



Annual Report '10

OUR MISSION

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



Cover: Volunteer at Becklin Homestead County Park and Wildlife Management Area September 2010, photo by Mark Karney.

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renewing communities*



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Join a Growing Experience

As one of only seven designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, the Rum River passes through extensive backwaters, marshes and bottomlands. Small stands of white and red pine near the river are what remain of vast pine forests that were cut during logging at the turn of the century. Improving this special river is now the focus of a partnership between Great River Greening and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), made possible by your support, as well as federal funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The work done in this area will center on building relationships with stakeholders and landowners and elevating oak savanna and woodland restoration on public lands. Over the years, you have laid the foundation to this work by supporting the larger Anoka Sandplain Partnership for terrestrial and freshwater conservation.



Jay Krienitz, who leads the Wild and Scenic Rivers at the Minnesota DNR, worked with Greening to reach out to willing landowners who sold easements along the Rum River. "Since the overall water quality of the river is good," he says, "working with landowners now will prevent degradation over time."

Partnering with Krienitz is one example of the way your support has helped Greening expand its partnerships, geography, and types of work. Pictures in this annual report only begin to show what you have created. I hope you can join us at an event soon. Thank you for caring about our children's heritage.

Bob Bieraugel, Board Chair
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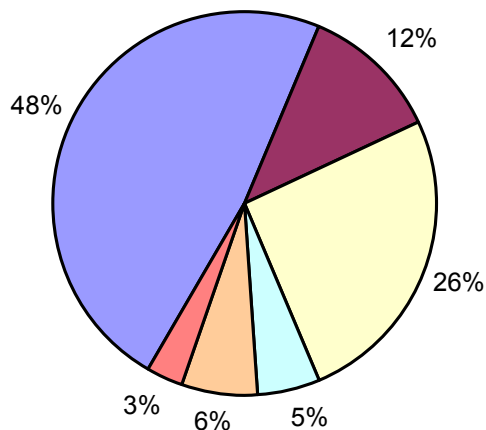
This page: Rum River restoration site, photo by Richard Bend.

Back cover: Minority teens of the Science Areas Teen Network, 2010, images by Kim Pogue.

Financial Summary 2010

Total Assets	\$	222,456
Total Liabilities	\$	51,689
Total Net Assets	\$	170,767

	<i>Expenses</i>
Program Services	\$ 817,963
Management & General	100,501
Fundraising	57,590
	<u>\$ 976,054</u>



	<i>Funding Sources</i>
Government Contracts & Grants (blue)	460,921
Non-Government Contracts (maroon)	113,673
Foundation Gifts & Grants (yellow)	245,575
Individual Gifts (light blue)	50,948
Corporate Gifts (orange)	61,099
In-Kind and Other Revenue (salmon)	29,435
	<u>\$ 961,651</u>

Note: All amounts are audited results for the year ended December 31, 2010. Individual and Corporate include revenue from a fundraising event.

Unrestricted Change in Net Assets \$ (14,403)

Temporarily Restricted Change in Net Assets (102,485)

2010 continued a string of difficult years for the local and US economy. We managed our costs very carefully and with our diverse sources of funding from governments, private foundations, landowners, corporations and individuals, we were able to do our important work and end the year within 1.5% of breakeven. Our restricted net assets were down primarily due to the timing of grant awards.



Above left: Volunteer at Pilot Knob, Oct. 2010.

Above middle: Mother and son at Pond Dakota, Sept. 2010; photo by Randy Guertin.

Above right: Volunteers at Pilot Knob, Oct. 2010.



Restore our Forests and Freshwaters



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 involve planting rain gardens that infiltrate runoff, stabilize eroding streambanks, 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."



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

Certainly, the issue of water quality is complex. But we as a community of volunteers and supporters can do many things in the next five years. Through Greening's new Campaign for Forests and Freshwater, starting fall 2011, 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. 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 on the ground that reduce water pollution.
- Encourage public and private landowners to prepare and implement conservation plans with on-the-ground results to reduce water pollution.
- Protect and restore wetlands and other critical habitats that protect water.

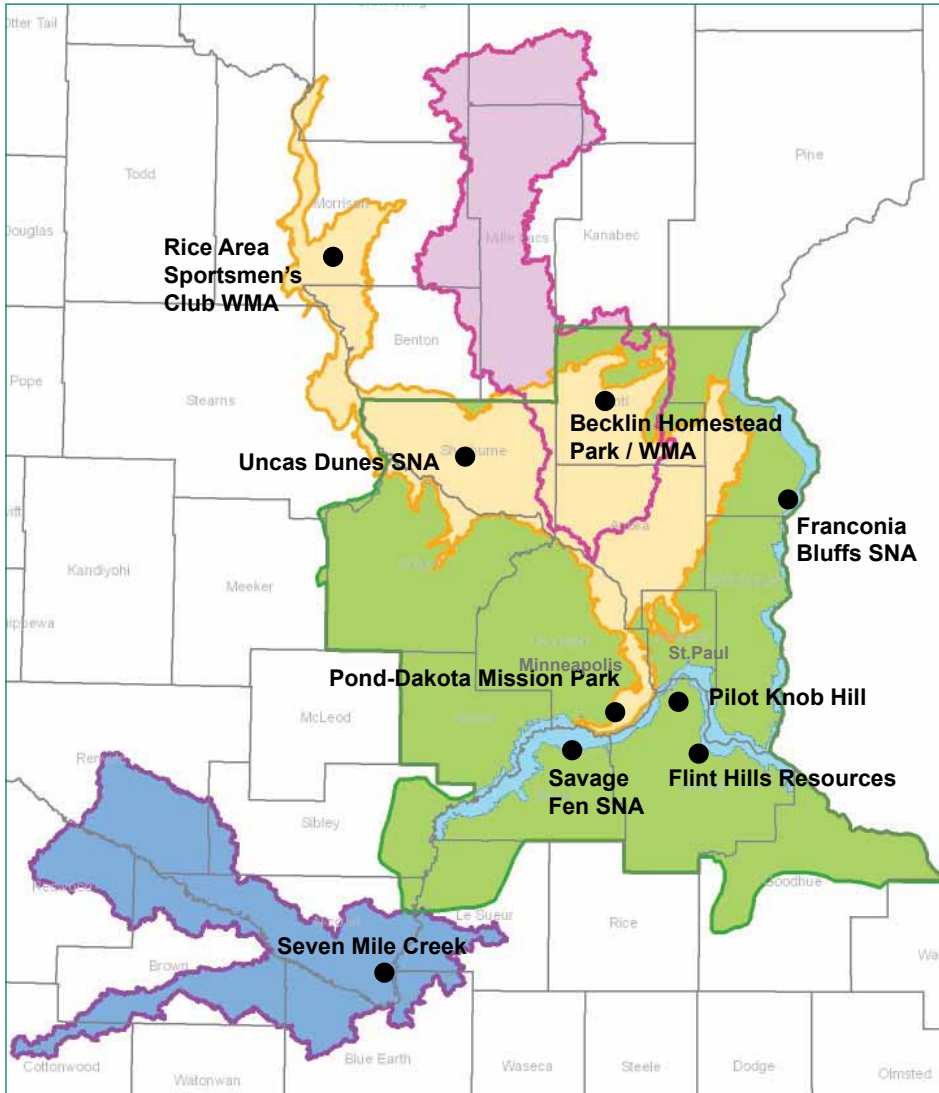
Five-year goals

- Affect 10,000 acres in new watershed projects in honor of our 10,000 lakes
- Reduce pollution by 25% in waters affected by these projects
- Engage 5,000 volunteers

This page: Wetland, Mike Sweet. Above sidebar: Volunteers at Collinwood and Minnesota riverbluffs, Fall 2010.

Opposite page: Great River Greening geographic areas with example projects.

Conservation Focal Areas & Representative Projects



- Anoka Sand Plain
- Metro Big Rivers
- Metro Conservation
- Middle Minnesota River
- Rum River Watershed



Oak Savanna sapling planting at Becklin Homestead Park / WMA



Cedar removal part of Oak Savanna Restoration at Rice Area Sportsmen's Club.



Prairie seeding at Pond Dakota Mission Park



Acorn planting part of Woodland Restoration at Franconia Bluffs SNA



Buckthorn removal at Savage Fen SNA



Gully erosion along Seven Mile Creek Watershed, Nicollet County.



Prairie plug planting at Pilot Knob Hill.



Prescribed burn at Flint Hills Resources





2010 Million Acorn Projects

Pilot Knob

Uncas Dunes Scientific and Natural Area

O.H. Anderson School

Lost Valley Prairie Scientific and Natural Area

Pond Dakota Mission Park

Becklin Homestead County Park and Wildlife Management Area

Franconia Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area



Your Million Acorn Challenge

This year, you encouraged once again thousand of volunteers to collect acorns and help restore the oak habitat in the St. Croix Valley by planting the collected acorns. This year volunteers collected over 100,000 acorns within a 25-mile radius of the Franconia Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) to ensure the acorns are of local ecotype. The collecting culminated in October with 100 volunteers planting at Franconia Bluffs SNA.



Dawn Wyatt, a volunteer at this year's Million Acorn Challenge, says she got involved with the project because "I was searching for ways to get my family involved in volunteering and this sounded like a fun option. I'm trying to teach my children that one of the most precious gifts they can give is their time! And, not all work that is done needs to include a paycheck."

Dawn seemed to really enjoy participating in the Million Acorn Challenge. "It was great because we were helping the environment for the future! It wasn't about us that day; it was about those in the next generation. Our environmental future is scary. Despite many efforts that are out there to be conscientious, we are still a nation of excess."

Dawn added, "I hope my family is making a difference! We are one family contributing and if thousands of other families contribute, our difference could be very noticeable."



This page: Million Acorn Challenge at Franconia Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area, Fall 2010. Above sidebar: Volunteer at the Pond Dakota Mission Event, September 2010, photo by Randy Guertin; volunteers at Pilot Knob, October 2010.

Opposite page: Volunteers at the Becklin WMA, September 2010, photos by Mark Karney. Opposite sidebar: Volunteer at Franconia Bluffs SNA, Fall 2010.

Adding Up to Real Conservation

When you support Great River Greening, each individual project you help implement adds up to conservation of entire areas throughout the state. The story of Greening is of making a difference one volunteer, one acre, one tree at a time. Paula Berger, who has volunteered with Great River Greening before, took part in the Becklin Homestead County Park and State Wildlife Management Area (WMA) tree-planting event by planting 2,500 oak seedlings for a major oak savanna restoration happening at the site. 150-year-old white pines grace the Becklin WMA, which lies on the state-designated Wild and Scenic Rum River.

Paula was involved with the Becklin WMA restoration because her company, WSP Environmental Strategies, tries to participate in an environmental service project every year. She says, “[We] have volunteered for the past few years with Great River Greening because they are well organized and the projects have a clearly-defined environmental benefit.”

Paula continued, “We are trying to teach our children, at least my child, that community service should be a part of your life.” She also added, “We can accomplish much more as a group.”



With the help of Great River Greening, Paula feels as though she has been able to make a difference in her community. She states, “Anything that we do to improve or support the natural environment provides a benefit to all of us and makes a difference. The Great River Greening activities definitely make it easy for ordinary working people, who generally don’t have time to organize work groups and participate in something bigger.”



Metro Conservation Corridors

Partnership: Through this partnership, Greening has restored more than 900 acres across 56 sites over the past eight years.

St. Croix Blufflands and Floodplain:

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.

St. Croix Healthy Waters Initiative:

Completion of three-year program of award-winning Best Management Practices to safeguard the waters of the St. Croix River in Washington and Chisago Counties.

Anoka Sandplain Partnership:

Rice Area Sportsmen’s Club Wildlife Management Area (Benton County) and Rice Creek SNA (Kanabec County) are the first projects scoped for this 20-partner collaboration targeting conservation on public and private lands throughout the ecological region of Central Minnesota.

Metro Big Rivers Habitat Partnership:

Work started in 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.

Middle Minnesota River:

We completed a natural and historical/cultural conservation plan for the Middle Minnesota River Valley (centered in Redwood and Renville counties) that is now guiding conservation action in the region.



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Pond Dakota Mission Park

Greening Program Spotlight

St. Croix Blufflands and Floodplain:

Great River Greening has organized a campaign with Audubon Minnesota, the Department of Natural Resources, Washington Conservation District and other partners to improve migratory bird habitat throughout the lower St. Croix River Valley.

In 2010, we conducted two private landowner workshops in partnership with Audubon with over 40 people in attendance, and engaged five landowners for woodland restoration projects totaling over 100 acres of habitat improvements.

Restoration and habitat improvements of public natural area lands include Belwin Conservancy, Lost Valley Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Franconia Bluffs SNA, and Falls Creek SNA.

Major funding for this campaign comes from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Other funders include Aveda Earth Fund, Anderson Corporation, Bailey Nursery, and Gordon & Margaret Bailey Foundation.



For a second year, you are helping to restore the Pond Dakota Mission Park on one of the most significant historical sites in the state of Minnesota. Back in the 1840s, this was the site of the Oak Grove Mission for the Dakota Indians within the Minnesota River Valley. The site also includes one of Minnesota's oldest houses, the Gideon and Agnes Pond House.

This past spring, Great River Greening again worked with volunteers to restore the historic landscape at Pond Dakota Mission Park. The work done at the volunteer event will help to improve the natural area for wildlife habitat, and at the same time will give future generations a chance to experience the natural history of the Pond Dakota site and its importance in American history.

Volunteers planted native oak trees and prairie grasses while they worked to remove invasive buckthorn. This was part of a large effort to restore this area's original oak and savanna woodlands. Josh Vrzal, part of a corporate group of volunteers coming from Ikon Office Solutions, says he got involved with the event because he "wanted to enjoy the experience of doing something good with others while helping the environment at the same time."



"It's good to give back to the Earth and your community. Giving should be part of a well-balanced life," says Josh. While he is not overly optimistic about our environmental future, he says that through his volunteer work he is proud to do what he can to help. Josh also adds, "I love the fact that what we did with Great River Greening impacts our own 'backyard.'"



This page: Pond Dakota Mission Event, May 2010; photos by Laura Kaczmarek. This sidebar: Volunteers at the Lost Valley SNA Event, Oct. 2010.

Opposite page: Restoration site along the St. Croix River, photos by Richard Bend. Opposite sidebar: Image of cheatgrass.

Landowner Helps Children to Learn

"I have always wanted to make my property a showcase for the diversity of plants, amphibians, reptiles, and trees that I knew as a boy," says Richard Bend, who is working with Greening's ecologists as part of our private lands work in the St. Croix. Richard Bend's property on Lake Edith just west of the St. Croix River also serves as a destination for field trips from the Natural History Academy, a school that Bend helped to start, which focuses on exposing students to natural environments.

Allowing people, especially children, to experience natural wildlife is important for Bend. "A mowed, monoculture lawn is a poor classroom. Wild savannas, prairies, and ponds, by contrast, are full of hidden things to find and explore."

"Without concern for our environment, experience of how it works, observation of how we affect it, and curiosity regarding the consequences of how we affect it, we will most certainly damage it in ways that damage us in the end. We are partners with nature and part of nature, whether we notice it or not. I choose to notice."

With his work, Bend feels that he is making a difference for the natural areas he calls home. "With the help of Great River Greening and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, real change has been made possible on our property. Change which affects not only our land, but the lake it adjoins and the stream running for miles out of that lake to the St. Croix, to the Mississippi, to the Gulf. The effect of the work done is greatest at the source, but in infinitesimal ways, extends a long way."



Attacking Cheatgrass

Great River Greening is leading an effort to control invasive cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) on Minnesota's high quality sand and gravel prairies. Partnering with Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR), Greening's ecologists and crew have been managing and monitoring cheatgrass infestation at sand-gravel prairies at the Flint Hills river bluffland in Rosemount.

Greening's ecologists have developed a very successful three-pronged attack on cheatgrass for high-quality dry prairies in Minnesota and bordering states, including the surprising discovery that a June cutting will help with November control. Although we are exploring whether the cost of cheatgrass control can be reduced by going to a two-pronged attack, so far it appears all three are needed.

Greening and FMR presented the cheatgrass results at two professional regional conferences in 2010, alerting over 100 professionals to this new threat. Nationally, cheatgrass is a tremendous problem in the western US, invading millions of acres of arid and semi-arid land. Western techniques for controlling cheatgrass are too harsh for our high-quality prairies and would devastate our restored prairies.



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Helping Dreams Take Root

"I feel that if nobody helps the environment, it will only downgrade its value and health. I understand now why we should volunteer to help the environment." This is what Ntsa Lee said about her experience in the Science Areas Teen Network (SATN), now in its third year, growing and improving every year because of your support.

The Science Areas Teen Network's minority students take what they learn in the classroom and put their knowledge into action when they go on field trips and talk with community mentors about their dreams. The Science Areas Teen Network exposes these students to wild areas and enhances their interest in ecological sciences and the environment, many for the first time.



Ntsa says she really enjoys her experiences helping the environment and would like others to feel the same way. "By being involved with this program, I would like to communicate to others that the environment is very important to us. The environment basically determines our health, because if the environment is polluted, then we will end up, sooner or later, being affected too."

"I also liked hearing from all the mentors, who showed me how many different jobs in the environment you can do. The program in general was amazing, and it makes me feel good that I am doing something for a cause that impacts future generations."



Volunteer Statistics

1. Million Acorn Challenge II: engaged almost 700 area youth who collected over 100,000 acorns.
2. Volunteer Events: engaged 2,110 volunteers in restoration events including 1,132 youth (53%) resulting in:
 - removal of 231 acres of invasive species
 - planting of 1,138 trees and shrubs
 - installation of 12,834 forbs and grasses
 - restoration of 300 acres
3. Teen Supervisor Program: trained 16 teen volunteer supervisors to lead community events and neighborhood projects.
4. Science Areas Teen Network: engaged over 226 minority youth in an environmental science and career program.
5. Overall ethnicity served: 8% African-American, 5% Asian, 3% Hispanic, 81% Caucasian, 2% African, .5% Native-American, .5% Multiracial.
6. 25,629 volunteers have planted 60,586 trees and shrubs and restored 4,000 acres since Greening began in 1995.



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