



June 2019

In October 2015, LWV Upper Mississippi River Region (UMRR) held its first annual meeting. Bylaws, a budget and a nonpartisan policy were adopted. We hit the ground running that month, and we haven't stopped since. On June 1, we held our fourth annual meeting where we had the opportunity to discuss our continuing growth and future plans. Our work continues to focus on education and advocacy to reduce nutrient pollution throughout the upper Mississippi River basin. Here are some highlights:

- In Minnesota, we are a member of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership, where we collaborate with others on identifying and promoting clean water legislation. This year, we co-sponsored and chaired a section of Water Action Day activities, which drew almost 700 people to the capitol. With the support of local Leagues, we partnered with the Land Stewardship Project early this year to co-sponsor workshops for retired/absentee Minnesota landowners who lease their agricultural land to others.
- In Iowa, we will soon be expanding our work with the Izaak Walton League as we address regenerative agricultural practices.
- In Wisconsin, one of our board members now serves on the La Crosse Sustainability Commission's water subcommittee. Connections have also been made with the Sparta Area Public School District and the St. Croix River Association to discuss efforts to reduce nutrient pollution to the La Crosse River, and we reached out to the St. Croix River Association regarding a proposed hog CAFO. We continue to support groups, including LWV Wisconsin, in their opposition to the Foxconn project.
- We signed numerous letters to state/federal legislators, agencies and committees regarding the Farm Bill and bills focused on clean water and groundwater protection policies.
- Looking forward, we will continue to support The Nature Conservancy's 10-year "Our Mississippi Our Future" plan to complete clean-up projects and purchase buffer strips along the Mississippi. We will also continue our involvement in activities to help Wisconsin's "2019: Year of Clean Water" be successful.

All of these activities take time and effort. Our board members donate hundreds of hours every year traveling and networking across our four-state region. We depend on ongoing support from our members to continue our work and to keep our members informed:

- We send out a monthly e-newsletter to more than 700 individuals, members, and organizations. If you would like your League's members to receive the newsletter, just send us their email addresses and we'll be happy to add them! They can unsubscribe at any time.
- We maintain a website dedicated to providing current information on issues impacting the Mississippi River (visit www.lwvumrr.org – check out our blog and videos from our educational events).

- Our volunteers visit local Leagues, sharing information about local and regional water issues. If you would like to have someone visit your League, please email us at lwwumrr@lwwmn.org .

We hope your League will continue to support our efforts to protect the waters of the upper Mississippi River basin by renewing your membership for 2019/20. Our membership year ends in June, and annual dues are only \$25. Our membership form can be found on our website (www.lwwumrr.org). Please contact us at lwwumrr@lwwmn.org if you have any questions. We hope to hear from you soon!

Sincerely,

Mary Ploeser and Steve Ploeser, Co-Chairs
League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization