

## **Executive Summary**

The Rivers Project Office, St. Louis District is proud to nominate Ms. Erin Hilligoss-Volkman for the 2014 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence. She has had an impressive interpretive and outreach career, highlighted by her many accomplishments in 2013, and is extremely deserving of the award. Ms. Hilligoss-Volkman is a motivational force for interpretive excellence. She regularly surpasses the standards and enhances a diverse array of creative and engaging experiences for our visitors and regional partners. Her interpretive talents inspire others to appreciate and find a true connection to our vital natural and cultural resources along the Mississippi River's banks and beyond. She has achieved successes above and beyond the standard and her infectious love of her job inspires others daily.

Her ability to mold original ideas with successful program opportunities showcases an educational art form rarely seen. In 2013, she accomplished an extraordinary array of programs, special events, partner connections, and many other interpretive projects. She coordinated more than 250 interpretive and outreach programs for more than 30,000 participants. Those numbers alone speak for themselves.

As a force for positive change, Ms. Hilligoss-Volkman's many successes are highlighted in the subsequent sections. A few examples where she used a creative and innovative approach to accomplishing numerous interpretive and outreach goals in 2013 include: engaged more than 1,600 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in bird education programs; developed hands-on education programs for more than 3,000 pre-school students; worked with various partners to enhance our local communities' outreach programs; and provided valuable recommendations and coordination during special events to improve the visitor experience.

Ms. Hilligoss-Volkman has had an outstanding career with the Corps since her start as a volunteer and student Park Ranger in 2009. This past year has highlighted several defining moments and provides us an opportunity to recognize her achievements.