

## Recreation on the Red

Red River's potential as a recreational resource is tremendous



The Red River of the North provides a scenic backdrop for a variety of recreational activities – bicycling, walking, canoeing, bird-watching, boating, fishing, in-line skating and many more.

The Red is home to more than 50 species of fish including Northern pike, muskellunge, wall-eye, sauger, smallmouth bass, channel catfish, black and brown bullhead, lake sturgeon, mooneye, goldeye and carp. Fishing the Red requires a license and catch and release is always encouraged. Never dispose of leftover bait in the river. Certain species of bait-fish can overtake a river, crowding out game fish and other "desirable" fish.

On June 5, River Keepers and the Fargo Park District will host the Lil' Fishermen's Clinic and Derby at Dike East.

Learn the basics of knot tying, casting, safety, ethics, regulations and basic fishing techniques. The fishing clinic is sponsored by the Minnesota Darkhouse Association and Scheels All Sports.

River Keepers and Paramount Sports are sponsoring the 14th annual "Race the Red" canoe and kayak race on Monday, June 5, 2006.



Entrants choose from two races; a ten mile competitive race starts at 5:30 p.m. and a two mile fun race starts at 7 p.m.

Both races will begin at the bike/pedestrian bridge in Fargo's Lindenwood Park at Fifth Street and Seventeenth Avenue South and will finish at Fargo's Dike East/Midtown Dam at Second Street and Second Avenue South.

Entry fees are \$15 for a solo racer and \$25 per team if registration is received by 5 p.m. on Thursday, June 2. Registrations

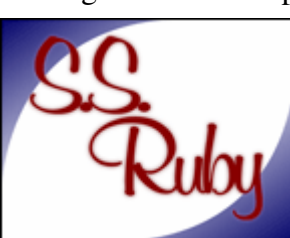
received after the deadline are subject to a \$15 late fee.

If you are in need of a canoe or kayak, rent one from the River Keepers for \$15. The price includes paddles and person flotation devices. There is a limited number available so reserve yours early!

Awards will be presented to race winners during a ceremony at 8 p.m. There also will be door prizes and all participants will receive a free t-shirt.

Join us for this special day of fun on the Red River of the North!

Discover the history, geography and wildlife of the Red River from the decks of the S.S. Ruby during a 45-minute pontoon tour.



"The Gem of the North" begins touring on May 26, depending on flood levels, and can be reserved for groups of up to 18. For additional information or reservations, call 701-793-RUBY.

### IN THIS ISSUE

• Recreation on the Red	1
• Dam Modifications	1
• River Walk	2
• Director's Corner	2
• Prescription Drug Disposal	3
• Creature Feature	3
• Support River Keepers	3
• Connections	4
• Events Calendar	4
• What's New!	4

Canoes and kayaks can be rented for independent exploration of the Red River of the North from the S.S. Ruby ticket booth located next to the First Avenue North Bridge, adjacent to the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead. The booth is open from 4 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays, and 1 to 8 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend. The cost is \$7 per hour per water craft, and includes the use of the craft, paddles, personal flotation devices and basic instruction. River Keepers recommends you bring a camera!

More on river recreation, page 2

## Dam Modifications Make Red River Safer

Last summer, River Keepers held a Ribbon Tying to celebrate the completion of the South Dam retrofit. Originally built in 1933, the South Dam was improved to eliminate the dangerous hydraulic roller effect that is common at low-head dams. By construction of a series of rock rapids, the improvements allow fish migration to occur and help undo the deadly undertow. This is the third dam retrofitted in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

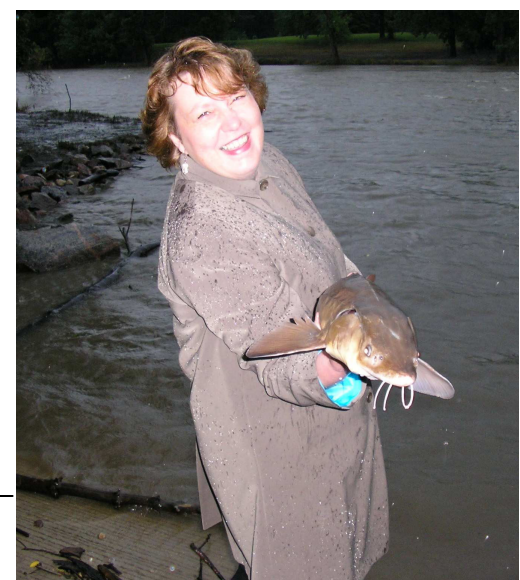
Retrofitting lowhead dams is necessary to correct the safety threats they impose. They were built to provide water during drought periods. Because of their small size, they don't appear to be dangerous, especially when viewed from a boat or canoe upstream. Water pouring over them creates a churning backwash or hydraulic roller action that prevents a person in the water from escaping.

Retrofitting, in which rocks are spread across the riverbed below the dam, directs the current away from the shore and toward the center of the river. Instead of a steep plunge, the water drops gradually over the installed rock.

The South Dam Ribbon Tying represented the reconnecting of the Red River in the Fargo-Moorhead city limits. This was the third and final dam in Fargo-Moorhead to be retrofitted. As part of the celebra-

tion, River Keepers, with the assistance of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, held a ceremonial stocking of lake sturgeon, which can weigh up to 100 pounds and is one of the fish species in the Red that requires a reconnected river.

Lauri Winterfeldt-Shanks stocks the Red River of the North with lake sturgeon.



## River Recreation continued...

River Keepers coordinates a women's weekend of paddling, outdoor cooking, and camping on the Red. From July 21st to the 23rd, the group will paddle from the headwaters in Breckenridge, Minnesota to historic Fort Abercrombie. Enjoy two nights of camping, outdoor cooking lessons, and s'mores around a campfire. Also, learn about the natural features of the Red River through fun activities along the route.



Want to meet fellow paddlers? For information about the FM River Riders, a hu-

man powered water craft group, contact Matt Ahonen via email [mattahonen@hotmail.com](mailto:mattahonen@hotmail.com) or call 701-238-2368, or email Travis Sanger at [travis@paramountsports.net](mailto:travis@paramountsports.net).

Want to join a small group of aspiring rowers? No prior rowing experience necessary. For more details go to <http://www.ndrow.org> or contact Mahinda at

(701) 371-8778 or [northdakotarowing@yahoo.com](mailto:northdakotarowing@yahoo.com).



## MOUTH OF THE RIVER

325 7th Street South  
Fargo, ND 58103-1846  
Phone: (701) 235-2895  
Fax: (701) 235-7394  
[riverkeepers@i29.net](mailto:riverkeepers@i29.net)  
[www.riverkeepers.org](http://www.riverkeepers.org)

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

## 2005-2006 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eugene Boyle  
President

Pamela Schaefer  
Vice President

Rocky Swanson  
Secretary/Treasurer

Allan Ashworth  
Past President

Karl Bakkum  
John Dalen  
Mary Davies  
Dennis Flom  
Tom Moberg  
Dan Pullen

Rick St. Germain  
Rocky Swanson  
Lucinda Swenson  
Jan Ulferts Stewart  
Brad Wimmer (ex-officio)  
Jennifer Walz (ex-officio)

## RIVER KEEPERS STAFF

Bob Backman  
Executive Director

Christine Holland  
Project Coordinator

Adrienne Olson  
Communications Volunteer

## SUSTAINING SPONSORS

Buffalo-Red River  
Watershed District

Southeast Cass Water  
Resource District

## River Walk: Enjoying the Red River of the North

The riverfront is home to many activities. People come to fish, listen to the water, go for a bike ride, meet friends, enjoy the birds...

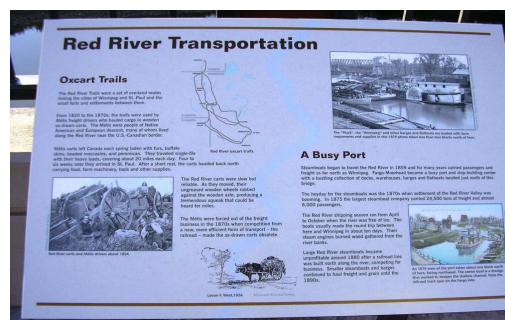


Kyle St. Germain proudly displays his channel catfish, one of 50 species of fish in the Red River.

As you are walking along the river, you may notice some folks carrying ladders and climbing trees, they are probably River Keepers volunteers performing annual maintenance on wood duck boxes. Almost 500 of these boxes are in place along the Red in Fargo-Moorhead. Please stop and thank these volunteers for their service. Learn more about the wood ducks at [www.woodducksociety.com](http://www.woodducksociety.com).

A recently completed recreational needs survey of the F-M area showed that more than 60 percent of citizens use recreational trails. Fargo's plans include an addition to the bike path adjacent to Oak Grove Park, which would complete a circular route through Fargo and Moorhead.

The latest addition to the Main Avenue Bridge is interpretive panels displaying some of the history of the area. Go for a riverfront walk, cross over the bridge and read them.



While in the neighborhood, observe all the progress being made on the Moorhead side of the river. New housing and retail space is being constructed adjacent to the river.

## Director's Corner

**Riparian restoration, watersheds, macroinvertebrates, in-stream flow, hydrologic cycle, water supply, water quality...** These are terms and issues that are used and discussed every day in the water business. I will have to admit that before I started at River Keepers, like many of my generation, my knowledge in some of these areas was weak.

**A basic understanding of terms and vocabulary is necessary before we can discuss any subject. If you want to communicate with your computer repair person you need to know about USBs, parallel and serial ports, RAM, hard drives, ISPs and the list goes on. The same is true with water. For example, when we discuss issues related to nonpoint source pollution it is helpful to know the definition of a watershed.**

**Our schools do have curriculum that includes water and issues related to water. We frequently work with students and know that they are learning about water. But there are teachers that tell us that they can't provide the depth of instruction in water and natural resources that they often desire. River Keepers has responded to this need by going into the classroom, making presentations and providing resources for teachers. We also host service-learning activities and offer the Red River Water Festival. Through these activities, students are given hands-on opportunities to learn about water and rivers. Teachers tell us that the experiences and activities we provide would not exist if we didn't offer them. For example, the water festival has over 1,500 students attending that are exposed to dozens of water experts and to experiences that can't be brought into a classroom.**

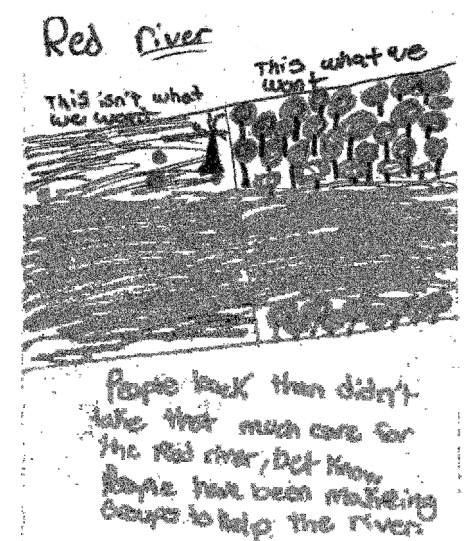
**River Keepers, along with many partners, is developing the Living Lab in South Fargo. When completed, it will help our community understand the importance and techniques of riparian restoration. Hopefully it will also help stop the once common practice of removing vital native riverfront vegetation that is helping hold the riverbank in place. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are currently being spent in the valley to fix problems caused by that removal.**

**Now take a look at this drawing. This 5<sup>th</sup> grade student understands something that many of us adults don't. In response to a classroom experience led by River Keepers' Christine Holland, this student has drawn for us a before and after picture of riparian vegetation removal.**

**Many agencies and organizations are fixing problems that were created by our lack of understanding about rivers. Perhaps our educational efforts will prevent a few of these problems from occurring in the future.**

**I hope so.**

  
Bob Backman



# Disposal of Prescription Drugs: Care Required

Recently, prescription drugs have been in the news. Most of this news concerns how to pay for them. However, as more drugs are discovered and as more of us take drugs to deal with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, numerous aches and pains, etc., the issue of disposal of unneeded drugs is increasingly being discussed among folks who are concerned with water quality.

There is no question that prescription drugs have an important role to play in today's world. Many of us would find life increasingly difficult or perhaps wouldn't even be here if it were not for prescription and across-the-counter drugs. As with many products in today's world, the disposal of unused or expired products may be problematic.

Previous advice to flush drugs down the toilet was made to keep them out of the hands of children. Currently, that advice is under a lot of discussion within certain disciplines. Within a city, where there is a central waste water

treatment facility, flushing drugs down a toilet may only dilute the drug. Most waste water treatment plants are not capable of removing drugs like they do bacteria from waste water before discharging the processed water into a lake or river. Later that water is used for someone's drinking water. As more drugs enter our water sources, dilutions may decrease.

In the case of a septic system (most rural homes have these), the drug will eventually work its way in to a lake, river or aquifer where the water may later be brought to the surface for use.

There are different classes of drugs with various levels of danger. Some change with age, some when they are exposed to water, and others change as they pass through the body. Others change very little. Since most of us are not pharmacists it's important for us to treat leftover drugs very carefully.

Ideally, leftover drugs could be handled like other household poisons and brought to a

Household Hazardous Waste Facility. However, currently most are not accepting drugs. Therefore our current recommendation is to bring them to a pharmacy that accepts drugs from anyone regardless of their status as a customer. Currently the only one in the area that we are aware of is CashWise Pharmacy in Moorhead. There may be others, ask yours if they provide this service. The second, less desirable option is to crush pills, (if they can be safely handled), mix with kitty litter, place in original container and double bag. Place in trash shortly before pickup, minimizing the time wildlife, dogs or children would be able to access it.

There are a variety of sources to contact for further research on this subject. A Google search will turn up thousands of references. Perhaps one of the best is a brochure from Michigan, available for download at [www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-ess-tascau-Rxbrochure.pdf](http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-ess-tascau-Rxbrochure.pdf).

## Creature Feature: Peregrine Falcon



**Falco Peregrinus** means "foreigner" or "traveler," a fitting name for this widespread falcon.

The peregrine falcon is one of nature's swiftest and most beautiful birds of prey. Its speed and aerial agility make it a formidable

hunter and with diving speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour, one of the fastest animals on earth.

The Red River Valley is home to a well-established family of peregrine falcons. Our resident male falcon, Dakota Ace, and his breeding partner, Frieda, claim downtown Fargo as their territory. The pair produces successful fledglings each spring. They are often seen along the river.

Peregrines are very territorial. Breeding partners often return to the same nesting site in

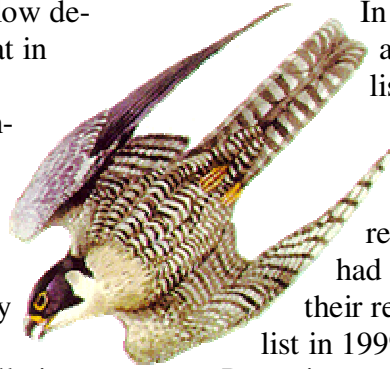
winter. The birds reach full breeding maturity at two years old. Peregrines do not build traditional nests, rather, they scrape a shallow depression out of the base of their habitat in which to lay their eggs.

Eggs are laid in two to three day intervals with up to five eggs in each clutch. The female incubates the eggs for approximately 33 days, during which time she is fed by the male.

Chicks fledge at six weeks, but rely on their parents for food for another couple of months before becoming fully independent, traveling considerable distances to stake their own territory.

Peregrine falcons are the size of crows and can be identified by their dark blue to slate gray backs and white throats. Another distinguishing characteristic is a black teardrop-shaped marking beneath each eye. Females are larger and less common than males, possibly because conflict between two females is often fatal. The average life span of a peregrine

falcon is fifteen years in the wild, and even longer in captivity.



In 1970, peregrine falcons were added to the endangered species list, largely due to use of pesticides containing DDT, which caused eggshell thinning. But thanks to DDT restrictions and recovery efforts, their numbers had grown to levels that warranted their removal from the endangered list in 1999.

Peregrines now live successfully with man, often choosing urban nesting sites at the top of tall buildings and smoke stacks. In fact, many city governments provide nesting boxes for the falcons, as they prey on black birds and pigeons.

Young peregrines are often banded by various agencies so that their movements can be tracked. The peregrine falcon is now the most widely distributed bird of prey in the world.

## River Keepers Needs Your Help



All of our plans for the future and accomplishments of the past could not and will not be possible without the involvement and support from our many partners. Paid memberships and donations of time and materials all contribute to the successful completion of our goals. Your support not only provides some of the direct fiscal support necessary for our organization to continue but it provides matching fund for some of our grant funded projects. To make your donation, you can use the form below or visit [www.riverkeepers.org](http://www.riverkeepers.org).

Volunteers are another necessary ingredient of the work we do. River Keepers appreciates all the work of volunteers, from picking trash to building wood duck nesting boxes. If you are interested in becoming VITAL to our mission through volunteer work, please call River Keepers at 701.235.2895 or e-mail [info@riverkeepers.org](mailto:info@riverkeepers.org).



You can help raise money for River Keepers every time you search the Internet! Use GoodSearch.com like any other search engine - the site is powered by Yahoo! - but each time you do, money is generated for River Keepers.

1. Go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)
2. Type "River Keepers" into the "I support" box and click on "verify"
3. Search the Internet as usual
4. Since GoodSearch shares its advertising revenue with non profit organizations, every time you search the Internet at GoodSearch, you'll be earning money for River Keepers. The more people who use the site, the more money we'll earn, so please spread the word!!

### 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)

- Kayak.....\$25       Contact me about possible donations of products, equipment and/or services which I understand may be tax-deductible
- Canoe.....\$50
- Skiff.....\$100
- Steamboat.....\$500+       Contact me about volunteer opportunities

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

## Connections

The Merriam-Webster dictionary has several definitions of the word **connection**. They include: junction, union, logical relationship, bond or link. River Keepers is involved in a variety of projects and activities where the “connections” are obvious. For example, if you throw your empty pop bottle in the river as you walk your dog on a riverfront trail somebody has to pick up that bottle. The obvious message is “don’t throw the bottle”.

But many issues related to the work of River Keepers are not as obvious. Sometimes we are trying to build connections and other times we are trying to disrupt a connection. Some of the “connection” issues include:

- The connection between what we do in our yards and water pollution. Excessive or improper application of fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides can result in polluted run off that goes into the streets, then into a storm drain or stream and eventually into the river. In response to this issue River Keepers has conducted River Friendly Yard Management workshops and has an active storm drain education program. This summer we will be building a storm drain education display helping folks understand that what they do on land is connected to the health of the river.
- Building a dam to store water in times of drought can have unintentional consequences. Dams break the connectivity of the river. It can restrict fish migration and some dams create undertows resulting in drowning deaths. River Keepers has advocated since its creation in 1990 for a solution to the problems caused by dams on the Red. Other rivers face the same issues. But now thanks to the work of many, the Red River is on it way to becoming one of the longest reconnected rivers through the retrofitting of low head dams with rock slope ways.
- River Keepers conducts fishing clinics teaching area youth how to fish in the Red River. River Keepers is certainly not trying to take over the role of the parks or game and fish departments, but research indicates that users of a resource take care of that resource. Therefore a positive connection is made. A person that fishes is less likely to harm the river. For some of the same reasons we conduct canoe races and kayak demonstrations. As more people use the resource they make the connections that result in a better cared for river.
- Some connections are even less obvious. Riverfront trails, as part of a community trail system, add to quality of life for all of us. But are trails an aid to employee recruitment efforts? Yes. Some research is showing that young professionals are looking for local recreational resources and that trails are one of those resources. So, building more and better trails can increase the ability of a community to attract and hold employees. A good connection that benefits the entire community.
- Most of us know walking is good for us. Recently several agencies and groups in the F-M community have been holding a series of workshops on the “walkability” of the community. The sub-heading for the latest workshop is “developing a connected community.” So what is the connection between walkability and the Red? As more people walk/bike there is a reduced use of cars resulting in fewer parking spots and streets. Impervious surfaces such as streets and parking lots can result in polluted run-off entering our rivers through storm water drains.
- River Keepers is especially interested in connecting the river to urban redevelopment efforts. There are lots of connections here. More people living and working downtown results in less impervious surfaces (see above). Urban sprawl increases pressure on our water resources and riverfront environment. More people living close to the cities core reduces that rate of sprawl. On a trip to St Paul two years ago, we heard about a major new employer that located downtown because they wanted their employees to have access to a riverfront environment on their breaks. A connection between economic development and the river.

Lots of connections. Some obvious and some not so obvious.

## River Keepers’ Calendar of Events

- April 21 - 25** Earth Week displays at Moorhead Center Mall
- April 26 - 30** Earth Week Displays at West Acres
- April 27**, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Living Lab Tours
- April 27**, River Keepers Annual Meeting
- May 9**, 7 p.m., Walk This Way, led by River Keepers
- May 11** 6 to 8 p.m., On-the-Water River Cleanup from Midtown Dam to North Dam
- May 26** S.S. Ruby Pontoon Tours and canoe/kayak rental season opens  
Information: 701.793.RUBY
- June 5** Lil’ Fishermen’s Clinic & Derby at Dike East
- June 5** Race the Red canoe/kayak races
- July 7** Canoeing on the Red from Lindenwood Park to Viking Ship Park
- July 11** River Keepers display at Police Community Picnic in Island Park
- July 18 - August 22** River Arts on Tuesday nights in Moorhead
- July 21 - 23** “Canoeing, Cooking and Camping” A women’s weekend on the Red from the Headwaters to Historic Fort Abercrombie
- September 3** S.S. Ruby and canoe/kayak rentals close for the season
- September 26 - 29** Red River Water Festival



The Main Avenue Bridge has many features. One of these is a the nine-foot diameter “map” of the downtown area with prominent buildings highlighted with brass circles. Cold Springs Granite did the fabrication and Bill Mahar of the City of Fargo did the design.

### What’s New at River Keepers

River Keepers worked with the F-M Metropolitan Council of Governments to produce 3 issues of *River Connections*, a citizen’s guide to river stewardship. Issues were distributed to property owners along the Sheyenne and Red Rivers.

River Keepers worked with Fargo Park District on a dock at Convent Landing and coordinated the ribbon cutting ceremony.

River Keepers coordinated the South Dam Retrofit Ribbon “Connecting.” We coordinated the release of Lake Sturgeon as a symbol of connecting the river.

River Keepers developed and coordinated the “Recreation on the Red: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow” workshop as one of the activities commemorating our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

River Keepers coordinated an organizational meeting of the FM River Riders, a human-powered water craft group, who have continued to meet.

River Keepers worked with FM River Riders to install “Dam Ahead” signs at Christine and Hickson.

River Keepers received an Environmental Protection Agency grant to add an arboretum and native plant displays at the Living Lab. The displays will be built and the arboretum will be planted this summer.

River Keepers is working with North Dakota State University School of Natural Resources to produce a series of publications entitled “Living with the River.”

River Keepers and the City of Fargo are designing a storm drain system kiosk that will be on display at the Living Lab.

Plans for an eagle nesting/resting site at the Living Lab are being developed.

River Keepers is working with MN DNR on additional access sites and portages.

This summer River Keepers will be contracting with MN DNR to develop canoe and boating maps for the sections of the Red River from Georgetown to Grand Forks and Grand Forks to the border.



The 2005 Water Festival was a three-day event which drew more than 1,400 fourth grade students, who learned about water and various aspects of the Red River Watershed through hands-on activities.