

Making History

River Keepers Keep the Red a Vital Part of Valley Life

River Keepers grew from a desire to rediscover the Red River's heritage, and to teach people to again appreciate the Red as a living river. In earlier decades of Fargo-Moorhead history, people used and appreciated the Red River for a variety of activities. In later years, people lost that appreciation for the river which is the dominant geographical feature in the community, and began to consider it a liability to be avoided.



In 1989, believing that it was time to promote a "new attitude about the river," and explore ways to develop the river as a recreational site, a team of architects called the Red River Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT), produced an intensive review and analysis of the resources along the Red River that flows through the

cities of Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota. R/UDAT proposed the creation of an organization to act in the position of River Keeper. They also proposed plans to educate people about maintaining the ecological health of the river, ideas for expanding the river's recreational use, and plans to

build a "rediscovered" riverfront area in the downtown Fargo-Moorhead area. These visions could be accomplished through the actions of a River Keepers organization, the Fargo and Moorhead governmental offices, and by educating the public to be stewards of the river.

See timeline on page 4

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Did you know...

River Keepers hold a historical position in the British Isles and Continental Europe. They evolved from gamekeeper positions that European nobility found necessary to protect their vast and exclusive land holdings. River Keepers in these countries currently conduct stewardship activities that sustain the health and integrity of the sporting qualities of their resources. River Keepers provide stewardship on smaller individual sections of river systems. They are in fact the grassroots element of resource stewardship.

Much like your River Keepers of Fargo-Moorhead...

Visions for the Red - 2004

By: Alex Bakkum

River Keepers recently hired me as their summer intern. My charge was to complete a research project for them. This project had me conduct key person interviews, focus groups, a literature review and some survey work. From these research elements I created *Visions for the Red-2004*. This document includes details for future development that may occur along the river, a process for completing successful desired projects, and recommendations for River Keepers and other organizations that feel the Red River is currently under-utilized.

Many of the developments discussed by the focus groups revolved around recreational opportunities and an expansion of the canoe, kayak and bike rentals currently offered. Furthermore, the issues that could possibly hinder river development were addressed.

While conducting my research I met passionate, motivated, concerned individuals that are will-

ing to work for sustainable and attainable use of the Red River.

In recent years, the local leadership has completed numerous projects and should be pleased with the progress they have made. They have found a new level of cooperation and communication that many felt was lacking in previous years. However, much work remains to be done, and the research indicates that now is the time to continue these vital efforts.

Citizens and private sector entities must become key players in river development in the future. Local leaders need to forge ahead and create a healthy, vibrant, and active river community that understands its role as a steward of the Red River. Then the Red River will truly be a river that binds rather than a river that separates the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area.

*Who looks upon a river
 in a meditative hour and
 is not reminded of the flux
 of all things?*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Volunteer with River Keepers

Just as the Red River could not flow without a source, neither could River Keepers. The more participation in River Keepers' projects and committees, the larger the impact on the community. These are just a few of the many volunteer opportunities available.

Cavity Replacement Program

In 1998, River Keepers began a cavity replacement program to build, install and track nesting cavities along the Red River corridor in Fargo-Moorhead. More than 450 houses have been built and installed. To continue this program, volunteers are needed to build, install, map and track the success of nesting boxes. Donations of wood material are also required to finish this project.

When we save a river, we save a major part of an ecosystem, and we save ourselves as well because of our dependence - physical, economic, spiritual - on the water and its community of life.

Tim Palmer,
The Wild and Scenic Rivers of America

Nature Areas

Mrs. Colson's Moorhead Junior High eighth grade earth science students designed and built a self-guided nature trail at M.B. Johnson Park. The Lions Conservancy Park is intended to demonstrate to the public through active and passive plantings, displays and signage, the natural environment of a riverine system. The Living Laboratory is an urban riparian restoration project. All of these sites need volunteers to help with signage, planting, maintenance, etc.

Storm Drain Marking Program

One simple step to eliminate contamination of ground water, surface water and drinking water supplies is to warn people they should not dump things down storm drains. This project can be done with as little as two people. Volunteers glue markers next to storm drains and distribute information doorhangers. Just imagine how many people have noticed these warnings and how many more could be told.

Red River of the North International Historic Canoe Trail

The Red River is the longest north flowing river in North America and holds tremendous potential for canoeing. It provides safe recreational access to the river with emphasis on interpretive, historical, and environmental information. As a part of efforts to develop the trail, volunteers are needed to design and build campsites and access sites.

Storm drains not for trash

Mother Nature is lending a hand in keeping our streets clean. A hard rain can sweep away litter and wash it right down the drain. But where does it go from there?



A storm drain is the grated opening in the street that collects water from rain and melting snow to minimize street flooding. It's also a pathway for garbage directly into our rivers. Rainwater often carries street debris - trash, leaves, grass clippings, pet wastes, car fuels - into storm drains. This pollutes our lakes and rivers and contaminates ground water drinking supplies.

You can choose to be part of the solution.

- Keep litter, pet wastes, leaves, and debris out of street gutters and storm drains.
- Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly and according to directions. Avoid placing fertilizer or lawn chemicals on driveways, sidewalks and streets.
- Dispose of used oil, antifreeze, paint and other household chemicals properly, not in storm sewers or drains.
- Clean up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease and antifreeze. Do not hose them into the streets where they can eventually reach local streams and lakes.
- Never throw litter out the car window.



Cigarette butts are the most littered item in America and it is estimated that several trillion are littered worldwide every year. They are not biodegradable. In fact, cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate fibers, a form of plastic, which can take decades to degrade.

Cigarette butts threaten wildlife and aquatic animals that mistake them for food. If filters block their digestive tract, animals may become ill or even starve. Animals will also ingest hazardous compounds such as cadmium, arsenic and lead that have been absorbed by the filters.

MOUTH OF THE RIVER

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River Keepers is a non-profit organization, "promoting a renewed vision for the Red River of the North."

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River Keepers Membership Form

(membership begins January 1st)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____
Company (if relevant) _____

Please check appropriate level: (River Keepers is a 501 (c) (3) organization. All monetary contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kayak.....\$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact me about possible donations of products, equipment and/or services which I understand may be tax-deductible! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scull.....\$25 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoe.....\$50 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skiff.....\$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact me about volunteer opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steamboat.....\$500+ | |

Please return this completed form, along with your membership investment to:
River Keepers 325 7th St. S. Fargo, ND 58103

Creature Feature



Haliaeetus leucocephalus

The bald eagle is uncommon in North Dakota but is usually seen along the river in late fall/early winter and in the spring during migration to its northern breeding grounds. It is similar in size and shape to the golden eagle but can be easily distinguished by its white head and tail. Immature bald eagles, however, are almost completely dark brown and may be confused with immature golden eagles. Bald eagles do not acquire their white-colored head and tail until about four years of age. The bald eagle is currently listed as a threatened species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The bald eagle feeds primarily on fish, either self-caught or stolen from other birds, especially ospreys. When fish are not readily available, it will

Each January the North Dakota Game and Fish Department participates in a nationwide survey to determine the number of bald eagles in each state. The survey consists of flying at a low altitude from Bismarck to the Garrison Dam, counting both adult and immature bald eagles.

feed on injured or crippled waterfowl, muskrats, squirrels and rabbits. It is not uncommon to see bald eagles feeding on carrion or roadkill in the winter.

Nesting is initiated in March or early April. Nests are constructed by creating a stick foundation and lining it with mosses, pine needles, grasses, feathers and other soft materials.

Every year a new nest is created on top of the previous year's nest, which can result in nests being seven to eight feet across, twelve feet deep, and weighing hundreds of pounds.

The female lays between one and three eggs and does most of the incubation which lasts about 35 days. It takes the young eagles about 72 to 75 days to fledge.

The bald eagle is currently endangered. In North Dakota, they are found along the Missouri River, Red River, Devils Lake, and the Turtle Mountains. Bald eagles are now abundant in Alaska and Canada. Bald eagle populations declined in the early 20th century due to loss of habitat, shooting, and trapping.

Fun Facts

- The bald eagle is not really bald; it actually has white feathers on its head, neck, and tail. Bald is a derivation of *balde*, an Old English word meaning white. The eagle was named for its white feathers instead of for a lack of feathers.
- The bald eagle can fly 20 to 40 mph in normal flight and can dive at speeds over 100 mph.
- Bald eagles may use the same nest year after year, adding more twigs and branches each time. One nest was found that had been used for 34 years and weighed over two tons!
- Bald eagles can actually swim! They use an overhand movement of the wings that is very much like the butterfly stroke.

Did you know...

The adult eagle protects its brood from stormy weather by forming a shelter with its outstretched wings.

An eagle will swoop down and catch a fish even if there are people nearby.

It is illegal to possess an eagle feather unless you are an American Indian.

The bald eagle was adopted as the national emblem of the United States in 1782.

The bald eagle matures in five years.

The bald eagle's favorite food is fish.

A bald eagle's head feathers are brown until they are adults.

The bald eagle usually lays two eggs.

Bald eagles are only located in the north American region.

Red River Valley

Author Unknown

It's a long time, you know, I've been waiting
For the words that you never did say,
Now alas! All my fond hopes have vanished,
For they say you are going away.

From this valley they say you are going,
I shall miss you blue eyes and sweet smile,
For you take with you all of the sunshine
That has brightened my pathway a while.

So consider a while ere you leave me,
Do not hasten to bid me adieu,
But remember the Red River Valley
And the half-breed who loved you so true.

So remember the valley you're leaving,
How lonely, how dreary it will be;
Remember the heart you are breaking,
And be true to your promise to me.

As you go to your home by the ocean,
May you never forget those sweet hours
That we spent in the Red River Valley
And the love we exchanged in its bowers.

*Research indicates this song originated among British troops stationed along Manitoba's Red River Valley. While some of the lyrics are politically incorrect, the historically accurate sentiment still rings true.

Director's Corner

River Keepers will celebrate a 15th anniversary next year. First, thanks to all of our supporters and volunteers that have made it possible for this organization to exist and thrive. Without that support we wouldn't be here. We know that without River Keepers many river related events, activities and developments would not have happened. So, to all those that have been a part of the process, take pride in knowing that future generations will benefit from your actions.

It is customary at these anniversaries to take stock of where you have been and where you are going. Space does not allow for a detailed listing but let me mention a few things that have happened over the last 15 years.

- Three F-M area dams were retrofitted with a rock slope way allowing fish passage and eliminating dangerous undertows responsible for many deaths.
- Annually, over 4000 people are carried on the S.S. Ruby, the pontoon tour boat owned by River Keepers.
- Over 1400 4th grade students annually attend River Keepers award winning water festival. It's the second largest water festival in the three state region.
- The new Main Avenue bridge will be "connected" to the river through an accessible stairway and interpretive displays.
- Moorhead and Fargo are actively connecting their downtowns to the river.
- Riverfront bike trails are being expanded and improved.
- There are now four boat ramps in the F-M reach of the Red.
- The Red is a designated Canoe and Boating Route in the State of Minnesota, complete with signage, a map and informational kiosks.
- Our annual canoe race is increasing in size every year. Participants come from as far away as Canada.
- Over 400 wood duck nesting boxes are installed along the Red and annually maintained by volunteers.
- Water quality monitoring and storm water awareness programs are on going.

So what does the future hold? Our board, along with staff, is currently going through our annual planning process during which our future efforts will be identified. Some items that we anticipate working on include the following: increased urban waterfront developments, an increase in our youth and adult educational offerings, increased emphasis on our on-the-water activities, participating in a community wide greenway plan, continuing to integrate our efforts with other water related groups to accomplish our goals and continued development of riparian restoration demonstrations.

Some days our accomplishments seem miniscule when compared to all the work remaining. But then a volunteer or city leader approaches us and says "Boy, have we seen the changes occurring with the Red over the last few years!" That is good to hear.

We know that as an organization everything we have or will accomplish only happened because of our partners, our supporters and our volunteers. To be a part of that excitement, give us a call. We have a job for you!

Bob Backman

Timeline of the River Keepers

Continued from Page 1

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|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team studies Red River in Fargo Moorhead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midtown Dam retrofit completed • “Cavity Replacement” program implemented | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passed inspection and began operation of the S.S. Ruby, a pontoon tour boat • Received FM River grant from EPA to communicate the health of the river to citizens • Progress on canoe trail included appropriation to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources from Minnesota legislature for inventory and mapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published a Red River Basin Water Quality Monitoring Volunteer Manual • Assisted the City of Fargo and Fargo Park District officials, in completing a Downtown Fargo Riverfront Development Plan for the area between Dike East and Oak Grove • Working with an advisory committee on the Living Lab, an urban restoration demonstration site • Added canoe and kayak rental services |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Keepers formed • MB Johnson Boat Ramp constructed • Floating bike/pedestrian bridge installed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First canoe/kayak demonstration on the Red • First “Red River Water Festival” • Lions Conservancy Park developments begin • Outdoor learning classroom at MB Johnson Park built • Convent Landing constructed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained funding for safety lighting under downtown bike paths • Developed master plan for Red River Boating and Canoe Trail under contract to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Installed over 400 wood duck nesting boxes in the river corridor • Installed interpretive signs at MB Johnson Park nature trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed maps, directional signage and kiosks for the Red River of the North Canoe and Boating route between Breckenridge and Georgetown • Expanded Red River Water Festival to include an optional outside component focusing on water quality monitoring |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First annual “Race the Red” canoe/kayak race • First annual photo contest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received funding from Minnesota Department of Natural Resource for lighted buoys and signs providing warning of dam locations • Became coordinating partners for the Red River of the North Historic International Canoe Trail • Received funding from Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation for an outdoor classroom at Lions Conservancy Park, which was designed by an NDSU Landscape Architecture class • Two new boat ramps on the north and south sides of the Midtown Dam at Fargo’s Dike East constructed • The first Millennium Tour, a 34 day, 550 mile, international canoe trip beginning at the Headwaters of the Red River in Breckenridge, Minnesota to the Mouth at Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed master plan for Red River Boating and Canoe Trail under contract to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Installed over 400 wood duck nesting boxes in the river corridor • Installed interpretive signs at MB Johnson Park nature trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed maps, directional signage and kiosks for the Red River of the North Canoe and Boating route between Breckenridge and Georgetown • Expanded Red River Water Festival to include an optional outside component focusing on water quality monitoring |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First “River Caring Workshop” • “Adopt-the-Red” clean-up program created • Installed interpretive markers • “The Red River: A Use and Protection Guide” published | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received funding from Minnesota Department of Natural Resource for lighted buoys and signs providing warning of dam locations • Became coordinating partners for the Red River of the North Historic International Canoe Trail • Received funding from Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation for an outdoor classroom at Lions Conservancy Park, which was designed by an NDSU Landscape Architecture class • Two new boat ramps on the north and south sides of the Midtown Dam at Fargo’s Dike East constructed • The first Millennium Tour, a 34 day, 550 mile, international canoe trip beginning at the Headwaters of the Red River in Breckenridge, Minnesota to the Mouth at Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained funding for safety lighting under downtown bike paths • Developed master plan for Red River Boating and Canoe Trail under contract to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Installed over 400 wood duck nesting boxes in the river corridor • Installed interpretive signs at MB Johnson Park nature trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed maps, directional signage and kiosks for the Red River of the North Canoe and Boating route between Breckenridge and Georgetown • Expanded Red River Water Festival to include an optional outside component focusing on water quality monitoring |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First “Fun For All Fishing Clinic” • River access sites in Lindenwood Park established • “Paint the Drain” program created • Archeological Dig for “Fargo in the Timber” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received funding from Minnesota Department of Natural Resource for lighted buoys and signs providing warning of dam locations • Became coordinating partners for the Red River of the North Historic International Canoe Trail • Received funding from Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation for an outdoor classroom at Lions Conservancy Park, which was designed by an NDSU Landscape Architecture class • Two new boat ramps on the north and south sides of the Midtown Dam at Fargo’s Dike East constructed • The first Millennium Tour, a 34 day, 550 mile, international canoe trip beginning at the Headwaters of the Red River in Breckenridge, Minnesota to the Mouth at Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained funding for safety lighting under downtown bike paths • Developed master plan for Red River Boating and Canoe Trail under contract to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Installed over 400 wood duck nesting boxes in the river corridor • Installed interpretive signs at MB Johnson Park nature trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed maps, directional signage and kiosks for the Red River of the North Canoe and Boating route between Breckenridge and Georgetown • Expanded Red River Water Festival to include an optional outside component focusing on water quality monitoring |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Common Water: A Story of Life Along the Red River of the North” published | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received funding from Minnesota Department of Natural Resource for lighted buoys and signs providing warning of dam locations • Became coordinating partners for the Red River of the North Historic International Canoe Trail • Received funding from Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation for an outdoor classroom at Lions Conservancy Park, which was designed by an NDSU Landscape Architecture class • Two new boat ramps on the north and south sides of the Midtown Dam at Fargo’s Dike East constructed • The first Millennium Tour, a 34 day, 550 mile, international canoe trip beginning at the Headwaters of the Red River in Breckenridge, Minnesota to the Mouth at Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained funding for safety lighting under downtown bike paths • Developed master plan for Red River Boating and Canoe Trail under contract to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Installed over 400 wood duck nesting boxes in the river corridor • Installed interpretive signs at MB Johnson Park nature trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed maps, directional signage and kiosks for the Red River of the North Canoe and Boating route between Breckenridge and Georgetown • Expanded Red River Water Festival to include an optional outside component focusing on water quality monitoring |
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Hidden Sturgeon: This camouflaged sturgeon is part of the fourth Minnesota Department of Natural Resources release of lake sturgeon into the Red River Basin. The release of sturgeon is part of a larger effort to restore our watershed, which also includes such efforts as dam retrofitting and riparian forest restoration.

What’s New at River Keepers

River Keepers held a River-Friendly Yard Management Workshop on April 29 at the Hjemkomst Center. Participants learned about healthy, green lawns; designing functional landscapes that are attractive and easy to maintain; saving money on lawn and garden chemicals; the latest river-friendly techniques; and contributing to a safe drinking water supply through “river-friendly yard maintenance.” Speakers included Dave DeCock, retired Cass County Extension; Jim Hanson, Hanson Design Associates; Bob Fogel, City of Moorhead; and Allen Lee, City of Fargo Forestry. There were also displays, handouts and door prizes including a compost bin, fertilizer and gift certificates. This workshop was sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency. Partners included City of Fargo, City of Moorhead, Red River Basin Institute, Fargo Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments, Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District and Red River Basin Commission.

River Keepers worked with three Eagle Scout candidates. Jordan Smith conducted an on-the-water cleanup of the Red River. Brett Cardon cleaned out, fixed windows, built a workbench, and installed lights in a shed at the Living Lab “Woody house.” Cyrus Artz built two beautiful kayaks.

Moorhead area businesses/organizations hosted Moorhead RiverArts on Tuesday evenings in downtown Moorhead from June 8th to August 17th. In conjunction with River Arts, the S.S. Ruby pontoon tours and canoe and kayak rentals were open.

Charles Fritz of the Red River Basin Institute, Genevieve Thompson of Greenway on the Red/Audubon Dakota, and Bob Backman and Christine Holland of River Keepers were presented a *Friends of the Environmental Protection Agency Award* for their efforts to monitor, assess, protect and preserve the water quality and natural resources of the Red River Basin using a holistic approach.

Many fall group volunteers are participating in the Storm Drain Marking Program, a non-point source pollution prevention program and Adopt-the-Red, a riverfront trash removal effort.

The effort to start a canoe trail was started by River Keepers in 1998. Thanks to the efforts of many supporters and volunteers, it has become a reality. A celebration commemorating the first segment of the Red River of the North as an official Minnesota canoe and boating route from the headwaters at Breckenridge, Minnesota to Georgetown, Minnesota was held on September 11 at Headwaters Park in Breckenridge.

The Lil’ Fishermen’s Derby and Clinic and Race the Red canoe & kayak races were a success! The evening was beautiful and it was the biggest fishing derby & clinic yet. There were roughly 175 youth who caught over 100 fish out of the Red River in just a few short hours. The Fargo Park District, Coca-Cola, River Keepers, Cargill, Moorhead Public Service, and Scheels All Sports sponsored this event.

The U.S. Geologic Survey, North Dakota Department of Health, River Keepers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Cass Water Resource District, City of Fargo and Red River Basin Institute have partnered to establish a real-time water-quality monitoring station in Fargo-Moorhead. Water-quality monitoring equipment is used to measure water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, specific conductance, and turbidity. The information obtained will enhance ongoing efforts and can help determine the effectiveness of management strategies that are aimed at improving water quality. Time-relevant, useful, and accurate environmental monitoring data for the Red River at Fargo-Moorhead are available at <http://nd.water.usgs.gov/realtimeqw.html>.

River Keepers, partnering with the Fargo Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments, was one of 20 organizations in the upper Midwest to receive a grant from the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA). Funded by the Otto Bremer Foundation the grant allowed River Keepers to hire, Alex Bakkum, an intern to conduct a community perception assessment of the Red River of the North.

A master plan for the Living Laboratory, a demonstration/educational urban riparian restoration project was completed.

River Keepers, along with the Red River Basin Institute, received an AmeriCorps grant. Four Americorps members (Levi Binstock, Shanna Braun, Lance Heald, and Robert Stein) receive a stipend to work on watershed related projects.