

*The official newsletter of Mississippi Park Connection and
the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.*

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEWS

Spring / Summer 2018



MISSISSIPPI PARK CONNECTION

Discover your river

The mission of Mississippi Park Connection is to strengthen the enduring connection between people and the Mississippi River by enriching the life of the river and the lives of all who experience our national park, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Park Connection supports the park's environmental stewardship and education programs, including outdoor recreation, education, and volunteerism.



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

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.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEWS

111 Kellogg Blvd E, Suite 105
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Discover Your River!

Katie Nyberg, Executive Director, Mississippi Park Connection



Photo by Joey Tichenor

It's the time of year we've all been waiting for. Open windows, ice-less sidewalks, outdoor patios, and picnics.

This issue of our newsletter is chock full of ways you can experience our national park. If you like to get a little dirt under your nails, I encourage you to help us Plant for the Future. Bring your family, friends and co-workers down to the river and give back to the river that gives us so much.

Have you taken a lock wall tour at the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam yet? We are gearing up to open the lock to daily tours for the third year in a row. Ranger-led tours are free and occur daily starting Memorial Day weekend.

Have a flair for the dramatic? Join us for our second annual *Murder on the Mississippi* series. Our partners at Fearless Comedy have developed a new play and will be performing on the Jonathan Padelford riverboat this summer. Tickets sell out in a New York minute so don't delay.

Even if you don't join us at one of our scheduled events, I hope you can experience the power and the peacefulness of our river. Take a picnic down to the sandy shores of the gorge or watch barges go by from Harriet Island. Enjoy your national park!

“

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experience the power
and the peacefulness
of our river.*

On The Edge Of A New Era

John Anfinson, Superintendent,
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

We stand on the edge of a new era for the Mississippi River, and the National Park Service and Mississippi Park Connection must be deeply involved in the conversations about what the future will look like. Our programs this summer will engage locals and out-of-town visitors to explore the Mississippi River and discover why it is so important to the Twin Cities and the nation. We will also provide education about impending changes and gather insights on what the public would like to see happen over the next few decades.



Photo by Eric Haugen

Here are just a few of the conversations and partners we are coordinating with:

- This spring, American Rivers included the Gorge – the 8.5-mile reach from St. Anthony Falls to the Minnesota River – as one of America’s 10 Most Endangered Rivers. The group is calling for the removal of Lock and Dam No. 1 and the Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers restarted its Disposition Study at the end of April, which re-examines its role on the river since commercial towboat navigation has ended.
- Friends of the Lock and Dam is pushing to transform the Upper Lock into a world-class visitor center.
- The former Upper Harbor Terminal now has 48 acres open to new development. Situated along the west bank, this land could offer new connections to the river for those in north Minneapolis.

In all my years of experience with the Mississippi River, I have never seen so many critically important opportunities happening at once. We are on the cusp of profound changes to the Mississippi River in the heart of the Twin Cities. We hope you join us in the conversation.

Murder on the Mississippi

Sharon Stiteler, Park Ranger,
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area



Last year the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and Mississippi Park Connection worked with Fearless Comedy Productions to create an interactive murder mystery on one of the Padelford Riverboats. You could enjoy the gorgeous river views while having a few laughs, solving a mystery and learning trivia about our park's corridor.

This year *Murder on the Mississippi* returns with a new show and mystery. Set during World War II, audience members will be given the mission to figure out who their ally contact is and uncover the spy who stole blueprint plans from the Cargill Shipyards. You can come in costume to fit the theme of the show and immerse yourself in the experience. Park rangers will be on hand to help answer any questions about the river and point out the many bald eagles along the way.

To get the most out of this fun event, be sure to purchase your tickets as soon as you can to guarantee a spot. Tickets sell out fast! The evening performances are scheduled for June 27 and July 18. Bring a friend and consider coming in early 1940s style!

Meet Sharon Stiteler

Lee Vue, Communications Associate, Mississippi Park Connection



"We are so fortunate to have this amazing resource and wildlife corridor right in the heart of the Twin Cities."

- Sharon Stiteler, Park Ranger

Since 2008, Sharon has been working for the park in some capacity whether as a park ranger or bird surveyor. As a park ranger, Sharon interprets the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the park to visitors who stop by one of the park's two visitor centers. The Mississippi River is one of Sharon's favorite places to visit due to the various birds that live and migrate along the river. (During migration, there's an abundance of warblers, vireos, nighthawks and waterfowl. In the wintertime, the river is a wonderful place to watch eagles and ducks dive underwater.)

Sharon graduated with a degree in theater which explains her exuberance and infectious joy when it comes to her ability to be engaging and creative. She helps organize one of our most popular summer programs, *Murder on the Mississippi*. She enjoys making events fun and approachable - especially birding. Sharon organizes the major birding events in the park such as *The Big Sit* and *The Big Watch*. Both birding events are designed for birders of all abilities and participants help document all the birds they see and hear from sunrise to sundown.

There are many sides to Sharon: bird enthusiast, author, park ranger, geek, and river steward. She loves that she can spend the day showing people heron rookeries or prothonotary warblers in a canoe event and then in the evening, go see an award-winning theater.

The Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center

Jessica Bierbrauer, Executive Director,
Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center

The Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center at Freedom Park, a National Park Service Partner site, welcomes guests from around the world to the confluence of the Mighty Mississippi River and the Wild and Scenic St. Croix River. On a sunny day in Prescott, WI, visitors can see a distinctive line where the waters of the two rivers begin to intermingle: the sediment-clouded brown waters of the Mississippi meet the clear blue waters of the St. Croix. Here also the 72-mile Mississippi National River and Recreation Area's southern end meets the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

Freedom Park is a lovely location for a family picnic; a chance to stretch your legs during a sightseeing trip around Lake Pepin; and provides opportunities to see less-common bird species such as red-shouldered hawks, peregrine falcons, indigo buntings, Baltimore orioles and tufted titmice. Sightseers and photographers enjoy capturing Mississippi River views from one of the four overlook areas and watching pleasure boats and tugboats pass by on the river below.

The Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center is open year-round with free public programs. There is no entrance fee for parking or visiting. The schedule of programs and events is available online at www.freedomparkwi.org.



Photo courtesy of Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center



Volunteer Voices

Kinnell Tackett, Volunteer Crew Leader

In Spring, the skunk cabbage will lead the way, quickly followed by the leafing out of our entire urban forest, encompassing our local national park.

Along with the change of seasons comes the annual need for volunteers to help park employees take care of this place. Volunteers are the muscle behind our initiatives every year. Whether removing invasive species, planting native ones or simply prepping tools for other groups to use in future events, every volunteer makes a difference and we always need more.

For me this drive began very young when I learned the importance of helping out those less fortunate than me, which in my case meant the streams and the trees. Years later, I hold that lesson close to my heart and it drives me as a Volunteer Crew Leader for the park. As a Volunteer Crew Leader, I help create positive experiences for other volunteers and always find something new to educate myself on. In fact, I now find myself on annual trips into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness due in no small part to the exposure I have received canoeing and volunteering on the river.

So, come join me in our park and discover your own passions, because as Dr. Seuss said, *"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."*

Illuminate the Lock

Sarah Peters, Director of Public Engagement for Northern Lights.mn
and Co-Director for Northern Spark Festival



At sunset on September 14, 2017, artist Aaron Dysart and lighting designer Kyle Waites paced nervously around the edges of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. They were about to turn on dozens of theater lights and spots placed carefully around the lock's decks, tucked into homemade, waterproof boxes. This was the first full-

show test run of *Surface*, a three-hour light and fog experience that was many years in Dysart's imagination before that night.

Two weeks later, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff ferried four hulking projectors up the lock's tiny elevator. Once the projectors were calibrated and flipped on, the lock wall was transformed into a giant screen for the remembrance and re-appearance of Spirit Island as seen through Andrea Carlson's video of vivid color, historical photographs and drawings called *The Uncompromising Hand*.

Powerful, reflective, informative, inspiring. Striking, supercool, surreal, sacred. This is how viewers described these projects at the first iteration of *Illuminate the Lock* in 2017.

The partners behind the project, Northern Lights.mn, Mississippi Park Connection, and the National Park Service / Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, are thankful to the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for their support. In September 2018, the art project returns with a new artist exploring an aspect of the history, present, or future of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage area, using the lock and falls as a "theater" for the story.

Event Dates

Begins September 14, 2018

Become A Volunteer

Email volunteer@parkconnection.org

Events that Support the River

Anna Waugh, Development and Communications Manager,
Mississippi Park Connection



There are so many ways to support your park while having fun this spring and summer!

Grab your friends and join Mississippi Park Connection at Dangerous Man Brewing Company on April 29 for a special event that features a special Rooted Red Ale, brewed in honor of the *Plant for the Future* campaign. The best part of the event, Dangerous Man will donate \$1.00 per beer for every Rooted Red Ale sold between noon and 8pm.

On May 31, enjoy delectable bites prepared by The Sioux Chef; learn more about efforts to save the tree canopy and delight in mingling with park lovers coming together to celebrate our national park at *Cocktails for the Canopy*. A special evening fundraiser at Crosby Farm Regional Park will support the *Plant for the Future* campaign by planting trees and creating jobs for young people in conservation. Tickets go on sale on Earth Day (April 22) starting at \$75.00.

Finally, join us all summer long during Surly Brewing Company's pre-match parties for our hometown professional soccer team, Minnesota United FC. Surly will donate \$1.00 for every Rising North sold during each of the pre-match parties hosted at its brewery in Minneapolis.

Check out the events calendar for the full listing of events where you can support the Mississippi River's only national park this summer!



BECOME A MEMBER

JOIN TODAY AT PARKCONNECTION.ORG

Support your national park and receive benefits year round - become a member of Mississippi Park Connection! Discounted registration and member events are just a few of the perks.

VOLUNTEER WITH US



Volunteers are a crucial component in many areas of park operation. Beyond helping with maintaining river shoreline and protecting important natural, historic, and cultural resources, our volunteers educate and engage our local community, increasing awareness and support for the park. Every day, volunteers make a vital contribution to the Mississippi River and our community.

To register as an individual or group, please contact:
Mary Hammes, Environmental Stewardship and Volunteer Manager
(651) 291-9199 | mhammes@parkconnection.org

VISITOR INFORMATION



Photo by Dan Marshall

UPPER ST. ANTHONY FALLS LOCK & DAM 1 Portland Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55401

- Ranger-led tours on the lock wall
- Learn about locks, dams, and river navigation
- Great views of the falls from the observation deck



Photo by Joey Tichenor

MISSISSIPPI RIVER VISITOR CENTER 120 Kellogg Blvd West, Saint Paul, MN 55102

- Learn about the park's cultural and natural history
- Take flight in the Fly Like An Eagle motion-detection video game



Photo by Crystal Liepa & Zoe Prings-Flash

COLDWATER SPRING 5601 Minnehaha Park Dr South, Minneapolis, MN 55111

- Observe native plants and animals
- Take a Ranger On Call walking self-tour

Tree Nurseries

Mary Hammes, Environmental Stewardship and Volunteer Manager,
Mississippi Park Connection



Tree nursery at the Science Museum of Minnesota.

Young trees have a difficult time growing in our urban national park environment; therefore, we're giving them a boost with gravel bed nurseries. These tree nurseries are a fantastic tool to help reforest areas along the river that are suffering from Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestations, and play a vital role for tree survivability for our *Plant for the Future* campaign – a proactive plan to protect the tree canopy in the park.

Trees purchased as bare-root stock are lightweight, easy to plant, affordable, and available in a variety of diverse species. Once purchased, the trees are planted in a foot of gravel in the springtime and irrigated throughout the summer.

The power of this tool is what happens below the gravel, out of sight. When fall comes, the trees are taken out of the beds with three times the fibrous roots more than they had in spring! This makes them much more successful when planted. One of our first gravel bed nurseries was built in partnership with Urban Roots, a local nonprofit on the east side of St. Paul, dedicated to cultivating and empowering youth through nature, healthy food, and community. The conservation youth interns built a nursery in the fall of 2017 and will install their trees this spring in forests near Battle Creek Regional Park. Together, we will use this tool to reforest natural areas along the river.



Roots of a bare-root tree before going into a gravel bed.



Roots of a bare-root tree after going into a gravel bed, showing the fibrous root system produced.



MAP LEGEND

-  Boundaries of the park (areas shaded green)
-  Mississippi River Paddle Share Stations
Rent a kayak at www.paddleshare.org
-  Mississippi River Visitor Center
Located at the Science Museum of Minnesota
-  Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam
Visitor Center open during summer months
-  Ranger On Call Stations
Audio tours, www.rangeroncall.com

SITES ALONG THE RIVER

- 1 Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park
- 2 River Park
- 3 Manomin County Park
- 4 North Mississippi Regional Park
- 5 Mississippi Watershed Management Org.
- 6 Boom Island
- 7 Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam
- 8 Stone Arch Bridge
- 9 Mill Ruins Park
- 10 Minnehaha Regional Park
- 11 Coldwater Spring
- 12 Fort Snelling State Park
- 13 Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm Regional Park
- 14 Pickerel Lake
- 15 Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park
- 16 Mississippi River Visitor Center
- 17 Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary
- 18 Lions Levee Park
- 19 Spring Lake Park Reserve
- 20 Hastings Riverfront

MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL RIVER & RECREATION AREA

Learn more about the national park in the Twin Cities at nps.gov/miss

MAY - SEPTEMBER 2018

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Photo by Tom Matre

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

M = Members Only Event

V = Volunteer Opportunity

F = Fundraiser Event

APR

April 29 Rooted Red Ale @ Dangerous Man Brewing Company **F**

MAY

May 19 The Big Watch @ Grey Cloud Dunes SNA

May 19 Kids in Parks Day @ Mississippi River Visitor Center

May 25 Mississippi River Paddle Share – Opens for the summer

May 26 Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock & Dam – Opens for the summer

May 31 Cocktails for the Canopy @ Crosby Farm Regional Park **F**

JUNE

June 3 Grand Old Day @ Patagonia St. Paul

June 8 Get Outdoors Day @ Powderhorn Park

June 10 Take a Kid Fishing @ Thompson County Park

June 16 Visit NPS at the Stone Arch Bridge Festival (thru June 17)

June 19 Bike with a Ranger @ Hastings

June 21 Public Habitat Restoration @ Grey Cloud Dunes SNA **V**

June 23 Pontoon Tour @ Harriet Island **M**

June 27 Murder on the Mississippi @ Harriet Island

June 30 River Raft RAVE @ Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park **V**

June 30 Bike with a Ranger @ The Commons

JULY

July 10 Bike with a Ranger @ The Commons

July 12 Pontoon Tour @ Harriet Island **M**

July 14 Heron Paddle with Ranger Sharon

July 17 Family Fishing @ Hastings

July 18 Murder on the Mississippi @ Harriet Island

July 28 Canoe RAVE @ Mississippi River West Regional Park **V**

July 28 Bike with a Ranger @ The Commons

AUG

Aug 4 Groveland Gallery Artists @ Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock & Dam

Aug 11 Bike with a Ranger @ The Commons

Aug 16 Pontoon Tour @ Harriet Island **M**

Aug 18 Canoe RAVE @ Lion's Levee Park **V**

Aug 21 Bike with a Ranger @ Hastings

Aug 23 Visit NPS at the MN State Fair (thru Labor Day)

SEPT

Sept 11 Bike with a Ranger @ The Commons

Sept 13 Public Habitat Restoration @ Grey Cloud Dunes SNA **V**

Sept 14 Illuminate the Lock Begins @ Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock & Dam

Sept 22 National Public Lands Day @ Coldwater Spring **V**

Members receive free or discounted registration for most programs, plus invitations to special members-only events. Join today at parkconnection.org/membership.

All events are subject to change.

CONTACT INFORMATION



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National Park Service
Mississippi River Visitor Center
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CONNECT WITH US



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Email info@parkconnection.org
or call 651-291-8164