MISSOURI RIVER RELIEF
|
Missouri River Relief’s mission is to engage individuals and communities along the Missouri River in the exploration, enjoyment, restoration and care of the river through hands-on river clean-ups, education events and stewardship activities.

LESS TRASH, MORE TREASURE

People joke with me about “job security” working on river clean-ups because our society’s source of litter seems endless.

On top of that, people invent new ways to make waste. One obvious example is how plastic bottles have replaced glass containers. In fact, one of our young clean-up volunteers kept a glass bottle as a souvenir. He wanted to take this strange artifact home to show off to his family!

But something both good and strange has happened recently at our river clean-ups. It has become harder to find trash! And we’ve heard from fellow “river rats”—people who have worked on the waterway for years—the river is visibly cleaner. This observation offers a wonderful sense of accomplishment. It also challenges us to evolve our programs.

In our 2013 report, you can read the stories of mothers, teachers, volunteers and government agencies who have stepped up to create a better river environment for their communities. They are educating others about the river, its history, its trash, and its treasure in ways both conventional and innovative. We’re proud to call them our own, and couldn’t do any of our work without their social and financial support. Please join us in our efforts, as every hand helps.

See you on the river,

Jeff Barrow,
Director, Missouri River Relief

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89 river miles. That’s about the distance from Boonville to Hermann, if you travel by river or on the Katy Trail. That’s a long stretch of trash to dig out from the muck, bag up and haul off the banks. And while we’re talking distance, factor in the lengths our volunteers drive to come clean the Big Muddy, and the mileage teachers get when they take our lessons back home. Who knows how far our messages eventually go? In 2013, we may have actually garnered less trash in some categories, but we think we made up for it in the lives that we touched.

24 River clean-ups
1,637 Volunteers
882 Students and teachers
89 Rivermiles
38 Tons of Trash
424 Tires
26 Communities in
5 States
6,352 Volunteer hours
45 Presentations
20 Educational trips
1 Stream
Team Association
**WHAT WE’VE FOUND:**

*a sampling of items cleaned from the river*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Cleaned From the River</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,146 Bags of Trash</td>
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<tr>
<td>141 Bags of Recyclables</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>424 Tires</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>70 Chunks of Styrofoam</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>294 Hunks of Metal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17 - 55-gallon Plastic Barrels</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 - 55-gallon Metal Drums</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 - 5-gallon Buckets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Coolers (plastic &amp; Styrofoam)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Water Coolers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Refrigerators</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Chest Freezers</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Compressors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 TV's</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Lawnmowers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Chairs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Plastic Tubs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Duck Decoys</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Rubber Duckies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Plastic Net Float</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Propane Tanks</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Metal Posts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Pile of Roof Shingles</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Pieces of Carpet and Padding</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Plastic Koala</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Rolling Suitcases</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 ft of Fire Hose</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Pieces of Siding</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Balloons from a Pedestrian Bridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Chain</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Exercise Machine</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 ft of Chain-link Fence</td>
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**Away Teams**

*THE MRR CREW BRINGS BOATS, EQUIPMENT AND EXPERTISE TO HELP OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE CLEAN-UPS THEY ORGANIZE.*

- **Living Lands and Waters:** March, Memphis
- **Confluence Trash Bash:** March, St. Louis
- **Current River Cleanup:** June, Eminence, MO
- **Operation Clean Stream:** August, St. Louis
- **Stream Team 211:** August, Big River
- **Earhtones:** September, Alton, IL
Working for a Clean River

“It is important for my daughter to see how important it is to keep our environment clean, and to have a good time while we are doing it.”

— Tim Dorius, who volunteered with his daughter Ashley and their church group.

HIGHLIGHTS

OUR MOST EXCITING EVENTS FROM 24 TOTAL CLEAN-UPS IN 2014

APRIL 6: MISSION CLEAN STREAM - ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI
Even after nine years of visiting this site, we still uncover old flood debris. 150 volunteers removed 4.1 tons of trash from 6 rivermiles.

APRIL 28: WASHINGTON RIVER FESTIVAL AND CLEAN-UP
With the river in flood stage, we couldn’t get folks out in boats. So on Friday our scout crew made a new plan: 70 volunteers removed a whopping 2.7 tons of trash from land sites! More than a thousand people attended the River Festival, enjoying music, art and booths by local and regional organizations.

AUGUST 17: GLASGOW CLEAN-UP
Volunteers came from as far away as Kansas City, Chillicothe, and Arnold. 123 volunteers removed 3.9 tons of junk from the banks of the river.

SEPTEMBER 7: OMAHA/ COUNCIL BLUFFS CLEAN-UP
On a super hot day, 248 volunteers removed nearly 3 tons of junk, including 3 boat loads entirely full of styrofoam. All of the trash was hauled to a Corps of Engineers barge loaded up with dumpsters. A great sign that interstate partnerships work fantastically.

280 volunteers teamed up at La Benite Park in Sugar Creek, MO to help clean up 10 miles of the Missouri River with MRR and Healthy Rivers Partnership, a newly formed river-stewardship, nonprofit in Kansas City.

OCTOBER 19: HARTSBURG CLEAN-UP
More than 115 bags of trash were collected and sorted, including 39 bags of recyclables and tons of scrap metal and other materials including a small john boat!
EDUCATORS
HOW ONE MOTHER’S SIMPLE IDEA UNITED A RIVER COMMUNITY

Gloria Bauermeister started with a modest goal: get people to come out to the Washington River Festival. She got way more than she bargained for. Engaging kids in nature leads to long-term conservation ethics, and it takes all kinds of visionaries to pull that off. For instance, Gloria met a young mother in her yoga class, and they bonded over talking about the environment. “We had all these conversations about trash around the school,” Gloria says. “I asked her if she wanted to be involved in the river festival; she had an idea of getting her daughter’s class to draw posters of ‘what the river means to me.’” The woman joined Gloria’s hand-picked advisory committee to plan for the festival.

That idea bloomed into a city-wide project attracting a hundred art entries that were put on display the day of the festival. That was just one aspect of the event; Gloria contacted individual teachers in all eight schools to gauge their interest in a “Day on the River” with Missouri River Relief. So many people responded that they had to turn nine classes away. Businesses and service organizations got behind them with funding and advertising, which drew hundreds to the festival.

Fostering a sense of wonder, appreciation and respect for the environment is vital to foster future citizen action. The city’s investment in its youth — and its teachers’ dedication — is a hopeful sign that Washington’s vibrant river culture will shine bright in the future.

RIVER HEROES
DONNING CAPES FOR THE CAUSE OF LEARNING
Rain, shine, more rain? The children of Washington, Mo., proved ready for anything as they swarmed the city’s beautiful riverfront.

EN PLEIN AIRE
THE MISSOURI RIVER INSPIRES A NEW GENERATION OF ARTISTS
Paintings of the Missouri River are nothing new, and students from Washington joined in the tradition. Drawings explaining what the river means to them went on display during the River Festival.
EXPERTS ENHANCE OUR KNOWLEDGE.

For the fifth year, river rats, academics, and passersby converged at The Big Muddy Speakers Series, held monthly in Rocheport, Kansas City and St. Charles, Missouri.

The following is a sample of the Missouri River policy, history and ecology we discussed in 2013:

PREHISTORIC CULTURES OF THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER  Joe Harl, St. Louis Archeological Research Center

INTERSEX STURGEON ON THE MISSOURI RIVER?  The effects of emerging contaminants on a big river - Diana Papoulas, U.S. Geological Survey

“TOO MUCH WATER, NOT ENOUGH WATER – BALANCING THE 8 ‘AUTHORIZED PURPOSES’ OF THE MISSOURI RIVER”  Larry O’Donnell – Healthy Rivers Partnership, Little Blue River Watershed Coalition and Missouri River Relief

BUILDING A NATURAL LEGACY IN BOONE COUNTY  Roger Still, Greenbelt Land Trust

THE RIVER BENEATH THE MISSOURI RIVER  David Stous and Pat Higgens, Burns & McDonnell Co.

“Only if we understand, can we care. Only if we care, we will help. Only if we help, we shall be saved.”

– Jane Goodall
"I think the secret of helping people protect the river, is giving them an opportunity to fall in love with it. Sandra Steingraber, author of *Living Downstream*, says that we protect what we love. Missouri River Relief helps people fall in love with our River."
— Melinda Hemmelgarn, host of KOPN Radio Show “Food Sleuth”
The River is a Playground

EXCURSIONS
TRIPS EARN MORE THAN EXTRA CREDIT

Steve Schnarr, program manager for Missouri River Relief, loves working with student leaders. “It’s really inspiring to see them ripple out into the community,” he says, and attributes students’ initiative to the learning that takes place on a boat. “There’s a different experience, to be surrounded by that water, by that nature, the trees, the birds. People connect on a deeper level with just how big this river is.”

In 2012, Anniya Preisberga and her fellow classmates at the University of Missouri-Kansas City attended a cleanup for extra credit. They left with inspiration. “It reminded us why we liked the environment to begin with,” she says. She started an environmental organization on her campus because of the experience.

The River Relief crew strives to imbue that sense of ownership with every potential River Rat. Look to the right for examples of how we engage the community.

RIVER TIME ONLINE

Online: history, information and regular updates are online at www.riverrelief.org

Facebook: events, photo albums and river related articles go out to 1,500+ fans

River Notes: blog features stories, photos and trash lists

FUN & GAMES

HANDS-ON ENGAGEMENT
River Relief runs tire and trash races at Prairie Fork’s annual Earth Day event, which promotes “educational experiences related to forestry, fisheries, wildlife, soils, and environmental conservation, especially for our youth.”
ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

THE MR340 IS THE WORLD’S LONGEST RACE AND RIVER RELIEF’S BIGGEST COMMUNITY COMMITMENT.

A lot can happen in 88 hours, with 400 kayakers racing on the river. During the Missouri American Water MR-340, you can find River Relief crew members at the helm of safety boats, ensuring each participant has a safe and enjoyable experience of the stream we call home.

**CANOE RACES**

**Race to the Dome:** The fourth annual Mid-Missouri race raised funds for MRR.

**Race for the Rivers St.** Charles paddle event sponsored by Greenway Network.

**Freedom Race:** A 65-mile paddling race from the Lamine River to Jefferson City.

**MR340:** The longest non-stop river race in the world!

**COMMUNITY FESTIVALS**

**Wild & Scenic Film Festival**
A friend and fundraiser that brings environmental stories to our hometown.

**Earth Day Festivals**
Crew members led more than 500 children through the action-oriented Recycle Relay Race at Peace Park in Columbia and Prairie Fork Conservation Area near Williamsburg.

**EcoArtFest**
MRR crew members gave educational boat rides to more than 150 people.

**RIVER EXCURSIONS**

**Douglass High School Service Club River Trip & Clean-up**
Huntsdale, MO
We gave a quick tour of Manitou Bluffs followed by a small-scale river clean-up.

**Greenworks Kids Day on the River**
Kansas City, MO
These students are learning about the emerging green economy. We show their community from the river’s perspective.

**Missouri Master Naturalists**
Kansas City, MO
A river clean-up combined with an overview of river ecology.

**Conservation Careers Academy**
Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area - High School students from across the state learn about potential jobs on the Missouri River in a program sponsored by the MU School of Natural Resources.

**“Party on the River” with Certified Commercial Investment Members**
Kansas City, MO
“Membership Meeting” event at Kaw Point Park. A riverside party highlighted by educational boat rides on the Missouri River along the city’s waterfront.
People Make it Possible

CREW REPORT

TO RUN EACH EVENT, WE NEED DOZENS OF VOLUNTEERS. EMILY PHERIGO IS ONE.

The Missouri River Relief volunteer crew is an amazing group of people, the heart of this organization. They help organize events, drive boats, provide the human infrastructure and staff at clean-ups, cook food, travel all over the watershed and provide the energy and love that keeps it all going. More than your normal nonprofit, these folks form a tribe: an always-growing, always-caring family of river lovers that want to share the river with others.

To highlight one example, University of Missouri graduate student Emily Pherigo has been the calm before and during the storm – she’s a real go-getter, full of ideas, formulates a plan, and then takes action. While we don’t often see her as crew at clean-ups, meetings or in camp, she is often in the mix as an educational presenter with live fish, shrimp and even plankton, engaging kids in her science. Even better, she is a fantastic boat driver, and often takes the time to talk to clean-up volunteers about the river and take them for a spin to catch a flying carp. She is a great role model at these events.

“This person has been the calm before and during the storm.”
— Melanie Cheney, presenting the “True Blue Tributary” Award to Emily Pherigo
For the last several years, Emily has helped us with outreach and donations for the Wild & Scenic Film Festival, confidently and systematically hitting a number of downtown businesses, and coming up with new ideas for more experiential auction items like last year’s “fish biologist for a day,” in which she was able to share her work fishing on the tributaries to the Missouri River.

Emily lives out the values that keep this organization strong. We’re proud to list dozens such dedicated volunteers among our ranks and look forward to developing more leaders for many years to come.
We can’t do it alone
THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS
MDC MISSOURI RIVER FISHERIES UNIT NAMED “PARTNER OF THE YEAR.”

There's no way we can get hundreds of people on the river in less than an hour without a stable of agency boat drivers giving up their Saturday morning and driving to whatever remote boat ramp we ask them to come to. The MDC Missouri River Fisheries Unit has taken that mandate to a new level of dedication. From St. Joseph down to Jefferson City, we can count on the help of both the Fisheries and Missouri River Units from Chillicothe to make the drive and safely haul huge numbers of volunteers onto the river in their massive research boats. They’ve caught live fish to display to children at our events. And one of them has recruited his family to come to countless clean-ups, becoming super clean-up pros themselves.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to the Chillicothe Crew for your years of dedication to our project cleaning up their “office.” Special thanks to Jason Datillo, Thomas Huffmon, Darby Niswonger and Greg Pitchford.

“We have no finer partnership than our relationship with Missouri River Relief.”
- Tom Bell, Manager, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Big Muddy Refuge
THANK YOU TO OUR MANY SPONSORS
THIS PROJECT IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT.

$20,000 TO $30,000
Pat Jones
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Ecological Services Columbia Field Office

$10,000 TO $19,999
Bass Pro Shops
Missouri American Water
Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources
Hulston Family Foundation
Missouri Dept. of Conservation

$5,000 TO $9,999
Constellation Energy
Healthy Rivers Partnership
Great Rivers Greenway District
Rivermiles, Inc.
Thomas & Anne Smith Charitable Fund
Walmart

$2,000 TO $4,999
AEP River Operations
Boone Electric
Boeing Co.
Certified Commercial Investment Members
Greenway Network
Jackson County
John Burroughs School
Mo. Environmental Fund
Living Lands & Waters
Missouri Scholars Academy
Patrick & Becky Lynn
St. James Winery
University of Missouri - Columbia
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Omaha
Bryan Johnson

$500 TO $1,999
Alton Marketplace Association
Ameren Missouri
Ameristar Casino - St. Charles
Anheuser Busch
Back to the River - Omaha
Bank of Washington
Bernie Arnold
Big Muddy Adventures
Central Bank
Colliers International
Dave & Fran Stous
Francis Baum
Gallup
Greenway Network
Jan Weaver
Jan and Clayton Schnarr
Jed Friedrichson
Jodi Pfefferkorn
Joe Engeln
Kohl's
Marilyn Barrow
Morgan Stanley
Open Space Council of St. Louis
Patagonia
Roger & Barbara Giles
Rotary Club of Washington
St. Louis-Jefferson Solid Waste District
The Blue Note
Donations from individuals are an important part of Missouri River Relief’s income. Donations from volunteers and admirers were 1/3 of our funding this year.