



Friends of the Mississippi River

Working to protect the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities area

www.fmr.org

Spring 2005

When Government is Not Enough

Citizen voices and hands working to protect Mississippi watershed

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2005 Mississippi
River Challenge

by Dave Dempsey

Since the dawn of the modern environmental age in the 1960s, many Americans have turned to local, state and federal governments to protect the natural world. But as volunteers in the metro are proving through day-to-day, nitty-gritty work, it takes more than government to conserve the water and land resources of the Mississippi River in our community – it takes a village of activists.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) nurtures and supports these citizen stewards as they enthusiastically and diligently challenge development proposals, monitor stream and wetland health and clean up polluted and degraded areas along the Mississippi and its tributaries in the metro. In a time of static or declining government budgets and multiplying environmental threats and opportunities, the public voices (and hands) are more important than ever. As activist Michelle Hoffman says, "If it weren't for the actions of citizens, we'd be in deep doo-doo."

Gorge Steward volunteers take care of the river in their community by regularly monitoring trails and natural areas, picking up trash and removing invasive species.

Community caretakers in the gorge

One initiative strongly supported by FMR is the Mississippi River Gorge Stewards, a volunteer force dedicated to monitoring and protecting the health and beauty of the river gorge in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and educating others about the issues. Beth Storey, FMR's watershed education coordinator, leads FMR's work with Gorge Stewards volunteers. "People often choose to live near the river because they enjoy the sense of connectedness to the natural world it gives them," Storey says. "A project like the Gorge Stewards allows them to take that one step further to restore and care for that piece of the natural world."

Rebecca Cramer of Minneapolis has participated in the Gorge Stewards for nearly three years and delights in the experience of helping protect the health of the river in the city while learning more about both the natural and human communities. In addition to the Stewards' formal outings three or four times annually to remove invasive buckthorn from the gorge, she's been trained and deputized by Minneapolis Park Board staff to "wear a little buckthorn-busting badge" and remove invasive plants on her own. She also regularly monitors graffiti and erosion that result from off-trail bike use, and looks out for the overall health of the gorge in her neighborhood.

"In these times, volunteering is absolutely vital," says Cramer, a biomedical scientist who grew up in Florida but has lived in the Twin Cities since the early 1980s. "And it's fun. You get to meet your neighbors and work together on improving the community in tangible ways." Cramer discovered last fall that removing buckthorn along the paved path was a great way to educate others as walkers and joggers stopped to inquire about



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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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From the Director

"The river has no beginning or end. In its beginning, it is not yet the river, in its end it is no longer the river. What we call headwaters is only a selection from among innumerable sources which flow together to compose it. At what point in its course does the Mississippi become what the Mississippi means?"

- T.S. Eliot

Whatever you think the answer to Eliot's question may be, it's hard not to be impressed with the way the Mississippi River valley opens up as it rounds the big bend in Saint Paul. From atop the bluff downtown, the view down river doesn't disappoint. Looking across the broad floodplain of the West Side flats you can see the bluffs of Newport and Cottage Grove – five, six miles distant. Sunlight glinting off the big arc of the river, the bones of the land laid out before you. This is an ancient view.

In the news lately, there have been reports about a proposal to build a residential tower, eight to twelve stories high (98-144 feet), on the flats across the river from downtown. Behind the first proposal are more like it, waiting in the queue. One proposed development – The Bridges of Saint Paul – suggests multiple towers of up to 300 feet looming over the valley.

These proposals have generated a number of important questions and have fueled an interesting civic debate about the importance of the Mississippi River to Saint Paul. Do views matter and why? Who should get views and who should lose them? Do the economic benefits of higher density outweigh the harder-to-quantify benefits of preserving historic, scenic views?

Friends of the Mississippi River has argued that buildings along the river should complement the historic landscape, not defy it. There are certain places that are undeniably special, and this is one of them. This is the location (getting back to T.S. Eliot) where the Missis-

...the great irony here is that the very folks who are arguing for obstructing these views are doing so because they know views do matter, and place matters, and the Mississippi River matters, and that is what they hope to sell.



Whitney Clark, *Executive Director*

issippi River grows up – where the prairie river opens into the big floodplain river, the river of Mark Twain.

Some 2000 years ago, just across the river from the flats, the Hopewell Indians buried their dead atop Dayton's Bluff to eternally gaze upon this amazing landscape. Many years later, the Dakota added their relatives to the mounds. To the Hopewell and the Dakota the view was spiritual as well as scenic.

Of course the great irony here is that the very folks who are arguing for obstructing these views are doing so because they know views do matter, and place matters, and the Mississippi River matters, and that is what they hope to sell.

Fortunately, every applicable plan or regulation pertaining to development within the river corridor has recognized the importance of Saint Paul's unique geography. The state Critical Area designation, Saint Paul's Mississippi River Corridor Plan and the city's new zoning code all specifically prohibit tall buildings that would obscure views to and from the river on the West Side flats. Most recently, West Side neighbors voted overwhelmingly to stand by the 4-6 story height restrictions prescribed in the West Side Flats Master Plan.

But ordinances and laws are easily changed to suit the latest political expedience. Protecting Saint Paul's incomparable river valley landscape will require the continued vigilance of citizens, neighbors and maybe even an elected official or two who know, like the Hopewell knew, what the Mississippi means.

Program Highlights

West Side flats balloon test

One chilly morning last December, a dozen people gathered at Grumpy Steve's coffee shop to volunteer for an unusual outdoor project. The goal: evaluate the visual impact of building tall on St. Paul's West Side flats from key public viewing locations on both sides of the river. The method: raise a four-foot-wide red balloon to varying heights and ask volunteers to take digital photos from the viewing locations.

After a brief introduction and a chance to review aerial photos of the river valley, volunteers headed out with two-way radios and digital cameras in hand. The balloon was raised to 45, 75 and 90 feet at the site where developer Lander-Sherman proposed a 98-foot building (southeast corner of the Wabasha bridge). Photographers captured images of the balloon against a backdrop of the river valley and bluffs from Kellogg Park, the Science Museum, Raspberry Island, Mounds Park and seven other sites on the flats, bridges and bluffs.

Jim Von Haden of the National Park Service compiled the photos into a power point presentation that has been presented to the West Side Citizens Organization (WSCO), St. Paul City Council staff and several other community groups for discussion and consideration.

The balloon test itself created quite a buzz and landed on the front page of both the Star Tribune and the Pioneer Press. But more importantly, it brought citizens together to examine the possible impact of building heights on the river and the com-

munity. And it spurred a broader dialogue about how to ensure that the area is developed in a way that respects the natural and scenic qualities of the river valley landscape, and the sense of place that St. Paul's unique landscape gives to community members.

In the months following the test, FMR worked with a group of residents to advocate upholding the city-zoned height restrictions of 45-75 feet for the site of the Lander-Sherman proposal. Approximately 75% of the 100+ attendees at a WSCO public hearing were in favor of restricting heights, and many spoke passionately about protecting the river's views. WSCO's riverfront development committee and full board responded to their community members' concerns by taking a formal vote opposing a variance for height for the proposal, but pledged to assist the developer in obtaining public funds for environmental clean-up at the site.

To learn more or get involved, please contact Irene Jones at 651/222-2193 x11 or ijones@fmr.org. We will also have regular updates on river corridor issues in our electronic newsletter, *Mississippi Messages*. Visit www.fmr.org to sign up.



A four-foot-wide red balloon was raised to varying heights to assess the impact of tall buildings on St. Paul's west side flats. Photo by Jocelyn VanToor

Greenway landowner protects property

Ms. Aina Wiklund recently realized a long-held dream to permanently protect her property when she placed a conservation easement over the entire 25 acres she owns in Rosemount. In addition to the easement, she is donating 15 acres to the City of Rosemount for a wildlife preserve.

This protection project resulted from a strong partnership that included Aina and her attorney, Barry Fernald, the DNR's Metro Greenways Program, the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Program, the City of Rosemount and FMR. Tom Lewanski, FMR's conservation director, sees the larger significance of this project: "This land protection effort is a wonderful example of how government agencies, a private landowner and a nonprofit organization can come together to protect ecologically important areas. Each brought resources, expertise and commitment to make it happen."

Aina's desire to protect her land has its roots in the strong land ethic she brought from Sweden many years ago. And her actions spring from a deep sense of responsibility and kinship, not only with the deer, fox, birds and other creatures that share her land, but also with the habitat her property provides them. Identified as significant by the Farmland and Natural Area

Program, the Metropolitan Conservation Corridors Project and the Northern Dakota County Greenway Project, this property's ecological significance stretches beyond Aina's vision. As part of the Dakota County Greenway, her property is part of a continuous corridor of natural habitat significant to migratory birds.

Besides protection efforts, FMR is also helping to restore portions of the property. This past year an eight-acre hayfield was converted to native prairie, and work will begin this year on improving the health of the wooded portions of the property. Funding for these restoration activities has been provided by the Metro Greenways Program, the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Upper Mississippi River Forestry Partnership's Neotropical Migratory and Forest Bird Habitat Program.

This field, photographed before restoration work began, has since been seeded with native prairie grasses. At the landowner's request, the restoration was completed without chemical herbicides.





Volunteers study aquatic plants in an Apple Valley wetland as part of a wetland monitoring project.
Photo by Mary Kay Lynch

Special Places Tours

FMR is gearing up for another exciting season of Special Places Tours – educational programs that highlight the natural and cultural resources of the Mississippi River. The schedule of spring and summer programs is now available on our website or in brochure format.

Grab your binoculars and join us this spring for a birding hike or wildlife walk. Or discover the historically significant ruins of the Meeker Island Lock and Dam during a walking tour of the site. Come along as we explore some of the rich backwater habitat of the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes by canoe or meet us at the Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area for an evening wildflower walk during the summer solstice.

Special Place Tours are continually growing in popularity so sign up for the events early. To register for a tour, please contact Katie Galloway at 651/222-2193 x14. If you're not on our mailing list and would like to receive the brochure, contact Katie to have one mailed to you. Or visit www.fmr.org to see a complete listing of tours.

Program Updates

Volunteer Opportunities

Spring is one of the best times of year to get involved in some of FMR's hands-on stewardship activities. Check out the lineup of events and consider joining us to protect water quality and help restore habitat at important natural areas along the river.

Woodland Restoration

Pine Bend Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area, Inver Grove Heights

Join FMR and the Department of Natural Resources at one of

the Twin Cities' newest Scientific and Natural Areas to help restore woodland habitat by removing exotic buckthorn and garlic mustard, which are choking out native species.

Buckthorn removal

- Saturday, April 2, 9:00am-noon
Volunteers are needed to help haul and stack pre-cut buckthorn for later burning in an effort to enhance the ecological integrity of the SNA.

Garlic mustard pull

- Saturday, April 30, 9:00am-noon
Volunteers will pull garlic mustard from a large stand of oak forest to promote greater native wildflower diversity at the site.

Gloves and equipment will be provided and lunch is offered to volunteers following the events. For more information or to sign up, contact Katie Galloway at 651/222-2193 x14 or kgallowa@fmr.org.

Garlic Mustard Days!

Join the Mississippi River Gorge Stewards to help protect native plants and animals by removing invasive garlic mustard from restoration and trailside areas. Gloves and bags provided for all events.

Volunteer training by Mpls. Park and Rec Board staff:

- Sunday, April 17, 1:30-3:30pm
Meet at W. River Pkwy. and 35th St overlook, Mpls.

Garlic mustard pulls:

- Saturday, April 30, 9:00-11:00am
Meet at Mississippi River Blvd. and Otis, St. Paul
- Wednesday, May 4th, 6:30-8:00pm
Meet at the staircase on W. River Pkwy. between 33rd & 34th Streets, Mpls.

To sign up for Garlic Mustard Days, contact Beth Storey at 651/222-2193 x16 or bstorey@fmr.org.

Earth Day Clean-Up

- Saturday, April 23, 9:00-11:00am
W. River Pkwy. at 24th & 36th Streets, Mpls.
Join hundreds of volunteers for this citywide annual watershed clean-up.

Mississippi Gorge Forest Restoration

- Saturday, May 7, 8:30am-noon
44th Street and W. River Pkwy., Mpls.
Join Longfellow Gorge Stewards and Great River Greening in an ongoing effort to restore native plant

communities and reduce soil erosion in the oak and maple-basswood forests of the Mississippi River Gorge. Volunteers will plant native ground-layer vegetation, install erosion-reducing wattles to stabilize soil and clear European buckthorn from the site. Steep slopes make this event unsuitable for young children or pets. Wear enclosed shoes and dress for the weather. Tools and refreshments will be provided, and pre-registration is required. Contact Steve Budas at 651/665-9500 x11 or sbudas@greatrivergreening.org. Sign up online at www.greatrivergreening.org.

Dakota County WHEP Training

FMR invites you to join the Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP) to learn plant and insect identification while you work with a community-based team to study the ecological health of area wetlands. Training in field methods, insect collection and identification, and plant survey techniques and identification will take place in June. Volunteers will conduct local wetland studies in June and July. All equipment provided. No prior science background required. For more information, contact Katie at 651/222-2193 x14 or kgallowa@fmr.org. To learn more about the program, visit www.mnwhep.org.

Storm Drain Stenciling

Storm drains carry stormwater from rain and snow-melt directly from the city's lawns and streets to rivers and lakes. Volunteers of all ages can help protect water quality by stenciling storm drains with the message "Please! Don't Pollute! Drains to River" and distributing door hangers to houses and businesses in the surrounding neighborhood. An FMR representative will meet with your group to explain the project and discuss non-point source pollution. This is an ideal opportunity to improve our local water resources through a hands-on outdoor activity.

To plan a stenciling event, contact Beth Storey at 651/222-2193 x16 or bstorey@fmr.org.

Mississippi River Challenge Assistants

- August 6 and 7

Volunteer to help make our second annual Mississippi River Challenge a success by providing assistance at stops along the route. We need people to help with directions and logistics, refreshments, parking, interpretation and other tasks to provide participants with a fun and safe experience.

For more details about volunteering, contact Katie Galloway at 651/222-2193 x14 or kgallowa@fmr.org. Or visit the Challenge website at <http://mississippi-river-challenge.org/volunteer.php>.

Program Updates

FMR expanding stewardship in the Vermillion watershed

This spring FMR will be launching the Vermillion Watershed Stewards Project to engage citizens of Dakota and eastern Scott counties in activities that protect and enhance the Vermillion River watershed. This exciting new program will be modeled after the Mississippi River Gorge Stewards, the successful community-based stewardship program that FMR coordinates in Minneapolis and St. Paul neighborhoods bordering the gorge.

One of the primary goals of the Vermillion Stewards project is to raise awareness throughout the watershed about the importance of watershed protection and to educate local residents and businesses about what they can do to help. To this end, FMR will be coordinating hands-on stewardship and education activities for citizens and community groups to foster a deeper connection to natural areas of the watershed and engage people in projects that actively protect the Vermillion River.

The Vermillion Stewards project is being funded by the Vermillion Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

For more information on the project, contact Katie Galloway at 651/222-2193 x14 or kgallowa@fmr.org.

Volunteers work to stabilize and restore streambanks on the Empire property using willow stakes.



Water pollution imperiling economic growth

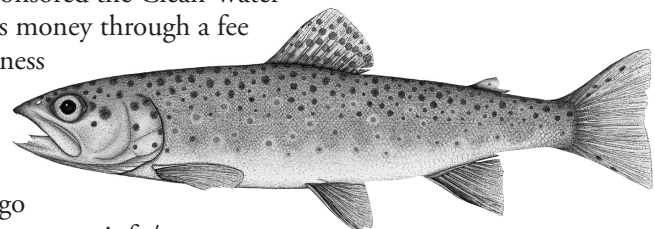
The Land of 10,000 Lakes may also be the land of 10,000 polluted waters. According to estimates by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), 10,000 of the state's lakes, rivers and streams may be polluted enough to be listed as impaired by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Under the Federal Clean Water Act, state and local governments are required to develop and implement a plan for cleaning up any water body listed as impaired. Until such a plan is approved by the EPA, adding new sources of pollution to impaired waters is illegal.

For this reason, the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy has filed a lawsuit against the MPCA for granting a permit for a new wastewater treatment plant near the cities of Annandale and Maple Lake. The plant would discharge into the Crow River, which is listed as impaired, as are other downstream water bodies such as Lake Pepin. A new sewer plant would add more pollution to these impaired waters. If the lawsuit is successful, Annandale and Maple

Lake could not build additional sewer capacity, which would slow growth in the area until a plan is developed to clean up these waters. Such a plan, called a Total Maximum Daily Load study (TMDL), may take years to develop.

Business leaders are concerned that unless the state addresses these polluted or impaired waters, the Clean Water Act may severely restrict growth and development throughout the state. This concern has mobilized a coalition of environmental, farm and business groups to push for state funding to proactively address water pollution issues throughout Minnesota. State Representative Dennis Ozment has sponsored the Clean Water Legacy Act which raises money through a fee on household and business water utility bills.

To learn more about the campaign to clean up Minnesota's waters go to: <http://www.protectourwater.info/>.



Elko/New Market expands waste-water treatment

A recent decision by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency may have a dramatic impact on the Vermillion River, one of FMR's target watersheds and the nation's only world-class trout stream found in a major metropolitan area. Due to booming growth, the cities of Elko and New Market have been granted a seven-fold expansion of their wastewater (sewer) plant that dumps into the headwaters – a river's most ecologically sensitive portion – of the Vermillion River.

It is unclear what impact this dramatic increase in wastewater will have on the Vermillion River, its trout population and drinking water supplies. The wastewater will be treated before entering the river and limits have been placed on the concentrations of pollutants. However, FMR and others have expressed concerns that the expansion would degrade the Vermillion River through increased temperatures, stream flows and quantities of nitrogen and phosphorus, which are components of wastewater. Fortunately, the Metropolitan Council has agreed to route a new sewer interceptor to Elko/New Market by 2010 which would limit the negative impact on the Vermillion.

Illustration courtesy of Ethan Nedeau, www.biodrawversity.com.

Continued from cover

her efforts. “It’s an incredible resource and the more people learn about it, the more they’ll do to care for it,” she adds.

Keeping the West Side flats flat

Although already an experienced Saint Paul neighborhood advocate, Michelle Hoffman was spurred to action again recently over a 12-story tower proposed at the base of the Wabasha Street bridge by developer Lander-Sherman. The West Side Flats Master Plan, developed through a public participation process, calls for heights of no more than four to six stories. Hoffman, along with a group of other westsiders and concerned Saint Paul residents, worked diligently with FMR to educate neighbors and community leaders about the importance of protecting the magnificent views of the river valley and bluffs, and to ensure that the height restrictions in the plan were fully honored. The mitigation of building-height impacts from this and other projects on the flats (some of which envision structures as high as 28 stories) would be one of the neighborhood’s most important accomplishments in recent years, Hoffman says, protecting its character and relationship to the river.

A freelance graphic designer, Hoffman has been active in community concerns since she moved into her West Side neighborhood in 1996. At that time, her neighbors were fighting a proposed automobile metal shredder on the river. Their fight, which she joined, resulted successfully in a City Council ban on such facilities throughout the city.

“I’ve learned that the dedicated and thoughtful work of a group of citizens, supported by environmental organizations, can succeed,” Hoffman reports. “Unfortunately, decision makers often don’t understand the impacts of their decisions. They need to hear personal stories and things they may not know. The majority of folks do want to do the right thing. It’s just a matter of motivating them to do it.”

Homespun organizing holds the line

South of the core cities, where there are significant unprotected natural areas along the river, citizens who care about protecting the river’s natural qualities are standing up to inappropriate development in the corridor. A couple of years ago, when the River’s Edge mega-development was proposed for land surrounding a small backwater bay on the river in Grey Cloud Island Township, a group of citizens gathered around a dining room table to hammer out a plan of action. They formed a group called Friends of the Bay (FOB) and got right to work on planning a community forum and campaign to “Save the

Bay” through lawn signs, flyers, door knocking and letter writing. They invited Friends of the Mississippi River to join their effort. “FMR has been a great partner, assisting us with community organizing, reaching out to other environmental groups for support and lobbying the DNR to uphold Mississippi River Critical Area law and regulations,” says Jerry Taube, one of FOB’s founding members. The project proposal has suffered numerous delays – in part because of the opposition that started with a simple meeting among friends – and is currently on hold until an annexation dispute is resolved. “Things may be quiet at the moment,” says Taube, “but we’re still here, and we won’t give up.”

To ditch or not to ditch

Up in the northern part of the metro, Peltier Lake Association President Wayne LeBlanc joined forces last year with FMR to protect the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes from sediment and nutrient pollution from a proposed ditch project upstream. The Rice Creek Watershed District was evaluating a proposal to cut into unstable soils and drain critical areas. LeBlanc opposed the plan and assisted FMR in organizing residents to speak out against the project. He also worked closely with FMR staff to raise the profile of the issue among Anoka County commissioners. LeBlanc says the issue may resurface again in 18 months, requiring continued citizen vigilance. “Without people like Wayne stepping up, speaking out and

holding policy makers accountable, decisions that are detrimental to our water resources and to the broader community fly right under the radar,” said FMR Watershed Program Director Daniel Huff.

LeBlanc also fought successfully to establish a no-wake zone in a shallow, sensitive island section of Peltier Lake to help protect habitat for a large great blue heron rookery. He gathered 556 petition signatures to present to decision makers in Centerville and Lino Lakes in support of the no-wake designation.

His advice to citizens who see something going wrong with a natural resource they want to protect: “Get involved and speak up. There are huge pressures from special interests at work to abuse the environment. Once a piece of environment is lost, it is almost always lost forever. It takes great effort just to keep what we have.”

Watershed watchers weigh in

In the headwaters of the Vermillion River watershed, Apple Valley resident Helen Goeden is a longtime wetland monitoring volunteer for the Dakota County Wetland Health Evalua-



Volunteers collect invertebrates in a Burnsville wetland for later identification in a lab. Photo by Mary Kay Lynch

Board & Staff Update

Ted Mondale



Ted Mondale, who was elected to the board in January, brings a wealth of public policy and political expertise to FMR. He is the CEO of Nazca Solutions, an information technology company that helps local governments and school districts to be more efficient and consumer-friendly.

Previously, Mr. Mondale was Chair of the Metropolitan Council, a 4,000 employee, 500 million dollar regional planning and operating agency in the Twin Cities. Mr. Mondale also served two terms in the Minnesota state senate. In the private sector, Mr. Mondale was executive vice president of Petters Group, LLC and also served as vice president of Public Sector Services for United HealthCare.

“The Mississippi is such an important part of our community identity,” says Mondale. “I don’t think our community can be healthy if our river is not.” Among the contributions Mr. Mondale hopes to make to FMR is to help the organization work with local governments to be more successful at protecting local water resources, including the Mississippi. “I’ve admired FMR’s work for several years. It is great to be a part of the such an effective organization,” he said.

tion Program (WHEP), which is coordinated by FMR. Born in Minnesota, Goeden lived for a time in California, where water scarcity is a paramount public issue. She and her husband decided to return to the metro in part because of its abundant water resources. She’s concerned about the complacency about water she sees among some residents.

“My sense is most people don’t give a second thought to where their drinking water comes from,” says Goeden, trained in toxicology and environmental health. “They take it for granted. Since water is absolutely essential to life, you’d expect people to be more aware and concerned.”

Goeden joins other volunteers each spring and summer to monitor plant and invertebrate populations at four local wetlands. They’ve found a variety of conditions at the Apple Valley sites, ranging from “questionable” to “fairly healthy.” Wetland sites surveyed by previous WHEP teams, however, have shown heavy damage from runoff and siltation.

To broaden awareness of the importance of this resource, FMR recently worked with Goeden and other volunteers to present their water quality monitoring results to the Apple Valley City Council. “The direct experience that volunteer monitors have with their local wetlands and streams makes them passionate advocates for the watershed,” reports Katie Galloway, FMR’s volunteer coordinator. “And the council members really appreciated learning about local water quality issues from the volunteers.”

Goeden likes to share her love of water resources with the younger generation, and her children often accompany her in the field. “I wanted to learn something I could pass on to my kids and get them involved, too. I didn’t just want to talk about water; I wanted to do something about it,” she says.

“Doing something about it” is the ethic that FMR seeks to reinforce. “We’re fostering a culture of stewardship among citizens,” says FMR Outreach Director Irene Jones. “That’s the key to assuring the river is protected not just now, but in years to come.”

Dave Dempsey is a St. Paul freelance writer who has authored two books on the environmental history of the Great Lakes region.



Clare Stokes, Connie Lanphear and Kay Yanisch join FMR

FMR is pleased to welcome three new part-time staff members.

Connie Lanphear came on board in November to manage communications and the office, Claire Stokes was hired as FMR’s accountant in January and Kay Yanisch took over in March as the 2005 Mississippi River Challenge event manager. All three join FMR with strong skills and a love of the river.

Legacy Society

Join the Mississippi River Legacy Society!

Each year, with your help, Friends of the Mississippi River makes tangible progress toward a healthier, more inviting and more accessible Mississippi River for everyone in the community. The challenges we face together are many. A number of them require long-term attention and maintenance – invasive exotic species, population growth and development, and trail and water quality monitoring among them.

You can ensure Friends of the Mississippi River’s ability to address these challenges for years to come, benefiting both current and future generations, by making a planned gift to Friends of the Mississippi River. A planned gift can be as simple as a bequest in a will or the donation of a life insurance policy. People are also making gifts through trusts, annuities or other planned giving vehicles.

Talk with your financial or estate planner, or call FMR Director of Development Heather Haynes today at 651-222-2193 x20. Learn more about how your gift to the river can have a lasting impact when you become a member of the Mississippi River Legacy Society,



Mississippi River Challenge

August 6 & 7, 2005

Embrace the River.

Experience the majesty of descending through locks, use an antique cannon for an alarm clock and view great blue herons foraging for breakfast. Experience a sense of place unique to the Twin Cities and a sense of community forged by a common bond.

Experience the Mississippi River Challenge.

Your journey begins at Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park early on the morning of August 6th. On the first day, you'll travel with voyagers, paddle the only gorge on the Mississippi and negotiate the cavernous upper locks. When you reach the beach below historic Fort Snelling, the overnight camp, you will climb to the Fort to rejuvenate with a hearty meal and a celebratory evening of live music, historic reenactment and revelry.

Day two begins at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers and meanders through the Saint Paul reach of the river with stops at three riverfront parks before taking-out at scenic Grey Cloud Island.

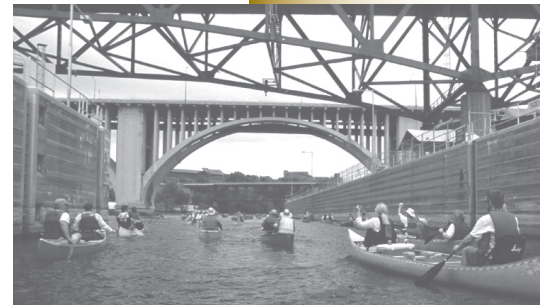
Registration is \$30 and paddlers need to raise a minimum of \$200 in pledges. The Challenge is a two-day 44-mile event, fully supported with:

- On-line registration and pledging
- Assistance and incentives for pledge-raising
- Numerous volunteer opportunities
- Shuttles for you and your gear
- All meals inclusive
- Sag support at every rest stop
- Safety support at rest stops and on the river

Join us for an incredible journey and experience this unique perspective of the Twin Cities from the viewpoint of the river. Proceeds from the event support Friends of the Mississippi River's work to protect, restore and celebrate the river.

As a registered participant, you may bring a friend and meet us at the Summit Rathskeller on May 5th for a kickoff celebration (see box at right).

For more information on paddling, volunteering or sponsoring, please contact Kay Yanisch at 651/222-2193 x19 or visit the Challenge website at:



2004 Challenge paddlers leaving the Upper St. Anthony lock.

www.MississippiRiverChallenge.org



Friends of the Mississippi River

46 East Fourth Street
Suite 606
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Join us on May 5th at the Summit Brewery for the Challenge Kick-Off Party!

Come to the Summit Rathskeller to enjoy live music, good food, a Summit beer or root beer and to find out more about the 2005 Challenge! Get tips on training to paddle, recruiting a team and raising pledges. Meet other participants, and find out more about FMR's efforts to raise awareness of the value the Mississippi River holds for everyone in the Twin Cities.

You must be a registered paddler or guest to attend, so visit the website to sign up or call for a registration form today.

See you on May 5th!

MINNESOTA Environmental Fund

FMR is proud to be a member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund (www.mnenvirofund.org)

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

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