CURE’s mission is to protect and restore resilient rural landscapes by harnessing the power of citizens who care about them.

We do this because we believe that robust human communities can only be sustained by healthy ecosystems, and robust natural environments can only be regained through vigorous stewardship.
MILESTONES AND GOING FOR BOLD

Passing CURE’s twenty-fifth year presents an obvious opportunity to tout our accomplishments, reflect on past challenges, and plan ahead to a hopeful future. That’s an easy assignment. CURE has a rich and colorful history. Over the years we’ve done many good things together as a grassroots member-based organization, and in the process, we have built the CURE community. On occasion, we’ve stumbled and recovered. From time to time, we’ve done battle with Goliath, and sometimes we’ve won. We’re always charting the course ahead while remaining grounded in place and practice. We honor our roots. We know our history. And we strive to demonstrate democracy as a model of organizational governance.

With another year behind us, we’re paying our bills and employing a competent staff of organizers and nonprofit professionals. We’re reaching more people and growing support for the work. And every so often we pause to assess what impact we’re having in the communities we serve.

Last year and in the months leading up to this report we had an awakening of sorts.

We heard from our members and our organizational partners and funders their growing concern that the core progressive values underpinning our collective work were under siege and our hard-fought policy wins were at risk of being reversed.

In response to so many new external threats against what CURE members value, we’ve committed to stepping up as a bolder champion of progressive public policy, expanding our work well beyond our historic environmental concerns. And, as a grassroots organization firmly anchored in rural Minnesota, rural America—CURE has taken on a greater role as connector and convener to address difficult public issues and challenge those forces that undermine our work. This report reflects those efforts.

We’re up to the challenge. Stay with us. Join us. There’s much to do.

- Duane Ninneman, Executive Director

YOUR VOICE. YOUR SKILLS. YOUR TIME.

Dear Friends,

I volunteer my time to help lead CURE because I believe the world is run by the people who show up. When I attend CURE events and engage in activities, I am doing my small part to help move the policymakers towards a path of sustainability and a higher quality of life for us all. I encourage you to do the same. Your voice, your skills, and your time are needed.

CURE has grown over the past twenty five years thanks to the hard work of many volunteers and dedicated staff. We are excited to enter a new chapter with the addition of the Rural Democracy Project. This project allows us to bring our influence to bear directly on the levers of change. We know what we need to do. We need to move our policymakers to side with the majority of the people in the communities they serve, and not defer to powerful corporate interests.

CURE continues to advocate for Energy Democracy and is also leading the creation of a Water Ethic Charter for Minnesota. We hear our Native American friends say, "Water is life," and it is so true; everybody needs clean water, we strive to bring all of our communities together to that end.

Thank you for being part of CURE. I wish you the best as we face the great challenges and opportunities of this time and place, together.

- Pete Kennedy, Board Chair
ENGAGEMENT & PROGRAMS

THE PLACES WE GO: ACTING ON OUR VALUES

by Peg Furshong, Operations & Program Director

As we look back on 2017, for CURE members and many others, it was a referendum on a call to action. No longer could people be comfortable sitting back and watching what was unfolding in front of them. They wanted to be sure that lawmakers and others would know what was on their mind and in their hearts. CURE led on facilitating and organizing our constituents for action. We brought buses originating from Marshall, Moorhead, and Morris and picked up constituents on our way to the Capitol. We organized in St. Paul for committee hearings, the Women's March, Water Action Day, the March on Science, and monthly for “Pints & Policy” at a West Central Minnesota brewery. We were in Morris for the Water Summit and in Brooklyn Center for Our Minnesota Future.

Beyond advocacy and being a voice for our rural neighbors, CURE connected people of all ages with the tallgrass prairie. We co-hosted three different events that provided people with outdoor experiential learning experiences that focused on the prairie—a BioBlitz at Glacial Lakes State Park, removing invasive plants at the Lac qui Parle Mission and graduating a new class of Minnesota Master Naturalists Volunteers in the Prairies & Potholes Biome of southwestern Minnesota. We wrapped up our year with our annual support of the Dakota 38 + 2 Wokiksuye Memorial Ride. In 2018, look for more organizing and civic engagement with our Rural Democracy Project.

MEET ANNE BORGENDALE

Anne Borgendale joined CURE in October 2017 to lead work on Communications projects. Joining the CURE team has brought her full circle. In the summer of 1999, CURE sponsored the Minnesota River Expedition, a high school class paddling the entire length of the Minnesota River. It was an experience that helped launch Anne on a career path that integrates, science, communications, agriculture, environment, food, and advocacy—all of which are vital in CURE’s work in 2017 and beyond.

Working with CURE has been exciting, and sometimes challenging, as she tells CURE’s community about the work CURE does. Historically, CURE was known as an organization that advocated for water quality and connecting people with the outdoors. They still do this important work, but so much more including—renewable energy policy and access, grassroots organizing to build rural citizens’ civic capacity and leadership through the new Rural Democracy Project, and a re-energized Water Ethic Project. Anne has the privilege to work on all of these in her communications role.

She’s also excited to be back in the Upper Minnesota River Valley after 12 years away. Anne grew up here on a dairy farm Lac qui Parle County and received a degree in chemistry from the University Minnesota, Morris. Before CURE, she worked with the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, Buy Fresh Buy Local Upper Minnesota River Valley, and as a cheesemaker. In addition to her work with CURE, she’s in the process of starting Brynhild Creamery in the Montevideo area to make artisan cheeses from grass-fed cow’s milk. The CURE community is leading the way to keep rural Minnesota a vibrant, welcoming place to build a life and a family. Anne and her husband, Andrew, are happy to be part of this re-energized rural revolution.
**ENGAGING AT HOME**

In November 2017 CURE members young and old gathered in Maynard to discuss their shared values and vision for a just Minnesota.

In July 2017 CURE hosted the Minnesota Master Naturalists Prairies & Potholes Biome volunteer training program at Lac qui Parle State Park. In addition to classroom training attendees go out onto the tallgrass prairie to learn first hand.

In March 2017 Hanna Hankins visited the CURE office to talk about Community Organizing and her time in the Obama administration. Hankins is the daughter of CURE members Dorthy Anderson & Roy Hankins.

**BIOBLITZ 2017**

The 2017 BioBlitz at Glacial Lakes State Park was an amazing day where nearly 150 participants paired up with local experts to learn about and identify as many native species as possible in a specific area in a given amount of time. It was a day of bugs and plants and exciting shared experiences.
In April 2017, CURE members went to the Minnesota State Capitol as part of Water Action Day. This day of action provided an opportunity for constituents to actively engage with their legislators on water issues in Minnesota. Over 1,200 rally attendees heard messages in support of clean water from speakers ranging from Governor Mark Dayton to concerned citizens.

In 2018 CURE will embark on the multi-year creation of a water ethic charter for Minnesota which will incorporate the voices of many communities across the state.

INTRODUCING CHAS JEWETT

In January 2018, CURE is excited to welcome a new staff member. Chas Jewett will be joining CURE as the Rural Democracy Organizer & Tribal Liaison. She will also be working on a Water Ethic Charter for Minnesota and Get Out the Vote efforts.

Chas Jewett is a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. She and her sisters are the fifth generation to grow up on their family’s cattle ranch along the Moreau River in South Dakota, which was settled by her great-grandfather and his Dakota wife in the 1840s. Chas earned degrees in English and Government at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, MN and has taken graduate coursework at the University of South Dakota.

In 2002, Chas began organizing for the Sierra Club in Rapid City, SD, working on a grasslands wilderness campaign. Since then, she has organized in South Dakota for local and national organizations on the issues of reproductive justice, health care reform, peacemaking, police brutality, and racial justice. As part of her organizing, Chas was a field producer for a documentary about reproductive justice called Young Lakota. She has worked with several political action committees, including Democracy in Action and Dakotas for America, and served on the boards of the South Dakota Peace and Justice Center and the Center for Restorative Justice.

Chas spent six months along the Cannonball River protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline as part of the largest gathering of the Oceti Sakowin in 150 years. She manages the Facebook page "No KXL Through Treaty Land." In 2017, she was part of the Missouri River Nibi Walk from Montana to Missouri led by Ojibwe elder Sharon Day. When not organizing, she can always be found hiking around with her boxer, Numpa or listening to public radio. Another favorite activity is FaceTiming with her seven nephews and two nieces.
HELLO, ENERGY DEMOCRACY!
SIX HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017

by Erik Hatelstad, Energy Democracy Organizer

1) ENERGY PROGRAM -> ENERGY DEMOCRACY

Historically, the Energy Program focused on clean energy and climate change issues. Now, CURE is moving our work to include PEOPLE in those issues. CURE’s definition of Energy Democracy is having communities involved directly in their energy systems’ decision-making process. Democratic involvement is key in a clean energy economy.

CURE is a national leader in the Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) reform movement. This movement wants RECs to be faithful to their founding democratic values AND centered around decentralized clean energy generation.

2) WE OWN IT

CURE was part of the inaugural Cooperative Democracy Fellowship through We Own It. We Own It is a national network of organizations working on co-op reform. As part of this network, CURE shared our extensive knowledge about rural electric co-ops and learned from others in the field. CURE staff also received high-level training from leaders who were instrumental in the 2008 Obama campaign.

3) COALITION BUILDING FOR ENERGY DEMOCRACY

CURE’s democracy work was bolstered by strong coalitions with ally organizations.

MINNESOTA FARMERS UNION & NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

By organizing with Farmers Union members, CURE built support for Rural Electric Co-op reform and Energy Democracy within these groups.

OUR MINNESOTA FUTURE

CURE’s Energy Democracy work was strengthened by our involvement in the Our Minnesota Future coalition—22 people driven organizations working to change the face of politics in Minnesota.

POWERSHIFT NETWORK & NEW ECONOMY COALITION

CURE joined the Powershift Network which focuses on getting young people involved in the climate movement.

CURE is also now part of the New Economy Coalition which brings 200+ organizations from across the US together to move communities towards a new economy.

4) ERIK AT THE OBAMA FOUNDATION SUMMIT!

Last fall, I was also honored to be invited to the inaugural Obama Foundation Summit in Chicago. I had the opportunity to share CURE’s work with inspiring young leaders from around the world. It was an incredible experience to learn from some of the world’s brightest minds. CURE is known across Minnesota as an organization that “punches above its weight” and our work in Energy Democracy continues to prove that.

5) 2017 WIN AT THE MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL

During the 2017 legislative session CURE led the opposition to HF 234, which deregulated rural electric co-ops and allowed them to charge unchecked fees on their members with small wind and solar installations. CURE members showed up and barraged legislators and Governor Dayton with thousands of letters, calls, and emails in opposition to this bill. It was CURE’s decisive action that earned Governor Dayton’s first veto of the year.

6) WIND & SOLAR FIELD DAY

CURE members Jim & LeeAnn VanDerPol of Pastures A Plenty and Marv & Judi Boike of Boike Farm hosted a field day at their farms featuring their solar and wind installations in July 2017.

In February CURE members showed their support for renewable energy and opposition to HF 234 in St. Paul.

CURE members checking out the new solar array at Pastures A Plenty in July near Kerkhoven.
RURAL DEMOCRACY PROJECT
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES = HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS
by Anne Borgendale, Communications

The Rural Democracy Project grew out of rural citizens’ growing appetite for connection, conversation, and action on issues affecting the health and future of rural Minnesota communities. CURE members know that clean water and healthy ecosystems are a lot harder to achieve and maintain when our communities are struggling with the issues that keep people up at night.

THE BIG ISSUES:
- Aging Populations
- Climate Change
- Corporate Power
- Education
- Environmental Justice
- Gender Equity
- Healthcare
- Local Food Systems
- Racial Justice
- Renewable Energy
- Rural Economic Development
- Standing with Native American Communities
- Water

The Rural Democracy Project is just beginning. It’s one thing to talk about the issues and it’s another thing to work on addressing them systemically. In 2018 and beyond the CURE community and partners will work together to create tools, host events, cultivate conversations, and take concrete steps to make this visionary action plan a reality. People are at the heart of the Rural Democracy Project. Rural people working together can make real change that benefits all people and creates vibrant and welcoming communities.

GRASSROOTS PLAN OF ACTION:
- Grow rural civic capacity and provide civic learning opportunities
- Restore networks in rural communities that support people in making change
- Help rural communities identify and grow leaders
- Build rural peoples’ governing power on the local and state level
- Create independent and distributed political power for all people
- Take on the root causes of why our shared values are being ignored

The Rural Democracy Project works in collaboration with Our Minnesota Future (OMF). OMF is a statewide collective effort and includes many of the strongest people’s organizations in Minnesota. There is power in numbers; allies provide the strength to make the significant change we need for the health and prosperity of both the people and the land.

KICKING OFF THE RURAL DEMOCRACY PROJECT
A JUST & HEALTHY VISION FOR MINNESOTA

100 CURE and Land Stewardship Project (LSP) members gathered in Maynard to share a meal and their vision for a just and healthy Minnesota.

A diverse group of people from across MN gathered at the OMF People’s Assembly in Brooklyn Center.

OMF PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY & LEADERSHIP GATHERING

200+ CURE and LSP members traveled to the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center as part of a gathering of 1000 people. We came together—rural and urban—with strong and diverse organizations from across Minnesota. Together we wrestled with the challenges, asserted our vision, and started making a plan for a better Minnesota we ALL deserve.

Graphic recording of “A Just & Healthy Vision for MN” drawn by Audrey Arner & Malena Handeen in November 2017 in Maynard.
In 2017, 87% of CURE’s Support & Revenue came from foundation grant funding. We rely on funding from major foundations and organizations to fund our work in each Project area. For example, the Carolyn Foundation has helped to in part fund CURE’s Energy Democracy Project.

Member-donors contributed 9.4% of CURE’s revenue in 2017. CURE continues to rely on member-donors, especially sustaining donors. In 2017, 18.4% of gifts were from sustaining donors. These monthly gifts are the most efficient way to support CURE. They allow us to maintain momentum in our projects and advocacy work, plan for those critical issues that arise and need immediate action, and budget more effectively to make sure we can accomplish all of these things successfully. Sustaining memberships also means CURE spends less time, and less money, reminding members to renew and give.

Details about CURE’s financials may be obtained by contacting the CURE office.

Financial numbers only tell part of CURE’s story. CURE engages with people in communities across Minnesota and 2017 was no exception—it was a year of action.

A snapshot of how people were involved with CURE in 2017:

- Women’s March | 2 buses, 53 people from 23 towns
- Committee Hearing | 1 bus, 31 people and 4 people testified
- Water Action Day | 2 buses 48 people from 21 towns
- March on Science | 27 people 6 carpools, 11 towns
- Our Minnesota Future People’s Assembly | 93 people, two buses from 33 towns
- Maynard Meeting on our shared vision & values | 145 people from 34 towns
- Water Summit | 56 people/delegates

CURE also continued to have a long digital reach:

- Facebook Engagements | 8600+
- Twitter Engagements | 1200+
2017 DONORS

We thank the following member-donors who generously donated to CURE from January 1 - December 31, 2017

*Indicates Sustaining Members who give monthly to CURE

MEMBER-DONORS

$1,000 AND UP
Dorothy Anderson & Roy Hankins *
Maureen Laughlin & Duane Ninneman *

$500 TO $999
Clifton Brittain & Peggy Ladner
Peg Furshong & Steven Petrich *
Dixie Tilden *

$250 TO $499
Anonymous
Audrey Arner & Richard Handeen
Susan Barnes Elliot
David & Julie Christensen
Mike & Jean Henle
Peter Kennedy & Teresa Clarke *
Nick & Donna Krueger
Rachel Rigenhagen *
Paul & Lauri Tinklenberg
Lucy & Gene Tokheim
Heather Wayne & Peter Dolan
Mary Lou Werner

$100 TO $249
Anonymous
Julia Ashley
Donald Beck
Bev Blomgren *
Marvin & Judi Boike
Peggy & Glen Booth
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Laurie & David Driessen
Helen Duritsa
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Jay Fier
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Margaret Kuchenreuther *
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Paul & Linda Laughlin *
David & Karen Minge
James & Sydney Nesbitt Massee
T. Todd Masman
Timothy McMahon
David Moody & Mary Catherwood
Sue Morton
Robert Narem & Linda Simmons
Darby & Geri Nelson *
Laura Newby

CURE hosted a program on pelicans in June 2017 at Marsh Lake. Marsh Lake holds a beautiful American White Pelican Rookery.

Donna Nieckula
Doug Nopar & Joann Thomas
Dean & Jeri Nordaune
Sarina Otaibi & Tim Beckmann *
Howard & Verna Patrick
Beryl Perry
George & Deb Peterson
Keith & Vicki Poier
Jean Replinger
Gene & Judy Rose
Tim & Margo Roth
Lila & John Salls *
Kathy & Mike Sampson
John Schladweiler
Lola Schoenrich
Michelle Thelen
Jessica Tritsch
Jim & LeeAnn VanDerPol
Bruce Vien
Sam & Megan Villella
Mark Voorhees & Judy Kammer
Heather Wayne & Peter Dolan
Del & Shirley Wehrspann
Sue Wika & Tom Prieve
Mark Wilson
Brian & Janine Wojtalewicz *
Paul Wymar & Amy Bacigalupo
Frank & Tina Ziegler

$50 TO $99
Julia Ahlers & Richard Ness
Keith & Anita Anderson
Ross Anderson & Pam Sanders
Sigurd Anderson
Victoria Barnes
Dr. Thomas Birkey & Doris Thompson
George Boody
Anne Borgendale & Andrew Hodny
Diane Borgendale
Mary Borstad
Joshua Boschee
Mitch & Dave Collins
Leslie & Tim Craine
Jill Crafton
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Karin Elton
James & Karen Falk
Kerry Fine
Judy & Kevin Flicker
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Patrick Foley
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Lars Gustafson & Melissa Miller
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Phil & Mary Kelly
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Spencer & Peggy Kvam
Katie Laughlin *
Lance & Julie Lindeman
Barbara Little
Lynn Mader & Mark Rekow
Trista Mages
Craig & Deb Maki
Cheryl McChesney
Olivia McHathey
Barbara McGinnis
Dan & Teresa McGrath
Tom Meium
Jean & Tony Menden
Cory & Jim Mitchell
Kristi Mogen
Robin Moore
Brad Moseng
Matt Norton
Curt Olen & Sandra Irish-Oien
Russ & Sharon Olson
George & Debra Peterson
Joshua Preston
Mike & Mary Preuss
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Daniel & Linda Richter
Margaret Robertson
Vonnie Saqulan
Tim Schuck
Mark Schultz & Jeannette Raymond
Ray Schultz
Peter & Anne Schwagerl
Ingrid Schwingler
Bryan & Jessica Simon
Vern Simula
Paul & Candy Sobocinski
Karen Soukkala
Iyekiyapiwin St. Clair
Mary Sullivan & James Kanne
Laura Thielke
William C. Thompson Jr.
Lyndon Torstenson
Liz Veazey
Sharon Vick
Kelly & Bonnie Wasberg
Jordan Wente
Robert Williams
Robert Wyatt & Edwin Yerka

UP TO $49
Anonymous
Jane Abbot
Nagi Abdullahi
Anthony & Feliz Amato
Lizbeth Anderson
Dennis Barta
Donald Bot
Evie Bourne
Sheryl Breen
Maria Brun
Barbara Burke
Ronald Burley
Patricia Buschette
Tim Buysse
Nancy Carpenter
Patience Caso
Lauren Caldwell & Gabe Fursong
Steve & Leanne Carmeny
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Donna Chollett
Doris Cogelow
Joe Czapiewski
Sharon Day
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Judy Douglas
Crystal Dougherty
Beverly Dougherty
Darwin Dyce
Karim Elton
Cecily Erickson
Carmen & Sally Fernholz
Coleen Ford
Matt Fredericks *
Andrea Fox Jensen
Glenn Gelhar
Allen Gleckner
Heidi Goldberg
Jihadda Govan
Tom & Genie Kalahar
Susan Granger & Scott Kelly
Mary Grey
Malena Handeen & Mike Jacobs
John & Eileen Hanson
Kathy Hartley
James & Candy Hersch
Steve & Chris Hettig
Lex Horan
John Ihle
Kylie Jacobsen
Pamela Jensen
Brian Jones
Josh Journey-Heinz
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Tim Kennedy
Duaine & Kathie Kimpling
Duwayne & LaVonne Koenen
Don Knott
Mary Ann & Tom Kramer
Richard & Karen Kroger
Al & Linda Kruse
Patricia Kubly
Cindy & Bill Lavin
Denise Lindquist
Joanne Mader
Marc Mattice
Alice Menge
Julayne Miller
Kristi Mogen
Barbara Moore
Dori Moore
Darrel Mosel
Denise Montgomery
Julie Nagel
Judith & David Nass
Suzanne Nelsen
Josiah & Tyler Nelson
Jim Nichols
Emilie Nicklawsky
Lori & Dennis Niedfelt-Petrich
Karen Odden
Kelsey Olson & Kyle Jarius
Sharon & Russell Olson
Jay & Teresa Peterson
Joel Quam
Dale Quin
Jeff Richter & Janine Thull
Bob & Karla Tinklenberg
Franz Albert Richter
Kristen Ringham
Jessica Rohloff

CURE members at Paddle for the Climate in New London in April 2017.
Lauran Rothstein
Tom Ryan
Jacob Sanders
Eric Sannerud
Melissa Scholten
Melissa Schulte
Kurt Schulz
Shackelford Family
Jim & Mary Stone
Cat Stravino
Mary Taylor
David Taylor
Beverly Tellefsen
Diana-Christine Teodorescu
Karen Thompson
Scott & Penny Tower
Ronnette Kennedy Trulson
Michael Utzinger
Keith VanOverbeke
Lauren Wadsworth
Jo Walter
Nancy & Lee Warne
Carol Westberg
John White
James Wolf
Roslyn Yunik

MN Center for Environmental Advocacy
MN River Valley Audubon Chapter, Bloomington
Morning Sky Nursery, Morris nuQuIRE LLC
Patagonia
Pesticide Action Network of North America
Power Shift Network
RE-AMP Network
Soil Consultants, Inc, Twin Brooks, SD
Tokheim Stoneware, Dawson Townshool of Ortonville
YME High School Science Club, Granite Falls

FOUNDATIONS
Carolyn Foundation
McKnight Foundation
Minneapolis Foundation

2017 TRIBUTES
In honor of MniSota Wakpa
Iyekiyapiwin St. Clair

In memory of Nate Hart
Sheryl Breen
Nancy Carpenter
Leslie & Tim Craine
Jay Fier
Judith Flicker
Emily Graham
Vicki Graham
Agnes Hart
Marya Hart
Margaret Kuchenreuther
Leann Lindquist Dean
Cory & Jim Mitchell
Ray Schultz
Carol Westberg

In memory of Jerry Tilden
Dixie Tilden

In memory of Carol Vick
Ingrid Schwingler

For more information about our Tributes program or to obtain envelope, please contact Peg Furshong at the CURE office.

*** If you believe that we have made a mistake in your giving history for 2017, please contact us so that we can resolve the issue. It is important to us that we honor all of our member-donor support.

In the summer of 2017, CURE awarded the 2016 RiverKeeper Award to Darby and Geri Nelson.

CURE presents the RiverKeeper award to individual(s), organizations, or government agencies who have worked in an exemplary manner over the previous year to carry out CURE’s mission to “Focus Public Awareness on the Upper Minnesota River Watershed and to take action to restore and protect its water quality, biological integrity, and natural beauty for all generations.”

The RiverKeeper Tokheim Stoneware Plate has a bible verse on it from the book of Amos: “May justice flow like water and integrity as an unfailing stream.” Justice and integrity are rare traits, and when we see them lived out, we nominate those individuals for the RiverKeeper award.

The RiverKeeper award has been given out annually by CURE since 1994.
YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.
SUPPORT CURE’S WORK FOR AS LITTLE AS $5/MONTH!

Did you know that monthly giving is an incredibly efficient way to support CURE? Monthly gifts allow CURE to maintain momentum in our programs and advocacy work, plan for those critical issues that arise and need immediate action, and budget more effectively to make sure we can accomplish all of these things successfully. If you are not able to make a monthly commitment, please make a one-time gift.

With your support, know that CURE is working on your behalf to protect our water, promote clean energy, provide climate change solutions, revive civic engagement, and support vibrant rural communities. Visit www.cureriver.org or call 320-269-2984 to learn how to become a member!