



GREAT RIVER GREENING

*Restoring land,
water and wonder
for 20 years*



2014 Annual Report



Great River Greening inspires, engages, and leads local communities in conserving and caring for the land and water that enrich our lives.

"I can honestly say that this was one of the best experiences of my life ... I wouldn't have even thought about going into science if it weren't for Great River Greening. Thank you!"

Melinda was a student in our Field Learning for Teens program. Thanks to Great River Greening's generous donors, she explored a world of wonder somewhat removed from her neighborhood in East Saint Paul. She saw monarch butterflies, a garter snake, yellow swallowtail, and even a red-tail hawk! "I love how the site was once a rail yard, and now it's a sanctuary for nature. I think it would be so cool to have a job that does this kind of thing."



Melinda is only one of the 35,000 kids and adults that have dug in with Great River Greening, actively doing, learning, and sharing what happens as an ecosystem is restored. Acre by acre, for 20 years, our supporters, partners and volunteers have helped us grow to be Minnesota's restoration leader, mobilizing communities to conserve our most critical natural areas, lakes, and rivers.

Great River Greening's geographic reach has grown enormously, throughout the Twin Cities and beyond. But our impact is still felt by individuals making a difference on a local level.

"The positive focus and the fact that my son can come back and see the transformation are absolutely the reasons why we decided to volunteer here. This is something we can't do ourselves, and I love seeing all the people working together." James, Alimagnet Park, Apple Valley

20 years, 35,000 volunteers, 110,000 trees, 12,000 acres. Every year we add to what is possible to accomplish, and 2014 is no different. We hope you enjoy the overview provided in this annual report. Thank you to all our friends for providing these opportunities to participate in a piece of our natural heritage. We hope to see you digging in soon!

Deborah Karasov *Roger Green*

Deborah Karasov, Executive Director and Roger Green, Board Chair



In 2014

65
acres planted

15,359
forbs & grasses
planted

3,652
trees planted

58
lbs of seed collected

176
acres seeded

Community-Based

Community is at the heart of Great River Greening’s work. We have worked with local communities at 300 sites throughout Minnesota; each one, a special opportunity to connect to the land and water that enrich our lives.

A community vision comes to life

At Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary in Saint Paul, the City turned to Great River Greening as a partner to help transform a former rail yard into green space that reconnects neighborhoods to the Mississippi River. Through Great River Greening’s unique volunteer events, youth education, and ecological expertise, children, groups, and families are learning about the new forests and rediscovered creek at this site.

With many more years left to complete the transformation, already more than 600 volunteers, including 200 at-risk youth, have planted native grasses, flowers, and trees, cleared the 42-acre site of invasive plants, and learned about the science behind the restoration.

“At my age, I’m very conscious of what my legacy is going to be. I donate because I want to be able to look back at a body of work that I feel good about.” Great River Greening Donor

OTHER NEW PROJECTS

- Katherine Abbott Park in Mahtomedi: New metro area partnerships led to the start of a multi-year restoration effort at this 76-acre gem beloved for its beauty and accessibility to a variety of outdoor recreation.
- Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park: This “future park” is located just outside the City of Prior Lake. It will one day spread out across 1,140 acres featuring native hardwood forest, oak savanna, prairie, and pristine wetlands scattered across a rolling glacial topography.
- Springbrook Nature Center, Fridley, Alimagnet Park, Apple Valley, and Terrace Oaks, Burnsville are also new.



In 2014

1,931
volunteers

5,793
hours

400
youth

12
school groups

Volunteer-Driven

In 2014, during our spring and fall restoration events, nearly 2,000 Great River Greening volunteers stacked piles of invasive buckthorn and planted hundreds of trees and wildflowers in their own communities, throughout the Metro Twin Cities and beyond.

Volunteers transform an urban trout stream

In 2014, we celebrated the completion of Ike’s Creek restoration. The multi-year effort transformed a creek bed in Bloomington. In 2010, mile-long Ike’s Creek, located just a block from the Mall of America, was all but hidden to the community. The vast green slopes surrounding the water connect to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge but were so choked by buckthorn and other woody invasives, the area was visited mostly by people disposing of tires and other debris. Today, Ike’s Creek is a fresh, open valley enjoyed by more and more people every day.

“I think the best conservation is local and community-based. Thank you Great River Greening for bringing all these volunteers together to make something happen.” - Volunteer

OTHER COMPLETED PROJECTS

Projects we completed across the metro area and beyond:

- Shoreline planting, in partnership with DNR Shoreland Program, at Colby Lake, Woodbury; Wayzata’s Minnetonka Lakefront; Cannon River in Cannon Falls, and William O’Brien State Park’s St. Croix Boat Launch.
- Martin Meadows in Andover, 40 acres of beautiful oak forest and meadow on the Rum River.
- Heritage Village Park, Inver Grove Heights, a developing 80-acre public park connected to the Mississippi River.
- Completed first phase of various projects in the Anoka Sandplain region: Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area, Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.



Active Partnerships

Every restoration project Great River Greening undertakes is in partnership with others. In leading and coordinating large partnerships with stakeholder organizations we are jointly solving challenges and realizing enormous impact on our natural resources throughout Minnesota.

Advancing efforts to improve water quality in rich farmland region

Great River Greening leads the Seven Mile Creek Watershed Partnership, which comprises 25+ agriculture, conservation, community, business, and government partners. Anchored by an innovative community-based strategy supported by this Partnership, the watershed was selected as one of seven Targeted Watershed Demonstration Projects in the State by the Board of Water and Soil Resources. With a \$1.7 million grant, the group is working with farmers and community members over the next 4 years to eliminate the bacteria impairment in Seven Mile Creek, reduce sediment by 40%, and nitrates by 25%.

Our work to improve water quality in this prime Nicollet County farmland region is also advanced thanks to a prestigious Community Innovation grant from the Bush Foundation.

“Great River Greening is working toward a better model for watershed preservation that reflects the whole community.” -Molly Matheson Gruen, Bush Foundation community innovation manager

OTHER WATER QUALITY PARTNERSHIPS

Great River Greening is a partner in a second Targeted Watershed Demonstration Project – at Sand Creek in the lower Minnesota River – with Scott Watershed Management Organization, Scott SWCD, Minnesota Ag Water Research Center, and others.

Great River Greening will develop and oversee 10 shoreline restoration projects along Sand Creek and build community relations through community stewardship events and targeted outreach to local landowners.



In 2014

- 1,236 acres restored
- 801 acres of invasive species removed
- 71 goats grazed on invasive plants
- 49 acres of prescribed burn

On-the-Ground Expertise

Experienced, committed ecologists practice state-of-the-art restoration and introduce the next generation to careers in environmental sciences and skills that provide them with confidence and a connection to the world.

Teaching the stewards of tomorrow

Great River Greening's team of ecologists are among the best in the region and inspire colleagues and community members with their passion for healthy habitats and testing new restoration methods – which are sometimes drawn from the past.

Through Field Learning for Teens program, they share their knowledge and passion with at-risk youth in the field and in special programs and trainings. It's a rare opportunity to talk one-on-one with scientists of such depth, and for young people especially, the occasion can be inspirational.

In 2014, 134 at-risk youth learned about environmental science and technology through hands-on activities in the field, talking with community mentors, and learning about careers in the environment, ecology, and science and technology.

"I learned about my community and about the impact we have on the land."
-Field Learning for Teens participant

STATE OF THE ART SCIENCE

Great River Greening ecologists also collaborate with research universities and nonprofits to advance the science of restoration. In 2014, we started new research projects with the Xerces Society and the University of Minnesota, researching how white and burr oaks are responding to climate change, and restoring prairies with techniques to help bees, butterflies and other pollinators.



Thank You 2014 Major Donors

FOUNDATIONS

\$10,000 & Above

3M Foundation
Allianz Foundation for
North America
Bush Foundation
Patrick and Aimee Butler
Family Foundation
The McKnight Foundation
The McNeely Foundation
MLB 2014 All-Star Legacy
Giving Foundation
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The Toro Foundation
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\$250-\$999

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UnitedHealth Group

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Prairie Moon Nursery
Bill and Debby Smith
Summit Brewing
The Toro Foundation
Versa-Lok
Viking Platinum
Floral Designs
We also thank more than 125
individuals and businesses
that donated items to the
silent auction at the 2014
Great River Greening Gala

INDIVIDUALS

\$1,000 & Above

Ryan Anderson
Todd and Cindy Awes
Susan and Joel Barker
Richard and Joyce Barnes
Mita Bell
Robert Bieraugel
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Stewart Corn and
Ellen Ferrari
Jennifer Drew
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\$1-\$99

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 Rob Nygaard
with any concerns. 612-665-9500 x18

Great River Greening in the News in 2014

- The first volunteer planting event at the new Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary in East Saint Paul was part of Twins Hope Week, to celebrate it as an All Star Legacy project supported by MLB Charities, the Twins Community Fund, and the Pohlrad Family Foundation. The story was covered in the Star Tribune and a number of online media venues. Trout Brook Sanctuary was also covered in the Star Tribune and Forecast Public Art Review.
- Great River Greening's outstate work in the Sherburne National Wildlife Reserve was covered in the St. Cloud times, and Seven Mile Creek Watershed in Free Mankato Press.
- Conservation Grazing continued to gain media attention, with reporting from the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Minnesota Public Radio.
- Volunteer planting events were featured in South Washington County Bulletin, White Bear Press, and the South Washington weekly cable news.
- Subaru Drive Magazine featured a story on Great River Greening programs.



Financial Summary 2014

FUNDING SOURCES

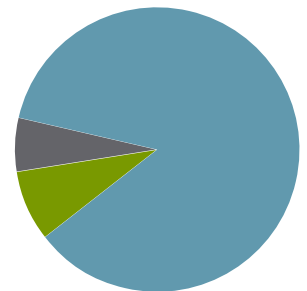
Government Contracts & Grants	1,037,119
Foundation Gifts & Grants	430,899
Non-Government Contracts	66,552
Corporate Gifts	117,481
Individual Gifts	81,612
In-Kind & Other Revenue	15,326
Total	1,748,989

EXPENSES

Program Services	1,435,932
Management & General	139,560
Fundraising	91,986
Total:	1,667,478
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	81,511

ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Total Assets	865,178
Total Liabilities	185,183
Total Net Assets	679,995



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