

The background of the cover is a photograph of a young boy with short, light brown hair, smiling and looking down at a small, dark, circular object he is holding in his hands. He is wearing a dark blue jacket over a grey t-shirt. To his left, a portion of another person wearing a red headscarf is visible. The overall scene is outdoors with soft, natural lighting.

CURE



Climate . Energy . Water

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2015**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Recently we had a valued colleague working in China recommend us for work sponsored by the State Department in Washington. In his recommendation, the colleague characterized CURE as a small but dependable organization in rural Minnesota that consistently **punches above its weight**. Those words are golden.

But let's give credit where credit is due. We punch above our weight because our Board of Directors has vision, our staff is smart and committed, foundations consistently invest in us, our nonprofit partners trust us, and our volunteers, members and donors keep us grounded. We are a community of possibilitators; change makers with a proud history and a hopeful future yet to be realized.

And yes, we punch above our weight.

2015 was a great year for CURE and 2016 is ripe with possibility. Join us as we move into our 25th year with an eye on reflection and celebration.

Sincerely,



Duane Ninneman



LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends,

As you read this year's Annual Report and reflect on all that CURE has accomplished this year, I hope you will be as proud as I am to be a member of this outstanding organization!

Like many of you, I live in rural Minnesota, and I value the quality of life that rural living provides. But I also worry that we too often take this quality of life for granted, and know that it is threatened in many ways: by on-going soil erosion, degradation of water quality and quantity, habitat loss, and continued over-dependence on fossil fuels. I am concerned about the damage we are doing to our environment, and long instead for change that will lead to a more sustainable future for us all.

That's why I value my membership in CURE so highly. With its mission to "focus public awareness on the Minnesota River Watershed and to take action to restore and protect the river's water quality, biological integrity and natural beauty for all generations," CURE is a local, grassroots organization that is working toward a more harmonious relationship between people and the land. Whether sponsoring terrific outdoor experiences that help people develop deep attachment to the water and the land, or providing the education and empowerment necessary for all of us to effectively engage in the political process, CURE is a tireless advocate for strong environmental protection in our own backyard.


As we look back on the year, I am grateful to the CURE staff and board for all that they have done on behalf of the environment. And I thank all of YOU for joining me in support of this important work!

Sincerely,



Margaret Kuchenreuther



A woman with short grey hair, wearing a green jacket, olive pants, and colorful patterned boots, stands in a river. She is holding a dark, oval-shaped mussel in her right hand and a long wooden stick in her left hand. The background shows a calm river with some fallen branches on the far bank.

“The mussel field day was an excellent opportunity to learn more about one of our local resources. It provided me with some knowledge and experience that I could then share with my middle school science students. I hope that at some point I will be able to incorporate a field trip to the river for my students, giving them a hands-on opportunity to learn more about mussels and the Minnesota River environment.” - Leanne Carmany, CURE member and MS/HS Science Teacher, Yellow Medicine East Schools

2015 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Buffers Now Campaign

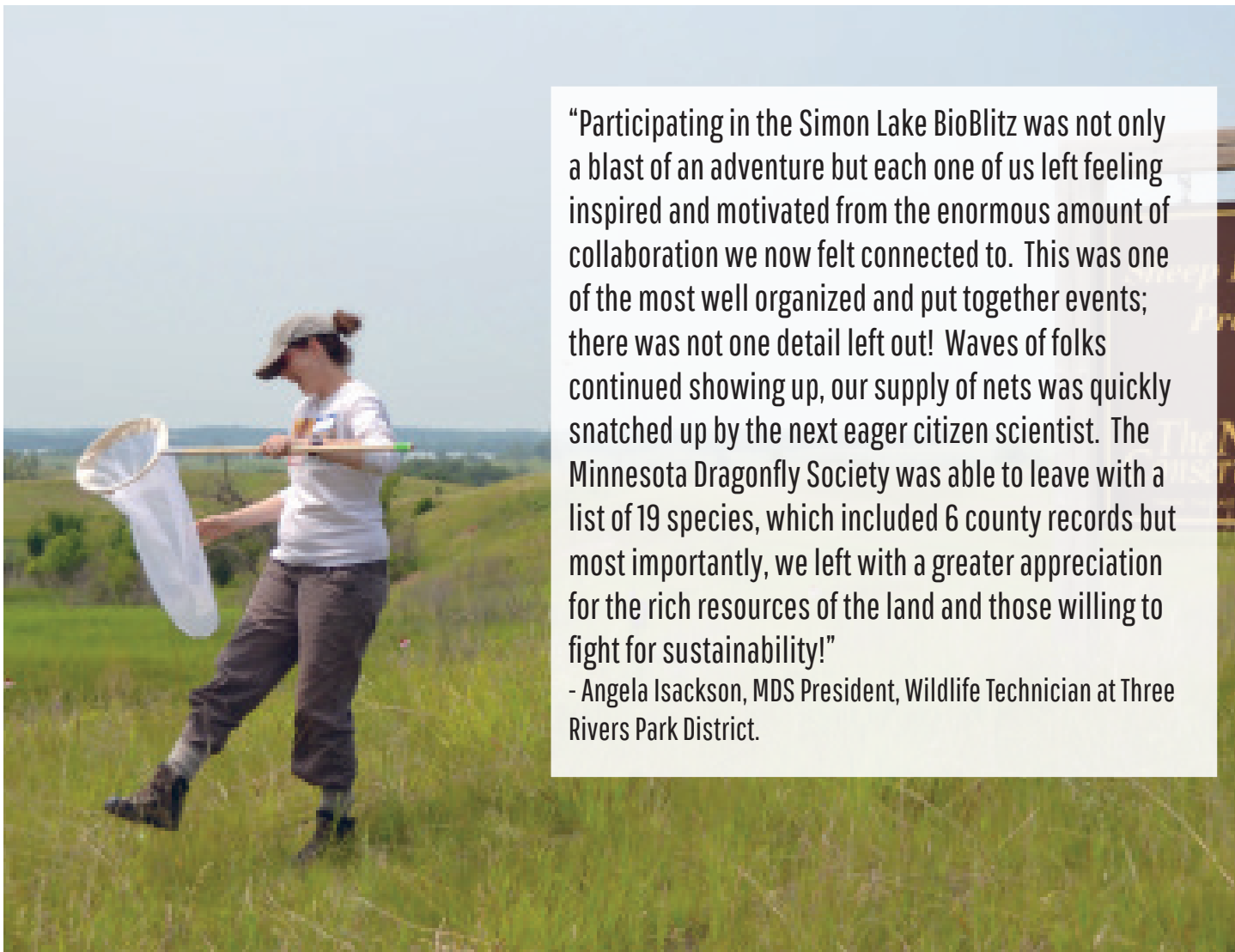
Early in 2015, CURE was perhaps the first organization to step up in support of Governor Dayton's buffer initiative to improve water quality in Minnesota. We were at the stakeholders' table to create the legislation and we managed a well-designed advocacy campaign that was widely supported by CURE members and beyond. Although less than what we had hoped for, we'll call this a win for CURE's water mission.



Minnesota Clean Energy and Jobs Campaign

CURE was called rural Minnesota's powerhouse for its organizing effort outstate in support of the Minnesota Clean Energy and Jobs Campaign. Moving smart energy policy through the Minnesota legislature has been difficult in recent years, but laws passed as a result of this campaign effort will move Minnesota from #25 on solar generation capacity to #5 in 2016.





“Participating in the Simon Lake BioBlitz was not only a blast of an adventure but each one of us left feeling inspired and motivated from the enormous amount of collaboration we now felt connected to. This was one of the most well organized and put together events; there was not one detail left out! Waves of folks continued showing up, our supply of nets was quickly snatched up by the next eager citizen scientist. The Minnesota Dragonfly Society was able to leave with a list of 19 species, which included 6 county records but most importantly, we left with a greater appreciation for the rich resources of the land and those willing to fight for sustainability!”

- Angela Isackson, MDS President, Wildlife Technician at Three Rivers Park District.

EVENTS AND ADVENTURES

The CURE Events & Adventures program grew and cultivated relationships in 2015 with both individual members and collaborating partners. The more work we do, the more we realize that it doesn't matter if you are young or old – many of us are out of touch with nature and the natural world around us. Moving forward, you are going to see CURE's work more aligned with the work of Aldo Leopold, Richard Louv and others who address the 'nature deficit disorder' that we see in our culture.

A couple of our 2015 highlights include our second year of collaboration with Land Stewardship Project and the Chippewa 10% Project at our 24-hour BioBlitz at Sheep Berry Fen near Simon Lake. Over 100 people from all across Minnesota participated in this biological survey of plants, animals and all things living. In the fall, we expanded our 3rd Annual Mussel Field Day to include a workshop on Friday for the Minnesota River Valley Education District and teachers from eight regional school districts. They received a hands-on opportunity to learn about freshwater mussels and how they can bring what they learned back to their classrooms.

New to CURE in 2015 was our partnership with the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program and the formation of a Prairie and Potholes Chapter for southwestern Minnesota.

CONVENING PEOPLE AROUND ISSUES THAT MATTER TO THEM

An important part of CURE's work is to convene people around issues that matter to them and to develop constituent education. In 2015, CURE went above and beyond expectations and brought over 40 people together to meet with legislators about the buffer initiative and clean energy policy at a Willmar in-district meeting.



CONGRATUALATIONS TO LAST YEAR'S AWARD RECIPIENTS



Kay and Annette
Fernholz of Madison,
MN, received the 2014
RiverKeeper Award.

Congratulations to our additional award recipients: Lauri Wyum (Volunteer of the Year Award); Ken Paulman, Midwest Energy News (Good Media Award); Sally Finzel, Morning Sky Greenery (Good Business Award); Governor Mark Dayton (Kubly Good Government Award).

2015 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In 2015, 84% of CURE's revenue came from Foundation Grant funding. We rely on funding from major foundations, mostly from a few large grants, to fund our work in each program area. The McKnight Foundation, for example, has provided the base funding for our Water Program for most of CURE's existence.

This past year, CURE increased its range of work and program delivery on behalf of our mission. Although projected revenue fell short of budget, with one major grant request not being awarded, CURE was fully operational throughout the year. As with most well managed nonprofits, we were able to draw on our strategic cash reserve to smooth out cash flow and still ended 2015 with \$153,000 in the bank.

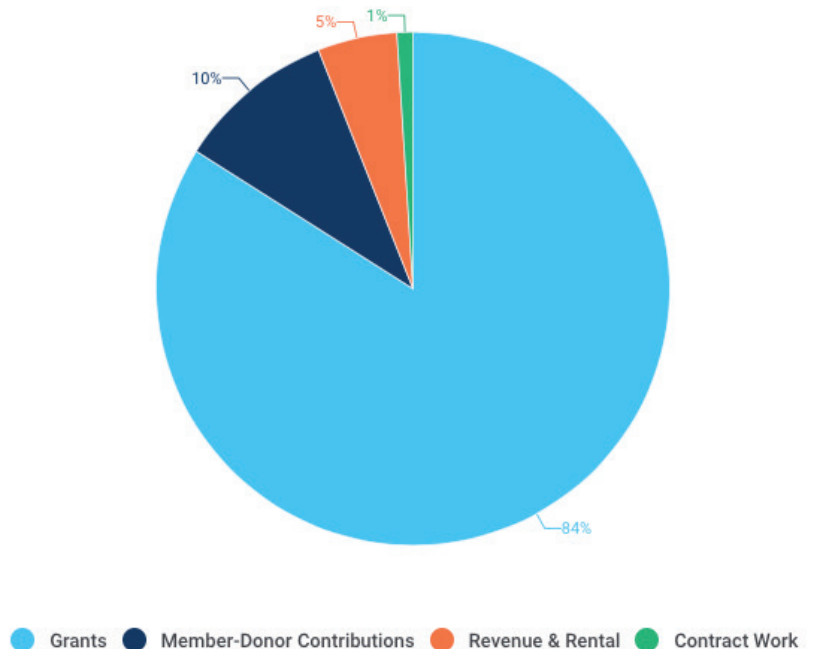
In 2016, CURE hopes to raise 10% of our revenue from our member-donors. We are grateful that the size of individual donations has grown consistently over the last few years, because as our work expands, we don't expect to raise foundation dollars for all of our programs. We will need to rely more on our member-donors to fund our work -- such as programs offered through the Events & Adventures Program and our direct advocacy.

CURE's budget for 2016 is \$398,450.

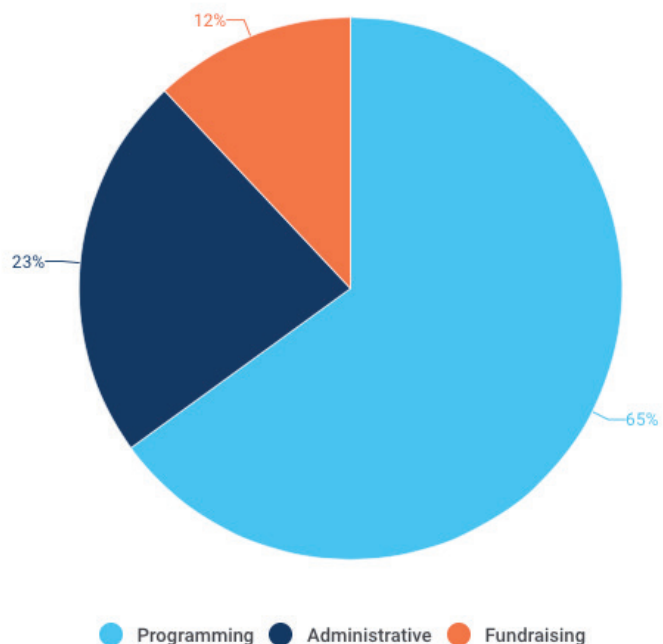
CURE's member/donor goal for 2016 is \$40,000.

Details about CURE's financials may be obtained by contacting Duane Ninneman at the CURE office.

Total Income: \$289,924



Total Expenses: \$327,078



OUR 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS WERE MADE POSSIBLE BY YOU

We thank the following member-donors who generously donated to CURE from January 1, 2015 through December 31st, 2015.

* Sustaining Members who give monthly to CURE

FOUNDATIONS

Carolyn Foundation
McKnight Foundation
RE-AMP Network/
Minneapolis Foundation

MEMBER-DONORS

UP to \$49

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Margie Andresen
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Teresa Clarke *
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Roy Hankins &
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Steve Petrich &
Peg Furshong *
Dixie Tilden *
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\$1,000 and up

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Duane Ninneman *
Barbara Olson
Rod MacIver
Gene & Lucy Tokheim

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Marshall
Josten's, Minneapolis
Lac qui Parle Valley Science
Club, Madison
Lac qui Parle Watershed
Project, Montevideo
Land & Driveway Service,
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Township of Ortonville
Unitarian Universal Church,
Underwood
Upper Sioux Community
Vivid Image, Inc,
Hutchinson
YME Science Club,
Granite Falls

2015 TRIBUTES

Dixie Tilden
In memory of
Jerry Tilden

In 2012, we began a formal CURE Tributes program where you may remember a loved one who has passed on or honor someone for a life's journey milestone (birth, birthday, graduation, wedding, anniversary, retirement, etc.) For more information about our Tributes program or to obtain envelopes, please contact Peg Furshong at the CURE office.

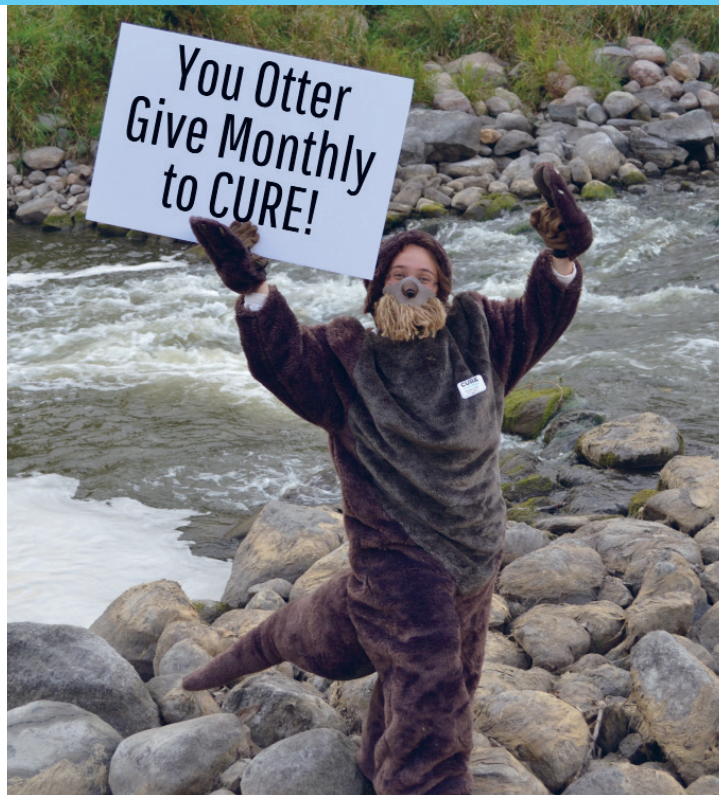
*** If you believe that we have made a mistake in your giving history for 2015, please contact us so that we can resolve the issue. It is important to us that we honor all of our member-donor support.

BECOME A SUSTAINING MEMBER

Join CURE's Monthly Giving Program! Your monthly support makes a difference.

Sustaining Members make convenient ongoing monthly contributions toward CURE's conservation and community engagement work. It allows us to be financially strategic and it saves money. Sustained Monthly Giving saves on staff time, printing and postage costs, and saves you the hassle of remembering to renew your CURE membership each year. Maureen L. agrees, "I recently increased my giving to CURE and spread my contribution out on a monthly plan."

Join today with a \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 or an amount of your choice. Once a month, your donation will be automatically withdrawn from your account.



BECOME A CURE MEMBER!

The mission of CURE is to focus public awareness on the Minnesota River Basin and to take action to restore and protect the river's water quality, biological integrity, and natural beauty for all generations.

In service to our mission, we strive to raise public awareness and engage policy makers on environmental and community issues that affect the basin. We advocate for solutions that will best sustain ecological and human health.

Our vision is for healthy human and natural communities to thrive together on the land, sustained by a common ethic of care, preservation, and protection of the watershed environment.

We believe that by working together, we can deepen public understanding and commitment to a healthy environment. We ground our work in a sense of place, grassroots democracy, eco and social justice, civility and respect for those with whom we disagree, and the courage to act on complex and difficult issues. We also believe that we must take time to celebrate our connections to the land and each other.

Become a CURE Member Today!

Visit www.cureriver.org to learn how you can become a member or call the CURE office.

"See what one person can do."



Ginger Homme is a long-time CURE member and advocate who has installed renewable energy on her property.

STAFF AND BOARD

STAFF

Representing fiscal year 2015

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Director of Operations and Constituent Engagement

Erik Hatlestad

Public Interest Fellow

Ariel Herrod

Water Program Coordinator

Duane Ninneman

Executive Director

Kristian Nyberg

Energy Program Coordinator

Sarina Otaibi

Director of Communications and Engagement

Dixie Tilden

Office Manager

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Representing fiscal year 2015

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Appleton, MN

Glenn Gelhar

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Clarkfield, MN

Holly Hatleswick

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Renville County for the Natural Resources
Conservation Service
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Chippewa River Watershed Project
Montevideo, MN

Glen Jacobsen, Member at Large

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Jen Kader

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Tom Prieve

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Brian Wojtalewicz

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