



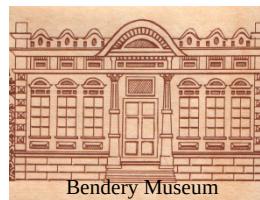
SISTER RIVERS

Connecting Watersheds, Rivers, and People

RED RIVER OF THE NORTH · DNIESTER RIVER

2008 - 2010

Partners



Funded by

Museums & Communities Collaboration Abroad (MCCA), a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State in partnership with the American Association of Museums.

Beginnings



Bob Backman, Executive Director of River Keepers and Chuck Fritz, Executive Director of the International Water Institute present “The Role of Nonprofits in Natural Resource Management in the Red River of the North” at the Dneister River International Conference in Chisinau, Moldova in October of 2008.



Ilya Trombitsky, Executive Director of Eco-Tiras speaking at the same conference.

Rivers



Flowing into the Black Sea, the **Dniester River** was used by many ancient civilizations. Eastern European nonprofits and governments are working to resolve issues related to flooding, dams, and pollution.



Flowing through two countries, the **Red River of the North** is the longest north flowing river in North America. It has wide swings in flow regimen. It is used for municipal water supply, fishing, and historically for transportation.

Sister Rivers



A world map provides the opportunity for project participants to indicate the location of the two Sister Rivers, the Dniester River in Moldova and the Red River of the North in the United States.



A Sister Rivers Proclamation was signed by the nonprofits River Keepers and Eco-Tiras at a Mixing of the Water Ceremony in May of 2011 in Moorhead, Minnesota, USA.

Museum Entrances



The Moldovans say good bye to their host families at the Rodger Ehnstrom Nature Center before boarding the bus for the airport.



The entrance to the Bendery Museum provides a distinctive backdrop to take pictures of the group before leaving to tour sites in Transnistria, a breakaway province of Moldova.

Activities



American visitors are honored to receive original artwork created at the 2010 Dniester River Summer School. A student's newfound understanding of the Dniester inspired the work. The artwork was later made into project note cards.



A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service led "Web of Life" activity assists Wahpeton area water festival students learn the connection between water and all life.



As part of the Sister Rivers Luncheon, attendees participated in the International Water Institute's River of Dreams program.



A tree was planted at the Chahinkapa Zoo in celebration of Arbor Day.

Tunnels

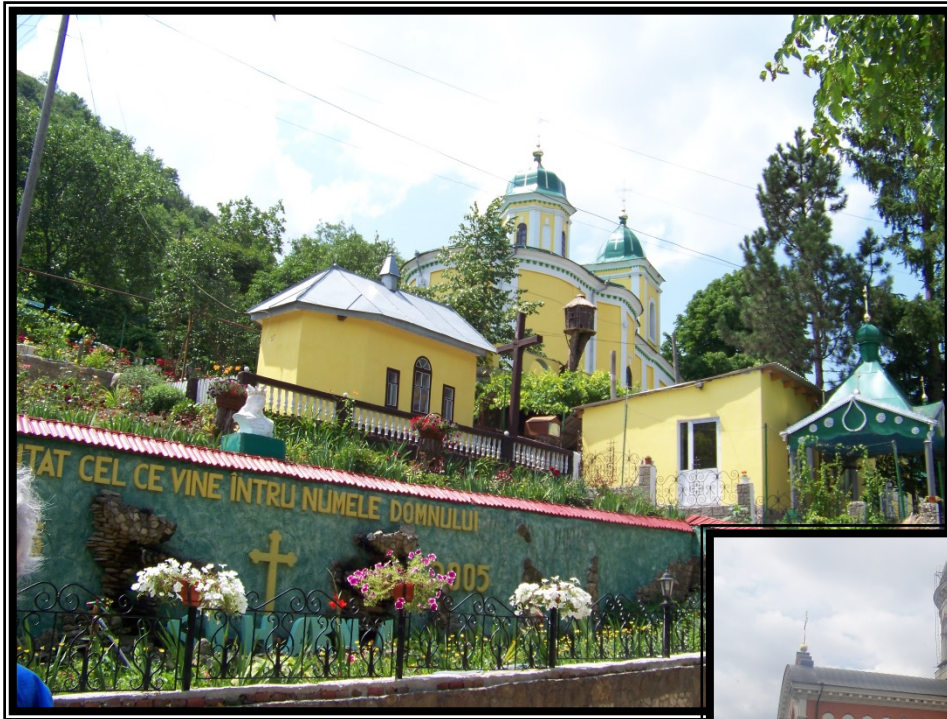


Monasteries cultivate grapes for wine production. The arbor provides a beautiful backdrop and welcome shade on a hot day for tour participants.

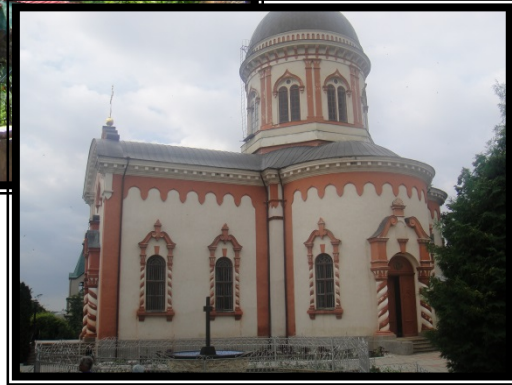


The Mall of America's Underwater World provides close up views of a wide variety of aquatic animals.

Churches



Flowers, bright colors, and unique architectural features are all part of the experience when visiting historic monasteries such as the Saharna.



With less local history, many of our American religious buildings are duplicates of other more historic buildings. The Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County's Stave Church is a replica of one in Norway.

Public Celebrations



The Red River and the Dniester River were officially declared Sister Rivers at a Mixing of the Waters Ceremony. Water from the two watersheds was mixed and shared with attendees.



After the Dniester River Festival, project participants participate in a private luncheon with local foods and wine. An accordionist provides traditional music for dancing.

Food



An American project supporter talks about his ancestral home in the Ukraine with a Moldovan partner over traditional American food.



Moldovan meals provide numerous opportunities to discuss watershed and cultural issues. Pork and corn are common foods in both countries.

Buffets



Participants at a Moldovan buffet stand and enjoy dozens of local foods with wine and cognac. Standing instead of sitting encourages interaction with many people.



Participants enjoy a “Taste of the Prairie” where the “plains bison met the lake walleye” at the Sister Rivers Welcome Ceremony in Wahpeton.

Dams



Large hydropower dams on the Dniester River have altered the ecological integrity of the river. It is a popular location for student tours and recreation.



Luther Aadland, a River Ecologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, discusses retrofitting dams to reduce ecological impact with Moldovan visitors.

Dancing



An important part of the Native American heritage is dancing, music and colorful costumes, demonstrated by Circle of Nations students at the Sister Rivers Welcome Ceremony.



Dancing, music, and colorful costumes are an important part of the culture in Moldova. Many local community members perform in community celebrations.

Presentations



American partners shared information about the United States and water management at the Dniester River Summer School.



Ilya Trombitsky shares information about Moldova and their water issues with attendees at the Sister Rivers Luncheon.

Displays

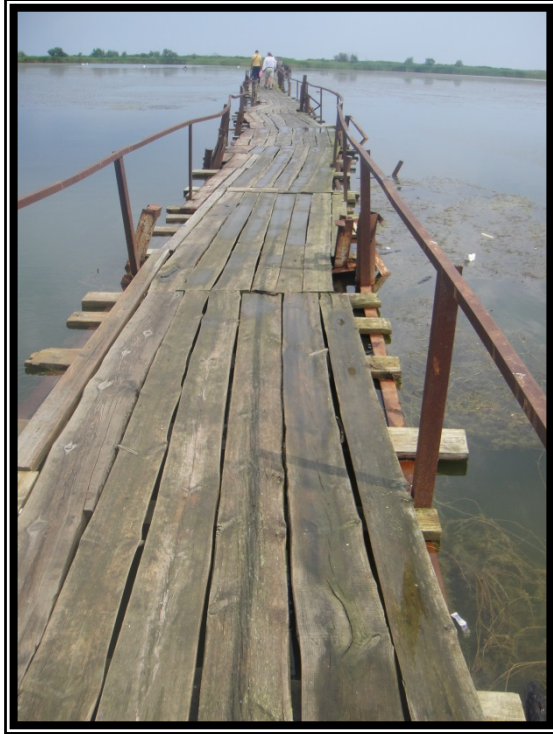


The Bendery Museum Executive Director proudly shows their new Sister Rivers display to American project participants.



A Sister Rivers Display was up at the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County for over a year.

Docks



A long walk over an estuary provides access to a beach on the Black Sea which is the mouth of the Dniester River.



Rain does not dampen the enthusiasm for catfishing near the headwaters of Red River.

Historic Waters



American literature is made real for one Moldovan, who owns the entire Mark Twain collection, when he walks across the very cold headwaters of the Mississippi River.



Wading in the Black Sea, the mouth of the Dniester, is a memorable experience for Americans.

Elected Officials



Former North Dakota Governor George Sinner provides words of encouragement to former Moldovan Council Member Ilya Trombitsky.



The Chobruchi Mayor receives gift of Native American music at a private reception following the Dniester River Festival.

Fun



Americans enjoy participating in the Dniester River Summer School Closing Ceremony water games.



An American historical carousel at the Chahinkapa Zoo provides a unique fun experience for Moldovans.

Gifts



The presentation of gifts are frequently accompanied by toasts. Gifts and toasts are valued and serve as reminders of the project. Gifts to Moldovans included books, T-shirts, bison statuettes, Native American jewelry and music CDs.



Presentation of gifts to hosts was an enjoyable part of the visits and provided an opportunity to learn more about each others' countries. Moldovan gifts included hand crafted tapestries, books, and flags.

Group Photographs



Group photos captured smiles, budding friendships and the sorrow of departure. The end of the Dniester River Festival is celebrated with a group photo and fireworks.



A rained-out barbeque, moved inside, offers an opportunity for impromptu guitar playing, numerous small group discussions, and heartfelt toasts.

Historic Interpreters



Steve Stark's unique talents as an artist and historical interpreter provides an engaging description of the European settlement of the Red River Valley.



A Moldovan project partner's role as Neptune at the Dniester River Festival provides a historical context to the importance of water.

Markets



Chisinau's open air market serves as a source of produce and goods as well as a gathering place.



The Mall of America provides a strong contrast to traditional open air markets of Moldova.

War

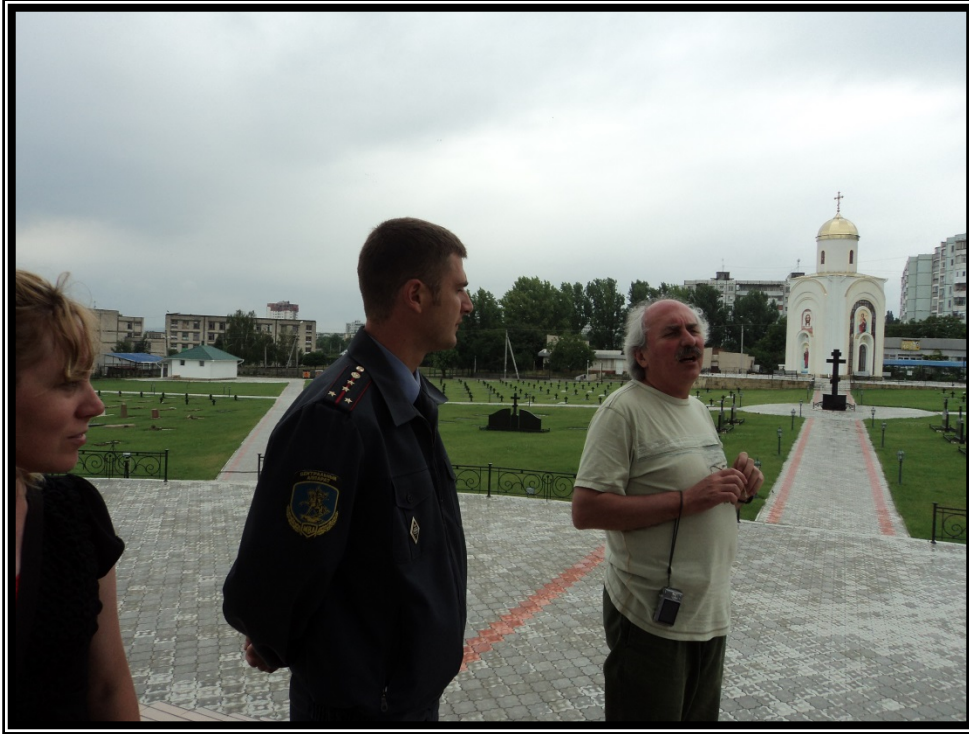


A memorial to those who died in the recent civil war provides a reminder of the difficulty in resolving differences. Numerous wars have been fought in the Dniester River Watershed.



World War II posters are viewed at the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County. This war impacted both Americans and Moldovans.

Military Museums



Numerous wars are remembered at this recently restored museum and cemetery for several nationalities and military branches.



The renovated Fort Abercrombie represents the settler's expansion into the Red River Valley.

More Museums



The cultural history of Moldova includes wine so it's not surprising that it has one of the world's largest museums dedicated to spirits.



Artifacts highlighting local history are shown to Moldovans at the Richland County Historical Museum.

Monuments



A map of the river and historical information marks the headwaters of the Red River of the North in Breckenridge, Minnesota where the Bois de Sioux and the Otter Tail Rivers meet.



Residents of a small village in Transnistria, a breakaway province of Moldova, show American partners a monument of the Russian leader, Stalin.

Fountains



Parks are a center of social, recreational, and cultural activities in Moldova. This Chisinau park has an elegant water fountain.



Wahpeton shows off the beauty of it's riverfront park, Chahinkapa Park, with an on-the-water fountain.

Early Explorers



In Moldova, as in America, hollowed out logs were used for early transportation and exploration.



Early exploration of American rivers is studied by the Moldovan contingent.

Otters



A young Moldovan student is thrilled to receive a book about otters from the Chahinkapa Zoo staff. Otters are a popular animal in both Moldova and America.



Greetings from Moldovan otters to American otters were offered via a letter to the Mayor of Frazee at the opening of the Otter Tail River Water Trail. The Mayor and a young Sister Rivers event participant admire his otter.

Storytellers



A Breckenridge storyteller, along with a Moldovan translator, offer a fascinating perspective of the Red River Valley settlement.



Moldova has had many wars which are brought to life for American participants by a local storyteller.

Music



Music is an important part of American and Moldovan culture. An impromptu guitar performance is enjoyed by all at a reception for the Moldovans.



Students at Dniester River Summer School offer their musical talents for the enjoyment of fellow students and guests. Students from different political backgrounds live and perform together while learning about the Dniester River.

Young People



A major part of the project was to learn about water and expose students to other cultures. These young people participated in the Mixing of the Waters Ceremony where the Red and Dniester Rivers were declared Sister Rivers.



Students from various backgrounds participate in the Dniester River Summer School. This is one of several very old monasteries in the Dniester watershed.

Toasts



Many meals and events include toasts as a way of complimenting hosts and recognizing new partnerships. The Sister Rivers relationship officially starts with a document signing at this meeting.



Moldovans are generous in their toasts to their new American friends. They used these occasions to describe what they learned about America and water management.

Tours



Downtown Fargo's Hotel Donaldson provides an opportunity to discuss methods of urban water conservation via its green roof.



Students at the Dniester River Summer School are given many opportunities to learn about historical sites, often located adjacent to rivers

Water Projects



A large dam project, built by the Russians, was doomed to failure because designers did not understand the science of irrigation and issues related to water quality.



A successful wetland restoration in the Red River Valley is viewed as an example of a water project with many benefits.

Water Quality Monitoring



Water quality monitoring tools are provided and demonstrated as a part of the Sister Rivers project.



High School River Watch students play a major role in determining the health of the basin's water by monitoring streams near their school. They demonstrate their procedures to Moldovans.

Wine



In eastern Europe, grapes are often produced or purchased locally to make wine at home. Moldova is known worldwide for its excellent wine.



The Maple River Winery and Distillery, located in the Red River Basin, provided a variety of wines and spirits for Sister River events. Their wines are made from a variety of plants, including dandelion.

Zoos



Zoo Directors exchange professional insights on the management of their zoos. They also make a commitment to continue dialogue.



A rainy, cold, windy day does not hamper the enthusiasm of the Moldovans to get a behind the scenes tour of the Chahinkapa Zoo, nationally accredited by the American Zoo Association.

Snakes



Kathy Diekman, Executive Director at the Chahinkapa Zoo shows off one of their snakes.



Volodea holds a snake at the Chisinau Zoo.

Transportation



Because of the Wahpeton Park District's bus, long days are made more comfortable while touring the Red River watershed.



Bumpy roads, hot weather, no air conditioning, and tense border crossings make some travel uncomfortable.