



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
4th Quarter Meeting
November 21, 2019 • 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.
State Office Building – Basement Hearing Room

DRAFT AGENDA

2:00 p.m.	Welcome & Introductions	Senjem
2:05 p.m.	Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 8/15/19	Senjem/All
2:10 p.m.	Informational Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">- NPS Headquarters/Mississippi River Learning Center (NPS, Great River Passage Conservancy, Mississippi Park Connection)	John Anfinson, Mary deLaittre, Katie Nyberg
2:30 p.m.	Commission Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Budget Report- Regional Meetings	Handout/Lewis/Miller Samp/Christianson/Miller
2:45 p.m.	National MRPC <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2019 Annual Meeting, La Crosse, WI- 2020 Annual Meeting, Bemidji, MN- Drive the Great River Road Month- Committee Updates (Culture & Heritage, Communications & Marketing, Environment, Recreation & Agriculture, Transportation)	Senjem/Samp/Lewis/Zoff Lewis/Zoff/Miller Lewis Committee Members
3:10 p.m.	Commission Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">- MN GRR Print Map- MN GRR Website- Ambassador Development	Zoff/Miller Project Team Zoff/Miller
3:35 p.m.	New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- All American Road Designation – Possible Process for GRR- Mississippi Headwaters Board Conference- 2020 Quarterly Meeting Dates	Zoff Christianson/Miller All
3:50 p.m.	Letter/Action Requests <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Consider Transportation Alternatives Projects Ltrs of Support	All
4:10 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
3rd Quarter Meeting – August 15, 2019
State Office Building, St. Paul MN
MINUTES – Draft**

Commissioners Present

Sally Fineday – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids
Megan Christianson – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings
Sen. David Senjem
Rep. Anne Claflin
Rep. Tony Jurgens
Lisa Havelka – Tourism Appointee
Scott Bradley – Transportation Appointee
Anne Lewis – At Large Member

Technical Advisors/Staff Present

David Kelliher – Historical Society
Gina Bonsignore – Natural Resources

Carol Zoff – Transportation
John Anfinson – National Park Service
Diane Henry Wangenstein – LCC
Greg Hubinger - LCC
Chris Miller - Staff

Commissioners/Technical Advisors Absent

Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border
Paul Hugunin – Agriculture Appointee
Sen. Patricia Torres Ray

Speakers & Guests Present

Matt Glaesman – City of St. Cloud
Suzy Scotty - MnDOT

Meeting called to order at 2:35 p.m. by Chair Senjem. Welcome was extended to new member Sally Fineday of the Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids Region. A quorum was present.

Approve Today's Agenda: Motion by Cordelia Pierson to amend the agenda by addressing Old Business and Letter Requests after the Informational Presentation. Second by Anne Lewis, motion carried. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Scott Bradley to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried.

City of St. Cloud Riverwalk Project: Matt Glaesman from the City of St. Cloud shared an overview of the history, present and future of the St. Cloud Riverwalk Project. The project involves a one mile stretch of riverfront from downtown north to the St. Cloud Hospital and provides a connection to the Lake Wobegon Trail. Commission members asked questions about the costs and needs and discussed options such as application for Transportation Alternatives funding since Scenic Byway Grants no longer exist.

USACE Minneapolis Upper Lock Disposition Study: Cordelia Pierson and John Anfinson provided background. The Upper St. Anthony Lock was closed to navigation in 2015, the National Park Service has since taken over operations of the Visitor Center on a seasonal basis, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers is currently conducting a disposition study to determine future ownership and use of the lock area. Public meetings are being held and public comments will be accepted until October. The dam is owned by Excel Energy. Friends of the Lock and Dam are advocating for a new visitor center at the site but there could be other alternatives as well. There was discussion on potential impacts to National Scenic Byway intrinsic resources and historic district guidelines. Motion by Cordelia Pierson and seconded by Anne Lewis to authorize a letter from the MN-MRPC to the US Army Corps of Engineers, with copies to elected officials and interested parties, urging the Corps to consider byway intrinsic resources and historic district impacts when evaluating alternatives for future uses of the Upper Lock. Discussion included Sen. Senjem noting that he will be looking to the MN-MRPC statute, mission and byway definitions when evaluating this and other letter content. Motion carried.

USACE Upper Mississippi River Master Plan Public Meetings: Public meetings were held in July to gather scoping feedback for this recreations plan that will include USACE property from St. Paul to Guttenberg, Iowa. Feedback will accepted via email until September 30. Information is on pages 15-18 of packet.

Crown Hydro License: A letter from the City of Minneapolis was referenced in the meeting packet, requesting termination of the Crown Mill Hydroelectric Project. The letter was signed by officials

representing the City of Minneapolis along with over 15 stakeholder groups. The MN-MRPC was asked to consider signing on to this letter or providing a letter in support. Cordelia Pierson shared details. The MN-MRPC submitted a letter regarding this project in 2016. Members considered whether to proceed with a letter in support of the City of Minneapolis letter. Motion by Cordelia Pierson and seconded by Scott Bradley to send a letter supporting the City of Minneapolis letter and highlighting the National Scenic Byway intrinsic resource impacts of the project. Discussion followed with members requesting more information about the project and needing additional feedback from their agencies. It was also noted that this new letter would take a position in addition to the requests included in the MN-MRPC letter from 2016. After discussion motion for a letter from the MN-MRPC was withdrawn at this time.

Nokasippi River Area Gravel Mining Proposal Update: Karl Samp and Carol Zoff shared an update in follow up to the letter authorized at the last MN-MRPC meeting. The current gravel mining permit was denied and a moratorium put in place until ordinances are developed. The letter authorized and sent by the MN-MRPC related to evaluation of impacts to byway intrinsic resources was positively received and will be used as the city develops ordinances.

Executive Committee Report: Minutes from the July 30 Executive Committee meeting were referenced in the meeting packet. The committee recommended instituting written reports from members at quarterly meetings to help manage agenda time. Exceptions would be in cases where Commission action is being requested or there are time sensitive issues or matters of special importance to the Great River Road. A draft form for reports was developed by Carol Zoff. Members agreed to try this approach for a few meetings along with limiting verbal reports to two highlights as appropriate. The form will be sent out via email and also posted at <https://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/mrpc/mrpc.html>. The committee also recommended holding one quarterly meeting per year outside the St. Paul, to visit other regions and invite in local speakers. Members were in agreement with this concept and Rep. Jurgens offered Hastings as the first location.

2019 MRPC Annual Meeting – La Crosse, WI: The meeting agenda was referenced in the meeting packet. Attendees will include Sen. Senjem, Karl Samp (Pilot Emeritus), Anne Lewis (Pilot Pro Tem), Carol Zoff (MnDOT) and John Anfinson (NPS – speaker).

2020 MRPC Annual Meeting – Bemidji, MN: The Mississippi River Parkway Commission and Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI) will both be holding 2020 annual meetings in Bemidji. Dates are September 15 – 17, 2020. The Mississippi River Legislative Caucus participates in the annual MRCTI meetings and will be in Bemidji at that time as well. A preliminary planning session for the MRCTI 2020 meeting was held in Bemidji on August 6. Karl Samp, Carol Zoff and Chris Miller were in attendance and one of the goals was to evaluate opportunities for joint sessions of the MRPC and MRCTI. Likely options seem to be the Tuesday evening opening reception and Wednesday evening Mississippi Headwaters trip and dinner. The next MRCTI 2020 planning meeting will be on October 1. In addition, assistance will be needed in coming months from MN-MRPC members in planning and carrying out the MRPC 2020 meeting agenda.

Relay of Voices: The National MRPC is a partner on this event and the group came through Minnesota in July. Several communities were involved and stories of individuals were shared on the website and blog at <https://relayofvoices.com/>. MN-MRPC member Sally Fineday was one of the featured “voices.”

Drive the Great River Road Month: September is annual Drive the Great River Road Month, celebrated in all ten river states. Anne Lewis shared plans for Minnesota’s promotion of the month, which focus on MN Great River Road State and National Parks. A news release is currently out for approval of partners, and all MN-MRPC agencies and members will be asked to post and share information. A new online story map will be launched to celebrate the month. Suzy Scotty, MnDOT GIS student worker, was introduced to the group and shared the draft story map she has developed after visiting nine MN Great River Road State Parks. Motorcycle travel was suggested and discussed as the theme for a future Drive Month feature.

MRPC Committee Updates: Anne Lewis reported for the Marketing Committee and noted that the Flavors of the Great River Road promotion recently wrapped up. Carol Zoff reported that the Transportation Committee is focusing in implementation of the new ten state Corridor Management Plan

and will be working with all committee chairs. Karl Samp reported that the Executive Committee is working on a news scope of service agreement with the National Office.

MN GRR Print Map Review: Carol Zoff and Suzy Scotty shared a current draft of the new map, which is scheduled for printing and distribution in spring of 2020. This is possible, along with Ambassador Development and website updating, due to the project funding received by the Commission for the current biennium. Special thanks were noted to the Legislative Coordinating Commission. The new map design is similar in format to the MN State Highway Map and includes a drivable map of the Great River Road, call out maps of communities, and feature boxes for the 12 National Great River Road Interpretive Centers located in Minnesota.

Ambassador Development: A proposed two year project outline was included in the meeting packet. The Executive Committee has reviewed and provided feedback as noted in their meeting minutes. Member discussion included the importance of broadening the program in the future to include more volunteers and general community members to share local culture and stories and also a suggestion to use information videos rather than webinars as on-going training tools.

MN GRR Website: The current website has existed for many years and is in need of updating to improve overall functionality and use on mobile devices. Notice was also recently received that the current website host will be updating servers and websites in the format of the current MN GRR sites will no longer be supported as of early 2020. This now helps drive the website project timeline. Megan Christianson, Lisa Havelka, Carol Zoff and Chris Miller will be serving on the work team for this project and will request feedback/information from Commission members at various points along the way.

Florence Township Gravel Mining Proposal: Carol Zoff shared information recently received from a local stakeholder as Florence Township continues to consider mining proposals. Byway intrinsic resources are being considered and MnDOT is also involved and assisting in determining any impacts to scenic easements. A map of the area was provided in the packet.

Mississippi Gorge Regional Park Master Plan: Comments regarding the plan provided by the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area were included in the packet. In addition, Carol Zoff reviewed the plan and provided feedback on the need to address maintenance of GRR signage, which was shared with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board by Cordelia Pierson as Regional Commissioner. Pierson recommended that others contact Zoff if plans/projects could benefit from review related to byway intrinsic resources and the Corridor Management Plan.

At-Large Member Report (Anne Lewis): A Brand USA information event was recently held in the Twin Cities and provided details on how this organization brands and markets the United States to international visitors. Their approaches center on video and story content. Much of the information is applicable to the Great River Road.

Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids (Sally Fineday): Sally Fineday is pleased to join the Commission and plans to meet with both White Earth Nation and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to explore how they could possibly work jointly to share stories and history especially as related to the Headwaters. She also plans to engage with Bemidji, Cass Lake and Bena communities.

Grand Rapids to Brainerd (Megan Christianson): A new Mississippi River pedestrian/bicycle bridge has opened in downtown Grand Rapids with a ribbon cutting planned for September. Art and historic markers are being installed to tie in with the new bridge. All new downtown art pieces will have a connection to the river. Funding is being sought to bridge a gap between trails and parks along the river in the downtown area. A grant is also being pursued for a video art project and brochure. Communities in Aitkin County – Jacobson, Palisade, Aitkin and McGregor – are interested in nominating sites to be designated as National Great River Road Interpretive Centers. This would likely begin in 2020.

Brainerd to Elk River (Karl Samp): Information on Brainerd and St. Cloud riverfront efforts has been presented today and at the previous meeting providing good examples of activity in the region.

Elk River to Hastings (Rep. Claflin, Rep. Jurgens, Cordelia Pierson): Rep. Jurgens reported on attending a meeting convened by U.S. Rep. Angie Craig involving various agencies regarding river issues such as dredging and navigation. Reps. Jurgens and Claflin also met recent with the Cottage Grove Economic Development Authority including time on the river. Concerns included challenges of moving products on the river due to channel width. Rep. Claflin will be attending the Mississippi River Legislative Caucus meeting in Memphis in September. Pierson referenced regional issues and projects discussed earlier in the meeting, and also referenced a recent sailing experience on Lake Pepin with the wish that all members have an opportunity to experience the river in a new way.

Historical Society (David Kelliher): Historic site season will be winding down after Labor Day. The Minnesota Scenic Byways Conference will be held October 15 – 16 in Onamia, hosted by the newly designated Mille Lacs Scenic Byway. MNHS is a member of the Minnesota Scenic Byways Commission and looks forward to the event. A tour of the Mille Lacs Indian Museum may be included.

Transportation (Scott Bradley/Carol Zoff): A written report was included in the packet and was referenced.

Natural Resources (Gina Bonsignore): Keith Parker will be leaving the DNR and serving as the new Executive Director of Great River Greening. A new DNR Central Region Director will be announced soon. Karl Samp sent greetings and congratulations to Parker on behalf of the MN-MRPC.

Tourism (Lisa Havelka): Statewide listening sessions were recently held and thanks were expressed to those that participated. A new Explore Minnesota strategic plan is now in development and details will be shared as available. The Southern Minnesota Tourism Association (SMTA) Annual Meeting will be held September 18 – 19 in Winona. The event will include a boat tour led by the Winona County Historical Society. It was noted that all SMTA meetings are open to others interested in attending, including MN-MNRC members. Information on future meetings will be shared as those dates approach.

Next Meeting – November 21, 2019, 2:00 – 4:30 p.m., State Office Building Basement Hearing Room

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:55 p.m.

MN-MRPC FY20 Activity/Project Budget

11-11-19

<u>Activity/Item</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>11/4/2019</u>	<u>Pending</u>	<u>Remaining</u>	<u>% Spent</u>
MN-MRPC Operating Budget					
Quarterly Meetings (4 @ up to \$1,650 each)	\$6,600.00	\$851.60		\$5,748.40	13%
Special Meeting and/or other Commissioner meetings travel & per diem	\$2,000.00	\$266.60		\$1,733.40	13%
Executive Committee Meetings (2 @ \$300)	\$600.00	\$0.00		\$600.00	0%
MRPC Dues	\$15,000.00	\$0.00		\$15,000.00	0%
Admin Contract	\$26,400.00	\$6,600.00	\$2,200.00	\$17,600.00	33%
Website & phone basic costs (incl. 800 website + 300 phone + 204 Constant Contact)	\$1,600.00	\$517.43	\$124.28	\$958.29	40%
National Meetings	\$8,700.00	\$803.42		\$7,896.58	9%
Regional Meetings/Elections	\$900.00	\$486.85	\$92.34	\$320.81	64%
Mailing/Shipping Maps (10 State and MN GRR Maps)	\$500.00	\$28.00	\$18.00	\$454.00	9%
Additional Staff Hours for CMP Implementation Activities (incl. regional mtgs, ambassador program mgmt, letters of support/comment, investment inventory)	\$15,000.00	\$4,015.00	\$1,100.00	\$9,885.00	34%
Website Programming Changes - Minimal	\$500.00	\$89.10		\$410.90	18%
General Material Printing & Supplies	\$200.00	\$0.00		\$200.00	0%
Total Operating Budget	\$78,000.00	\$13,658.00		\$60,807.38	18%
Special Projects - Funding for Implementation during FY20 and FY21					
Website Updates for Map Tools, Mobile Devices	\$20,000.00		\$3,575.00		18%
Ambassador Development	\$28,000.00				
New Print Map	\$34,000.00				
Total Special Projects	\$82,000.00				
Estimated Total Expenses	\$160,000.00				
Total FY 20 Allocation	\$149,860.00				
LCC Funds for Website	\$10,140.00				
Total Funds Available	\$160,000.00				
Amount Remaining	\$0.00				



2019 MRPC Annual Meeting recap

We had a successful and productive meeting in La Crosse, Wisconsin last month. A big thank you to everyone who attended! Here are a few highlights from our lineup of speakers.

- Designees from the WI Departments of Transportation and Tourism presented updates on infrastructure and the impact of tourism on the Great River Road.
- Francis Shelfhout with the WI Department Transportation discussed bicycle routes on the WI Great River Road.
- Consultant Fred Lochner shared stories that could help us consider how to raise public official awareness of the Great River Road.
- It was wonderful to hear from the NSB Foundation board member as the Reviving America's Scenic Byways Act of 2019 recently passed through Congress.
- Our federal agency partners John Anfinson and Sabrina Chandler shared advice on working with federal agencies.

Special thanks to Sabrina for organizing a memorable paddling trip on a beautiful afternoon! Others toured the newest interpretive center on Wisconsin's Great River Road and viewed the tanks stocked with thousands of fish that were ready to go into waterways across the country.

After the mobile sessions we met for a farm to table dinner at the Shrine of Guadalupe. Who could forget that wonderful meal, the beautiful setting—and the delicious pie!

Thank you to WI-MRPC and chair Sherry Quamme for your planning and warm Wisconsin welcome—here's to enjoying Wisconsin beer and cheese along the Great River Road!

Special recognition

- **Stewardship Award**
Angie Yu and Two Rivers Fisheries in Kentucky

- **Honorary Member**
Al Lorenz (Wisconsin)

- **New Interpretive Centers**
Three new interpretive centers were approved at the national meeting:
 - [Johnny Cash Boyhood Home](#)
 - [Sultana Disaster Museum](#)
 - [Delta Gateway Museum](#)

Technical Committee Minutes

Committee minutes are posted online and will be updated as we receive them.

- [Culture & Heritage](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [ERA](#)

Don Frerichs

The Great River Road recently lost one of its champions this summer. Don Frerichs was a past pilot, Minnesota commissioner and legislator who was very passionate about the river and was fundamental in the launch of the MRPC endowment. Don will be missed.

Call for Photos

If you've obtained any good fall photos via social media or other sources that we might highlight, please pass them on! These photos are of tremendous value to the website, promotions and social media—we can use seasonal photos, scenic images, and photos of people engaged in activities on the route. Photos can be sent to info@mrpcmembers.com.

Upcoming calls and national meetings

Mark your calendars! Here are upcoming meetings and calls we have scheduled.

- **Transportation Committee Teleconference:** October 28, 1:30pm CST ([agenda](#))
- **Marketing Committee Teleconference:** November 4, 1pm CST
- **MRPC board call:** December 13, 9am
- **2020 Semi-Annual Meeting:** April 21-23, 2020, Baton Rouge, LA
- **2020 Annual Meeting:** September 15-17, 2020, Bemidji, MN

Great River Road in Martha Stewart Living!

facilitate this piece and it was featured in the Out & About section. The writer called the byway, “a glorious getaway.” Here’s a screenshot of the article.

Great River Road in the news

- [Conference in La Crosse explores impact of the 'Great River Road' – WKBT](#)
- [Fall for the Mississippi River — Drive the Great River Road month – Quad City Times](#)
- [Follow the Great River Road to Minnesota Parks – aitkinage.com](#)
- [These 7 parks offer some of the best views of the Mississippi River in Wisconsin – Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#)
- [These spots are Illinois' best for seeing fall colors – WROK 1440](#)



Follow us:   

Mississippi River Parkway Commission 701 E. Washington Ave., Suite 202 Madison, WI 53703
Toll Free: 866-763-8310 Phone: 608-268-0902 Fax: 608-242-8896 Email: MRPC@pilchbarnet.com



2019 Drive the Great River Road Month Minnesota



Goals

- Raise awareness of the Great River Road and its ability to connect Minnesota tourists and residents to the state's heritage and outdoors by exploring state parks along the Mississippi River.
- Get people to drive the Great River Road to enjoy state and national parks that are nearest them and then plan more GRR trips for the future.
- Promote the ten state GRR and sweepstakes

Governor's Proclamation

- Requested and received proclamation from the Governor's Office, posted at www.mnmississippiriver.com & sent to National MRPC Office
- The proclamation was displayed at the National MRPC Annual Meeting in La Crosse and information on the new MN GRR state park online travel guide was presented during a general session.

MN Great River Road Social Media

- 15 Facebook posts (Great River Road MN). Total Facebook reach – 3,543 (compared to 3,950 in Sept. 2018, 3,324 in Sept. 2017 and average reach June – August 2019 of 481). Engagement for September 2019 posts – 300, compared to 251 in September 2018.
- Top Facebook post – Sept. 3 - *"September is Drive the Great River Road Month in all ten Mississippi River states! We'll be posting Outdoor Adventure Highlights throughout the month from 12 state parks and one national park along the Minnesota Great River Road. Our special correspondent, Suzy, put together an online travel guide highlighting her first visits to nine of these parks. Use it to inspire your own visits or as a virtual visit to Mississippi River parks as a break from your busy day..."*
- Twitter (@GreatRiverRdMN) – 3 MN GRR Tweets
- Social media posts by Visit Grand Rapids, Explore Minnesota, America's Waterway

MN Great River Road Website

- Button/link to new MN GRR state park travel guide developed at MnDOT. 831 visits to the new travel guide.
- General information was posted about the sweepstakes and event.
- 13,833 website visits in September (compared to June – 15,378; July – 16,601; Aug – 16,009).
- 818 MN Great River Road Map/Travel Planners and 153 MN GRR Regional Maps downloaded.

News Release

- Release was sent to media list, distribution partners (CVBs/Chambers, State Parks, Interpretive Centers, Welcome Centers, etc.) and MN-MRPC members.
- Targeted releases with specific state park photos also sent to media in area of state/national parks promoted.
- Articles/Blogs – Aitkin Independent Age, Brainerd Dispatch, Monticello Times, River Travel Magazine, Mississippi Park Connection



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 Claitor (DFL - 54A); Tony Jurgens (R - 54B) **Members of the Senate:** David Jensen (R - 25); Patricia Torres Ray (DFL - 63) **State Senator Appointees:** Paul Huginin - Agriculture; Scott Bradley - Transportation; Lisa Hawella - Explore Minnesota Tourism; Open - Natural Resources; Open - Historical Society **Regional Appointees:** Jolly Hinesley - Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids; Megan Christensen - Grand Rapids to Brainerd; Karl Kemp - Brainerd to Elk River; Cordelia Pearson - Elk River to Hastings; Sheronne Mulry - Hastings to Iowa Border **Member at Large:** Anne Lewis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Chris Miller, Director, MN-MRPC
chris@fogpartners.com, 651-341-4196

Follow the Great River Road to Some of Minnesota's Greatest Parks

St. Cloud, Minn. (August 19, 2019): If it's the great outdoors you seek this fall, follow the Great River Road, Minnesota's longest National Scenic Byway, as it meanders the Mississippi River to 12 state parks and the only national park dedicated to the Mississippi River.

If you're a fan of the National Park Service's parks and monuments, you'll be pleased to find Minnesota has a parallel system of its own, with great outdoor experiences that include just as many recreational options, only in smaller land areas. Following the Great River Road from the headwaters to the bluffs provides a route to explore 12 of those state parks, plus the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

September is national "Drive the Great River Road" month. Traveling Minnesota's Great River Road in fall offers an array of vistas and outdoor experiences unmatched in quantity by any other of the 10 Mississippi River states. Twelve of Minnesota's state parks - plus a national park - call this route home and offer the traveler encounters with nature, history, wildlife and beautiful scenery.

Starting near the river's headwaters, make your way along County Road 2, the Great River Road, to the Mississippi River's pinnacle site - Itasca State Park, where the great American river starts its journey first north, then east, and then finally south to the Gulf of Mexico. This is one of the country's iconic Mississippi River destinations and this Minnesota state park has enriched the tourist experience. Besides the proverbial walk-across-the-Mississippi attraction, there are kayaks, hiking and birding options all within a few steps of each other.

In the middle of the state and Minnesota's Great River Road, take the Great River Road to the only national park dedicated to the Mississippi River. You'll find it starting in Dayton at the north end or on U.S. Highway 61 in Madison at the southern end. In between is something from historic East Scollie to

Outdoor Notes: Follow the Great River Road to some of Minnesota's greatest parks

Written By: Brainerd Dispatch | Sep 7th 2019 - 5am.



Crow Wing State Park is one of 12 state parks along the Great River Road. Submitted photo

September is national "Drive the Great River Road" month. Twelve of Minnesota's state parks plus a national park call this route, Minnesota's longest National Scenic Byway, home



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Proclamation

WHEREAS: The Great River Road encompasses 3,000 miles of interconnected roads that follow the Mississippi River through 10 states, from Lake Itasca in Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS: The Great River Road has been designated a National Scenic Byway for its historical, cultural, recreational, natural, and scenic treasures; and

WHEREAS: The Great River Road connects hundreds of vibrant cities and unique river towns; and

WHEREAS: The Great River Road is the ideal way to discover and experience the rich culture of the Mississippi River region, the heart of America; and

WHEREAS: The Minnesota Great River Road spans 565 miles, 43 communities, 20 counties, 3 tribes and 6 unique destination areas - linking travelers from near and far with all the riches of the Mississippi River region; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TIM WALZ, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim September 2019 as:

DRIVE THE GREAT RIVER ROAD MONTH

in the State of Minnesota.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this 26th day of August.

Tim Walz
GOVERNOR

Steve Simon
SECRETARY OF STATE



Great River Road MN
September 3

Like Page

September is Drive the Great River Road Month in all ten Mississippi River states! We'll be posting Outdoor Adventure Highlights throughout the month from 12 state parks and one national park along the Minnesota Great River Road. Our special correspondent, Suzy, put together an online travel guide highlighting her first visits to nine of these parks. Use it to inspire your own visits or as a virtual visit to Mississippi River parks as a break from your busy day. Find it at www.mnmississippiriver.com! And for info on all Mississippi River states be sure to visit www.experiencemississippiriver.com.

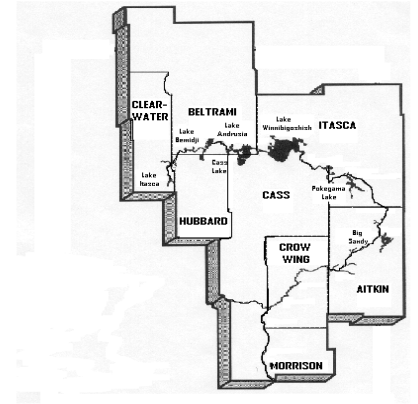
Drive the GREAT RIVER ROAD MONTH



Mississippi Headwaters Board Biennial Conference

Chase on the Lake
502 Cleveland Blvd. W.
Walker, MN
Walker Bay Ballroom

November 1, 2019
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM



8:30 AM- Registration

9:00 AM

♦ **Pledge of Allegiance & Welcome** – MHB Chairman Mike Wilson and Executive Director Tim Terrill

9:05 AM **Legislative Welcome**

9:15 AM **Opening Comments-** John Jaschke, Board of Water & Soil Resources Executive Director

9:20 AM **Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project** – See how easements and acquisitions with a habitat screening tool can help effectively implement habitat complexes across 400 miles. Bob McGillivray, The Trust for Public Land; Dan Steward, Board of Water & Soil Resources; Tim Terrill, Miss. Headwaters Board

10:00 AM **Minnesota Traditions 2020 Campaign-** See what education was done last year, and what new opportunities are on the horizon. Tim Terrill, MHB

10:20 PM **Regional Stormwater Implementation-** A stormwater retrofit study completed back in 2014 for Miss. River cities is producing results for the City of Baxter and Bemidji. Brad Chapulis, Baxter city administrator, and Rita Albrecht, Mayor of Bemidji

10:50 AM **Comprehensive Plan Summary-** A look at the MHB Comprehensive Planning process the MHB developed and participated in over the past few years to update the Comprehensive Plan.

11:20 AM **Mississippi River Recreational Sign Project-** The MHB is working with local counties and partners to implement a signage program that will allow for specific recreational opportunities on the Miss. River.

11:40 AM **Closing-** Sarah Strommen, MN Dept. of Natural Resources Commissioner

11:50 PM- Lunch Provided

1:00 PM Adjourn

MN-MRPC 2020 Meeting Dates Draft for Consideration 11/21/19

1st Quarter – February 6, 2020
(alternates February 13 or 20)

2nd Quarter – May 28, 2020
(alternate June 4)

3rd Quarter – August 13, 2020
(alternate August 6)

4th Quarter – November 19, 2020
(alternate November 12)

Meetings to be held from 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. in the State Office Building unless otherwise noted.
Field trip location under consideration by Executive Committee for August meeting.



Member Update to MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Commissioner: Anne Lewis

Representing: At-Large

Quarter: August 16 – November 20, 2019

MRPC – Ten-State

MRPC Board meeting: Minnesota MRPC Chair oriented the MRPC Board to the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators Mississippi River sub-caucus and their work.

Wisconsin State Representative Jill Billings:

- Talked about the importance of the “Silent Sports” and Outdoor Recreation to the economy of Wisconsin and particularly her area of La Crosse.
- Scenic Byways increase tourism and increased tourism means increased traveler spending

Carol Zoff, Minnesota:

- Progress of the Comprehensive Management Plan Implementation
- “Intrinsic values [of byways] embody the promise of scenic byways”

Sabrina Chandler: National Fish and Wildlife Management Area Manager & John Anfinson, MN-MRPC & Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Superintendent presented on working with federal agencies:

- 41 National Wildlife Refuges on the Mississippi River
- 33 (?) National Parks on the Mississippi River
- Both cited willingness to work together to increase travel on the Great River Road and programs they know of to assist with that effort.
- Sabrina referenced new research finding highway right of ways are good for pollinators

Wisconsin Secretary of Tourism Sarah Meany:

- “Wisconsin Curiosity Challenge”
- Sited “Outdoor Nation” report on the economic data on recreation.

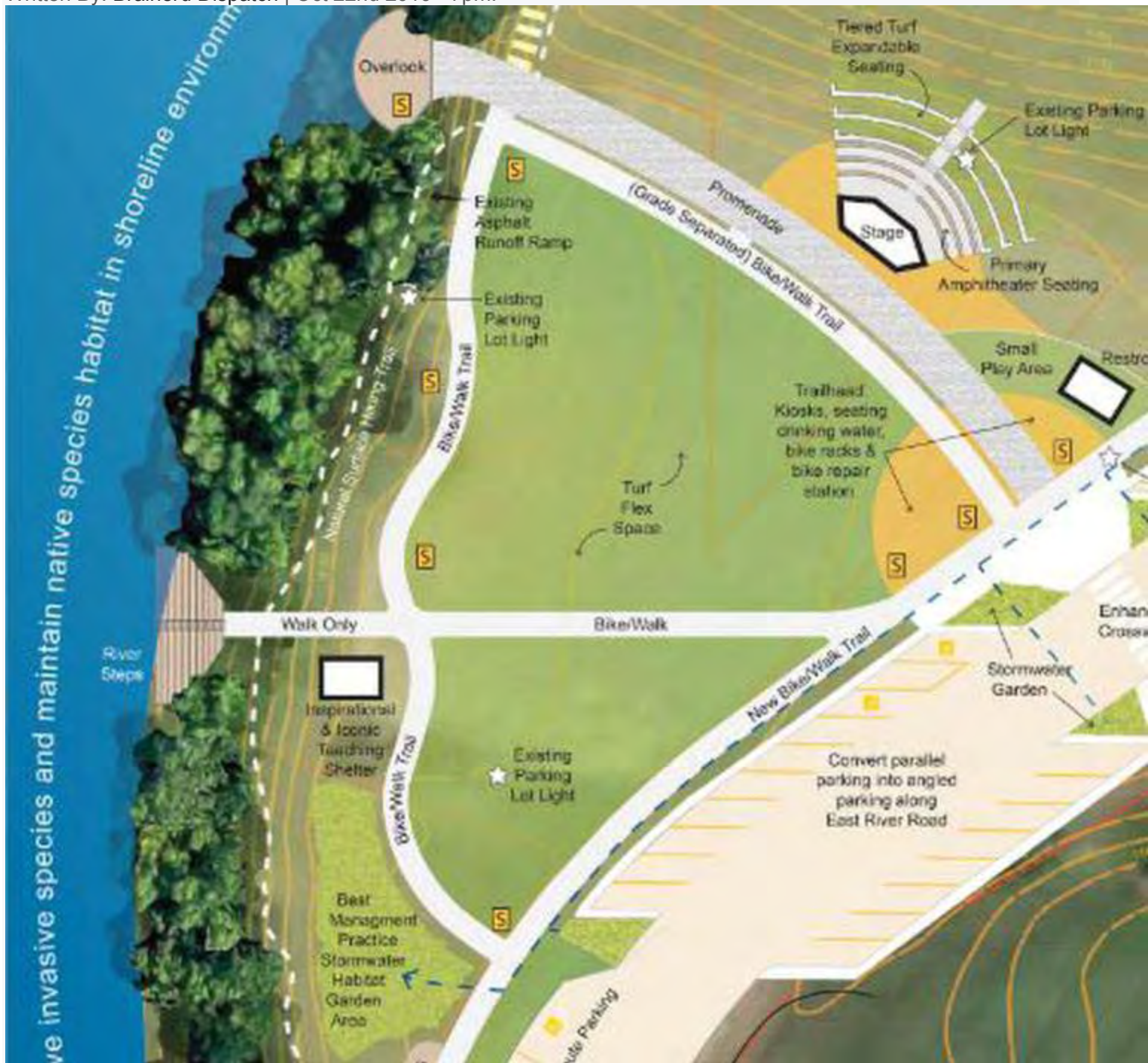
*Iowa Report: New “Biker’s Passport” for traveling the Great River Road. Retail and restaurants along the Great River Road who cater to bikers (motorcyclists) paid for 1-page ads in pocket-size passport.

*Wisconsin Report: Turning to series of podcasts with interviews of people on the Great River Road telling their own stories. Very well done, short and entertaining.

Endowment Committee – Newly formed

Community input sought on Mississippi River park

Written By: Brainerd Dispatch | Oct 22nd 2019 - 7pm.



A draft concept plan from Brainerd's Riverfront Committee shows proposed plans for Mississippi Landing, a riverfront park along East River Road.

The Brainerd Riverfront Committee has developed a design concept for a riverfront park and trailhead and now seeks input from the community.

The goal of Mississippi Landing, the proposed name, is transform the downtown riverfront into a gathering place where residents and visitors can easily access and enjoy the Mississippi River.

The park will be along East River Road on the hillside below the North Star Apartments, near the high school baseball fields.

“We are bringing the two most important parts of the city together: the river and the people,” Don Gorham, co-chair of the Brainerd Riverfront Committee, stated in a news release. “This is about both community and economic development. We hope to make Brainerd a better place to live and work, and make the Mississippi River more accessible and enjoyable.”

The city of Brainerd was selected in 2019 by the National Park Service River, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to assist in the design and layout of the park. The riverfront committee worked with National Parks Service staff to brainstorm ideas and bring a draft concept plan to life. Printed copies of the draft concept plan will be displayed around town on community bulletin boards, at Central Lakes College and at the Brainerd Family YMCA through the survey period.

The plan currently includes a hillside amphitheater and stage, which could be used as a site for the Lakes Area Music Festival and other community performances; a wide promenade that could accommodate a variety of vendors; several river overlooks; a canoe/kayak launch; an outdoor classroom and a small children’s play area. Mississippi Landing will eventually connect to all regional bike trails and be a central point in creating a more walkable and bikeable city.

Mississippi Landing Trailhead will replace the old parking lot in that area, which is problematic for stormwater management. Diagonal parking will be added along East River Road. The design concept also includes several rain gardens to help with stormwater management.

The Riverfront Committee now seeks community input on the draft concept plan. The survey is available at www.brainerdriverfront.org or on the Brainerd Riverfront Facebook page. Community members are invited to take the survey and offer input on the design concept through Nov. 4.