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FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Winter/Spring 2001

At the Water's Edge

The Importance of Preserving and Restoring Natural Shorelands

By Irene Jones

From bustling harbors that reflect urban skylines to quiet lakes lined with second homes to free-flowing rivers that swell and retreat to the rhythm of seasonal rains — the places where land and water meet attract a diversity of life. In its natural state, the edge of a river, lake or stream, also known as “shoreland,” is a critical zone that supports an array of plants and wildlife. It is here that the aquatic and terrestrial habitats merge to create a greater diversity of species than either individual habitat can support. Species from further afield such as migratory birds are attracted to this rich habitat, and they depend upon shorelands for both food and geographical orientation. Humans are also attracted to shorelands for some

of the same reasons - convenient location for travel, abundance of fish and wildlife, a reliable source of drinking water and natural beauty.

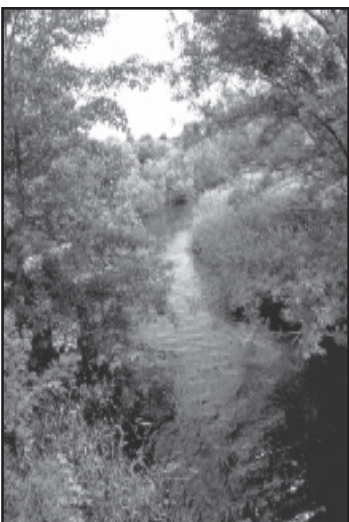
Human Settlement Impacts Shorelands

Human settlements of urban, rural and suburban landscapes each present problems for shorelands. What is often missing is the presence of a healthy riparian zone — a buffer of natural vegetation between human land uses and the waterway. In urban areas, shorelands are generally occupied by industry, piers or recreational facilities such as manicured parks and paved trails. Suburban shorelands are commonly lined with private residences and lawns mowed right up to the water's edge. In rural areas natural shoreland habitat can be interrupted if there is no buffer between agricultural

crops or livestock and the waterway. Unprotected forests, prairies and wetlands that provide critical wildlife habitat are often attractive to developers and are quickly being eaten up by new homes and businesses.

Loss of ecologically healthy shorelands does more than just threaten habitat; it can also severely impact water quality. Thick, diverse vegetation along a stream, lake or river helps to filter out pollutants such as sediments, excess nutrients from fertilizers, harmful pesticides and other chemicals carried by rain and snowmelt. Shoreland buffers also help stabilize streambanks and prevent further erosion and sedimentation. “Excess sediments and nutrients cause major problems for fish and other aquatic wildlife here in the metro area and downstream as far as the Gulf of Mexico,” says Karen Schik, FMR's Restoration Ecologist. “Installing shoreland buffers throughout our watershed is an important step toward improving water quality in the

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The land that borders streams and rivers has a direct impact on wildlife habitat and water quality. A healthy riparian buffer (left) is often missing in agricultural and urban landscapes (above, right).





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MISSION:

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) advocates a new vision for the Mississippi, especially the river and its watershed in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Through active leadership and education, FMR seeks to preserve and restore the river's fish and wildlife, its vital floodplains and scenic bluffs, its natural and cultural treasures, its beauty and its romance. We envision a river on which small boats are safe and welcome, to which we have clear and easy access and in which we can safely swim and fish. We envision a river that is cleaner, healthier, more alive and more inviting, a river no one can ignore or take for granted.

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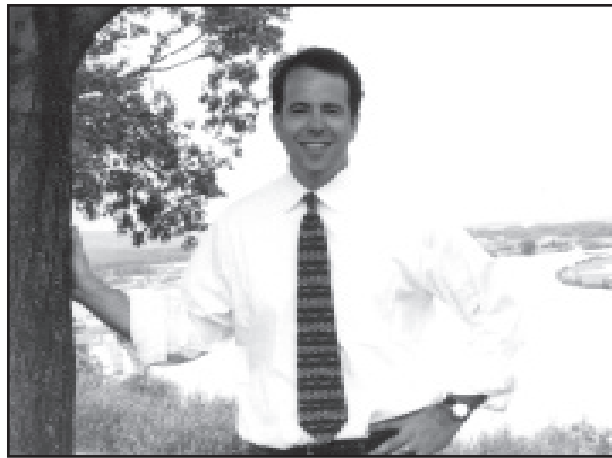
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Lyndon Torstenson, *Photography*

Letter from the Director



Whitney Clark, Executive Director

Winter in the natural communities along the great river is a time for hunkering down and storing energy. The plants and animals of the floodplains and bluffs have a seasonal cycle, and so does Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR). For the staff and board of FMR, winter is hardly a time of inaction—we are just as busy as ever—but it is a time for us to take stock of the things we've accomplished over the past year and lay our plans for the coming one. In that spirit, I offer my reflections on some of the highlights of 2000.

The year 2000 was a year of tremendous growth for FMR. We more than doubled our membership and grew our staff from four to seven.

The number of people FMR reached through our education and stewardship programs increased dramatically this past year. Our storm drain stenciling and watershed education project involved more than three thousand volunteers in a hands-on effort to protect water quality. Our expanded slate of Special Places Tours engaged 170 individuals for in-depth interpretation of some of the river's greatest natural and cultural treasures. And, of course, on July 22, our Third Annual Mississippi River Canoe Adventure drew more than 400 paddlers of all ages for a sun- and fun-drenched exploration of the only gorge on the world's third largest river.

I am also very proud of the work FMR has done over the past year to protect and restore riverfront lands. We added 18 landowners and more than

1,300 acres to our Heritage Land Registry. We began ecological restoration and management work on eight sites along the river. And on May 20th, more than 350 volunteers pitched in to help restore rare prairie and oak savanna high above the river at Pine Bend Bluffs.

One final memory from 2000 is bittersweet. On April 13th, FMR held its annual meeting at the new Science Museum of Minnesota on

the bluff overlooking the river. At the meeting we awarded our first annual Friend of the River Award to Minnesota Fourth District Congressman Bruce Vento. Bruce was there to receive the award and was in peak form reminiscing with humility and good humor about some of his accomplishments on behalf of the river and the environment throughout his more than 30 years in public service. As most of you know, Bruce passed away on October 10, 2000. I am pleased we were able to recognize Bruce while he was alive. His passionate advocacy on behalf of public lands and environmental quality will be sorely missed.

Looking ahead to 2001 we expect to continue growing the organization by adding new staff and board members. Our current programs will continue to evolve and we will be expanding our work into new areas. For example, in 2001 we will launch an annual State of the Watershed Report to help citizens and public officials understand the issues and trends that affect the Mississippi and its watershed. We also plan to expand our work on watershed issues, focusing more on the effect of local land use decisions on water quality.

All this is possible because of you, the members, volunteers and partners of FMR. Together we have chosen one feature on this vast planet, one place which is home to us and sustains us. And we have decided to dig in and work together to leave this great river more whole than we found it. Thanks to all of you who are part of this. I look forward to our continued partnership!

Camping Memories: The Mississippi River

Thuy Nguyen, Age 11

The sun was big and high in the blue Saturday sky. I lifted my head to catch the warm rays dancing on my hair and in my cousin's eyes. We were on our way to our campsite on the Mississippi River, just a ten-minute drive from our house by the State Capitol. Our silver boat was splashed and rocked from side to side by the strong current of this famous river.

Once we reached the land, my cousins started to set up the tents for the night while I ran around exploring the shore. The fine, white sand felt like silk under my feet. Waves caressed my hands with gentle touches, and when they receded they left colorful rocks behind. The water shone under the sun. The wind blew gently.

As soon as the sun began to set, we made a fire on a clear patch of ground. It crackled loudly in the silence of the evening and sent sparks flying around like fireworks. The bug repellent seemed to make no difference to the mosquitoes, and even though their bites itched like crazy, no one was paying attention to them—the full moon had become the main attraction.

Under its magical cool rays everything was quiet. We could see the woods behind us, and a winding path that led into the woods looked like a road fairies might use. Before us the water was a smooth, sparkling, white-silver carpet.

I will never forget the peace and beauty of the Mississippi River in the moonlight.

This essay was selected for and originally published by "Voices for the Land" a project sponsored by 1,000 Friends of Minnesota.

**Welcome Karen Schik
– Restoration Ecologist**



Karen Schik, the newest addition to our growing staff, brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to FMR's conservation efforts in the Vermillion and Mississippi Watersheds. Karen earned a Master of Science Degree in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota, where she did research on the impacts of agriculture on wetland bird communities. She has many years of experience as an educator and environmental consultant, and most recently held the position of landscape designer for EnergyScapes, a private company that specializes in landscaping with native plants. With a background that blends technical and interpersonal experience, Karen is well suited for her work on conducting habitat assessments and helping landowners to develop and implement management and restoration plans. She also loves to lead bird and wild-flower hikes, so look for Karen on some of FMR's Special Places Tours!

Farewell to Founding Board Member, Amy Middleton

Amy Middleton, river activist extraordinaire, has resigned from the FMR Board of Directors after seven years of service and inspiration. Amy helped shape FMR's mission, purpose and growth to where it is today. Amy's accomplishments are too many to list here, but she will be missed and we are grateful for the time and energy she gave to FMR. Amy is enjoying motherhood and her new baby girl, and she will continue her environmental consulting work with MMC associates. (You can read more about Amy in FMR's Winter 2000 newsletter on our website.)



It's a great time to become a Friend of the Mississippi River

Join us — or continue our friendship — as we expand our efforts to protect the mighty Mississippi! All contributions to FMR are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to Friends of the Mississippi River and send them, along with this form, to 46 E. Fourth St., Suite 606, St. Paul, MN 55101 • 651/222-2193.

Name _____

Address _____

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- \$5.....Youth
- \$15.....Student/Senior
- \$25.....Individual
- \$40.....Household*
- \$50.....Sponsor
- \$100.....Supporter
- \$500.....Sustainer
- \$1,000+....Patron

*If you join at a level of \$40 or more, you will receive the beautiful, full-color FMR poster, "Native Fish of the Upper Mississippi River - A Diversity of Species" or a set of ten notecards featuring the photographs of Henry Bosse. These items are also for sale individually. Contact FMR for information.

Continued from Page 1

Mississippi River."

Ways to Protect Shoreland

The human population is growing and, as such, new settlement and development is inevitable. But where and how development takes place can make all the difference. More than 27,000 acres of open space are urbanized each year in the Twin Cities, and riverfront land is often a prime target for development. The Metropolitan Council is promoting the concept of "Smart Growth" and encouraging communities in fast-growing areas to plan for more sustainable development, which includes the preservation of open space and shorelands. According to Met Council Chairman Ted Mondale, "Our lakes and rivers set the Twin Cities apart from other urban areas, and preserving their beauty and health is a key part of protecting and enhancing the quality of life in this region."

Community planning through programs such as the Farmland and Natural Areas Project in Dakota County is one way that residents and public officials are working to set priorities for protecting critical shoreland before development takes place. Tom Lewanski, FMR's Conservation Director, plays a key role in this effort and comments, "It's not surprising

to find out that many residents in Dakota County value shoreland areas and want to see them protected from development."

Community planning efforts often encourage protection of shorelands, but they generally cannot enforce it. For this reason, additional incentives need to be available to waterfront landowners who face economic pressure to sell their land for development. FMR works with riverfront landowners in

Loss of ecologically healthy shorelands does more than just threaten habitat; it can also severely impact water quality.

Dakota and Washington Counties to help match them up with available resources for land protection and native habitat restoration. So far, over 1,300 acres have been protected through the Mississippi-Vermillion Heritage Land Registry, which is a voluntary non-binding agreement. FMR is also working with landowners on the Vermillion River to provide funding and

technical assistance for installing river buffers through a Metro Environment Partnership grant from the Met Council. (See related articles on p. 5.)

Shoreland Legislation

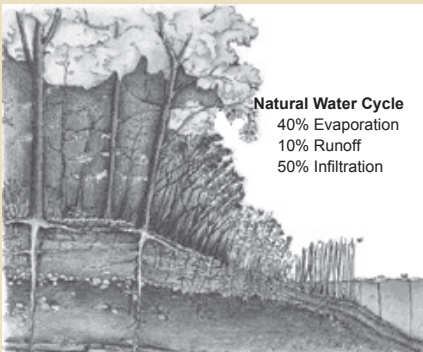
Although these programs have been successful, shoreland protection is needed on a much broader scale in order to protect our water resources. For the past three years, FMR has been lobbying at the State Capitol for legislation to provide resources for shoreland buffer protection. If passed into law, the "Shoreland Buffers Bill" would provide cost-share grants to lake and riverfront owners for the establishment of vegetative shoreland buffers and fund the purchase of conservation easements from willing sellers on critical shoreland parcels. "The time is ripe for this initiative," says Whitney Clark, Executive Director of FMR. "Our strong economy has created a surplus of state money, some of which must be allocated to protecting our critical shorelands if we are to keep up with the region's booming development."

The State of Wisconsin is ahead of us on this one. State boards overseeing agriculture and natural resources are reviewing proposed regulations believed to be the first in the nation to require naturally planted buffer zones to capture polluted runoff from barnyards and farm fields as well as urban sources. Allen D. Shea, director of the WI DNR's Bureau of Watershed Management, said, "Sooner or later, other states will have to do the same thing, at which time cost-sharing dollars may not be available..." (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, January 22, 2001).

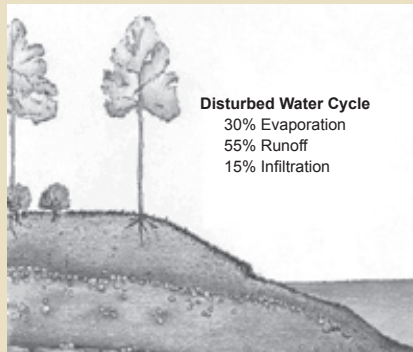
Protecting and restoring shorelands is imperative if we hope to preserve the natural beauty, clean water and vital habitat that Minnesota has long enjoyed. Now is the time to direct our attention, and our public resources, toward this effort.

If you would like more information on FMR's initiatives to protect shoreland, please call 651 / 222-2193.

Natural shoreland is sustainable for people and the environment. It provides habitat for wildlife and filters polluted runoff.



Natural Water Cycle
40% Evaporation
10% Runoff
50% Infiltration



Disturbed Water Cycle
30% Evaporation
55% Runoff
15% Infiltration

Natural Shoreline:

Preserved and restored native shoreline vegetation protects water resources. Impacts include:

- Reduced water runoff
- Filtered water runoff
- Increased groundwater infiltration
- Diverse and healthy habitats
- Visually attractive natural shoreline

Disturbed Shoreline:

Hard surfaces and reduced vegetation degrade water resources. Impacts include:

- Dramatically increased water runoff
- Unfiltered water runoff
- Degraded aquatic and shoreland vegetation
- Less attractive scenery

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Special Places Tours

A Great Way to Connect with the Mississippi River!

Were you able to join us for one of our events on the Mississippi River last year? If you did, you know what a great success they were. If you didn't get a chance to join us for a canoe trip or an interpretive hike, read on and make room in your 2001 calendar! *(Check the calendar insert or our website—www.fmr.org—for details.)*

The Special Places Tours along the Mississippi River took us to many locations around the Twin Cities. We paddled the Mississippi downstream from Coon Rapids Dam, around Grey Cloud Island and through the Vermillion River Bottoms. A variety of migrating birds were spotted at Crosby Farm and the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Parks, and we identified birds and wildflowers at the Hastings and Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs). We toured the neighborhood restoration projects of the Mississippi River Gorge in Minneapolis as well as exploring "daylighted" Phalen Creek of Swede Hollow in St. Paul.

It was one of the hottest days of the summer when 33 people joined us at the Swede Hollow Café to talk about the unique history of the area and sip cool teas. And a 13-degree windchill in May didn't keep a group of 25 hardy paddlers from experiencing the Vermillion Bottoms. Whatever the weather, we had great participation and a wonderful time on all the Special Places Tours.

The Third Annual Canoe Adventure was also a day to remember. With 450 people in attendance and gorgeous weather, the paddle was our greatest yet. One person said, "We may make this an annual event." Another commented, "It was a terrific day! The high point of my summer. Thanks to all the people who made it happen."

FMR sincerely thanks all the volunteers who gave their time and energy and helped to make these events a great success. We also wish to thank our event partners: Audubon Society, Hennepin Parks, Dakota County Parks, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Friends of Swede Hollow, Minneapolis Aquatennial, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Minnesota Canoe Association and Longfellow Community Council.



Birding at Crosby Farm Regional Park in St. Paul



SAVE THE DATE... The Fourth Annual Canoe Adventure is July 21st

The Friends of the Mississippi River Aquatennial Canoe Adventure is an event to behold...and an event to attend. Last summer, over 450 people in 200+ canoes and kayaks participated in this exciting, guided paddle down the Mississippi from River Flats Park in Minneapolis, to Hidden Falls Park in St. Paul. The Fourth Annual Canoe Adventure, which is scheduled for July 21, 2001, will be just as grand! The morning paddle includes interpretive stops and "locking through" Lock #1. Lunch and educational activities are provided at the landing.

Don't miss this year's event! Let us know if you want to receive the registration brochure (available in Spring of 2001). Contact Alyssa at ahawkins@fmr.org or 651/222-2193.



Pictured left to right: George Dunn, Whitney Clark, Beth Hayden, Ryan Pool, Juliann Pool, Tom Lewanski, Congressman Bruce Vento

FMR Annual Awards Honor Stewards of the Mississippi

Three awards were presented to outstanding river stewards at the first FMR Annual Celebration on April 13, 2000:

Friend of the River Award: The Honorable Bruce Vento, U.S. Congress Congressman Vento was a champion for the Mississippi River and many other environmental issues throughout his career as a United States Congressman and a Minnesota legislator. Bruce passed away on October 10, 2000. He will be greatly missed by his friends, family and the public he served so well.

Landowner of the Year: Ryan and Juliann Pool The Pools of Ravenna Township are members of the Mississippi-Vermillion Heritage Land Registry. They are restoring a dry prairie and removing red cedar from their property.

Volunteer of the Year: Beth Hayden Beth gives an evening a week to FMR as the volunteer membership coordinator.

Volunteers Help to Restore Pine Bend Bluffs



On May 20th, over 350 volunteers spent a beautiful spring day removing invasive buckthorn and planting prairie seedlings at the Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area overlooking the Mississippi River. Owned by Koch Petroleum Group (KPG), this picturesque spot includes some of the last remaining high quality natural areas along the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metro area. Invasive exotic plant species, such as European buckthorn, present the biggest threat to the native plant communities of oak savanna, tallgrass prairie, and the rare sand gravel prairie.

Friends of the Mississippi River, in partnership with Great River Greening and KPG, worked to coordinate an event that attracted hundreds of volunteers and numerous local officials who were eager to participate in and celebrate this ecological restoration.

Building upon the momentum from the May event, a group of volunteers returned to the site in September for a training event to learn how to identify and gather native prairie seeds. The seeds will be used in future restoration efforts at Pine Bend Bluffs.

This project is part of the Big Rivers Partnership and is funded by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, KPG and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



Top: A young volunteer plants prairie plugs at the Pine Bend Bluffs restoration event in May.

Above: Jason Husveth (right), of Great River Greening, teaches volunteers about prairie seed identification at the Pine Bend Bluffs site in September.

Volunteer Supervisors are Needed for Restoration Events

Volunteer supervisors are needed to participate in restoration events on the Mississippi River. Basic and advanced training is provided by Great River Greening (GRG). Supervisors are expected to help with one or more events. Join a training event on March 29 or 31. For more information see the calendar insert or call Maria at GRG:

Storm Drain Stenciling Program Involves Thousands of Volunteers

For the past four summers Friends of the Mississippi River has taken to the streets of St. Paul with local volunteers to paint the message **"Please Don't Pollute! Drains to River"** near the storm drains. This year's stenciling season was a little different...

Working with the City of St. Paul and our two new stenciling partners, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, FMR spread the word about urban runoff to a much broader audience this year. The project included painting the message next to storm drains and distributing doorhangers to homes and businesses in the neighborhood. The doorhangers provide citizens with tips on keeping pollution out of our stormwater and the Mississippi River. Over 3,000 volunteers participated in the stenciling campaign, getting to more than 6,000 drains and close to 30,000 doors.

Over the course of the summer we worked with a variety of groups including classrooms, scout groups, YMCAs, neighborhood organizations, churches, universities, singles groups, families and individuals. The University of St. Thomas Entrepreneurial group, Service Corps and the La Crosse Club contributed more than 200 hours in the Summit Avenue area. Nearly 200 Girls Scouts from Chaska braved cold temperatures and spent a day in the Longfellow neighborhood of Minneapolis. And in just one week, Minneapolis' Folwell Neighborhood Organization gathered enough volunteers to stencil their entire neighborhood—that's over 350 drains!

It was definitely our busiest and most successful stenciling season yet. We're busy preparing for next spring, so if you are interested in participating or are part of a group looking for a service project, please contact Alyssa at 651/222-2193 or ahawkins@fmr.org, or visit our website at www.fmr.org.



Girl Scouts from Chaska spent the day stenciling in south Minneapolis near the Mississippi River.

Promoting Prairie Stewardship

Many plant communities combine to form the wonderful Mississippi River ecosystem. Each community is a unique combination of plants and animals adapted to local natural features. Bedrock bluff prairie is a community that is a rare natural feature in Dakota County, representing less than 1.5% of the remaining natural habitat and less than 0.04% of the landscape. This type of prairie, once common in the metro area, is found along the bluffs of the Mississippi River and its tributaries in southeastern Minnesota. Often called "goat prairies," they are generally small openings located on steep south and west-facing slopes, surrounded by woodland. The thin soils, dry climate, and rock outcrops provide habitat for rare Minnesota plant species, such as kitten-tails and hill's thistle, and animals such as five-lined skink and timber rattlesnake. Through the DNR's Prairie Stewardship Planning Assistance Program, FMR began working with landowners in Ravenna Township this year to protect and improve this important natural resource.

Five landowners were delighted to work with us and to learn more about their backyard jewels. Some of them were already working to protect and improve what they recognized as a wonderful natural community. Portions of these prairies may have been grazed in the past, but luckily the invasion of exotic plant species has been minimal. The primary threat is encroachment by woody vegetation, especially red cedar. FMR staff surveyed each site, evaluated the condition and developed management recommendations. We gave each landowner a detailed prairie stewardship plan and many resources to assist them in implementing the plan. These neighbors are now meeting with each other to share their enthusiasm and to share project tasks and expenses. We hope to continue this work next year and reach many more bedrock bluff prairie landowners in the area. The dedication these landowners have shown in improving and protecting the prairies that exist on their property contributes in important ways to enhancing the Mississippi River for the animals, plants, and people that reside within it and along its banks.

Vermillion River Projects Continue

FMR continues to work on improving habitat and water quality of the Vermillion River, a tributary of the Mississippi in Dakota County. This year, the Vermillion assessment focused on an eight-mile stretch of the South Branch from Hwy 3 to Hwy 52. This habitat and stream evaluation of a 600-foot river corridor provides information on the ecological health of the river system and helps to identify areas with restoration opportunities. Optimally, we want to see a wide vegetated buffer between the river and adjacent land uses. Grasses are ideal for filtering runoff, and trees and shrubs provide deep anchoring of soil and shading of the stream. A good diversity of native plant species provides habitat for wildlife.

With a grant from the Metropolitan Council, FMR began working with landowners this year to address bank erosion and riparian buffer issues within the entire Vermillion River system. Projects will consist of using native plantings to increase the vegetated buffer width, and using bioengineering techniques to stabilize stream banks.

The Quade Property, shown at right, is part of the Vermillion Buffers Project. Work is currently underway to restore healthy riparian vegetation to the eroded bank. Stabilizing this streambank will improve both habitat and water quality in the Vermillion River, a tributary of the Mississippi.

Heritage Land Registry Protects Over 1,300 Acres

The Mississippi-Vermillion Heritage Land Registry was developed to acknowledge and support landowners along these two rivers who are taking steps to protect and enhance the natural areas on their property. When the individual efforts of several landowners are combined, significant improvements can occur that profoundly impact the river locally and nationally.

Through the variety of projects in which FMR takes the lead, such as Prairie Stewardship, Vermillion River Buffers, and Big Rivers Partnership, more and more landowners are being recruited for the Registry. The Registry allows FMR to begin relationships with landowners. We provide ecological information and help them understand how their efforts fit into the larger Mississippi ecosystem. "People generally want to do the right thing for the environment, and the Registry gives them a partner in their conservation work" explained Tom Lewanski, FMR's Conservation Director. As of November 1st, over 1,300 acres have been enrolled in the Registry. If you would like to learn more about the program contact Tom Lewanski at 651/222-2193 or tlewansk@fmr.org.



FEBRUARY 2001

Eagle Watching at the National Eagle Center

Weekends through March, Wabasha

Every weekend through March, National Eagle Center volunteers provide guided eagle watching at the observation deck from 1-3 p.m. Bring binoculars and warm clothes. The Center is at 152 Main St. and open from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

For more information visit www.eaglewatch.org.

Snowshoeing the Vermillion River Bottoms

Meet at Hastings Middle School, Hastings

Sunday, February 18, 1-4 p.m.

Join FMR and Dakota County Parks on a snowshoe hike through the breathtaking winter wonderland of the Vermillion River Bottoms, one of the largest and most pristine natural places in the metro area. Explore and learn about this unique floodplain environment by investigating winter wildlife, animal tracks and even a few signs of spring. Registration required, space is limited. Equipment provided but dress for the weather and wear winter boots. \$7/person or \$15/family.

For more information or to sign up, contact Dakota County Parks at 651/438-4660.

Candlelight Ski

Schaar's Bluff, Spring Lake Park Reserve, Hastings

Saturday, February 24, 5-9 p.m.

Invite your family and friends to an evening of skiing by the light of the full moon and the soft glow of candlelight along an illuminated 5.8k trail along the Mississippi River bluffs. Program is free, bring your own equipment.

For more information call Dakota County Parks at 651/438-4660.

Mississippi Panorama

Children's Theater Company, Minneapolis

February 20 through April 1

Join a voyage and a phenomenal journey through time to a mystical, animated place, teeming with outlandish characters. It's a magical, music-filled tall tale with touches of reality. Because a majestic old river has secrets to reveal—to you.

For ticket information call 612/874-0400.

MARCH 2001

Mississippi Bluff and Riverbank Protection

March 8, 7-9 p.m. - Lakeland Park, Brooklyn Park

March 15, 7-9 p.m. - Hastings City Hall, Hastings

Join a forum on what homeowners and other residents can do to help contribute to the health of the Mississippi River by controlling runoff, reducing erosion and planting vegetation.

For information contact Dan Ercke at MNRRA (National Park Service) at 651/290-3030, ext 235.

Low Impact Development Workshop

Royal Cliff Conference Center, Eagan

Wednesday and Thursday, March 14-15

A two-day workshop on protecting water resources through low impact development. Topics include: managing growth in a water rich region, local land-use planning, conservation design, modeling low impact systems and addressing policy implications.

For information, call Dakota County SWCD at 651/480-7777.

Your Urban Yard: Landscaping for Water Quality

March 21, 6:30-8 p.m. Powderhorn Park Center, Minneapolis

March 22, 6:30-8 p.m. Nokomis Rec. Center, Minneapolis

March 29, 6:30-8 p.m. Baker Community Center, St. Paul

March 28, 6:30-8 p.m. Merrick Community Center, St. Paul

Join FMR for a community workshop on improving the health of the Mississippi from your own backyard. We'll give you tips on everything from turf maintenance and rain gutters to backyard native plantings and porous pavement.

For more information contact Alyssa at FMR at 651/222-2193.

The Truth About Exotic Species

March 22, 7-9 p.m. - Battle Creek Recreation Center, St. Paul

March 29, 7-9 p.m. - Anoka City Hall, Anoka

This forum will provide residents with information on exotic species that are currently present within the Mississippi River community, how they are impacting the river's resources, and how residents can help control and avoid exotic threats.

For information contact Dan Ercke at MNRRA (National Park Service) at 651/290-3030, ext 235.

Mississippi River Leaders Forum

Humanities Education Center, St. Paul

Wednesday, March 28, 7:30-9:30 a.m.

FMR hosts a breakfast forum for river stakeholders from local and county governments, state and federal agencies, river-related businesses, non-profits, community organizations and foundations. We meet every other month to facilitate networking, communication and cooperation toward reaching



Public officials and other stakeholders discussed river protection issues in preparation for the 2000 Legislative Session last year at a Mississippi River Leaders Forum, hosted by FMR.

LOOKING AHEAD...



River Calendar of Events

FMR teamed up with Audubon and Hennepin Parks to lead a birding hike along the Mississippi at Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park West last spring as part of our Special Places Tours, a series of guided educational programs that highlight special places along the river.

our common agenda. \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Please call FMR at 651/222-2193 for more information or to register for the March meeting.

River Restoration Supervisor Training

*Sponsored by Great River Greening, St. Paul
March 29, 6-9 p.m. or March 31, 9 a.m.- noon*

If you enjoy working with people and teaching them about ecological restoration, don't miss this chance to participate in a unique project. Fifty volunteer supervisors will be needed for the native tree and shrub planting at Shepard Road on May 19th, and there will be several other opportunities to supervise at volunteer events in the Twin Cities throughout 2001. In the training you will learn about native plant identification, proper tree and shrub planting techniques, and design strategies so you can pass this knowledge on to volunteers at planting and ecological restoration events. Once you've completed the basic training, you will have access to specialized and advanced trainings offered by Great River Greening.

*Call to sign up - spaces are limited. 651/665-9500 ext 2, or contact through the website - www.greatrivergreening.org
Questions? call Maria at 651/665-9500 ext 11.*

Big Rivers Partnership Volunteer Events

River locations throughout the metro area

The Big Rivers Partnership is a team of 14 government agencies and non-profits, administered by Great River Greening, that have joined forces to restore critical river valley habitat while building community investment in our urban natural resource base. Volunteers are needed to help restore native vegetation at several sites in the Twin Cities. There are many ways to get involved. Pre-registration is required for all events and trainings.

For a schedule of events or to sign up, call Great River Greening at 651/665-9500 ext 2, or visit their website at www.greatrivergreening.org.

The Mighty Mississippi Passport

River event listing for the metro area

The Mighty Mississippi Passport Program is a collection of more than 60 family-friendly activities on or near the Mississippi River in the metropolitan area. Participants receive stamps at each activity and are eligible to win prizes.

To receive your own Mighty Mississippi Passport call 612/676-9444. For more information visit the Mississippi Passport website at www.mississippipassport.org



FMR Special Places Tours

River locations throughout the metro area

You don't have to travel six hours to experience the wilderness - it's in your own back yard! Friends of the Mississippi River and partners are sponsoring a second season of tours that highlight special places along the river in the Twin Cities area. Discover the rich natural and cultural resources of the Mississippi, and learn about threats to the river and how people are working together to protect and enhance our watershed.

The Special Places Tours schedule listed here is subject to change. If you would like to receive the brochure (ready in March), please call FMR at 651/222-2193 or visit us on the web at www.fmr.org.

Birding at Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area

Sunday, April 29, 7:30-9:30 a.m., Inver Grove Heights

Birding for Beginners at Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park West

Saturday, May 5, 7:30-9:30 a.m., Brooklyn Park

Paddling the Vermillion River Bottoms

Saturday, May 12, 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Hastings

Birding in Lilydale Regional Park

Saturday, May 19, 7:30-9:30 a.m., St. Paul, West Side

Pine Bend Bluffs Natural History Hike

Saturday, June 9, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Rosemount

A Bird's Eye View of History

Wednesday, June 20, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Mounds Park, St. Paul

Fourth Annual Mississippi River Canoe Adventure

Saturday, July 21, 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Minneapolis/St. Paul

Prairie Wildflower Walk at Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area

Sunday, August 5, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Cottage Grove

Exploring the Critters of Elm Creek

Saturday, August 18, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Champlin

Biking the Mississippi River Regional Trail

Saturday, September 22, 1:00-3:30 p.m., Fridley

Thank You FMR Donors and Partners!

The following individuals and organizations donated to FMR in 2000 or provided in-kind donations. All donors for 2000 will be listed in the FMR Annual Report later this year.

Aggregate Industries

Calhoun Beach Framing

City of St. Paul Public Works

ColdSnap Photography

Conservation Fund, Kodak
American Greenway Awards

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Andersen Foundation

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Legislative Commission on
Minnesota Resources:
Big Rivers Partnership

Legislative Commission on
Minnesota Resources: Farmland
and Natural Areas Program

Longfellow Community Council

McKnight Foundation

Metropolitan Council Envi-
ronmental Partnership Grant
Program

Metropolitan Council
Environmental Services

Minneapolis Park and
Recreation Board

Minnehaha Creek
Watershed District

Minnesota Department of
Natural Resources:
Metro Greenways Program

Minnesota Department of
Natural Resources:
Prairie Stewardship Program

National Fish & Wildlife
Foundation

Patrick and Aimee Butler
Family Foundation

Recreational Equipment
Corporation (REI)

Reliant Energy—Minnegasco

Symantec Inc.

Trotter's Cafe and Bakery

FMR Measures Up

Recently, Friends of the Mississippi River was reviewed by the Charities Review Council. The Council is an independent organization in St. Paul that researches and reviews non-profits in order to help Minnesota donors make informed giving decisions. Organizations are evaluated against a set of accountability standards in four areas: Public Disclosure, Governance, Financial Activity, and Fundraising. After a thorough review of information such as our annual report, fundraising materials, bylaws, board meeting minutes, and financial statements, we are proud to report that the Council determined that FMR meets all standards.

Although the Council does not endorse or disapprove of any organization, its standards are generally accepted as base-line indicators of accountable, ethical and healthy organizations, and the Council encourages support of charities that meet those standards. A copy of the report on FMR is available to donors upon request. For free information about informed charitable giving, contact the Council at 651/224-7030 or 800/733-GIVE (outside the Twin Cities), or visit its web site at www.crcmn.org.



Friends
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Mississippi
River

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Visit FMR's Web site for the most
current information on events and
programs... www.fmr.org