

# MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEWS

---

SPRING/SUMMER 2023



## One Awesome Mississippi

Anna Waugh, Interim Executive Director, Mississippi Park Connection  
Tucker Blythe, Superintendent, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

Be awed on the Mississippi River and discover the wonder of a day outdoors. No matter the weather, there is so much to learn and explore.

Join us on the Mississippi River this summer! Paddle with a Ranger will delight your senses. From early summer floods to deep summer blooms to splendid, crispy autumn hues, you will experience something new each time you kayak on the river. Listen to the nighttime sounds of the river's nightlife: frogs, insects, and nighttime birds will become illuminated at Park After Dark.

Explore the history of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area at Mystery on the Mississippi River. Back on the Jonathan Padelford Riverboat again for the first time since 2019, this immersive theater experience blends a fictional story with real historical events to intrigue audiences as they cruise along the mighty Mississippi.

When you've made your connection to the river, we invite you to give back by attending a volunteer stewardship event. Plant a tree with us at National Public Lands Day this fall or join a regularly scheduled volunteer crew at Mill Ruins Park or Coldwater Spring/Mni Owe Sni or Riverfront Park.

Support park rangers at the Mississippi River Visitor Center or Saint Anthony Falls or create memories aboard Amtrak trains through the popular Trails and Rails Program. There are so many volunteer positions to explore. Find your next adventure at the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

**We can't wait to see you out on the river!**



## Lower Landing Park

Will Mathews, Park Ranger, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

If you visit St. Paul's Lower Landing today you'll find an unassuming park. You might not guess that this was once the location of St. Paul's main port. Early photographs show steamboats at the levee and capture workers walking, chatting, and lifting with horses and carts in blurred motion among piles of goods. They remind us of a familiar narrative: that St. Paul was born on the river, nurtured by commerce, and grew to prosperity by being a place of connections. In early decades, the lower landing was the city's crucial connection point.

Steamboats packed with immigrants and transplants came ashore here in the heady decades after the 1851 Dakota treaties. If there's one place in our park that evokes Ellis Island, this is it. The arrivals came for land, with plans to settle or speculate, and transformed the region as they did.

Importantly, there are other sides to this story. The city created by these arrivals upended an earlier world, built by native people and shaped by centuries of trade. Kaposia, a Dakota village, lay downriver from the Lower Landing until 1853, long enough for residents to see surveyors lay out town lots and protest settlers who "showered down" homes around them. What did the landing mean to them?

And what did it mean to settlers like Jim Thompson? Thompson came to Fort Snelling an enslaved man in 1827. He found freedom and opportunity in the multicultural world of the fur trade. He married into an important Dakota family, became an interpreter at Kaposia, and then a carpenter, liquor dealer, ferry operator, and church founder. The arrival of settlers would dim his prospects and import familiar lines of racial division to the city.

The Lower Landing is still a place where you can consider the region's transformative migration. It is a reminder of the Mississippi River's power to connect, and of the inequitable consequences that can flow from connection.

Photo courtesy of Mary Hammes

More information: [stpaul.gov/facilities/lower-landing-park](http://stpaul.gov/facilities/lower-landing-park)

## MAY - SEPTEMBER EVENT CALENDAR

### MAY

- 13+14** Doors Open Minneapolis @ St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam
- 20** SNA: Spring 'N to Action! @ Grey Cloud Dunes
- 27** Mississippi River Paddle Share Season Opener @paddleshare.org

### JUNE

- 3** St. Anthony Falls Visitor Center Season Opener
- 6** Adaptive Paddle @ Pickerel Lake (Lilydale Regional Park)
- 11** Two Paddles Race @ Coon Rapids Regional Park
- 22** Mystery on the Mississippi @ Harriet Island Park
- 22** Share the River Northeast @ Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

### JULY

- 6** History Cruise @ Watergate Marina
- 7** Let's Go Fishing! @ Mississippi Gateway Regional Park
- 8** Wander and Wonder Walk @ Crosby Farm Regional Park
- 11** Party in the Park @ Levee Park (Hastings)
- 15** Bike with a Ranger @ Levee Park (Hastings)
- 21** Park After Dark @ Crosby Farm Regional Park
- 27** Mystery on the Mississippi @ Harriet Island Park

### AUGUST

- 1** Adaptive Paddle @ Pickerel Lake (Lilydale Regional Park)
- 3** Picnic for the Park Annual Fundraiser @ Harriet Island Park
- 4** Let's Go Fishing! @ Mississippi Gateway Regional Park
- 10** History Cruise @ Watergate Marina
- 12** Wander and Wonder Walk @ Crosby Farm Regional Park
- 17** Mystery on the Mississippi @ Harriet Island Park
- 18** Park After Dark @ Crosby Farm Regional Park
- 19** Bike with a Ranger @ Levee Park (Hastings)
- 22** Adaptive Paddle @ Pickerel Lake (Lilydale Regional Park)

### SEPTEMBER

- 7** History Cruise @ Watergate Marina
- 8** Let's Go Fishing! @ Mississippi Gateway Regional Park
- 9** Wander and Wonder Walk @ Crosby Farm Regional Park
- 9** Park After Dark @ Crosby Farm Regional Park
- 16** Bike with a Ranger @ Levee Park (Hastings)
- 21** Mystery on the Mississippi @ Harriet Island Park
- 23** National Public Lands Day

All events are subject to change. Current information and registration is available at [parkconnection.org/events](http://parkconnection.org/events). We hope to see you out on the river!

## Forestry Project Update

Abby Daniel, Graduate Student, Dept. of Forest Resources, UMN

The Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change (ASCC) research site has survived yet another winter thanks to the Crosby Crew – a group of volunteers who look after the study site. This year marks its third year since more than 200 volunteers helped install 24 test plots and planted more than 1,000 test trees at Crosby Farm Regional Park. Three tree methods were examined: Resistance, Resilience, and Transition.

So far, the trees in the Resilience plots have had the highest total average survival rates, Resistance plots are at a close second, and Transition plots are the lowest.

Volunteers, staff, and AmeriCorps members have spent the past three years monitoring the sites. This site has depended on the work of local community volunteers from the project's beginning. Join their efforts by checking on equipment, collecting data, or joining the Crosby Crew, a group that gathers regularly to maintain the plots ([parkconnection.org/volunteer](http://parkconnection.org/volunteer)).

Photo courtesy of Mississippi Park Connection



More information: [parkconnection.org/ascc](http://parkconnection.org/ascc)

FEARLESS COMEDY  
MISSISSIPPI PARK CONNECTION  
MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL RIVER AND RECREATION AREA

present

# BACK to the BOAT

A HISTORICAL MURDER MYSTERY EXPERIENCE\*

June 22 | July 27 | August 17 | September 21

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
TICKETS: \$35 | MEMBERS: \$20

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[WWW.PARKCONNECTION.ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.PARKCONNECTION.ORG/EVENTS)

\*THIS IS A FICTIONAL STORY

# Transportation Options for Paddle Share

Lily Jones, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Mississippi Park Connection

Paddle Share is a self-service kayak rental that enables users to enjoy the wonders of the Mississippi River by renting equipment at a number of stations along the river. There are several transportation options to help you get to where you need to go without the need for a shuttle. Users can take advantage of ride share services or a taxi, but there are some great alternative transportation options as well.

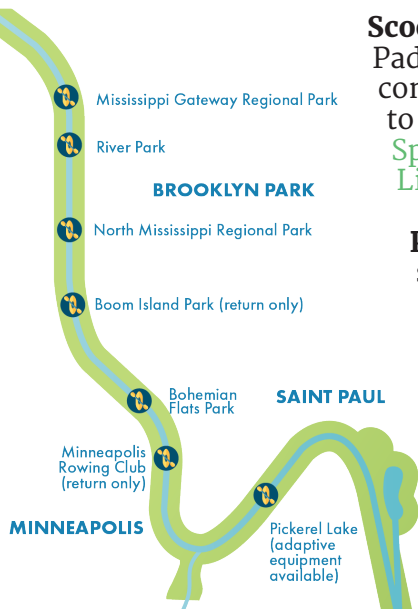
**Run & Paddle:** Each of the Paddle Share routes offers off road options for jogging. Runners and walkers have the option to combine paddling with running routes that range from 3 to 8.5 miles.

The gorge route offers the opportunity for a leisurely 5K along West River Road. You can also go “off road” by running the Winchell Trail for the segment between the Lake Street and Franklin Avenue bridges. Make sure to bring water with you.

**Scooter/Bike Rental:** For the Minneapolis Paddle Share routes, a variety of rental companies can give you a zippy alternative to walking or running. Download **Lime, Spin and Veo** for scooter rental. Download **Lime and Veo** for e-bike rental.

**Pickerel Lake:** Paddle Share’s only lake station, Pickerel Lake users will begin and end their journey from the same place.

**Bus/Train:** Metro Transit can also help you plan your trip, especially if you have extra time to get to your destination and don’t mind some walking. Plan your trip by visiting [metrotransit.org](http://metrotransit.org).



# Ways to Get Involved



**PARTICIPATE**

Explore the history, culture, and ecology of the Mississippi River through recreational activities, art events, educational programs, PaddleShare.org, and visitor centers.

Sign up for our newsletters to stay informed!

**SUPPORT**

Gifts support youth education, habitat restoration, and community programs in the national park while strengthening your commitment to preserve, protect, and enjoy the Mississippi River.

**\$1,000**  
St. Anthony Falls Level

**\$250**  
Community

**\$60**  
Family

**\$35**  
Individual

**ACTIVATE**

Volunteers of all kinds are a crucial component in park operations, school programs, and habitat restoration. Volunteering is a fun and rewarding way to connect to your community while providing the public with a connection to the river.

[parkconnection.org/volunteer](http://parkconnection.org/volunteer)

Artwork by graphic design volunteer Yana Cherepashenskaya

# Twin Cities Educators Develop Curriculum for the River

David Kappelhoff, Education Specialist, Mississippi Park Connection

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and Mississippi Park Connection are working together with the City of Saint Paul and other entities to plan for a new River Learning Center and headquarters for the national park. The vision is a new park facility and campus that will serve Twin Cities public schools with robust place-based, experiential, and outdoor education programs that also meet the formal educational needs of classroom teachers and their students.

A grant from the National Park Foundation has made it possible to create a program plan for youth education at the new River Learning Center that is fully designed by local educators. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create outdoor programs that can impact Twin Cities students for a generation in a unique location within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. It is also an opportunity for the park to revamp its approach toward learning and outdoor education, and to modernize its methods.

The Education Resource Development Team was formed in December and consists of current and former educators, program directors, and education leaders from around the Twin Cities area who have experience with developing field trips and place-based learning experiences. The dozen team members are working together for six months to develop both place-based field trips and pre- and post lessons for the classroom. Some of the field trips will pilot with schools in early June and others at later dates.

A wide variety of topics have been discussed with work being developed for many river-related areas including geology and water engineering; animal studies within the floodplain forest ecosystem; water quality testing; indigenous connections with water; and a revamped approach to the 20-plus-year Big River Journey program.

Combined with existing programs, these new programs are aimed at serving a wide range of grade levels from grades 1-8, and help to unite multiple learning areas for educators to explore with their students throughout an entire school year. The resource development team is laying the groundwork for developing engaged and inquisitive students who will learn deeply from the river and its surroundings.

Image illustration courtesy of Great River Passage Conservancy



# Paddle With A Ranger: Pickerel Lake & North Mississippi Regional Park

Lily Jones, Marketing and Communications Coordinator  
Mississippi Park Connection

Paddle with a Ranger is back! Explore unique areas of the Mississippi River on guided river tours this summer. Park rangers and trained river guides from Paddle Bridge Guide Collective and Mississippi Park Connection will provide instruction and equipment for an adventure on the water for a wide range of experience and ability levels.

Kayaks, paddles, and life-jackets will be provided by the National Park Service and Mississippi River Paddle Share.

## Pickerel Lake

Pickerel Lake is located in Lilydale Regional Park, surrounded by floodplain forest and scenic bluffs. It is a wonderful location to be introduced to the world of paddling for beginners or anyone looking for a more predictable paddle. There is an abundance of fish in the lake, and in mid-summer lily pads dot the surface. Look for the eagle's nest near the powerlines, and the river otters that hang out along the forest shoreline across the lake.

The fully outfitted program at Pickerel Lake offers instruction for all abilities, with optional adaptive paddling equipment like supported hand adaptations or specialized outriggers for balance.



## North Mississippi Regional Park

This is a four-mile paddle from North Mississippi Regional Park to Boom Island Park. Get up close with a heron rookery, spot bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and other wildlife as you kayak down the Mississippi River.

On this guided tour, you will also pass by the Upper Harbor Terminal Project site, several industries on the river, the Lowry Avenue Bridge, and the iconic Boom Island lighthouse, with the Minneapolis skyline as your backdrop.

Paddle with a Ranger Programs are held at Lake Vermillion River Bottoms, Mississippi Gateway Regional Park, Pickerel Lake, and North Mississippi Regional Park.



DAYTON

RAMSEY



# MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL RIVER AND RECREATION AREA

## SITES ALONG THE RIVER

- 1 Mississippi West Regional Park
- 2  Mississippi Gateway Regional Park
- 3 Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park
- 4  River Park
- 5 Manomin County Park
- 6  North Mississippi Regional Park
- 7 Mississippi Watershed Management Org.
- 8 Boom Island Park
- 9 Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam  
Visitor Center open during summer months
- 10 Stone Arch Bridge
- 11 Mill Ruins Park
- 12  Bohemian Flats Park
- 13 Minnehaha Regional Park
- 14 Mni Owe Sni / Coldwater Spring
- 15 Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm Regional Park
- 16 Historic Fort Snelling
- 17 Fort Snelling State Park
- 18  Pickerel Lake / Lilydale Regional Park
- 19 Harriet Island Regional Park
- 20 Mississippi River Visitor Center  
Located at the Science Museum of Minnesota
- 21 Wakán Tipi / Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary
- 22 Indian Mounds Regional Park
- 23 Pig's Eye Regional Park
- 24 Lions Levee Park
- 25 Riverside Park
- 26 Pine Bend Bluffs SNA
- 27 Grey Cloud Dunes SNA
- 28 Spring Lake Park Reserve
- 29 Hastings Riverfront
- 30 Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center (WI)

## ICONS



Mississippi River Paddle Share Stations  
Rent a kayak at [www.paddleshare.org](http://www.paddleshare.org)







## MISSISSIPPI PARK CONNECTION

*Discover your river*

Mississippi Park Connection is the official nonprofit partner to the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. We seek to enrich the life of the river and the lives of all who experience the national park through youth education programs, environmental stewardship volunteerism, and outdoor community engagement events.

The Mississippi National River and

Recreation Area is a 72-mile national park, binding together more than 85 state, regional and local parks from Coon Rapids to Hastings. The purpose of the 54,000-acre river park, established by Congress in 1988, is to preserve, protect and enhance the significant values of the waters and land of the Mississippi River corridor.



MISSISSIPPI PARK CONNECTION  
111 Kellogg Blvd E, Suite 105  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
TWIN CITIES, MN  
PERMIT NO. 27734

Edited by Lily Jones , Katie Nyberg and Anna Waugh Cover photograph by Lee Vue. Printed on Minnesota-milled, chlorine-free recycled and recyclable paper with 10% post consumer material.