2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Bringing People Together
Programs Expand with Rock-solid Results

Missouri River Relief solidified its foundation of river activities in a truly impressive array in 2017. Our education programs expanded with two workshops for educators and an enlarged enrollment at the Missouri River Academy residential summer camp for teenagers.

MRR awarded eight River Stewardship mini-grants, thanks to an EPA Environmental Education grant, and hosted the second Missouri River Rendezvous in Saint Joseph where we honored MR-340 Race Director Scott Mansker with the “River Hero” Award.

River Relief continued building its framework of clean-ups with community-based projects from Omaha-Council Bluffs to Saint Charles with big events in Washington, MO and Boonville.

Our educational boat trips expanded tremendously with a flagship program to take every Fourth Grader in Columbia Public Schools to the Missouri River (1,500 students).

MRR crews continued operating safety boats in four river races with hundreds of paddlers. Our new fleet of canoes embarked on rivers for trash clean-ups and float trips. We also operated a support boat for the five-day, 100-mile Paddle MO trip organized by Stream Teams United.

We continue to co-sponsor the monthly Big Muddy Speaker Series and to host the annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival.

MRR stands out as an equipment-based, action-oriented group that forms a compelling community when conducting events up-and-down the river. I invite you to join us in taking action to make the river a better place—there are many ways to help and everyone has something to offer. Please accept our heart-felt gratitude for your continued support—THANKS!

Jeff Barrow,
Director, Missouri River Relief

Steve Schnarr has been Program Manager for MRR since 2005. He’s also secretly a fantastic cook, talented writer and calm force behind nearly all events.

Melanie Cheney’s nickname is “Reminder in Chief” and for good reason—she is a demon with details. She has been Assistant Program Manager for MRR since 2008.

Kristen Schulte, MRR’s Education Coordinator, earned her master’s in Natural Science Education and has a passion for making students fall in love with the Missouri River.

Jen Davis, MRR’s Event Coordinator since 2015, has a background in theatre and a flair for infusing the arts into the nuts & bolts of organizing.

John Brady is MRR’s Fleet Manager and poet laureate. He might bark orders and gesture crazily when the frontloaders are out, but we know he’s really a teddybear.

Racin’ Dave Stevens, MRR’s Mechanic, cares for our vehicles and boats with the attention he gives to motorcycles in his shop. A high honor indeed.

Jody Frank has been a crew member for MRR since 2009. With experience in environmental education and prairie restoration, she’s a multitalented Bookkeeper.
Highlights

**MO RIVER ALL STARS**

After-School Program launches in 5 Columbia Elementary Schools, working with 83 students, covering 5 lessons and one riverside learning day.

**Beetles Institute**

Steve and Kristen attended a 5-day workshop in San Francisco to bring leadership expertise and incorporate effective practices into learning experiences for our participants and staff.

**Awards Won**

“Citizens Award” - MO Chapter of American Fisheries Society.

“Mayor’s Climate Protection Environmental Stewardship Award” City of Columbia

100 Years of Missouri Conservation Partnership - MDC & MCHF

“Missouri River Country Heroes Award” - Katy Land Trust

**PARTNERSHIPS**

Columbia Public Schools, Fontenelle Forest, Back to the River, UMKC/Sustain Mizzou, Cooper’s Landing, Open Space Council, Piasa Pallisades Sierra Club, Healthy Rivers Partnership, MEEA, Big Muddy Adventures, Osage Paddle Sports, Paddle MO

**Intens!**

MRR welcomed two Education Assistant Interns in 2017. Read our River Notes blog (riverrelief.blogspot.com) for a cool recap.

**TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE**

MRR shuttled 50 of our best volunteers and friends to an island on August 21st, 2017, also launching six canoes & kayaks to get onto the big river for this once-in-a-lifetime event!

**MINI-BUS & CANOES**

Thanks to a grant from the Mid-Missouri Solid Waste District, RR was able to purchase these two new pieces of equipment.
Missouri River Relief

Kent Robinson: Two new races, lots of new faces for MRR

Kent Robinson not only started Osage Paddle Sports in 2015, he and his family brought two new benefit races to Missouri River Relief. The “Spring 12” in May saw #1 canoes and kayaks race from Mariosa to the mouth of the Osage River and back to Bonnots Mill (with a headwind in both directions!). They tripled that distance in October with the “Fall 36” – a 36-mile race from the Osage River, down the Missouri and up the Gasconade. They helped raise more than $1,800 for the organization.

Paddle sports have become a staple in Missouri River Relief’s outreach and fundraising efforts. Since the start of the MR340 Race, canoeing and kayaking on the Missouri River has exploded. The strong community that has grown around racing has helped our organization in so many ways, from sweat equity to event planning, fundraising and networking.

2017 EDUCATION
BY THE NUMBERS:

2,124 Students
252 Teachers
13 Educational Booths
20 Excursions
3 Educator Workshops
49 Presentations
32 Big Muddy Speakers Series
15 Media Stories

Educators Learn to Integrate the Missouri River in Classrooms

“Close your eyes and imagine this river through the eyes of a steamboat captain…” says MRR Education Coordinator, Kristen Schulte to a group of teachers in life jackets, as they sit in a large, flat-bottomed boat floating down the Missouri River. From workshops in Omaha, Nebraska to St. Louis, Missouri, Kristen has guided educators through a series of professional learning workshops to not only give educators a better understanding of the river but also ideas of how they might incorporate it into their own classroom.

“I found it very interesting to learn about the bottom of the river and the silt and sediment that are collecting down there,” said Nicole Trautman a science teacher from Nebraska. “This is a great experience for me as a teacher because I get the joy of being a participant in the program but I also get to see how I, as a teacher, could facilitate a program like this to get kids involved in the environment and thinking about the natural resources Nebraska has to offer.”

Schulte says, “An important part of this workshop is getting educators to think about ways to implement what they have learned into what they are currently teaching.” Each educator brings a lesson that they use to teach science, environmental education or social studies and are asked to take what they have learned from the workshop and adapt it to something that connects the lesson back to the Missouri River.

These two workshops were supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Environmental Education Grant and the Missouri Environmental Education Association.

Nebraska Educator, Nicole Trautman’s first time on the river
Fourth Graders Explore the River at “Missouri River Days”

“My favorite part was the boat ride because we got to be scientists. They asked us questions about the river and what we thought about it” says a fourth grader. MRR Education Coordinator, Kristen Schulte says, “this was the reaction of many fourth graders in 2017 as we kicked off ‘Missouri River Days’, a half-day field trip on the river offered to the entire 4th-grade of Columbia Public Schools during the fall and spring school year.”

Schulte says that “during the field trip, students develop an understanding of the Missouri River through four experiences” This includes a guided hike through a floodplain forest, creating a nature sketch like Lewis and Clark, experiencing the Missouri River by motorboat and meeting a fisheries biologist. “Like Brian McKeage, who works for Missouri Department of Conservation, he showed student’s several species of fish, including a silver carp,” says Schulte.

There were many squeals as McKeage used a net to move a shovelnose sturgeon into an aquarium for the students to observe. “Sturgeon don’t have any bones in their bodies. They’re all cartilage, like a shark,” McKeage shares in between the splashes and squeals from the kids. “I also liked seeing the fish. There were some unusual fish and feisty fish too! I have been on a boat before, but never on the Missouri River”, shares the fourth grader. This is the case for most of the fourth graders that participate in Missouri River Days. Which is why we are so grateful for support from the National Park Foundation with their “Every Kid in a Park” grant.
Washington River
Hometown Heroes

Washington, Mo. is one of the most river-centric towns on the Lower River. With one of the busiest boat ramps on the Missouri River, people flock to the beautiful downtown park overlooking the river to stare at it, sunshine or flood. The grassy park and pavilion on the river is the ideal place to hold, not just a community river clean-up, but also a local river festival highlighting the town’s connection to the river.

River Relief held our sixth Washington River Festival and Missouri River Clean-up on April 8, 2017 in partnership with the Washington River Festival Committee. Because of high water on the Missouri River, we changed our plans at the last minute to attack land-based sites along creeks and streams near Washington. The weather was perfect and we had 170 volunteers show up to remove 5.75 tons of junk from the banks and floodplains of our streams. It turned out to be an amazing day, really.

The festival was the best ever, with really great music lined up throughout the day, food, drinks, educational booths, art projects and more, all thanks to this dedicated committee of volunteers, helping to craft educational events, tasty meals and student art projects, finding creative venues and music acts to bring large parts of this community to the river. To us, these folks are true hometown heroes!
30 tons of trash removed from the river, including...

1,019 bags trash • 320 tires • 12 coolers
21 chairs • 5 refrigerators • 27 barrels & drums
25 buckets • 11 bedsprings & mattresses
107 blocks of Styrofoam • 8 propane tanks
5.5 fishing poles • 5 TVs • 2 messages in a bottle
18 light bulbs • 2 bowling balls • $13 dollars
7 traffic cones • 1 Elmo head

5,305 total people impacted in 4 states

1,552 Volunteers from groups such as Cox Conserves, Berkshire Hathaway, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Pacific Life, Great Adventure Ministries, National Park Service, Harrah’s Casino, Boonville High School, Chouteau Grotto, CMU Environmental Science Club, Columbia College, CoMoTion, Hickman High School, Missouri Master Naturalists, Rock Bridge High School, State Fair Community College, Missouri Stream Teams, Washington Middle School Environmental Club, Washington High School, Tamil Sangam, Alliance Water Resources, Walmart and a bunch more!

29 Communities
Easley, Providence, Boonville, Washington, Orrick, Omaha, Bellevue, Huntsdale, Ashland, Jeff City, Columbia, St. Charles, St. Louis (Maplewood, Fenton, Brentwood), Alton, Kansas City (Sugar Creek), St. Joseph, Bonnot's Mill, Hartsburg, St. Albans, Collinsville, New Haven, Osage Beach, Bennington, NE City, Hermann

60 Events
Clean-ups, education, river races, film festival, Big Muddy Speaker Series, river excursions, river festival & more
**Missouri River Paddlers**

Paddlers of all ages hopped in canoes and kayaks on Saturday, Sept. 30th for the 8th annual Race to the Dome. In total, the benefit paddling race for Missouri River Relief saw 91 boats, and 140 paddlers. One paddler in particular, was William Clark’s great (x5) grandson, Churchill Clark, who paddled his handmade dugout canoe. Upon completion of the race, paddlers enjoy lunch and an ice cold beer. Prizes and medals are then awarded to the winners in each division.

River Relief participated in a good number of paddling events this year, including the Spring 12 Race - which hosted a new youth/adult class, the 12th annual MR340, Race for Rivers, Race to the Dome, Paddle MO, along with a canoe team at the Boonville Cleanup, and a leisurely Sunday float at the 2017 Missouri River Rendezvous utilizing MRRs new fleet of 10 aluminum canoes!!!

Providing safety boats for these events, our hard working and skilled volunteers give up part of their week or weekend to travel along the race to the finish line, supplying support and first response. It’s a great way to build their river skills and learn lessons about Missouri River navigation. Plus get inspired by hundreds of people pushing their bodies and hearts to new limits.

River races and paddling events are providing unparalleled experiences for people to get out on the Missouri River, getting to know the resource where we get our drinking water from on a much deeper level, and creating a new community of engaged and knowledgeable Missouri River citizens.

This year, MRR helped with 8 paddling events!
The Missouri River Rendezvous

As the year wound its way down, Missouri River Relief hosted the final Missouri River Rendezvous at beautiful Camp Geiger in St. Joseph, MO funded in part by a 2-year Environmental Education EPA grant and the Missouri Environmental Education Association.

45 Participants enjoyed a series of presentations by activists, historians and experts showcasing river-related art, education, advocacy, recreation, research, stewardship and commerce along the Missouri River.

There were indoor and outdoor presentations and activities, including a Big Muddy boat ride, and a River Heroes banquet Saturday night to honor one of our biggest heroes, MR340 Canoe & Kayak Race Organizer, Scott Mansker! The essence of River Relief’s mission is to connect people to the Missouri River through action. What a rare treat to work with an organization like Scott’s (Rivermiles) that shares this same essential goal, involving the entire paddling community that they have nurtured.

Friday night we hosted a cool campfire scene through story and song, with Ozark musician and storyteller Marideth Sisco. We finished the crisp fall weekend with a 12-mile guided canoe trip on a gorgeous stretch of river many of us had never been on. We love St. Joe!
### Financials

#### 2017 Income
- **Individuals** $68,248
- **Corporate** $79,835
- **Grants & Foundations** $23,285
- **Government** $98,798
- **Program Related** $31,951

**Total: $302,117**

#### 2017 Expense

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**Total: $321,420**

### Meet the Board

- **KORY KAUFMAN, president**  
  Science Teacher, Rock Bridge High School, Columbia Public Schools
- **KATHY LOVE, vice president**  
  Public Information Officer, Missouri Department of Higher Education (retired)
- **MICHAEL CRIST, treasurer**  
  Partner, Tatanka Resources
- **LYNNE HOOPER, secretary**  
  Urban Hydrologist, Boone County Public Works Department
- **BILL FESSLER, past president**  
  Resource Management, Kansas City Parks & Recreation
- **FRANCIS BAUM**  
  Senior Software Engineer, Tapestry Solutions, A Boeing Company
- **HEATHER GILLICH**  
  Education Consultant
- **TONY SUDEKUM**  
  Medical Doctor
- **NIC ROGERS**  
  Staff, Ozark Regional Land Trust
- **DIANA PAPOULIAS**  
  Aquatic toxicologist, E-Tech International (NGO), Science Mission Lead, Expedition
  USGS fish biologist (retired)

After six years of continuous service, Kathy Love is taking time off from the Board of Directors where she has brought a laser-sharp focus as an advocate for educational programs. We wish her well and look forward to her return.

*photo by John L. Dengler*
A Big Muddy Thanks to Our Sponsors

Our projects would be impossible without the generous donations of our many sponsors. Our gratitude is heartfelt.

Sponsor of the Year

$20,000 to $55,000

Hulston Family Foundation

$2,000-$4,999
- ArchTech, LLC
- Diggit Graphics
- KOPN 89.5 Community Radio
- Lucky’s Market - Columbia
- City of Columbia – Stormwater
- Columbia Sportswear
- Corvin Family Foundation
- Greenway Network
- Bryan Johnson
- Little Blue River Watershed Association
- Missouri Stream Team
- National Environmental Education Foundation
- Race to the Dome
- St. James Winery
- St. Louis-Jefferson County Solid Waste Management District
- Stream Teams United
- The Blue Note
- UMKC (Student Environmental Coalition)

City of Council Bluffs
City of Omaha
City of St. Charles
Colliers International
Columbia Convention & Visitors Bureau
Columbia Public Schools
Columbia Audubon Society
Mike Crist
Joe Engeln
Bill Fessler
Doris Guilory
Great Rivers Greenway District
Harrah’s Casino - Council Bluffs
Isle of Capris Casino - Boonville
Stephen & Linda Jackson
Katy Land Trust
Logboat Brewing Co.
Patrick and Becky Lynn
Terry Merritt
Missouri Environmental Fund
Missouri Geographic Alliance
Ruthie Moccia
Morgan Stanley Wealth Management
Sandy Neal
Northrup Grumman
Osage Paddle Sports
Diana Papoulas and David Galat
Piassa Palsades Sierra Club
Redfin
Rotary Club of Washington
Jan & Clayton Schnarr
Stephanie and Everett Stokes
Dave & Fran Stous
Sustain Mizzou
Laura Sweets
James Swope
Jan Thompson
Veterans United
True/False Film Festival
Walmart
Jan Weaver

$10,000 to $19,999

Rio Vista Fund
(Greater St. Louis Community Foundation)

Pat Jones

$5,000 to $9,999

Agriservices of Brunswick
Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources
Bass Pro Shops
Mid-Missouri Solid Waste Management District
Thomas Smith Charitable Fund
Open Space Council of St. Louis

$500-1,999
- Alliance Water Resources
- Alpine Shop
- Arnold Stream Team 211
- Audubon Society of Missouri
- Gloria & Michael Attoun-Baumeister
- Augusta Brewing Company - 68.3 Bierfest
- Marilyn Barrow
- Francis & Case Baum
- Bank of Washington
- Berkshire Hathaway - National Indemnity
- Matt Boehner
- Dan & Connie Burkhardt
- Broadway Brewery
- Central Bank of Boone County
- City of Boonville
- City of Columbia Parks & Rec

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Our Crew of Volunteers

Equally important to new blood, the growth and evolution of volunteer crew into positions of responsibility is essential to our continued success.

Every year we recognize seasoned crew members who truly grew in their contributions to the organization at Missouri River Relief’s Annual Awards Banquet. The MRR crew often transform themselves into positions of more responsibility as a leader, boat driver, staff member, board member or other positions.

Sometimes people encounter Missouri River Relief and then they come up to one of us and they say: “I love this. This is what I am going to do.”

Missouri River Relief is powered by people like this.

This year’s Cornerstone Award, River Relief’s highest honor, is a person that sees the hull of a boat as a sacred space where we welcome our neighbors into a new river world. She sees a dinner plate as a place where love feeds the energy that can save our world. She sees the beauty of the river splashed everywhere. She sees the stone under your foot as a priceless jewel.

She sees a word as a thing that can hurt or inspire. The choice was obvious, she is one of our biggest inspirations.

Thank you for the love you give to everyone you encounter, Gale Johnson. You are a Cornerstone of Missouri River Relief and so much more.