



# 2014 Annual Report

## Mission Statement

To advocate sustainable use of the Red River.

## Slogan

Promoting a renewed vision for the Red River of the North.

## Vision Statement

All people value our Red River as a vital part of our community.

## Core Values

stewardship, integrity, leadership, influence, education, and respect

## Numbers

**Members:** 224 (a 15% increase from 2013)

**Volunteer Hours:** 760 volunteers contributed over 2800 hours to River Keepers' projects and committees.

### **Presentations:**

Presentations were made to 20 groups, reaching almost 800 people.

### **Red River Water Festival**

**Students:** 1982 (18% increase from 2010)

## 2014 Profit & Loss

Memberships	\$12,293.98
Appropriations	\$120,800.00
Grants/Contracts	\$26,963.55
Sponsorships/Donations	\$48,127.82
Misc. & Project Income	\$10,116.99
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$218,302.34</b>

Office Expense	\$16,675.23
Project Expenses	\$31,101.47
Payroll Expenses	\$132,979.10
Misc. Expenses	3,077.36

<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$183,833.16</b>
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<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$34,469.18</b>
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## Finances

**Sustaining Sponsors:** Buffalo-Red River Watershed District, Southeast Cass Water Resource District

**Government Members:** Fargo Park District, City of Fargo, City of Moorhead, Clay County

## Awards Presented

**Partnership Award:** Barry Foundation

**Employee of the Year Award:** Donna Toso

**Outgoing Board Members** Angelique Kube, Jan Ulferts Stewart, Tom Moberg

**Water Festival 10 Year Volunteer Recognition:** Karen Carlsrud, Christina Hargiss, Jan Ulferts Stewart

**Water Festival 15 Year Volunteer Recognition:** Mark Blonigen

## Board of Directors

Barry Nelson, Pres.  
Christina Hargiss V.P.  
Mitch Martel, Sec/

Treas.

Cindy Gray, Past Pres.

Kory Bonnell

John Brummer

Ken Demmons

Rennae Gruchalla

Ardis Haaland

Bryan Leininger

Karen Nitzkowski

Scott Olson

## Full Time Staff

Bob Backman,  
Executive Director  
(January—May)

Christine Laney,  
Project Coordinator  
(January—May)  
Executive Director  
(June—December)

Jessica Creuzer,  
Project Coordinator  
(July—December)

## Bookkeeper

Jeannie Baskerville

# 2014 River Keepers Highlights



## Staff Changes:

Bob Backman retired after 16 years as Executive Director. Christine Laney was promoted to Executive Director. Jessica Creuzer was hired as Project Coordinator.

## Storm Drain Marking Program:

Collaborated with City of Fargo, City of Moorhead, and volunteers to mark storm drains with a "Do Not Dump" message. Over 75 volunteers contributed 175 volunteer hours.

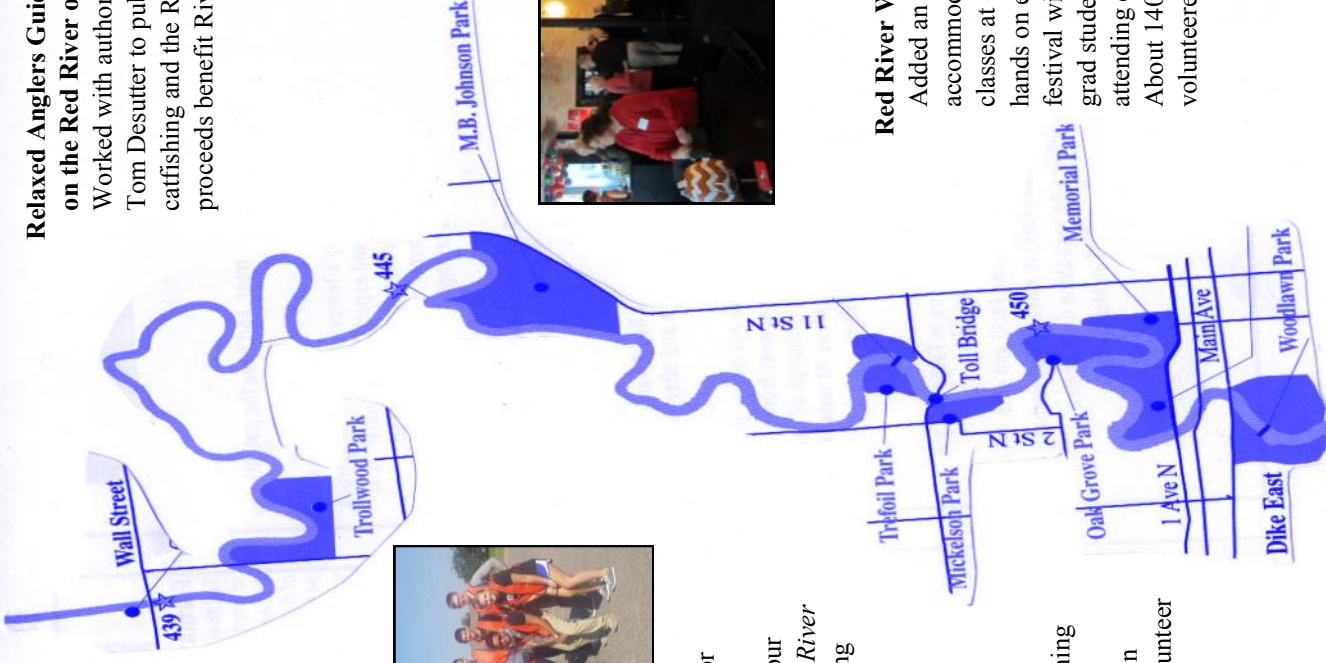
## Media Outreach:

River Keepers was featured on television, in print, and on the radio for projects such as RiverArts Fishing Clinic, Lil' Fisherman's Derby & Clinic, Red River Canoe Trail, S.S. Ruby, Reforest the Red, Make Your Own Rain Barrel Workshop, *Relaxed Guide to Catfishing on the Red River of the North*, Plant it 4 the Planet, Race the Red, Golf Scramble, fishing report, water quality, aquatic invasive species, and fishing.



## Youth Fishing Clinics:

Coordinated two youth fishing clinics with 260 youth participants. Twenty-seven volunteers provided 74 volunteer hours.



## Relaxed Anglers Guide to Catfishing on the Red River of the North:

Worked with authors Jay Leitch and Tom Desutter to publish a book about catfishing and the Red River. All proceeds benefit River Keepers!



## Board Leadership:

Our Board of Directors conducted River Keepers Golf Scramble and Celebrate Our Red fundraising events that raised over \$22,000 for River Keepers!



## Red River Water Festival:

Added an extra day to accommodate more classes at our annual hands on educational festival with 2000 4<sup>th</sup> grad students (94 classes) attending over five days. About 140 people volunteered 875 hours.



### Race the Red:

Organized the canoe and kayak races with 18 competitive and 21 fun teams resulting in the largest Race the Red event to date! Seven volunteers provided 28 volunteer hours.



### Water Trail:

Advocated for additional access and riverfront camping sites. We continue encouraging the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to resolve issues related to the failed portage/enhanced fishing access project at the North Dam. Participating in the Red River Basin Commission's Recreation Workgroup. Explored several options for a stand alone canoe/kayak rental.

### Reforest the Red:

Along with the Cass County Soil Conservation District, City of Fargo, Fargo Park District, and City of Moorhead, coordinated three tree planting events. Almost 400 volunteers planted 2000 trees and shrubs contributing almost 700 volunteer hours!



### Clean ups:

Partnered with the City of Moorhead to patrol the downtown section of the river weekly, picking up trash and reporting any maintenance issues. Conducted four on-the-water clean ups. Worked with an Eagle Scout on a fall riverbank clean up.

### Best Management Practices:

Partnered with Cass County Soil Conservation District and Moorhead Community Education to produce a *Make Your Own Rain Barrel Workshop* and a *Make Your Own Compost Tumbler Workshop*. Assembled and sold rain barrels. Launched a floating wetland demo at the Urban Plains Pond in partnership with Cass County Soil Conservation District. Produced and distributed hundreds of Totes from T-shirts that were donated, cut, and sewn by volunteers. Produced a rain barrel display for Holland's Landscaping and Garden Center.



### Water Quality:

With the support of the North Dakota Department of Health, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the assistance of volunteers, we took semi-monthly water quality samples during ice-free conditions. Participated in Clay County Soil & Water Conservation District's Local Water Plan Advisory Committee.



### Riverfront Development:

Staff participated in the Metropolitan Council of Government's Bike and Pedestrian Committee where we advocate for more riverfront trails and connectivity; a bus tour with community leaders to Winnipeg and Grand Forks where the importance of connecting rivers to downtowns was discussed; and was a member of Moorhead's Riverfront Corridor Study Committee.

# Celebrating 25 Years

River Keepers mission is to advocate sustainable use of the Red River of the North, primarily within the Fargo-Moorhead area. River Keepers:

- Advocates awareness, appreciation and stewardship of the Red River.
- Advocates riverfront development projects.
- Encourages and promotes River usage.
- Helps develop economic opportunities in the River corridor.
- Encourages development of recreation amenities in the River corridor.
- Educates residents on the River environment.
- Addresses safety concerns regarding the River corridor.
- Assists in providing cultural opportunities at the River's edge.

River Keepers grew from a desire to rediscover the Red River's heritage, and to teach people to again appreciate the Red as a living River. In earlier decades of Fargo-Moorhead history, people used and appreciated the Red River for a variety of activities. In later years, people lost that appreciation for the river which is the dominant geographical feature in the community, and began to consider it a liability to be avoided.

In 1989, believing that it was time to promote a "new attitude about the River," and explore ways to develop the River as a recreational site, a team of architects called the Red River Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT), produced an intensive review and analysis of the resources along the Red River that flows through the cities of Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota.



R/UDAT proposed the creation of an organization to act in the position of River Keeper.

They also proposed plans to educate people about maintaining the ecological health of the river, ideas for expanding the river's recreational use, and plans to build a "rediscovered" riverfront area in the downtown Fargo-Moorhead area. These visions could be accomplished through the actions of a River Keepers organization, the Fargo and Moorhead governmental offices, and by educating the public to be stewards of the river.

A few of River Keepers milestones include:

## 1989

- Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team studies Red River in Fargo-Moorhead.



## 1990

- Formed River Keepers.
- Hired Steve Zaiser as 1<sup>st</sup> Executive Director.
- Constructed MB Johnson Boat Ramp.
- Installed floating bike/pedestrian bridge.
- Coordinated first Riverfront Days festival.



## 1991

- Held first annual Race the Red canoe/kayak race.
- Produced first annual photo contest.
- Created Art on the Red River with Plains Art Museum.



# rs of River Keepers!

## 1992

- Published *Red River Explorers Guides*.



## 1993

- Hired Christine Holland as Project Coordinator.

## 1994

- Held first River Caring Workshop.
- Coordinated Duck Derby on the Red as a fundraiser with FM Sertoma Club.



## 1995

- Started Adopt-the-Red clean-up program.
- Published *The Red River: A Use and Protection Guide*.
- Installed interpretive markers in the river corridor.



## 1996

- Started coordinating Paint the Drain.
- Organized first Fun For All Fishing Clinic.
- Established river access sites in Lindenwood.
- Coordinated an Archeological Dig for Fargo in the Timber.



## 1997

- Published *Common Water: A Story of Life Along the Red River of the North*.



## 1998

- Hired 2<sup>nd</sup> Executive Director, Bob Backman.
- Formed Red River of the North Trail Group.

## 1999

- Completed Midtown Dam retrofit.
- Began Lions Conservancy Park developments.
- Coordinated first Red River Water Festival.
- Implemented Cavity Replacement program.
- Worked with Fargo Park District on Convent Landing.
- Built outdoor learning classroom at Johnson Park.
- Received grant for Project RUN (River University Naturalists).



## 2000

- Received funding from Minnesota Department of Natural Resource for lighted buoys and signs providing warning of dam locations.



# 25 Years Continued.....

- Worked with partners to get two new boat ramps on both sides of the Midtown Dam at Fargo's Dike East.
- Became coordinating partners for the Red River of the North Historic International Canoe Trail.
- Coordinated The Millennium Tour, a 34 day, 550 mile, international canoe trip from the Headwaters of the Red River at Breckenridge, Minnesota to the Mouth at Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada.
- Received funding from Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation grant for an outdoor classroom at Lions Conservancy Park, which was designed by an NDSU Landscape Architecture class.



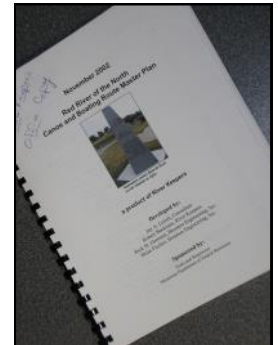
## 2001

- Passed inspection and began operation of S.S. Ruby, a pontoon tour boat.
- Received FM River grant from EPA to communicate the health of the river to citizens.
- Obtained appropriation to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources from Minnesota legislature for inventory and mapping.
- Participated in Moorhead Parks and Recreation's first Polar Party.



## 2002

- Obtained funding for safety lighting under downtown bike paths.
- Developed Master Plan for Red River Boating & Canoe Trail under contract to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- Installed over 400 wood duck nesting boxes in the river corridor.
- Installed interpretive signs at MB Johnson Park nature trail.



## 2003

- Led business and government leaders on two trips to visit St. Paul, and Sioux Falls/Sioux City, these cities that have successfully incorporated the riverfront into their urban redevelopment.
- Worked with an advisory committee and many volunteers on the Living Lab, an urban restoration demonstration site.
- Published a Red River Basin Water Quality Monitoring Volunteer Manual.
- Participated in the St. Patrick's Day Parade.
- Added canoe and kayak rental services at the S.S. Ruby landing.
- Completed, with City of Fargo and Fargo Park District officials, a Downtown Fargo Riverfront Development Plan for Dike East to Oak Grove.



### 2004

- Developed map, directional signage and kiosks for the Red River of the North Canoe and Boating route between Breckenridge and Georgetown.
- Expanded Red River Water Festival to include an optional outside component focusing on water quality monitoring.



### 2006

- Completed Map 2 & 3 of the Red River Canoe & Boating Route map series.
- Designed and planted Native Plant Wild Bird Garden at Living Lab.
- Coordinated Canoeing, Cooking, and Camping, River Keeper's first women's weekend on the Red River.



### 2005

- Coordinated South Dam Retrofit Ribbon "Connecting" and lake sturgeon release.
- Produced three issues of *River Connections*, a citizens guide to river stewardship.
- Worked with Fargo Park District on a dock at Convent Landing.
- Coordinated organizational meeting of FM River Riders, a human powered water craft group.
- Coordinated Recreation on the Red: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow Workshop.



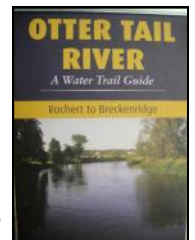
### 2007

- Partnered with Fargo Park District, Cass County Soil Conservation District and Sierra Club to coordinate the first annual Reforest the Red event where 1000 trees were planted. Received award from the North Dakota Forest Service.
- Worked with City of Fargo on the development of the Grand Meadow and Wildflower Grove.



### 2008

- Contracted with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to develop a master plan and water trail map for the Otter Tail River.
- Coordinated the first two 'sold out' *Make Your Own Rain Barrel Workshops* with Cass County Soil Conservation District.



# 25 Years Continued.....

- Collaborated with the Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society on 2 green roof workshops.
- Wrote, designed and installed about 30 interpretive signs. Planted 900 trees and shrubs in plots. In coordination with Cass County Soil Conservation District, 12 experimental plots were designed and planted.
- Initiated T-shirt to Tote Project with Moorhead Community Education.
- Explored the development of a “sister river” relationship with Eco-TIRAS, a non-profit working with the Dniester River. Made presentation at Dniester River Conference on role of non-profits in river management.



## 2009

- Approved a “Flood Awareness in the Red River Valley: A call to action-again” statement that contained 5 recommendations.
- Assisted Wahpeton Breckenridge coordinate their first Red River Water Festival.
- Produced a backpack program for hands-on activity stations at the Living Lab that tie into elementary curriculum standards.
- Analyzed River Keepers water quality monitoring data from the last 10 years.



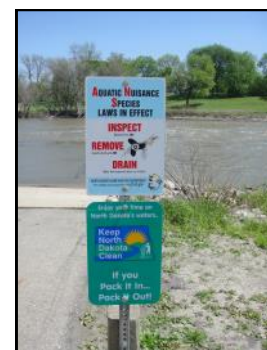
## 2010

- Developed a “sister rivers” relationship with the Dniester River in Moldova.
- Added a rain garden demonstration site to the Living Lab.
- Taught the first 2 ‘*Make Your Own Compost Tumbler Workshops*’ with Cass Soil Conservation District and Moorhead Community Education.
- Worked with an NDSU student on a low water use garden.
- Produced the first board run fundraising event, Celebrate Our Red at the HoDo.



## 2011

- Partnered with Cass County Soil Conservation District on two “Living with the River” bus tours for city and county leaders.
- Installed aquatic invasive species signs to combat the increasing threat.
- Received the Governors 2010 Best Package Award for Canoeing, Cooking, and Campfire: A Women’s Weekend on the Red River.
- Completed a rain garden at the Living Lab.



- Developed and distributed a F-M Red River Map with support from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Fargo Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- Coordinated the first annual board member led River Keepers Golf Tournament and cookie sale at Atomic Coffee.



## 2012

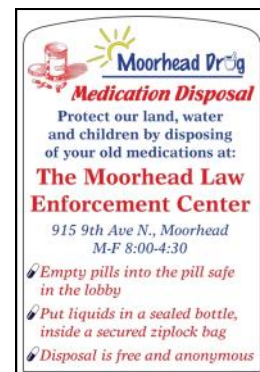
- Managed (along with the City of Fargo Forestry, Fargo Park District and City of Fargo Planning and Development) ten AmeriCorps members who removed 80,000 pounds of woody debris and 1400 pounds of trash from the downtown riparian area during an 8 week project.
- Worked with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and other partners to coordinate a ribbon "tying" ceremony for the Christine and Hickson Dams Retrofit Modifications. All five local dams are now modified!
- Started River Rambles series with guest narrators on the S.S. Ruby tour boat.



## 2013

- First stand up paddle board entry in the Race the Red canoe and kayak races.

- Managed the Red River Clean Team in partnership with the City of Fargo Forestry, Fargo Park District, and City of Moorhead.
- With grant support from the Minnesota Department of Health, River Keepers convened an advisory group and researched community outreach messages and protocols for pharmaceutical disposal.
- River Keepers, the International Water Institute (IWI), and the Red River Basin Commission established common office space at the Red River Watershed Center, 1120 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue North in Fargo.



## 2014

- Increased Red River Water Festival to 5 days to accommodate more 4th grade students.
- Published *The Relaxed Anglers Guide to Catfishing on the Red River of the North* with authors Jay Leitch and Tom DeSutter. All proceeds go to River Keepers.
- Hired Christine Laney as 3<sup>rd</sup> Executive Director.
- Hired Jessica Creuzer as Project Coordinator.



Thank you for your memberships, sponsorships, donations, and volunteer support to River Keepers over the last 25 years! We will continue to work towards making the Red River a vital part of our community that all people value.

# 2014 Members, Sponsors, C

ABC Seamless  
Advanced Engineering and Environmental  
Service

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Bara LaGrasa  
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Barnesville River Watch  
The Barry Foundation  
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Buffalo-Red River Watershed District  
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Cass County Soil Conservation District  
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Classic Floral  
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Clay County Soil and Water Conservation  
District

Clay County Solid Waste  
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Concordia College  
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Dabbert Custom Homes  
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Downtown Community Partnership  
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Fargo Air Museum  
Fargo Brewing Company  
Fargo Moorhead Community Theatre  
Fargo Moorhead Convention & Visitors  
Bureau

Fargo North Environmental Club  
Fargo Park District  
Fargo South Environmental Club  
Fargo Theatre  
FM Muskies  
FM Symphony  
FM Walleyes  
The Forum Of Fargo Moorhead  
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Moorhead Community Education  
Moorhead Public Library  
Moorhead Public School District  
Moorhead Public Service  
North Dakota Department of Health  
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North Dakota State University  
North Dakota State Water Commission  
North Dakota Water Environment  
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Northwest Regional Sustainable  
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Plains Art Museum  
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Kevin Zavoral and Jessi Polnes  
Steve & Kim Zimmerman



1120 28th Ave. N., Ste. B  
Fargo, ND 58102

## Mark Your Calendars!

### **River Keepers Annual Meeting:**

5:30-7:00 p.m. on March 26 in the Executive Suite of the Loretta Building, 210 Broadway, Fargo. Authors Jay Leitch and Tom DeSutter will present information from their book "Relaxed Anglers Guide to Catfishing on the Red River of the North", awards presented, new board members elected, and the last 25 years of River Keepers reviewed. Free event.

### **Make Your Own Rain Barrel**

#### **Workshop:**

6-8 p.m. on April 30. Learn how rain barrels reduce water pollution by reducing storm water runoff, which can contain pollutants such as sediment, oil, bacteria and chemicals. Sponsored by Cass Soil Conservation District. \$74.00 fee includes supplies, register with Moorhead Community Education.

### **Build Your Own Compost Tumbler**

#### **Workshop:**

6-7:30 p.m. on May 7. Learn how compost has the ability to regenerate poor soils, reduce erosion and help prevent pollution in our water ways. We will cover the basics of composting. You will build and bring home a plastic 55-gallon barrel compost tumbler. Sponsored by Cass Soil Conservation District. \$69.00 fee includes supplies, register with Moorhead Community Education.

### **Plant it 4 the Planet:**

9:30 a.m. on May 15 at Oak Grove Park. Arbor Day Celebration. Free.

### **Walk This Way:**

7 p.m. on May 19 at Oak Grove Park. Free.

### **Race the Red:**

June 8, Location and time TBD. Pre-registration encouraged.

### **River Keepers' Golf Scramble:**

1p.m. on June 15 at Moorhead Country Club. Pre-registration required.

### **River Canoe/Kayak Excursions:**

June 16—History of the Red River;  
June 30—Canoeing/Kayaking Basics,  
July 14—History of Saloons, July 28—  
Red River Scavenger Hunt, August  
11—Aviary Expedition, August 25—  
Fishing. 6-8 p.m. Location TBD. Pre-registration required.

### **RiverArts Fishing Clinic:**

5:30-8:00 p.m. on August 4 at Memorial Park. Youth learn the basics of fishing (knot tying, casting, river safety, etc.) and try landing the big one! Free.

### **Reforest the Red:**

4-7 p.m. on September 1 at Oak Grove Park. Help Reforest the Red by planting trees and shrubs! Strategically planting native trees and shrubs along the Red River creates a buffer, maintains river bank stability, encourages growth of native plants, improves water quality (Fargo-Moorhead's drinking water source), and provides habitat for wildlife. Educational activities for youth. Hot dogs and Pepsi products while supplies last. Partners include River Keepers, City of Fargo, Fargo Park District, and City of Moorhead. Free event.

### **Red River Water Festival:**

September 22-25, 28 Pre-registration required.



### **Celebrate Our Red Fundraiser:**

6-8p.m. on September 27 at the HoDo. Join River Keepers for some fun, gourmet hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and door prizes. Tickets must be purchased.

Stay connected with River Keepers, learn about volunteer opportunities and community events on our webpage at [www.riverkeepers.org](http://www.riverkeepers.org) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/RiverKeepersFM](https://www.facebook.com/RiverKeepersFM)