

SPRING / SUMMER 2025

rivertime

CONSERVING OUR WILD & SCENIC RIVERS



WILDRIVERSCONSERVANCY.ORG



WILD RIVERS

ST. CROIX CONSERVANCY NAMEKAGON

Photo Craig Blacklock

A SEASON OF GRATITUDE AND PURPOSE

As we move into another beautiful season along the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers, I'm excited to share news of growth and gratitude here at Wild Rivers Conservancy.

Please join me in welcoming two new leaders to our Board of Directors: Nancy Beiersdorf, who brings her expertise as our new Treasurer, and Jennifer Mason, whose energy and perspective are a great addition to our team. We also celebrate Lorelee DiLorenzo as our new Chair of the Board, with Dorothy Goldie stepping into the role of Vice Chair. Their leadership, dedication, and passion for our mission will guide us well in the year ahead.

Earlier this year, we also welcomed Will Jenkins as our new Director of Development. With Will's leadership, we're expanding our capacity to connect more people to the Riverway and deepen support for the Conservancy's work. Our staff and board team are strong, united by purpose, and ready to advance our mission to inspire stewardship to forever ensure the rare ecological integrity of the St. Croix and Namekagon Riverway.

This edition of our newsletter celebrates our friends at the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, through the voices of our incredible staff. Every aspect of our work is made possible through thoughtful collaboration with the team at the National Park Service. The testimonials you'll read in this issue reflect the admiration and deep respect our team has for our National Park partners.

As the official friends group of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, we rely on these partnerships every day to accomplish our mission. Together we collaborate on education programs that inspire stewardship, recreational experiences that connect people to the river, and conservation efforts that protect its fragile ecosystems. These shared efforts strengthen our impact and deepen our connection to the Riverway.

We're reminded of the importance of recognizing those who dedicate themselves to protecting and stewarding our public lands. The protections we enjoy along the Riverway are easy to take for granted, yet they exist only because of the tireless efforts of individuals who work to preserve its natural beauty, cultural resources, and visitor experience.

At a time when public lands—and the people who care for them—are facing increasing threats and uncertainty, we are doubling down on our values. I've been inspired by the resilience, commitment, and clarity of purpose demonstrated by our local partners in the National Park Service. Together, we remain focused on what matters most: the preservation of this national treasure and the shared experiences that connect people to it.

As you make plans for the coming months, I invite you to experience the Riverway—paddle a stretch of river, hike a trail, join a program, or simply talk with a Park Ranger. Witness firsthand the depth of knowledge, care, and commitment they bring to their work.

In the midst of all that is uncertain, we hold fast to what grounds us: our mission, our values, and our community of passionate supporters like you. Join us to take action—speak up for the river and the public lands you love, volunteer your time, and support our work through your generosity.

Together, we can ensure a thriving watershed, forever accessible, scenic, and wild.



Matt Poppleton

Executive Director

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

As the official nonprofit partner of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, our staff works alongside the passionate staff at the park service. In this Rivertime issue we are taking a moment to recognize the knowledge, passion, and commitment the National Park Service (NPS) Staff bring to Riverway.



Maria Young

Invasive Species Coordinator

Having NPS as a partner on our invasive species work for the Riverway means that I never have to worry about asking for help on a project because I know that they will always have my back. Whether it be helping with roadside invasive species monitoring, a buckthorn workshop, or zebra mussel sampling, I'm grateful to NPS for all we are able to accomplish together.

Conservancy and NPS staff shared educational programming for youth at the Chisago Freshwater Festival. As partners we align on educational messaging on protecting the Riverway.



Photo: Wild Rivers Conservancy



Photo: Tanner Stofferahn



Kylee Wesbrook

Invasive Species Field Technician

I am grateful for their knowledge of zebra mussels and monitoring practices. They've given us a great foundation and have set us up for success in expanding our monitoring and prevention efforts throughout the watershed!

NPS Rangers take part in a zebra mussel detection training, led by Kylee. Improved zebra mussel detection and monitoring efforts will play a key role in prevention of the spread of the aquatic invasive species.

PARK PARTNERS SINCE 2011

Are you feeling inspired to see this partnership in action? Attend an event this summer and build new sets of skills, engage with others, and learn more about the St. Croix watershed. Stay up to date with all of our offerings at: www.wildriversconservancy.org/events/



Sierra Stukenholtz

Volunteer Coordinator

To have NPS as a partner in my work for the Riverway means I get to learn something new every day, witness the expertise and passion that the rangers have for this special resource, and be a part of the team that preserves and protects our public lands for all to enjoy. I am very grateful to get to play a part in stewarding the Riverway and building relationships across the watershed.

Our joint Riverway Volunteer program is a testament to collaboration with the National Park Service. In 2024, over 300 volunteers gave 5,894 hours of service to the Riverway. A group of employees from our partners at Xcel Energy contributed to this total by removing over two truckloads of invasive garlic mustard at Arcola Bluffs.



Photo: Bethany Cox



Photo: Katrina Schlicker



Owen Anderson

Outdoor Program Coordinator

I wish the public knew the wide range of outside experience the Rangers bring to our Riverway. Many Rangers have lived and worked in National Parks all throughout the country and have learned something unique from each experience. This combined knowledge works to make the community of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway even more special.

Many of our day paddles are enhanced by the expert interpretive knowledge provided the Rangers of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

Visit wildriversconservancy.org/events to take part in a paddle this summer.


Photo: NPS



Katrina Schlicker

Environmental Education Coordinator



I'm very thankful that we were able to get NPS Rangers for our St. Croix Youth Summit in April. Three of our presenters this year are Rangers at St. Croix or Mississippi, and it's amazing that students were able to learn about mussels, how people have affected the water quality, and how the St. Croix is connected to so many places. 

An Aquatics Biological Science Technician with the National Park Service at the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, shared her knowledge with hundreds of students during the 2025 virtual St. Croix Youth Summit.

Visit our youtube channel at www.youtube.com/@wildriversconservancy to watch all of this year's recordings.



Wendy Tremblay

Community Engagement Manager




Our Summer Internship Program has grown over the past ten years into a wildly successful opportunity for young conservationists. Our interns get to work alongside park staff who are conservation experts in their field, gaining hands-on knowledge and experience to shape their future careers while contributing to meaningful projects and fostering a deep connection to the Riverway and its preservation. 




Photo: NPS

NPS Staff, Conservancy Staff, and summer interns pose for a group photo outside of the St. Croix Falls Visitor Center on the season all staff day.

Since 2014, the Summer Internship Program at Wild River Conservancy of St. Croix & Namekagon has been hugely successful in building the much-needed capacity for both Wild Rivers Conservancy and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, which is part of the National Park Service managed lands. Thirteen more interns are set to join us this May.

A THRIVING WATERSHED, FOREVER ACCESSIBLE, SCENIC, AND WILD



The ‘greatest good for the greatest number’ applies to the number within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction. Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. 

— Theodore Roosevelt, 1916

For over a century, people have united to protect the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers. Our commitment to the Riverway began long before the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, and today, the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway stands as the first Wild & Scenic Rivers National Park—a model of accessible, scenic, and wild lands within reach of millions.

Visitation has grown steadily, reflecting the public’s deep connection to the Riverway. However, while more people seek its peace and beauty, federal support has not kept pace. This has created a climate of uncertainty and scarcity, making the work to protect this place more challenging.

That’s why Wild Rivers Conservancy, as the official nonprofit partner of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, collaborates closely with the National Park Service. As reflected in the insights from our team, the collective work of the Conservancy, the Park Service, and our broader community of supporters is far greater than the sum of its parts. Together, we are making meaningful progress in protecting and celebrating this special place.

To ensure the Riverway thrives for generations to come, we need a strong, growing community—people like you—who care deeply about this place and its future.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Share Your Resources

Make a gift today to support the Riverway’s future. Use your network to amplify fundraising efforts through events, auctions, and donor connections.

Share Your Time

Wild Rivers Conservancy relies on over 300 volunteers who contribute nearly 6,000 hours annually. Help others explore and discover this National Park while making a lasting impact. Whether you’re new or returning, your time matters.

Share Your Voice

Stay informed. Understanding the Riverway’s needs and opportunities is key. Talk to your elected representatives about why the Riverway matters, and share your experiences with friends and family—when they hear why this place matters to you, they’re more likely to care too.

Together, we can ensure the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway remains forever accessible, scenic, and wild for all people and all time.

Welcome Will Jenkins Director of Development

I am honored to have joined this remarkable organization as the new Director of Development, and I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of my initial impressions and express my deepest gratitude for your support.

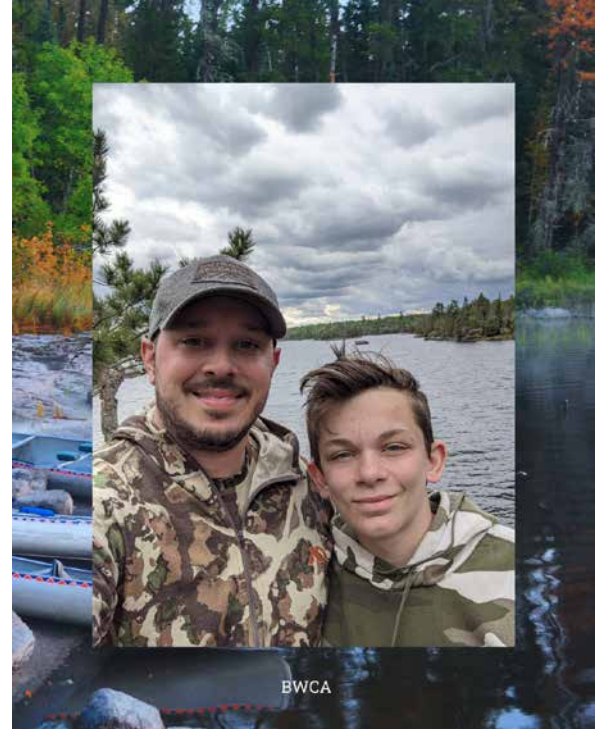
My first couple of months have been nothing short of inspiring. I've had the privilege of immersing myself in the vital work that Wild Rivers Conservancy undertakes to protect the pristine waterways of the St. Croix and Namekagon Riverway. What has struck me most is the incredible caliber of the staff. Each individual brings a wealth of knowledge, a tireless work ethic, and an undeniable passion for our mission. From the natural resources team working to protect the ecology of the waterway to the educators engaging our communities, their dedication is truly the heart and soul of this organization. They navigate complex challenges with unwavering commitment, and I feel incredibly fortunate to work alongside such a talented team.

Furthermore, I've been deeply impressed by the strength and dedication of our partners at the National Park Service. Their expertise and mission-focused approach are invaluable as we collaborate to safeguard these natural resources. The energy between our organizations is palpable, and it's clear that our shared commitment to conservation drives a powerful force for good. Witnessing this close collaboration firsthand has reinforced the critical role partnerships play in achieving meaningful and lasting impact. The start of my tenure has coincided with a period of broader uncertainty in the political and economic landscape. We recognize that these external factors can create challenges for individuals and organizations alike. However, it is precisely during these times that the commitment of our staff and the unwavering support of the National Park Service become even more crucial. Their resilience and proactive approach to conservation in the face of uncertainty are truly commendable, and I am confident in our collective ability to navigate these headwinds.

It is against this backdrop that your continued support becomes even more vital. Your past generosity – whether through volunteer hours, financial contributions, or simply spreading awareness about our work – has laid a strong foundation for our success. As we look ahead, the need to protect our waterways remains as critical as ever. The challenges we face require sustained effort and resources. It is in these times that we lean even more heavily on the commitment of our community. Your ongoing support will empower us to continue our great work to project the waterway through conservation, education and recreation.

We are grateful that you have chosen to invest in the mission of Wild Rivers Conservancy. Your belief in our work fuels our passion and enables us to continue safeguarding the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the St. Croix and Namekagon Riverway for generations to come.

Will Jenkins





WILD RIVERS

ST. CROIX CONSERVANCY NAMEKAGON

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STAY CONNECTED

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Join Wild Rivers Conservancy for “River Mixer”

 June 11, 5:00 - 8:00 PM

 Lucky Guys Distillery
Hudson, WI

Learn more at www.wildriversconservancy.org/events



Photo: Zoe Yates