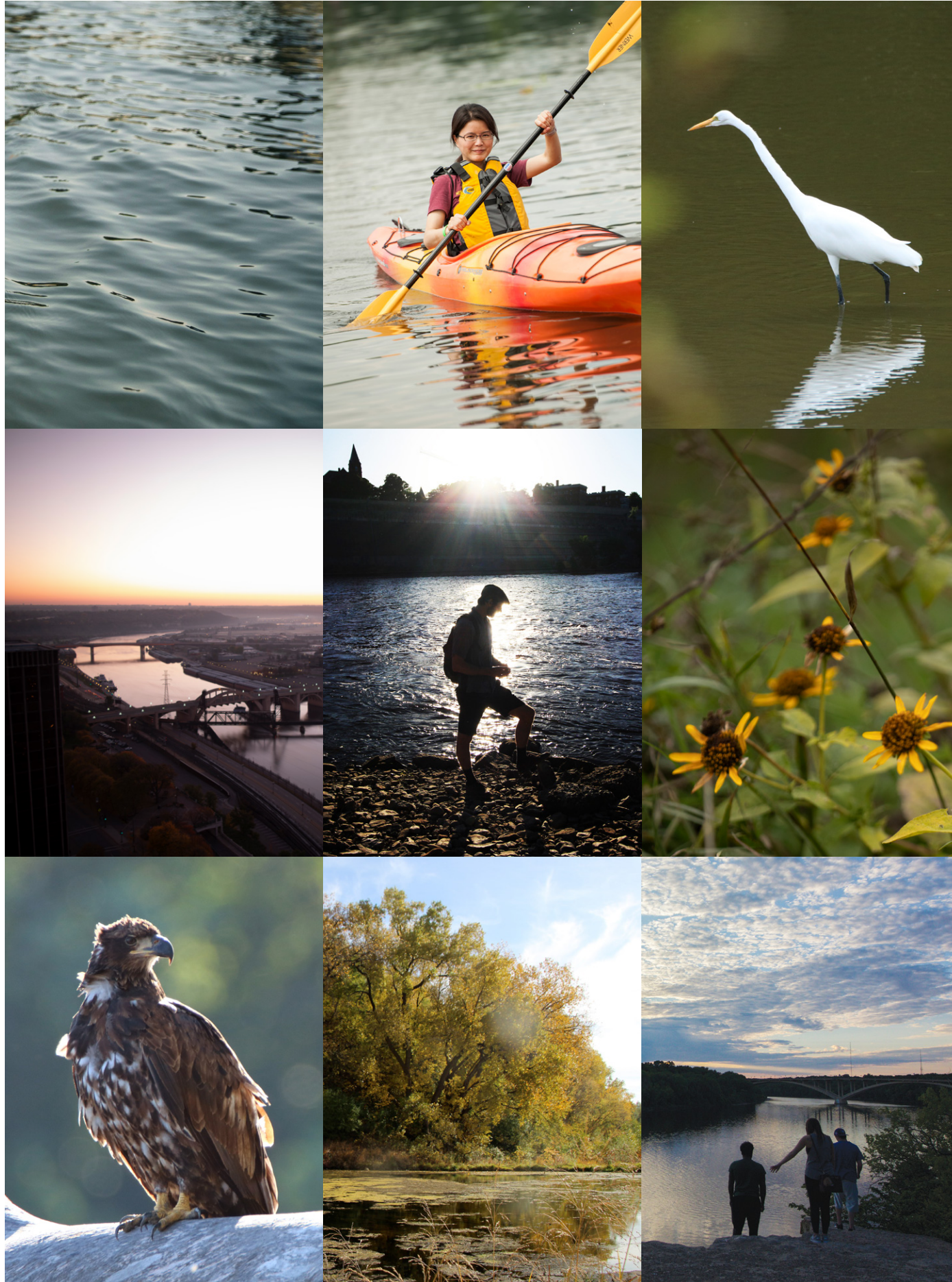


WE ARE THE RIVER



Great River Passage Conservancy **2019 Annual Report**



Dear Great River Passage Community,

The Great River Passage Conservancy is young—just over a year old—but our work builds on a vision decades in the making, flowing from the legacy of a river that has run through what we now call Saint Paul since time immemorial.

Preserving and strengthening that legacy drives our collaboration with the City of Saint Paul’s Great River Passage Initiative. Together we have forged a true public-private partnership with a vision of Saint Paul as The River Capital, where we bring the Mississippi River back to the **center of our public life and live not just by—but with—the river.**

In this sense, we are one, but the Conservancy fills a distinct role in bringing our shared vision to life. As the fundraising arm of the Initiative, we are focused on strengthening Saint Paul for our residents, visitors and our river through:

- Economic development
- Shared cultural and historical identity
- Environmental stewardship
- Linking community health and environmental health
- Rallying the wide range of river stakeholders and advocates around a common vision

Those areas of focus drive the key river-centered projects at the heart of our work: the **River Learning Center**, the **River Balcony** and the **East Side River District**.

To be successful, these complex projects require someone to hold the center. The Conservancy has stepped into this role as convener, bringing together the large and diverse group of partners needed to move projects of this scope. In the coming months, we’ll hold events (virtually if needed) that knit together the moving pieces, ideas and partners.

In light of COVID-19, we are seeing the Great River Passage Conservancy’s mission—**connecting Saint Paul’s two greatest assets, its people and the Mississippi River**—come into sharper focus. As time has in some ways stood still, we watch more people than ever connect with the Mississippi, and realize how precious and vital our mission is in restoring our sense of balance and shared community.

We hope you will see this report as inspiration to join us as the river carries us forward.

We are the river. Invest in our future.



Eric J. Jolly, Ph.D.

Great River Passage Conservancy
Board Chair

President and CEO,
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation



Mary E. deLaittre

Founding Executive Director
Great River Passage Conservancy

Our Mississippi: THE RIVER FLOWS THROUGH US

Ever-flowing, the Mississippi River tells the story of both our history and our future. On its 17-mile course through Saint Paul, it touches every aspect of our capital, deeply linking our community health and identity to the health of our broader environment—something we understand more urgently in an era of advancing technology and accelerating climate change. When we spark economic development, lift up our shared culture and history, and inspire stewardship, we will see both environmental and community health improve, hand in hand.

Environmental Stewardship

- The fourth largest watershed in the world, the Mississippi River serves as an important migration and flyway route for birds and as a habitat for more than 300 species of animals.
- It provides drinking water for 1 million Minnesotans.
- It is the largest, most complex flood plain river ecosystem in the northern hemisphere.
- The climate crisis is taking its toll on the river – but Saint Paul’s river advocates are focused on protecting it and the wildlife that call it home.

Shared Culture and History

- With 3,500 acres of riverside parkland, 17 river-adjacent parks, six major trails, and five historic and preserved sites in Saint Paul alone, the Mississippi River has a centuries-long legacy tied to our community identity.
- From the Dakota who made their home along the river before Saint Paul was even a city, to the construction of the state capitol in the next century, to the last 40 years of work to re-center ourselves with the river, the river has always flowed through us.

Economic Development

- The Mississippi River is an essential economic engine in Saint Paul.
- Each year, five million tons of commodities pass through Saint Paul’s river terminals.
- Saint Paul Port Authority terminals are home to 30 businesses and nearly 750 jobs.

Community Health

- Today, more than four million people (including 30,000 school-aged children) visit parks along the Mississippi River annually to take part in programs, recreation, education, and environmental experiences.
- More than 50 stakeholders and 45 organizations invest in and operate programming along the river in Saint Paul.

Our Challenge and Opportunity: BUILDING THE RIVER CAPITAL

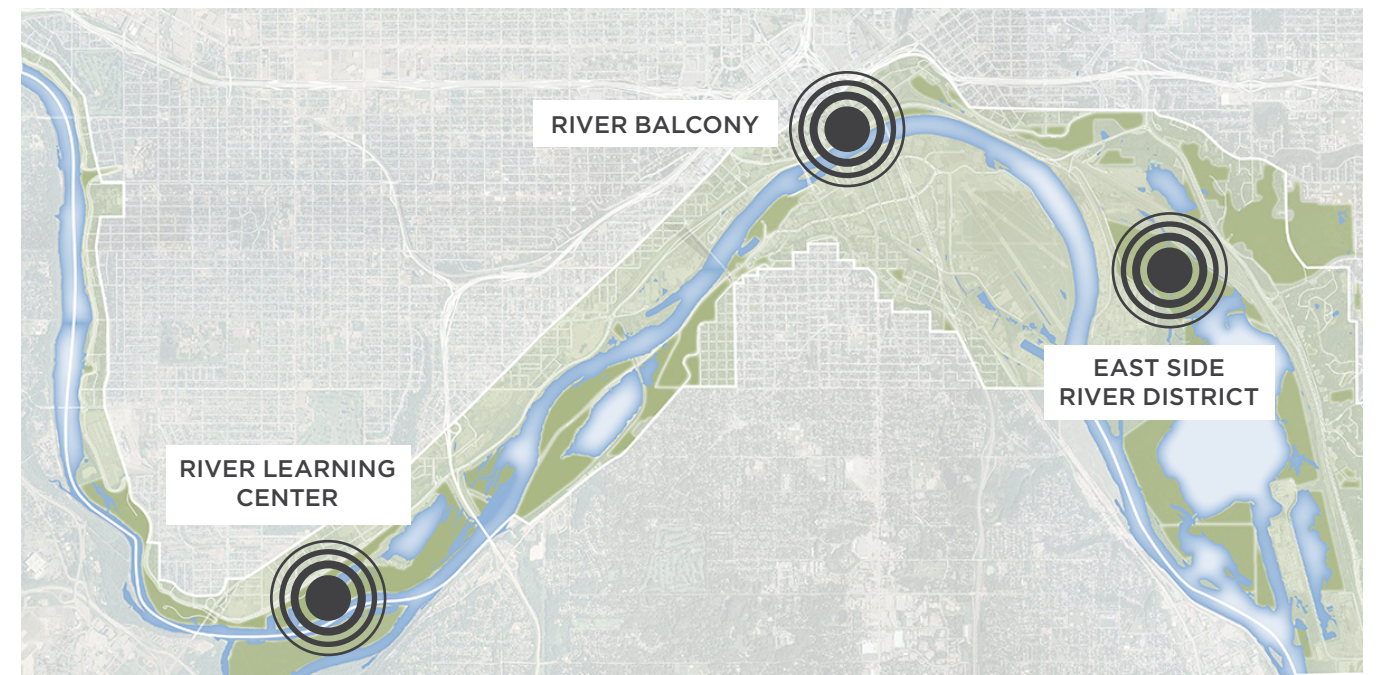
The Great River Passage Conservancy is playing a key role in bringing the river back to the center of public life—today and for future generations.

Excitingly, we have the pieces, the players and the will to do that. That is our opportunity—but also our challenge: to bring coherence, leadership and connection to the stakeholders and organizations investing in and operating programming along the river. The parts are strong, but the Conservancy exists to make the whole much greater than their sum. When we do that, we truly become The River Capital as we focus on supporting environmental stewardship, shared cultural and historical identity, economic development and community health along the river.

How We Get There: CREATING CENTERS OF ACTIVITY

Our strategy is to bring together the many stakeholders and partner organizations who are invested in the river to collaborate around a shared vision and joint projects. As we convene and align those partners, we will create three river-focused centers of activity that:

- Build greater awareness of and access to the river for a larger, more diverse community
- Create shared experiences that bring people together to enjoy the river landscape
- Improve community health and well-being
- Promote a culture of care and respect for the environment
- Spark economic development and contribute to the commercial and economic vitality of the river





Classroom
VJAA Architects

Our Projects: RIVER LEARNING CENTER

Experience the land + water + culture of the Mississippi River

The River Learning Center will be home to the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area headquarters, welcoming residents and visitors with four-season programming that honors and teaches the river's culture, history and ecology.

The Center will turn the currently isolated Crosby Farm Regional Park area into an easy-to-reach hub that enhances public connections to this incredible natural resource and creates the next generation of park users and river stewards.

Funding and Project Partners: City of Saint Paul, National Park Service, Mississippi Park Connection, Friends of the Mississippi River, Wilderness Inquiry, Capitol Region Watershed District



Promenade, Overlook and Stairs
VJAA Architects

Our Projects: RIVER BALCONY

Reimagining Saint Paul's unique perspective of the river

The River Balcony is a 1.5-mile promenade extending along downtown Saint Paul's signature Mississippi River bluff and down to the river. The River Balcony transforms urban infrastructure into public space that connects parks, civic landmarks and private development along Kellogg Boulevard.

The promenade will include a series of spaces for community gatherings and activities and serve as a catalyst for real-estate development, raising visitor attendance to what has historically been the edge of downtown Saint Paul. The project will draw on multiple disciplines, including urban design and landscape architecture, to become an international example of sustainable design for a year-round urban experience that reinforces Saint Paul's identity as The River Capital.

Funding and Project Partners: City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Metropolitan Council, Ecolab, Xcel Energy, District Energy St. Paul, RiverCentre, Visit Saint Paul



Floating Boardwalk and Bird Blind
VJAA Architects

Our Projects:

EAST SIDE RIVER DISTRICT

Reveal, heal, connect, protect a dynamic river landscape

Underused today, the East Side River District will become a cultural, historical, environmental, recreational and economic centerpiece of Saint Paul's riverfront.

The Great River Passage is partnering with state, local and tribal governments, businesses, and nonprofits to heal a compromised landscape, connect the area to the wider city through safe roads and trails, and protect culturally sacred sites and sensitive ecological systems.



Our Role:

HOLDING THE CENTER

Convening river stakeholders to reflect, collaborate and learn from each other is essential to making our three river centers exceptional. We believe common water raises all boats, and when we are all onboard together, we can truly hold the river as the center of life in Saint Paul. To capitalize on the opportunities in front of us, someone must hold the center, bring the plans and players together, be a clearinghouse for river-focused information, and form a cohesive approach that brings the river to the forefront of our civic life.

That spirit drove our "Common Water Raises All Boats" event in 2019, bringing together over 50 different partners, including:

- Local, regional, state and federal elected officials
- Dakota tribal leadership
- Institutional leaders from City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County and more
- Nonprofits such as Mississippi Park Connection and Friends of the Mississippi River



Laying a Sustainable Foundation for Success: 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To set the stage for the ambitious projects shared above, the Conservancy focused on laying the groundwork for success, accomplishing the following in 2019:

Established a public-private partnership with the City and project collaborators

Secured start-up funding for Conservancy capacity and early phases of the three river-centered projects

Focused on foundational organizational development work

Prepared schematic design phases for the River Learning Center, East Side River District, and River Balcony

Hosted a convening as part of the "Common Water Raises All Boats" series that brought together river stakeholders to discuss their roles and responsibilities and lay the foundation for collaboration

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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President, Prairie Island Indian Community



John I. Marshall
Director of Community Relations, Xcel Energy



Joe Nayquonabe Jr.
CEO, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures



Jake Reint
Managing Director, Public Affairs, Koch Companies Public Sector/ Flint Hills Resources



Mike Hahm (Ex Officio)
Director, City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation



Russ Stark (Ex Officio)
Chief Resilience Officer, City of Saint Paul

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City of Saint Paul
Flint Hills Resources
F.R. Bigelow Foundation
Hardenbergh Foundation
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Xcel Energy

2019 FINANCIALS

(Unaudited)

Income Statement

Total Revenue Without Donor Restriction.....	\$378,037
Total Expenses	\$102,558
Net	\$275,479

Balance Sheet

Total Assets.....	\$316,044
Current Liabilities	\$18,065
Total Net Assets	\$297,979
With Donor Restriction	\$22,500
Without Donor Restriction	\$275,479
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$316,044



Connecting Saint Paul's
greatest assets:
**THE RIVER
AND ITS PEOPLE**