



# MISSISSIPPI River Fund

2009 – 2010 Annual Report



**“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else.” – John Muir**

## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

The Mississippi River Fund and the National Park Service are powerful partners. Only by working together can we bring many worthy park projects to fruition. At the fund, we rely on many skills to champion our park—flexibility, expertise, leverage, and publicity, to name a few. These are skills and resources we are happy to share with the National Park Service because we care so much about the Mississippi River. We all rely on the park’s exemplary public programs, thoughtful insight into riverfront development, and protection of our community’s rich history. This year our relationship has been strengthened in several meaningful ways.

Thanks to the generosity of the National Park Service, the Mississippi River Fund has moved its offices to the park’s headquarters in downtown St. Paul. We are also pleased to announce that we have expanded the staff of the Mississippi River Fund to include a Volunteer Program Coordinator. Our goal is to support the National Park Service’s “Volunteers-in-Parks” program and truly integrate their program with the Mississippi River Fund’s. We have already launched a new series of events called “River Action Volunteer Events” (RAVEs) that will match up river recreation with habitat restoration and clean-ups.

More and more, our partnership is receiving national attention as a stand out partnership for national parks. In August, our park was the focus of a listening session on President Obama’s “America’s Great Outdoors” initiative. Our park has also been

selected to be part of the First Lady’s nationwide campaign to end childhood obesity within a generation. “Let’s Move Outside” is incorporated into our Junior Ranger program to make it easy for kids to get outdoors and be active.

Our partnership continues to flourish because of our generous community. Thank you for all that you do to support our vision for the Mississippi River. We hope you enjoy reading about a few partnerships from the past year that we are especially proud of. Please visit our web site at [missriverfund.org](http://missriverfund.org) to learn more about our programs and to register for upcoming events. And don’t forget to sign up for our e-newsletter and stay in touch!

Thank you for your support!

Beth Dooley  
Co-Chair

Ellen Grace  
Co-Chair

Katie Nyberg  
Executive Director



Beth Dooley and Ellen Grace



Katie Nyberg



Every once in a while I get to boat and fish on one of my favorite stretches of the river, just below the Ford Dam. One summer evening in July, my friend Greg Lais and I were heading back in on the boat and we saw so many people enjoying the river—sitting around small campfires at Hidden Falls, playing the guitar, and picnicking. Across the river, the bank was lined with people skipping rocks, fishing, walking, wading; families and people with their dogs, each enjoying their little escape from city life. I never get tired of being on the river and having that experience. It reminds me how important our work is, to protect and promote the river and our park so that everyone can benefit.

With over 9 million visitors to the Mississippi National River and Recreation area each year, there are boundless opportunities for interpretation, public engagement, and service. I am proud to say that we have continued to cultivate relationships with many great organizations, particularly the Mississippi River Fund. Partnerships like ours are fundamental to the success of park programs and our efforts in protecting this special resource.

Perhaps no program exemplifies the power of collaboration more than Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures, a partnership between the National Park Service, Wilderness Inquiry, and the Mississippi River Fund. In its second year, we successfully paddled with more than 7,000 kids on the river—many in a canoe for the first time.

This year we also focused on the development of our water quality initiative. A new program, the Science Training and Research Skills internship, allowed four undergraduate interns to perform their own full-time research on the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers this summer with the help of professional scientist mentors. This collaborative program with the Mississippi River Fund and the Science Museum of Minnesota has increased our scientific

knowledge of the river's ecosystem. This was also the first project conducted cooperatively between our park and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

The St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers are connected both physically and conceptually, as they share much in the way of natural resources, recreational opportunities, and management issues and challenges. This year, we entered into a sister park agreement in order to better protect, preserve, and promote the parks and their significant natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Our park has earned its spot at the table in shaping land use decisions, water quality planning, and program work throughout the 72-mile park region. I am pleased the Mississippi River Fund is sitting beside us, and I look forward to another year in partnership.

Sincerely,

Paul Labovitz  
Superintendent  
Mississippi National River & Recreation Area

**“Partnership skills are a core competency. Our employees must be able to find and welcome partners, to reach common ground and leverage each other’s skills and resources.”**

– Jon Jarvis, National Park Service Director



Melissa Buss

# DOWN TO THE RIVER

One of our strategic goals is to get people to and on the river—to create more opportunities for people to experience the Mississippi River through park programs and recreation. In support of this ongoing initiative, the Mississippi River Fund helped fund these projects that brought more people to our park in 2009–2010.

## Mississippi River Companion

It is easier than ever to explore the river thanks to the new Mississippi River Companion, a recreation guide to our national park. The Mississippi River Fund helped finance the publication, which includes 26 maps of the river from Dayton/Ramsey to Hastings, Minnesota. Feature stories throughout the book tell of the area's history and provide information to help visitors plan their outings in the park. The guide directs users to water trails, boat landings, marinas, bicycle and pedestrian trails, major landmarks, historical sites, parks, and natural areas along the river. The free guides are available at the Mississippi River Visitor Center, and a digital version is available online at [nps.gov/miss](http://nps.gov/miss).

## A New Voyageur Canoe

Getting more than 7,000 kids on the Mississippi River each summer requires the paddling power of many canoes. To help get even more people on the river, the Mississippi River Fund purchased a 24-foot cedar strip Voyageur canoe that will benefit the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures program and the national park. The canoe was built locally by NorthWest Canoe in Lowertown, St. Paul.

**“When you watch those kids get in the boats down here and shove off, they are riveted. They are paying attention.”**

— Greg Lais, Executive Director of Wilderness Inquiry, and UWCA partner

## Fishing in Your National Park

More than 650 people participated in the park's new fishing program this year with the help of new equipment purchased by the Mississippi River Fund. From winter ice fishing to the “Festival of Fish” in July, there are opportunities year round to borrow free fishing gear, get out on the river with a Park Ranger, and learn about the wide variety of fish that live within the park corridor. A new partnership with Neighborhood House in St. Paul also gave Park Rangers the opportunity to work with gang member intervention and outreach through the fishing program.



Melissa Buss



Jeffrey Thompson, Minnesota Public Radio.org



# TAKING THE RIVER'S VITAL SIGNS

The Mississippi River Fund's Vital Signs initiative supports projects that focus on environmental change. Early detection of potential problems allows park managers to take steps to restore the ecological health of the river before serious damage occurs. The following Vital Signs projects are currently being supported by the Mississippi River Fund.



## Migratory Bird Survey

Millions of migratory birds use the Mississippi River as a flyway each fall on their trips to warmer waters in the south. Now in its second year, a National Park Service-led survey of bird populations along the river is providing new information about total population sizes, habitat, and the waterfowl's response to management actions. Because of the scope and timing of the study, it may also provide valuable information about the effects of the gulf oil spill on migratory birds.

**“Every day in the plane is an adventure...when you are just a few hundred feet above canvasback ducks and they all take off and spread out below the plane...it’s a sight few people ever get to witness and I’m honored to see it.”**

– Sharon Stiteler, lead National Park Ranger on aerial bird survey

## STARS Program

The Mississippi River Fund was proud to support the work of two undergraduate research interns this summer as a part of the Science Training and Research Skills (STARS) internship program, a partnership between the St. Croix Watershed Research Station, the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

The STARS program benefits our park by increasing scientific knowledge of the river ecosystems and awareness of parks as natural laboratories. This year, interns studied sediment cores and created a seed inventory of plant species that have been buried under river mud since the flooding at River Lake in the 1930s. Because buried seeds remain viable for decades, the inventory collected by the interns should predict the types of plants that will grow when the river is lowered. These seeds may be an important factor in repopulating native plant species that were lost or reduced after the flooding following the construction of the Twin Cities' lock and dam system.



**“I really enjoyed being able to be involved with an actual, significant research project as an undergraduate. The opportunity to meet and work with professionals in my field was also quite exciting.”**

– 2010 STARS Intern

# URBAN WILDERNESS CANOE ADVENTURES

**“We’re attempting to close the achievement gap by going outside of the box. We think that getting kids active and engaged through outdoor activities will spark an interest that wasn’t there before.”**

– *Mary Barrie, Director of Alternative Learning for Minneapolis Public Schools*

Through experiential canoe trips and innovative classroom curricula, Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA) introduces Twin Cities youth to the world-class educational, recreational, and natural resource right in their backyard—the Mississippi River.

The UWCA was created in 2008 through a unique partnership between the Mississippi River Fund, the National Park Service, and Wilderness Inquiry. In its second year in 2010, more than 7,000 people participated in UWCA trips and we anticipate reaching our ultimate goal of 10,000 kids by 2011.



Brian Peterson, Star Tribune

**“Supporters raised money to put 10,000 school kids in nature, in canoes on the river, to take them away from the 53 hours a week they spend in front of a monitor or screen and get them outdoors. This, my friends, isn’t a field trip. It’s giving Mother Nature a chance to nurture her young.”**

– *Don Shelby, Mississippi River Fund Trustee*



Brian Peterson, Star Tribune

## Many thanks to the following individuals who made gifts in support of the UWCA

July 1, 2009–June 30, 2010

Darren Acheson & Carol Peterson	Mike Hahn	Kate & Stuart Nielsen
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\* Gifts made to Wilderness Inquiry in support of the UWCA

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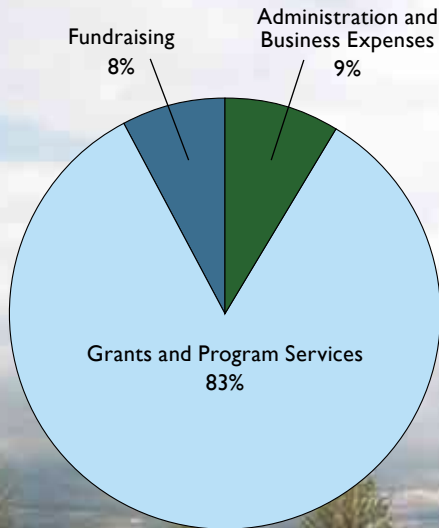
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# FINANCIALS

## Expenses

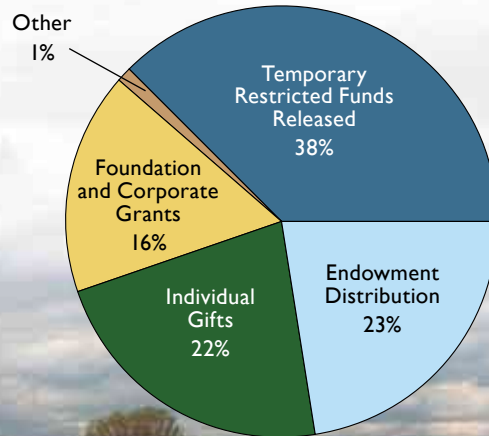
Administration and Business Expenses	\$35,166
Grants and Program Services	\$330,584
Fundraising	\$30,368
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$396,118</b>



## Revenue

Endowment Distribution	\$90,410
Individual Gifts	\$89,560
Foundation and Corporate Grants	\$65,805
Other	\$4,692
Temporary Restricted Funds Released	\$149,551*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$400,018</b>

\* \$151,951 raised in the previous year was available for 2009-10 operations. \$29,676 raised in 2009-10 is available for 2010-11 operations and not reflected here.



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