



Spring news 11

Restore our Forests and Freshwaters

Help Make the World Flow Onward

OUR
MISSION
Great River
Greening
leads and
inspires
community-
based
restoration
of our
prairies,
forests,
and
waters

In public opinion polls, Minnesotans consistently rank protecting water quality as their top environmental priority. We hear that from you as well. Some of the most popular Greening events over the years have been to plant rain gardens that infiltrate runoff, stabilize streambanks that are eroding, and create pollution buffers around our lakes. "I care about our water," a volunteer once told us, "because it is the basis of all life. And everything we do on the land ends up in the water."



Wetland © Mike Sweet

Approximately 40 % of assessed water bodies have been listed as impaired (violating state water quality standards). The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) expects more than 10,000 total impairments statewide once all waters have been assessed.

Certainly it is true that the issue of water quality is complex and requires multiple organizations and strategies. But we as a community of volunteers and supporters can do many things in the next five years. Through Great River Greening's new Campaign for Forests and Freshwater, starting next fall, we all have an opportunity to put Minnesota on the path to clean water.

You can make this campaign succeed just like you made the Million Acorn Campaign succeed (see inside story). Help us do what Greening does best: on-the-ground conservation work that repairs land that negatively affects our water and restores wetlands and other habitats that protect water. Join us to make a difference that will endure!

Campaign for Forests and Freshwaters: Restore a stream of action

Objectives

- Encourage public participation (especially youth) in conservation activities that reduce water pollution.
- Encourage public and private landowners to prepare and implement conservation plans to reduce water pollution.
- Protect and restore wetlands and other habitats that protect water along the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

Five-year goals

- Affect 5,000 acres in new watershed projects
- Reduce pollution by 10% in waters affected by these projects
- Engage 5,000 volunteers

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2010 Great River Greening Accomplishments Building Partners for Greater Stewardship

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Thanks to our friends and supporters, in 2010, Greening increased the scope of our impact, achieving more diverse conservation results and reaching new audiences.

Over 2,000 volunteers (53% youth) included corporate groups and teen leaders

- In 2010 volunteers removed 231 acres of invasive species, planted 1138 trees and shrubs and installed 12,834 forbs and grasses. Group volunteers included employees from Best Buy, Delta, Toro, and Unilever.
- The Science Areas Teen Network involved more than 226 minority and at-risk youth. In addition to hands-on restoration work and class activities, these youth worked with community mentors in the science field whose background reflected their own.

Major 2010 funding from Andersen Corporate Foundation, Beim Foundation, Gannett Foundation, Midwest Mountaineering, Nash Foundation, Pentair Foundation, REI, Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation.



Lily Lake 2009

Conservation programs leveraged resources and partners

- Anoka Sandplain Partnership – Rice Area Sportsmen's Club Wildlife Management Area is one of the first projects scoped for this 20-partner collaboration targeting conservation on public and private lands throughout this ecological region of Central Minnesota. Over the past three years, we have raised nearly \$2 million for restoring and enhancing key natural assets. Future projects include working with private landowners within the Rum River watershed in an effort to safeguard one of Minnesota's Wild and Scenic Rivers.
Major funding from Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Board of Water & Soil Resources. Other funders include Athwin Foundation, Buuck Family Foundation, Centerpoint Energy, Great River Energy, National Wild Turkey Federation, Rathmann Family Foundation, Xcel Energy.
- Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership – Work started at Franconia Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) for this newly formed Partnership to elevate conservation within habitat corridors along the Lower Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers in the Twin Cities Metro Area.
Major funding from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Other funders include Brookfield Renewable Power, RBC Blue Water Fund, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources.
- Metro Conservation Corridors Partnership – Through this partnership, Greening has restored more than 900 acres across 56 sites over the past 8 years. Among other 2010 projects, a high quality dry prairie remnant was restored at Lost Valley SNA, and work began at Heritage Village City Park, Inver Grove Heights, a complex of upland, forest, wetland, and shoreline on the Mississippi, known to host waterfowl and other wildlife.
Major funding from the Minnesota Environmental Trust Fund.
- St. Croix Forest Habitat – Organized a campaign with Audubon Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources, Washington Conservation District and other partners to improve migratory bird habitat throughout the lower St Croix River Valley.
Major funding from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Other funders include Aveda Earth Fund, Anderson Corporation, Bailey Nursery, and Gordon & Margaret Bailey Foundation.

Readers please note: The annual donor roster printed in prior Spring Newsletters will now be printed in the Annual Report published in summer.



Your Successful Million Acorn Campaign and St. Croix Healthy Waters Initiative Herald New Campaign

The Million Acorn Campaign captured the hearts and imagination of over 5,000 volunteers and well illustrated the uniqueness of Great River Greening. Beginning in 2006, the five-year campaign, which completed 100 projects of oak habitat, created new stewardship opportunities for these 5,000 volunteers and created a legacy for their children. For Carol Jernberg, "It is something that will last with results that will live on for generations."

Beyond the thousands of trees and prairie grasses planted, The Million Acorn Campaign through its Million Acorn Challenge engaged over 3,000 young people who collected over 1,400,000 acorns which were then planted at oak savanna sites. Lorie Danielson, leader of a Lakeland Boy Scout Troop, said, "It was wonderful to see young people engaged in the environment and the community."

You also made a success of Greening's now-completed St. Croix Healthy Waters Initiative, a partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Washington and Chisago County soil and water conservation districts, and local watershed organizations.

Designed by Greening's ecologists and installed in many instances by volunteers with your help, 17 best management practices on private and public lands will help protect and enhance water quality within the St. Croix River. Examples include the Chisago County Government Center on the north, where rain gardens, an infiltration swale, and native vegetation are now mitigating what was once an annual 2.6 million gallons of stormwater runoff. Greening ecologists also pioneered their boat launch assessments, leading to demonstration retrofits at boat launches that had been contributing sediment to the river. Over 4,500 individuals were engaged through volunteer events, a healthy waters fair, and landowner training.

The Million Acorn Campaign and St. Croix Healthy Waters Initiative are significant accomplishments that you have made possible. They herald back to our very first success with greening the Saint Paul riverfront, and show what is possible when the community joins together and partners willingly leverage their resources. They affirm our strength in capacity-building, in particular building partnerships where the needs are great, but where cross-boundary leadership is lacking. With three multiyear successes, and with your help and that of our partners, we feel confident moving forward with a new statewide campaign: The Campaign for Forests and Freshwater (see front story).

Perhaps volunteer Daniel Schultz put it best when he said, "Great River Greening in Minnesota is able to mobilize enormous numbers of volunteers to...restore native plant communities and wildlife habitat, which also helps the water quality of the rivers these lands drain into. This actively repairs the environment, while at the same time, it also builds community and provides experiential learning."



RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM:

Meeker Dam 2007

Mounds Park 2006

Uncas Dunes 2009

© Mark Karney

Pond Dakota Mission 2010

© Laura Kaczmarek

ABOVE LEFT AND MIDDLE:
Million Acorn Challenge 2008, Pilot Knob 2009 © Mark Karney

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Best Buy and Great River Greening Take SATN to the Next Level



Celebrate the overwhelming success of the Million Acorn Campaign at the fifth annual A Million Shades of Green Gala presented by Xcel Energy, Saturday, April 16.

Join us as we honor:

The Corporate Environmental Steward of the Year –
Aveda

The Non-Profit Environmental Steward of the Year –
National Wild Turkey Federation – Minnesota
Chapter

The Environmental Business of the Year –
Pentair

The Environmental Community Partner of the Year –
Saint Paul Port Authority

The Individual Environmental Steward of the Year –
Loran Kaardal of Redwood Falls

The Landscape Photographer of the Year –
Stan Tekiela of Victoria

Great River Greening Founders' Award –

Rob Buffler – First Executive Director

Special Achievement Award –
Minnesota Twins

The evening begins at 6:30 pm with a reception and a silent auction.

Dinner begins at 8:00 pm followed by A Million Shades of Green Awards Ceremony.

A Million Shades of Green Gala will be held
Saturday, April 16
at Southview Country Club in Saint Paul.
Tickets for the gala are \$100 per person,
\$1,000 for tables of ten.

To reserve, telephone
Patrick at 651-665-9500x18 or
e-mail pflood@greatrivergreening.org

Significant funding from Best Buy has allowed Great River Greening to introduce a GPS component (global positioning system) to its Science Areas Teen Network (SATN). This is only the latest advance to a program that began in 2006 as a pilot program with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The SATN program's lectures, small group activities, and hands-on restoration efforts are rooted in the state of Minnesota's science education standards, including college and work readiness and environmental literacy. In 2010, the program involved more than 226 minority and at-risk youth.

Beyond classroom activities and hands-on restoration work in one of Minnesota's Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA), the young people work with and visit with community mentors whose background reflects their own and who have succeeded in scientific and professional careers. One teacher observed, "It meant a lot to the students to see that there were adults who cared and were passionate about the issues, and they were not just tackling them professionally, but also in their personal lives."

Now with funding from Best Buy the program introduces youth to GPS units and GIS (geographic information systems) mapping. After being introduced in the classroom to how these tools are used in natural resource work, students will utilize GPS units in a field game where they must find answers to ecological questions.

Usually students participating in the Science Areas Teen Network face serious socio-economic barriers. For the most part, they do not have opportunities to learn about and explore the environment. By the end they have a new connection, experiencing but also understanding how they can make a difference. As Noochie, a student with YouthCares said after a day at Saint Croix Savanna SNA, "I never saw a place so beautiful."

Funding for the entire 2011 SATN program has come from many leading entities in addition to Best Buy. This includes Pentair Foundation, Unity Avenue Foundation, Anderson Corporate Foundation, and Gannett Foundation. Each year we must raise funds anew for the program. We hope as the economy recovers to find more sustainable funding.

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LEFT AND RIGHT
SATN 2010

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