Mississippi River News

WINTER 2014-2015

Meet Your New Park Superintendent

"I am thrilled to be the new superintendent of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, especially as we approach our 100th anniversary in 2016," says John.

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area is one of over 350 units within the National Park System, with a mission to engage and inspire Americans through cultural and natural resources. John began his federal career as an archeologist student trainee with the St. Paul District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1981. He moved on to become Chief of Cultural Resources and District Historian. He joined the National Park Service in 2006 as the Cultural Resources Program Manager and became Chief of Resource Management in 2010.

In August, we welcomed a new superintendent of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Dr. John O. Anfinson.

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To celebrate this event and to carry out the park service’s mission in our second century, will require close partnerships like the one we have with the Mississippi River Fund.”

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area is the only NPS unit whose mission is to protect, enhance, and interpret the world-renowned Mississippi River. Established in 1988, the park runs through 28 communities—five counties—and is managed by a plethora of local, state, and federal entities. Consequently, the National Park Service relies on partnerships for everything it does.

"John’s proven ability to build strong relationships to solve difficult issues makes him the perfect person for this job,” said Patricia Troy, Acting Regional Director for the Midwest Region. “Few people know the Mississippi River, especially the 72-mile national park, like John.”

"Members of the Mississippi River Fund are invited to a special event with John on February 12. Details at missriverfund.org.

New Outdoor Clubs in the Heart of the City

The Mississippi River Fund and the National Park Service are leading an effort to develop new outdoor clubs for youth in the Twin Cities. Working with partner schools participating in the Urban Wilderness Camp Adventures (UWCA) program, the clubs provide ongoing engagement for students interested in the outdoors, right in the heart of the city.

Two “fellows” with the UWCA program will be leading the outdoor clubs, beginning Fall 2014. Maja Lee is heading up an outdoor club with two Minneapolis schools in coordination with the YMCA’s Beavers Program, and Michelle Yang runs the outdoor club for fifth graders from Battle Creek Elementary in St. Paul in partnership with the Eastside YMCA.

Club activities range from the basics, like learning how to dress for being outdoors in a Minnesota winter, or learning how to make s’mores over a fire, to fishing and environmental restoration work.

Thanks to the National Park Foundation for supporting this work.

Point Douglas

This fall and winter, be sure to stop by Point Douglas at the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers in Hastings, Minnesota. Here, rushing waters spills through a narrow channel into the Mississippi. This rapidly moving water creates an open patch of water all winter long. Waterfowl like to take advantage of this open patch of water, giving you the opportunity to spot bald eagles, ducks, and geese throughout the season. Often, in the depths of winter, you may even get an up-close look at less common waterfowl like swans and harlequin ducks along the river at Point Douglas.

After bird watching at Point Douglas, head a mile up the St. Croix Trail road to visit the Carpenter Nature Center in Hastings.

Support your national park and receive benefits year round—become a member of the Mississippi River Fund! Discounted registration and member events are just a few of the perks. Join today at missriverfund.org.

Outdoor Club kids learn how to build a fire at a Mississippi River park.

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I grew up on a Michigan farm and walked a mile to my two-room country school. On the way home, I investigated everything. The creek got me almost every day. I would want a better look at a crayfish or frog, or see if I could jump to that next rock—and splash! Luckily, my mother had done the same thing as a girl, and probably would have been disappointed with me if I came home dirty.

Our park programs work because the kids are always excited. Want a better look at a crayfish or frog, or to see if I could make a seed bomb with compost and soil so they have a better chance of surviving when we plant them in downtown Saint Paul.

Mississippi River Fund and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area’s offices in Saint Paul.

To register as an individual volunteer, contact Kathy Swenson, National Park Ranger & Volunteer Coordinator: 651-293-8424, kathleen_swenson@nps.gov.

To register your volunteer group, contact Anna Wenga, Project Manager & Volunteer Coordinator: 651-293-1197, anna_wenga@missriverfund.org.

Become a Junior Ranger!

Junior Rangers are young people who promise to learn about, explore, and protect our national parks.

Learn how at nps.gov/miss/forkids