

MALLARD ISLAND IN RAINY LAKE
WORST FLOOD IN 64 YEARS MARKS THE SUMMER OF 2014



PHOTO BY GEORGE GLAZIER, EARLY JULY

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**“Dedicated to the preservation of Ober’s north woods legacy
as a source of inspiration, renewal, and connection to the natural world.”**

Dear Friends of Mallard Island and the Oberholtzer Foundation,



Some years just take more than others. This is true for islands as well as for our lives in general. There are years that simply test our character.

I'm happy to report that the Mallard Island community of program participants, work week volunteers and carpenters, board of directors and staff met the test in 2014 due to flooding. It was not an easy summer, yet it is one that will share its lessons for years to come.

Oberholtzer suffered water levels even higher in 1950. Back in those days, ice and firewood were crucial to all of the Rainy Lake islands, and the 1950 flood took both, which badly interrupted tourism and Ober's life on Mallard.

This past summer, we did not suffer the loss of either ice or firewood, nor of two refrigerators or one antique piano, no loss of our pump nor electric stove! No books suffered water damages. The Big House and its beautiful new stone fireplace were untouched. Japanese House, Bird House and Front House stayed high and dry. All composting toilets were intact. So many blessings!

And yet when in early July we canceled 90% of the summer weeks, when we still were not hearing the word "crest," and as we then in August assessed the muddy mess created by our dear Rainy Lake, things did not look good. Where to cook for teams of volunteers arriving with tools in hand? But we put our heads together, and with the generosity and ingenuity of so many, we found a way to cook, we repaired four floors, and we re-created spaces for pump, tools, storage, island residence and a working kitchen. The Wannigan (kitchen boat) took it the hardest, and I can say truthfully that it took us most of five weeks to get that place back in order. See for yourself! ---->

In retrospect, as we have finally gathered (most of) our wits, we see that the year was a hugely generous one. More donors than ever, a fall event that "saved the day" financially, and carpenters who still want to return and who have committed to work in 2015.

See Jim's piece, pages 3 and 6 for more details about our year. At this time, I'm happy to announce that the island will be cared for by me and two new summer program directors this coming year: Mairi Doerr of Cannon Falls, MN and Prudence Johnson of Minneapolis. Both women have had caretaking experience, and they will add their experience and enthusiasm to the 2015 island weeks, now on the schedule and awaiting spring.

We are a tiny island learning humility every year. We are a small organization testing our knowledge of both what we stand for and how best to get things done. We have a modest operating budget and a mid-sized mailing list, but the generosity of our community surpasses all, and we could write the book about volunteer spirit! When somebody travels to a muddy island, puts in five days of hard cleaning and relentless carpentry and still sheds a tear at Bald Rock Dock upon leaving, well, that is really *something*. I'm honored to be part of such a story.



Beth Waterhouse ~ Executive Director -2-

[Email: beth@eober.org]

Accomplished by Everyone during 2014

- ❖ Completed the repairs on Cook's House including new cedar deck and staircase
- ❖ Refurbished and bat-proofed the Ice House for indoor tool and material storage
- ❖ Replaced the channel-side screen on the Library
- ❖ Procured cedar-slab siding for the Big House project (and it didn't float away!)
- ❖ Replaced a 30-foot tamarack buttress pole at the SE corner of Bird House
- ❖ Treated the Wannigan deck and finished treating the deck chairs
- ❖ Incorporated a dozen beautiful new life jackets into Mallard Island use
- ❖ Totally re-organized and updated the first-aid kit
- ❖ Refurbished or replaced most of the fire extinguishers on the island
- ❖ Repaired and added floatation to the Wannigan dock, saving thousands of dollars
- ❖ Survived the flood of 2014
- ❖ Replaced sub-floor and flooring in the Wannigan kitchen boat
- ❖ Upgraded wood stove in the kitchen boat, swapping in the one from lower Bird House
- ❖ Painted 3/4 of the shelving and cupboards in the kitchen boat
- ❖ Repaired floor boards and lower walls of the Artists' Room, now ready for guests
- ❖ Repaired walls and floor structure in Ice House; cleaned and re-organized room
- ❖ Good forestry work begun on Crow Island
- ❖ Much island clean-up work on both Crow and Gull Islands accomplished in the fall.

From the Desk of our President, Jim Fitzpatrick

Most of the residents of Rainy Lake would not call 2014 a particularly good year. In fact, many of them would just as soon forget the year of 2014. On Mallard Island, the former home of Ernest C. Oberholtzer, we endured a year of very high water. In fact there had been only one year when the water actually got higher than this past summer's 1111.3 feet. That was the flood of 1950 when the lake rose to five feet over flood stage.

The 2014 flood lasted 3 months, and it was June 16 when our Executive Director, Beth Waterhouse, had to turn the electricity off and abandon the island. Mary Swalla Holmes went up for a visit in early July and the water had just crested. I came up in late July and water levels had begun to drop ever so slowly. In total, we had five buildings in the water. The worst was our Cedarbark House that had 12 to 14 inches of water in it for 6 to 8 weeks. Artists' Room, Ice-house the Wannigan Kitchen Boat and the Pump House all had about 4-6 inches of water for some duration.

That's the bad news. Now for the good news: 29 volunteers came to the island over the months of late July through September and put in 850 hours of work rebuilding the floor in the Wannigan and Artists' Room and did some patch-work in Cedarbark, cleaning and rebuilding where necessary. The water did not reach a single book of the 12,000 + books on the island.

In rescuing the island, we had to put out over \$7,500 dollars in material and labor to affect some of the corrections along with \$3,000 in flood-related supporting costs for gas, food, supplies and the water system. To make matters worse, the Foundation lost \$14,772 in program fees for the summer weeks that were cancelled (Only one program week happened and they had to leave early because of the water.) The generosity of people prevailed. \$2,700 in refunded fees were refused by some participants and turned into donations. We raised \$12,128 for flood restoration costs,

continued on page six

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**Statement of Operating (Full) Revenue and Expenses – Unaudited
Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation - for Calendar Year 2014**

REVENUE (rounded to nearest dollar)		<u>% of total</u>
Funds from Previous Fund Campaigns (spent this year)	7,097	5%
Grants from Foundations	6,000	4%
Dividends and Interest from Investments	11,000	7%
Revenue from Oil & Gas Royalties	80,000	52%
Donations from Individuals this year	36,465	24%
Program Fees for Island Use (83% refunded this year)	11,440	7%
Sales of photos, prints, and books	<u>1,300</u>	1%
Total for Year.....	\$ 153,302	

EXPENSES (rounded to nearest dollar)	
Staff Salary and benefits	43,758
Organizational Excise Taxes	3,090
Island Utilities / Organizational Storage	2,283
Administration and Fundraising (Insurance here)	10,895
Board Meeting Expenses and Travel	8,814
Outreach and Education (incl. centennial video)	6,664
Archives and Collections Management	248
Direct Summer Program Expenses	6,770
Capital Improvements & Repairs (on Mallard Island)	2,611
Flood Related Emergency Repairs, Mallard Is (w/ equipmt)	7,511
Forestry Work (greatly multiplied by volunteer energy)	2,147
Book and Archival Projects within the Legacy	2,240
Contingency / misc. costs	1,645
Refunds of Summer Program Fees (due to flood)	9,528
Designation to Emergency Fund*	<u>5,000</u> *
Total for Year.....	\$ 113,204
Excess	40,098

* Note: Each year, the board designates \$5,000 to a self-insurance/emergency fund. The total by year-end 2014 in that fund was \$45,000. ~ We were able to use this year’s operating excess due to the highly unusual oil royalty revenues to increase our investments for the future. In December, a second anonymous gift doubled the size of the Frances E. Andrews Bldg Endowment

A Portfolio of Investments is held with Robert W. Baird & Co., Chicago, Illinois.

With the assistance of Ms. Rosa Ebling at R.W. Baird & Co, the Foundation manages a diverse portfolio of investments. This portfolio as of 12-31-14 was valued at \$474,176 (an increase of 22.7% this year), and this figure now includes \$193,926 as a board-designated endowment. We raise our operating budget afresh each year. Special thanks are extended to Rosa as well as to Rebecca Wallenfelz and Antoinette Hickey of Chapman & Cutler LLP, Chicago, for their assistance with legal and tax compliance over many years.

Recognition of Volunteers, 2014 (in order of appearance)

Work Week Volunteers

Don Maronde
Nance Kunkel
Sue Nielsen
Clay Gustafson
Emily Gustafson
Daniel Lay
David Donisch
Craig Fernholz
Mairi Doerr
Michael Reid
Phil Willkie
Barb Balcom
Tom Balcom
Peggy Anne Smith
Mary Alice Smith
Karla McGray
Bill Forsyth
Richard Paper
Jennie Ross

Flood Restoration Volunteers, Carpenters

Tim Heinle
Jim Fitzpatrick
Don Maronde
Nance Kunkel
Mary Alice Smith
Josh & Graham, Camp Kooch
Craig Fernholz
Jennie Ross
Danielle Sosin
Prudence Johnson
Michael Reid
Fiona Reid
Justin Ernst
Mark Granlund
Maddie Granlund
Stephanie Humphrey
Gary Olsen
Gaila Olsen
Mary Swalla Holmes

Elaine Thrune
Mary Harrellson
Jane Lund
Sue Carver
Brian Klawiter
Ken Klawiter
Wendy & Heidi Jerome
Jane Arden
Kathy Johnsen

Special Thanks to Nance Kunkel, Mallard Island Newsletter's Layout Editor this year

Mallard Island Caretakers during 2014

Mairi Doerr
Michael Reid
Jennie Ross
Jane Lund
Danielle Sosin
Jim Fitzpatrick
Elaine & Steve Thrune
*Fewer "designated" caretakers
this year due to the flood.*

Steadfast Island Openers and Closers and Flood Assistance

Pam and Darrell Rundell
& the Rundell family
Dave & Nancy Markwardt
Tim Heinle
Jennie Ross
Ross Peterson
Don Maronde

Incoming Caretaker Trained this Summer

Jennie Ross

Special Thanks to Forestry Volunteers on Crow Island

Nicholas Dolan
Tim Youngquist
Mandy Youngquist
Andrew Wunschel

Special Assistance with the October 25th Flood Restoration Fundraiser in Minneapolis

Kathryn Kysar
Daniel Laurence Anderson
Matt Stenerson
Emily Pipkorn
Wenonah Wilms
Karla McGray
Laura Moyer
Don Maronde
Larry Weaver

Readers & Musicians:

Lynn Cox
Glen Helgeson
Prudence Johnson
Joe Paddock
Beth Ray
Gary Schulte
Thomas R. Smith
Sarah Stonich
Gwen Westerman

**Gratitude goes to Roy
Misonznick and Omega
Point Multi-media (Ely,
MN) for the flood restora-
tion video. Our thanks,
also to all the photogra-
phers who so carefully
documented the 2014
flood on Mallard Island
and Rainy Lake.**

Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation Board of Directors:

- **Jim Davis** Pensacola, Florida
- **Jim Fitzpatrick** Hastings, Minnesota
- **Tim Heinle** Scottsdale, AZ and Ranier, MN
- **Bob Hilke** International Falls, Minnesota
- **Mary Swalla Holmes** Madrid, Iowa
- **Pebaamibines**
(Dennis) Jones Minneapolis, Minnesota
- **Charles A. Kelly** St. Paul and Ranier, MN
- **Robin Monahan** Shoreview, Minnesota
- **Michael Reid** St. Paul, Minnesota
- **Jean Sanford Replinger** Marshall, Minnesota
- **John Roth** Minneapolis, Minnesota
- **Margaret Anne**
(Peggy) Smith Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Harry Sweatt** Wayzata and Ranier, MN
- **Diane Tessari** Excelsior, Minnesota
- **Elaine Thrune** Sartell, Minnesota

From the Desk of the President (continued from page three)

and this was above and beyond reaching our budget goal for individual donors for 2014. FEMA has been open to our episode, and we will realize some reimbursement for damages that have yet to be addressed. We have also received gifts of \$1,700 toward 2015 expenses related to the 2014 flood.

We learned a great deal through this flood. The island is just a big slab of granite. Water comes and goes and the island is still there. Only the man-made portions of the island will suffer because of the additional water. These man-made items can be replaced. The generosity of the many individuals that participated in the flood restoration and even in the fall gathering that dealt with the flood will help us survive and indeed even prosper with our new found knowledge. From a bridge to a flower garden to a kitchen floor to a storage building—all of these and several of the island's rock walls can be rebuilt, replanted or re-rocked. But it is the people involved in the refurbishing that provide life to the island. Their generosity of time and talents can remake each and every item that suffered from the flood. As each item is replanted, rebuilt, repaired or replaced, another person has contributed to the ultimate soul of Ober's island home.

The island cannot rest with only 29 volunteers, or with the 75 who did volunteer work in all of 2014 or the hundreds of people on our volunteer list. Indeed the island will continue to need refreshed people with new and different and amazing talents to continue its life and its growth. The year 2015 will bring new and exciting challenges as will each of the following years. Let us all learn from the flood and embrace Ober's Islands with new excitement and goals for the coming year. We learned a lot in 2014. Let us go forward and make the coming year another great year.

-- *Jim Fitzpatrick, board president* -6-

**Thank You,
All of Our
2014
Donors:**

Arnold Alanen
& Lynn Bjorkman
Michael L. Anderson
Rolf T. Anderson
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Mary Axelson
Kitty Baker
Sheldon, Brenda Baker
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Gary L. Johnson
Prudence Johnson
William E. Johnson
Campbell & John Jolly
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Larry Kallemeyn
Leo Karsnia
Tom & Edna Karsnia
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Marlyss Keller
Martin, Esther Kellogg
Ellie Kingsbury
Sandra Knoche
Kathryn Kysar
Nance Kunkel
Paul & Kay Larsen
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Eddie Lehman
Lenfestey Family Fndn
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Longview Foundation
(Winston family)
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Kate Weyrens
Lois & Robert
Whitcomb
Janice K. Whitney
Stephen Wilbers
Philip Willkie
Douglas Wood
Kathy Wood
Dorothy Zerbe

Thank you!

~~~~~  
*Several special gifts  
were given this year in  
memory of Janet May  
Pearson, others in  
memory of Leo S.  
Anderson, Ruth R.  
Anderson, Stephanie  
Prem and Mary  
Hilke. Gifts were also  
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Sanford Replinger  
and Joe Paddock.*