

...did consulting work for the National Grasslands. He did consulting work for the

...at First United Methodist Church, Fargo. See Deaths, Page C10.

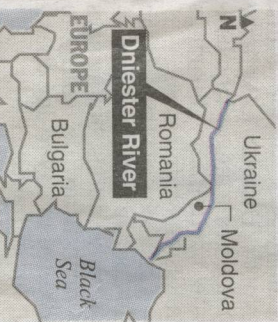
Inform searchword: Jamestown Ben Rodgers is a writer for the Jamestown Sun, which is owned by Forum Communications Co.

...he and friend Jordan Stutsman rescued from a road near Pipestem Reservoir on Jan. 22.

# Groups working to make the Red a 'sister river'

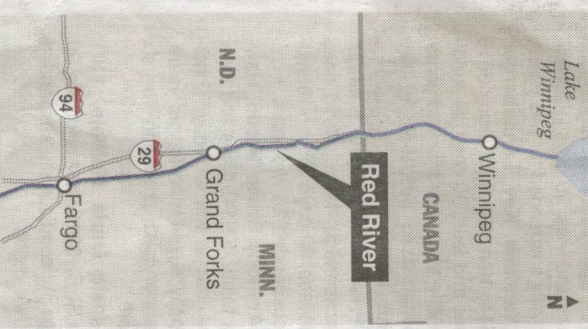
## Sister rivers

River Keepers of Fargo and the Rodger Ehnstrom Nature Center in Wahpeton, N.D., are working with a Moldovan museum and non profit agency to create a "sister river" relationship for the Red River and the Dniester River.



The Dniester River originates in the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains and drains into the Black Sea, along the way forming part of the border between Ukraine and Moldova.

- ▶ It is about 850 miles long.
- ▶ It drains a basin of 26,500 square miles.



The Red River of the North has its headwaters at the confluence of the Otter Tail and Bois de Sioux rivers in Wahpeton, N.D., and Breckenridge, Minn.

- ▶ It is about 550 miles long
- ▶ It drains a basin of 40,200 square miles.

The Forum

By Helmut Schmidt

Groups in North Dakota and the Republic of Moldova hope to teach the importance of water issues and prime the pump for cross-border cooperation by joining the Red River and Dniester River in a "sister river" program.

A mixing of the waters ceremony is planned in Fargo as part of the sister river declaration in early May, said Bob Backman, executive director of River Keepers in Fargo.

There will also be cultural exchanges between museums and water resources groups from the two nations, he said.

The Red River group will go to Moldova, a landlocked country in Eastern Europe located between Romania and Ukraine, in July, Backman said.

"The point that we're getting at here is all of our water is connected. We need to be concerned about upstream and downstream," Backman said.

## Online

- ▶ [www.eco-tiras.org](http://www.eco-tiras.org)
- ▶ [www.riverkeepers.org](http://www.riverkeepers.org)
- ▶ River Keepers and "Sister Rivers: Red River of the North and Dniester River" on Facebook.

River Keepers and the Rodger Ehnstrom Nature Center in Wahpeton, N.D., received about \$78,000 for the initiative from the Museums & Communities Collaboration Abroad.

That's a program of the U.S. State Department and the American Association of Museums.

The Red River groups will work with two Moldovan entities: the Bendersky City Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, and

Eco-TIRAS, an international environmental association of river keepers.

The Red River groups will teach how to gather volunteers and get people involved with events, such as the water festivals in Fargo and Wahpeton. The Moldovans will share tips on coordinating the work of government and non-governmental groups, Backman said.

Reached by e-mail, Ilya Trombitsky, executive director of Eco-Tiras, said that in post-Soviet era nations, the problems of changing economies have made river issues low priorities.

"Our program should help to raise public awareness on river-related issues, which will also be helpful in the lobbying of the river interests," he wrote.

Trombitsky said that with the Dniester acting as a border for Ukraine and Moldova, public support is needed for coordinating river management. He also hopes to raise the importance of the museum in Bendersky in promoting river interests, particularly because it is located in a secessionist territory. He said getting the cooperation of secessionist leaders on river issues could help in conflict resolution.

Inform searchword: Red River  
Readers can reach Forum reporter Helmut Schmidt at (701) 241-5583

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