



When you join the Friends of the Missouri National Recreational River (FOMNRR), you become part of a team dedicated to promoting education, conservation, recreation, and public awareness of the Missouri National Recreational River (MNRR).

Why is this important? Because your stewardship is an integral part of maintaining and celebrating this 100-mile untamed stretch of the Missouri River, which flows between Pickstown, SD and Ponca, NE. It is a place that is rich in natural history, human stories, diverse fish and wildlife, and educational and recreational opportunities.

Your FOMNRR membership helps us secure the resources necessary to further our mission of sustaining and promoting a national treasure. In addition, you will be able to participate in our activities and have your voice heard in determining future directions of the Missouri National Recreational River.

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**Your involvement will help
sustain the past
and also build the future.**

**As we head into 2022,
NOW is the time to
join or renew
your membership!**

Go to www.fomnrr.org or page 8

**Thank you
for being part of
FOMNRR!**

From the Superintendent's Corner

National Park Service (NPS) Regional Director Bert Frost announced the selection of Curt Dimmick as superintendent of Missouri National Recreational River spanning South Dakota and Nebraska. In this capacity Dimmick will serve as the Group Superintendent overseeing operations for both Missouri National Recreational River and the Niobrara National Scenic River. He currently serves as Chief of Resource Management and Visitor Protection at Pinnacles National Park. He will assume his new role in January.

"We are pleased to welcome Curt as the new superintendent," said Frost. "His years of leadership experience outside the federal government in addition to his extensive background in law enforcement, emergency services, and resource protection in the National Park Service will make him an outstanding superintendent for this park."

"It's a great honor to be selected as superintendent of Missouri National Recreational River," Dimmick said about his appointment. "I look forward to working with the park's staff and partners to protect the visitors and resources of the park and strengthen our connections in the community. Having grown up in Northwest Illinois along the Mississippi River I know the importance of this kind of resource, and I am excited to share this experience with my family."



Curt and his family will be moving to the Yankton area in January.

Look to our Summer/Fall FOMNRR Newsletter for more news from Curt.

Good news: Missouri River Events to Return in 2022!

By Paul Lepisto, FOMNRR board member

The pandemic forced cancellations of the festivals during the last two years, and the cleanup hasn't been held for 3 years as high flows cancelled it in 2019.

We're excited that three popular river-related events are slated to return next year:

- **Missouri River Watershed School Festival. Thursday, May 5.**
Around 400 high school students from Nebraska and South Dakota learn about the importance of the river and our resources through a variety of presentations.
- **Missouri River Cleanup. Saturday, May 7.**
The cleanup involves over 100 volunteers who remove tons of trash from the river.
- **Lake Yankton Outdoor Festival/Homestead Day. Saturday, June 11th.**
This event gives families the chance to experience a wide range of fun outdoor activities.

Your new or renewed FOMNRR membership helps coordinate Missouri River Events.

For more information about ways to help at these events:
contact Dugan Smith at dugan_smith@nps.gov.

Welcome to Tom Downs!

Hello! I was selected as the new program manager for Interpretation, Education, and Outreach for Missouri National Recreational River this past summer.

My responsibilities include:

- developing and evaluating the effectiveness of interpretive and educational programming,
- managing outreach with park partnerships, and
- broadening public support for the preservation and protection of park resources, so that they may be enjoyed by present and future generations.



My career in the National Park Service began in 2003 with my first job as a seasonal park ranger at George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac River. My second seasonal park ranger job took me to Towson, MD, where I worked at Hampton National Historic Site interpreting slavery for the first time in my life. From there, I got my big break and was hired to work on the National Mall in Washington, DC as a permanent ranger for the National Park Service! I interpreted our nation's history for six years at the Washington Monument, the World War II Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

Working on the National Mall was an extraordinary experience in so many ways—from interpreting tough chapters of our history to working huge special events like the Cherry Blossom Festivals, the Fourth of July Celebrations, and presidential inaugurations. One of my biggest highlights was working as the NPS chair for the nationally televised National Symphony Orchestra Concerts on the West Lawn of the Capitol building. During those two years, I was lucky enough to provide celebrities like Gary Sinise with tours of the Mall, and I even got to meet the late General Colin Powell at one of the concerts.

Following my time in our nation's capital, I was hired as an interpretive park ranger with the U.S. Corps of Engineers at the Bay Model Visitor Center in Sausalito, CA, so I moved to the Bay Area in CA to chase down and marry the love of my life, Ranger Tammi, who I met while working in DC. Two years later we moved again for a supervisory ranger position to interpret Abraham Lincoln's amazing life at Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, IL, where we celebrated the arrival of our first child, Alexander, in 2014. Three years later we moved to Death Valley National Park for a District Ranger position, where geology, survival, and the stars dominated the interpretive themes. Two years of survival later, we moved to Charleston, SC for my previous position, Deputy Chief of Interpretation, at Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park, where we celebrated the arrival of our daughter, Isabella, in 2017. Interpretation was meaningful at Fort Sumter. Slavery and the causation of the American Civil War were brought into the light during my watch.

I am super excited about my new position here at MNRR and I look forward to cultivating relationships for the park while managing the park's interpretation, education, and outreach. I hope to have continued success with our partnerships and programming as I get my boots securely attached to the banks of the Mighty Mo. Thank you to everyone who has already welcomed me and my family to the park and to the area, we are excited to become part of this community! Midwestern hospitality is second to none. We are truly excited to start this new chapter here with the MNRR family and their partners and friends! See you around!

How History Repeats



Rich Burns, FOMNRR Chair

In the fall of 1921, a group of people in Yankton, South Dakota, got together to continue their pursuit of constructing a bridge across the Missouri River. They felt the timing for tackling such a significant project couldn't be better. World War I was over, the world was recovering from the Spanish Influenza crisis—which was considered to be the worst pandemic ever, and break downs in the supply chain across the American continent left the moving of goods and services in shambles. What became known as the “Meridian Bridge Boosters” put their resources to work to raise funds and complete the construction of a bridge they believed was going to help with Yankton's progress, enhance the region's quality of life, and improve the nation's transportation infrastructure. By 1924, the Meridian Bridge was completed and the vision seen by those dedicated individuals had been achieved.

We fast forward 100 years and recognize those same experiences from 1919 to 1921 are happening now. What is different is our vision. The Missouri River is no longer an obstacle; instead, it is a vital component to our overall quality of life. The Friends of the Missouri National Recreational River (FOMNRR) is a present day “Booster” that is putting together resources toward making the Missouri National Recreational River (MNRR) better. Starting in 2022, FOMNRR's Missouri River Events Committee is back and hosting the Missouri River Watershed School Festival, Lake Yankton Outdoor Festival, and a Missouri River Cleanup. In addition, planning and outreach initiatives will begin for the NPS/MNRR proposed South Entrance Meridian Bridge Improvement Project. FOMNRR will continue its pursuit of new MNRR access and habitat conservation opportunities, and strive to serve as the local leader in reconnecting people and communities to the Missouri River.

Just like the “Meridian Bridge Boosters” of 1921, FOMNRR recognizes that issues happening around us today also create opportunities. The only thing we really need are other people to “get-on-the-bandwagon” with us. The Meridian Bridge Boosters took three years to build a bridge—maybe in 2024, we, too, can celebrate the achievements from our vision. And who knows, maybe in 2121 there will still be a FOMNRR organization to “Booster” what we've created 100 years earlier.

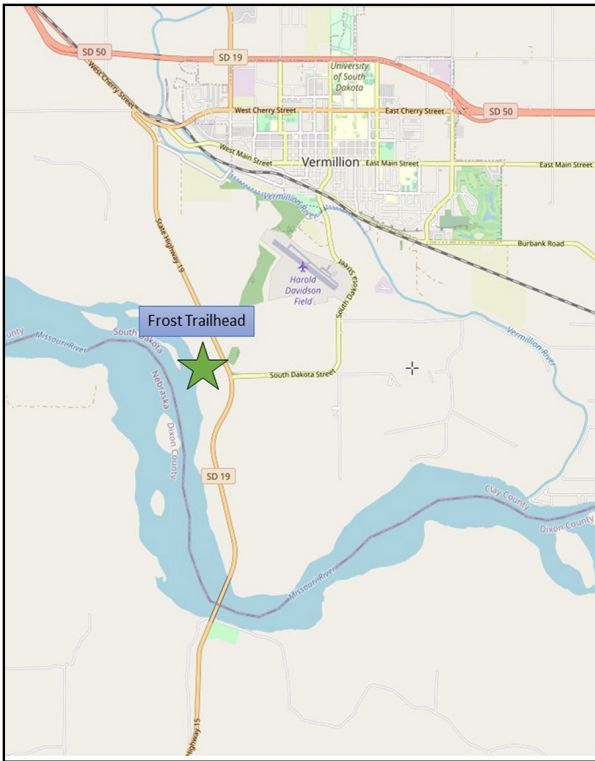
A Bridge to the Future

Yankton's 100 year old Meridian Bridge provides a great experience for foot and bicycle traffic across the Missouri River. Unfortunately, once you're on the Nebraska side there isn't much to do other than turn around and head back to Yankton. That's all about to change.

Back in July, FOMNRR joined staff specialists from the NPS/MNRR for a field visit on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River to learn about future improvements. A proposed land transfer (not including the Meridian Bridge) from the City of Yankton to the NPS would allow for the development of a visitor's services area, including improved parking, shade structures, restroom facilities, signed hiking trails, river access, and a kayak/canoe area just to the west of the southern Meridian Bridge entrance. Improvements are also included for camping locations on Green Island, and a River Trail west of Highway 81. Once plans and surveys are finalized, FOMNRR will work with the NPS/MNRR on grant and funding possibilities. Collaboration is an exciting process and FOMNRR appreciates the opportunity of playing a major role in such a significant visitor services and recreational development.



New Frost Trail Sign by Tim Cowman, FOMNRR Board Member

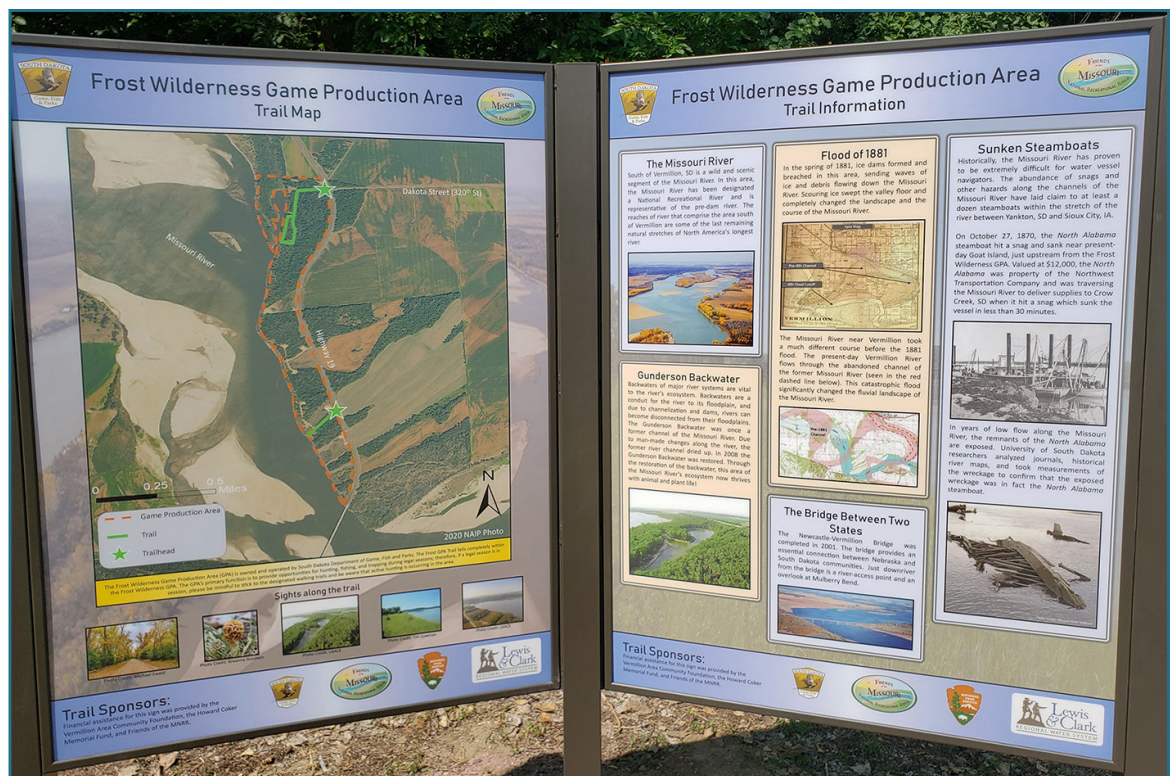


Map of Frost Trail

The Frost Trail is an FOMNRR project trail that begins near the intersection of SD Highway 19 and Dakota Street south of Vermillion, SD. The trail traverses through riparian woodlands and along the grassy bank of the MNRR. The Gunderson Backwater comes into view along a portion of the trail. It is designated for hiking and other foot traffic, such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Recently, the FOMNRR installed an informational trailhead sign at the trail parking lot. The sign contains a map of the trail as well as information about cultural history and ecologic features in the vicinity of the trail. FOMNRR volunteers designed the sign and it was funded with help from the Vermillion Area Community Foundation, the Howard Coker Memorial Fund, and FOMNRR general funds.

More information about the trail can be found on the FOMNRR website:
<http://fomnrr.org/frost-trail.html>.



Informational Trailhead Sign

First Annual FOMNRR Photo Contest Winners!

Thank you to Tom Downs for judging the Photography Contest. Tom wrote:
“I liked all of them, but these were the ones that stood out for representing the river best.”

People on the
MNRR

**Elijah Berry,
Yankton**

*“This photo was taken during
River Boat Days at the fire-
work display. I really like this
photo because it captures the
fireworks over the Meridian
Bridge.”*



Explosions of Color

Youth Photographers
on the MNRR

**Winner:
Casen Nickless,
Yankton
(Age 14)**



On The Way Down

Nature
on the MNRR

**Deb Merkwan,
Wagner**

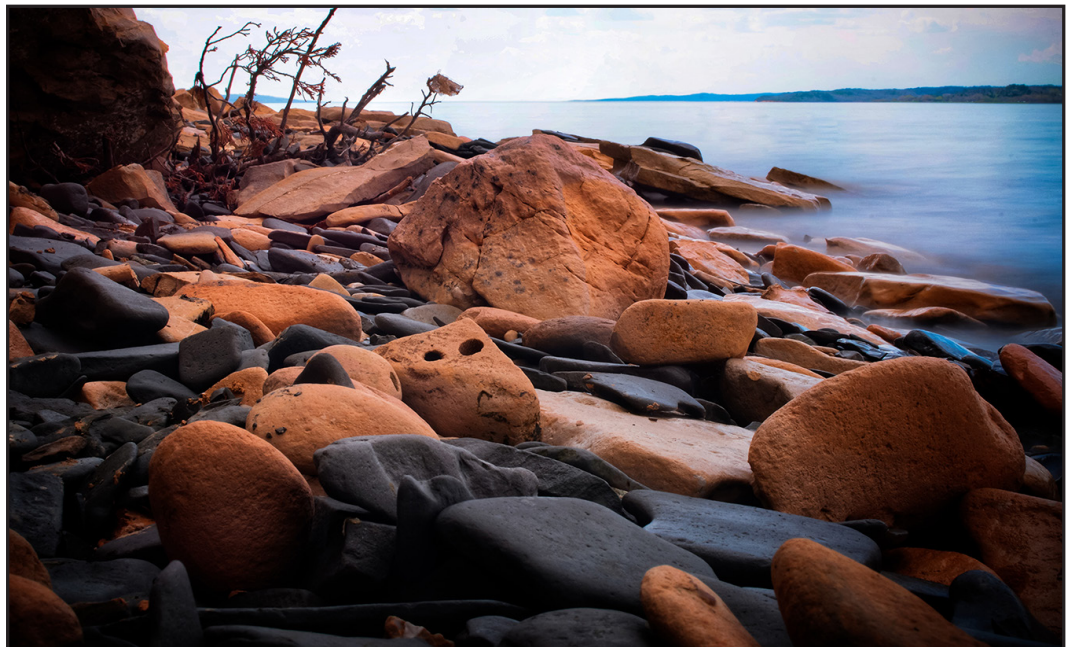


*Reflection of Geese Arriving Back to the
Missouri on Sanctuary Island*

Landscapes
along the MNRR

**Elijah Berry,
Yankton**

*"This photo was taken
on the Nebraska side of
the river near the South
Shore Trails. I like how
the clay and the water
contrast really well."*



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



FOMNRR website: www.fomnrr.org
MNRR website: www.nps.gov/mnrr

**Friends of the
Missouri National Recreational River**

**Please join, renew,
or donate now**

**Online: www.fomnrr.org
Click the “Join Now” button**

Or mail this form and a check payable 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.

Join the Friends of the MNRR



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Annual Membership Levels

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FOMNRR Membership

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Donation \$ _____