

GOLD  
MEDAL  
FLOUR

# MISSISSIPPI River Fund



2010 – 2011 Annual Report

# Community Collaboration, Raising Awareness, and New Opportunities

**Katie Nyberg**  
MRF Executive Director

**Tricia Davidson**  
MRF Board Chair

**Paul Labovitz**  
Superintendent,  
Mississippi National River  
& Recreation Area



**Katie:** We wanted to do something different for this year's annual report. Rather than having a long letter from each of us, I thought our readers would appreciate hearing an open and candid conversation about our partnership.

**Paul:** I would have preferred a music video of us.

**Katie:** It's an annual report, Paul—there's always next year. So, I just returned from Washington D.C., where I attended the bi-annual Friends Alliance meeting for the National Parks. It struck me that when I'm in DC talking to groups, it's very clear who we are and what our relationship is with the park. Locally, though, we struggle to explain what a "friends group" is. How do you answer that question?

**Tricia:** When I tell people about the fund, I talk about how it's our goal to support the park through fundraising and other resources and build the community using the park as a venue.

**Paul:** I like to say that the Mississippi River Fund is a Friend with a capital "F." You help us accomplish more through fundraising and raising awareness. We've organized around our affection for this great national park.

**Katie:** That's a great way to put it, Paul. We have a lot coming up in the next couple of years. What projects are you most excited about?

**Paul:** The Coldwater site demolition and restoration is an exciting project. Soon, we'll be able to show people a restored oak savannah on the Mississippi River, at a site owned by the National Park Service.

The Asian carp issue is another big one—that's a potentially large ecological threat to the river. We're coordinating many folks on this issue. We don't know yet where it's going to go, but the issue is important and we're right in the center of it.

**Tricia:** I echo what Paul said about the exciting future of the park and the fund, but in a different way. As friends of the park, I think it is our moment to build awareness and help people realize the opportunity to experience one of the best parts of the city—after all, we have an urban national park right here.

While the Asian carp issue is a foreboding challenge, it's also raising awareness for the river and the park. Sometimes it's through crisis that people begin to appreciate and rally around opportunity.

Mississippi River Fund  
program highlights and  
accomplishments in  
**2010-2011**



New mobile  
park unit brings  
the river to  
where you live



First-ever  
Asian Carp DNA  
study in the  
Twin Cities



**400** water quality  
professionals attend  
Mississippi River  
Forum events



**Katie:** As the park's charitable partner, I am excited to help move projects forward, like the Coldwater site, trail development, and land and habitat restoration for wildlife and the public. These projects are not only for the public who will visit, but for people who end up taking ownership of these places through volunteer opportunities.

**Tricia:** Volunteerism with the fund and the park is on a great trajectory. Minnesotans have always been strong advocates for volunteerism. Having a venue for more people to participate in the park's work is fabulous. There are so many opportunities and the benefits for the river will be tremendous.

**Katie:** Tricia, one of the things I think our readers will want to know is what inspires you to spend so much of your time with the fund and the park?

**Tricia:** There are two things for me. First, the decisions I've made in my life about where I spend my time are focused on people who want to make a difference with their actions. When I found the opportunity to work with the fund and the park, that's exactly what I found.

The other thing is that I hit my 40s and realized that community involvement and participation is really a responsibility. This is one way I can give back to my community in an area that is very important to me.

**Katie:** Is there anything else you want to make sure is heard by our readers?

**Paul:** Without gushing, I just want to hug the Mississippi River Fund for enabling us to do things we would never be able to do with federal funding alone. Your ability to raise our capacity to deliver great programs and attract new partners is critical. You are able to broker new relationships that help us grow immensely.

**Katie:** Well, the feeling is mutual, Paul. Our partnership allows us to attract community and philanthropic leaders who know they can make a difference by supporting the fund because of our partnership with the National Park Service.

Now it's time to let our readers learn more about our partner projects by exploring the rest of the annual report. Thanks, Paul and Tricia.



**50%** of Big River Journey students receive scholarships from the fund



**500** River Citizens join the 1 Mississippi Campaign



Mayor Coleman, Superintendent Labovitz, Bernadia Johnson, Greg Lais, Mary Barrie, and Mayor Rybak at UWCA benefit event hosted by Garrison Keillor in June 2011



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# Floored by Volunteering

By Kate Havelin



The best part about volunteering at the Mississippi River Visitor Center is something most people just walk over without a glance.

I love sitting on the floor with visitors, pinpointing precisely where their house is on our floor graphic of the park. Some find their house and go. But often, once home is spotted, visitors begin to see more. They see the connection between their lives and the national park in our backyards. Sitting on the floor, they tell river stories—the heron they saw last week, their fishing trips, their latest walk across the Headwaters.

Volunteering with the park and the Mississippi River Fund lets me see the river coursing through our community. It's been a gift for me to see so many others who consider the river, our urban park, as innate as the air we breathe and the trails we walk.

Some people think volunteering is about giving to others. It's true, volunteers like me give our time and we do help, but we get more than we give. I've acquired more knowledge about the river, and more connections with people I like to be with, and more chances to see how this national park is a bridge, linking people and the river.



**9,000** people paddle the river through Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures



Funding partner for Emmy award-winning *Troubled Waters* film



**111** new snowshoes for park programming



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# Inspiring a New Era of Park Recreation

By **Mikaela Kramer**  
Outreach Specialist, REI



REI and the Mississippi River Fund have been strong partners for years now. It has been such a rewarding experience to see the impact we've had on the community together, from local events, classes, programs, and product donations, to supporting the fund's River Action Volunteer Events (RAVEs) through grants from REI. The RAVEs are so unique in that they combine a volunteer opportunity with an outdoor recreation experience. I love the model for this program and am very proud REI is able to help support it.

Last winter, REI also donated our rental snowshoes to the Mississippi River Fund. I wanted to find a local partner that would be willing to start a snowshoeing program to serve the community, and the fund came to mind right away. The donation worked out beautifully and now the National Park Service has made the program a reality.

In addition to developing a great working partnership, I truly value the friendships I have made through the fund and all that we are able to accomplish together.



Melissa Buss

Otter survey monitors increasing population in the park



New virtual tour unveiled



102 bags of trash and invasive plants collected on River Action Volunteer Events



Ranger Sharon on third annual migratory bird survey

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# Fostering Research

**By Jerald Dosch**

Director, Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area, Macalester College



© Steve Wolt

Jerald examines a Baltimore Oriole at BioBlitz

I direct Macalester College's Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area along the Mississippi River in Inver Grove Heights. Our partnership with the Mississippi River Fund and the National Park Service has been immensely important and has helped the Ordway Field Station with all four pillars of its mission: education, civic engagement, research, and sustainability. The fund made it possible for us to host the 2011 Minnesota BioBlitz, a wonderful scientific festival in which approximately 100 people cataloged over 500 species, in conjunction with a RAVE river cleanup event. The BioBlitz was 24 hours of education, community engagement, and research all wrapped into one amazingly fun event. The fund provided volunteers, leadership, crucial connections with the park and its rangers, facilitating cooperation with other partners, and funding through a grant from Patagonia. We are building on the success of our relationship by working with the fund and the park to develop a strategic partnership that will allow us to increase cooperative outreach and scientific research in our section of the park. It has been a great year and the future of our collaboration looks even brighter!



Melissa Buss



Melissa Buss



Patrick O'Leary



Stock Photo



Melissa Buss

**511** species identified during BioBlitz 2011



**39** bald eagle nests discovered in annual park survey



**579** corporate volunteers from **11** corporations donate **2,071** hours of service



**Shop the river!** Mississippi River Fund rolls out new merchandise to benefit national park



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# Contributors

July 1, 2010 –  
June 30, 2011



## Contributions of \$20,000 and above

David Winton Bell Foundation  
F.R. Bigelow Foundation  
The Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation  
Mary Lee Dayton  
The McKnight Foundation  
Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. \*  
National Park Foundation

## Contributions of \$5,000 to \$19,999

Duffy & Partners \*  
Ecolab Foundation  
General Mills Foundation  
Anne Larsen Simonson/Larsen Fund  
Medtronic Foundation  
National Park Service \*  
Kate and Stuart Nielsen  
RBC Dain Rauscher Foundation  
REI  
Unilever Foundation  
Vinaya Foundation  
Xcel Energy Foundation

## Contributions of \$1,000 to \$4,999

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Ed and Libby Hlavka  
Okabena Advisors  
Patagonia \*  
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SmartWool Advocacy Fund  
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Jon and Christine Galloway  
Eric Michael and Josh Hillger  
Richard and Suzanne Pepin  
Joanne Von Blon

## Contributions of \$250 to \$499

3M Matching Gift Fund  
Conley and Marney Brooks  
W. John Driscoll  
Bruce and Brigid Hansen  
Thomas Meyer and Martha Meyer-Von Blon  
Doug and Therese Moore  
Jim Roe  
Mary Vaughan

## Contributions of \$100 to \$249

Jane Andrews  
Susan Boren  
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Clif Bar and Company \*  
John and Page Cowles  
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Wilma Gitchel  
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Amos Rosenbloom and Marcia McDonald  
Lisa Schmid  
Steve Simon  
Heinz Stefan  
Jeanne and Steven Tanamachi  
Marilyn Thompson  
Stephanie Van D'Elden

## Contributions up to \$99

Anonymous in honor of Mr. Krahl  
Ronald Abrahamson  
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Jean and John Wolf

**Thanks to the individuals and organizations who so generously supported the fund in 2010-2011.**

*\* Contributions of In Kind Support*



Ranger Dietzman rescues injured heron chicks after tornado demolished the river's largest great blue heron rookery

Big River Journey serves 50,000 students

Sponsor of Mississippi Megalops River Excursions during Northern Spark festival

5,495 volunteers donate 27,052 hours to the park

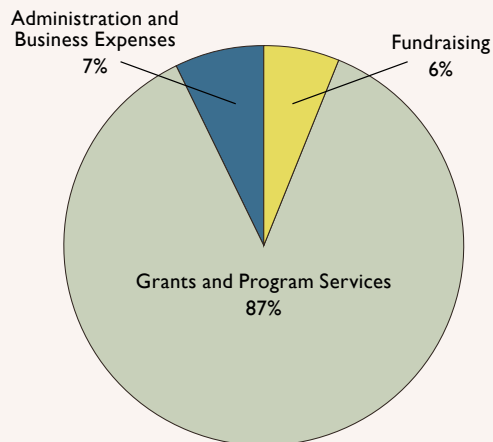
## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS



# Financials

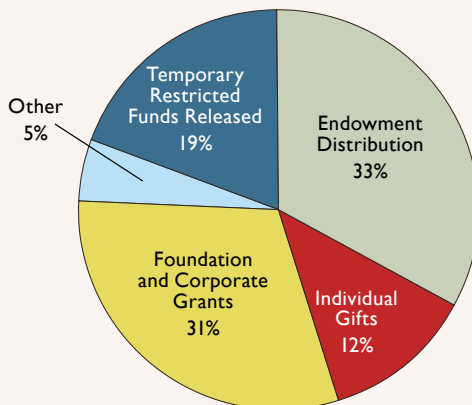
## Expenses

Fundraising	\$26,117
Grants and Program Services	\$354,744
Administration and Business Expenses	\$29,437
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$410,298</b>



## Revenue

Endowment Distribution	\$137,400
Individual Gifts	\$50,820
Foundation and Corporate Grants	\$127,025
Other	\$20,010
Temporary Restricted Funds Released	\$79,048
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$414,303</b>



\* \$32,076 raised in the previous year was available for 2010-11 operations. \$114,424 raised in 2010-11 is available for 2011-12 operations and not reflected here.

**MISSISSIPPI**  
River Fund

111 Kellogg Blvd E, Suite 105, Saint Paul, MN 55101  
651-291-8164 • [info@missriverfund.org](mailto:info@missriverfund.org)  
[www.missriverfund.org](http://www.missriverfund.org)

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