



**Friends of the
Mississippi River
2019
ANNUAL
REPORT**

Coming together for our river

**Enjoy the full report:
fmr.org/AR2019**



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Mission

Friends of the Mississippi River engages people to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region.

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Cover photo by Steve Cronin

Dear friends of the river,



This uncertain season underscores how connected we all are. While the COVID-19 crisis requires that we keep our distance from one another, we also heed the call to recognize our interdependence, and to protect one another.

You know how to do this. You know how to come together to save something beyond yourself. The stories we have to tell from our work in 2019 celebrate this unity and generosity. Just as many waters unite to make our Mississippi mighty, it takes many communities joining together to protect our river.

Coming together for clean water and healthy habitat...

This year, FMR supported 20 organizations and our 2,000+ River Guardians to advocate for **new laws to protect drinking water for every Minnesotan**. We also formed the **Forever Green Partnership** with researchers, farmers, agribusinesses and others. This new coalition will support farmers by helping 'clean-water crops' take root, which will in turn protect our river from runoff pollution.

Through collaborations with government, landowners and volunteers, **we restored 2,000+ acres** of quality habitat this year. More than 20 at-risk species have made that habitat home.

Connecting communities through the river...

This was the first year of FMR's **Youth Empowerment Program** giving metro teens who care about the environment a chance to build experience in the field. We also engaged hundreds of community members in local decision-making — at **toxic Ford Area C**, at the **Upper Harbor Terminal** and more.

We think there's a reason our **annual Earth Day cleanup** overflowed with nearly 500 participants: The river inspires our belonging, and in turn our responsibility, to this place and to each other.

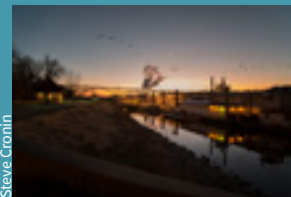
To all of you who gave time or resources this year to protect, restore and enhance the metro Mississippi, thank you. **Like the river, we're more powerful together.**

Our sincerest gratitude,
Ronnie Brooks, Chair of FMR's Board of Directors

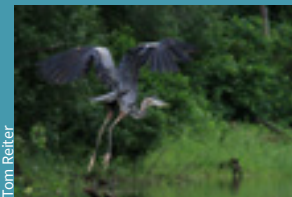
Join us in 2020



fmr.org/volunteer

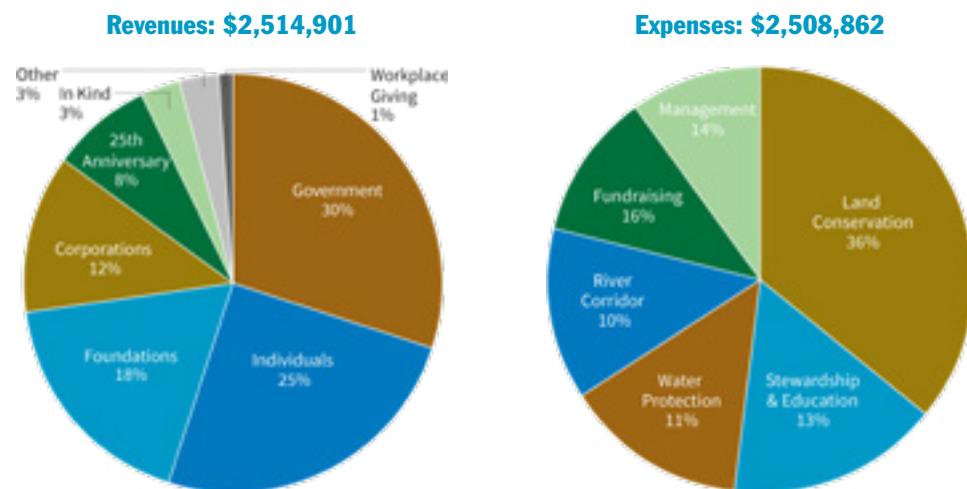


fmr.org/advocate



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Our 2019 Statement of Financial Activities*



*Calendar year 2019 unrestricted amounts, unaudited. For our full financial report, check fmr.org/AR2019. Audited financials will be available after July 2020.

TOGETHER IN 2019, WE...



Made a buzz in our prairie restorations
 A 20-year partnership created habitat for the rusty patched bumblebee
 Photo: USFWS



Raised a glass to safe drinking water for all
 A groundswell protected our groundwater and wells



Joined forces (since no one is an island)
 Teamwork made a haven for paddlers and plants at Settler's Island



Guarded the future from the past
 Persistent citizen advocacy influenced the cleanup of the toxic Ford Area C waste dump
 Photo: Margie O'Loughlin



Created confluences with metro teens
 The Youth Empowerment Program pilot took off



Made art and erased invasives
 Volunteers got creative and stemmed out-of-hand invasive plants



Called bluff on a Lilydale development
 Proactive advocacy prevented erosion that building too close to the bluff would cause



Grew a new alliance for clean-water crops
 The Forever Green Partnership took root
 Image: Kimberly Boustead + Emily Sauer



Held a beautiful day in the neighborhood
 The Gorge Earth Day cleanup overflowed with nearly 500 river friends

YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Education + engagement

10,253 hours

spent (by you!) restoring and learning about the Mississippi

157 rain barrels

built and placed to save rain from stormwater systems

2,482 youth

engaged in field work, cleanups, lessons and more

Habitat

1,000+ pounds

of prairie and woodland seeds spread to make diverse habitat

20 Species

of Greatest Conservation Need found at our restoration sites

192 acres

in our river's watershed newly and permanently protected

Advocacy

1,306 messages

sent by River Guardians to decision-makers

28 projects

and riverfront plans reviewed by FMR staff and advocates

450+ people

urged legislators to protect water on Water Action Day

Get the full stories at fmr.org/AR2019



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THANK YOU

for coming together for our river

Through another year of profound impact on our hometown river, we are grateful for your unwavering generosity, backing and trust. Together, we got our hands dirty restoring critical habitat, spoke out as a voice for the river and made big-hearted gifts of support to help conserve our great natural treasure. Our collective commitment has never been stronger: to this work, our communities and the river.

Inside, view a snapshot of what you made possible in 2019. And be sure to enjoy the full, interactive version of our annual report as well as our list of generous 2019 donors at fmr.org/AR2019.

The river and all of us at FMR extend our gratitude for all that you made possible and helped achieve. You welcomed your role as a Mississippi River steward and are part of a community of river protectors. Thank you for helping carry out our shared vision of clean waters, restored habitat and a river for all to enjoy.

—Whitney Clark, Executive Director



Clockwise from top left, photos by Tom Reiter, Tom Reiter, Rich Wahls, FMR.

FMR.ORG

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