

All of us at Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) are grateful for the commitment and support from all of our members, volunteers, advocates, funders, and partners who helped us achieve so much in 2013. Thank you for a great year!

As FMR turned 20, we reflected on the past 20 years and celebrated a number of significant accomplishments. We also looked toward the next 20 years, and began to plan strategically to address issues that are surfacing for the river as we move forward.

This annual report describes a few highlights of what we achieved in 2013. Please join us in celebrating a year of accomplishments and progress for our river and our community! And please visit FMR's website for more information: www.fmr.org.

Water Program Highlights

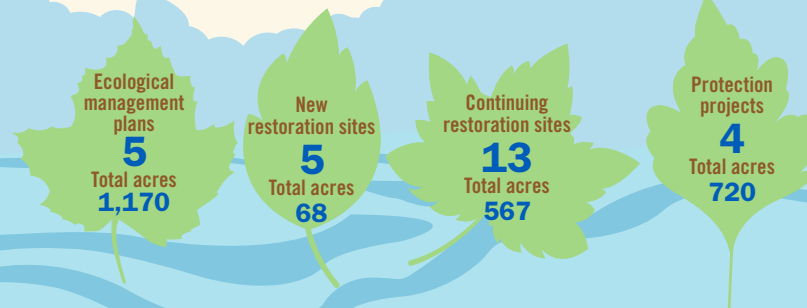
- FMR continues to educate Minnesota residents about water quality with the groundbreaking State of the River Report. Working in partnership with the National Park Service, we presented the report findings to a wide range of audiences, reaching 1,561 people with presentations and 26,216 people via the web site in 2013. One of the report's most talked about findings is the rapid build up of toxic dioxins in the Mississippi from the antibacterial chemical triclosan found in many hand soaps and other consumer products. FMR led the effort to reduce triclosan pollution in Minnesota, and, responding to public concern, in March of 2013 Governor Dayton signed an executive order requiring state agencies to discontinue using triclosan products. FMR also led the effort to pass legislation phasing out the sale to consumers of soaps and body washes containing triclosan, which passed in May of 2014.
- FMR's work with cities to help them reduce urban runoff pollution to Minnesota's waters gained momentum in 2013. FMR's innovative Blue Star Award Program honors Minnesota cities that do the best job of keeping our water clean. In 2013, FMR ramped-up our outreach to cities to help them improve their systems and earn the award.
- FMR continued to lead the Minnesota Environmental Partnership's Water Cluster in 2013. Along with our partners in this coalition, we secured passage of the Clean Water Accountability Act, a critical framework for ensuring Minnesota's waters are successfully restored and protected.

**BLUE STAR
AWARD PROGRAM**
50 participating cities
31 assessments completed
18 awards

Land Conservation & Restoration Program Highlights

- Protecting and restoring natural areas along the river has long been one of FMR's top goals. 2013 was a big year for this program. Important habitat was restored and enhanced on over 600 acres at 18 sites, including rare sand-gravel prairies, oak savannas, oak forest, woodland, floodplain forest and streambanks. In addition to conventional restoration methods, browsing goats were used to help control buckthorn, a large snake hibernaculum was built to provide specialized habitat, and cottonwood livestakes were used as a trial method for regenerating this species in a reed canary grassland. Vast amounts of exotic buckthorn removal resulted in a bedrock bluff prairie recovering its majestic views of the Mississippi River, and several oak savannas, a rare native community, were freed from very dense growth of this invasive shrub. Vegetation and breeding bird surveys helped us to monitor how this restoration work is making a difference in the landscape.

2013 by the numbers



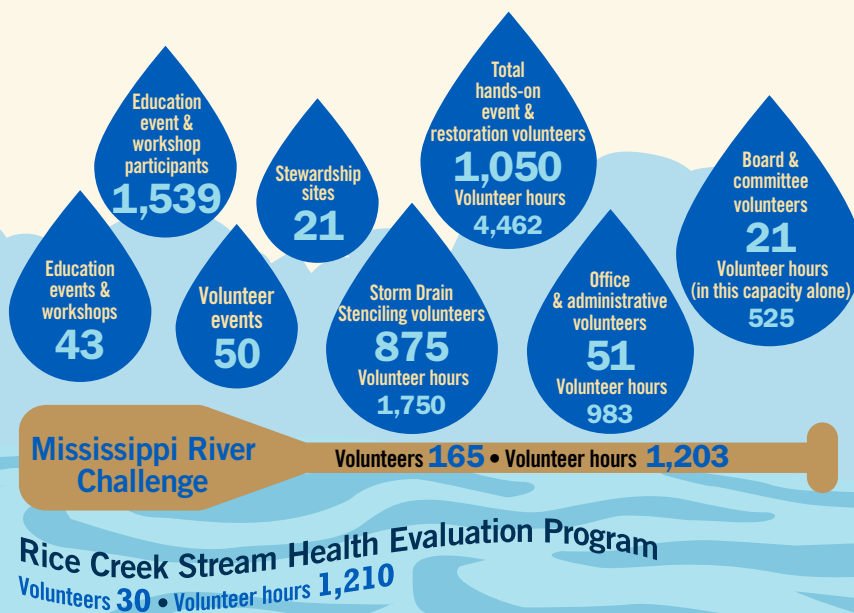
- Along with several partners, FMR is proud to have helped to permanently protect 62 acres of the Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway in Maplewood in 2013. This property, surrounded on three sides by Ramsey County open space, is situated along the bluffs of the Mississippi River, providing habitat for animals in the river corridor and great views of the Mississippi River valley. This project adds a key link to the network of greenway corridors and connected habitat in the metro region.

River Corridor Policy & Advocacy Program Highlights

- In 2013, FMR continued our long tradition of working to protect the key public assets and values of the river corridor through the Twin Cities region – and all of this work was made more effective through the help of hundreds of citizen advocates. From working with state legislators to extend rulemaking authority for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area, to engaging local citizens in shaping and influencing the revision of Minneapolis' Above the Falls Plan, to actively participating in local planning initiatives for the West Side Flats Master Plan Update and the Central Riverfront Regional Park Plan Update – FMR is ensuring that the voices of the river and those who love it are being heard.
- FMR has been actively working since our founding to protect biodiversity and stop the spread of invasive, non-native plants and wildlife. In 2013 we continued to work with the Stop Carp Coalition and members of Congress on legislation to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock, to prevent invasive carp from invading Minnesota's upstream lakes and rivers. The lock closure provision passed congress and was signed into law in May 2014.

Stewardship, Volunteering and Education Highlights

- FMR expanded our stewardship and education offerings in 2013, particularly with youth and community groups in north and northeast Minneapolis, the east side of Saint Paul, and Cottage Grove. FMR's fabulous legion of volunteers worked hard to improve the health of the river they love at 50 different events. Projects included willow staking, buckthorn removal, prairie seed collection, wetland planting and much more. We also held 43 education events, including walking and bike tours of the Above the Falls riverfront, "Build-Your-Own Rainbarrel" workshops and classroom education presentations like "Erosion in a Box". Overall more than 1,500 people participated in these education events.
- One stewardship effort in which FMR volunteers really stood out as heroes was the Native Plant Salvage event at the Hastings Scientific & Natural Area in May. Despite a constant downpour the morning of the event, volunteers moved hundreds of native woodland plants out of harm's way to prevent them from being destroyed by a summer road construction project. The plants were cared for by FMR and DNR staff and volunteers over the summer months and then volunteers reconvened in September to replant them back into the SNA along the new road.

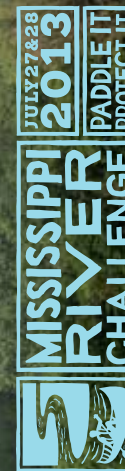


360 North Robert Street
Suite 400
Saint Paul, MN 55101
651.222.2193
www.fmr.org



2013 marked the 10th anniversary of the Mississippi River Challenge, and the second year with the first day on the Minnesota River as FMR worked to raise awareness of the need to prevent the spread of invasive carp in the upper Mississippi River. Over 200 paddlers ages 2 to 72 saw rain, mud, sun, eagles, herons, turtles and more on this two-day river journey through the Twin Cities. Once again the paddle itself as well as the overnight at Historic Fort Snelling was an amazing experience for participants, volunteers and staff.

For now, 2013 also marks the final year of the Mississippi River Challenge, as FMR is taking some time to evaluate the first ten years of the event and its ability to help us reach for our mission and goals. We greatly appreciate all of the time and resources donated, funds raised, experiences shared and every other fantastic aspect of this event. A sincere thank you to every individual and organization that has been involved over the years. FMR will keep you posted regarding the next great adventure!



2013
ANNUAL REPORT

A Voice for the
River for 20 Years

