



FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Inside

- Director's Letter 2
- Program Highlights 3
- Program Updates 4-5
- Embrace Open Space 6
- New Staff and Board 7
- Calendar of Events 8

Winter 2003

Finding Our Sense of Place... And Connecting with Today's Mississippi River

By Dr. John O. Anfinson

Few names evoke a more powerful sense of place than the Mississippi River. Despite its weaving, linear character, the Mississippi is a place. Places hold meaning when they anchor us historically, when they inspire us, or when they put us at ease. Authentic places trigger memories, reminding us of an event, song, book, or person.

To our peril and the river's, we take the Mississippi's sense of place for granted. For too many people, their understanding of the river's sense of place is shallower than the natural river used to be. The Mississippi has become a cliché. Everyone knows about the "Mighty Mississippi," but that knowledge rarely leads to caring for and protecting the river and its resources.

The Mississippi has become a place more in the mind than in reality. Author Mark Twain is, in part, responsible. The

Mississippi became a place in the mind through the works of Twain initially, and then through the great volume of literature that emerged during early twentieth century—literature that romanticized the river and transformed it into an imagined ideal. As Americans dammed, leveed and polluted the Mississippi, the river lost its real mystique and romance, and we escaped into this literature to find it again.

Being a place only in the mind allows us to overlook what happens to the real river. The danger in this is that we may inadvertently let the real Mississippi River slip away. Authentic places – historical and ecological – along the river might be allowed to disappear. Without a deep, specific sense of place, we have nothing tangible to fight for, and the river's natural and historic places are taken apart piecemeal.

The river is still a real place that we can escape to and enjoy. We can find solace in the gorge between Minneapolis and St. Paul, losing the city almost entirely. What a rare place in such a large metro area! We can paddle through the Vermilion River bottoms below Hastings and get some sense of what the river must have been like when the Da-

kota lived here. We can float down the Mississippi from its confluence with the Crow to St. Anthony Falls and imagine Father Louis Hennepin, Zebulon Pike and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft as they explored this once wild and scenic reach.

There are historic places, like Mill

"To our peril and the river's, we take the Mississippi's sense of place for granted."

Ruins Park, the Stone Arch Bridge, the remains of the Meeker Island Lock and Dam, the St. Paul Municipal Elevator and Sack House, and many others that connect us to remarkable achievements and puzzling debacles. These are places that can anchor us physically and emotionally. Historic places, natural places, places that root us in our past, and places that offer us an escape from the present survive along the metropolitan Mississippi River, but ill-conceived development and urban sprawl is threatening them. We need to preserve such places.

Richard Relph, in his book *Place and Placelessness*, insists that "for many ... a profound attachment to place is as necessary and significant as a close relationship with other people. It is therefore disturbing," he complains, "that so much



Continued on page 6



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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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Letter from the Director



Whitney Clark, Executive Director

Whether or not voters sent a message on November 5, and, if so, what that message was, has been a prominent discussion topic around Minnesota's water coolers and opinion pages. Whatever your political persuasion, however, one has to be impressed by the decisive statement made by Dakota County voters, when they overwhelmingly approved a \$20 million bond referendum to protect their water quality, natural areas and farmland.

The measure passed by a 57% to 43% margin county-wide and had strong support in both rural areas such as Empire Township (57%) and booming suburbs like Eagan (58%). Both working class communities such as South St. Paul (54%) and affluent ones such as Mendota Heights (65%) approved the measure by solid margins.

Support for the referendum equaled or exceeded Dakota County's strong support for candidates Norm Coleman (57%) Tim Pawlenty (53%) and John Kline (54%). Overall, 91,802 citizens voted to *increase* their taxes the same day they ushered in candidates promising not to. Nationally, voters in 79 communities in 22 states agreed to spend \$2.6 billion to protect open space and approved 80% of the ballot measures that called for more public investment in land protection. These results suggest that protecting open space and water quality is a widely supported and growing core issue of bipartisan significance.

Dakota County has been a focus of FMR's work for more than five years. Some of the highest quality natural areas in the seven county metropolitan region lie along the Mississippi River in Dakota County. It is a county dominated by rivers. In addition to the Mississippi, three

important tributaries, the Minnesota, the Vermillion and the Cannon rivers, flow through the county. FMR worked hard as part of the team that spent two years holding public meetings around the county in an effort to develop a thoughtful and popular land protection program. We are also proud to have been part of the truly grassroots campaign to get the measure passed.

Dakota, like many other metro counties, is experiencing rapid growth and urbanization. Over 3,000 housing units are added each year and approximately 100,000 more people will live in the county by the year 2020. In many cases, the pace of environmental change and landscape transformation is incremental. Sometimes people don't notice how much their communities are changing. November 5th tells us that people *do* notice.

I think voters in Dakota County and

"These [election] results suggest that protecting open space and water quality is a widely supported and growing core issue of bipartisan significance."

around the country are aware that something precious is slipping away from us. Our woods, our wetlands, our water quality are essential to our well-being and quality of life, and there is a growing consensus that government must play a larger role in safeguarding those values. What this election tells us is that people are willing to pay for protecting environmental quality, if the program is well thought out and the benefits are close to home.

As Minnesota's governor-elect, the new legislature and other leaders survey the political landscape and their new mandate for leadership, they would do well to heed the strong bipartisan message sent by Dakota County voters. We look forward to continuing our work with citizens and county officials to make the program implementation a great success.

FMR Welcomes Two New Board Members



Stewart Crosby

Stewart Crosby first learned about FMR through his work with his family's foundation, the Carolyn Foundation. A Twin Cities native, Stewart has always had a keen interest in watersheds and water issues. After recently completing his Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture at the University of Oregon, he returned to the Twin Cities. In his profession, Stewart focuses on land planning and conservation issues and hopes to share some of that expertise with FMR. As a board member, he wants to better connect people to the Mississippi River and help foster a greater awareness of how land use throughout the metro area affects the river and its watershed.

Candace Campbell



Candace Campbell brings a wealth of experience and innovation to the FMR board. As principal of CDC Associates in Minneapolis, Candace consults regionally and nationally on the issues of regional economic competitiveness and strategies for building technology, new businesses, alternative institutions, and civic leadership for the future. She is also an instructor at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs, where she has worked as a researcher for many years. Candace also serves on the board of the Green Institute, where she played a significant role in developing the Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center, a \$6 million, 64,000 square-foot "green building" that serves as an environmentally friendly business center in Minneapolis.

Candace's business savvy and management skills are among the many strengths she brings to the board. She will serve on FMR's Policy and Planning Committee.

Meet Heather Haynes, FMR's New Director of Development



Heather's career path began at Carleton College, where she earned a B.A. in Theatre Design. After moving to St. Paul, she was one of the founding members of the Speedboat Gallery, a venue for alternative artists. Heather's interest in fundraising led her to receive a Master's in Philanthropy and Development from St. Mary's University in Winona. Pulling her arts and development experience together, she went on to work for United Arts and most recently as Development Director for the Stepping Stone Theater. Heather also serves on the board of Teatro del Pueblo.

With the goal of transferring her fundraising skills to environmental issues, Heather joined FMR's staff last September. She is eager to help FMR raise funds to expand current programs and initiate new ones, and she hopes to foster non-traditional partnerships along the way.

Heather lives in St. Paul with her husband Tom, daughter Elena and their entourage of two dogs, two cats and a guinea

Farewell Alyssa!

Alyssa Hawkins, FMR's Watershed Education Coordinator for the past two years, has moved on to take the position of Watershed Education Manager with Earth Force, a national environmental education organization.

Alyssa worked with thousands of students and other volunteers on the storm drain stenciling project, teaching people about urban runoff pollution in our watershed and how to prevent it. She greatly enhanced the educational components of the project and developed community workshops on landscaping to protect water quality. Hundreds will also remember her as the cheerful voice and face that coordinated FMR's tours and events.

Alyssa will be missed by FMR staff, volunteers and members alike. We wish her the best of luck in her new position.



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.

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- \$40.....Household^s
- \$50.....Sponsor
- \$100.....Supporter
- \$500.....Sustainer
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^sIf 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

planning and remaking of landscapes proceeds apparently in ignorance of the importance of place,...” which, he says, leads to chaos. “In a chaos,” he laments, “there is no place.” Placelessness, he argues, results from “the casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardized landscapes”

What would we lose in standardizing the Mississippi River’s landscape?

“Every time we eliminate a natural area or historic site, we chip away at the real and mythical power of the Mississippi River.”

Without thinking about the answer, we are doing just that. Every time we eliminate a natural area or historic site, we chip away at the real and mythical power of the Mississippi River. This is not to suggest that we should freeze the river in time. There are places where new development is possible and even desired, but we need to be much more careful about where and how we change the river’s unique landscape.

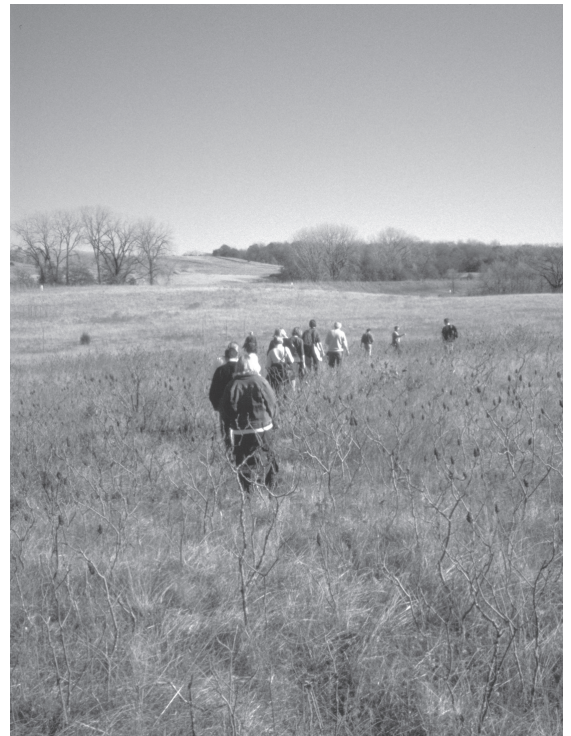
Only a fraction of the Twin Cities area’s native or pre-European settlement landscape remains, and much of that is along the Mississippi. FMR and its partners are working to avoid chaos and placelessness by protecting natural and historical places along the river. An example of this is our work with several landowners and hundreds of volunteers to protect and restore the nearly pristine habitat along the Pine Bend Bluffs in Inver Grove Heights and Rosemount.

Through FMR’s Canoe Adventure, Special Places Tours and stewardship events, we are striving to broaden and deepen the public’s sense of place about the river. We are trying to get people to visit real places on the river and to learn about them. In this way, we are determined to overcome the disconnection many people have to the river.

The writer Terry Tempest Williams insists that places need stories in order

for people to feel accountable or responsible for them. This sense of responsibility is the bedrock of stewardship. We tell stories about places to get people interested enough to care about them. You do not allow places for which you are accountable to perish or be diminished. You fight for them because they are a part of you — they are part of your story. Our challenge is to create a sense of place that instills accountability in the citizens and leaders of the Twin Cities area for the Mississippi and for its rare and precious places.

We need to understand our river heritage and our responsibility to it, or the authentic river may become a place we may visit only in the mind.



John Anfinson is a founding member of FMR's Board of Directors and currently serves as the Vice Chair. He is an historian for the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, National Park Service. John has published numerous papers and articles, and he is the author of the soon-to-be-released book: "The River We Have Wrought - A History of the Upper Mississippi."

EMBRACE OPEN SPACE Campaign is Launched

Visit www.embraceopenspace.org

Take a drive around the Twin Cities and one of the things you'll notice is the wealth of open spaces in this region. Our rivers meander through lush green valleys, and local landscapes are sprinkled with wetlands, woods, fields, lakes, patches of prairie, parks, and farmland. Our close relationship with nature plays a significant role in our cultural identity and the region's economic well-being.

Although we are blessed with many wonderful places that connect us to our natural heritage, much has been lost. In the Twin Cities, less than 6% of the native landscapes that greeted European settlers remains, and only about 4% of the native plant diversity still exists. And with nearly a million new residents projected over the next 30 years, what remains of our precious open spaces could be degraded or lost forever.

In response to this, the McKnight Foundation, Friends of the Mississippi River, and several other nonprofits and public agencies recently launched a major new campaign to involve citizens in open space protection. The goal of the campaign is to mobilize Twin Citians to become more vocal in public decision-making about land use and land protection in this region.

The Embrace Open Space website is definitely worth a visit (www.embraceopenspace.org). Check out the "10 Twin Cities Treasures"— specific places that represent the kinds of open spaces we need to protect from development. Among the ten treasures are two places along the Mississippi River that FMR is leading the effort to protect and restore—Pine Bend Bluffs and the Vermillion Bottoms.

Dakota County Votes YES for Land Protection

While the tumultuous events of the 2002 election season filled the airwaves and captured headlines, Dakota County quietly passed a landmark referendum to protect open space for future generations – the first of its kind ever in Minnesota. Fifty-seven percent of the county’s voters gave the nod for the “Preservation of Water, Open Space, Natural Areas and Farmland,” a bonding act that will provide \$20 million of public funding over 10 years to protect some of the best remaining natural areas and key farmlands in the county.

Although \$20 million is a significant amount of money, the cost to the average Dakota County homeowner will be only \$17 per year. These funds, which will be distributed by the county, will fund land acquisition and the purchase of conservation easements based upon the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Protection (FNAP) Plan. The FNAP plan is the result of four years of planning and input, which included the involvement of hundreds of citizens in every community and township in the county. FMR played a lead role in shaping this visionary plan that aims to preserve Dakota County’s rural character, protect water quality, and preserve critical habitat along the Mississippi, Minnesota and Vermillion rivers, as well as in other areas.

“This is a huge victory for the citizens of Dakota County and their children and grandchildren” said FMR Executive Director Whitney Clark. “We’ve been working hard to protect the Pine Bend Bluffs and the Vermillion River from the impacts of encroaching development, and

now we have a wonderful tool to help us get the job done.”

“The community has really embraced this vision of protecting land in Dakota County,” added Tom Lewanski, FMR’s Conservation Director. “Citizens came out in droves to help identify priority areas for the FNAP plan, and the voters came through on election day.”

FMR played a leading role in helping citizens organize a grassroots campaign to pass the initiative. The “Vote Yes on #1” campaign was supported by a broad range of individuals and organizations. Republican, Democratic and Independence candidates for office endorsed the measure. The Star Tribune, the Outdoor News and the Hastings Star Gazette, among others, lent their editorial weight to the cause.

Since the election, FMR has been conducting outreach to landowners whose property was identified by the Farmland and Natural Areas Plan as potential protection opportunities. Many of these properties are also part of FMR’s ongoing protection and restoration activities.

In addition to the funds generated by the referendum, the county hopes to leverage considerable state, federal and private sources to further extend the program’s reach.



The “Sand Coulee” is one of those rare remaining natural places in Dakota County. A variety of native species and some rare plants reside there, and the landowners are working together to protect and restore this important site.

Mississippi River Greenway Plan Receives National Award

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) has awarded the Mississippi River Greenway Strategic Plan a national Merit Award in the Analysis & Planning category of the 2002 ASLA Professional Awards Program. Friends of the Mississippi River and the Hoisington Koegler Group Inc. organized this multi-jurisdictional effort, which developed a greenway plan and opportunity map for the Cities of Hastings and Rosemount and the Townships of Ravenna, Marshan and Nininger, all in Dakota County. The project is highlighted in the November issue of *Landscape Architecture*. Project partners included the local units of government listed (except Nininger Township), Dakota County, and the Metro Greenways Program of the Department of Natural Resources.

Riverfront Restoration Planned for Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant

In January 2002, FMR completed a natural resource management plan, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, for the Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant’s 460-acre property along the Vermillion River. Primary recommendations for the site, which is owned by the Metropolitan Council, were to stabilize and restore several thousand feet of streambank, to restore an existing soggy cropland to shallow wetland and wet prairie, to remove the invasive buckthorn from the floodplain forest, and to restore a 30-acre grassland to native prairie.

In September, the Metropolitan Council awarded \$250,000 to FMR toward accomplishing these projects. This restoration work will create an important link in two greenway corridors: the Vermillion River and an overland corridor extending northeast from the Vermillion to the Mississippi. The streambank work will dramatically reduce the amount of sediment entering the river and will help protect an important brown trout spawning site.

Volunteers Add Diversity to Enhance Wetland

A wetland at the Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area in Inver Grove Heights is now richer and more diverse, with approximately 1,500 newly installed native plants. Ordway, owned and operated by Macalester College, was host to 65 volunteers on Saturday, October 12, who helped to plant several native species throughout the wetland. The ambitious volunteers braved morning rain and brisk autumn weather to plant even more vegetation than was originally anticipated. All of their hard work really paid off and will leave the wetland an enhanced natural place to be enjoyed by wildlife, birds, Macalester students and other visitors.

Friends of the Mississippi River partnered with Great River Greening and Macalester College to coordinate this event. Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers and partners who made this project a success!



Macalester students and other volunteers planted native species in an emergent marsh wetland at the Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area in Inver Grove Heights.

The Mississippi Gorge Stewards Project is Growing

The Mississippi River Gorge Stewards program began two years ago in the Longfellow neighborhood of Minneapolis as a way to involve residents in local river protection efforts. FMR coordinates both stewardship and educational programs in the neighborhood, working with a network of residents and community groups. Volunteers participate in invasive species removals, clean-ups, trainings and trail monitoring, among other things. In January 2002, the Seward Neighborhood Group joined the program, extending our work northward along the gorge.

FMR recently received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to expand the Gorge Stewards project to include neighborhoods on both sides of the gorge. The funding, which is provided by the Minnesota Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund, will be used to enhance the project in Seward and Longfellow, and to build partnerships with additional gorge neighborhoods. Our goal is to expand Gorge Stewards activities and program-

ming to neighborhoods on the east side of the river and to help facilitate inter-neighborhood cooperation and planning for the gorge as a whole. Throughout the next few months we will be meeting with neighborhoods lining the gorge in both Minneapolis and St. Paul in order to discuss the project expansion. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact Katie at 651/222-2193 ext. 5, or kgallowa@fmr.org.

Prairie Stewardship Activities Continue

FMR completed two prairie stewardship plans in 2002, with funding from the DNR Prairie Stewardship Program. One site has a small prairie remnant with a large population of kittentails, a threatened plant in Minnesota. The other site has six acres of old field near the Mississippi River that the landowners want to convert to prairie. For each site we developed management plans to restore native prairie vegetation.

This year we also held our first "Prairie Tour," which was attended by past and present prairie stewardship plan recipients and members of our Heritage Land

Registry. During this fun and informative tour, we visited two native prairie sites, learned plant identification and prairie ecology, and collected some native seeds for future restoration activities.

Restoration Plans for the New Hastings River Flats Park

The Hastings River Flats is a wonderful natural resource located near Lock and Dam No. 2 in Hastings. FMR is developing a natural resource management plan for the 215-acre park, which includes 80 acres of floodplain forest and 40 acres of good quality emergent marsh. The diversity of habitats supports over 50 nesting bird species, including a resident pair of bald eagles, plus about 90 migratory species. In addition to management recommendations for the natural areas, the plan includes habitat restoration for about 40 acres of land, most of which was a former petroleum tank farm. This site not only provides critical wildlife habitat, but is an important link in the Mississippi River Greenway Plan (see page 3). The city's master plan for the site also includes an interpretive center, nature overlooks, and a bandshell.

Northern Dakota County Greenway

FMR recently teamed up with the Dakota Soil and Water Conservation District and the DNR Metro Greenways Program to identify and prioritize greenway opportunity areas in the northern portion of Dakota County. When implemented, these greenway corridors will provide important habitat in a highly developed portion of the county.

Working with landowners and local units of government, a potential greenway corridor was identified that crosses through developed portions of the county and extends from Lilydale Regional Park to Pine Bend Bluffs on the Mississippi River. It includes areas within the cities of Eagan, Lilydale, Mendota Heights, West St. Paul, Sunfish Lake, Inver Grove Heights and Rosemount. We look forward to working with these organizations and landowners to implement this greenway vision.

Canoe Adventure 5 Years Strong

The 5th Annual Aquatennial Mississippi River Canoe Adventure was a great success. Close to 500 people paddled the river from Bohemian Flats in Minneapolis to Hidden Falls Park in St. Paul. This year, for the first time, paddlers got a close up view of the working river's barges, which were running on Saturday due to unseasonable high water earlier in July. As a result, our entire group of over 200 boats locked through Lock #1 together! (See photo at right). At the landing, participants enjoyed a hearty lunch, expanded exhibits at Hidden Falls, a rap-tor presentation and Charlie Maguire, the Singing Ranger from the National Park Service. Special thanks to our sponsors, partners and wonderful volunteers. Join us on July 26, 2003 for the 6th Annual Mississippi River Canoe Adventure.



Lock #1 at the 5th Annual Canoe Adventure - photo by Russ Snyder, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Special Places Tours 2002

This year we again had a full calendar of Special Places Tours. We visited some of our old favorite places like Grey Cloud Dunes, Mounds Park, birding at Crosby Farm, and paddling the Vermillion River Bottoms, and we brought people to some new special places including a historic hike on the St. Anthony Heritage Trail and a bike trip along the Mississippi Regional Trail in Anoka County. With all this birding, biking and boating, nearly 200 people experienced the Mississippi River with us.

This year we launched a new series, called "Wading into Our Watersheds," where we visited two tributaries of the Mississippi River. Participants looked for aquatic invertebrates and discussed water quality during these hands-on, family-friendly programs. Also new this year was a trip downriver to Alma, Wisconsin to see the large annual gathering of tundra swans during fall migration. On the return, we stopped in Wabasha to visit the National Eagle Center, and we spotted several bald eagles along the river.

FMR now offers outings throughout the winter months, so you can experience the Mississippi with us year round. See the back of this newsletter or visit the web at www.fmr.org to learn how to get involved in upcoming Special Places

A Successful Evening on the River

Thank you to everyone who attended our fundraiser on September 12th - "An Evening on the River," at La Rive Condominiums in Minneapolis. The event was a wonderful success - raising nearly \$5,000 for FMR's programs! The event also helped spread the word about FMR's river protection work to new members and supporters.

There were 84 people in attendance to sample good food and drink (most of it donated by local establishments), and to share a commitment to a common goal - the conservation and revitalization of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities. Attendees also enjoyed the music of local guitar hero Phil Heywood and a presentation by FMR Board Member John Anfinson on the Mississippi River and our sense of place.

Thank you to all who helped make the event a successful one. Special thanks to our Host Committee: Joseph Bagnoli, Andy and LuAnn Brown, Gail Dorfman, George Dunn, Chris and Michele Flannery, Peter and Mary Gove, Ted and Michelle Grindal, John and Diane Herman, Kate Jaycox and Mike Hatting, Senator Dave Johnson and Tracy Johnson, Sam and Sylvia Kaplan, Peggy Lucas, Perry McGowan and Sheila Smith, Ted and Pam Mondale, Lynn and Tim Moratzka, Ron and Becky Nargang, Phil Riveness, R.T. Rybak and Megan O'Hara, Lee Sheehy and Jennifer Fling, Katie Simon-Dastyeh and Jerry Dastyeh, Tina and Archie Smith, Bill Tilton, Cynthia Whiteford, Deanna Wiener and Jim Tilsen.

Give to FMR at Work through the Minnesota Environmental Fund

Friends of the Mississippi River is a proud member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund, a coalition of 18 environmental organizations in Minnesota that offers workplace giving as an option to improve our communities through natural resource protection.

FMR and other Minnesota Environmental Fund member organizations are working hard to protect, conserve and restore Minnesota's remaining natural environment. We are working to protect Minnesotans from environmental health hazards like mercury and pesticides in our drinking water, and working to maintain access for current and future generations to the recreational and cultural opportunities offered by our parks, rivers, lakes and open spaces.

You can support FMR in your workplace by giving through the Minnesota Environmental Fund. Options include giving a designated amount through payroll deductions or giving a single gift. You may also choose to give to the entire coalition or specify any organization within the coalition.

If your employer does not provide this opportunity, ask the person in charge of workplace giving to include it. For more information, contact FMR Development Director Heather Haynes at 651/222-2193 ext. 8, or hhaynes@fmr.org.

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



FMR Gorge Stewards Programs and Special Places Tours

Pre-registration is required for all events and outings. To sign up, please contact Katie Galloway at 651/222-2193 ext. 5 or kgallowa@fmr.org, unless otherwise noted.

From Rapids to Reservoirs: A Brief History of the Mississippi Gorge

Thursday, January 30, 7-8:30 p.m. Augsburg College, Minneapolis. Co-sponsored by the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and Augsburg College

When Zebulon Pike ascended the Mississippi River from the Minnesota River's mouth to St. Anthony Falls, in 1805, he complained about the dozens of islands and difficult rapids. Today the islands are mostly gone and the rapids have been flooded by a reservoir. In a richly illustrated presentation, Dr. John Anfinson, National Park Service historian, will explore how we have transformed the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities area. Although he will focus on the unique stretch known as the gorge, (St. Anthony Falls to Fort Snelling), he will cover the river throughout the metropolitan area.

Birds of the Mississippi River Gorge

Thursday, March 13, 7-8:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Minneapolis

Get ready for spring with a slide presentation on birds of the gorge and the 100+ species that pass through during spring migration. Bob Janssen, author of *Birds of Minnesota* and former president of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union, will provide an orientation to birds of the area and what to look for during spring

Gorge Stewards programs are supported by the Minnesota Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund

Snowshoeing the Vermillion Bottoms

Sunday, February 2, 1- 4p.m., Hastings Co-sponsored by Dakota County Parks

Join us for a snowshoe hike through the breathtaking winter wonderland of the Vermillion River Bottoms, one of the largest and most pristine natural places in the metropolitan area. Explore and learn about this unique floodplain forest environment by investigating winter wildlife, animal tracks and even a few signs of early spring. Snowshoes are provided by Dakota County Parks. Space is limited and pre-registration required.

Fee: \$7 per person or \$15 per family.

To register, call Dakota Parks at 651/438-4696

River Wildlife Walk

Saturday, March 22, 10:00 a.m. - noon, West Coon Rapids Dam, Co-sponsored by Three Rivers Park District

Late March can be a great time to see waterfowl at the Coon Rapids Dam as birds pass through on their spring migration. In addition to bird-watching, we will also look for animal tracks, otter slides and other signs of river wildlife as the floodplain forest awakens for the spring season. Three Rivers Park District naturalist Karen Kobey and FMR staff will lead the exploration on park trails. Snowshoes will be provided if needed. Please dress for the weather and wear boots that can get muddy.

Parking fees of \$5 per vehicle apply at West Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park.

Save The Dates!

April 12-13, 2003

Second Annual Living Green Expo - Minnesota State Fairgrounds

July 26th, 2003

Sixth Annual Aquatennial Mississippi River Canoe Adventure

Volunteers Needed Tuesday Evenings

Are you interested in volunteering with FMR over the fall and winter? One way you can help is by joining our office volunteer team on Tuesday evenings to assist with some of the nuts and bolts of our work, such as data entry, mailings and other special projects. We are also always looking for individuals to share their skills in the areas of research and writing. If you are interested in learning more about how you can get involved, please contact Katie at 651/222-2193 ext. 5, or kgallowa@fmr.org.



Friends of the Mississippi River

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