



# July E-News: Summer's in Full Swing

## A Message from Our Chair

Hello,

As the summer season unfolds, the energy surrounding the Friends of the Missouri National Recreational River continues to be inspiring. The first half of 2026 has been marked by growing momentum, meaningful partnerships, and a shared commitment to preserving and promoting this remarkable river resource.

**That progress would not be possible without the support of our members, donors, volunteers, and community partners.**

Every membership, donation, and volunteer hour helps strengthen our ability to support projects and programs that protect, celebrate, and enhance the river experience for all.

Whether you have been involved for years or are just learning about Friends of the MNRR, we invite you to join us in advancing this important work. Together, we can continue building momentum and ensure a strong future for the river and the communities it connects.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the Missouri National Recreational River.



Cheers!

**Brittany Wagner**

Chair, Friends of the Missouri National Recreational River

# What's Been Happening On The River?

## What the Missouri River Means to Us



During National Rivers Month, Friends of the Missouri National Recreational River invited community members, partners, paddlers, park staff, and river neighbors to reflect on a simple question: What does the Missouri River mean to you?

The answers we received were heartfelt, thoughtful, and deeply personal. Together, they paint a picture of a river that is so much more than water moving through the landscape. The Missouri River is where families gather, where memories are made, where wildlife thrives, where history lives, and where people come to find adventure, peace, connection, and a sense of home.

These reflections remind us why this river matters — and why caring for it matters too. Each story speaks to the lasting impact the Missouri National Recreational River has on our lives, our communities, and the generations who will come after us.

We're honored to share these voices in a new article on our website, celebrating the many ways people know, love, and care for the Missouri River.

Read the full article on [fomnrr.org/news](http://fomnrr.org/news)

## Picking up with a Purpose and Paddling with a Passion

The National Park Service kicked off their first **Paddle with a Purpose** of the summer with a celebration of National Trails Day on June 6!

10 volunteers picked up 3 large bags of litter from Lake Yankton. Thank you to all the volunteers and park staff who helped keep our Water Trail clean!

The next Paddle with a Purpose is scheduled for **Friday July 3rd**, with one more on **Saturday, September 12th**.





Photo by Alex Maier/Wilderness Mindset

Find them on Facebook @  
Missouri River Speed Record

Track them live on  
Rivermeter.app

## Where is the Missouri River Speed Record?

On Tuesday, June 23, the Missouri River Speed Record team launched their attempt to set a new world record for the fastest paddle down the Missouri River.

Their journey has already brought a mix of challenges and memorable moments, including thunderstorms, sleep deprivation, a saxophone serenade from a fan on the riverbank, and an 18-mile portage around Great Falls, Montana.

If they stay on track, the team is expected to pass through the sections of the MNRR between Fort Randall Dam and Sioux City sometime between July 8–14.

## Upcoming Programs & Events in July

### Special Events



#### Paddle with a Purpose

July 3rd, 8AM-12PM | Lake Yankton to Riverside Park in Yankton, SD

Join MNRR for a guided kayak float AND litter cleanup! Celebrate **America's 250th** by exploring and cleaning up the **Missouri River Water Trail**.

Registration is required and caps at 10 volunteers! Call 605-665-0209 x21



#### July 4th Celebration and Music at the Meridian

July 4, 5:30-8PM, fireworks to follow

& Music at the Meridian on July 9, 16, 23  
5:30-8PM ,30

Enjoy live music, food trucks, and more at Yankton's Riverside Park. Visit the park rangers and check out the MNRR Mobile Ranger Station—the visitor center on wheels!



### Thursdays on the Platz— Nonprofit Night

July 16, 5-8PM | Ratingen Platz in  
Downtown Vermillion, SD

Thursdays on the Platz is Vermillion's favorite summer music series. Enjoy live music from Blue Rune, local food vendors, games and more!

Nonprofit night features local organizations like FOMNRR that make a difference in our community.



### Jake Jaunt

July 18, 7AM-5PM | River race from  
Riverside Park to Clay County Park

The Jake Jaunt is open to any paddlers, any craft, who want to share their love for the Missouri River.

This memorial paddle, organized by Jarett Bies, honors river-loving friend Jake Riter and costs \$36, including safety coverage, a t-shirt, and snacks.



### Crofton Dam Race

July 25, 7AM-2PM | Crofton, NE

Choose your adventure between three events: a sprint triathlon with kayaking instead of swimming, a half marathon, or a 12-mile bike race

## Connect with Your National Park

All MNRR/National Park Service programs are FREE to attend with equipment and supplies provided.

### Kayak Clinics



Kayak Clinics are geared toward beginners, but all levels are welcome! Learn the basics of water safety and paddling, then practice out on Lake Yankton with park rangers. All kayaks, paddles, and life jackets are provided.

July 5, 8, 12, 19, 22, & 26 from 9AM-12PM at Lake Yankton in Yankton, SD

Call MNRR at 605-665-0209 x21 to register

## Youth Programs

- July 3 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Freedom 250 Friday** at Dakota Territorial Capitol Building in Yankton, SD
- July 4 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Jr. Ranger Day** at Riverside Park East Picnic Shelter in Yankton, SD
- July 10 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Freedom 250 Friday** at Dakota Territorial Capitol Building in Yankton, SD
- July 10 | 2–3 PM — **Paper Tube Binoculars Craft** at Vermillion Public Library in Vermillion, SD
- July 17 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Freedom 250 Friday** at Dakota Territorial Capitol Building in Yankton, SD
- July 22 | 2–3 PM — **Clay Fossils Craft** at Yankton Community Library in Yankton, SD
- July 24 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Freedom 250 Friday** at Dakota Territorial Capitol Building in Yankton, SD
- July 31 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Freedom 250 Friday** at Dakota Territorial Capitol Building in Yankton, SD

## Guided Hike

- July 15 | 8:30–10 AM — **Guided Bird Walk** with the Yankton Library at Paddle Wheel Point Trail near Yankton Thrive in Yankton, SD

## Fishing Clinics



Learn the basics of recreational fishing, ethical angling, and how we can prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species!

All fishing equipment will be provided. All ages are welcome! Anglers 18 years and older must have a valid SD Fishing License.

July 4, 11, 18, & 25 from 9-11AM at Chief White Crane Recreation Area in Yankton, SD

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## A Sneak Peek at early August

- August 1 | 9–11 AM — **Fishing Clinic** at Chief White Crane Recreation Area in Yankton, SD
- August 2 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Kayak Clinic\*** at Lake Yankton in Yankton, SD
- August 5 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Kayak Clinic\*** at Lake Yankton in Yankton, SD
- August 8 | 9–11 AM — **Fishing Clinic** at Chief White Crane Recreation Area in Yankton, SD
- August 9 | 9 AM–12 PM — **Kayak Clinic\*** at Lake Yankton in Yankton, SD

\*Registration required: Call NPS/MNRR at 605-665-0209 x21



View the full calendar  
for more details on  
[nps.gov/mnrr](https://nps.gov/mnrr)

Check out more ways to  
support and experience the  
river at [fomnrr.org](https://fomnrr.org)



# Keep This River Remarkable

From student programs and river cleanups to paddling events and stories that remind us why this place matters, Friends of the MNRR helps connect people to the Missouri River in meaningful ways.

Your support keeps this work moving. **And we cannot do it without you.**

When you become a member or make a gift, you help more youth learn from the river, more volunteers care for it, and more people discover the beauty, history, and recreation found along this national park.

**Support your river today — become a member, renew your support, or make a gift to Friends of the MNRR.**

## Thank you to our Missouri River Guardians

Benedictine Sisters of  
Sacred Heart Monastery

Brad and Nancy Wenande

CorTrust Bank of Vermillion  
and Gayville

Lewis and Clark Recreation  
Area

Lewis and Clark Regional  
Water System

SD Chapter of the American  
Water Works Association

Vermillion Rotary Club



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