



# MISSISSIPPI PARK CONNECTION

*Discover your river*



**Annual Report**  
2014-2015



## Get Connected!

We completed our recent fiscal year by selecting a new name and visual identity for the Mississippi River Fund. As of October, we have officially changed our name to Mississippi Park Connection. Our new name is a better reflection of our mission to strengthen the connection between people and the Mississippi River's national park.

We are particularly pleased with the new connections we have made this year. Thanks to new partners like Ultra Creative and Studio Mpls, our programs like Ranger on Call have benefitted from great graphic design. Our Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures fellows connected thousands of students to the Mississippi River and our community volunteers continue to bring more and more of their friends and colleagues to the park for habitat restoration and education programs.

New board members Dianne Hickok, Kristin Rasmussen, Chris Mortenson, and Stephanie Zawistowski bring new connections to the organization and bolster our expertise in finance, science, education, and public policy. We are also proud to welcome new staff members Alora K. Jones, Mary Hammes and Connie Xiong. Our staff members are creating new relationships with members of the community every day—opening eyes to the national treasure we have in our backyard.

As we look forward to celebrating the National Park Service Centennial next year, we will have the opportunity to expand our impact—from scholarships for school field trips, to community-wide days of play in our park, to a new visitor center at the Science Museum—more and more people will be able to discover their river. We look forward to connecting with you in 2016. Thank you for your support!

  
Jay Cowles  
Board Chair

  
Katie Nyberg  
Executive Director

From top:  
Jay Cowles,  
Katie Nyberg  
and John Anfinson

Photos by Eric Haugen



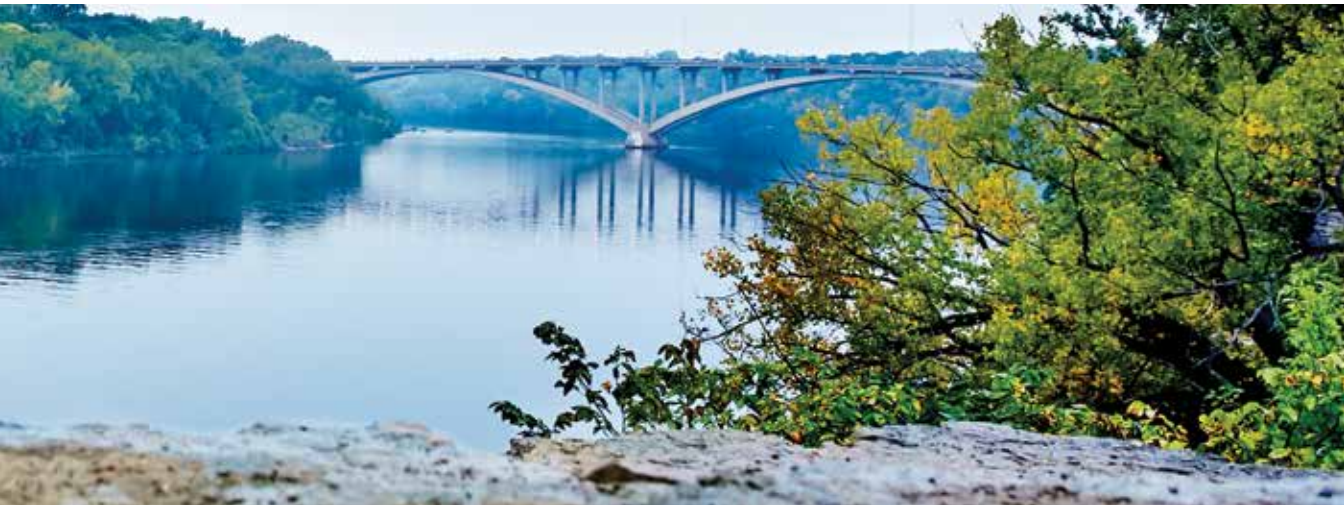


Photo by Tom Matre Photography



Mississippi Park Connection and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area work closely in many arenas. From habitat restoration programs, to signature events, like National Public Lands Day, to the popular River City Revue, our staff and volunteers work toward a common cause of engaging the public with the river. This year, however, was marked by close collaboration on the planning for two things that will not come to fruition until 2016.



Next year, we will celebrate the National Park Service Centennial and we have spent a lot of time this year planning for it. Thanks to our terrific partnership, we have formed a steering committee and have developed a robust calendar of events and programs. To commemorate the centennial, the Connection has set its most ambitious fundraising goal ever, a large portion of which includes revamping our visitor center in the Science Museum of Minnesota.



Both projects demonstrate that the park could not be as successful as it is without Mississippi Park Connection. The Connection brings together private philanthropy and boots on the ground assistance to help us deliver programs and events to engage our broad community.

Thank you for supporting Mississippi Park Connection!

**John Anfinson**

Superintendent, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

# MISSISSIPPI PARK CONNECTION

## A Year by the Numbers



### VOLUNTEERS

**1,758** Hours served at Coldwater Spring—and **20,431** hours across all programs including education, habitat restoration, and special events.

**172** Groups, including **1,052** corporate volunteers and **2,422** community members and youth, gave **9,171** hours to the habitat restoration program.

**9** Years of service Lee Larson, Volunteer of the Year, has given to our national park.



### PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



**3,000** Community members experienced their park through public programs.

Volunteers paddled and restored the river at **5** River Action Volunteer Events.

Artists and musicians gathered at **4** River City Revues.

Families found fossils and banded birds at **5** Second Saturday events.

Visitors walked or biked **6** Ranger on Call audio tours.





## YOUTH EDUCATION

18,128

Students served from Minneapolis–St. Paul and the surrounding metro area.

1/2

Of all students on Big River Journey and Journey to the Falls received a full scholarship to attend their national park field trip—92 classrooms in all.

5

Interns hired: Connie Xiong supported the volunteer program, Lucy Kayee, Shalesa Johnson, and Aaron McCalip worked on Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures. Our marketing and communications intern, Alora K. Jones, officially joined Mississippi Park Connection’s staff this fall at the end of her internship.

93

Youth from YMCA intervention services experienced canoe trips and volunteer service on the river.



## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

2,140

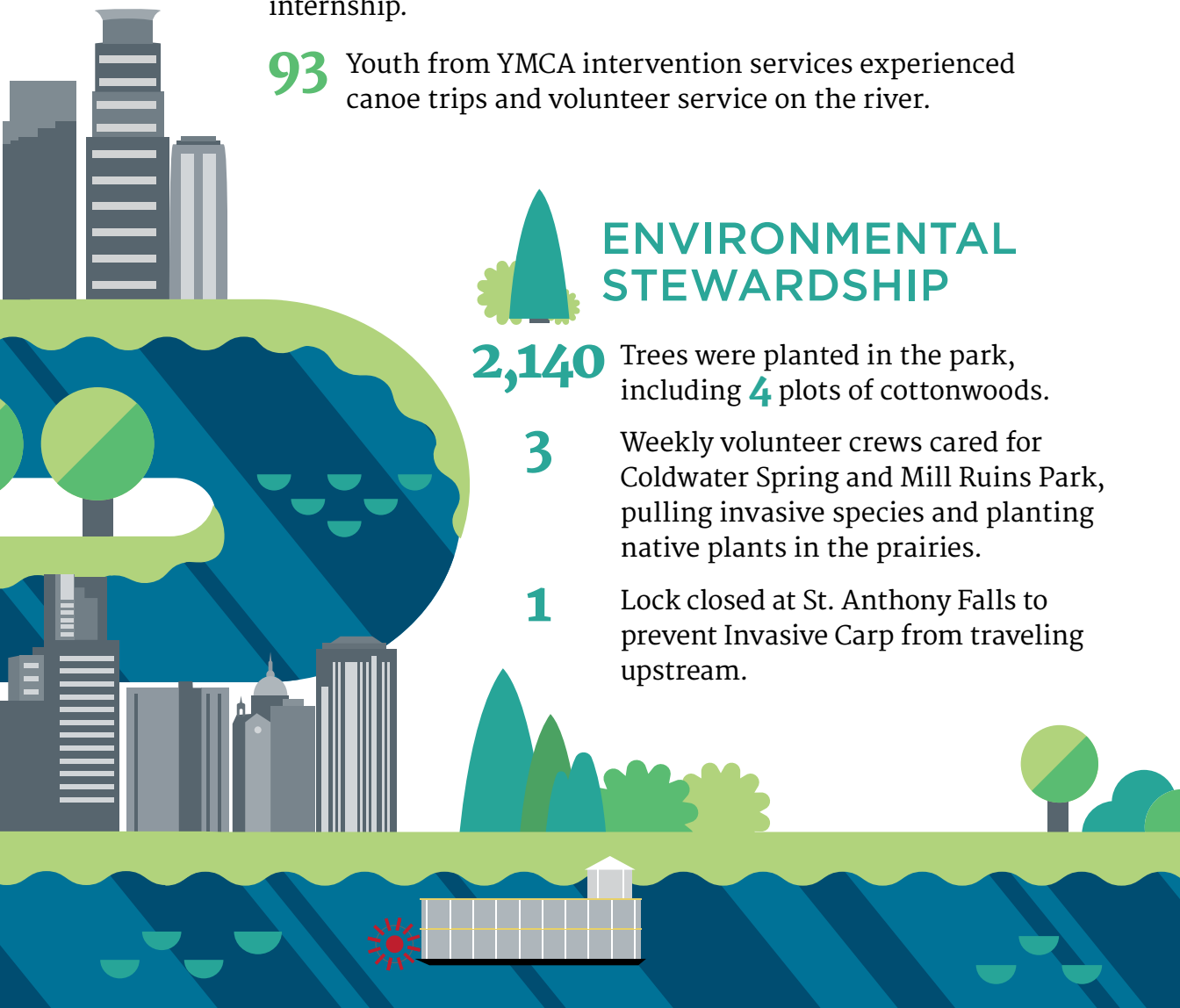
Trees were planted in the park, including 4 plots of cottonwoods.

3

Weekly volunteer crews cared for Coldwater Spring and Mill Ruins Park, pulling invasive species and planting native plants in the prairies.

1

Lock closed at St. Anthony Falls to prevent Invasive Carp from traveling upstream.



# DONOR SPOTLIGHT



## Bill and Judy Walter

“Having the opportunity to experience nature is something we have always wanted to share with others. Nature and the outdoors are great educational tools for young people to help them develop important social skills, discover new talents and enhance their health and well-being. As such, Judy and I have been committed to providing this experience to urban youth in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. We have heard from many of these students, after completing a wilderness experience, about how much this time has impacted their lives.



Bill and Judy Walter are generous supporters of the UWCA Fellows program and the Ticket to Ride Scholarship fund. Photo courtesy of National Parks Conservation Association.

Judy and I feel very strongly about getting young adults involved in the outdoors. Local parks and rivers are areas that everyone can enjoy regardless of their background. These areas need people to help preserve them so future generations can benefit from the same experiences and learn to appreciate the wonders of nature in our own backyard. The summer internship program is a great place to start fostering this passion for the outdoors.

We are thrilled that we have been able to achieve our goal of providing summer internships and employment opportunities to urban youth. We look forward to the future of this program!”



“I love being able to connect with students, and seeing that light in their eyes when they finally step into a canoe, or learn about the different ecological elements of the river. I have a passion for the river and to see youth also get that passion is something I want them to continuously pass on. I want to see more youth learning in National Parks, and more job opportunities and volunteer opportunities extended to students who come from low-income urban areas.”

—Shalesa Johnson, UWCA Fellow





Photo by Tom Reiter

## Karen and Eric Kaler

“My husband, Eric, and I have the great fortune of living along the Mississippi River. We live in a house built by the Brooks family in 1922 on the eastern bluff of the river. They named the home Eastcliff for the location. The family donated the home to the University of Minnesota in 1958.

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area was established as a national park in 1988. Now students at the University of Minnesota have the benefit of being on an urban campus and, by crossing the Washington Avenue Bridge, walking across a national park while going to class.

Last December we gave trees to the president’s office staff and senior leaders at the university. We reassured people that they didn’t have to find a place for the trees—they were all planted by Mississippi Park Connection in the oak savanna at Coldwater Spring. Some of us enjoyed joining in the planting, as shown in the photo. It’s rewarding to know that these trees should outlast us all.

We enjoy taking our dogs for walks along the river and appreciate the great beauty of the changing seasons. I am in awe whenever I see an eagle flying over the river. Remembering a time when eagles were in decline, I’ll never take that sight for granted. Mississippi Park Connection is a leader in giving people the opportunity to experience the river and learn firsthand why we need to protect our natural resources. We are grateful for that work.”



“Volunteers continue to dedicate their time by working with park staff to expand and enhance Coldwater Spring. These events would not be possible without coordination from Mississippi Park Connection and generous donors.”

—Neil Smarjesse, National Park Service Biologist

Karen (purple turtleneck) and Eric Kaler (white jacket) stand with staff from the University of Minnesota’s president’s office just before a tree planting event this spring.

Photo courtesy of Karen Kaler



## Second Saturdays

One of Coldwater Spring's advantages is that it is right in the heart of our park. Just south of Minnehaha Falls, and north of the airport and Fort Snelling—it's a great location for city people to get out of the house and explore nature close to home. This year marked the second year of our popular Second Saturdays program. With support from the National Environmental Education Foundation, Mississippi Park Connection supported programs like "Splash, what's in Coldwater's water?" a program about aquatic invertebrates, "Bees and Bugs" about native pollinators, and "Fossils" that featured a paleontologist leading scavenger hunts for Ordovician Period fossils in the park. Hundreds of kids and their families enjoyed national park programming at Coldwater Spring each month this summer.



"The biggest benefit that I see to Second Saturdays are the number of people who discover our site and realize that they can not only get quality ranger programs once a month but can also visit it on their own whether their passion is birding, fossils, frogs or just getting a bit of exercise."

—Ranger Sharon Stiteler







Photo by Tom Matre Photography

## Habitat Restoration with Corporate Volunteers

Corporate volunteers, like Boston Scientific, make all the difference when it comes to restoring native habitat on the Mississippi River. This year, 144 Boston Scientific employees gave more than 800 hours of service to the National Park and Mississippi Park Connection's co-managed volunteer program. The majority of the work went into removing invasive plants and planting prairie forbs at Coldwater Spring and Coon Rapids Dam. The Green Team at the Arden Hills corporate office went beyond volunteering, and nominated Mississippi Park Connection for a \$5,000 impact grant, driven by votes from Boston Scientific employees. Organizing their fellow co-workers, the Green Team campaigned this spring within their office for votes, and 641 Boston Scientific employees voted for Mississippi Park Connection to receive the grant, which was awarded at the beginning of our 2016 fiscal year that began in July.

“For the past two years Boston Scientific employees from Minnesota have volunteered with Mississippi Park Connection to help maintain and improve the environment in our great river's national park. Our volunteers have loved the events organized for them and as organizers we have loved the professional and safe way that these events are managed. Our staff arrive at volunteer events “corporate clean” and have left muddy, tired and very happy. There has been a great sense of accomplishing something meaningful. Thank you Mississippi Park Connection—let's see what's next!”

—Sonia James, Boston Scientific,  
Green Team President



Photo by gdgood Photography

# Contributors July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

## Contributions of \$100,000 and above

Patrick & Aimee Butler Foundation  
National Park Service

## Contributions of \$20,000 to \$99,999

The McKnight Foundation  
Mortenson Family Foundation  
National Park Foundation

## Contributions of \$10,000 to \$19,999

3M Foundation  
General Mills Foundation  
Merge Creative\*  
REI  
WM Foundation  
Xcel Energy Foundation

## Contributions of \$5,000 to \$9,999

David Winton Bell Foundation  
Ecolab Foundation  
Fort Snelling State Park Association  
Eric and Karen Kaler  
Krahl-Thacker Family Fund  
*in memory of Ned Krahl*  
National Park Foundation  
River Road Foundation  
City of Saint Paul—Cultural STAR Program  
Bill and Judy Walter

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

Anonymous  
Johanna Bell  
BNSF Railway Foundation  
Cecelia Butler  
Jay and Page Cowles  
Beth and Kevin Dooley  
John B. and Kirsten Driscoll

The Driscoll Foundation  
James Eastman and Cynthia Kriha  
Kate Havelin and Leo Timmons  
Josh Hillger and Eric Michael  
Ed and Libby Hlavka  
The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread

Anne Larsen Simonson/Larsen Fund  
Mammel Family Foundation  
NEEF  
Padelford Packet Boats Co. Inc.\*  
Patagonia St. Paul  
Prairie Island Indian Community  
Mark and Julie Sullivan

## Contributions of \$500 to \$999

C.H. Robinson Worldwide Foundation  
Cap'n Redbeards\*  
Deloitte\*  
General Mills  
Dianne and Cline Hickok  
Donald Janes and Marilyn Thompson  
Tom Meyer and Martha Meyer-VonBlon  
Mississippi Watershed Management Organization  
Richard and Suzanne Pepin  
Plantra, Inc.  
Mark Simpson  
United Health Group—Dollars for Doers  
Walmart Store #1472

## Contributions of \$250 to \$499

Anonymous  
Brocade  
Tricia and Jim Davidson  
Jean Garbarini and Tim Carl  
Wilma Gitchel  
Brian and Linda Goodspeed  
Kowalski's Market  
Paul and Sue Labowitz

Sally McLean  
Doug and Therese Moore  
Chris Mortenson and Nathalie La Gonzalez  
Katie and Jeff Nyberg  
Scott and Sarah Nyberg  
Scott and Rachel Parkin  
Kristin Rasmussen  
James Roe  
David Schmidt and Sara Klasky  
Jim Stensvold and Sarah Kline-Stensvold  
Bill Svrluga and Lucy Gerold  
Guff Van Vooren and Vicki Rapport  
VOYA Financial

## Contributions of \$100 to \$249

Jane Andrews  
John Anfinson  
Anonymous  
Gregory and Lauren Anthony  
Dennis Appleman  
Sally Bell  
Peter and Eleanor Blitzer  
Heidi Bodette  
Thelma Boeder  
Lois Bollman  
William Bracken  
Elizabeth Brombach  
Paul Brown  
Robert Bruininks and Susan Hagstrum  
Thomas Burke  
Ann Calvert  
Wendy and David Coggins  
Adam Dodge  
Jonathan Doolittle  
Dan and Ariel Dressler  
Equifax  
Ronald Erickson  
Nancy Feldman  
Friends School of Minnesota

Cynthia Froid  
Sandy Fuller  
Peter and Mary Gove  
Jeffrey Green  
Mike Hahn  
Stephen Haines and Jennifer Plomborn  
Kelsey Hans  
Mary Harrington and Jessie Okie  
David Harris  
Edward Heimel and Christine Klejbuk  
Mary Hilfiker  
Anne Hunt  
Holly Jett  
Justin Kleinman  
Jim Krache  
JoAnn Kyril and Joseph Meyers  
Greg Lais and Patti Thurber  
Lake Harriet Community School  
Lee Larson  
Gregory LeFevre  
Al and Kathy Lenzmeier  
Anonymous  
Margaret Lynch  
Paul Markwardt  
Brian Mathieu  
Walter Mondale  
Mark Muller  
Charles Nelson  
Rebecca and Chris Newhouse  
Pat Nunnally  
Kendrah and Andy Pearson  
Jodi Petrich  
Sally Polk  
Bill Preiss  
Brian Prevost  
Thad Radel  
Marcia and Gary Richter  
Derrick Keith Rollins, Jr.  
Lawrence and Mary Schwanke  
Steve Simon  
Courtney Smith  
Karen Suzukamo  
Stephanie Van D'Elden  
Pirkko Vanska



## Financials

### Expenses

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#808080; border:1px solid black;"></span> Fundraising	\$36,331
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#404040; border:1px solid black;"></span> Administration	\$51,763
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#808000; border:1px solid black;"></span> Program Services	\$520,323
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#000080; border:1px solid black;"></span> New Brand Initiative	\$34,973

**TOTAL** **\$643,390**

Mary Vaughan  
 Volunteers Of America Highschool  
 Gil Wahl  
 Tracie Ward  
 Sarah Waterworth  
 Anna Waugh and Cyrus Butler  
 Dan Waugh and Mildred McLean  
 Alan and Lynn Wyman

**Contributions up to \$99**

Susan and Desmond Albrecht  
 Dean and Janet Anderson  
 Kevin Anderson  
 Anonymous  
 Elizabeth Babinski  
 Michael Barthel  
 William Barton  
 Malcolm Bastron  
 Fred Bertschinger  
 Colleen Bjerke  
 Brent Blevens  
 Laurel Bruno  
 Kealani Cameron  
 Jaime Casey  
 Nicole Clemmons  
 Joan Cochran  
 Susan Conlee  
 Francine Corcoran  
 Stewart Corn  
 Lori Dahnert  
 Janet Dalgleish  
 Maria DeLaundreau  
 Jerald Dosch  
 Sheril and Larson Doughman  
 Danielle Dries  
 Nancy Duncan  
 April Dutteneher  
 Andrea and Patrick Erickson  
 Shirley Erstad  
 LuAnn Fehn  
 Deborah Fellows  
 Mary Field  
 Leanne Fields

Ameriprise Financial  
 Susan Flynn  
 Jessica Flynn  
 William Gonzalez  
 Peter Gorman and Diane Dube  
 Paul Gregoire  
 Stephen Grothem  
 Amanda Haefner  
 Ramona Haines  
 Larry Hampel and Mary Kopet  
 Christina Hausman  
 Mary Heille  
 Nicholas Holtan  
 James Horns  
 Janet Hougen  
 Sheaping Hu  
 Stan and Mary Hunter  
 Mary James  
 Steven Kaplan  
 Nick Karasch  
 Mary Kelleher  
 Michael and Barbara Kelly  
 Dana Kirkemo  
 Joan Knuttila  
 Cole Komma  
 Vernese Lathrop  
 Rubin Latz  
 Lee and Low Books, Inc.  
 Deborah W. Lewis  
 Dorothy Lipschultz  
 Garrett Manzi  
 Don and Abby Marier  
 Steven Marking  
 William Mattson  
 Natalie McGuire  
 Medtronic Employee Giving Program  
 Kurt Miller  
 Dave Miller  
 James Mohlman  
 Emiliano Monroy  
 Linda Morey  
 Marceleen Mosher

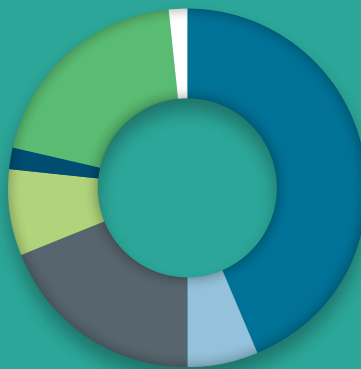
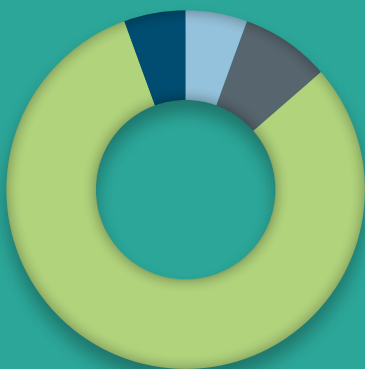
Diane Mostek  
 Thomas Nechodomu  
 Nokomis Square Communities  
 Sharon Olson  
 Jeremy Page  
 Gabriele Pillmann  
 Lincoln Poole  
 Danielle Quist  
 Daniel Reese  
 Jill Regan-Taylor  
 Matthew Reindel  
 Thomas Reiter  
 Alan Robbins-Fenger  
 Rebecca Robertaccio  
 Rita Rocheford  
 Michael Russell  
 Marjorie Savage  
 Michael Sawyer  
 Heidi Schallberg  
 Glenn Skuta  
 John Snell  
 Diane Steen-Hinderlie  
 Kathryn Steinberger and James Young  
 Rory Stierler  
 Kathy Swenson  
 Paula Swingley  
 Kinnell Tackett  
 Lyndon Torstenson  
 Anthony Trimble  
 Joann Trygestad  
 Elizabeth and Dean Van Hoever  
 Michael Walker  
 Katherine Walter  
 John Waugh and Kathleen Lively  
 WB Area School Dist. 624  
 Bill Weir  
 Lark Weller  
 Lisa Wersal and Louis Asher  
 Lois Whitehorn  
 Kristin Wyeth  
 Mark Zimmerman  
 Carol Zoff



Special thanks to **The Bachelor Farmer** for donating proceeds from their annual **Kraftskiva** event to Mississippi Park Connection.

And to the **4,061** volunteers who provided **20,031** hours of service: our park simply would not be the same without your contributions.

Thank you.



**Revenue**

Foundation Grants*	\$310,499
Corporate Grants	\$45,099
Government Grants	\$133,424
Individuals	\$55,204
Program Revenue	\$13,060
Endowment Distribution	\$140,224
Other	\$10,013

**TOTAL**

**\$707,523**

\*Some contributions will be used for projects in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.





# MISSISSIPPI PARK CONNECTION

*Discover your river*

111 Kellogg Blvd E, Suite 105  
Saint Paul, MN 55101  
651-291-8164  
info@parkconnection.org  
parkconnection.org

All photos courtesy of the Mississippi Park Connection and National Park Service staff and volunteers, unless otherwise noted. Printed on Minnesota-milled, chlorine-free recycled and recyclable paper with 10% postconsumer material.



Cover photos by Tom Matre Photography

## Board of Trustees

Mississippi Park Connection is led by a group of local community leaders from Minneapolis and Saint Paul. They guide the operations of the fund and its programs. We are proud to list this distinguished group that includes:

**John Cowles, III, Chair**  
President, Unity Avenue Associates

**John B. Driscoll**

**James Eastman**

**Dianne Hickok, Treasurer**  
CPA, Baker Tilly Virchow Krause LLP

**Anne Hunt**  
Environmental Policy Director, Office of Mayor Chris Coleman, City of St. Paul

**Karen Kaler**

**Leslie Kinsman**  
Business Director, Andersen Corporation

**Tom Meyer**  
Principal, Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd.

**Chris Mortenson**  
Teacher, Upper Mississippi Academy

**Scott Parkin**  
Materials Manager, Tennant Company

**Don Shelby**

**Mark Sullivan**  
Senior Director of Marketing Communications, Cardiovascular Systems Inc.

**Kristin Rasmussen**  
Panacetacea

**Stephanie Zawistowski**  
Policy Aide—Sustainability, City of Minneapolis

**Staff** **Maria DeLaundreau**  
Floodplain Restoration Project Coordinator

**Mary Hammes**  
Environmental Stewardship and Volunteer Manager

**Kate Havelin**  
Communications Coordinator

**Alora K. Jones**  
Marketing and Communications Associate

**Katie Nyberg**  
Executive Director

**Anna Waugh**  
Development Coordinator

**Connie Xiong**  
Volunteer Engagement Specialist

**UWCA Fellows** Shalesa Johnson, Lucy Kayee, and Aaron McCalip