

League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region ILO

Report to our local and state league members

May 2022

LWV Upper Mississippi River Region, or UMRR (pronounced “Ummer”), is an interleague organization (ILO) focused on water quality. UMRR is made up of 60 local Leagues in the states of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin representing over 7,000 local League members in this region. Our geographic area is the Upper Mississippi River basin – that part of the Upper Mississippi basin upstream of the river’s confluence with the Ohio at the south edge of Illinois to its headwaters in Itasca County, MN. Here’s a link <https://www.lwvumrr.org/blog/lwv-upper-mississippi-river-region-who-we-are-what-we-do> to learn more about what an ILO is and how it fits into the LWV national structure, and to learn more about how our structure strengthens our work, allowing the amplification of the voice of League throughout the watershed.

Established in 2015, UMRR’s ILO Board has strong representation from each of our four member states. **Our 2021-22 Board:**

Officers

Chair	Mary Ellen Miller	Iowa	Metro Des Moines
Vice-Chair	Nancy Porter	Iowa	Johnson County
Vice-Chair	Shawn Stacey-Choinard	Illinois	Rockford
Secretary	Tam Prenosil	Iowa	Dubuque
Treasurer	Jeri McGinley	Wisconsin	Stevens Point
Past Chairs	Mary and Steve Ploeser	Wisconsin	Dane County

Board Members:

MN Representative	Kay Slama	Minnesota	Edina
MN Alternate	Lonni McCauley	Minnesota	ABC
WI Representative	Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins	Wisconsin	La Crosse Area
WI Alternate	Nancy Hill	Wisconsin	La Crosse Area
IA Representative	Sue Wilson	Iowa	Dubuque
IA Alternate	Paul Schultz	Iowa	Dubuque
IL Representative	Lee Ekstrom	Illinois	McHenry County
IL Alternate	Paula Ekstrom	Illinois	McHenry County
Communications	Gretchen Sabel	Minnesota	ABC
Mississippi River Network Liaison:	Nancy Porter	Iowa	Johnson County

UMRR annual meeting is May 21, 2022, via ZOOM. Business meeting starts at 9:00 am and preregistration is required; available on the website. The program, “**Does it take an Act of Congress to protect the Mississippi?**” begins at 10:30 am. Panelists include: Alicia Vasto, Iowa Environmental Council; Brandt Thorington, Mississippi River Cities and Town Initiative; Lara Bryant, Natural Resources Defense Council; and Kristen Wallace, Upper Mississippi River Basin Association.

UMRR BOARD MEETINGS: The Board meets six times a year on the first Monday of even numbered months via ZOOM.

UMRR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: As part of each Board meeting, we hold an educational session that focuses on a specific topic of concern in the watershed. Our education sessions are aimed at educating league members on the issues within the UMRR watershed to learn what we can do on an individual, community, regional and national level to protect and improve water quality in the Mississippi River. These educational sessions **are free and open to the public** and recorded videos are shared and posted on our website. We encourage local Leagues to utilize these session recordings as part of their educational programming.

Educational sessions during 2021-22:

- Dubuque, IA, efforts to protect and improve water quality (August 2)
- PFAS (fire-suppression chemicals) contaminating water in Wisconsin (October 4)
- How Federal farm policy created the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone (December 6)
- En-Roads Climate Change Simulator (February 7)
- Ground water sustainability in Minnesota (April 7)

UMRR WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER: our [website www.lwvummr.org](http://www.lwvummr.org) has lots of information! Our Blog features 2-3 posts per month on current UMRR topics. One recent post <https://www.lwvumrr.org/blog/watershed-scale-work-to-improve-soil-and-water-quality> , discusses watershed-scale work to reach people and promote soil health and water quality. Our “Upcoming Events” page includes posts for our upcoming meetings <https://www.lwvumrr.org/annualmeeting2022.html> and maintains Board meeting information from past events. Here, those who are interested can see our Board agendas, meeting minutes, Treasurer reports, and Action Committee reports as well as see the topics that were included in the educational sessions.

LWV UMRR puts out an email newsletter that includes links to our Blog posts and other items of interest. You can sign up to receive the newsletter here <https://www.lwvumrr.org/contact-us.html>. The Mississippi River is an enduring and defining feature of North America.

We invite all who are interested in the restoration and revitalization of this valuable natural resource to join us in this important work!

Mary Ellen Miller, IA, UMMR Chair, 2021-22

May 1, 2022