

Connecting River, Watershed and Community



FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER
ANNUAL REPORT

2008



Dear Friends:



For Friends of the Mississippi River 2008, our 15th year working on behalf of this great river, was a year of considerable accomplishment. The significant advancements in our key strategic areas —

land protection and restoration, river corridor stewardship and watershed protection — are detailed throughout this report. Thank you to our board of directors, staff, donors, volunteers and program partners for a year of considerable progress in the midst of significant economic challenges facing Minnesota and our country.



As we navigate in the coming year the very real impacts on all nonprofits of unprecedented economic challenges, we remain committed to our mission to be a tenacious voice for the Mississippi River corridor in the Twin Cities region. The board's decision many years ago to build a modest operating reserve and our budgeting discipline have served us well. Your contributions are critical to achieve our mission and we thank you for your continuing support.

At a recent event sponsored by a corporate partner, an executive recalled a childhood experience on the river where a family member told him it was not safe to drink the water, swim or eat fish caught in the Mississippi. One of the reasons we founded FMR was to advocate for a cleaner, swimmable river that is the source of drinking water for millions in the Twin Cities, and from which fish can be safely eaten.

We're very proud of the progress that has been made in the last 15 years, but more is yet to be done. We look forward to working with you — our members, volunteers and donors — to continue this important work!

Sincerely,
Peter L. Gove

Peter L. Gove
Chair, FMR Board of Directors



2008: FMR's Major Accomplishments

- Supported the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Study Group, chaired by Rep. Rick Hansen and Sen. Katie Sieben, which resulted in the introduction (and passage in 2009!) of the Mississippi River Critical Area Reform Bill.
- Championed passage of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment through the successful Vote Yes For Minnesota campaign, securing dedicated funding for Minnesota's environment for years to come.
- Conducted workshops with local decision-makers, commission members and citizens in the cities of Ramsey, Brooklyn Park, Cottage Grove and Hastings to discuss planning and land use for each community's riverfront.
- Permanently protected three ecologically important properties totaling 347 acres, including the Freitag property, a 300-acre parcel located in the Vermillion river bottoms at the confluence of the Mississippi, Vermillion and St. Croix rivers.
- Developed eight natural resource management plans for the ecological restoration of 254 acres of land.
- Inspired 3,055 volunteers to dedicate 11,245 hours to helping the river, including 98 "Super Volunteers" who contributed over 20 hours of service each.
- Organized 1,367 volunteers who contributed 2,795 hours to Storm Drain Stenciling, a water quality education project.
- Led 56 habitat restoration events, in which a total of 1,609 volunteers contributed 6,157 hours of restoration work.
- Conducted 31 educational and interpretive events, with a combined total of 1,290 participants.



River Corridor Stewardship

Friends of the Mississippi River advocates at the local level for development policies and other land-use policies that protect and enhance the ecological, cultural, historic, scenic and recreational assets of the Mississippi River Corridor.

In 2008, FMR and National Park Service staff conducted outreach workshops with local decision-makers, commission members and citizens in the four river communities of Ramsey, Brooklyn Park, Cottage Grove and Hastings. The purpose of these workshops was to provide an overview of the significance of the river's resources and to educate community leaders about tools and resources available to help realize local, state and national goals for the Mississippi River Corridor. A lively discussion about local opportunities, issues and threats was included in each workshop, and just as the character of the river changes from one community to the next, so do the key issues.

FMR continues to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of river corridor protection policy for the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and the Mississippi River Critical Area and work toward strengthening state and federal policy.

A series of stakeholder engagement meetings held in 2007 to gather and document input from corridor cities, river businesses and developers, and environmental, civic and neighborhood groups about the strengths and weaknesses of the Mississippi River Critical Area program resulted in the formation of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Study Group, chaired by state legislators Rep. Rick Hansen and Sen. Katie Sieben.

Through a series of meetings with the study group last fall, FMR established general agreement with stakeholders around some key elements of a Mississippi River Critical Area Reform Bill, which was introduced in the 2009 session. The legislation calls for a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) rulemaking process to revise critical area land-use districts, standards and guidelines, it refines bluff-related definitions, and it clarifies the enforcement responsibilities of local corridor municipalities and the DNR.



National Park Service historian Dr. John Anfinson tells the story of how the Mississippi Gorge was transformed from rapids to reservoirs in an interpretive tour of the Meeker Island Lock & Dam Ruins.

Throughout the legislative process, FMR worked with legislators, local cities and other stakeholders to modify the bill in response to concerns raised. The final bill, which passed the Legislature this spring, seeks to strike a balance among the diverse interests by providing appropriate flexibility and adequate protection of the river's significant resources. The rulemaking process will begin in late 2009 or early 2010.

In addition to policy work and outreach to local cities in the river corridor, FMR engages hundreds of volunteers in land and habitat stewardship within the corridor. The Gorge in Minneapolis and St. Paul and the Pine Bend Bluffs in Inver Grove Heights and Rosemount are two primary focus areas for stewardship. Corridor education and interpretive programs continue to be popular and served close to 1,000 people in 2008. Read more about these programs on the map in this report or on our website (www.fmr.org).



2009 Mississippi River Challenge

A fully supported paddle event to promote a cleaner, healthier river. PADDLE IT! PROJECT IT! JULY 25 & 26.

If you've never experienced the Twin Cities from the perspective of the river, the Mississippi River Challenge is the way to do it! Let the cities recede beyond the trees and atop the bluffs while you paddle stretches of quiet beauty, then emerge again as you paddle the urban riverfronts and pass through the locks. This one-of-a-kind journey showcases the ecology, history, scenic beauty and cultural value of our stretch of the Mississippi in a way that no other event can. Stay close to home this summer, and experience your local river. Paddle the Mississippi River Challenge.

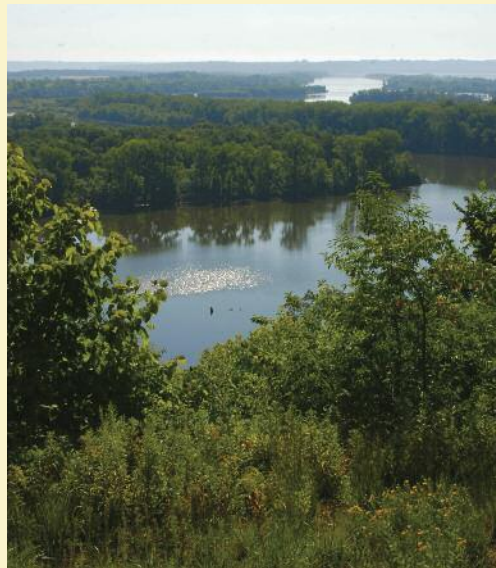
www.mississippiriverchallenge.org



Land Conservation

Friends of the Mississippi River continued its commitment to working with public and private landowners to enhance stewardship in locations critical to a healthy river and thriving ecosystem.

Thanks to the work that FMR completed in 2008, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and with the help of dozens of volunteers and numerous hard-working contractors, the 78-acre Hastings Sand Coulee Scientific and Natural Area in Marshan Township is well on its way to providing better habitat to its native prairie denizens. The removal of a 4-acre stand of red pine trees that had encroached on this remnant sand-gravel prairie, prescribed burns and weed removal by volunteers all served to rejuvenate the native plant community. It is hoped that these improvements will help to ensure survival of the many rare plant and animal species found at the site.



Removing non-native shrubs at Pine Bend Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area restored habitat for birds and wildlife as well as many breathtaking views.

FMR's effort to protect the native prairie in the Sand Coulee took another step forward in 2008, as the Murnane family donated a conservation easement to the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program on six acres of prairie that they own. The family's action to protect their portion of the Sand Coulee was in loving memory of their parents, Joe and Joann Murnane, who both passed away several years ago. Both Joe and Joann had a deep appreciation for the land and valued the prairie that existed on the property. They also provided leadership in getting other landowners to partner with FMR to conduct restoration activities throughout the Sand Coulee. This donation was a fitting tribute to them, and we are honored to have known them.

The Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area in Dakota County encompasses nearly 1,300 acres of very high biodiversity habitat at the bend of the Mississippi River, which is one of the most significant migratory bird routes in the world. FMR's ecological restoration efforts, begun in 1999, progressed in 2008 with removal of non-native shrubs at Pine Bend Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area. The results provide expansive views of the river for people and improved habitat for birds and other wildlife. In 2008, FMR

and Great River Greening conducted restoration activities on Flint Hills Resources' native and rare sand-gravel prairies and oak savanna, and within the property's woodland. We would like to thank Flint Hills Resources for its strong commitment to the health of its river bluffland.

FMR also assisted in protecting a large and ecologically important riverfront property in 2008 through a partnership with the Minnesota DNR, Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program, and the City of Hastings. The 300-acre Freitag property, located near the confluence of the Mississippi, Vermillion and St. Croix rivers, serves as the western terminus of the extensive Vermillion-Cannon Rivers floodplain. This was a significant event in our effort to protect and improve the health of the Mississippi River as there are few remaining opportunities to protect such large tracts of land along the river in the Twin Cities.

Our efforts in 2008 will benefit the ecology of the river for many years to come and we are looking forward to a successful 2009.

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Christine Bohn
Tim Boyle

Laurie Bruno
Bill Davnie
Barbara Gibson
Lisa Hamze
Maggie Hill

Karen Jenkins
Elaine Jervis
Jeanne LaBore
Catherine Malave
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Martha Zemur

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Jennifer Burt
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Warren Stortroen

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Sandeé Blanchard
Adam Brewer
Gail Conzemius
Dennis Davidson
Carol Drone
Anna Lewanski
Alex Lewanski
Josh Lewanski
Hamilton Medved-
Lufkin

Bill Newman
Amanda Putz
Charlie Rader

Laura Recker
Brenda Reeves
Michael Reeves
Dan Smith
Andy Tatham
Dan Smith
Meghan Untz
Richard Wahls
Sam Wils
Craig Zimmer

Stream Health Evaluation Program

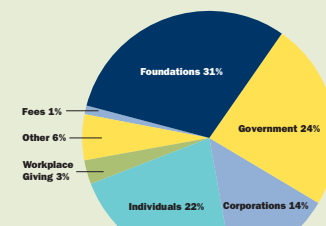
Gary Averbeck
Wendy Barron
Bob Bartlett
Barbara Bor
Jim Bukowski
Ralph Butkowski
Christy Dolph
Glenn Fuchs
Susan Fuller
Julie Glanton
Linda Grundtner
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Marilyn Radmer
Dana Raines
Don Vegoe
Nancy Wilberts
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Eileen Zierdt

Special thanks to
Timothy Boyle, whose
photographs appear
throughout this report.

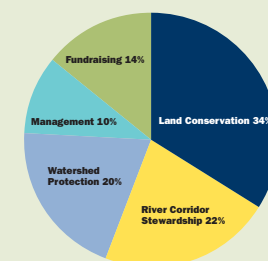
Revenue

Foundations	408,643
Government	316,827
Corporations	188,746
Individuals	292,922
Workplace Giving	38,266
Other	73,667
Fees	18,675
Total Revenue	1,337,746



Expenses

Land Conservation	476,062
River Corridor	
Stewardship	300,256
Watershed Protection	277,776
Management	141,848
Fundraising	197,372
Total Expenses	1,393,314



FMR meets all the accountability standards of the Charities Review Council of Minnesota

FMR is a proud member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund



Watershed Protection

A clean river begins with a clean watershed. Friends of the Mississippi River has broadened its scope and expanded its efforts in watershed protection to work toward a simple goal: clean water.

In the Rice Creek Watershed, one of FMR's two target watersheds, volunteer monitors continue to sample and identify benthic macroinvertebrates – tiny stream-dwelling bugs whose presence or absence in a stream is an excellent indicator of stream health. Last year, our 30 volunteer monitors once again proved that well-trained volunteers can assist local governments in providing high quality data. In 2008, our volunteers exceeded our accuracy goals, accurately identifying 96.5% of all samples. Better still, the data shows that recent restoration and water quality projects in the Rice Creek Watershed District are starting to have profound positive impacts on stream health in the area.



Because clean water begins with clean land, volunteers have dedicated their time to improving watersheds that are critical to the health of the Mississippi River.

In the Vermillion River Watershed, another target area, FMR's 2008 Vermillion Stewards program helped 369 volunteers contribute more than 845 hours of volunteer time protecting and preserving local water quality. FMR organized twelve public stewardship projects and three educational/interpretive events at multiple sites across the Vermillion River Watershed. These activities ranged from invasive species removal and trout surveys to the installation of 1,200 native prairie plants in the Sand Coulee, a rare dry sand prairie near Hastings. Volunteers learned from a wide range of local experts and took part in stewardship, education and restoration activities that will help improve water quality and watershed health for years to come.

The big news for FMR Watershed Protection is an expanded water quality focus in the coming years. FMR has broadened our scope of water quality work to include a wide variety of local and statewide advocacy, education and outreach programs. FMR is now active in a number of watershed and agency water protection and

cleanup programs, and will work with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on several large-scale efforts to clean up the Mississippi River in coming years. We've also expanded our reach to cities and townships across the metro area, working to help local governments find water protection strategies that work for their communities. In addition to our Special Places Tours and water quality workshops, FMR continues to coordinate the Clean Water Minnesota Media Campaign – a statewide water protection and education program.

Through our expanded Watershed Program, FMR will continue to reach out and bring more Minnesotans face-to-face with the long-term solutions to keeping our Mississippi clean and beautiful for generations to come.

