From Our Director

2019 was a year for the record books on the Missouri River. Spring started out with an unprecedented flooding disaster in Nebraska followed by a year of nonstop runoff throughout the basin. The people of the river valley were bruised, but also in wonder of the river’s power.

Our job at Missouri River Relief is to find ways to connect people to the Missouri River. When we can’t work ON the river, we share all the most up-to-date information about the river that we can. We find other ways to bring the river to our community. We help those that need help.

Despite several postponements and reschedules we were able to complete almost everything we had on our schedule. We know that the river is in charge. For the past 19 years, we’ve found ways to work with the rhythms of the river and still keep an endless tide of people engaged, active and hopeful.

Our method is this. We provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds to get in touch with their river. To connect. We share enough knowledge and stories to draw them in. We craft experiences that feed that connection and cultivate a care and love for the river. And we provide opportunities for people to put that caring to work.


Steve Schnarr
Director, Missouri River Relief

Steve Schnarr lives in Columbia, Mo. His favorite part of working for Missouri River Relief is introducing people to the Missouri River for the very first time.

See You on the River in 2020!

Our Mission

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 programs and recreation.

Our Staff

Melanie Cheney
Office Manager
Assists the staff with programs and outreach. She manages the office and keeps the organization flowing smoothly.

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
Operations Manager
Organizes community events along the Missouri River, working closely with our dedicated volunteer crew and partners to make it happen.

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

Katy Miller
Bookkeeper
Tracks our income and expenses and thanks our many generous donors when she’s not busy as a local homebirth midwife.
Expanding Our Reach

Growing To Serve Our River

In 2019, we spread our arms wide to embrace growth and increase our capacity. Blessed with new equipment making it easier to more efficiently achieve our mission, we put our new boat, Lucia, to use right away in the spring. This 20-passenger boat (pictured below) has double the capacity of our other boats. The boat was purchased with generous donations from Mid-Missouri Solid Waste Management District, Hulston Family Foundation and Missouri American Water. A grant from the Robert J. Trulaske Foundation purchased a brand new pickup to haul boats and gear.

We brought aboard two education interns in the summer, Katie Hathaway and Carly Hopkins, to help with curriculum and programs. We brought aboard an AmeriCorps VISTA member, Laura Semken, to help grow our capacity. Our deep base of volunteers and donors exploded this year with a desire to help the river.

And our family grew, as the year closed our Education Director Kristen Schulte welcomed a new daughter to her family, growing the next generation.

Since 2001

183
River Clean-ups

27,838
Volunteers

940
Tons of Trash

25,852
Students & Teachers

32
Communities Served
Missouri River Days

Adding layers to a river education experience

Learning is a process. One learning experience, no matter how great, probably won’t lead to a big understanding. Students need more episodes for “deep and sticky” learning.

At River Relief, we give students powerful experiences that will inspire more memorable episodes in their learning about the Missouri River. Partnering with the National Great Rivers Research and Environmental Center, we hosted an Education Intern, Carly Hopkins, to help design a pre & post curriculum for Missouri River Days, an education program that engages the entire 4th grade in Columbia, Mo. with the Missouri River.

Carly designed the curriculum to include two pre-lessons and one post-lesson that align to 4th grade learning standards. Carly then piloted these lessons with grade school teachers. Piloting the lessons was one of her favorite parts of her internship experience.

She shared that “there’s something amazing about seeing your work unfold. The feeling of hearing the teachers read the words that went through countless revisions, and the kids absorbing it, it falls nothing short of complete elation.” Thanks to Carly’s hard work, Missouri River Days is now a “deep and sticky” learning experience that combines a pre-post curriculum with a Missouri River field trip.
**AmeriCorps VISTA**

*Increasing educational capacity*

Meet Laura Semken, our new AmeriCorps VISTA Education Assistant! Laura is focused on education programs targeting Title I schools and community organizations that work with low-income individuals.

With over 19 years of experience in environmental education and a Master’s in Environmental Education and Interpretation, Laura’s wealth of knowledge has assisted River Relief in identifying funding and partners to build the capacity for Missouri River education programs.

This position is hosted in partnership with Stream Teams United.

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**Cultivating Connections**

**2019 Education Programs**

- Environmental Educator Meet & Greets
- St. Louis Educators Workshop
- Missouri River Days with every Columbia Public School 4th grader
- Missouri River All-Stars after school program and river trip
- Missouri River Academy five-day overnight summer camp
- Missouri River Sunset Excursions with Columbia Parks participants, and sponsors & partners from each river community
- Investigating the Missouri River field trips with Oakland Middle School, Rock Bridge High School & AmeriCorps members from across the state
- Stewardship on the Missouri River with Job Point YouthBuild participants
- Leadership Ladder River Excursion with Mo. Department of Natural Resources employees

**By The Numbers**

- **2,236** Students
- **298** Teachers
- **5,077** Hours on the River
- **25** River Trips
- **7** Educator Workshops
- **21** Missouri River Presentations
In our 19 years of working on the river, we’ve never experienced the magnitude of water coming down the Missouri River as we did in the Great Flood of 2019. The impacts on the communities and farms along the river will be felt for years to come.

One of the lessons the river teaches is resilience. Along the banks of the river are stands of willows. Willows can bend in the current, be buried by floods and rebound; get harvested by beavers then resprout or reseed a new sandbar after a flood.

River Relief volunteers are like the willow trees. Difficulties with the weather and river levels are just part of the game. We proceed as the way opens. We are humbled by the river and bring our joy no matter what.

In 2019, 1,149 volunteers worked on 9 clean-ups along the Missouri River, removing 19.5 tons of trash and 168 tires from the banks of the river. A total of 10,867 hours were volunteered along the river’s 42 miles.

The stars aligned for the Washington River Festival and Clean-up, giving us a window of opportunity between large flood events. In addition to the river clean-up, our local partners threw an outstanding River Festival with music, education, art and great food. 169 volunteers removed 5.5 tons of trash from the river, half of which was recycled.

Fort Osage River Clean-up

It stormed most of the day, but a tough batch of volunteers dodged the downpours and still removed 1.5 tons of trash from the river.

The clean-up, our first based out of Fort Osage County Park, was focused on Mile 333, an area of forest that acts as a Trash Trap, collecting Kansas City litter during high water events.

Jefferson City River Clean-up

200 of the best volunteers ignored the rain and cleaned this stretch of river heavily impacted not only by flooding, but a devastating tornado that spread Styrofoam insulation along the banks. We removed 4.9 tons of trash from the banks of the Missouri River including 41 tires and a staggering 176 large chunks of Styrofoam.

Weldon Spring River Clean-up

This was our first time cleaning this beautiful stretch of river just upstream of St. Charles. 153 volunteers removed 4.3 tons of trash from the Missouri River. We were able to send 1.2 tons of that, mostly plastic, to the recycling center and all 51 tires were recycled.

Washington River Festival and Clean-up

The stars aligned for this one, giving us a window of opportunity between large flood events. In addition to the river clean-up, our local partners threw an outstanding River Festival with music, education, art and great food. 169 volunteers removed 5.5 tons of trash from the river, half of which was recycled.
Connecting the Art Community to the River

The Big Muddy Art Auction

Who doesn’t love river art?

We are always looking for new ways to connect our communities to the Missouri River. One thing we do know is that the Missouri River is a source of inspiration for everyone that sits on its banks. When artists transform that inspiration into beauty that can be shared, there are whole new layers of connection going on.

This was our second time hosting the Big Muddy Art Auction at Orr Street Studios, and it was even more successful than our first one. Our goal is to make the event a collaboration between our artist friends and River Relief, so all of the proceeds from submitted artworks are shared.

Some of the artists that participated in 2018’s “Just Plein Air & Water” painting adventure submitted pieces and we met some new friends who donated pieces. The diversity of perspectives was enlightening. The depth of talent was breathtaking. A love for the river saturated all of the works.

A local cattle auctioneer, John Harrison, did the calling and a room packed with 145 bidders kept things hopping. The event raised $8,000 for Missouri River Relief programs and created new relationships with a focus on the river.

Bryan Haynes

Missouri River Artist

We met Bryan Haynes on the river. He helped haul hay bales for the Washington River Festival and got dirty with the rest of us.

The big river breathes a timeless power and energy into the landscape. Bryan’s paintings find the patterns in that energy. They arrange the tiny details of the river world into a tapestry of connection. He brings history into the present and touches it with magic.

Bryan has never said “No” to a request for help from River Relief. We admire, honor and respect him. And stand amazed at his creations.
Whether you are a world-class competitive paddler or a mom and son combo on the Missouri River for the first time, Race to the Dome is the perfect event for you.

It’s really two simultaneous races, 16 & 28 miles – both ending at beautiful Wilson’s Serenity Point Park in Jefferson City.

This event was started by Patrick Lynn, a friend from Jefferson City who had attended some river clean-ups and thought that the capital deserved a quality paddling race. And he wanted it to benefit Missouri River Relief! American Water, Jeff City’s water company whose plant is directly across the river from the race finish, decided to hop aboard as our title sponsor.

10 years later and this race has created a wonderful community of paddlers. Since 2010, 1,333 paddlers in 944 boats have finished this race! It is the last race of the year and the gathering at the finish line has a joyful feeling of a reunion. The river created this community. That is the goal of everything we do.
Financials

Revenue: $414,690

Program Fees: $43,583
Government: $64,064
Foundation: $106,675
Individual: $118,165
Corporate: $67,845
Non-Profit: $14,358

Expenses: $333,847

Fleet & Insurance: $44,190
Clean-Ups: $63,038
Education: $61,789
Outreach: $65,036
Administrative & Fundraising: $99,794

Meet The Board

Officers
NIC ROGERS, President
Stewardship Specialist,
Ozark Regional Land Trust

LYNNE HOOPER, Vice President
Urban Hydrologist,
Boone County Resource Management

KORY KAUFMAN, Secretary
Retired Science Teacher, Rock Bridge High School,
Columbia Public Schools

MICHAEL CRIST, Treasurer
Executive Director,
Managing member of Tatanka Resources

Nic Rogers
Board President
Nic Rogers has volunteered for the last five years as a crew member, helping at river events from St. Louis to St. Joe; he has excelled at jobs like “ramp boss” and “dispatch”, giving a helping hand to each and every volunteer who boards a boat. On top of that, he is a smooth board facilitator.

Thank you for your service, Nic!

Board Members

BILL FESSLER
Resource Management
Kansas City Parks & Recreation

JED FRIEDRICHSEN
Retired Digital Learning Innovator

CATHY GUNTHER, PHD
Biology Instructor
University of Missouri

DANA KEE
Social Worker
Ellis Fischel Cancer Center

DREW LEMBERGER
Owner; Mt. Nebo Inn B&B & Missouri Boatworks;
retired VP Les Bourgeois Vineyards

TOM LEMLEY
Attorney
Bridgepoint Law Firm, LLC

TERRY MERRITT
Vice President
Midwest Water Operations

DIANA PAPOULIAS, PHD
Retired Fisheries Biologist - US Geological Survey;
Ascension Mission Leader of Exxpedition

KENT ROBINSON
Branch Manager Plumb Supply/DKB; Race Director of Osage Spring 12

MICHAEL SALANSKI
Operations Manager at Convergence
Financial & Commissioner with Columbia Community Development Commission

HEIDI SHARP
Founder of Solstice Wellness
# 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

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<td>RIVERMILES, HOST OF THE MR340</td>
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Get Involved

Volunteer
• At a Clean-up
• As an Educator
• On the Board

Create
• River Art
• Tasty Food
• A Community

Participate
• In a River Race
• At a Speaker Series
• At a Summer Camp

Donate
• Cash
• Time
• Talent

Missouri River Flooding on Pinckney Bend in New Haven, MO
Photo by Steve Schnarr