



MISSISSIPPI  
River Fund

Annual Report  
2013-2014



What makes a park? Trees, grass, flowers, and water are all good answers, but a park's most essential element is its people. The focus for our report this year is people and partnerships. This idea comes from the deep-seated notion that people are at the heart of everything we do at the fund.

In the following pages, you will discover how personal connections and partnerships between organizations have made the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area a better place. Many of our programs focus on young people in our community, truly the next generation of river stewards. Programs such as the outdoor clubs we run with the YMCA and Wilderness Inquiry foster lasting connections with the river and create ladders of opportunity for young people.



Partnerships with our corporate community have a huge positive impact on our river and also create an ethic of environmental stewardship that we would like to see multiplied throughout the Twin Cities. Last year alone, 85 groups provided nearly 4,600 hours of volunteer service to the park. Many leaders from our corporate community also provide grants for youth education programs and habitat improvements for wildlife.

Lastly, personal connections with our park also lead to generous financial contributions made by individuals and ensure our river and our park will be enjoyed and protected for the next generation. Gifts to new parks like Coldwater Spring create immediate improvement as we continue to transform the historic site into a gem within the Twin Cities park system.

We invite you to think about your own connection to the river and our park. What was your first experience with the river and how did it change you? We also encourage you to deepen your connection in the coming year by taking part in one of our programs—from volunteering at the river to snowshoeing with a park ranger to becoming a member of the fund.

We look forward to growth in the coming year and continued strong partnership with the National Park Service and our new park superintendent, John Anfinson. Thank you for your interest and support of the Mississippi River Fund!

*Jay Cowles*  
Jay Cowles  
Board Chair

*Katie Nyberg*  
Katie Nyberg  
Executive Director

Front and back cover art by Minneapolis artist G.W. Anderson, who painted *en plein air* oil paintings of the park in every season at Coldwater Spring.

"The next three years are going to be busy, and we will need the fund more than ever."

I am humbled, excited, and somewhat daunted by the opportunity to be the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area's new superintendent. Paul Labovitz will be a hard act to follow. Through his vision and our partnership with the Mississippi River Fund, he brought attention to the value of our presence not only in the Twin Cities but to the National Park Service itself. I am starting at an unusually opportune time that I hope will advance that awareness to new levels. The next three years are going to be busy, and we will need the fund more than ever.

In 2016, the National Park Service celebrates its 100th anniversary. We have already begun planning how we will celebrate this milestone locally and with the other national parks around the state. The National Park Service and the National Park Foundation are planning a massive national publicity campaign that we have the opportunity to leverage to the maximum, and they are looking to urban parks like ours to deliver on the primary theme of



Photo by Eric Haugen

connecting with and creating the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates.

In 2017, the Twin Cities will host the biennial International Urban Parks Conference, which draws more than 1,000 people from around the world. The 2015 conference is in San Francisco, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area will be involved deeply. This creates another significant opportunity to partner with Minneapolis and Saint Paul park systems and spotlight our unique urban park.

We celebrate our partnership with the fund and what we have accomplished together with our volunteers, friends, and supporters over the past year—and we look forward to new programs, partnerships, and opportunities for 2015 and beyond, thanks to the fund's leadership and support.

*John O. Anfinson*  
John Anfinson  
Superintendent, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

# Mississippi River Fund HIGHLIGHTS

Each year we are thrilled to share some of the news, numbers, and notable moments in our work for the river.

Here are some of the highlights for July 2013 to June 2014, thanks to your support!

**71**  
**VOLUNTEERS**  
strapped on snowshoes to  
haul buckthorn in frigid temps



**ONE**  
**BIG BRASS**  
**BAND**  
at River City Revue



**87**  
**NATIVE PRAIRIE**  
**SEED BOMBS**  
made by boy  
scouts for Mill  
Ruins Park



**908**  
**JUNIOR RANGERS**  
sworn in at national  
park programs



**533** **BIG RIVER**  
**ART**  
contest entries received from  
Twin Cities students



**79**  
**OTTER**  
scat samples taken  
in 6 survey days



**COLDWATER**  
**VOLUNTEER**  
**CREW**

received the Midwest  
region's Hartzog Award for  
Outstanding Volunteer Service  
from the National Park Service

**20.13**  
**FEET** seventh highest  
river crest on  
record in St. Paul,  
on June 26, 2014

**48** **ACTIVE BALD**  
**EAGLE NESTS**  
within the park boundary—  
more than double since 2007

**SECOND SATURDAYS,**  
a new monthly program at Coldwater  
Spring, gives people of all ages outdoor  
adventures in the park

**4,800** **COTTONWOOD**  
trees, seeds, whips, and  
seedlings planted at  
Lilydale Park

**360**  
**YOUNG**  
**PEOPLE**

in schools and  
church groups  
helped restore  
Coldwater's habitat

**3,000**  
**KIDS**

received Ticket to  
Ride scholarships  
to attend national  
park river programs

**VOLUNTEERS**  
**OF THE YEAR**

Denny Appleman, Stan  
Hunter, and Sandy Fuller  
were honored for their strong  
dedication and many hours  
of service to our national park

**MISSISSIPPI**  
**RIVER**  
**NEWS**

launched in  
partnership with  
the National Park  
Service

**BIG RIVER JOURNEY**

celebrated its 18th year as the park's flagship education  
program, and has served more than 65,000 Twin Cities  
students through on-the-river learning experiences

**175%** **INCREASE IN INVERTEBRATES**  
at the newly created wetland at  
Coldwater Spring



## Chris & Nathalie Mortenson

Chris and Nathalie are on the board of the Mortenson Family Foundation, and Chris is a teacher at Upper Mississippi Academy at Fort Snelling.

"Clean water isn't just about providing for human society, it's about understanding how we can sustainably interact with natural systems—and connecting human society to the natural world. The work of the Mississippi River Fund is an important piece for Minnesotans in our quest to use fresh water sustainably. The Mortenson Family Foundation has been overjoyed to support the fund in this regard.

"The Mississippi River Fund has helped create opportunities for our students at Upper Mississippi Academy to authentically

interact with the river at Coldwater Spring, whether through water quality monitoring, insect population studies, or service projects like removal of invasive species. Yes! We love to battle the buckthorn, too. The students consistently report a connection to Coldwater Spring, in large part because they are doing so much of their science learning in our national park. Through our partnership with the park and the fund, we are educating an army of environmental investigators in our young science learners."

"When I was growing up, I lacked mentors who knew about the outdoors and were comfortable in it. It wasn't until high school when I got involved with an outdoor skills program that I really learned about the outdoors with mentors who understood the importance of environmental stewardship.

"It has been really rewarding to play a similar role for the students I work with through Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA). These kids are unforgettable. It's so amazing to see them interact with the outdoors on UWCA programs in new and exciting ways. Being able to see a student's face when they catch their first fish is priceless!

"Having positive experiences outdoors is crucial to understanding the environment and for having a greater understanding of our place in the world. The UWCA helps give youth the skills to feel comfortable navigating the outdoors. This is a huge first step to becoming better stewards of public lands.

"The internship with the UWCA has helped me focus on my future plans to work for a public land management agency and ensure that our public lands are preserved and protected for the enjoyment of everyone for years to come."

## Maria Lee

Maria was a 2014 UWCA intern through the national park's "fellows" program, supported by the Mississippi River Fund in partnership with Wilderness Inquiry.



## David Schmidt & Sara Klasky

David and Sara are long-time volunteers with many park programs and loyal members of the Mississippi River Fund.

"Having worked in downtown Saint Paul most of our working careers, primarily at Burlington Northern Railroad, we gained a real appreciation for the river and its connection to the city. Many changes occurred over those years; the most profound was watching the river get cleaner and the bald eagles' numbers increase.

"We began volunteering with the Big River Journey program. It was, and still is, fun watching as the kids come onto the boat in the morning. Their eyes get big when they see the big paddle wheeler, and their enthusiasm while looking through a microscope or seeing a bald eagle for the first time is wonderful.

"Being former railroaders, we thought volunteering with the Trails and Rails program would be fun as well. We have also helped at Coldwater Spring planting trees, removing buckthorn, and geocaching for the Take Me to the River program. It is great fun to see a child have the "ah-ha" moment when they discover this park belongs to them, that they can become a steward of the land and water and make a difference in their community.

"Supporting the Mississippi River Fund is just another way we can help keep our wonderful wild areas stay vital and available for everyone to experience and appreciate."



Photo courtesy of Hands on Twin Cities

“Our relationship with the Mississippi River Fund is a testament to the power of partnership and how we can strengthen our communities through a shared commitment to educating the next generation about the outdoors and environmental stewardship.”

—Cynthia Runkel Kleven, Manager, 3Mgives



One of the fund’s strongest and longest supporters, 3M is a multifaceted partner of the Mississippi River Fund. The 3M Foundation has provided critical grant support for youth educational programs with the National Park Service, providing outdoor programming for thousands of kids from grade school through high school and into adulthood, encouraging lifelong outdoor enthusiasts and national park visitors.

Over the past ten years, support from 3M has grown to include gifts through their 3Mgives Volunteer Match program, in support of their many employees and retirees who are our dedicated volunteers. Together with 3M corporate groups, 267 volunteers from 3M have provided nearly 1,000 hours of service to the park in the last year alone.



Through a new partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s GreenCorps

program, the Mississippi River Fund hosted a full-time AmeriCorps member, Maria DeLaundreau, to study cottonwood trees in our national park.

A 2011 National Park Service study shed light on a problem that has likely gone unnoticed for decades—cottonwood trees have not been regenerating in the Mississippi River floodplain at historical rates. Cottonwoods provide many important benefits to the floodplain: up to 85% of the bald eagle pairs within our park nest in cottonwoods, the trees’ roots control erosion, and bees use cottonwood resin to build strong hives. The study presented an opportunity for the fund and the park to partner with Minnesota GreenCorps and dig deeper into this timely issue.

“In selecting host sites, we look for projects with the greatest potential for protecting and improving Minnesota’s environment,” says Karen Solas, MN GreenCorps Program



Maria DeLaundreau collects cottonwood cuttings for spring propagation.

Coordinator. “Through our partnership with the Mississippi River Fund, Minnesota GreenCorps was able to make great progress toward our goals of protecting the urban forest and engaging community members.”

Building on the success of this partnership, and with grant support from the McKnight Foundation and the Mortenson Family Foundation, the fund has hired Maria full-time to continue her work studying cottonwoods in the park and create best management practices for planting new cottonwood trees in the floodplain.



The Mississippi River Fund has been proud to be an active member of the Stop Carp Coalition since invasive carp became an urgent environmental threat to our river in 2010.

The coalition is made up of non-governmental organizations that work together to combat Asian carp by

advocating for initiatives to slow or stop the spread of these invasive species in Minnesota waters.

One of the most significant outcomes of last year’s work was passage of legislation that will close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock in 2015 to help stop the spread of Asian carp further upstream.

In support of the legislation, the coalition brought major public attention to the threat of invasive carp through public education and outreach. Senator Amy Klobuchar and

Representative Keith Ellison led this effort with bipartisan support from Senator Al Franken and Representatives Tim Walz, Rick Nolan, and Erik Paulsen. This legislation was signed into law by President Obama on June 10, 2014.

Additionally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will now lead a federal multi-agency effort that will coordinate strategies, best practices and resources to combat invasive carp in the Mississippi and Ohio River basins. This initiative is the result of

legislation championed by Congresswoman Betty McCollum.

“Our success in driving action to protect the waters of our national park from invasive carp could not have been accomplished without our strong coalition,” says Christine Goepfert, program manager with the National Parks Conservation Association and coalition leader. “Our partnership is more important than ever as we turn our attention to other pressing battlefronts further downstream.”

Contributions of \$20,000 and above

Patrick & Aimee Butler Family Foundation  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
National Park Foundation  
National Park Service  
Toro Foundation \*  
Ultra Creative \*  
WM Foundation

Contributions of \$10,000 to \$19,999

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Contributions of \$5,000 to \$9,999

David Winton Bell Foundation  
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John and Page Cowles  
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Mortenson Family Foundation  
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Contributions of \$1,000 to \$4,999

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SmartWool Advocacy Fund  
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Arlan and Virginia Tietel  
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Contributions of \$500 to \$999

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Donald Janes and Marilyn Thompson  
Lucy Hartwell  
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Suzanne and Richard Pepin  
Sample Room \*

Contributions of \$250 to \$499

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Tom Meyer and Martha Meyer-VonBlon  
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David Schmidt and Sara Klasky  
Brian Schubloom  
Sheba Productions  
Jim Stensvold and Sarah Kline-Stensvold  
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Contributions of \$100 to \$249

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Scott Vreeland *in memory of Mary Lee Dayton*  
Claralouise Wheeler *in memory of Brien Link*  
Alan Wyman  
David and Janet Zens

Contributions up to \$99

Ronald Abrahamson  
Susan Albrecht and Nancy Desmond  
Ameriprise Financial

Thanks to the many individuals and organizations who so generously supported the fund in 2013-2014.

And to the **3,958** volunteers who provided **18,256** hours of service, our park simply would not be the same without your contributions.

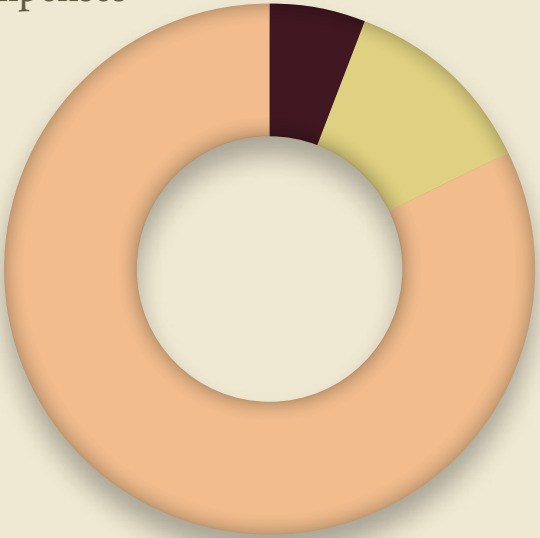
Thank you.

Anonymous  
Malcolm Bastron  
Peter and Eleanor Blitzer  
Bonita Benson  
Jennifer Browning  
Thomas Burke  
Tom and Kitty Cahill  
Stewart Corn  
Norman Crandell  
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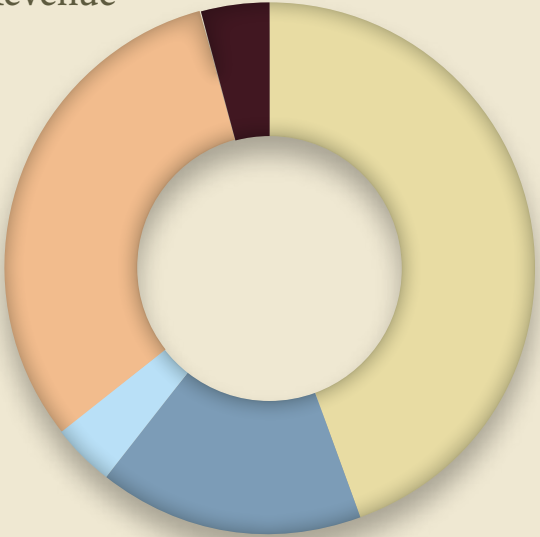
\* Contributions of in-kind support

Expenses



6%	Fundraising	\$27,821
12%	Administration	\$52,096
82%	Program Services	\$355,998
TOTAL		\$435,915

Revenue



44%	Foundation & Corporate Grants	\$196,390
16%	Individuals	71,043
4%	Program Revenue	16,490
31%	Endowment Distribution	137,940
5%	Other	22,028
TOTAL		\$443,891



In spring 2013, we bid farewell to Paul and Sue Labovitz, who moved on to work with Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. As superintendent of our park for seven years, Paul energized our community with a contagious passion for the river and our urban park. Sue's dedication as a volunteer also left an indelible mark on countless park programs and events.

To continue their dedication to getting Twin Cities kids on the river, they created the Paul and Sue Labovitz Scholarship Fund, providing national park experiences for kids in our community for years to come.

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We wish to thank outgoing board members Thaddeus Agar and Eric Jolly for their many years of service and support.

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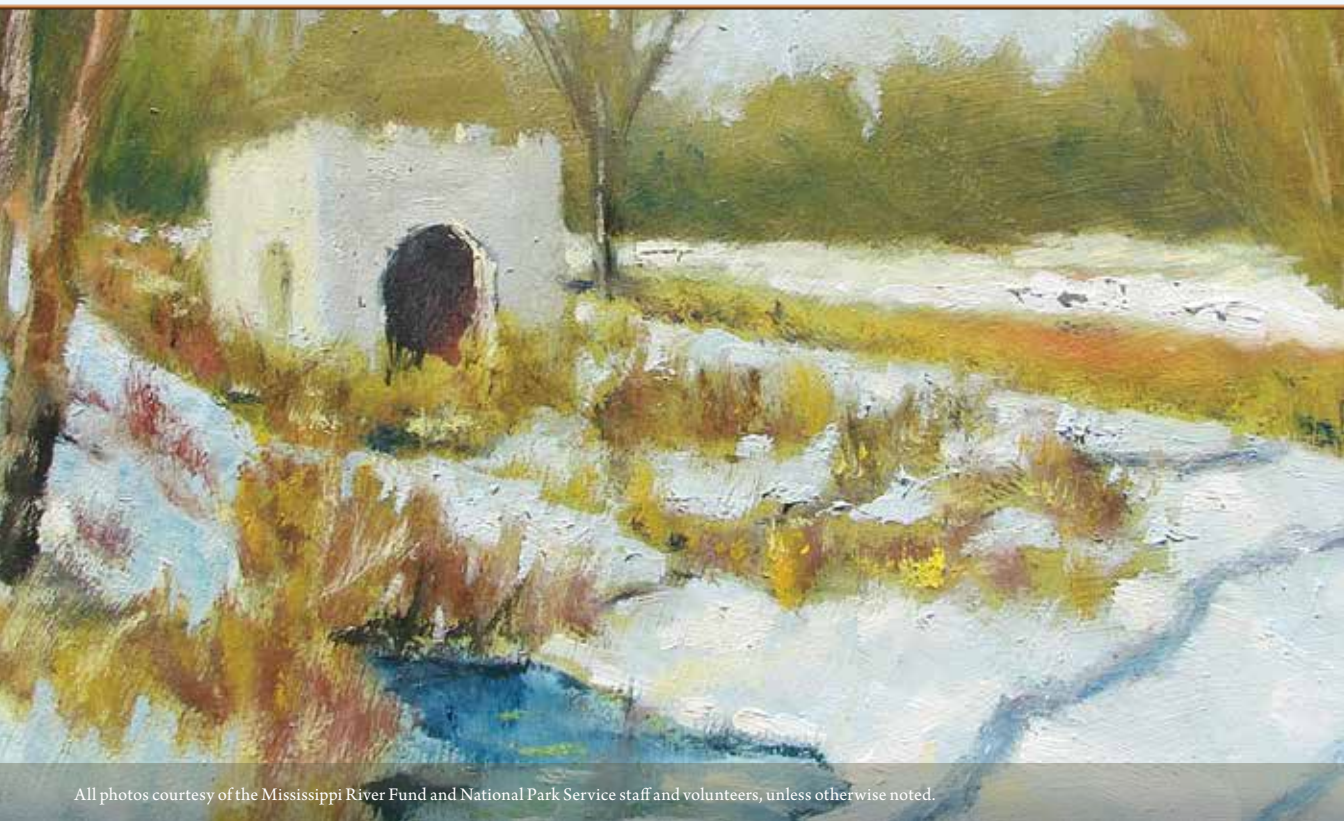
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All photos courtesy of the Mississippi River Fund and National Park Service staff and volunteers, unless otherwise noted.

# MISSISSIPPI River Fund

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