



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
2nd Quarter Meeting
May 27, 2021 • 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

DRAFT AGENDA

- | | | |
|------------------|--|---|
| 2:00 p.m. | Welcome & Introductions | Senjem |
| 2:05 p.m. | Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 2/24/21 | Senjem/All |
| 2:10 p.m. | Informational Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mississippi River Restoration & Resilience Initiative | Whitney Clark, FMR |
| 2:30 p.m. | Commission Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Budget Report- Legislative Updates | Handout
Legislative Members/LCC |
| 2:45 p.m. | National MRPC <ul style="list-style-type: none">- MRPC Board & National Meetings- Committee Updates<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Communications & Marketing▪ Culture & Heritage/Interpretive Center Visits▪ Environment, Recreation & Agriculture▪ Transportation | Lewis

Havelka
Anfinson
Karnowski
Wilcox |
| 3:10 p.m. | Commission Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">- All-American Road Promotion- Website- Ambassador Development- Improving Access and Welcoming Environment along the Mississippi River | Miller
Miller
Wilcox/Miller
Miller |
| 3:30 p.m. | New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- National Scenic Byway Grants- Review Commission Process for Actions & Letters- Introduction/Comment Letter Template | Handout/Miller/All
All
Anfinson/Miller |
| 3:45 p.m. | Old Business – Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- St. Anthony Falls Cutoff Wall | Anfinson |
| 3:55 p.m. | Commission Member Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Refer to Written Updates in Packet- Brief Highlights or Action Requests | All
All |
| 4:25 p.m. | Other Business | |
| 4:30 p.m. | Wrap Up and Adjourn | |



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
1st Quarter Meeting – February 24, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
MINUTES – Draft

Commissioners Present

Megan Christianson – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
John Anfinson – Elk River to Hastings
Jennifer Weaver – Hastings to Iowa Border
Sen. David Senjem
Rep. Kristin Robbins
Rep. Emma Greenman
Paul Hugunin – Agriculture Appointee
Lisa Havelka – Tourism Appointee
David Kelliher – Historical Society Appointee
Grant Wilson – Natural Resources Appointee
Marni Karnowski – Transportation Appointee
Anne Lewis – At Large Member

Technical Advisors/Staff Present

Gina Bonsignore – Natural Resources
Carol Zoff – Transportation
Tim Wilcox – Transportation
Craig Hansen – National Park Service
Diane Henry Wangenstein – LCC
Sandy Most - LCC
Chris Miller – MN-MRPC Staff

Members Absent

Sally Fineday – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids
Sen. Patricia Torres Ray

Meeting called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Chair Senjem. Roll call was taken with the members listed above present. There was a quorum. New members were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves – Representative Kristin Robbins, Representative Emma Greenman, NPS Technical Advisor Craig Hansen, and newly elected Metro Regional Commissioner John Anfinson.

Approve Minutes from 11/19/20 Meeting: Motion by Anne Lewis and seconded by Grant Wilson to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion carried.

Election of Officers: Karl Samp facilitated the election of officers, which happens approximately every two years. Megan Christianson nominated Anne Lewis to continue in the position of Treasurer, with no other nominations noted. Motion carried. Anne Lewis nominated John Anfinson for the position of Vice Chair, with no other nominations noted. Motion carried. Marni Karnowski nominated Sen. Senjem to continue in the position of Chair, with no other nominations noted. Motion carried. Officers were thanked for their service and the meeting was turned back to Sen. Senjem as Chair.

Budget Report: A year-to-date budget report was included in the meeting packet. The annual dues invoice to the National MRPC should be arriving soon, which will be a \$15,000 expense. There are more funds than anticipated remaining in the budget due to pandemic related changes in plans and travel. Karl Samp shared information and made a proposal to enter a partnership with River Travel Magazine for digital ads and articles for a cost of approximately \$1,368, followed by discussion. Members were in favor of proceeding, with Karl Samp noting that he has been following River Travel Magazine and Lisa Havelka reporting that Explore Minnesota is in discussions with them as well. There was also conversation about the fit and timing with the All-American Road designation. Digital package details that were presented will be sent out to members via email.

Motion by Lisa Havelka and seconded by Megan Christianson to approve the digital partnership package with River Travel Magazine using available FY 21 funds as proposed, with two digital ads and four blog articles. Anne Lewis requested that the campaign focus on the All-American Road designation. Motion carried.

Legislative Report: Sen. Senjem reported that this is a budget year at the legislature and that the Commission should be cognizant of this and work with LCC on the budget for Fiscal Years 22 and 23. Budget needs should be reviewed by the MN-MRPC Executive Committee and a draft developed by staff for FY 22. Diane Henry-Wangenstein noted that the Legislative Coordinating Commission met earlier in the day and that operating funding for the MN-MRPC is currently being proposed at levels steady with the current biennium.

All-American Road Designation: Anne Lewis congratulated all eight Great River Road states that received news of their new designations last week and noted the dedication and professionalism of state transportation departments and

partners in getting the nominations completed and submitted. The Great River Road was the only new national designation in Minnesota, and the Great River Road accounted for eight of 15 All-American Road designations nationwide. Core criteria are national significance and the byway being a destination unto itself. Members of the project team provided a review of the process and commented on the challenges and approaches. The MN-MRPC and partners along the byway were thanked for their help with the nomination. A news release has been distributed to the MN-MRPC's media list, an announcement was posted on Facebook, and information with a request to share was sent to the MN-MRPC's marketing and distribution partners along the route. MN-MRPC members were asked to share information within their agencies, regions, and groups. Sen. Senjem suggested a letter and news release from Senate and House members to their chambers. Members were also asked to send their favorite river stories, locations, and photos to the MN-MRPC office for use in the All-American Road celebration. MnDOT is considering development of a new online story map/digital travel guide as well.

Byway Grants: Funding has not been available through the National Scenic Byways Program for several years but \$16 million will be available in 2021. Details and grant solicitation information are not yet available. The National Scenic Byways Foundation and Scenic America are working to solidify more funding for Scenic Byways moving forward. If these organizations request letters of support, the MN-MRPC Chair could act at his discretion or convene the Executive Committee. Carol Zoff provided background including examples of funding received in the past. The MN Great River Road Corridor Management Plan includes many strategies that could be a fit for a grant application moving forward. MnDOT has created a budget line item to receive any grant funds that may come to Minnesota. Questions were raised about how this nationwide \$16 million compares to past years. Carol will provide a summary of MN byway grant projects funded in the past to be shared with members as meeting follow up.

MRPC Board Report and 2021 National Meetings: Anne Lewis, National MRPC Pilot, announced that the 2021 MRPC Semi-Annual Meeting will be held virtually on April 14. Interpretive Centers will be featured and there will also be a focus on the Mississippi River flyway.

National MRPC Committee Updates: Lisa Havelka reported for the Marketing Committee – recent discussions have focused on All-American Road promotion and a possible new signature/branding approach for the designation. The Pilot's Wheel logo would remain as the main Great River Road identifier. John Anfinson reported for the Culture & Heritage Committee – he has virtually visited all 90 Great River Road Interpretive Centers and is working to achieve a quorum on the committee so votes can be taken on new Interpretive Center nominations. Marni Karnowski is now Minnesota's representative on the Environment, Recreation and Agriculture Committee, has reached out to the committee chairs to introduce herself and is excited for the upcoming Semi-Annual MRPC Meeting. Tim Wilcox provided an update from the Transportation Committee – updated Great River Road route alignments are being requested from each state as well as GIS sign locations. The committee's page on the MRPC members website was noted as a source for information including individual state All-American Road nominations.

Letter of Support Request – City of South St. Paul Wakota Scenic Trailhead Project: The City of South St. Paul has requested a letter of support as they seek Federal Recreational Trail Program funding for the Wakota Scenic Trailhead Project. Other sources of funding include the Federal Lands Access Program, City of South St. Paul, Dakota County and potentially the National Park Service. The construction and trail connection will provide direct access to the Mississippi River along with amenities such as restrooms, picnic facilities, bike repair station and water fountains. John Anfinson, Regional Commissioner, described it as one of the major boat launches between St. Paul and Hastings, and a worthwhile project. He also consulted with National Park Service representatives who have been involved.

Motion by John Anfinson and seconded by Karl Samp to provide a letter of support for the Wakota Scenic Trailhead Project. Motion carried with DNR abstaining from the discussion and vote due to their role with the Federal Recreational Trail Program.

St. Anthony Falls Disposition Study Update: John Anfinson reviewed the background, which started in 2014 when Congress passed an act to close the Upper St. Anthony Lock to navigation. The National Park Service/Mississippi National River and Recreation Area took over visitor management at the lock. There are many visitors including international visitors. Friends of the Falls has raised \$5 million for a visitor center which could reach one million visitors per year. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers currently has a draft disposition study posted for public comment through March 18. The Tentatively Selected Plan in the study would be for the USACE to have no continued presence or ownership of the site, with ownership to be transferred to another entity. There are organizations and groups encouraging a continued Corps presence. Concerns include tourism, flood mitigation, and potential impact on water supply due to aging structures under the falls. There is strong potential for promoting the Mississippi River and Great River Road if a visitor center is included in

the future of the lock area. Consideration of a comment letter from the MN-MRPC was requested. Focus would be on support for plans that best capture the tourism potential and protection for the significant resources of the area. It was suggested that any such letter ask for consideration of byway intrinsic resources as part of the decision-making process and keep that as the theme. It was also noted that language would need to be carefully considered so as not to conflict with any comments of member agencies.

There was general agreement to proceed with a letter of comment on the Upper St. Anthony Falls Disposition Study. A draft will be sent to members for review and the decision on whether to submit will be made by the Chair after evaluating feedback from members.

University of MN Tourism Center Follow Up: Chris Miller reported on a phone call with Dr. Xinyi Qian to discuss next steps on items from the presentation at the November 19 meeting. Three items are on the list for further consideration: 1) Potential for Tourism Center participation as a technical member of the MN-MRPC if there is interest and a process to do so (referred to Executive Committee), 2) Assistance with outreach to and involvement of more diverse audiences (dependent on outcomes of MN-MRPC work group, and 3) Potential for a Great River Road Impact Study (review of similar past studies needed followed by development of possible scope). Follow up on these topics will continue.

MN GRR Website: Chris Miller reported that pricing has been obtained for edits and page additions for the MN Great River Road website launched in early 2020 and the work will be starting soon. Pages to be added include Ambassador Development and All-American Road.

Ambassador Development: Tim Wilcox reported on instructional videos currently being developed at MnDOT to guide the public through the features of the Plan Your Trip online tool. Audio has been scripted and recorded, and samples were played for the Commission. Video of the screens and mouse movements will be added next with the timeline estimated at 4 – 6 weeks. The video resources will be important tools for Ambassador Development. Next steps also include development of a web page to house resources including a collector app link for updates to Plan Your Trip, pilot information sessions for ambassadors, and GRR promotional items for use by ambassadors.

Improving Access and Welcoming Environment along the Mississippi River: The work group of Sally Fineday, Sen. Torres Ray and David Kelliher met on February 1, discussed several ideas for messaging and outreach, and identified four next steps – 1) Presentation to the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council on February 17 for an MN-MRPC overview and invitation to consider Regional Commissioner positions (thank you to Sally Fineday for presenting); 2) Request agenda time for a presentation to the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs; 3) an inventory to collect information on what MN-MRPC member agencies are already doing to be more inclusive; and 4) development of metrics so progress can be measured. The work group will reconvene after items 1 – 3 are completed. The council presentations are a result of emails sent by LCC last fall in advance of MN-MRPC regional meetings/elections. David Kelliher noted that the Commission's work needs to be reflective of communities and that it will take time and effort to get out there and listen. The work group will continue its efforts.

Member discussion and suggestions –

- Karl Samp recommended making sure that people of color are reflected in marketing materials, website, and social media.
- Craig Hansen volunteered to help and share ideas based on his work at Grand Portage National Monument in partnership with the Grand Portage Band and past work with other parks and tribes. Recruiting people as the next generation of park rangers was an important focus.
- Sen. Senjem suggested approaching the Rochester Area Diversity Council to offer a presentation about the MN-MRPC/Great River Road. A road show or Zoom presentation "This is the MN GRR" would be helpful. Carol Zoff mentioned using the MN-MRPC orientation presentation outline and Gina Bonsignore recommended pulling from regional meeting content.
- Grant Wilson spoke about the DNR's experience forming relationships and story partnerships for different languages, and the importance of reaching out where people are. He offered to assist with MN-MRPC efforts and suggested considering funding to help support implementation.
- Carol Zoff suggested looking into adding a translator function to the website.
- Gina Bonsignore asked about spending a little money on Great River Road ads in diverse communities.
- Anne Lewis noted that the Leech Lake Band has an electronic newsletter and suggested exploring opportunities for ads or content. There could be others around the state too.

- Paul Hugunin indicated interest in identifying how to connect with communities where English is not the first language – this is something applicable to agriculture as well – emerging farmers, assisting with licenses and permits, etc. It is important to have a strategy and not a scattered approach.

Other Business and Discussion:

- Gina Bonsignore referred to the DNR report in the meeting packet, a resource for current Minnesota State Park status and information that all members are free to use.
- Karl Samp raised a question about the LCCMR's timeline and process for funding decisions. The Brainerd area has a project under consideration – Brainerd Trailhead Regional Park. Sen. Senjem offered to check with the Senate Committee chair, and Diane Henry-Wangenstein noted that the committee met earlier in the day regarding Senate File 690. Video is available online.
- Lisa Havelka reported that Explore Minnesota's public relations lead received a request for information from USA Today picking up on All-American Road designation. There will potentially be a Great River Road feature in late April-early May.
- Jennifer Weaver shared that American Cruise Lines is planning 22 stops in Winona from three vessels in summer of 2021. Winona County Historical Society and their tour guides are working with the cruise operator and this is a great opportunity for the local community to welcome new visitors.

Next Meeting: May 27, 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

MN-MRPC FY21 Activity/Project Budget

5-11-21

<u>Activity/Item</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Spent 5-7-21</u>	<u>Pending</u>	<u>Remaining</u>	<u>% Spent</u>
MN-MRPC Operating Budget					
Quarterly Meetings	\$4,600.00	\$368.00		\$4,232.00	8.00%
Other Commissioner meetings travel & per diem/memberships	\$1,200.00	\$150.00		\$1,050.00	13.00%
Executive Committee Meetings (2 @ \$300)	\$600.00			\$600.00	0.00%
MRPC Dues	\$15,000.00		\$15,000.00	\$0.00	100.00%
Admin Contract	\$26,400.00	\$19,800.00	\$2,200.00	\$4,400.00	83.00%
Communications including website hosting, phone, Constant Contact, etc.	\$9,000.00	\$1,014.67	\$24.09	\$7,961.24	12.00%
Map Shipping & Storage	\$3,000.00	\$102.38	\$32.00	\$2,865.62	4.00%
National Meetings	\$5,000.00	\$55.00		\$4,945.00	1.00%
Regional Meetings/Elections	\$900.00	\$385.00		\$515.00	43.00%
Additional Staff Hours for CMP Implementation Activities with Partners & Stakeholders - Ltrs of support, regional meetings, etc.	\$15,000.00	\$10,450.00	\$1,375.00	\$3,175.00	79.00%
Professional/Technical Services	\$6,889.26			\$6,889.26	0.00%
Website Edits and Updates	\$2,000.00	\$299.00	\$50.00	\$1,651.00	17.00%
Ad/Article Campaigns - Drive GRR Month and AAR	\$4,500.00	\$5,688.00		-\$1,188.00	126.00%
General Material Printing & Supplies	\$800.00			\$800.00	0.00%
Total Operating Budget (78,000 base + 16,889.26 carry forward from FY20)	\$94,889.26	\$38,312.05	\$18,681.09	\$37,896.12	60.00%
Special Projects - Funding for implementation during FY20 and FY21					
Website Updates for Map Tools, Mobile Devices	\$3,642.24	\$450.00	450.00	\$2,742.24	25.00%
Ambassador Development	\$28,000.00	\$966.25	124.80	\$26,908.95	4.00%
New Print Map	\$9,307.90	\$1,262.56	79.64	\$7,965.70	14.00%
Total Special Projects	\$40,950.14	\$2,678.81	654.44	\$37,616.89	8.00%
FY21 Operating Budget Allocation	\$135,839.40				

MN Great River Road All-American Road Promotion Updates

The National MRPC developed and approved logos showing All-American Road status. Minnesota's logo is below along with the new ten state logo. The Minnesota logo will be used on the MN Great River Road website and on any new materials/presentations. A celebratory photo slide show was created by the National MRPC and is available for use by states.



New web page about the designation, including photo gallery and "My Favorites" form, in development for www.mnmississippiriver.com.

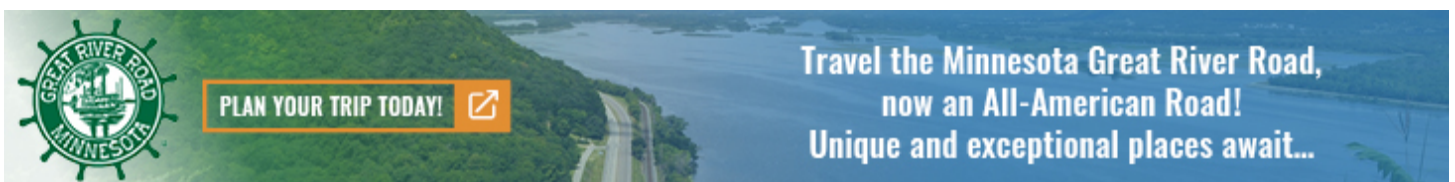


River Travel Magazine partnership underway as approved at February MN-MRPC Meeting.

Series of four online articles. First article posted by April 1 for Spring 2021. Link and article text are attached.

Additional articles will run summer, fall and winter 2021 featuring information from the MN Great River Road All-American Road nomination.

Two digital ads are in rotation online at rivertravelmagazine.com.



Text from - <https://rivertravelmagazine.com/enjoy-majestic-views-and-river-town-history-along-minnesotas-great-river-road/>

ENJOY MAJESTIC VIEWS AND RIVER TOWN HISTORY ALONG MINNESOTA'S GREAT RIVER ROAD!

www.mnmississippiriver.com

The Great River Road is now an All-American Road. Recognizing the scenic and historic treasures, the Federal Highway Administration elevated the Great River Road into an elite class of scenic byways. This spring, escape to exceptional views and river towns from Hastings to the Iowa border.

Here, water and wind created a unique and nationally significant scenic landscape. At Barn Bluff Regional Park in [Red Wing](#), hike to the bluff top for panoramic views. River towns in the region maintain deep historic connections to the Mississippi. The National Register Historic Districts in these towns harken back to the days of lumber and flour milling, grain shipping, and steamboat passenger traffic. Hastings, Red Wing, Wabasha, and Winona boast historic districts with walkable streets and charming local flavor. Built in 1874 and anchoring the St. James District, the [St. James Hotel](#) in Red Wing still serves tourists and business travelers as one of the few remaining hotels of its size and character along the river in Minnesota.

Stretching 21 miles from Red Wing to Reads Landing, [Lake Pepin](#), the birthplace of waterskiing, and largest natural lake on the Mississippi River – is often dotted with sailboats adding to the picturesque scenery. Bald eagles are common in the driftless area. See them up close at Wabasha's [National Eagle Center](#), one of 90 byway [interpretive centers](#) across ten river states. Below Wabasha, the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife & Fish Refuge offers spectacular wildlife viewing during spring migration. Locks and Dams 3 through 8 are themselves on the National Register of Historic Places – and the resulting reservoirs and towboats with barges offer classic Great River Road views.

Between Winona and La Crescent, [Great River Bluffs State Park](#) features two Scientific and Natural Areas – King's and Queen's Bluff, and nearby blossoming apple orchards. In Winona, the [Minnesota Marine Art Museum](#) and [Winona County History Center](#) share byway river stories, while Lake City, Minneiska, Reads Landing, La Crescent, and Brownsville also share their history with walking tours, interpretation, and events.

For more things to see and do, interactive mapping, and digital travel guides, visit www.mnmississippiriver.com.

All-American Grant Opportunity

- The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.
- First Scenic Byway Grant solicitation in ten years to be announced summer 2021. Continued funding anticipated to be in the next Transportation bill, too.
- \$16M total funds; 80 Federal : 20 local match
- Scenic Byway grants support grass-roots collaborative efforts established to help recognize, preserve and enhance designated roads throughout the United States.
- America's Byways® are gateways to adventures where no two experiences are the same, so a variety of project types have been funded.



[National Scenic Byways Program - Planning, Environment, & Real Estate - FHWA \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/nsp/)

FHWA National Scenic Byway Grant Eligible Activities

The [23 USC 162\(c\)](#) outlines the 8 eligible project types for NSBP grants.

1. An activity related to the **planning, design, or development** of a State or Indian tribe scenic byway program.
2. Development and implementation of a corridor management plan to **maintain the scenic, historical, recreational, cultural, natural, and archaeological characteristics of a byway corridor while providing for accommodation of increased tourism and development of related amenities.**
3. **Safety improvements** to a State scenic byway, Indian tribe scenic byway, National Scenic Byway, All-American Road, or one of America's Byways to the extent that the improvements are necessary to accommodate increased traffic and changes in the types of vehicles using the highway as a result of the designation as a State scenic byway, Indian tribe scenic byway, National Scenic Byway, All-American Road, or one of America's Byways.
4. Construction along a scenic byway of a facility for **pedestrians and bicyclists, rest area, turnout, highway shoulder improvement, overlook, or interpretive facility.**
5. An improvement to a scenic byway that will **enhance access** to an area for the purpose of recreation, including water-related recreation.
6. **Protection** of scenic, historical, recreational, cultural, natural, and archaeological resources in an area adjacent to a scenic byway.
7. Development and provision of **tourist information** to the public, including **interpretive information** about a scenic byway.
8. Development and implementation of a scenic byway **marketing** program.

Previous Minnesota Great River Road Grants

- Babe the Blue Ox Rehabilitation
- CSAH 42 - Hastings/ Dakota County Bike and Pedestrian Facilities
- TH 10, 197, 61, 2 Rest Areas at Daytonport, St Cloud, Bemidji, Lake City and Cass Lake
- US 10/TH 1 - Sauk Rapids Bike & Pedestrian Facilities
- Twin Bluffs and Shepard Road Scenic Overlooks
- Roadside Storybook interpretive panels
- LeDuc Historic Site Interpretative Exhibit Planning and Implementation
- Ladyslipper Scenic Byway: Vegetation Plan & Ladyslipper Transplant Program

Minnesota



Corridor Management Plan

The Great River Road was established in 1938 to honor and celebrate the Mississippi River. The byway tells the river's stories and provides access to the Mississippi's scenic, natural, historic, archaeological, cultural and recreational intrinsic resources. In 2016, the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission, Legislative Coordinating Commission and the Minnesota Department of Transportation published a Great River Road Corridor Management Plan (CMP) to serve as a guide for the next 10 to 15 years to preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor and to develop the Great River Road National Scenic Byway as the envisioned parkway. The development of the CMP was able in part through the funding partnership support of the Federal Highway Administration/National Scenic Byways Program, National Park Service and the Minnesota Department of Transportation in addition to the numerous input, assistance and support provided by partners and travelers during the development of the plan. To view the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan and supporting documents visit:

<https://www.mnmississippiriver.com/about-us/management-plan/>

Solicitation Preparation

Consider MnMRPC projects from the 2016 Corridor Management Plan.

- ✓ Plan for letter of support requests from city, county, and intrinsic resource managers.
 - 1.12** Encourage and facilitate new grant applications for corridor improvements by MN-MRPC, MnDOT and local partners
- ✓ Initial next CMP implementation priority was to restore the existing Roadside Story Book interpretive panels; then complete development of the remaining set. Recommend two phases: 1) content development; 2) fabrication and installation
 - 3.6** Use URLs and QR codes on interpretive panels to link visitors to more information online
 - 6.5** Complete the Roadside Storybook project from the 2001 Minnesota Great River Road Interpretive Plan including new content for the three tribal nations, repair or replace existing interpretive panels that are damaged and worn, and develop/install remaining panels included in the interpretive plan
- ✓ Over 90 CMP strategies to build upon!

Holly Slagle, MnDOT's Scenic Byway Coordinator, can help determine project eligibility and coordinate within DOT, the state byway commission and FHWA.



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission

56 33rd Avenue South, #283 • St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301

Phone: 651-341-4196 • E-Mail: info@MnMississippiRiver.com

Members of the House: Anne Claflin (DFL – 54A); Tony Jurgens (R – 54B) **Members of the Senate:** David Senjem (R – 25); Patricia Torres Ray (DFL – 63) **State Agency Appointees:** Paul Hugunin – Agriculture, Scott Bradley – Transportation, Lisa Havelka – Explore Minnesota Tourism, Keith Parker – Natural Resources, Open – Historical Society **Regional Appointees:** Open – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids, Megan Christianson – Grand Rapids to Brainerd, Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River, Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings, Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border **Member at Large:** Anne Lewis

Process for Project Comments, Letters of Support, or Related Action

The following process will be followed after a request for Commission action is received.

- 1) If the timeline allows for discussion at a regular quarterly meeting –
 - The topic will be placed on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair with information sent out to members in advance for review and consideration.
 - The agenda will be posted to the legislative calendar and MN-MRPC meeting webpage to allow for public notice. Public testifiers may be asked to sign up in advance.
 - Discussion and public testimony, if applicable, will take place at the meeting.
 - Commission will vote on requested action.
 - Staff will follow up with letter requestor as directed by the Commission.
- 2) If the timeline does not allow for discussion at a regular quarterly meeting –
 - A regional Commission member may choose to attend meetings for information or communicate with their stakeholders directly regarding an issue, without speaking on behalf of the full Commission or representing the full Commission.
 - The Chair will determine whether to call a special meeting for consideration of the request.
 - The request and any background information will be emailed to MN-MRPC members.
 - A meeting of the MN-MRPC will be scheduled to allow for public testimony with the agenda posted to the legislative calendar and the MN-MRPC meeting webpage. A meeting notice will be posted on the Commission's website, and a room will be available at the State Office Building to allow for members of the public to attend.
 - MN-MRPC members may participate by phone or in person.
 - Discussion will take place and a decision will be made on how to proceed.
 - Commission will vote on requested action.
 - Staff will follow up with letter requestor as directed by the Commission.

The MN-MNRPC asks for the following information to help facilitate the process -

- Name of requestor and contact information
- Topic
- Brief overview or link to details for Commission review
- Action requested – letter (provide draft), MN-MRPC representation at a meeting, presentation to MN-MRPC, material/update for information purposes only, etc.
- Positive or negative impacts to the Great River Road, Scenic Byway Intrinsic Resources (archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, scenic) and/or MN-MRPC mission (To preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor and to develop then national, scenic and historic byway known as the Great River Road.)
- Deadline for requested action or related meeting date
- Details on where letter is to be sent, or meeting to be attended

Adopted 5/19/16; Revised 3/2/17, 8/31/17, 5/30/19



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission

56 33rd Avenue South, #283 • St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301
651-341-4196 • info@MnMississippiRiver.com

Members of the House: Emma Greenman (D-63B); Kristin Robbins (R-34A) **Members of the Senate:** David Senjem (R-25); Patricia Torres Ray (DFL-63) **State Agency Appointees:** Paul Hugunin – Agriculture, Marni Karnowski – Transportation, Lisa Havelka – Explore Minnesota Tourism, Grant Wilson – Natural Resources, David Kelliher – Historical Society **Regional Appointees:** Sally Fineday – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids, Megan Christianson – Grand Rapids to Brainerd, Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River, John Anfinson – Elk River to Hastings, Jennifer Weaver – Hastings to Iowa Border **Member at Large:** Anne Lewis

Sent via email - MplsLocksDisposition@usace.army.mil

March 17, 2021

Col. Karl Jansen, District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Paul District
ATTN: Regional Planning and Environment Division North
180 Fifth Street East, Suite 700
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1678

Dear Colonel Jansen,

The Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC) would like to comment on the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam Disposition Study draft report. Our comments focus on the mission of the MN-MRPC and how that mission relates to the potential opportunities and impacts coming from the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam Disposition Study.

As established under Minnesota Statute 161.1419, the MN-MRPC's 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, which, in February 2021 received All-American Road status. The MN-MRPC promotes, supports, and advances actions, responsibilities, procedures, controls, operational practices, and strategies to maintain the intrinsic archaeological, cultural, natural, historic, recreational, and scenic qualities that support National Scenic Byway Designation. The MN-MRPC's interest in the Disposition Study relates to these intrinsic qualities.

The Great River Road/All-American Road runs adjacent to the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock, and the nearby Mill City Museum is a designated Great River Road Interpretive Center. We know and appreciate that you are partnering with the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area on visitor services at the lock. The St. Anthony Falls Historic District features the Pillsbury A and Washburn A Mills, both of which are National Historic Landmarks, and the James J. Hill Stone Arch Bridge, a National Engineering Landmark. Given its connection to the history of Mississippi River navigation and the development of America's agricultural industry, Upper and Lower St. Anthony Falls Locks and Dams have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. With all the planning and projects already built to turn the St. Anthony Falls riverfront into a world-class visitor destination, the opportunities to inform and educate visitors about the Mississippi River and the region are immense. The Great River Road affords access to that interpretation. **We strongly encourage that you consider how your recommendations and decisions about the lock's future may affect the Great River Road's ability to continue this important and significant access** and that those considerations are included in the final Disposition Study.

The MN-MRPC encourages your consideration of comments submitted or being submitted by our member agencies. The **MN Department of Natural Resources** will be submitting comments separately and, to avoid any confusion, is **abstaining** from participation in this letter specific to the MN-MRPC.

The MN-MRPC includes representatives of the Minnesota Senate and House, the Minnesota Departments of Transportation, Natural Resources and Agriculture, the Minnesota Historical Society, Explore Minnesota Tourism, five regionally elected citizens and an at-large member. The National Park Service serves as a non-voting technical member. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact the MN-MRPC office at 651-341-4196. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Senjem". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "S".

Senator David Senjem, Chair



Member Update to MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Commissioner: Grant Wilson, MN DNR
Quarter: Second (for May 27 Mtg)

Paddling the river along the Great River Road

It's time to get out the canoe and kayak. The [Mississippi](#) National River and Recreation Area Water Trail was one of the first in the nation in 2012. Minnesota has the largest [water trail system](#) in the United States, with a wide network of public water accesses, campsites and rest areas on state water trails on 32 rivers and Lake Superior. Water trails are assets for physical and mental well-being, providing awe-inspiring and meditative experiences to those navigating them or enjoying the surrounding environment.

This [Minnesota Conservation Volunteer article](#) from 2019 describes the soul-satisfying experience of paddling and off the main channel in the back channels of the Mississippi River. The entire Mississippi River is a MN State Water Trail and you can find virtual tours as well as route maps on the [DNR's website](#).

A great source of information like the above, is [The Trailblazer](#), a monthly newsletter featuring activities, recreation tips and insider information from Minnesota State Parks and Trails.

Featured State Wildlife Management Area (WMA) along the Great River Road: [Sand Prairie Wildlife Management and Environmental Education Area](#) in Sherburne County.

This [WMA](#), located on the edge of St. Cloud in the "Scenic" region of the river, has a parking lot on Highway 10, just a five mile drive detour off Great River Road. Unlike other WMAs, the area is closed to hunting and trapping in order to encourage its use for nature study. It features: 650 acres, hiking trails, interpretive kiosk and shelter. A [brochure](#) describes things to see and do. "Visit for Half an Hour or Half a Day Take a short walk to renew your spirit and reconnect to the earth. Or do a more serious exploration and nature study in this huge natural laboratory. Sand Prairie is open year-round. Its trails are for foot travel only and start from the Highway 10 parking lot. One trail, shaped like a figure eight, meanders through the prairie. The other, a rarely used road, leads directly to the boardwalk, Brushland Trail, Dike Trail and observation deck. Both trails have good accessibility; however, uneven ground, vegetation, or water may limit access to some areas." This WMA is a model for potential other "Gateway WMAs" that provide more developed access and signage than typically provided, in an effort to invite broader participation and use of our state managed public lands.

DNR taking aggressive action in Mississippi River, other waters on invasive carp

[From News Release: May 6, 2021](#)

34 silver carp captured in recent multi-agency operation

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is taking further action following the capture of 34 silver carp in Pool 8 of the Mississippi River near La Crosse, Wis. during a recent Modified Unified Method operation. Next steps include increased commercial netting operations, tracking tagged carp, and perhaps another Modified Unified Method operation in the Mississippi River.



Member Update to MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Commissioner: Anne Lewis

Representing: At Large

Quarter: 1st & 2nd, 2021

Minnesota

MN Great River Road Corridor Management Plan Implementation Support

Worked with sub-committee on ads for River Travel magazine/ web site. This advertising campaign satisfies several CMP recommendations around making better use of social media to promote travel on the Great River Road.

State-wide Issue, Project, Event or Partner

The River Travel ad campaign allows MN-MRPC to promote the different sections of the Great River Road seasonally and to the best advantage of the respective areas. We also made use of the intrinsic qualities set forward in the All-American Road application. The campaign itself is MN-MRPC's first foray into promoting itself as a destination unto itself and the road's national significance.

Interview with St. Cloud radio station for All-American Road designation.

MRPC – Ten-State

Ten-state Corridor Management Plan Implementation Support

Coordination and management of virtual national 10-state meeting emphasizing the All-American Advantages of the Great River Road. The event partnered with the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge and the National Scenic Byways Foundation in an effort to attract more Department of Natural Resources attendance, as well as cultural, historic and Interpretive Center participation.

Ten-State Issue, Project, Event or Partner

The national meeting, April 14, was the start of a 10-state effort to promote – and show states how to promote – the Great River Road as a destination unto itself and its national significance.

Interview with USA Today Upper Midwest Travel section writer re: All-American Road designation.



Member Update to MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Commissioner: _____ Wilcox/Zoff _____

Representing: _____ MnDOT _____

Quarter: _____ 2nd _____

Minnesota

MN Great River Road Corridor Management Plan Implementation Support

Hired Jack Flom, SEEDS worker, to continue development for the Plan Your Trip, Plan Your Project and StoryMap products.

Developing Plan Your Trip YouTube videos to help travelers use the interactive map features. Launch aimed for July 4th promotion.

Developing Ambassador Development program, aiming for beta testing and then roll out to MN GRR Interpretive Centers as the first audience.

Confirming Roadside Storybook project development in anticipation of FHWA NSB grant solicitation.

Updating www.mnmississippiriver.com with Chris, Lisa and Meg.

Updating MnGrown member data on the interactive maps and Traveler Resource Collector Application effort is underway.

State-wide Issue, Project, Event or Partner

Regional

MN Great River Road Corridor Management Plan Implementation Support

Regional Issue, Project, Event or Partner

Ongoing transportation project reviews to assure context of the Great River Road and byway traveler needs are incorporated.

Preparing plans and bid documents for new footings and paved area for the Sand Prairie Interpretive Panels. The panels are currently leaning in multiple directions.

MRPC – Ten-State

Ten-state Corridor Management Plan Implementation Support

- Finalizing webpage updates.
- Continuing to work on Ten-State Corridor Management Plan documents including NSB Applications and attachments, All American Road documents, and GIS Shapefiles for GRR Route, GRR Signage, and MRT Route.
- Finalizing its roster.
- Assisting in any new efforts to promote and enhance the All-American Road status.

Ten-State Issue, Project, Event or Partner

Presented at DOT Tri-State Workshop to celebrate MN, IA and WI All-American Road designations and introduce the NSB grant solicitation opportunities to DOT staff working with intrinsic resources and partners.