



River Connection

Winter/Spring 2020

James River Island - a new unit of the MNRR?



The 755-acre James River Island is located downriver from Yankton.

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The mission of the Friends of the Missouri National Recreational River is to build awareness, enhance and advocate for the scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, ecological, geological, cultural/historical values and economic and recreational opportunities of the Missouri River, a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.



NATIONAL PARK FRIENDS ALLIANCE

Future Challenges of Parks

Winter/Spring 2020



Missouri National Recreational River

www.fomnrr.org



A Look Back and a Look Ahead

From the Superintendent, Missouri National Recreational River
Rick Clark

The year 2019 laid the foundation for some key initiatives to take root and hopefully manifest beginning in 2020 for future years to come. It also had its host of challenges, including the March 2019 “Bomb Cyclone” storm event that resulted in the collapse of a bridge along Nebraska Highway 12 and a historic railroad trestle used for hiking that were both deposited in the Niobrara River which National Park Service (NPS) and other land management agencies had to address. If that were not enough, the high flow releases through much of the summer and fall from the Gavins Point and Fort Randall Dams due to appreciable snowmelt and above average precipitation in the upper Missouri River Basin, affected Missouri National Recreational River (MNRR) operations on the river, including motor boat transportation, the first ever cancelation of the 16-year-running river cleanup event in Yankton, and cancellation of canoe and kayak guided trips on the river due to safety precautions.



Gavins Point Dam running at 80,000 cubic feet per second in July 2019.



The Big MO and the James River Island.

The bright side to 2019 was the triumph in August when a 2.5-year planning effort culminated in the approval and finalization of the Goat Island Management Plan, which is set to be implemented beginning in 2020 (visit the plan: nps.gov/mnrr/learn/management/goatland). Another highlight for 2020 is the prospective acquisition of the 755-acre James River Island parcel located approximately five miles downstream from Yankton, SD. The approved 2020 DOI budget includes a provision for the use of the federally administered Land & Water Conservation Fund to purchase the property from a landownership group of six willing sellers who have been commendable stewards of the near pristine island during the approximate 40 years they have managed the property.

The implementation of new standardized and improved destination guide signs to the MNRR will take place in 2020. These guide signs will be installed on secondary state highways and county roads leading to each of the 15 boat landings/access ramps located throughout the 100-mile MNRR corridor from Ponca, NE to Fort Randall, SD.

Also exciting is the Park’s continued dialogue and synergy among our cooperators (partners), including South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks, Nebraska Game and Parks, US Corps of Engineers, *continued on page 3*



Example of new destination guide sign design for the MNRR.



The 801-acre Goat Island is located between River Miles 786 to 782.

A Look Ahead

continued from page 2

Village of Niobrara, Cities of Vermillion and Yankton, and our Friends of the MNRR (FOMNRR) with respect to establishing a joint vision for the Missouri National Recreational River National Water Trail and featuring prospective new access points, land holdings, and other opportunities for enhanced recreational visitation. Please continue to stay engaged and join us where and when you can to foster the mission of the Park.



The purpose of the Missouri National Recreational River is to collaboratively work with multiple stakeholders to preserve and protect the natural, cultural, and recreational values of the last unchannelized and unimpounded segments of North America’s longest river along the South Dakota and Nebraska border.

Mark Your Calendar

- **March 13-15:** Canoecopia. Find the MNRR at this 3-day consumer event in Madison, Wisconsin.
- **April 30:** Missouri River Watershed School Festival. Preregistration is required for schools to attend.
- **May 2:** Missouri River Cleanup, 58-Mile District. Meet at Yankton’s Riverside Park at 8:00 a.m.
- **May 23-24:** South Dakota Kayak Challenge. More information: sdkayakchallenge.org
- **June 13:** Lake Yankton Outdoor Festival & Homestead Day
- **July 11:** Fort to Field 50 Paddle Battle Event
- **September:** FOMNRR Annual Meeting (check fomnrr.org for date and details)

For complete listing of programs and events, please visit the Facebook page of Missouri National Recreational River or the park’s website at nps.gov/mnrr. Follow us on Instagram @MissouriRiverNPS, Twitter @MissouriRecNPS and Facebook.





Jackson Hole 2019

From the Vice Chair, Friends of the Missouri National Recreational River
Barbara Yelverton

I had the opportunity to attend the Fall 2019 National Park Friends Alliance meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming September 24-26, 2019. This meeting offered opportunities for park partners and Friends Groups to share current initiatives, best practices, and new policies and to return home with renewed energy and commitment to this community and the importance of parks everywhere. Accompanying me was Daniel Peterson, Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Outreach of the MNRR. This event, which brought hundreds of like-minded National Park enthusiasts together, was awe-inspiring!



The first day commenced with a myriad of field trips at Grand Teton National Park allowing conference attendees to appreciate the beauty and grandeur of the Tetons and begin networking with Friends groups from around the country. I had the pleasure of going on a National Park Service led hike around Jenny Lake with Friends Groups from Ohio, California, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. A complete renovation of the Jenny Lake area from new restrooms, interactive displays, and trail repair was completed for the 2019 season. The renovation was a public-private partnership between Grand Teton National Park Foundation and the National Park Service; Grand Teton National Park Foundation is the park's primary fundraising partner and provided \$14 million to improve the Jenny Lake Area. Jenny Lake, Grand Teton's most visited destination, hosts more than 1 million visitors each year.

The conference began Wednesday with an address by David Vela, Deputy and Acting Director for the National Park Service sharing the future challenges of the National Park Service (NPS). Vela revealed statistics that tell a story of how important our national parks are to local economies. *continued on next page*

Did You Know...

The National Park Foundation is the official charity organization for the National Park Service and helps local organizations in their support of the National Park Service. More information: nationalparks.org

Jackson Hole 2019

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Economic benefits of national parks include the following:

- 2018—318 million visitors to national parks.
- 20 billion dollars poured into the economies of gateway communities (gateway communities identified as within 60 miles of a national park).
- 329,000 jobs within the parks.
- Every dollar invested equals a ten dollar return.



David Vela, NPS Director, opens the conference with an inspiring message about our parks.

The NPS estimates by year 2040, park visitation will increase by 200 million. That means 518 million visitors per year. The question is, can the flora and fauna within our parks withstand the increased visitation? What impact will it have on cultural and natural resources? How will NPS employees handle the increased visitation stress? Deputy Director Vela continued with an overview of challenges the NPS faces and what the future will bring: decline in budget allocation, increase in visitor numbers, and impact of climate change on the park landscape?

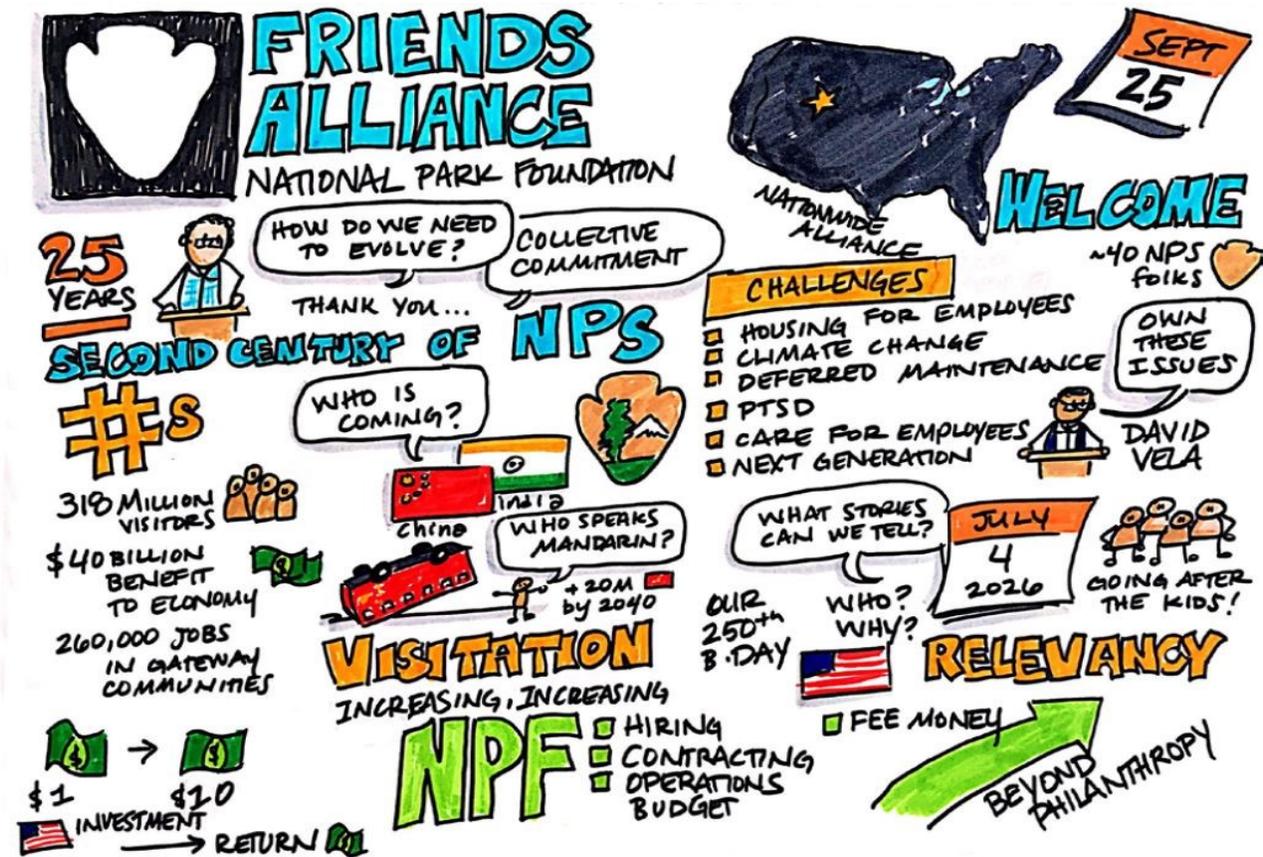
These challenges make Friends Groups like the FOMNRR important in the realm of the NPS. Friends Groups are necessary and vital to help sustain our national parks in all aspects of their importance to future generations. Vela cited both for NPS and Friends Groups a focus must be on children—they are the future of a strong and sustainable system of parks.

The conference provided me with renewed energy and enthusiasm by realizing the continued committed efforts by Friends Groups throughout the country to create liaisons and partnerships with national parks. We all face similar issues: the need to fund-raise, recruit volunteers, and identify our relevance as an organization within our local communities.

A Commitment For The Future

National Parks need people of all ages, abilities, and means to fulfill their mission. Park partnerships foster a sense of stewardship and commitment crucial to the future of parks. Without volunteers, advocates, philanthropists, and support of visitors, our national parks would not endure. The commitment from visitors and the American people sustains parks. What will be your role in the future of our National Park System?

The Alliance meeting offered information and gateways to meet these challenges. The National Park Foundation and National Centennial Challenge are great fundraising avenues Friend Groups can utilize. Increasing individual and corporate volunteerism can be fostered by increasing visibility of volunteers through social media, print media, brand recognition and consistent follow up. *continued on page 6*



Visual Notes taken by Angie B. Moline recapping a day at the Friends Alliance Meeting held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

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Maintaining the relevancy of an organization may be one of the most difficult tasks for a Friends Group. It takes an introspective look at present priorities (are we meeting them, are they relevant), realistic short-term goals, and the biggie, where do members see the organization in 5 or 10 years? And then determine the best strategy to achieve the desired outcome and remain relevant.

On my travels home I reflected on the information gleaned from presentations, break out work sessions, and the networking with peer Friends Groups. A couple of realizations stood out; we are all working for a common cause and many times sell ourselves short as to our accomplishments. The FOMNRR is a great example.

The FOMNRR is a young organization that has accomplished a lot of projects within our four-year existence. We have a small budget, a dedicated, hard-working board and a great group of volunteers that step up when asked. Here's a list of our accomplishments, current projects, and yearly activities:

Accomplishments

- Created and established the Frost Trail within the Frost Game Production Area.
- Created the first-ever coloring book for the Missouri National Recreational River; Roscoe's River Odyssey.

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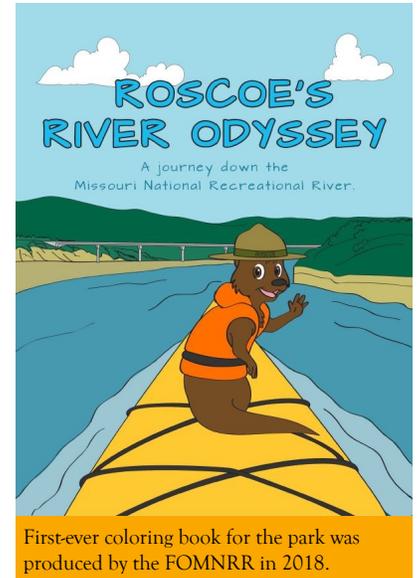
Jackson Hole 2019

Current Projects

- Working with Nebraska Department of Transportation and Village of Niobrara on a new Niobrara River access and boat ramp.
- Creating a river trail on the North Alabama Bend property.
- Landowner Stewardship Committee; we meet with river landowners to talk about the river, their concerns, and host open discussion events.

Yearly Activities

- Missouri River Cleanup
- Missouri River Watershed School Festival
- Lake Yankton Outdoor Festival
- Roscoe Junior Ranger Academy
- ROSCOE School Curriculum
- Third Thursday Socials
- Printing of River Connection Newsletter



To end my thoughts, there were somber moments of information presented, but those moments were overshadowed by overwhelming hope and renewed energy to take home to the FOMNRR and get to work to involve our communities so they feel invested and a part of the park. FOMNRR thrives due to your support which in turn enhances the public's experience with and understanding of the Missouri National Recreational River.

BULLETIN BOARD

HELP NEEDED
Volunteers are needed on:
April 30
- Watershed School Festival
May 2:
- Missouri River Cleanup
June 13:
- Lake Yankton Outdoor Festival
Please call Ranger Dugan at
605-665-0209 ext 28.

WANTED
FOMNRR is seeking a
newsletter writer & editor.
Contact the park at 605-665
-0209 for information.



FOMNRR SHIRTS AND CAPS ON SALE
Shirt sizes come in small, medium, large, and extra-large. Hats are one size fits all. Shirts are \$25 and caps are \$15. Shipping is available for \$5 per item by calling 605-665-0209 Ext 23, or pick up your items at the Park Headquarters Monday–Friday.

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Pass It Forward. Pass It On.

Friends of the MNRR
P.O. Box 7029
Yankton, SD 57078

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**FRIENDS OF THE
Missouri National Recreational River**

How to Join

Online:

www.fomnrr.org
Click on the “Join Now” button

**Mail this form and a check made payable to
Friends of the MNRR to:**

Friends of the MNRR
P.O. Box 7029
Yankton, SD 57078

Membership includes a subscription to the newsletter
and invitations to Friends programs and field trips.
Memberships and donations are tax-deductible.

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- \$1000 Platinum
- \$500 Gold
- \$250 Silver
- \$125 Bronze

FOMNRR Membership

- \$25 Individual
- \$50 Family
- \$10 Student
- \$5 Youth

This is a gift membership

Gift donor's name, phone and email address:

