

Paddle the Gorge



Photo by Gordon Dietzman

Minnesota has thousands of lakes and one great river. Chances are, you've canoed or kayaked on some Minnesota lakes, but have you ever paddled the Mississippi?

Make this summer memorable—paddle the Mississippi River gorge. The National Park Service, Mississippi River Fund and REI are teaming up for this first Paddle the Gorge event in Minneapolis, on Saturday, July 18 from 10 AM to 3 PM.

No boat? No problem! The National Park Service and REI will have canoes, kayaks and gear for paddlers to use. If you've got a canoe or kayak, feel free to bring it too. REI Outdoor School Instructors and

park rangers will be on shore and on the water making sure everyone's river ready. We've got the gear and a great location for a fun, free summer paddle, perfect for individuals or families.

The adventure starts at East River Flats, near the University of Minnesota and ends at the Minneapolis Rowing Club, about three miles downriver. We'll shuttle paddlers and boats back to the start. Sign up now for a gorgeous way to experience the river. Paddlers must be age 8 or older and one adult must accompany every boat.

Register for Paddle the Gorge at missriverfund.org/events.

National Park Service Centennial

By Dr. John Anfinson,
Superintendent, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area



Next summer, the National Park Service turns 100! Launched in April 2015, the centerpiece of the centennial is a public engagement

campaign to celebrate the National Park Service's first century and connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates.

Parks around the country, including ours, will offer special events and opportunities for recreation, conservation, and volunteering. Centennial activities for all ages will take place throughout 2016.

With more than 400 parks throughout the United States—including five in Minnesota—the centennial campaign encourages people to "Find Your Park" and explore, learn, discover, play, and be inspired in all of our national parks.

Learn more about the national effort at FindYourPark.com

FIND YOUR PARK

SUPPORT YOUR PARK

Prairie Pollinator Patches



Photo by Jordan Wein

Walk along Coldwater Spring's restored prairie and you'll likely notice tall grasses and colorful wildflowers. Native plants are natural features of prairies, just as natural and necessary as the bees and butterflies that buzz and flutter through prairies.

This summer, the Mississippi River Fund is introducing Pollinator Patches, a new way to attract more bees and butterflies to restore prairies along the Mississippi River, including at Coldwater Spring. Without pollinators, many flowers will not make the seeds necessary to create the next generation of wildflowers.

The patches will be seeded or planted with native wildflowers, including dotted blazing star, wild lupine, and butterfly weed (milkweed). Each Pollinator Patch is 500 square feet.

A donation of \$100 will make a Pollinator Patch. Donors will receive a Pollinator Patch certificate or can choose to have their certificates sent as gifts. To donate your Pollinator Patch, visit missriverfund.org.

BEE FACT: It's estimated that Minnesota has close to 400 known species of bees. Honey bees and bumble bees account for less than two percent of Minnesota's bees; about 98 percent of our state's bees are wild bees, also known as pollen bees.

University of Minnesota Bee Lab

INIOR

Support your national park and receive benefits year round—become a member of the Mississippi River Fund! Discounted registration and member events are just a few of the perks. **Join today at missriverfund.org.**

MISSISSIPPI
River Fund

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEWS

Newsletter of the Mississippi River Fund & Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

Summer 2015

FEATURED PROGRAM

WELCOME

Summer Fun as Easy as 1, 2, 3

By Katie Nyberg, Executive Director, Mississippi River Fund



Spring has arrived! We've been busy planning spring and summer park programs and we are pleased to share them with you.

We hope our newsletter inspires you to get out and enjoy the park this summer. We have plenty of ways to get involved—adventure and learning beckon on every page.

Here is a step by step way to make the most out of the summer:

1. Visit missriverfund.org to sign up for our e-newsletter and never miss another event! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and you'll never be left in the dark.
2. Stop by the Mississippi River Visitor Center at the Science Museum of Minnesota and ask a park ranger his or her favorite places in the park.
3. Make a pledge to visit one new place along the river—make a day trip! Take one of our guided cell phone tours. Bike and walking tours are available at RangerOnCall.com.
4. Experience the river from the water! Sign up for River City Rave and take a ride on the Jonathan Padeleford, (cover photo), or join us for a pontoon ride or our community Paddle the Gorge on July 18.

We hope to see you this summer!



In 1988, a national park was created in Minnesota to preserve, protect, and enhance the significant values of the waters and land of the Mississippi River corridor. Known as the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, the park extends for 72 miles along the river, running through the heart of the Minneapolis/Saint Paul metro area.

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FEATURED PROGRAM



Now there's a way to explore the river with a National Park Service ranger, any time of day. Ranger on Call is an audio tour that explores the Mississippi River's exceptional places.

Three tours are geared for bicyclists, with tour stops located on Nice Ride stations by the Saint Anthony Falls/Stone Arch Bridge area, downtown Saint Paul riverfront,

and Fort Snelling/Minnehaha Falls. Three additional walking tours are located at Coldwater Spring, Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, and Hastings' Jaycee Park.

This summer, it's easy for visitors and locals to rent a Nice Ride bike or take a hike to learn about one of our nation's greatest places—the Mississippi River. Stop by the Mississippi River Visitor Center in the lobby of the Science Museum of Minnesota to get an orientation to the Saint Paul tour or find suggested tour routes and a virtual tour at rangeroncall.com.

The Ranger on Call program was produced by the National Park Service and Mississippi River Fund in partnership with Nice Ride Minnesota, Ultra Creative, and eighth21 Creative Consulting.

FEATURED PARTNER SITE

Meeker Island Lock & Dam Ruins

Meeker Island Lock and Dam is the fascinating first chapter in the story of locks and dam on the Mississippi River. Meeker was the Mississippi's first dam when it opened in 1907, but less than a decade later, the dam was abandoned. The Twin Cities was turning to hydroelectric power from Lock and Dam 1 (Ford Dam), built just downriver from Meeker.

The ruins of the lock are still visible most of the time along the east bank of the river at Emerald Street SE where Minneapolis and Saint Paul meet. This summer's closing of Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam to navigation makes it the perfect time to visit Meeker Island Lock and Dam to learn more about navigation on the river.

From the top of the bluff, take the short switchback trail to the river to view the old lock chamber and the foundations of the related structures. Learn more about the structure by calling the number on the Ranger on Call sign. To make a nice loop hike follow the footpath along the river upstream to the wooden steps at the Franklin Avenue bridge and then return to Meeker Island on the paved trail on top of the bluff.



Photo courtesy, Minnesota Historical Society

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEWS





Volunteer Voices Sharing Their Love of Parks

By Dodi and Bob Helman

Even before we retired in 2002, we had determined that we wanted to volunteer for the national parks. Our parks are spectacular and contributing to them, sharing them with others, and taking care of them is a statement that we want to make.

We have been fans of the parks ever since visiting our first parks together, standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, looking up from the base of the General Sherman Tree in Sequoia, smelling the bubbling mud pots in Lassen, or floating down the Rio Grande of Big Bend.

Our local national park is equally special. It offers us the history of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities, the wildlife and natural habitats that live around and in it, the recreation to be enjoyed both winter and summer. The opportunities for volunteering are varied and endless.

We have done a little of all of it and every time we give, we get much more back. We learn things about nature we never knew, find local places we would have never discovered, hang out with like-minded people who inspire us, and witness the joy of discovery in the eyes of others. Come volunteer with us. We'd like to meet you and share some fun.

Volunteering by Leading



When walking along the river, do you wonder why invasive plants aren't being removed and how you might be able to help? Volunteer Jim Stensvold did and came up with a solution. He thought that a small crew of volunteers led by a trained volunteer working a couple hours a day could make a big difference. Jim was right!

Other volunteers stepped forward to lead and now the park has three crews that work at Coldwater Spring and Mill Ruins Park on Tuesday evenings, Thursday mornings and alternate Saturday mornings.

There is potential for more sites as crew leader volunteers step forward to lead. Is that you?

Perhaps working with youth and sharing your enthusiasm about the river is more your style. The park is offering the opportunity to

lead youth and education groups through a volunteer "Education Corps." Education Corps volunteers might lead the geocache and shelter building stations in the Take Me to the River program, while a ranger leads the fire-building station. During summer Fish with a Ranger programs, an Education Corps volunteer could lead a geocache activity, invertebrate collecting or water quality monitoring.

One of the perks of being a ranger is getting thanks from participants for letting them restore habitat, no matter how tired and dirty they might be. Sometimes, the reward is simply seeing a child's face light up as she learns something new. As a crew or corps volunteer, those perks will be yours as well!

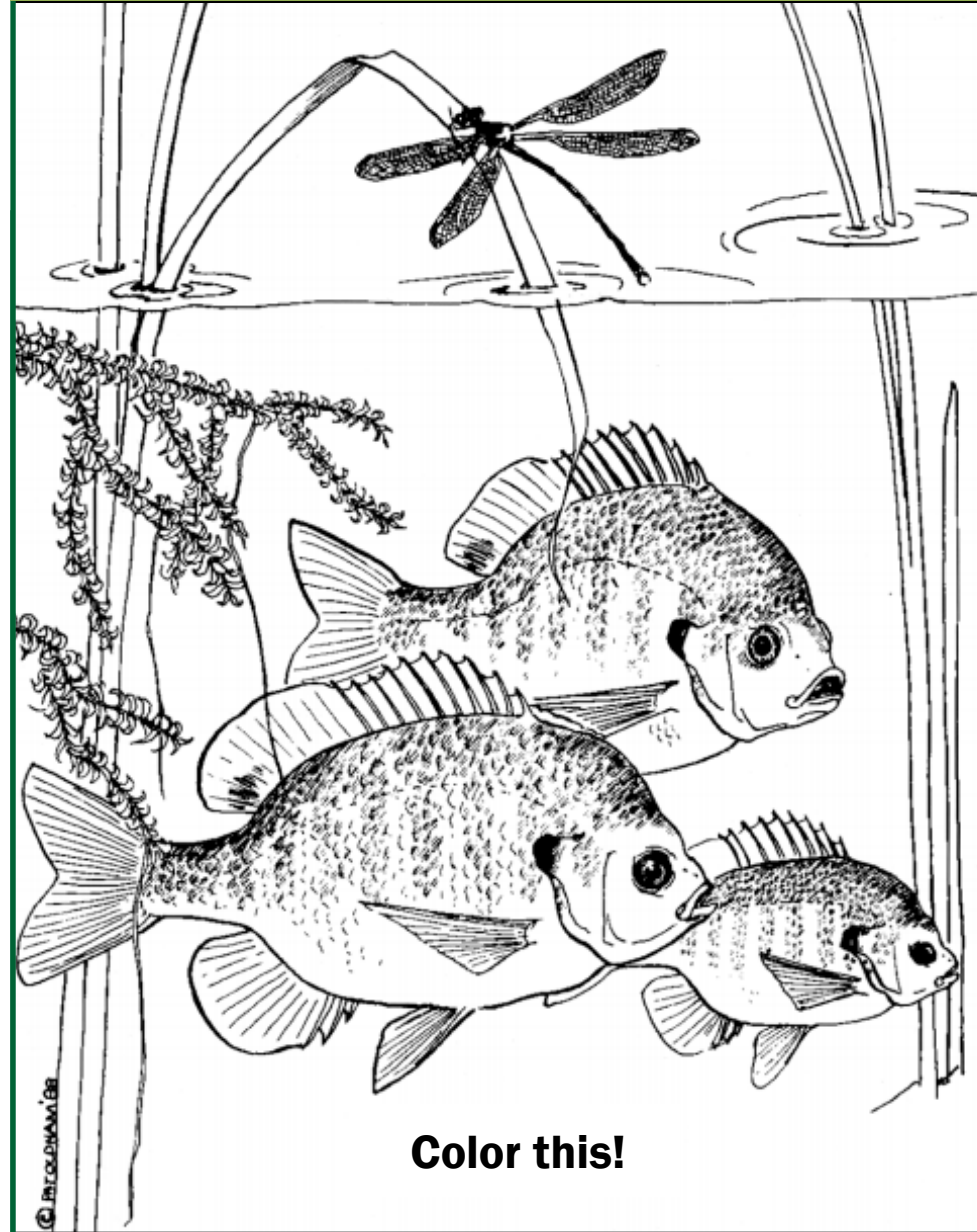


To register your volunteer group, contact Anna Waugh, Project Manager & Volunteer Coordinator: 651-291-9119, awaugh@missriverfund.org.

To register as an individual volunteer, contact Kathy Swenson, National Park Ranger & Volunteer Coordinator: 651-293-8424, kathleen_swenson@nps.gov.

Catch Bluegills on the Mississippi!

These little fish love to eat worms and corn.



Color this!

Become a Junior Ranger!

Junior Rangers are young people who promise to learn about, explore, and protect our national parks.

Learn how at nps.gov/miss/forkids



JUNIOR RANGERS



MAY-OCTOBER 2015

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit missriverfund.org/events for event details and registration information.

- May 8** Mississippi River Forum
- May 9** Spring Planting—Lilydale*
- May 9** Artists' Eye on Coldwater Spring
- May 28** Cottonwood Planting—Coldwater Spring*
- June 6** Take a Kid Fishing Day—Lilydale Park
- June 7** Take a Kid Fishing Day—Thompson Park
- June 13** Second Saturdays at Coldwater Spring
- June 19** Mississippi River Forum
- June 20** Bike with a Ranger—Fort Snelling
- June 20** River Action Volunteer Event—South St. Paul*
- June 23** MRF Member Pontoon Boat Trip
- June 30** River City Revue at MN History Center
- July 1** River City Revue
- July 4** Bike with a Ranger—St. Anthony Falls
- July 8** MRF Member Pontoon Boat Trip
- July 11** Birding Paddle with Wilderness Inquiry
- July 11** River Action Volunteer Event—Minneapolis*
- July 11** Second Saturdays at Coldwater Spring
- July 17** Mississippi River Forum
- July 18** Bike with a Ranger—St. Anthony Falls
- July 18** Paddle the Gorge
- July 22** River City Revue
- July 25** Build a Fishing Kit—Fort Snelling Park
- July 25** Great River Road Junior Ranger Camp—Prescott
- August 1** Bike with a Ranger—St. Anthony Falls
- August 8** Second Saturdays at Coldwater Spring
- August 15** Bike with a Ranger—St. Anthony Falls
- August 19** MRF Member Pontoon Boat Trip
- August 21** Mississippi River Forum
- August 27** Visit NPS at the State Fair through September 7
- August 29** River Action Volunteer Event—Hastings*
- September 12** Second Saturdays at Coldwater Spring
- September 18** Mississippi River Forum
- September 26** Bike with a Ranger—Minneapolis
- September 26** National Public Lands Day*
- October 10** Second Saturdays at Coldwater Spring
- October 16** Mississippi River Forum
- October 17** Bike with a Ranger—Falls Colors Tour

*Volunteer opportunity

Members receive free or discounted registration for most programs, including invitations to members-only events. Join today at missriverfund.org/join. All events are subject to change.



MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL RIVER & RECREATION AREA

Explore the river near you or join us for an upcoming program at one of our featured sites. Stop by the Mississippi River Visitor Center to chat with a national park ranger and pick up a copy of the Mississippi River Companion, featuring detailed maps and information.

CONTACT



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