

# 2003 Annual Report

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

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

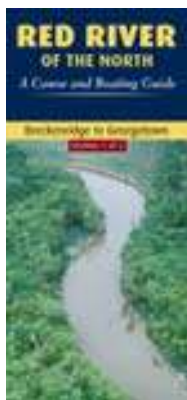
*This note will be one of my last duties as a board member of River Keepers. For better or worse, our bylaws dictate that I must step down from River Keepers after 9 years of service. It's been a good ride and I'm proud of River Keepers' accomplishments and the direction they are heading. The effectiveness of River Keepers is one of those things that is hard to measure but from my perspective it is evident they have played a role in again making the river a focus of the community. I first came to live in Fargo in 1979 as a college student and as usual, whenever I find myself in new surroundings, I find myself drawn to the waters edge. The Red River was no exception. What I found different than most places I have visited was the general lack of interest by the community in the Red. Oh sure, I found fisherman at the usually hot spots downstream of the dams and a few people using the bike paths along the river but little other activity. That wasn't all bad. A few of us had the whole river to ourselves. When I joined River Keepers, I found myself in a sort of a predicament. Should I promote or encourage use of my "secret spot"? Well for one, I enjoyed letting people know what a great place the river was and could be and it was in their own backyard. I found myself taking life-long residents down to the river for canoeing or catfishing and seeing what a good time they had. A second reason for getting more people involved is frankly, to raise money for improvements or programs that benefit the river experience. This financial investment can either come from private sources, grants or the taxpayer. To get our civic leaders to invest taxpayer dollars means they must have public support and rightly so. I believe River Keepers along with others have fostered community buy-in and support that has led to many improvements. The improvements that immediately come to mind are: dam retrofits, S.S. Ruby pontoon tours, renovation of downtown Moorhead parks, Establishment of the first restaurant overlooking the Red, a Main Avenue Bridge that's "connected" to the river, downtown Moorhead redevelopment, and a Riverfront Development Plan by the City of Fargo.*

*Well that's enough reminiscing, and patting on the back. There is still much to be done by River Keepers and I'm confident those that remain on the board and the new members will continue to make significant progress. Lastly, I know River Keepers will continue to be a success because of two dedicated individuals, Executive Director Bob Backman and Project Coordinator, Christine Holland. They have put their heart and souls into the organization and continue to do so.*

*See you on the river someday,  
Rick St. Germain*



## Canoeing and Boating Map Now Available!!!



Initial efforts led by River Keepers, began in 1998, to increase canoeing and boating on the Red River. Since then there have been numerous meetings up and down the valley, discussions, presentations, grant proposals submitted, and special events conducted. Hundreds of individuals, agencies and organizations have contributed financial resources, time and enthusiastic support to make this happen.

Results have included designation of the Red River as an official canoe and boating route by the state of Minnesota, completion of a master plan, a designation by the White House as an official Millennium Trail, and infrastructure improvement.

Under contract to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), part of this year was spent on developing a map, directional signage, and informational kiosks.

The map is available from the DNR Information Center at 1-888-minn-dnr.



100 youth participants. Worked with Schools All Sports to coordinate kayak demonstrations.

**Beginning Fishing on the Red:** Co-ordinated program with Moorhead Community Education and taught by Dennis Flom. 50 participants.



**Cavity Replacement Program:** Received grant from FM Area Foundation and NND Game and Fish. Wood duck boxes maintained by NDSU Natural Resource Management Club and NDSU Wildlife Society.

**Dams:** Worked with Army Corps of Engineers and others on South Dam retrofit. Project completed. There will be a portage. Continue to work with Water Task Force and others on Christine and Hickson Dams.

**Dam Safety:** Continued working with Fargo Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments Water Task Force regarding long term maintenance issues of buoys and signs.

**Lions Conservancy Park:** River Keepers continues to work with the Fargo Park District, Fargo Lions, and other. Native grasses and wildflowers planted. Volunteers mulched trees. Kiosk was installed. Completed outdoor amphitheater.



**Canoe & Kayak Rental:** Added canoe and kayak rental services at the S.S. Ruby landing. Coordinated "Tour the Red by Selkirk Canoe" class in conjunction with Moorhead Community Education. Had two canoe trailers donated.



**Some youth projects coordinated include:**

- \* Ms. Granning's and Mr. Moe's 5th grade class from Moorhead's George Washington school maintained the nature trail at Johnson Park, made a new trail guide, and identified buckthorn plants.
- \* Taught two stations at Madison Elementary's water festival.
- \* 4-H ambassadors and Discovery Junior High students cleaned-up and painted Living Lab.
- \* Worked with several young adults who took leadership roles in river clean-ups, kayak construction, and remodeling a building at the Living Lab into a "Woodie Shop" for the Cavity Replacement Program.

**Storm Drain Awareness Program:** Worked with City of Fargo and City of Moorhead to upgrade program by using curb markers instead of stencils. Over 150 participants provided over 420 volunteer hours. Assisted cities in storm water education. Designed and printed new brochures and door-hangers. Cargill provided funding to support the program.



**Living Laboratory:** Leased riverfront property from City of Fargo to use as a restoration demonstration site. Received funding from Cass County Soil Conservation District, Greenway on the Red and Red River Riparian Project. Received a "Five Star Restoration" grant. Working with an advisory committee and a landscape architect on a master plan. NDSU Landscape Architecture students inventoried site and suggested future uses. Site manager maintains property and assists with grant writing. Chairs, desks, table, snow blower donated.







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## Board

Rick St. Germain- President  
Allan Ashworth - Vice Pres.  
Rocky Swanson - Sec/Treas.  
Eugene Boyle  
Greg Danz  
Jack Duis  
Rich Pemble  
Tom Tolman  
Jennifer Walz  
Brad Wimmer

## Staff

Bob Backman  
Executive Director  
Christine Holland  
Project Coordinator

## Numbers

**Community members:** 128

**Annual Operating Budget:** \$220,000. Funding from our Sustaining Sponsors and Government members has allowed River Keepers to leverage additional grants and sponsorships from federal and state agencies, businesses, individuals and foundations to support projects.

**Volunteer hours:** Over 500 people provided over 3300 hours to River Keepers' projects, special events and committees.

**Parades:** Had floats in 2 parades.

**Presentations:** Presented to 25 groups, reaching over 3400 people.

**Displays:** Set up at 8 special events, reaching over 8000 people.

## PLANS FOR 2004

- \* The Annual Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 29 at the Hjemkomst Center.
- \* River Friendly Yard Management Workshop is scheduled for 6:30 -8:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 29 at the Hjemkomst Center.
- \* Race the Red, Lil' Fishermen's Derby and Clinic are scheduled for 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 5 at Dike East.
- \* Tour the Red aboard S.S. Ruby beginning in May 21. For more information, call 701-793-RUBY .
- \* Grand opening of the first 130 miles of the Red River Canoe and Boating Route.
- \* Riparian restoration demonstration project at the Living Laboratory.
- \* Main Avenue Bridge grand opening.
- \* Canoe Trail signage installed.
- \* Canoe Trail map printed.
- \* Expand water quality monitoring sites.
- \* And much more!



**2004 Membership - If you haven't done so already,  
it's time to renew your support of River Keepers!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of participation (check one): \_\_\_ kayak - \$15 \_\_\_ Scull \$25 \_\_\_ Canoe \$50

\_\_\_ Skiff \$100 \_\_\_ Steamboat \$500+

### SEND TO:

River Keepers  
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