River Stories

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSOURI RIVER RELIEF

Creating River Stories

The Missouri River is not silent. The power of its current swirls and boils. As it passes over snags and wing dikes, it rushes like the mountain streams that are its source. When its surface fills with frazil ice pans in the winter, they fill the air with a slushy hissing symphony of sound. The geese and ducks that follow its winding path through the country are part of the orchestra.

But in our world of cities and towns and farms, we need the river to have a voice. That voice is all of us. The river needs us to tell its story.

What Missouri River Relief has become expert at is creating opportunities for people to make the river part of their story. Sometimes it's a river clean-up volunteer who tells her friends about all of the sports balls she found in the cottonwood forest right before an eagle came swooping by.

It may be a student who can't wait to tell his parents about the weird dinosaur fish he got to touch that lives in the Missouri River or the sound of the swirling river he heard from a boat bobbing down the current.

Or the MR340 paddler who starts begging her friends to do a full moon float trip on the river with her to experience 1/6 of the continent's water slipping through the landscape in the darkness.

When the river becomes part of our story, we become the voice of the river. In a time when protections for our waters and lands seem in danger, and when more and more of us are living in the river's watershed, the river needs a voice.

The river needs us to tell its story.

Missouri River Relief's story in 2018 was one of many changes. We brought aboard our new and talented Operations Manager, Kevin Tosie. Our Director of many years, Jeff Barrow, retired from our staff and longtime employee Steve Schnarr moved into his place. Melanie Cheney built a new Office Manager role to stabilize our foundation. Our education program deepened with the vision of our Education Director Kristen Schulte.

Thank you for being part of the story of the Missouri River. You are part of the solution. We can clean her up. We can bring our families to her. We can give the Big Muddy the love she deserves and share her story.

Missouri River Relief is grateful for you.

Steve Schnarr,
Director, Missouri River Relief

Our Staff

Jeff Barrow, former Director and one of the original founders of Missouri River Relief, retired in August, 2018. Jeff wore many hats. As Director for 8 years, he helped build our community.

Melanie Cheney's nickname is "Reminder in Chief" and for good reason—she is a demon with details. She manages the office as **Office Manager** and keeps the organization flowing.

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

Kevin Tosie joined the team in June as full-time **Operations Manager**, organizing events throughout the Lower Missouri River Region and shepherding our volunteer crew.

Jen Davis, Event Coordinator, has a background in theatre and a flair for infusing the arts into the nuts & bolts of event organizing.

John Brady is our **Fleet Manager** and poet laureate. He keeps watch over our fleet of machines and the spiritual vision of our river community.

Katy Miller our **Bookkeeper,** tracks our income and expenses and thanks our many generous donors-when she's not busy as a local homebirth midwife.

Cover: "Missouri River Academy" summer camp students experience the Big Muddy. STEVE SCHNARR

Read the Story of 2018 at riverrelief.org/results/2018

Highlights

Our first big community clean-up at Riverfront Park in Kansas City, MO. MELANIE CHENEY

Kansas City Clean-up & Educators Workshop

In the Spring, 115 fantastic volunteers cleaned up 7 miles of the river at our first big community clean-up based out of Riverfront Park (pictured above) in downtown Kansas City. In the Fall, we partnered with Shawnee Mission School District to provide 20 middle school teachers a hands-on experience exploring how local water quality issues affect the river. We're proud of how the Missouri River's largest city is learning to love its river.

RIVER EXCURSIONS

From a Columbia Parks and Recreation Sunset Cruise to the Audubon Society of Missouri Conference Trip, educational river cruises are a treat. We get to showcase cool habitat restoration projects, like the Jameson Chute and tell the river's story.

Audubon Conference: ETHAN DUKE

Awards Received

"2018 Conservation Organization of the Year"
from the Conservation Federation of Missouri

"Missouri River Champion Award"
from the Missouri River Natural Resources Conference

"Kay & Leo Drey Environmental Stewardship Award"
from Missouri Coalition for the Environment

PAT JONES

2018 ended with a huge loss. Our "Prairie Godmother" Pat Jones passed away in December. Pat gave so much to the state of Missouri. She is the reason we have the Katy Trail, which is the number one way people can visit the Missouri River. She was a huge supporter of our mission. Thank you, Pat, for your endless generosity.

MU Student: STEVE SCHNARR

Missouri River Information Packets

Teachers are finding out that the Missouri River is an excellent lens to teach any subject. This year, we worked with experts and scientists to release our first batch of information packets on several issues facing the river, from endangered species to wastewater pollution. Each topic is accompanied by a summary, some basic facts and why it is important to the Missouri River. To learn more and download, visit our Education Resources page at riverrelief.org/education/resources/

Shovelnose Sturgeon: CLAIRE HASSLER

Dr. Ben Herman
Associate Professor, University of Missouri College of Education

Measuring Program Impact with New Partnership

Missouri River All-Stars After-School Program

In 2018, we worked with **1,980 students** and **214 teachers** across **23 different programs**. Of these programs, the one we are most proud of is "Missouri River All Stars After-School Program". This five-week program, based in four schools each year, includes four after-school sessions and one day on the river.

This lasting impact is largely due to a new partnership with University of Missouri: College of Education. Professor Ben Herman has helped us fine-tune our curriculum to support students' understanding of how various groups like scientists or farmers perceive and experience their relationship to the endangered Pallid Sturgeon.

He has also helped to conduct a research study integrating pre and post-student surveys, teacher interviews and student observations. His dedication to this research helped us capture the elusive impact of this program beyond just the number of students that participated.

We also added a new teacher professional development session with the goal of supporting teachers drawing on their Missouri River All Stars experience to develop lessons that incorporated the Missouri River into their classroom. Much to our surprise, the teachers took things a step further and actually worked to re-write the entire 4th grade science curriculum. This new curriculum will now be developed for use across the whole district!

All-Stars After School Students break up into groups to learn about the Missouri River. MELANIE CHENEY

YouthBuild AmeriCorps members happy to be catching a river breeze on a hot day of service. NANCY SILVER

AmeriCorps Members Come to the River from Across the State

River Clean-up with Job Point's YouthBuild Program

May 23rd, 2018 marks the date of a new tradition, as we spent the day working with AmeriCorps members from Job Point's YouthBuild from across the state. Members spent the day at the river while working together to pick up trash along its banks.

Members learned about the Missouri River in several ways. First, by exploring management practices with a stream table model of the river. Second, by investigating macroinvertebrates that live in the river with the use of microscopes. Third, by observing the adaptations of birds that live along the river.

Jerrell Morton
Director of YouthBuild

Lastly, members went out onto the river with our experienced boat captains. Members were provided a guided tour, pointing out an eagle's nest and sharing the river history. Along the way members stopped to pick up trash along the river's banks. Jerrell Morton the Director of YouthBuild said "Students walked away with tools and knowledge of the role we play in the health and preservation of the Missouri River".

For many members, it was their first time on the river and they experienced a lot of growth. At the end of the day, members reflected on their experience. Each member shared one word they would have used to describe the river before the program and one word to describe the river after their experience. Here's a couple examples: (1) Dirty > Relaxing, (2) Gross > Refreshing, (3) Scary > Chill, (4) Big > Tranquil.

The day was hot, but the members were champions and finished the day with smiles on their faces and chilled towels on their heads!

River Stories

The Artist

"Last fall I jumped at the chance of a personal boat ride to paint river side for an afternoon at the "Just Plein Air & Water Event". Painting outside on a hot sunny fall afternoon just a few feet away from the river swirling by was an inspiring challenge. Rather than being frustrated with the sunlight changing and shadows stretching long and the hot breeze drying my palette, I was fueled by these things, appreciating the flow, challenged as a creative to decide what parts of those 3-4 hours would make their way to the canvas, and excited by the unknown of what might float (or scurry!) by next."

--Cindy Scott Artistry, Event Painter

The Paddler

"We'd slept three hours so far, and had a full night, sunrise and early morning to paddle before our next stop. After passing Jeff City we realized we were taking on water through a hole and were slowly sinking. While bailing and paddling we found a place on the bank to hold onto the boat till a safety boat could come help us. Thanks to the Missouri River Relief folks on that boat and their magical boat tape we decided to push on and finished!"

---The Proud Marys three-woman canoe team

7 Events • 1,120 Paddlers

Spring 12, Mo River Ramble, Race for the Rivers, Missouri River 340, Race to the Dome, Big MO Ride and Row, Paddle MO

Race to the Dome Finish: **STEVE SCHNARR**

Missouri River Days Program: **KRISTEN SCHULTE**

The Student

"That was awesome! When years pass, don't forget that you made a lot of kids day. My favorite part was the boat ride. I learned the Missouri River can be more than 25 feet deep!"

--Columbia 4th Grader

1,980 Students • 23 Programs

Missouri River Days Program: STEVE SCHNARR

14 tons

of trash removed from the river

626 bags of trash
156 tires
5 refrigerators
2 chest freezers
2 hot water heaters
1 washing machine
1 dishwasher
12 propane tanks
18 coolers
19 plastic buckets
14 plastic barrels
6 metal drums
1 tattoo needle (new in package)
13 plastic tubs
1 goose decoy
1 space heater
1 fishing angel
1 old wedding photo
60 hunks of Styrofoam
3 TVs
4 car headlights
47 lightbulbs
1 George Foreman grilling machine
1 bag lottery tickets
1 leather easy chair
1 plastic pinapple
1 bottle of Old Spice
1 Dead End road sign
1 toilet seat
1 turkey baster
14 assorted flip flops
44 shot bottles
136 muddy balls
2 messages in a bottle

80 EVENTS

CLEAN-UPS, EDUCATION, PADDLING, FILMS, BOOTHS, BIG MUDDY SPEAKER SERIES, RIVER EXCURSIONS, PINT NIGHTS & MORE

The Volunteer

"Working on cleanups with River Relief helps me to know that I am doing my best to reduce the amount of plastics and metals accumulating in our environment. It's like a weight is lifted off of my mind after we've cleared out a long stretch of riverbank. I feel as though there is a huge disconnect between citizens and the Missouri River... and that's where we come in. Volunteering with Missouri River Relief has been one of the most inspiring experiences I've ever had. Cheers to many more."

--Phillip Masters, MRR Crew Member

1,208 Volunteers • 6,355 Hours

Kansas City Clean-up Treasure: MELANIE CHENEY

The Teacher

"I was able to participate in the Missouri River All Star program with my 4th graders. It was an amazing experience that allowed my students to learn so much more about the Missouri River and feel that amazing connection it. This experience created an entire group of students who are now passionate about the river and taking care of it, as well as the organisms within it."

--Ragan Webb, Columbia Elementary Teacher

9 Workshops • 214 Teachers

The Best Volunteers - Rain or Shine!

Osage & Missouri Rivers Clean-up - June 2, 2018

Soda Popp
Osage River property owner, & MRR Volunteer Crew

The first time we held a river clean-up at the confluence of the Osage and Missouri Rivers was in 2006. At that time, Soda Popp had a barge moored in front of his house selling gas and ice. He opened his property for our crew to camp at for the long clean-up weekend. Since then, he's been a tight member of our volunteer crew.

"The river is a really big part of my life. I want the river protected and cared for, and that's what Missouri River Relief does," said Soda Popp. "I do whatever I can to help with that, and to help them bring attention to the river."

It had been 10 years since we had a clean-up at this historic and beautiful river landmark, and once again we set up camp at Soda's, boating across the river to our clean-up headquarters at Bonnots Mill. Just as the first volunteers of the day started signing in and picking up their t-shirts, the storm clouds opened and people headed for cover. It was a deluge, with unnervingly close lightning. The land itself turned into a river for a moment, and we couldn't see across the Osage River at times.

As the storm moved past, we suddenly realized that the parking lot had filled up with vehicles and over 80 smiling people came striding up to register. Those smiles were the theme of the day. The dicey weather meant we lost some volunteers, but those that showed up were nothing but solid gold. With positive attitudes and smiles, they got more work done than most cleanup crews twice their size. We are so proud to be a part of it. **87 volunteers** removed **3.75 TONS** of trash from the Missouri and Osage Rivers!

The Combs family helped with the trash haul, and even found a message in a bottle! STEVE SCHNARR

Plein Air Artists: STEVE SCHNARR

"Just Plein Air and Water"

Connecting artists to the Big Muddy - September 23, 2018

Some of Missouri River Relief's most dedicated supporters are artists. Artists are often visionaries that understand how our work to connect people to the Missouri River is important to the future health of this river. For many years we have wanted to craft an event that would give our artist community a unique opportunity to create right on the river.

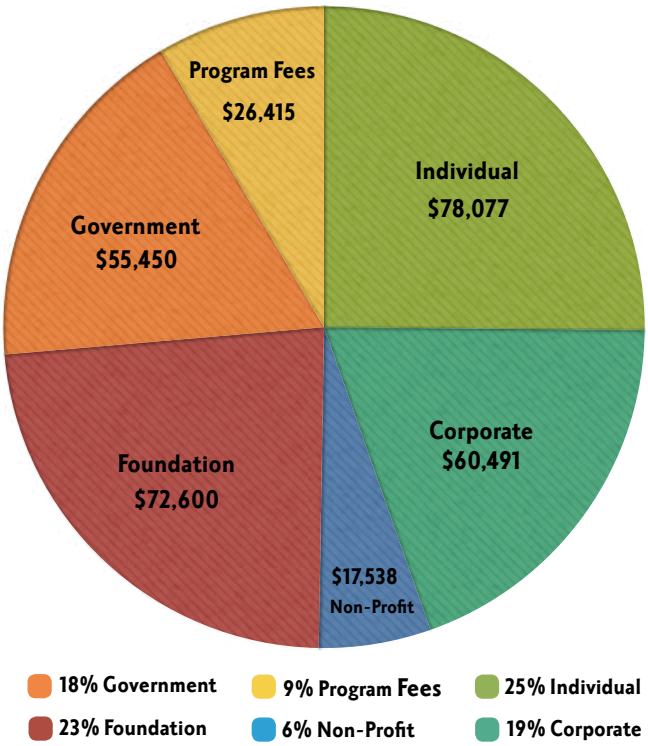
Enter Columbia Art League. When our volunteer Joe Engeln approached them with the idea of hosting a plein air art event on the river by boat, they were right on board. With this partnership, we provided the river expertise and boats and the Columbia Art League organized the participating artists. All proceeds were shared by the two organizations.

Many of the artists had never been on the river before, but everyone was brave. We plopped them down on muddy or rocky banks with stunning views of the Rocheport river bluffs and they got right to work. In just over 3 hours, our boats were filled with smiling artists and beautiful paintings. "This was a unique and inspiring event to benefit and join forces of Missouri River Relief and the Columbia Art League," said participating artist Cindy Scott. "I appreciated getting to spend the time to observe, visually study, and transfer my vision in paint onto a triptych work of art. It was a beautiful afternoon!"

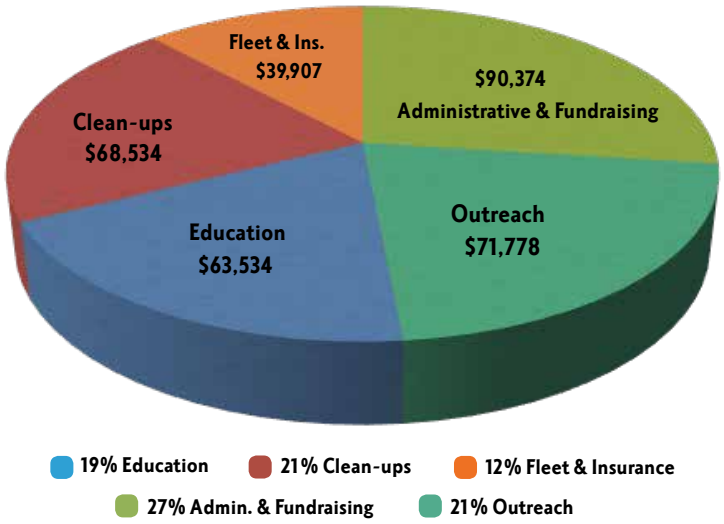
Paintings from the event were displayed in a "pop-up" gallery on Stephen's College campus in Columbia. Some of the artists donated their works to the Big Muddy Art Auction benefitting Missouri River Relief in 2019, raising over $9,000 for Missouri River Relief's work.

Financials

Revenue



Expenses



Revenue	**$310,571**
Expenses	**$334,472**

Meet the Board

Officers

KORY KAUFMAN, *President*
Science Teacher, Rock Bridge High School, Columbia Public Schools

NIC ROGERS, *Vice President*
Staff, Ozark Regional Land Trust

MICHAEL CRIST, *Treasurer*
Partner, Tatanka Resources

LYNNE HOOPER, *Secretary*
Urban Hydrologist, Boone County Public Works Department

Board Members

BILL FESSLER, *past president*
Resource Management, Kansas City Parks & Recreation

JED FRIEDRICHSEN
Retired Digital Learning Innovator

HEATHER GILLICH
Education Consultant

TOM LEMLEY
Attorney, Bridgeport Law Firm

TERRY MERRITT
Division Manager, Alliance Water Resources

DIANA PAPOULIAS
Aquatic Toxicologist, E-Tech International (NGO), Science Mission Lead, Exxpedition USGS Fish Biologist (retired)

Board President Kory Kaufman has volunteered for many years as a crew member, helps instruct at the Missouri River Academy, and drives boat loads of trash at river clean-ups.

In 2018 he led the organization through an intensive search and hiring process to find River Relief's new Executive Director.

Thank you for your service, Kory!

photo courtesy: ROBYN KAUFMAN

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

Mid-Missouri Solid Waste Management District

$20,000 to $55,000

Mid-Missouri Solid Waste Management District

Hulston Family Foundation

$10,000 to $19,999

Corvin Family Fund

Missouri Conservation Department

Missouri American Water

John P. & Maida S. Hulston Family Fund

Recreational Trails Program
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Rio Vista Foundation

www.rivermiles.com

Pat Jones

$5,000 to $9,999

Boone County Community Trust

Living Lands & Waters

National Park Foundation

The Open Space Council

$2,000 - $4,999

Alpine Shop
Boeing
Bryan & Linda Johnson
CenturyLink
City of Columbia
Columbia Convention & Visitors Bureau
Diana Papoulias & David Galat
Diggit Graphics
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Kaitlyn Hartnagel
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Lucky's Market
Ruthie Moccia
The Blue Note
Todd Wells
UMKC Student Environmental Coal.

$500 - $1,999

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Audubon Society of Missouri
Augusta Brewing Company
Bass Pro Shops
Big Muddy Adventures
Bill Fessler
Central Bank of Boone County
Columbia Art League
Columbia Storage
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Osage Paddle Sports
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Steve Jackson
St. Louis Aquarium Foundation
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Terry Merritt
University of Missouri
Van Trust Real Estate
Veteran's United
Walmart

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"Don't tell anyone, but it was a whole lot of fun".

Patty Farrar,
2018 Cornerstone

Our Volunteer Crew Makes it Happen

The growth and continued success of Missouri River Relief relies heavily on our dedicated crew members who travel all along the Lower Missouri River with us to flawlessly plan and execute our programs year-round. This group of devoted volunteers share their expertise, detail to safety and unmatched dedication throughout our programs as we educate and connect thousands of passionate community members all along the river we love and care for each year.

During our large-scale cleanups, it is impossible to experience everything that happens amongst this well-oiled machine. One of Missouri River Relief's greatest traditions is our "Star Circle" following our large events. This tradition allows each crew member to have everyone's undivided attention as they share their favorite river stories from the day. Laughs, tears, praises and thanks are shared in one of the most welcoming and inclusive atmospheres along the river valley.

At our Annual Awards Banquet, we recognize seasoned crew members who were instrumental to our success and have risen to the occasion time and time again to connect students, teachers and communities to the Missouri River. This year's Cornerstone Award was earned through countless hours at almost every Missouri River Relief program this year. It has been our great pleasure to work beside her during the MR340, bounce ideas off of about the next intricate event, and of course learn by example as we watch her gracefully teach and engage students' sense of curiosity during Missouri River Days. Thank you for the continuous laughs and unmatched passion, Patty Farrar.

The Missouri River Relief Crew poses for a group shot at the 2018 "Great Rivers Clean-up at the Confluence" KRISTEN SCHULTE