On September 22nd, the St. Croix River Association gathered for our fall meeting with the Friends of Wild River State Park. It was one of those crisp fall days that call us to go outside; which – after a lunch and presentation by Naturalist Dave Crawford - we did. Some of us paddled the St. Croix; others hiked to Nevers Dam with Naturalist John Eret to hear about the Amador logging era.

One of the highlights of our fall meetings is the moment we get to announce the awards for our annual Photo Contest. I am continually inspired by the many wonderful entries we receive; this year, nearly 100 photos were submitted.

Photographer Gary Alan Nelson, who judges the contest and gives one of his own 8x10 photos to each first place winner, said, “I would have been proud to have called many of these photos my own.” We gave awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places in four categories, and both youth and adult age brackets. They are quite impressive, with one as young as six years winning in the “Youth Close-up” category!

The contest encourages people to photograph landscapes, wildlife, and people in all seasons in all parts of our 8000 square mile watershed. Through their eyes, we all learn a little more about our magnifi-

I hope that someone that sees my photos will understand where I have been and what I have seen, and want to talk to me about them. A photo of thick green algae in the St. Croix River can trigger a discussion of the problem of high phosphorus in our rivers and our SCRA strategies for solving the problem. A photo of the river in the early morning mist might initiate a conversation about why we treasure our river. Even better, a photo of a paddler on the Namekagon might inspire someone to ask about canoeing that wild and wonderful stretch of water.

I’d like to thank all of the photographers who took the time and had the courage to send their photos to the St. Croix River Association. You have inspired us all!

(See all the photo contest winners on page 4)
Second Annual Fall Fundraiser October 20th

Showcasing the stunning home of Victoria Miller and Jim Carter, just south of Afton Alp along the St. Croix River, SCRA invites you to the second annual fall fundraising event. Join us October 20th from 3-6 PM for appetizers and drinks while browsing the St. Croix Valley-focused silent auction offerings. SCRA Board and staff will be on hand to talk about our work. National Park Superintendent Chris Stein and staff will be available to answer questions about the national park and its unique character and challenges. Tickets are $100/person; space is limited.

Contact Tracy Maki at tracymaki@scramail.com or 612-991-6327 for more information.

Land Use: Rights and Responsibilities by Dan Willius

At the core of this subject are two loaded questions:

⇒ What right do I have to tell others what they can or cannot do with their land?
⇒ In how I use my land, what responsibility do I have to the community?

Though answers are complicated and emotional, the St. Croix River Association energetically seeks answers. Balanced answers, because the future of the St. Croix is at stake.

In that vein, here are two more questions with answers I hope will illustrate.

First: What does the Milky Way have to do with land use? Owners surely have a right to light their property at night to deter various varmints. On the other hand, I believe I have a right to see clearly the magnificence of a star-speckled sky. Fortunately there is a rational way to resolve this conflict. Night lighting can be shielded very inexpensively - light still goes down where needed but not up where it is not. To me it seems reasonable for a community to require shielded lighting in new development, at little cost to builders and great benefit to those who appreciate dark skies.

Second: If the Milky Way is not high on your priority list, how do you feel about water quality? The greatest influence on water quality is land use. Agriculture has a huge impact. But many farmers resist the rest of us having a say in how they manage their land. As a result the St. Croix is at grave risk. Though the river’s water continues to look clean enough, phosphorus levels are rising and water quality is declining. The message that all is not well lies in today’s algae blooms along the river, blooms that were nowhere to be found 60 years ago. It’s not just farming. It’s also runoff from newly built parking lots, mowed and fertilized lawns and poorly functioning septic systems.

I remember growing up in St. Paul when no one of right mind would swim or fish in the Mississippi. Why? Because we ignored how land use affected the river. The Mississippi is recovering, spectacularly, because citizens realized a clean river is a huge asset and land use should be regulated to that end.

Let me close with another historical perspective. Where I live, the St. Croix owes much of its pristine character to the stewardship of private landowners who over the years made wise land-use decisions without the government telling them what they could or could not do. My parents were part of this landowning community that valued the greater good of an unspoiled natural asset. At the same time, many, including my parents, were also leery of government intervention.

Unfortunately this voluntary conservation ethic is no longer sufficient. Threats to the St. Croix have grown over the years, driven by the ever expanding Twin Cities, agriculture’s continuing overuse of chemicals, a sub-set of landowners who have a limited sense of community, and more. Yes, voluntary, citizen-led responses remain important (rain gardens come to mind). But they are not enough: if there is any hope that our great grandchildren will inherit a river resembling today’s St. Croix, better land use decisions must be made at all levels.

The St. Croix River Association is working in a variety of ways to make this happen. We strongly believe that whatever diminished value is perceived by some landowners is offset a thousand fold by the greater good that will be done in protecting the St. Croix for future generations.
Forestry & Water: A Winning Combination by Monica Zachay

The northern portions of the St. Croix River watershed boast an abundance of forested land for recreational activities, wildlife habitat, forest products and, even more importantly, water quality protection. Recognizing the need for forest protection and good forest management, in 2012 St. Croix River Association (SCRA) applied for and received a U.S. Forest Service Competitive Allocation grant in the amount of $125,000 to address this need. The project is to study the link between water quality and sustainable forestry. Working in collaboration with several state and local agencies, the SCRA is the lead for the project and coordinates the project goals, which are to:

- Develop a “State of the Forest” report that will be used by resource managers and landowners in the watershed. The results outlined in the report will help guide future decisions and actions.
- Create a model for a new approach to forest stewardship planning, which will include writing a comprehensive Landscape Stewardship Plan for each of two pilot watersheds. Each plan will outline desired future forest conditions as well as strategies to achieve those conditions. The pilot watersheds are the Kettle River in Minnesota and the Yellow River in Wisconsin.
- Establish and coordinate an outreach program for both resource managers and private landowners. Two demonstration sites will illustrate the connection between forestry and water quality.

The project has already gained many active partnerships, and continues to increase momentum throughout the pilot watersheds from local governmental units and private landowners.

Landowner educational activities have experienced huge success, with 150 landowners attending a spring forestry workshop in Pine County, Minnesota, as well as over 100 landowners attending a series of workshops titled “Learn About Your Land” in Spooner, Wisconsin. More education activities are planned, including a forestry tour for land owners this fall. This one is a partnership with Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) Forestry, and the Audubon Center of the North Woods. There will also be a Forestry Conference in the spring of 2014 for the northern extent of the St. Croix watershed, which will target forestry professionals and landowners alike.

A reforestation project in Robinson Park in the City of Sandstone, MN is in progress, and scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2014. The City of Sandstone received cost share assistance in 2013 from the MNDNR to remove invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn in Robinson Park, a premier ice climbing park located on the Kettle River. To complement this project, the SCRA has partnered with the City of Sandstone and Pine County SWCD to also reforest the areas treated for invasive species removal. SCRA will help develop a 10-year invasive species management plan to maintain a healthy forest community within the park, which will then also provide critical water quality protection.

A Governor Knowles State Forest road reconstruction demonstration project is in progress near Benson Brook. This stream is designated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as an Exceptional Resource Water. The project will employ forestry road best management practices to reduce erosion and nutrient loading into Benson Brook, while maintaining the integrity of the road for recreational and forest industry purposes. The State of Wisconsin road assistance program and Anderson Township are each contributing $2,000 as match toward this rehabilitation project.

Forestry protection for improved water quality has gained a lot of momentum through this US Forest Service project. The SCRA is committed to improving and expanding upon forestry protection and management practice opportunities as tools to improve water quality. We continue to actively recruit additional partners, and seek opportunities to expand this important work.
The 2013 SCRA Photo Contest Judges Gary Allen Nelson and Gary Noren had another fantastic set of entries to sort through and make the difficult choices for winners. The talented photographers did a nice job of showcasing their art and passion for life in the St. Croix watershed. Winning photos will be displayed at local libraries throughout the watershed in the upcoming months. To everyone that entered, THANK YOU, it was a pleasure seeing the world through your eyes.

**Adult Winners**

- **Close-up**
  1st – Jeff Bucklew “Dragon Fly”
  2nd – Jeff Bucklew “Frozen Tracks”
  3rd – Joan Benner “Milkweed”

- **Landscape**
  1st – Philip Schwarz “Sunset Crex Meadows”
  2nd – Pat Chiconis “River View from Arcola Bluff”
  3rd – Corry Mosher “Galaxy Over Grantsburg”

- **People**
  1st – Margaret Boike “Watching Paddlewheeler on River”
  2nd – Pat Chiconis “Kayaker Heaven”

- **Wildlife**
  1st – Jeff Bucklew “Trumpeter Love”
  2nd – Margaret Boike “Purple Martins on Hatch Day”
  3rd – Jeff Bucklew “Great B Heron, Sunset on the St. Croix”

**Youth Winners**

- **Close-up**
  1st – Cody Christenson, “Bull Thistle”
  2nd – Bennett Mitchell, “Tiny Bubbles”
  3rd – Emma Benner, “Feather”

- **Landscape**
  1st – Cody Lund, “Shimmer”
  2nd – Maci Mitchell, “Water Lily”
  3rd – Cody Lund, “Banning State Park”

- **People**
  1st – Cody Christenson, “A Walk in the Woods”

- **Wildlife**
  1st – Kelsey Anderson, “Midair Catch”
  2nd – Madilyn Anderson, “Mirror, Mirror On The Lake”
  3rd – Madilyn Anderson, “Whooooo are you?”

On July 31, about 190 people participating in the Great River Rumble enjoyed a sandbar stop south of Osceola. The Great River Rumble is an annual weeklong canoe/kayak trip. Each year it travels a different section of river, usually on the mighty Mississippi. In 2013 they floated from near Grantsburg on the St. Croix River to Redwing on the Mississippi River. Several SCRA Board members greeted Rumblers on that sandbar near Osceola.
SCRA Hired Interns to Work on River Issues

Invasive Species Intern
There is evidence that bighead and silver carp already exist in the St. Croix River south of the St. Croix Falls dam, at least in limited numbers. But even the famous jumping fish can’t leap over the 65-foot high dam, so the only way the much-feared Asian carp could infest the Upper St. Croix is if someone carried them there.

A three-inch Asian carp looks a lot like a fathead minnow, so there is concern anglers could accidentally transport them upriver in a bait bucket. SCRA set out to look into bait rules in both states and see if current legal barriers are adequate. Rachel Farhi, a second year law student at the University of Minnesota, is doing the research for SCRA.

Farhi, a native of Houston, Texas, has learned several important things:
• The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that states can regulate interstate transport of bait fish.
• It is illegal in both Minnesota and Wisconsin to import bait from other states.
• Violating state invasive species laws is also a federal offense.

Those protections should go a long way, but there are potential loopholes:
• Bait can be transported within each state, potentially from waters that have already become infested.
• Bait transported to fish farms face more relaxed rules than bait transported for sale, and it’s possible bait fish could escape from fish farms.
• Wisconsin allows unregulated take, for personal use, of up to 600 minnows.

The SCRA Invasive Species Task Force will take a look at these findings and consider the next steps we might take.

Land Use Intern
The National Park Service holds numerous scenic easements to preserve the unique and wild environment of the St. Croix Riverway. NPS has not had consistent funding and support to monitor and enforce these easements. SCRA’s Land Committee decided that research was needed to investigate the legal and practical impacts of insufficient monitoring and enforcement.

Erin Fleury, a second-year law student at the University of Minnesota, researched federal, Minnesota, and Wisconsin laws relating to scenic easement enforcement. He drafted a legal memorandum summarizing his results. The good news is that NPS likely has not lost any of its ability to enforce the easements. The challenge is for NPS to get enough support to monitor and enforce them regularly, which is the most efficient way.

The SCRA Land Committee will review this memorandum, and consider options to support NPS in regard to easements.

Supporting SCRA and Winning Big
Over the summer we had two separate raffles, each with a fantastic prize. We think everyone that supports SCRA is a winner, but these two women won big.

Kristen Walker of Hudson won the Wenonah canoe package, which included a pair of Bending Branches Espresso wood paddles and two PFDs. Kristen picked up her prize on the way north, taking the kids on a family vacation. How perfect is that?

Jean Appert of Stillwater, MN was the winner for the Jim Dimmers painting raffle prize. We can still hear her reaction when we called to give her the news: “Yippee, I won the Dimmers painting!”

Congratulations to Kristen and Jean, and thank you to everyone who bought a chance.
Federal Sequestration and Additive Budget Cuts Cost Everyone

Budget Cuts Equal Real Impacts
A declining park budget means a loss of key permanent and seasonal staff, resulting in:

Visitor Safety Compromised
Longer response times for emergency calls potentially compromising visitor safety.

People Don’t Learn About the Park
Decrease in the number of visitors contacted through interpretive, educational, and community outreach programs.

Fewer Rangers
When You Need Them
- Park rules are difficult to enforce.
- Visitor protection compromised.
- Resource protection compromised.

Basic Services Reduced or Eliminated
- Less frequent litter collection.
- Restroom sanitation compromised creating unsightly and unhealthy situations.
- Wells closed and fewer options for drinking water.

Resources at Risk
- Fewer staff to work on natural resource protection and monitoring efforts that threaten our diverse plants and wildlife such as endangered winged maple leaf and Higgins eye mussels.
- Cuts in funding hamper efforts to fight the spread of zebra mussels, Asian carp, purple loosestrife, buckthorn, and other species.

Discover...Protect...Enjoy
St. Croix River - Namekagon River
Be a $2.77 DONOR by Tracy Maki, Development Director

I’m a $2.77 donor. Do you think that sounds odd? Let me explain. $2.77 is what I contribute daily, leading to an $83.33 monthly contribution, totaling an annual contribution of $1,000. Huh. I never thought of myself as a $1,000 donor. But I do now!

You, too, can be a $2.77 donor by signing up at www.stcroixriverassociation.org.

We are so pleased to debut our evergreen, sustainable giving program. Many of you are familiar with this concept – committing to a monthly contribution amount and having that amount withdrawn from your bank account or credit card account on an ongoing basis.

For a conservation organization, I really like using the term “evergreen” when talking about continuing contributions. Evergreen is defined as “retaining freshness or interest: perennial.” Or should it be “forever blue” (or something like that), since our primary focus is clean water? I’d like to hear what you think. Based on your input and ideas, we can play around with what exactly to call this, but at the core of it are wonderful advantages. Sustaining gifts are easy and efficient for you while allowing SCRA to count on an ongoing, stable base of funding.

You may go online to our website to read more and review details. Here are the highlights:

- Secure, automatic, scheduled payments
- Convenience of regular contributions, with flexibility to make changes at any time
- Automatic membership renewal each year
- Fewer mailings from us – no more renewal letters
- Savings on postage, paper and administration - we put your dollars to use in and around our waterways

These are terrific advantages, and I also love the culture of sustainability we can help to build, together, in this way. We have one of the cleanest big rivers in the country in the St. Croix, yet within it, and in our extended watershed, we have many, many challenges. The more enduring our funding streams, the better we are able to tackle and solve those challenges.

I understand that you support a number of non-profits, so do I, but put us on your priority list. SCRA is the only watershed-wide organization undertaking the critical, time consuming work that needs to be done to ensure our waters continue to run free and clear. We are connecting with you on so many levels – providing great places to play, fish, recreate and live.

Doesn’t $2.77 sound ridiculously reasonable? I invite you to find a giving level that works for you, and sign up for evergreen giving!

Tracy Maki, Development Director, can be reached at 612-991-6327 or tracymaki@scramail.com.

Donations to the St. Croix River Association are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. You will receive a receipt for your donation.

- $5,000 and above - St. Croix River Keeper
- $2,500 to $4,999 - St. Croix River Champion
- $1,000 - $2,499 - St. Croix River Steward
- $500 - $999 - St. Croix River Guardian
- $50 - $499 - Friend of the St. Croix River
- $25 - $49 - Basic Level

__ In honor __ In memory of ________________________ (name)

Donors of $25 or more receive a one-year St. Croix River Association membership unless they opt out here. ____

Checks are payable to:
St. Croix River Association
PO Box 655
St. Croix Falls, WI 54024
Make an immediate and secure donation online at www.stcroixriverassociation.org
River Awareness Week 2013: Growing by Leaps & Bounds

The River Awareness Week (RAW) concept began several decades ago, with a few dedicated volunteers doing trash clean up on the St. Croix. It has grown to a week-long event, and moved from only river cleanups to other river awareness activities and celebrations.

In 2013 there were many organized efforts during RAW: the St. Croix Sojourn, the St. Croix Water Stewardship Institute, the Carpenter Nature Center Beach Program, St. Croix RiverFest, the St. Croix Workshop for Community Leaders, as well as many groups doing clean-ups. All events were well attended, and continue to bring new audiences to learn about the St. Croix River Watershed.

Hudson really ramped up efforts with a new concept that became, “Riverfest: A Party With a Purpose”. A dedicated group of volunteers organized the multi-day festival. Over 160 people attended a Hudson Library program focused on river and environmental themes. On-river activities included two paddle events, two log rolling classes, and yoga on the river. The St. Croix Sailing School hosted an open house. The week-long event culminated in a concert held at the band shell in Lakefront Park. The Steamboat Kings were the musical act, with local students doing a fun music and dance performance. Approximately 70 people participated in their clean-up. Thank you everyone that participated; it’ll be fun to see what you come up with next year.

“Scrappy” the splashing bass figure was created by Mary Johnson with help from participants in the “Just Add Water” class. This commissioned sculpture was created from trash collected during River Awareness, a cleanup event in Hudson.