

Volume 4, Edition 3 | Spring 2024

# Currently

Great River Passage Conservancy



2023 Annual Report

# Springing Forward



## Dear Great River Passage Conservancy Supporter,

As we embark on another year of stewarding the Great River Passage, we reflect on the remarkable journey we've taken together. Thanks to the leadership of our founding board and founding executive director Mary deLaittre, we have a solid foundation from which we can grow projects, programs, and community partnerships.

From its inception, the conservancy has been committed to fostering connections, inspiring investment, and building access along the Mississippi. In the following pages, you will notice a focus on some of the people who are driving change and connection to the river in Saint Paul. The success of the Great River Passage depends on meaningful relationships with the individuals, elected officials, business owners, nonprofits, and government agencies that share our passion for the river.

We value your partnership and support and look forward to working with you in the coming year as we bring the Great River Passage to life.

With the river,



**Katie Nyberg** | Executive Director  
Great River Passage Conservancy



**Peter Myers** | Board Chair  
Great River Passage Conservancy



## UNITING STAKEHOLDERS

We recognize the significance of collaboration and alignment among diverse stakeholders in the collective effort to revitalize and reconnect Saint Paul with the Mississippi River.

Through initiatives like the River Balcony, which builds upon decades of efforts to center the river in community life, we strive to forge partnerships that propel projects forward and ensure the river's prominence in Saint Paul's identity.

*"As a supporter of the conservancy since its founding, we are proud that our investments have served as a catalyst for public and private funding toward development of this important riverfront project to benefit our community..." — Tammy Davis Cownie, President & CEO, Hardenbergh Foundation*

Our collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota is just one example of how we are uniting stakeholders around our different projects—in this case the River Balcony. This summer, we will be collaborating with the museum and the National Park Service to offer public programs, including lunchtime patio talks on the Kellogg Plaza overlooking the river.

*"We are pleased to be working with the conservancy to develop a trailhead and outdoor experiences on Kellogg Plaza, a key site on the River Balcony. Thanks to the conservancy, we can work as a collective with other downtown boosters to create a signature visitor experience along the river." — Alison Rempel Brown, President & CEO, Science Museum of Minnesota*



## INSPIRING INVESTMENT

We are working to spark investment along the riverfront in Saint Paul through strategic partnerships and innovative programming. The Mississippi River Learning Center has been singled out as Saint Paul's top capital investment project in 2024.

The center is also receiving crucial support from the U.S. Forest Service Urban Connections program, allowing us to offer environmental education opportunities at the site as it develops.

*“The Urban Connections program seeks to foster an understanding of the role natural resources play in young people’s lives. The Mississippi River Learning Center is poised to be a national leader in providing youth education programs and we are excited to join the effort...” — Dan Dressler, Urban Connections Coordinator, U.S. Forest Service*

The recent decision by Saint Paul voters to increase sales tax for public infrastructure and parks maintenance presents a prime opportunity for advancing design developments along the Great River Passage.

These public funds, combined with state bonding allocations, create a solid foundation to leverage private philanthropy. Donors recognize the multiplier effect of supporting the conservancy, further amplifying our impact.

As we navigate fundraising campaigns and bonding requests in 2024, we remain committed to leveraging public support to realize our vision for a vibrant and accessible riverfront community.



## BUILDING AWARENESS & ACCESS

We are dedicated to building access and awareness of the Mississippi River in Saint Paul, ensuring that all communities can enjoy and appreciate this vital natural resource.

Through initiatives such as the East Side River District project, we are working to heal and connect communities to the river, focusing on Indigenous groups and underrepresented populations.

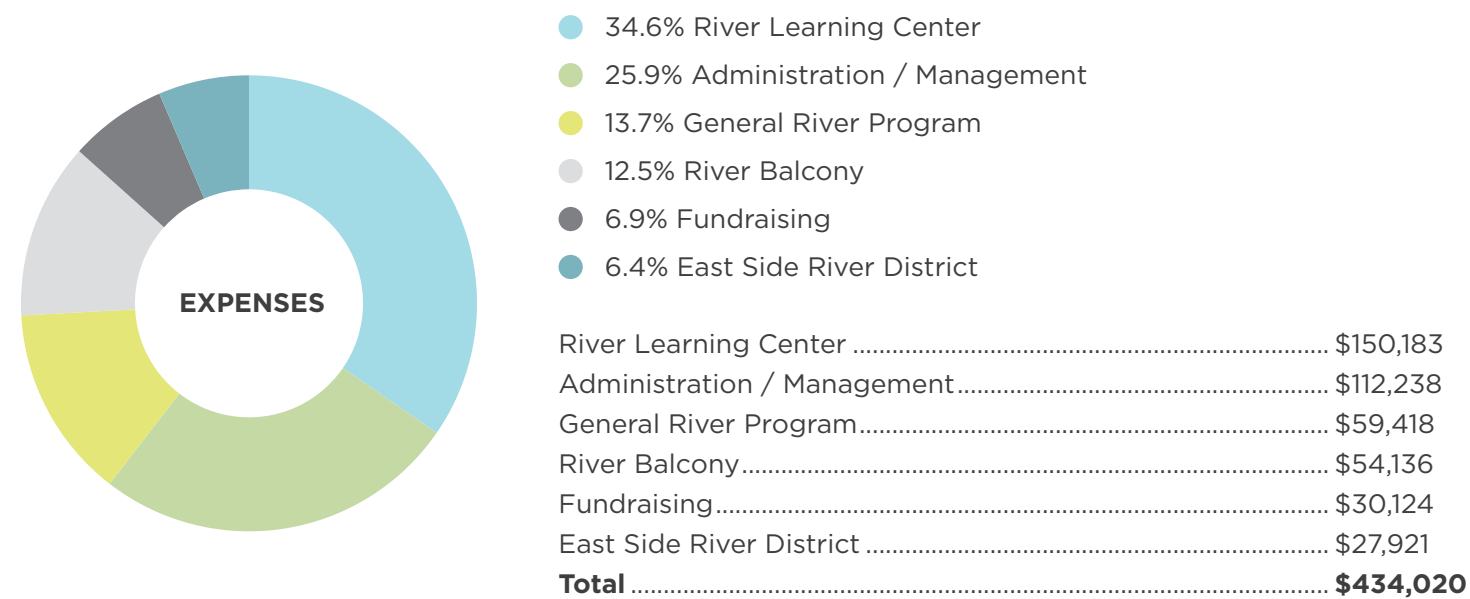
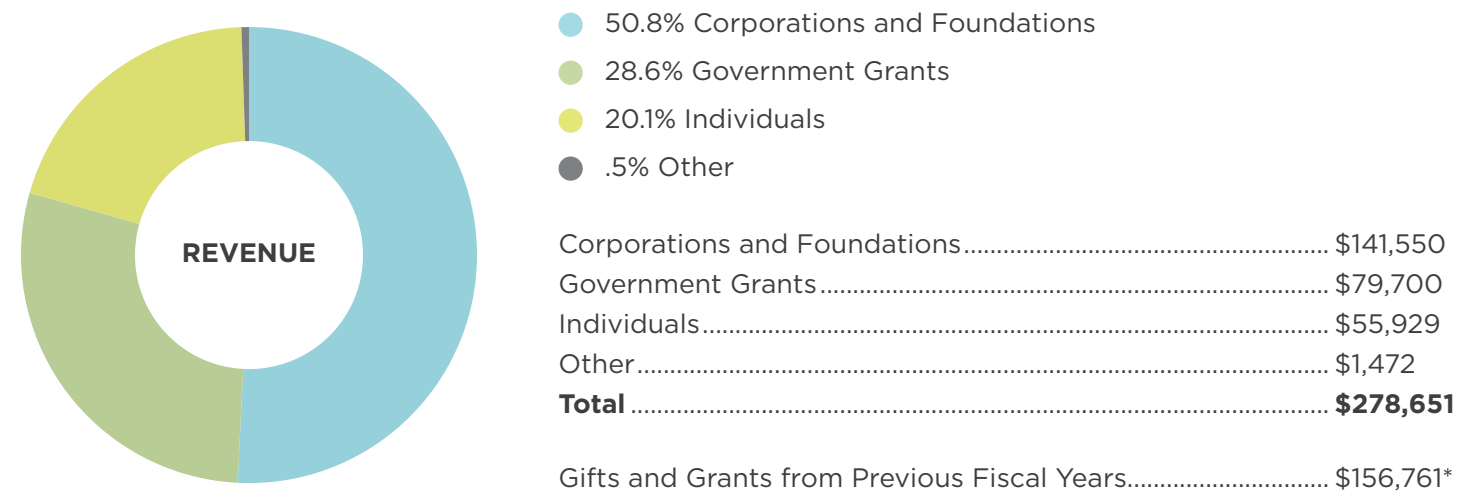
We have re-launched community engagement around Pig’s Eye Regional Park and the surrounding landscape. Over the next year, we will work with partners, including Urban Roots and Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi to develop programs and coordinate meetings that engage residents of the East Side as well as Indigenous communities.



Upcoming activities include bird watching hikes, wildlife surveys, and habitat restoration experiments.

*“Our partnership with the conservancy will empower and engage young people on the East Side to have a voice in the future of this landscape. Because of the conservancy, our youth crews will be working directly on conservation projects that build a healthy future for Pig’s Eye.” — David Woods, Conservation Program Director, Urban Roots*

## 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS\*\*



\* GRPC has accumulated net assets due to the recognition of multi-year pledges. These net assets are used in the years that pledge payments are received and expended for grants, program expenses and operations.

\*\* Total income includes the release of restricted funds to operations once the program or time restriction has been satisfied.

## 2023 DONOR LIST

We are grateful to the individuals and organizations listed below who are supporting the transformation of Saint Paul's relationship to our 17 miles of Mississippi River.

### CONTRIBUTIONS OVER \$25,000

F.R. Bigelow Foundation  
 Minnesota Department of Human Services  
 (Age-Friendly MN)  
 Mississippi Park Connection  
 Peter and Karla Myers  
 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)  
 Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

Mary James  
 Bob Jensen  
 Jim Rustad Charitable Fund  
 Charlotte Johnson  
 Eric & Elizabeth Jolly  
 Lisa Keitel  
 Mark Krause  
 Dan Krivit  
 Greg Lais

### CONTRIBUTIONS \$5,000 - \$25,000

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 Pat Nunnally  
 Katie Nyberg

### CONTRIBUTIONS UP TO \$5,000

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Great River Passage Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

## ABOUT THE GREAT RIVER PASSAGE CONSERVANCY

The Great River Passage Conservancy was founded in late 2018 to rally philanthropic support for the Great River Passage Initiative's river-focused projects designed to build economic vitality along Saint Paul's stretch of the Mississippi River. All on Dakota homeland, these three projects — the River Learning Center and National Park Service Headquarters, River Balcony, and East Side River District — respond to the enduring qualities of the Mississippi River that link it to Saint Paul and the wider region's historical, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being.

With Saint Paul's 17 miles of river, 26 miles of river edge, and 3,500 acres of publicly owned land, we have a unique opportunity to become the River Capital and unite our region's two greatest assets: its people and one of the three great rivers of the world, the Mississippi.

By advancing major projects along the Mississippi River that allow all people to experience the river in new and equitable ways, the Great River Passage Conservancy fosters environmental stewardship, community health, and economic development.

## 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Peter B. Myers (Chair)**, Myers Communications Group

**Tanya Bell**, NTH, Inc.

**Cameron Boyd**

**Monica Bryand**, Voices for Racial Justice & Urban Bird Collective

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**Anna Eleria**, Capital Region Watershed District

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**Kedar Hickman**, Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

**John Marshall**, Xcel Energy

**Joe Nayquonabe**, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures

**Sam Olbekson**, Full Circle Indigenous Planning + Design

**Elisa Rasmussen**, Xcel Energy

**Jake Reint**, Flint Hills Resources

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**Russ Stark (Ex Officio)**, City of Saint Paul

