

# RIVER CAMP 2009

Comments from the "Vision Tree"

September 17, 2009

California Island, Missouri River mile 177

On a beautiful night in September, Missouri River Relief hosted a group of our sponsors, partners and friends for a candlelight banquet on sandy California Island on the Missouri River. At each place setting, visitors were invited to write or draw their vision for the Missouri River. They later hung these from a driftwood sculpture we called the Vision Tree. This is a compilation of the thoughts they shared:

*"I wish the good work of Missouri River Relief will continue to help clean up the river and work with kids. I would also like to see the Big Muddy revert to a more natural state."*

*"To be clean for all to enjoy"*

*"A River/Wetland/Bottomland Forest habitat restoration for healthy plants & animals. Re-invigorate conservation opportunity area teams."*

*"That barges & freight boats will once again run on the Missouri River - No Dams!"*

*"Keep the Missouri River in as natural a state as possible."*

*"A big brown muddy river filled with brightly colored canoes & kayaks & people. But not too many."*

*"That it maintains its majestic natural beauty."*

*"My wish for the Missouri River is that it is unpolluted, teeming with mercury free fish, lots of fishing, canoeing, waterfront parks in every city, and that people become more aware to appreciate & support a healthy river."*

*"Ten thousand people at an event like this. Imagine the political clout!"*

*"Miraculous, Immaculate, Serene, Soulful, Outrageous, Unbelievable, Restful, Inviting"*

*"My vision is for River Relief to bring folks together to raise awareness about the river and improve issues such as water pollution due to agriculture runoff & pharmaceuticals, endangered species, fisheries, water use, drinking water, climate change, public land, flood control, conservation, etc. Amen, Love you River Relief!"*

*"My vision is to teach my children to contribute to the efforts you all organize to keep the Missouri River clean. I want my children to enjoy it as much as we do as they get older. I thank you guys for the work you do to make this happen!"*

*"The river has given us all she can its time for us to give back to her. I wish all would know the respect she deserves. The world will be a better place when we pay our respect to the river."*

*"Flow free and healthy for all to enjoy!"*

*"I hope to educate & encourage as many people as possible to explore & learn about this resource. My vision is that it will one day be seen by all as an integral resource for our children's education."*



*"A free Flowing interconnected waterway bringing together communities with their natural world."*

*"A river connected to its floodplain in many locations, creating pearls of habitat for wildlife, all organizations and agencies working in harmony to reach goals of restoration, an interested, engaged and educated public working in harmony to support the Missouri River's wildlife, recreation and health."*

*"I wish that anyone that has ever heard the sound of my voice would have the opportunity to have a "moment" on the Missouri River. . . A moment to have one's breath caught. . . by the beauty and magic of the river. . . A moment to be thankful for that beauty. . . A moment to be thankful to those incredible people who care for her. . ."*

*"I cherish opportunities like these—nights (& days) when I'm on the banks of the river meeting old friends & new, discussing the river in all its glory & its shame. I don't ever see a day when there's only one side to the story so I always hope for opportunities such as this when folks from all sides of the river can come together to celebrate the river in its raw glory."*

*"Personally: to give more of my time to Missouri River Relief Organizationally: to spread the word to those of alter-socio-economic levels without the opportunity to respect our deep & muddy resource."*

*"Clean, fun & enjoyable for everyone"*

*"My vision for the Missouri River is that it will be loved by more people."*

*"Love it back to life"*

*"To serve the multitudes with all its offerings until the end of time"*

*"Missouri—the one state of the union with the most "Big River" miles of any state. At this time, with a perfect storm in the economy & the historic steamboats in harbors unable to survive this economy, let Missouri create its Big River State Park. . . buy these abandoned historic Delta Queens, Julia Belle Swain, etc. and with the spirits of John Hartford, Bob Dyer, etc. create a cross-state Missouri & Mississippi River State Park, aboard those historic paddlewheels. . . visiting towns along the way with musicians, river brains & artists of all kinds, sharing in this most inspirational, of all energy flows in the middle of North America. We need a floating theatre to*

*take our music and stories out on the water, bring people to the river and on it – it can be part of that state park!"*

*"I wish for a clean eco-system, subject to natural flows, that supports a variety of historical habitats and species."*

*"Protecting a sustainable resource for all people"*

*"An unchannelized river, a national park in a linear mode ala Bruce Babbitt's vision"*

*"I'd love to see the river as wild as possible. Allowed to change, flood, move & live. What a beautiful wild corridor."*

*"Peaceful. Quiet. Listen to the silence."*

*"Sandbars. Lots of sandbars"*



"We need a Missouri Riverkeeper."

"To keep the river(s) clean, beautiful and in balance. To bring awareness of the natural gifts around us to the folks in our communities."

"A habitat system big enough and complex enough to sustain healthy populations and wildlife, fish & plants, knowing that people are part of that matrix"

"Each river town should showcase their cultural heritage, educate their young people and encourage and work with other communities to encompass the river and all its amazing features."

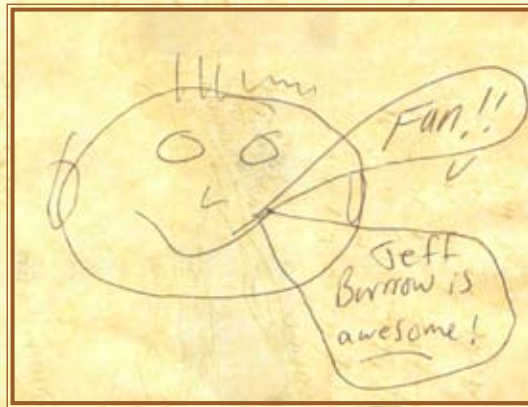
"The mud's great"

"Restoration of the spring rise; a reconnection of the river to its floodplain"

"First off - Wow, great job! I am a fish biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation & appreciate your efforts! My family loves to help with clean-ups on the Big Muddy. I would like to see the Missouri River re-meander and become braided again."

"That we realize its full recreational and restoration potential"

"To be clean and fun for the public, and our grand kids"



"A naturally functioning, self-sustaining, diverse river with engaged people and healthy communities"

"A beautiful natural world; clean, loved & a lovingly utilized river"

"Growing up near the confluence of the mighty Mississippi & the Big Muddy, I was always taught to be scared of these great rivers. The first time I got in a canoe on this great river, it was awesome. I hope everyone could experience such an awesome transformation, and lose their fear!"

"Natural awareness of the river and its value as a recreational resource."

"A place for herons to stalk... Eagles to soar & dive... Catfish to stir the mud... Leaves to fall & drift... And kids to dip their toes in the water."





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Vision Tree Sculpture  
*Sculpture by Joe Kellenberger*  
*Photo by Dory Colbert*