



# Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission

4th Quarter Meeting

November 14, 2013

2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

State Office Building **Room 200**

## DRAFT AGENDA

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- 2:30 p.m. Welcome & Introductions** S. Johnson
- 2:35 p.m. Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 8/22/13** S. Johnson/All
- 2:40 p.m. Agency and Regional Updates**
- Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids Salminen
  - Grand Rapids to Brainerd Schaubach
  - Brainerd to Elk River Samp
  - Elk River to Hastings Pierson
  - Hastings to Iowa Border Mulry
  - Agriculture Hugunin
  - Explore MN Tourism A. Johnson/Offerman
  - Historical Society Kajer/Kelliher
  - Natural Resources Parker/Wheeler
  - Transportation Bradley/Zoff
  - National Park Service/MISS Labovitz
- 3:05 p.m. Commission Business**
- FY '14 Budget Status Anderson/Miller
- 3:10 p.m. National MRPC Updates**
- MRPC Board S. Johnson/Samp
  - 2013 Annual Meeting, Sept 18–20, St. Louis Attendees
  - Mississippi River Connections Collaborative Samp/Zoff
  - GRR Interpretive Center Checklist Mulry
  - MRPC Foundation/Endowment Mulry
- 3:35 p.m. Old Business – Updates**
- Corridor Management Plan Project Zoff/ Miller
  - Visual Resource Protection Plan Zoff/Miller
  - Marketing Grant - Hospitality Training Project Wheeler/Zoff/Miller
  - CapX 2020 Mulry
- 3:55 p.m. New Business**
- Wabasha County – Letter of Support for TAP Application Miller
- 4:00 p.m. Consideration of Proposed Resolution 2013-01** All
- Urging development of proper procedures and regulation regarding silica sand mining and processing facilities in the Great River Road National Scenic Byway Corridor of SE MN (Public testimony is welcome - public is asked to limit their comments to two minutes. To testify, please contact Chris Miller at [chris@togpartners.com](mailto:chris@togpartners.com) by 4 pm on November 11. If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, written testimony should be submitted to [chris@togpartners.com](mailto:chris@togpartners.com) by 4 pm on Nov. 11)
- 5:00 p.m. Wrap Up and Adjourn**



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
3rd Quarter Meeting – August 22, 2013  
State Office Building, St. Paul MN  
MINUTES - DRAFT**

**Commissioners Present**

Rep. Sheldon Johnson – MN-MRPC Chair  
Scott Bradley – Transportation Appointee  
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River  
Keith Parker – DNR Appointee  
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border  
Nancy Salminen – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids  
Mark Anderson – At Large Member  
Andrea Kajer – Historical Society Appointee

**Technical Advisors & Staff Present**

Carol Zoff – Transportation  
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism  
Cynthia Wheeler – DNR  
Diane Henry-Wangenstein - LCC  
Chris Miller - Staff

**Commissioners & Technical Advisors**

**Absent**

Paul Huginin – Agriculture Appointee  
David Kelliher - Historical Society  
Sen. Patricia Torres-Ray  
Sen. David Senjem  
Rep. Mike Benson  
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings  
John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd  
Paul Labovitz – National Park Service

**Speakers Present**

Bill Mavity, Pepin County, WI  
Dave Smith, WI-MRPC

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The meeting was called to order at 2:35 by Chairman Johnson, followed by introductions. A quorum was present. Nancy Salminen was welcomed as a new Commission member, representing the Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids Region.

**Approval of Meeting Agenda and Minutes from 5/23/13 Meeting**

Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Keith Parker to approve the 8/22/13 meeting agenda and 5/23/13 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**Great River Road Preservation Zoning Ordinance**

Bill Mavity of Pepin County, Wisconsin provided information on the Great River Road Preservation Zoning Ordinance recently passed, assisted by Dave Smith of the Wisconsin MRPC (WI-MRPC). Details were shared on current and proposed frac sand operations in Wisconsin, the Pepin County Great River Road Preservation Ordinance, and the process to develop and pass the ordinance. Proposed new frac sand mines would impact the Great River Road and safety for bicyclists and motorcyclists. In April of 2012 the WI-MRPC adopted a resolution including findings and requesting that local governments establish moratoria on frac sand mining and processes until adequate procedures, regulations and oversight are established. Discussions regarding an ordinance in Pepin County began after a new facility was proposed near Stockholm. Such a facility would involve rail spurs, a barge loading facility and 2,200 truck trips per day. Day and night time views would be impacted. Lake Pepin Partners in Preservation, a 501c4 organization, was formed and worked on drafting the ordinance and providing information to the public. A study was completed by University of Wisconsin professors to evaluate the potential economic impact of new frac sand operations.

The Great River Road Preservation Zoning Ordinance was adopted by Pepin County in June of 2013. It is an overlay zoning ordinance, which adds restrictions to existing zoning. It prohibits both frac sand operations and high impact commercial enterprises involving more than 50 trucks per day in the defined area. The WI-MRPC supported the ordinance and all local entities passed resolutions of support before the ordinance was taken to the county board. The adopted ordinance does involve economic regulation but would likely withstand challenges due to substantive due process.

Chairman Johnson thanked Mr. Mavity and Mr. Smith for the presentation, followed by Commission discussion. What happens on one side of the river affects the other side of the river and the Great River Road experience. A question was raised about the economic impact study and whether it included evaluation of potential job loss vs. gain. This information was included along with potential property value changes and tourism impact. A full copy of the report will be forwarded to the MN-MRPC for review. There was discussion on whether this ordinance passed in one county could have applicability in other locations and nationwide. Significant scenic easement purchases have been made in Wisconsin by the Wisconsin DOT. Discussion continues on how those easements impact situations.

The MN-MRPC has received requests for a resolution, related to similar ordinances being considered in Minnesota. Chairman Johnson reviewed the process that would need to take place including a recommendation by the Commission to proceed with a possible resolution, drafting of a resolution, posting the information for public notice and consideration by members, and then review and voting at a future meeting. Agency partners requested time to review proposed language. It was also suggested that the draft be provided to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Department of Health for review and comment. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Sheronne Mulry to proceed with drafting a resolution regarding overlay ordinances that would be in keeping with the MN-MRPC mission to promote, preserve and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River Valley and develop the highways and amenities of the Great River Road. Motion carried.

### **Agency and Regional Updates**

**Transportation:** Scott Bradley reported that guidance on implementation of MAP-21 should be available soon. In Minnesota, he has been supporting a centralized approach to scenic byways funding or a transitional period from centralized to regional decision making. The Great River Road Historic Property Restoration project has been selected to receive a 2013 Preservation Award from the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. Carol Zoff shared background from the nomination. MnDOT began the project in 2008 with funding provided by the legislature and championed by the MN-MRPC. The award will be received at the Minnesota Preservation Gala on September 27. Details will be sent out to Commission members requesting replies from those interested in attending. The Great River Road Interpretive Panel project is nearing completion, with the final eight panels scheduled for receipt by the end of September and installation to follow.

**Natural Resources:** Keith Parker and Cynthia Wheeler reported and referred to the attached report including information on DNR presence at the State Fair. The MN PCA has approved a permit for the Nisbit Silica Sand Mine in Winona County. A question was raised on whether local approval is needed. There is a citizens group opposing the permit but the PCA still has authority to issue the permit in the meantime. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is proceeding with plans for restoration of Hall's Island as a new park area. The project had been opposed by the DNR due to it being a recreational rather than environmental project, but the focus will now be on the best environmental approach moving forward. The DNR has been directed to resume the rulemaking process for Critical Area designation on the Mississippi River.

**Historical Society:** Andrea Kajer noted that David Kelliher will be receiving the Award for Visionary Leadership from the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Historical Society will have representatives at the event. The Historical Society has a booth at the State Fair along with a new mascot, the "History Hound." A partnership is underway with Meet Minneapolis to promote tours at Fort Snelling.

**Explore MN Tourism:** Cheryl Offerman reported that a researcher is currently doing a study on the summer tourism season and impact of poor weather early in the season. Figaro magazine in France will be running an article on the Mississippi River in Minnesota, providing tremendous exposure. The Mississippi River will also be the lead story topic on France's number one radio show this week. Minnesota is partnering with Mississippi River Country (all Mississippi River state tourism agencies) to participate in the Japan Association of Travel Agents Show. Upcoming events include the 2013 Pedal Minnesota Bicycle Summit September 30 – October 1 at Cragun's; and the Minnesota Tourism Conference, February 4 – 5 in Duluth.

**Hastings to Iowa Border:** Sheronne Mulry is working on a template for a regional Great River Road newsletter that will present updates on issues to inform stakeholders. MRT signs have been installed in the region and positive response has been received.

**Brainerd to Elk River:** Karl Samp reported that Brainerd-Baxter looks forward to the upcoming Corridor Management Planning process and collaboration between the local and statewide planning efforts. The City of Brainerd recently identified priorities including a Mississippi River walking trail. The Mississippi Northwoods Celebration will be held on September 26. Karl invited others to join him at the event and noted that John Schaubach has been an integral part of the process that led to the land acquisition and celebration. Take a Day OFF (Outdoor Family Fun) was held on August 10 in the St. Cloud Area. Carol Zoff attended and staffed a booth representing the Great River Road. The event offered 40 different activities along and on the river and drew 800 people.

**Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids:** Nancy Salminen recently visited Chambers of Commerce/CVB's in her region and plans to return to share information and build awareness about Great River Road initiatives. Bemidji recently completed a bicycle trail bridge across Highway 179 and had questions about the interpretive panels that will be installed soon. The Lady Slipper Scenic Byway shares a portion of the Great River Road and has recently installed new interpretive signs to be followed soon by new parking lots (funded by a Transportation Enhancement grant).

### **Commission Business**

**FY '14 Budget:** A draft budget allocation form for FY '14 has been review by the Chair, submitted to LCC, and reviewed by the Treasurer. A copy is in the meeting packet, showing a tentative total allocation of \$66,150. Line item budget amounts are based on past years' expenditures and current estimates of activities during the coming year including CMP grant implementation. Changes to line item amounts can be made later in the year as needed. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Sheronne Mulry to adopt the FY' 14 budget as presented. Motion carried.

**Structure of Commission Meetings/Action between Meetings:** Suggestions have been received regarding the possibility of changing the order of agenda items, meeting earlier in the day, meeting more frequently, and whether details on action items could be sent out ahead of time so the info can be evaluated and decisions made. Today's agenda reflects a change in order of topics. Discussion was in favor of continuing with this change. A request was made to receive finance reports and other materials earlier. All meeting materials are posted online in advance of the meeting and the link can be sent out to members. Subcommittees are helpful for discussions needed between full Commission meetings. If special meetings of the full MN-MRPC are necessary in certain circumstances, arrangements can be made.

### **National MRPC Updates**

**MRPC Board:** A Board conference call was held August 16. Great River Road 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary topics and the 2013 Annual Meeting were discussed. Next Board Meeting will be September 18.

**2013 Annual Meeting:** Out of state travel approval has been requested for Sheronne Mulry, Nancy Salminen, Karl Samp, Sheldon Johnson and Dave Senjem to attend the 2013 Annual Meeting in St. Louis. Carol Zoff will also be attending. The agenda includes special activities related to the Great River Road 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**2014 Semi-Annual Meeting:** Illinois is currently scheduled to host Semi-Annual Meeting in 2014, but Minnesota has been asked to consider taking over if Illinois is unable to host. There was discussion on planning needs including funds for staff time and member time/per diem/mileage. Location options were discussed including St. Cloud and St. Paul. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Sheronne Mulry, as amended by Mark Anderson, to recommend that the MN-MRPC host the 2014 MRPC Semi-Annual Meeting in April 2014 if Illinois is unable to do so and if resources/funding would be available from the National Office to cover the planning time necessary from the MN-MRPC. Motion carried.

**Great River Road 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Thank you to members who helped with the Great Race Booth at the State Fairgrounds in June, and to Explore MN Tourism for their staffing and assistance. September

has been designated National Drive the Great River Road Month, which will be observed annually. A Facebook sweepstakes will run during September – details available at [www.experiencemississippiriver.com](http://www.experiencemississippiriver.com). MN GRR polo shirts funded by the National MRPC 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary program have arrived and are available for pick up today.

### **Old Business – Updates**

**Corridor Management Plan Project:** Chris Miller reported that an agreement has been completed between DOT and LCC allowing for National Park Service funds to go to DOT for completion of MRT signage; the first two invoices have been received for the MRT signage project; the RFP for printing of the Mississippi River Companion (including GRR and MRT maps) is to be released on August 26; interim performance and finance reports are due to the National Park Service September 13; and the RFP for Corridor Management Plan services should be released this fall with an update to be provide at the next quarterly MN-MRPC meeting. Carol Zoff discussed the process to finalize the RFP for Corridor Management Planning services including contacts with agency partners to review/revise RFP tasks and a final review of the overall RFP by Commission members prior to release. Liz Walton reported on MRT sign plans and installation. Sign installation in the Hastings to Iowa Border region is nearly complete. The Hastings to Elk River region will be signed in 2014, meetings are underway with communities in the area, and the current timeline includes request for bids in January. There could be some gaps in the metro area that will need to be worked out over time. Work with communities in the Elk River to Lake Itasca region will begin in late 2013-early 2014, with signs scheduled for installation in 2015. The MRT has recently received state and national awards. Several communities along the route are working with the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota on “Bicycle Friendly” designation. Bemidji and Grand Rapids are now recognized nationally as bicycle friendly. Winona, Little Falls and Brainerd are applying for the designation. The 2013 Minnesota State Bicycling Map was recently completed. Copies were distributed, along with the Lake Pepin Biking Guide, an example of local/regional promotion. Additional copies of the State Bicycling Map are available through Explore Minnesota or MnDOT.

**Visual Resource Protection Plan:** Field work has been completed and a final report will be available this fall. Commission review/feedback may be requested on the draft.

**Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative:** Karl Samp represented the MRPC at the Annual Meeting in St. Cloud in June, and talked individually with the mayors who attended. Initiatives of interest to the MRPC include a partnership between National Geographic and MRT Inc., and “America Speaks” town hall meetings utilized by America’s Waterways. The main office of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative is moving to St. Louis from Washington D.C., and there is interest in partnerships with related organizations.

**CapX 2020:** Information from Sheronne Mulry was forwarded to MN-MRPC members via email recently as an update. There has been news coverage in Rochester. The Supreme Court has denied the final appeals for the Hampton-LaCrosse segment so line construction will begin.

### **New Business**

**MRT Signing – Phase I Ribbon Cutting Event:** The Ribbon Cutting Event is planned for Wednesday, October 2 at the National Eagle Center in Wabasha. Details to be determined but likely will include speakers, ribbon cutting and optional activities afterward such as a short bicycle ride or National Eagle Center program. Carol Zoff and Chris Miller are working with local partners on planning. Scott Bradley and Sheronne Mulry volunteered to help. Details will be sent to MN-MRPC members as the agenda is confirmed.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, November 14, 2013, 2:30 - 5:00 p.m.  
State Office Building Room 400 North

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.



## Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Agency Updates – August 2013

### Department of Natural Resources – Keith Parker, MPRC Commissioner, and Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor

#### **DNR at the State Fair - 2013**

If you have not checked out the DNR State Fair exhibit in the past, this year would be a good year to do it! Five new fish tanks have recently been installed at the popular indoor fish exhibit, thanks to bonding money approved by the Legislature. The outdoor fish pond, always a popular attraction as well, will have about 45 different species of fish on display this year. And if you are thinking of camping at a State Park, a camper cabin, as an alternative to tent camping, will be available for you to step inside and check it out. Additionally, if you want to get a birds-eye view of the Fair, and aren't afraid of heights, take a climb to the top of the DNR fire tower!

#### **Nisbit Silica Sand Mine**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) issued a permit this week for the Nisbit Silica Sand Mine in Winona County. It is estimated that the mining operation will last for two to three years which will be followed by restoration activities. Plans are to contain and infiltrate all discharges on-site including storm water and waters used for dust control. No washing will occur at this location.

The mining activities will cover a 19.1 acre area and will be performed in two phases: phase one will consist of mining 7.8 acres, phase two will mine 19.1 acres. It appears the phase one mining will occur on top of the acreage mined in phase two. No more than 5 acres will be open in any phase per year.

The activities propose to generate a total maximum of 280 truck trips per day (140 empty trucks in and 140 loaded trucks out). Plans have been developed to generate the total maximum truck trips of 280 per day may occur if market demand increases. At the current time however, the mining activities are planned to operate with 10 trucks generating a total of 120 loaded trucks per day, and 120 empty trucks per day. The trucks will have a one-hour round trip per truck from the Nisbit mine to the Winona load-out.

MPCA anticipates that they could process 5 to 10 permits for silica sand facilities over the next 3 months.

#### **DNR Central Region Headquarters**

As part of the initiative to make the DNR Central Region Headquarters, with its 80 acres, a recreation destination, plans are being developed to construct a picnic shelter on site. Forestry staff is working to identify a source of timber for shelter construction. The structure, once completed, will provide a location to host some of the existing events that are occurring on the site, including the annual "Take Aim at Summer", as well as provide an outdoor location to expand programs.

## DNR State Fair exhibit fact sheet

*(Released August 15, 2013)*

### DNR Building

- Historic DNR building at State Fair opened Sept. 1, 1934.
- It cost \$73,000 to build (almost 10 times the net profit of 1934 State Fair).
- Gate tickets in 1934 cost 25 cents.
- Funding came from federal and state emergency relief administration and State Fair funds.
- Civilian Conservation Corps erected the building in less than six months using machined logs.
- The main building is 186 feet by 66 feet and is 40 feet high.
- Approximately 800,000 people visit DNR building and surrounding park area each year.
- DNR building open daily during State Fair from 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

### New DNR Aquariums

- DNR has completely renovated its indoor fish exhibit, installing five large aquariums inside the main DNR building.
- Each tank shows fish in their native Minnesota habitat: trout of southeastern Minnesota; fish of the St. Croix River; and species of central, southern and northern Minnesota lakes.
- New aquariums are built lower to the ground, making it easier for more guests to see the turtles, fish and other species.
- Combined aquarium capacity of more than 5,000 gallons of water, the same amount of water the average family of four uses in a month.
- When full, tanks will weigh about 118,000 pounds or about the weight of a juvenile Right whale.

### DNR Fish Pond

- The DNR's live fish exhibit is one of State Fair's most popular attractions.
- Outdoor fish pond holds about 50,000 gallons of water.
- Outdoor pond is kidney-shaped and is about 100 feet by 50 feet.
- This year's exhibit is expected to display about 45 species of fish that call Minnesota home.
- One of the most popular fish with fairgoers is the paddlefish. Characterized by its long, paddle-like bill, the paddlefish is found in the lower Mississippi River below Minneapolis. Paddlefish grow to be quite large, with fish up to 200 pounds being recorded. The paddlefish is a state threatened species.
- The largest fish in the exhibit is the lake sturgeon, which exceeds 50 inches. A State Fair veteran, this specimen was the gift of an angler who harvested it legally from the St. Croix River several years ago. Lake sturgeon in Minnesota are found in the Mississippi, St. Croix and Rainy river systems.
- Fish pond talks by MinneAqua program specialists take place at quarter to the half daily, from 9:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### State Park Camper Cabin

- A state park camper cabin model is on display during the State Fair.
- Fairgoers can step inside the 24-foot by 12-foot cabin to check it out.
- Cabins are built to provide a "camping out" experience within the comfort of four walls.
- Cabin has two sets of bunks allowing accessibility for a wheelchair.

- Camper cabin includes a picnic table and a fire ring with grill.
- There are more than 80 camper cabins available to rent in state parks and recreational areas located throughout the state.
- Most cabins are available to rent year-round. Most have heat and electricity. Cabins rent for about \$50 per night.
- Camper cabin display model open during the State Fair from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. daily. Located in DNR Park, near southwest corner of DNR building.

#### **DNR Fire Tower**

- Was specifically built for State Fair to provide a wildfire prevention message to visitors.
- Fire tower opened in 1966 and was closed in 1978 because of safety concerns.
- Fire tower was repaired and reopened in 2006.
- Fire tower is 65 feet tall.
- There are 84 steps from bottom to top.
- There is no charge for people to climb to fire tower stairs to get birds-eye view of fair.
- Tower open daily during fair from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., weather permitting.

#### **DNR Wildlife...Forever Wing**

- Fairgoers can learn about Minnesota species and wildlife habitat.
- Special sound and lighting effects help create an experience of moving from day to night and through the four seasons, as visitors walk through the display.
- Display located in DNR Building and is open daily during State Fair from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

#### **Adopt-a-River Sculpture**

- This is the 20th consecutive year that an Adopt-a-River sculpture has been on display.
- Each year, a new sculpture is made from trash and scrap collected by an artist at Adopt-a-River cleanups on Minnesota waterways.
- Sculpture is a tribute to more than 90,000 volunteers who have removed more than 6 million pounds of trash from public waters at more than 3,200 clean-ups over the years.
- Sculpture is located in DNR Park, south of the DNR fish pond.

#### **Smokey Bear**

- Smokey Bear is celebrating 69 years of reminding children and their parents about the dangers of wildfires.
- Smokey Bear makes daily appearances at DNR Park at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- In conjunction with the Governor's 16th annual Fire Prevention Day on Friday, Aug. 23, the DNR Forestry Division will host a variety of special activities and Smokey Bear appears at DNR Park at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 p.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.



## DNR renovates popular fish exhibit at State Fair

*(Released August 21, 2013)*

One of the Minnesota State Fair's perennial favorites has gotten a major facelift that should make it even more popular with visitors.

The indoor fish exhibit at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) building has been completely redone. Five new fish tanks will illustrate the habitat and fish found in different Minnesota waters: a southeastern trout stream, the St. Croix River, and lakes typical of central, southern and northern Minnesota. Nine new terrariums featuring live snakes and amphibians in climate controlled cells also were added.

"By focusing on fish communities and their habitat, we hope people will gain a better understanding of how good angling depends on healthy ecosystems," said DNR East Metro Fisheries Manager TJ DeBates. The DNR's east metro fisheries crew stocks and manages the State Fair fish exhibit.

The tanks that previously offered fair visitors a close-up look at native fish were nearly 30 years old and in poor condition. The new tanks are lower to the ground, making them more accessible to viewers of all sizes and abilities. They also have new heaters and pumps to maintain healthier conditions for their aquatic inhabitants.

The \$460,000 renovation was funded by bonding money approved by the Minnesota Legislature and appropriated to the DNR to maintain safe and accessible facilities. An estimated 800,000 people visit the DNR's State Fair exhibit, which also features an outdoor fish pond that is slated for renovation. Nearly 2 million Minnesotans fish, making it one of the state's most popular pastimes.

Here are descriptions of the five new tanks:

**Northern Minnesota lake tank:** This tank shows a lake with low primary productivity. These lakes have low algal production, and consequently, often have clear waters, with high drinking-water quality. The bottom waters of such lakes typically have ample oxygen; thus, such lakes often support many fish species, like lake trout, which require cold, well-oxygenated waters. In Minnesota, these lakes are associated with granite and rocky bedrock bottoms.

**Central Minnesota lake tank:** This tank shows a lake with an intermediate level of productivity. These lakes are commonly clear water lakes and ponds with beds of submersed aquatic plants and medium levels of nutrients. These are very good bass and panfish lakes due to the presence of native aquatic plants. These lakes have a mix of sand, muck, and rock, both hard and soft bottom areas.

**Southwestern Minnesota lake tank:** This tank shows a lake with high biological productivity. Due to excessive nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus, these water bodies are able to support an abundance of aquatic plants. Usually the water body will be dominated either by aquatic plants or algae. When aquatic plants dominate, the water tends to be clear. When algae dominates, the water tends to be darker. The algae engages in photosynthesis which supplies oxygen to the fish and biota which inhabit these waters. Occasionally an excessive algae bloom will occur and can ultimately result in fish kills due to respiration by algae and bottom-living bacteria. These lakes have mostly soft bottoms consisting of muck and dead organic material, but can have sand and rock substrates depending on the geology of the area.

**Southeastern Minnesota trout stream tank:** This tank displays different levels (gradient) within a typical trout stream in southern Minnesota, many of which have riffles or areas that oxygenate the water. In southeastern Minnesota, the combination

of consistent spring water (typically 48-52 F) and bedrock consisting of limestone (calcium carbonate) make for productive cold water trout environments. Aquatic insect's exoskeletons are made of calcium carbonate and in southeastern Minnesota there is plenty to go around. The trout in this part of the state grow fast due to the high levels of aquatic insects available as a food resource. Also, gravel bottoms are vital for the natural reproduction of both brown and brook trout. Increased development and agricultural practices can promote sedimentation and loss of gravel beds for spawning.

**Warm-cool water large river tank:** This tank displays a variety of habitats from sand to muck to rock to large woody debris. The diversity of habitat translates to a diverse fish community. Large rivers in Minnesota have fish communities consisting of both game fish (walleye, catfish, sauger, muskellunge, smallmouth bass) and nongame species (sucker species, gizzard shad, and various minnows species, gar, paddlefish).

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## Carcass of leaping Asian carp found on Mississippi River near Winona

*(Released August 22, 2013)*

The carcass of a silver carp – the kind that leaps from the water when disturbed – was found recently on a dam abutment just north of Winona, the furthest upstream a silver carp has been discovered in the Mississippi River, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"Finding this carp on the sill of the dam suggests that it was attempting to jump over it; it wasn't just leaping due to a disturbance," said Nick Frohnauer, DNR invasive fish coordinator. "That confirms our assumption that silver carp may use their leaping ability to attempt to overcome barriers."

A worker with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service first noticed the fish on Aug. 9. The fish was atop a concrete abutment just below Lock and Dam 5, about 20 miles further upstream of the previously northernmost instance of a silver carp. The dam is about 110 miles south of Lock and Dam 1 in St. Paul.

A DNR fisheries biologist investigated, snagged the fish with a treble hook and reeled it up from the abutment, which was otherwise inaccessible. Because the carp had been dead for at least a week, weight, gender and reproductive ability could not be determined, but the carcass measured about 30 inches long.

Silver carp are one of four species of invasive Asian carp threatening the Mississippi River and other native ecosystems. They can grow to 60 pounds, and they impact the base of the food chain by consuming large amounts of plankton that native fish also rely on. Populations of bighead and silver carp are established in the Mississippi River and its tributaries downstream of Pool 16 in Iowa. Bighead carp have been found in Lake Pepin and the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers, and as far north as the mouth of the St. Croix in Prescott, Wis. But there is no indication bighead or silver carp are reproducing in the Minnesota waters of the Mississippi or St. Croix rivers.

The DNR continues to take a multi-pronged approach to managing Asian carp including:

- Monitoring for Asian carp by using targeted surveying and contracted commercial fishing.
- Partnering with the University of Minnesota's Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center, which is researching ways to prevent the spread and to manage populations of Asian carp.
- Contracting on the design and approval of an electric barrier using new "sweeping" electrical technology at Lock and Dam 1 in St. Paul.
- Improvements to the Coon Rapids Dam to make it a better fish barrier.

The agency maintains that the best approach to keeping Asian carp out of the upper Mississippi River watershed is to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock. The lock is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and it would require an act of Congress to close the lock.

Find more information on **Asian carp in Minnesota**.



Register

**Design & Planning**

**West River/James I Rice  
Parkways Trail  
Improvements**

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**West River/James I Rice Parkways Trail Improvements**

The MPRB will be improving trails along the west bank of the Mississippi River from Franklin Avenue to Plymouth Avenue. Planning will begin the fall of 2013, with construction in 2014.

The MPRB has been awarded \$1.8 million in federal funding for 3.5 miles of trail improvements along West River Parkway (WRP) and James I Rice Parkway (JIRP). Regional Park Operation and Maintenance funds will provide the required local match. These trails currently provide vital off-street recreational and commuting connections within the region and city and are part of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. The project area receives over 1.6 million visits annually.



The project calls for complete reconstruction of the existing trails for improved safety and durability. Some segments of bicycle and pedestrian trails have not been reconstructed since their original installation 27 years ago. New paving, lighting, signs, and rest stops with benches and drinking water are included in the project scope. The trails will be redesigned to meet current MPRB and federal standards. These improvements are not expected to change the current use of this area as a popular trail segment with multiple connections to existing on and off-street trail systems, including the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the newly-opened U of M Trail.

This project intersects two other planning studies currently underway at the MPRB: [The Central Riverfront Master Plan](#) and the Waterworks/Fuji-ya Visioning.

- [Project Phase](#)
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**Project Phase**

The project is in the Design phase. See [Community Engagement](#) for meeting dates and appointers of the members of the Community Advisory Committee.

**Current Activity**

Date	Phase	Activity	
8/27/13	Pre-Design	Press Release	<a href="#">Public input sought for trail improvements along west river bank</a>
7/30/13	Pre-Design	Press Release	<a href="#">Appointed Advisory Committee To Help Plan Trail Replacement along River</a>
7/10/13	Pre-Design	Board Action	<a href="#">MPRBR approves the charge and composition of an appointed Community Advisory Committee - Resolution 2013-239</a>



Sign up to receive [project updates](#) via email.

**Contact Information**

Contact Deborah Bartels, Project Manager, MPRB Planning at [dbartels@minneapolisparcs.org](mailto:dbartels@minneapolisparcs.org) or 612-230-6438

**Community Engagement**

- [Review summary of online survey](#)
- [Review the intercept survey of trail users from June of 2013](#)
- [Review the Community Engagement Plan](#)

An appointed [Community Advisory Committee](#) (CAC) will help to guide planning process.

Community Meeting Schedule: All meetings will be held Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:30 pm in the Board Room of the [MPRB Headquarters, 2117 West River Road, Minneapolis](#). There will be time for public comment at all meetings.

- **November 6, 2013 | Public Hearing | 6:30pm**
- **October 15, 2013 - Meeting #3**
  - **Goal:** Discuss and modify preferred plan and make recommendations to the MPRB Commissioners.
  - [Agenda](#)
  - [Powerpoint Presentation](#)
  - [Concept Plan](#)
  - [Draft CAC recommendations to The Board](#)
- **October 1** - An Open House is planned for Tuesday October 1, 6:30-8:30 pm in the Board Room of the MPRB Headquarters to review planning efforts to date.
- **September 24, 2013 - Meeting #2**
  - **Goal:** Review priorities by trail segment developed at CAC meeting #1. Review and discuss plans for overall trail alignment and key areas.
  - [Agenda](#)
  - [Powerpoint Presentation](#)
  - [Preliminary Trail Plan and Key Area Options](#)
  - [CAC comments on Preliminary Trail Plan and Key Area Options](#)
- **September 3, 2013 - Meeting #1**
  - **Goal:** Review project scope and background. Map issues and concerns of CAC members and identify priorities for improvements.
  - [Agenda](#)
  - [Powerpoint Presentation](#)
  - [Key map for mapping exercise](#)
  - [Scan of mapping exercise and participants' comments](#)
  - [Summary of CAC Member Comments and Priorities for Four Trail Segments](#)
- **September 24, 2013 - Meeting #2**
  - **Goal:** Review plan alternatives and options for key areas of concern.
- **October 15, 2013 - Meeting #3**
  - **Goal:** Discuss and modify preferred plan and make recommendations to the MPRB Commissioners.

An Open House is planned for Tuesday October 1, 6:30-8:30 pm in the Board Room of the MPRB Headquarters to review planning efforts to date discuss concept alternatives.

## Background

- [History](#) West River Parkway (p 270) and James I Rice Parkway (page 85)
- [2001 Informational report on plank road](#)

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## Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

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## SE Minn. segment of MRT dedicated last Wednesday here

### Bike trail will follow Mississippi River from Lake Itasca to Gulf of Mexico

by Michael Smith

Wabasha was once again the focal point of a major regional event, like it has been so often before, and this time it was the site of a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Southeastern Minnesota segment of the Mississippi River Trail.

About 100 people were on hand outside the National Eagle Center for the ceremony, which was followed by a bike ride led by members of the Wabasha Bicycle Club.

The Mississippi River Trail (MRT) route in Minnesota is a 600-mile bicycling trail that starts at Lake Itasca and continues southward to the Iowa border; which is just a portion of the 10-state, 3,000-mile trail that continues to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota, the National Park Service and Minnesota Department of Transportation were celebrating the installation of the MRT route guide signage from Hastings to the Iowa border. The route passes through Wabasha, Kellogg and

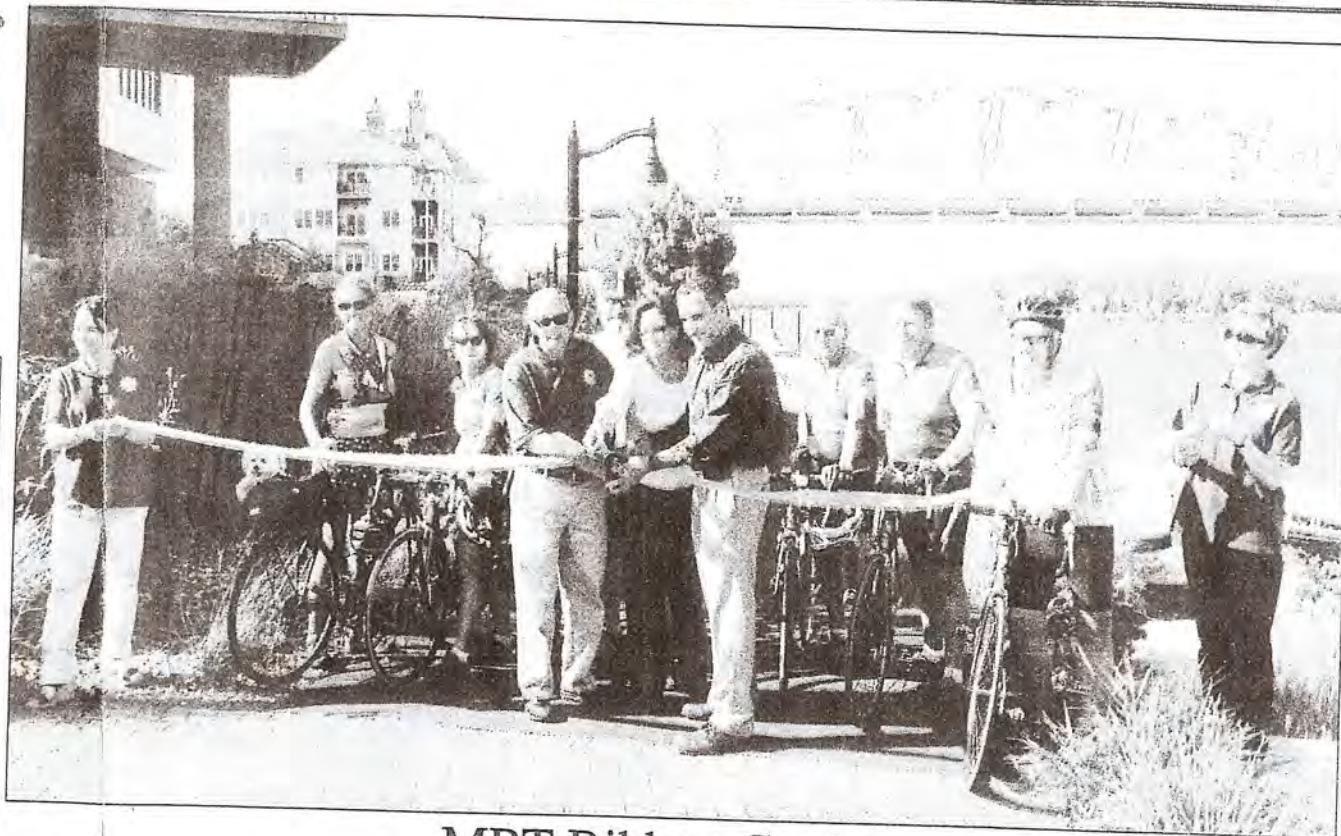


Wabasha Mayor Rollin Hall

Sand Prairie on its way north and south through the region.

Here's what the state's website on this trail has to say:

"Talk about an unforgettable



## MRT Ribbon Cutting

With Parkway Commission staff holding the ribbon and members of the Wabasha Bicycle Club looking on outside the National Eagle Center, Parkway Commission Chairman Sheldon Johnson, MRT Board member Suzanne Pepin, and MnDOT representative Amar Jabbar (l to r) cut the ribbon dedicating the Southeastern Minnesota segment of this 3,000-mile trail last Wednesday.

—Photo by Michael Smith

bicycle adventure!! A continuous bicycle route has been mapped along the Mississippi River and is downloadable to your phone. See America's river start at Lake Itasca where it is little more than a stream and watch it grow and gain momen-

tum until it forms the bluff-lined valley to the south of St. Paul.

Bike the Mississippi! Ride it all or just enjoy a segment or two."

Minnesota's route primarily relies on road shoulders and low-traffic roads, but also includes

relatively long segments of scenic state and regional trails.

As for Wednesday afternoon's program, Rep. Sheldon Johnson, Chair of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota, talked about how the trail came to be and what it

can mean for the state and region. He also explained its mission.

Wabasha Mayor Rollin Hall welcomed everyone to the ceremony and stated, "We're happy and proud that the MRT has se-

\*Turn to MRT Page 2

(Continued from Page 1)

lected Wabasha for this event. Tourism is important to our economy." He then talked about Wabasha's history and accomplishments, noting that it was home of the Grumpy Old Men movies and the National Eagle Center.

He added, "It is also home of the World Headquarters of the Wabasha Bicycle Club," which drew applause and a good laugh from club members and the crowd.

Eagle Center Executive Director Rolf Thompson said, "We're proud to be one of the original 75 Interpretive Centers along the MRT route."

Mississippi River Trail, Inc., board member Suzanne Pepin said, "I'm so proud of the leadership role that Minnesota has taken in the establishment of this trail. Minnesota has one-third of the total mileage of the MRT."

Pepin also talked about "Geotourism" and about how the MRT "will become one of the biggest tourist attractions in the country."

Sheronne Mulry of Wabasha

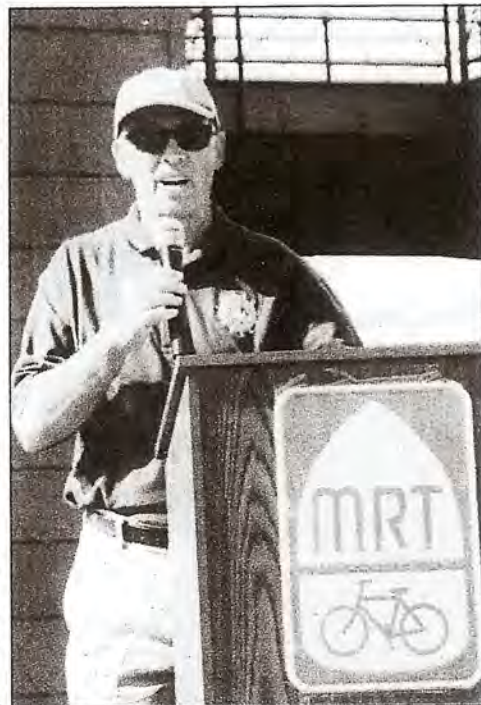
for Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Interim Superintendent John Anfinson and talked about the NRRRA, describing it as "a pearl." She said this trail will become a real asset to the area and the Parkway Commission and NRRRA were proud to be Project Partners in this effort.

Wabasha Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Cheri Wright showed exceptional enthusiasm for the trail after welcoming everyone to "Wabasha—the Midpoint of the MRT SE Minnesota Segment."

She said she became a bike rider when she moved to Wabasha and said she enjoyed the Tour de Pepin and other rides. "We're in the middle of it all. We can combine light/com-muter rail with a bike ride. I can see the day when visitors from the Twin Cities ride the commuter train to Wabasha and bike back, or vice versa.

"We work had to make sure we are a walkable/bikeable community."

It was at that point that ev-



Parkway Commission Rep. Sheldon Johnson

isting walking/biking path along the riverfront past the Eagle Center—for the Ribbon Cutting. As Parkway commission members held the ribbon and Bicycle Club members, and others looked on. Rep. Johnson, Pepin



NEC Ex. Director Rolf Thompson

and dedicated in Southeast Minnesota.

The brochure also states, "When traveling the Mississippi River at the pace and intimacy of a bicycle, you'll see what many tourists never will. You will be immersed in



Parkway Commission Rep. Sheronne Mulry

enchantment, and remarkable adventure!"

In any case, Wabasha, Kellogg and several state and federal agencies are banking that the extra attention to this area and the extra riders it will bring will boost local eco-



Chamber Ex. Secretary Cherie Wright

# MRT



The group that was assembled for last Wednesday's MRT Trail Dedication is pictured outside the National Lawrence Boulevard. The Mississippi River, which the trail follows, is in the background.—Photos by Michael



# CAPX2020 line breaking ground along Highway 42

by Cheryl Nymann  
Plainview News Editor

It's been seven years in the making, and now the huge CAPX2020 transmission line project has begun in Winnebago County.

Our area is only a portion of the project being done in the Upper Midwest. This is part of a joint initiative of eleven transmission owning utilities in Minnesota and surrounding states. The purpose of the project is not only to ensure reliable, low-cost electricity, but it will also increase access to renewable energy sources such as wind power. Wind energy from North Dakota, South Dakota, and western Minnesota will be surging through these lines.

Even working harmoniously with local land owners, so every day safety of the crews, the project is peppering the landscapes with heavy equipment.

Visiting the work sites myself, first with Charlie Uecker and then with Tom Cuthbert, was an interesting couple of days, which gave new insight and knowledge about the project. I thank both gentlemen for making the time to visit with and take me out to tour the work sites and staging areas.

The first day, I traveled out to Charlie Uecker's place, off County Highway 2 just northwest of Plainview.

"They're (Xcel Energy) been extremely easy to work with; they have good communication and we always know what's going on," Charlie commented.

Just like he goes to town everyday for the latest "news," he has the same commitment to head out to the work sites too. He told me that one landowner didn't want a certain tree line to be removed, so the company moved the line to the south further onto Charlie's land. With that, there were obviously more permitting and approvals that were needed.

Xcel Energy doesn't actually purchase the land, they purchase an easement that lasts forever. Landowners are paid for this easement, along with any loss crop coverage that is incurred during the building process. After completion of the entire project, the crops can be planted on

in the process, then the farmers are reimbursed for that loss. It was exciting to learn that much of the line easements could be done from a helicopter (which Charlie and I saw on a video).

To minimize the impact on some of the land (especially in wet spots), the company has treating that is like a polymer which is laid down and the machinery drive over. When done, the matings are cleaned before they are laid down in another area. Tom would later tell me that there are 16,000 mats on this project.

Hopping in his ATV, we went directly to the drill site where poles will be placed. The work crews had been at this site for several days. Usually, the turnaround time from drilling to completion of the base for the pole is just a few days, but this hole was a little more difficult because they hit some pretty hard rock. Each hole is drilled down an average of 50', depending on the soil. From rock to sandy soil and marshy land, they've worked with it all.

Of the utmost importance to these crews is safety. I saw it all throughout the tour both days. This first day, I got a close up view of the safety harness (attached to a gigantic hoist) a worker was wearing as he shuffled his way to the hole that was being drilled. Numerous sized drill bits specific to ironsides were utilized. These are

also times when a barrier has to be set in so dirt doesn't continually fall into the hole. After the hole is completed, an anchor bolt cage is lowered into the hole, and the concrete is poured in. The anchor

bolt cage is built on site at one of the staging areas (I'm sure you've seen them along highway 42).

Each rebar cage that is built has a number, which it will go, the structure number and the weight of the cage written on it. And, each one is inspected as well. It's no ordinary level they use when they get to this part of the project (see accompanying photo). As the concrete gets poured into the hole, they're constantly stirring it to ensure no air pockets form. Once again, as the workers finish the concrete



After drilling down 50 feet, concrete is ready to be poured into the anchoring base on which the high line poles will be bolted to. This photo is of the CAPX2020 transmission line project going in now near Plainview. Eventually, the line will parallel Highway 42 to Kellong.—Photo by Cheryl Nymann

which the base of the poles are bolted to. Typically, the poles extend 150 feet into the air, the tallest has been 195 feet, but depending on the terrain, some are small as 130 feet. The poles are typically in two- to five-part

are also part of this entire project. Closer to home, there is a substation just north of Pine Island that has been built. From here, there are lines to the Mississippi River (our area), and also north to Rochester, which

members), we were out to look at the huge structures. The huge structures would eventually be put together as the poles were erected. Some would be put on by crane, and some in the past have been put into place by helicopter. The structures

will begin to be seen out to the fields this month and continue through the end of the year. The wire was just beginning to arrive at this staging area.

It was interesting to note that when the wires are put up on the poles, the contractors so bring the wires together aren't like they use to be; instead, they use an innovative change that needs the lines together. If done on site, landowners will be notified when it happens, because it is quite a significant boom to the change when it is set off.

By now you've probably seen the semi trailers and flatbeds hauling the equipment and materials on Highway 42 and dropped off at the staging areas.

**(Xcel Energy) has been extremely easy to work with; they have good communication and we always know what's going on.**

means that the cool place in Rochester (RPLU) will be shutting down.

The first staging area was just east of Plainview on County Highway 27. This is where the rebar was welded together for the anchor bolt cage. A thorough safety training was given before Tim and I went down to look at all of the items in the area. Every single piece of the rebar cage was specifically designed for each hole that was dug.

Crews were also loading materials onto a flatbed and then taken out to the job sites. After meeting

working on the project as well. The huge structures that make up the poles are made at Thoreson and Betts out of Hager City, Wisconsin, and hauled over to the staging areas.

Many of the workers on this massive project are hired out of state, and thus, they have given a boost to the economy in the area. Some stay in hotels in Rochester and there are some that have come together to rent a house together in Winnebago. Some are looking to Plainview to do the same thing. There's also money being spent in our area on fuel and food.

As the project moves north-easterly and directly away from Plainview, they will be using the same corridor of the current high line that goes across the street—and they will remove the older poles. Their goal is to reach the marshy areas around the backwaters when it is frozen. In these corridors, sometime around the beginning of the year, the poles should all be up.

Although this is just one day

**MN-MRPC FY '14**  
**Operating Budget Status- 11/6/13**

Obj Code	Description	FY '14 Budget	Spent	Pending	Remaining	Comments
41070	Other Benefits (Per Diem)	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,807.00		\$ 1,193.00	Commissioner Per Diems: MN-MRPC quarterly mtgs, MRPC Annual Mtg & Semi-Annual Mtg, work group mtgs, commission representation at meetings and events, special projects.
41110	Printing & Advertising	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 192.19	\$ 31.57	\$ 776.24	Commission meeting copies, materials
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$ 38,000.00	\$ 6,918.93	\$ 2,166.66	\$ 28,914.41	Admin contract, marketing grant match, possible additional staff time on CMP grant, other services as needed, temporary cash flow on CMP grant project.
41150	Computer & System Services	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 814.00		\$ 186.00	Website hosting, stats and email. Minor updates and programming changes.
41155	Communications	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 162.40	\$ 60.70	\$ 776.90	Postage/deliveries, MN MRPC phone line and conference calls, shipping costs.
41160	In-State Travel	\$ 5,450.00	\$ 822.84	\$ 169.50	\$ 4,457.66	Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, work groups, events, related projects.
41170	Out-State Travel	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 3,307.16		\$ 3,692.84	MRPC Annual & Semi Annual Meetings - St. Louis in September 2013, Illinois in April 2014.
41180	Employee Development	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 880.00		\$ 820.00	Meeting and conference registration fees
41300	Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ (95.73)	\$ 9.65	\$ 586.08	General office supplies for Commission projects. Donations for GRR maps are placed in this line item.
43000	Other Costs (MRPC Dues)	\$ 7,500.00	\$ -		\$ 7,500.00	1/2 of MRPC dues for 2015
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 66,150.00</b>	<b>\$ 14,808.79</b>	<b>\$ 2,438.08</b>	<b>\$ 48,903.13</b>	



*“Working together to help Americans recognize and protect the Mississippi River and its people, places, and stories as a national treasured landscape.”*

## **The Mississippi River Sustainable Destinations Initiative**

A Geotourism Program with National Geographic Map Division for the Mississippi River Corridor.

**Geotourism - *Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place — its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.***

**Background** - At the November, 2013 Mississippi River Connections Collaborative (MRCC) meeting, a session on sustainable tourism was presented by Dean Reeder, National Park Service Tourism Director and Jim Dion, Program Manager, National Geographic Geotourism Mapping Division (NGS). The presentation was met with enthusiasm as participants saw this as an opportunity to support and enhance the MRCC’s vision and mission. Follow-up with National Geographic indicated a high level of interest on their part.

The **Mississippi River Connections Collaborative** is a formal agreement between the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Mississippi River Trail, Inc. to promote the magnificence and diversity of the Mississippi River as a national treasured landscape through a collaborative approach to river-long resource protection, restoration and recreational use. This collaborative is an informal network of local, state and federal refuge, park, and trail managers, alongside non-profit organizations that seeks to provide people with physical and thematic connections to the river, thereby tapping unrealized potential to restore and protect this nationally significant resource.

In March, 2013, the MRCC Core Leadership team approved moving forward with the proposal with Mississippi River Trail, Inc. serving as the primary point of contact and fiscal manager for this effort.

MRCC began to reach out to develop a broad base of support. This included a presentation in July to the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative that resulted in a great deal of interest and support for this effort. **Endorsements/Letters of Support from:**

- National Geographic Society
- National Park Service, Midwest Region
- National Park Service, Southeast Region
- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Midwest Region
- City of Minneapolis, MN
- City of Memphis, TN
- City of New Orleans, LA
- City of Navoo, IL
- City of Saint Paul, MN
- City of Osceola, AR
- City of Lake City, MN
- Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism
- City of Baxter, MN
- Arkansas Department of Heritage
- Mississippi River Parkway Commission
- City of Piggott, AR
- City of Sauk Rapids, MN
- City of Wabasha, MN
- City of Brainerd, MN
- City of Aitkin, MN
- City of Natchez, MS
- City of St. Louis, MO
- City of Vicksburg, MS
- Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN)
- Miss. River Cities and Towns Initiative

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission supports and is working directly with MRCC to implement this geotourism initiative.

**Why Geotourism?**

When done correctly, tourism can bring economic benefits and create an incentive to conserve natural assets and cultural heritage. Geotourism encourages visitors and residents alike to work for the long-term sustainability of a place. It is "best practice" tourism!






According to a market research study on geotourism, sponsored by National Geographic Traveler magazine and conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America, **"today's traveler craves and expects authentic experiences. They want to return from a trip renewed or changed in some way."**

*"Geotourism is an emerging trend that will endure. Sustaining the local environment or bringing in a bit of the local color can mean the difference between a discounted rate or a higher rate, can develop increased seasonal traffic, and spur local tourism "* Dawn Drew Former Vice President and Editor National Geographic

**The Process** to implement the Mississippi River Sustainable Destinations Initiative with NGS includes:

-  **Establishing a public-private Geotourism Stewardship Council** - members represent all aspects of the destination of potential tourist interest: scenery, culture, cuisine, nature and wildlife, outdoor recreation, folklore, artisanry, music, theatre, and history, as well as government and business.
  -  The Council's task is to oversee and advise on the four elements of a Geotourism strategy: identifying, sustaining, developing, and marketing the geotourism assets of a place.
-  **Launching the program with a catalytic project to bring stakeholders together**, such as a Geotourism MapGuide, participatory website, mobile apps or print maps highlighting the unique attractions of a destination.
-  **Using the MapGuide and website development process to build the capacity of the Geotourism Stewardship Council** to a full-fledged, sustained destination management and/or marketing organization.
-  **Development and implementation of an inbound marketing strategy** that deploys the appropriate software, sets up a monitoring and evaluation system, and trains local partners on its functionality.
-  **Business planning to build up the capacity of the Geotourism Stewardship Council** to become a full-fledged destination management and/or marketing organization defining and helping to implement a plan to generate income for the Geotourism Stewardship Council to sustain destination management and marketing activities.

#### **Current Activity/Next Steps**

-  Continued outreach for support of MRSDI
  -  Webinar in Late September, early October
  -  Continue to gather letters/resolutions of support
-  Announcement of MRSDI as part of renewal of Department of the Interior/National Geographic Society Geotourism Memorandum of Understanding
-  Resources in place to fully launch MRSDI – January, 2014

Additional information on the National Geographic Geotourism program can be found at:  
[http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/about\\_geotourism.html](http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/about_geotourism.html)



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# **Geotourism Program Proposal Mississippi River Corridor**

## **PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

**National Geographic Society – Maps Division**

**Proposal for a Geotourism Website, MapGuide and Stewardship Council Program for the  
10 State Mississippi River Corridor Region**  
*Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana and  
Mississippi*

**Submitted To:** Mississippi River Connections Collaborative

**Submitted By:** National Geographic Society, Maps Division

**Date:** Full Proposal - February, 2013  
Proposal Summary – March, 2013

# **National Geographic and Mississippi River Connections Collaborative Proposal Summary**

In 2008 a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was entered into by the National Geographic Society and the following Federal agencies:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Forest Service (FS)

The MOU establishes a framework for the NGS and the agencies to use geotourism principles in their collaborative work on tourism issues pertaining to Federal and Indian lands. The MOU is implemented under the guiding principles of geotourism, which encompass conservation, heritage preservation, cultural continuation, effective local leadership, and mutual understanding. Geotourism can help build a sense of national identity and pride for America's citizens by stressing what is authentic and unique about America's Federal and Indian lands and waters and their associated cultures and communities. Applying geotourism to these places can help meet the environmental, social, economic, and quality of life needs of Americans and their communities.

## **Seven Key Outputs within the National Geographic Geotourism Plan for MRCC:**

- 1) Establish Mississippi River Corridor Sustainable Tourism Council (and regional councils)
- 2) Co-branded MapGuide website
- 3) Geo-referenced smartphone application
- 4) Hard copy Geotourism MapGuide(s)
- 5) Comprehensive public relations strategy
- 6) Measure of Success tools
- 7) Social Networking/Website Marketing dissemination and distribution program

## **Project Background and Rationale:**

In 2007, discussions began leading to the development of the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative (MRCC) that engages two regions of the National Park Service and two regions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Mississippi River Trail (MRT), to support a key vision, mission and objectives for the Mississippi River Corridor.

In 2010 a formal Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the three agencies/organizations identified above formalizing a collaborative effort along the Mississippi River corridor representing 400 communities and urban areas, and 123 counties in 10 states.

## **MRCC MOU Thematic Areas:**

Five primary thematic areas for development were identified in the MOU establishing MRCC:

- History, Culture & Lore
- Education & Stewardship
- Conservation & Partnerships
- Improvement of Parks and Refuges
- River Access and Recreation

**The National Park Service – Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program is providing assistance with the organizational development of MRCC by convening federal, state, and local agencies and organizations up and down the river.**

Mississippi River Trail, Inc. serves as the fiduciary manager for MRCC by taking the lead in development of many MRCC efforts including the National Geographic Geotourism Unit to develop a Mississippi River Geotourism project for the length of the Mississippi River. It is anticipated that MRT would continue to serve as the fiscal manager for this and future MRCC efforts.

## **National Geographic Proposal to MRCC:**

**The National Geographic Society proposes collaborative creation of a Geotourism MapGuide program for destinations along Mississippi River Corridor to:**

- Brand the Mississippi River Corridor of the United States as a clean, safe, and unique world class destination
- Connect major Mississippi River Corridor attractions and destinations with additional travel opportunities, especially inland
- Foster the growth of trails or circuits focusing on cohesive themes such as; **nature, recreation, history, arts, cultural heritage, agriculture, urban and town life.**
- Provide a mechanism for regional and state tourism businesses and authorities to better manage challenges and cooperate on initiatives
- Raise awareness of the strong cultural heritage, advanced infrastructure, educated population, and unique experiences along the riverine and related destinations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana and Mississippi
- Catalyze local participation in tourism planning and growth,
- Assist local residents learn about their natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources

MRCC is seeking funding to collaborate with National Geographic based on the attached proposal submitted by National Geographic. See budget below.

## Budget: Mississippi River Corridor Geotourism Program / 24 Month project

Intervention	Cost	Notes
Online Geotourism Map – website (core program)	\$ 235,000	The Mississippi River Corridor Geotourism website is enabled by the <i>GeoConsensus</i> content management system featuring an interactive digital geotourism MapGuide. Includes design, features, functionality, cartographic elements, National Geographic editorial review, photo selection, user generated content editing, fact checking, verification and creation of original editorial content. The website will be created to the expected quality standards of the National Geographic Society. Cost includes one year of hosting and maintenance. H and M year begins six months after the completed website is delivered.
Mobile Geotourism Application (optional)	\$ 83,000	For both DROID and iPhone platforms. The Geotourism Mobile MapGuide will pre-load the text information for a location so that users will still be able to read about places around them, even when they are in a place that is not serviced by mobile service or internet access. Multiple regional APPS for select destination regions can be created that in total cover the entire region.
Geotourism Printed MapGuide (optional)	\$ 150,000	Printing and delivery of 100,000 copies of the mapguide. The Geotourism MapGuide is a printed derivative interpretation of the website. The Geotourism themed MapGuide is designed to be distributed free of charge. Can be created as two separate maps that cover the entire region or as one large format map.
NGMD Field Project Work Tasks (core program) – Public Outreach; forming and informing the Stewardship Council; project planning and management. This is for NGMD’s direct costs to manage the project process through the lifecycle of the program according to the milestone calendar presented in this proposal. The eight site visits are planned for one NG person in the field for a minimum of five working days per visit	\$ 242,000	Manage the interaction between the field project tasks and the creation of deliverables with the NG Maps Division. - Conduct activities in the field including eight visits to the site: Visit 1 - 2: Project planning and orientation for a multi-day workshop and site familiarization visit. (can be conducted by a third party organization under contract to NGS) . Strategic planning and research Visit 3 - 4: Project launch events and initiation of key stakeholder workshops. (NGS presence). Marketing and PR program activities. Visit 5 - 6: Mid term project meeting. Marketing assessment. Visit 7: Roll-out events / promotional unveiling of the website - Organize a public relations campaign to inform the residents of the region about geotourism activities, help people learn about the region, and promote the region to the wider international market. Visit 8: Monitoring and Evaluation. Project follow up activities
Public Relations – Strategic Planning	\$ 38,000	Geotourism Best Practices Program is to infuse sustainability into the day-to-day operations of the micro, small, and medium-sized tourism businesses participating in the website.
Social Networking / Marketing Program	\$ 42,000	Customized program to develop and orientate the GSC to realize market
Local Partner - Field Project Tasks – local lead individuals, agents, or organizations to coordinate project partners in applying the geotourism methods and process for creating key deliverables. An estimate for the costs of the local agent(s) to work with NGS to manage the project field coordination and tasks. They are not included I the budget total below.	\$ 205,000	The local lead for all project partners in applying the geotourism methods and process for creating key deliverables. - Conduct primary appraisal of the geotourism process. - Create, manage, and execute the project work plan - Identify, organize, inform and engage the Geotourism Stewardship Councils. - Execute, in co-operation with local affiliate organizations organizational and outreach activities to insure local participation
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 985,000</b>	



## Great River Road Network of Museums and Interpretive Centers Visit Checklist

State commissioner visits annually or bi-annually by making an appointment with the I.C. Director or other appropriate personnel.

The goal is to develop a stronger relationship between the Interpretive Centers (I.C.) and the MRPC.

During the visit, commissioner will review the checklist and share new or ongoing information about the MRPC. These talking points should include benefits of being an I.C. - featured with contact information on website, printed maps, social media, itineraries and more.

- Name of interpretive center
  - Visiting Commissioner's Name
  - Date of Visit
  - Name, title, email and telephone number of I.C. personnel
  - What are your regular hours?
  - What is your admission pricing?
  - How many visitors do you see annually?
  - Do you carry GRR maps or rack cards for sale, distribution or on display?
  - Do you display a Great River Road banner or other signage?
  - Does your I.C. have a website?
  - Do you have a button with the Great River Road logo and link on your website to the [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com) website? Please provide url link to page where it is located. If not, when will you be adding?
  - Does your I.C. have a facebook page? Please provide url link.
  - Are your front line personnel knowledgeable of the Great River Road? Do they receive any formal training.
  - Do you have photos or video of your I.C. to share for promotional use? Send photos, video or other media to the National Office.
  - What other Interpretive Centers do you communicate with regarding Great River Road activities?
-



## Great River Road Hospitality Training

### Background

- Per Minnesota Statutes 161.1419, MN DNR is a legislatively designated member of the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC).
- The MN-MRPC mission is to preserve, promote and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River and to develop the highways and amenities of the Great River Road.
- MN DNR is a partner with Scenic Byways including the Great River Road. The Minnesota Great River Road is a National Scenic Byway spanning 575 miles, 60 communities, and 21 counties, packaged into six unique destination areas.
- MN DNR Parks and Trails provide diverse outdoor recreation to residents and travelers in the state.
- Adventure touring is an expanding use of outdoor recreation in the nation.
- MN DNR staff currently meets with tourism and chamber organizations along the Mississippi River/Great River Road to promote outdoor recreation.
- Great River Road Promotional materials already include most state park locations along the route. State forests will be added as part of this effort.
- State parks and trails and forests are an integral part of promoting travel in MN.

### Project Intent

- Maximize knowledge base of DNR Parks and Trails, Forestry and local hospitality staff on “fun things to see and do” along the Mississippi River/Great River Road in their specific Destination Area and facilitate cross-promotion up and down the river.
- Conduct hospitality training with DNR State Parks and Trails, and Forestry staff, and Great River Road community tourism offices and Minnesota Travel Information staff, front desk and management staff from Great River Road hotels/motels, area attractions.
- Update print and web materials to include state forests and trails with OHV opportunities along the Great River Road.
- Expand knowledge of Adventure Touring by motorcycles and high-clearance vehicles along the Great River Road and “I Can” park programs.
- Project partners – MN DNR and MN-MRPC

### Intended Audience

Train the trainer and/or direct training of front line staff per preference of DNR.

### Length of Training/Presentation

30 to 60 minutes, per preference of DNR and flexible per site.

### Materials Provided

PowerPoint presentation and newly updated Great River Road map tablets including state forest and state park information.

### Proposed Content

- Great River Road Video
- Great River Road history, ten state context and Minnesota's six Great River Road destination areas (regions)
- Things to see and do in each destination area: focused on the specifics that occur in the destination area the park is in. Interpretive panels, historic waysides, and other locations of interest to travelers.
- Hospitality exercise(s) depending upon time at each site, but at a minimum use the map tablet to invite travelers to explore the Great River Road in the area.

## **Request for Letter of Support from MN-MRPC**

### **Funding Source**

MnDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant solicitation for local communities and regional agencies in Greater Minnesota to fund projects for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, historic preservation, SRTS and more. Letters of intent are due November 15, 2013, applications due February 1, 2014.

TAP combines funding for Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School infrastructure, and Scenic Byways - separate programs under the previous federal transportation bill - into one grant program. Minnesota will be soliciting approximately \$13 million across the state.

### **Applicant**

Wabasha County

### **Proposed Project**

Bituminous paving of shoulders on Wabasha County Highway 30 which is a segment on the MRT, the paving of shoulders would connect between existing paved shoulders in the City of Wabasha and TH 61 a distance of approximately 3.7 miles. The existing shoulders on the proposed project segment of Wabasha County Highway 30 consist of (on each side) 2' concrete and 4'-6' bituminous millings.

DRAFT – October 24, 2013

Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

Resolution 2013-01

**Urging the development of proper procedures and regulation in siting and operation of silica sand mining and processing facilities in the Great River Road National Scenic Byway Corridor of southeastern Minnesota**

*Whereas* the statutory role of the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN MRPC), established under Minnesota Statute 161.1419, is to work toward the planning, construction, maintenance, and improvement of the Great River Road or Mississippi River Parkway and

*Whereas* the MN MRPC mission is to promote, preserve, and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River Valley and to develop the highways and amenities of the Great River Road (National Scenic Byway) and

*Whereas* the MN MRPC promotes, supports, and advances actions, responsibilities, procedures, controls, operational practices, and strategies to maintain the intrinsic archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities that support National Scenic Byway designation and

*Whereas* in response to input and requests from stakeholders the MN MRPC passed a motion to draft a resolution related to its mission and byway intrinsic qualities and

*Whereas* there has been an identified need for more guidance in the approval process and oversight in affected counties and local governments and

*Whereas* silica sand operations create concern over potential negative effects; e.g. air & water quality, public health, traffic flow & safety, highway & bridge quality, property value, and aesthetic qualities within the region (all affecting tourism and community quality of life) and the MN MRPC supports the efforts of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) and

*Whereas* the potential for silica sand jobs and an economic boom within the Great River Road corridor are significant, there is also the potential for significant adverse economic impacts to the Great River Road's tourism industry and

*Whereas* the value of the land and silica sand resources are significant for owners as are profits for the mining industries

***Therefore be it resolved,*** that

The MN MRPC encourages local units of government to refer to and work with the EQB Silica Sand Technical Assistance Team and

The MN MRPC supports zoning ordinances and other land use practices that protect the archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway and the Mississippi River.

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_  
Date