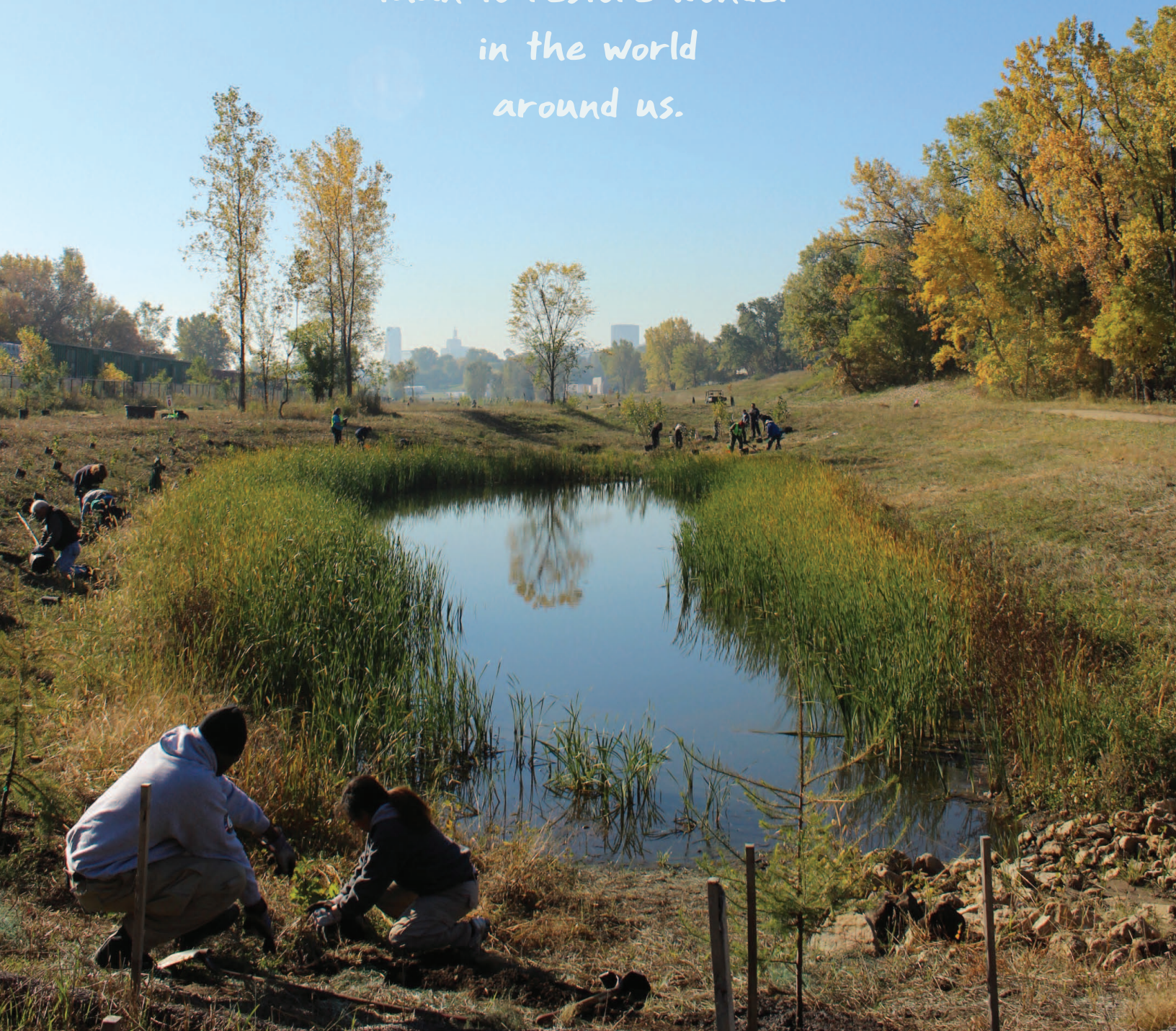




GREAT RIVER GREENING

2015 Annual Report

*There lies before us
no greater purpose
than to restore wonder
in the world
around us.*



In 2015:

2,215 volunteers

30,086 trees, flowers, and grasses

2,291 acres

40 sites





For 20 years,

Great River Greening has worked alongside 35,000 volunteers, planting 405,784 trees, flowers, and grasses to improve, restore, and care for Minnesota's natural heritage - 15,000 acres and counting.

Our mission is to inspire and lead local communities in restoring and conserving the land and water that enrich our lives.

Ike's Creek is one such place, located in the shadow of the Mall of America. It was lost to debris and overgrown shrubs when we began restoring it in 2011. Thanks to the work of 600 volunteers, and the City of Bloomington, it was transformed into a healthy, bubbling waterway, safe for trout and a place for people to enjoy year after year.

A year of firsts and celebrations

2015 was year of celebrating and stretching. We celebrated 20 years of restoring land, water and wonder, hosted our first farmland volunteer event, strengthened our reach to the west metro, and researched bumble bees. Highlights include:

Local communities throughout the state engaged in our mission

The number of hours that volunteers worked alongside us in 2015 ranks as fourth highest yet. These folks blasted buckthorn and planted flowers and trees in the metro area and in the agriculture-rich land along the Minnesota and Rum rivers. Volunteers inspired friends and families, young and old, to work together to take care of our waters, parks, and forests.

- ◆ For the first time, volunteers joined us on farmland to plant beneficial grasses and clear buckthorn as part our effort to improve the water quality of the Minnesota River and ongoing work with the Seven Mile Creek Watershed Partnership.
- ◆ Strengthening our footprint in the west metro, volunteers cleared buckthorn in Carver Park Reserve, Victoria, working with Three Rivers Park District to promote healthier growth in the park's maple basswood forest and oak woodland.
- ◆ Great River Greening began a partnership with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation to restore Victoria Park in Saint Paul's West 7th Street neighborhood. Volunteers shrugged off heavy rain to help in the kick-off event.

We increased environmental stewardship in younger generations

In 2015, we engaged 51% more youth on our project sites, urban and rural. The number of students who took part in Field Learning for Teens, an "outdoor classroom" for at-risk youth, ranked second highest since the program began in 2009. And, we expanded our service learning to rural high schools.

- ◆ In the Twin Cities metro, the Field Learning for Teens program brought 179 students outdoors to work alongside Great River Greening ecologists and learn about the science and technology of restoration.
- ◆ In Central MN, Little Falls High School students spent time in an outdoor classroom led by Great River Greening ecologist, Steve Thomforde; they learned about sustainable forestry and career options in resource management.
- ◆ Near Cambridge, MN, one dozen high school students from the Twin Cities' American Indian OIC canoed the Rum River to cast wild rice seed, thanks to a partnership with Wilderness Inquiry.



We deeply thank the more than 40 project partners and landowners in 2015 with whom we collaborated on restoration and enhancement projects, as well as the Minnesota Environmental Trust Fund and the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Great River Greening 2015 Annual Report

Partners drew on our expertise in the science of restoration

The acres Great River Greening restored in 2015 rank our fourth highest, bringing the 20-year total to 15,819 acres at more than 300 sites. These natural areas are both vast and small, but critical: local and regional parks, wild and scenic river shorelines, farm ravines, and wildlife refuges. Our ecologists formulate comprehensive land management plans at each site, practicing state-of-the-art restoration and bringing a passion for healthy habitats. They are among the best in the region, and the reason our community partners - comprising counties, cities, and private landowners - stay with us for years. In 2015, we forged new research partnerships that allow us to utilize our sites as scientific laboratories.

- ◆ In search of prime habitat for native bees: In a practice that merges the best science of vegetation restoration with pollinator management, we began a three-year, citizen project in partnership with Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and Maplewood Nature Center to monitor plant diversity and pollinator populations at our restoration sites.
- ◆ Old is the new cutting-edge approach to improving land quality: For the third year, animals grazed at one of our long-term prairie restoration sites in the metro area to remove invasive plants. In a partnership with the University of Minnesota, a biomass harvesting experiment was installed at another site to study the effects of grazing on decreasing nitrogen and increasing plant and pollinator diversity.
- ◆ Plan for restoring an urban lake: Great River Greening wrote a plan for St. Louis Park as part of the Bass Lake Preserve Restoration Project that calls for restoring tree groves and prairie, which had surrounded the lake before the land became a receptacle for waste.
- ◆ Save a rare coldwater trout stream: Great River Greening started a project with South Washington Watershed District, Trout Unlimited, Vail Resorts (Afton Alps), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and private landowners to restore a stream that feeds into the St. Croix National Wild and Scenic River by restoring an altered stream channel. The project will rebuild meanders in the historical channel, create in-stream fish and invertebrate habitat, restore adjacent upland habitat, and reduce erosion along the lower two miles of the stream's reach.



Before and After - Pilot Knob in Mendota Heights

Building on 20 years of community restoration

In 2015, Great River Greening celebrated 20 years of inspiring, engaging, and leading local communities across Minnesota in conserving and caring for the land and water that enrich our lives.

Reaching this milestone gave us the opportunity to reflect on the rewarding results of working with thousands of volunteers, community partners, and dedicated ecology staff, on hundreds of sites throughout Minnesota. This support is what allowed us to grow as the state leader in community restoration.

Two of our 2015 projects demonstrate collaboration and local solutions at work

At Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary in Saint Paul (pictured on the cover of this annual report), the City turned to Great River Greening to help transform a former rail yard into green space that reconnects the heavily urbanized North End and East Side neighborhoods to the Mississippi River, creating public awareness of our hidden water resources. It has presented an unparalleled opportunity to engage new, culturally diverse constituents, reach at-risk youth in particular, and engage and educate the community to keep our urban waters clean. 1,035 volunteers worked with us to transform the space.

In St. Peter, MN, we demonstrated our collaborative spirit and commitment to finding local solutions by working with farmers who care about Minnesota's water quality. In 2015, we worked with the Seven-Mile Creek Partnership to host field days, implement conservation practices on farmland, and plan for farmer- and community-led workshops leading to a shared watershed vision. Also begun was a community assessment and countywide survey to integrate at least 400 unique Nicollet County voices - farmer and other stakeholder - into state water planning in the greater Middle Minnesota watershed.

As we enter our third decade, this work motivates us to step forward in fresh ways with confidence that the community will join us, inspired and eager to protect our outdoors.



Before and After - Cedar Lake Farm in New Prague



Thank you 2015 Major Donors

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We also thank more than 125 individuals and businesses that donated items to the silent auction at the 2015 Great River Greening Gala

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We thank more than 200 additional individual donors for helping to make GRG's work possible!

We do our best to keep reporting as accurate as possible, and apologize for any errors. Please contact Kirsten Gulbro with any concerns. 651-272-3987

In the news



- ◆ Finance and Commerce, "Andersen CEO: Affordable green homes 'transformative'" (pictured above, at Great River Greening eighth annual Business Forum)
- ◆ Star Tribune, "Nonprofit dreams of mighty oaks"
- ◆ Star Tribune, "Wild rice seeding on the Rum River"
- ◆ Saint Paul Magazine, "Cultivating Greatness: All about Saint Paul's Environmental Nonprofit, Great River Greening"
- ◆ MinnPost, "Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary opens just north of downtown St. Paul"
- ◆ MinnPost, "Leveraging old idea, new national effort will save seeds — and landscapes"
- ◆ St. Peter Herald October, "Local volunteers work to clean Seven Mile Creek Watershed"
- ◆ Mankato Free Press, "Volunteers clear invasive species in Seven Mile Creek project"
- ◆ Stillwater Gazette, "Planting for future generations"
- ◆ South Washington County Bulletin, "St. Paul Park's Lion's Levee shoreline, hill to be rehabbed"
- ◆ Lillienews, "Sinking teeth into the invasive-plant fight"
- ◆ Inside Health Care cable TV spot, "GRG Ecologist talks to about connecting teens to the environment"
- ◆ Sun Sailor, "Removal of problem vegetation at St. Louis Park's Bass Lake Preserve set to begin"

Financials

FUNDING SOURCES

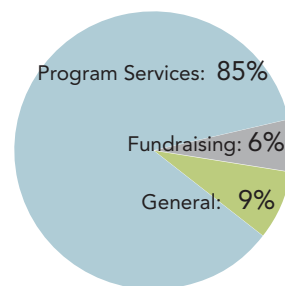
Government Contracts & Grants	1,164,664
Foundation Gifts & Grants	337,725
Non-Government Contracts	101,729
Corporate Gifts	126,640
Individual Gifts	112,292
In-Kind & Other Revenue	25,789
Total	1,868,839

EXPENSES

Program Services	1,529,696
Management & General	154,089
Fundraising	106,777
Total:	1,790,562
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	78,277

ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Total Assets	931,610
Total Liabilities	149,233
Total Net Assets	782,377



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