



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**1st Quarter Meeting – February 23, 2011**  
**2:30 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**State Office Building Room 500 North**  
**DRAFT AGENDA**

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<b>2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	Johnson
<b>2:35 p.m.</b>	<b>Approve Today's Agenda &amp; Minutes from 8/26/10 &amp; 11/18/10</b>	Johnson/All
<b>2:40 p.m.</b>	<b>Commission Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Election of 2011 Officers (Possibly tabled until 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr Mtg)</li><li>- Appointment of At-Large Member/Secretary</li><li>- Financial Status Report</li><li>- Legislative Session Update</li></ul>	All All Miller House/Senate Members
<b>2:55 p.m.</b>	<b>National MRPC Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- MRPC Board</li><li>- National Committees: Culture &amp; Heritage, ERA, Marketing, Transportation</li></ul>	Johnson Committee Members
<b>3:10 p.m.</b>	<b>State MRPC Travel Updates &amp; Upcoming Events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 2011 Explore MN Tourism Conference, January 25 -26, Nisswa</li><li>- Great River Gathering, May 12, 2011</li><li>- Other Events Recently Attended or Coming Up</li></ul>	All
<b>3:20 p.m.</b>	<b>Old Business - Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- CapX 2020</li><li>- Mississippi River Bicycle Trail (MRT)</li></ul>	Johnson/Samp/Zoff
<b>3:35 p.m.</b>	<b>New Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- HF 95/SF 39 - Mississippi River Critical Area (Repeal)</li><li>- Action Request: FY 11 Federal Historic Preservation, Trails and Bike/Pedestrian Funding</li></ul>	Johnson Zoff/All
<b>3:50 p.m.</b>	<b>2011 National Scenic Byways Conference, Aug 21 – 24, Mpls</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- MN-MRPC Attendance</li><li>- Application for National Scenic Byways Awards</li><li>- Great River Road Field Workshops, Booth Staffing, Door Prizes, etc.</li></ul>	Michelle Johnson, America's Byways Resource Center (phone)
<b>4:10 p.m.</b>	<b>Work Group Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Marketing, Economic Development, Capital Improvement, Organization</li></ul>	Work Group Members
<b>4:20 p.m.</b>	<b>Agency and Regional Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids</li><li>- Grand Rapids to Brainerd</li><li>- Brainerd to Elk River</li><li>- Elk River to Hastings</li><li>- Hastings to Iowa Border</li><li>- Agriculture</li><li>- Explore MN Tourism</li><li>- Historical Society</li><li>- Natural Resources</li><li>- Transportation</li></ul>	Frost Schaubach Samp Labovitz Mulry Kinney Frerichs/Offerman Kajer/Kelliher Murray/Wheeler Pafko/Zoff
<b>4:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Recognition of Distinguished Service to the Commission - Andy Golfis</b>	All
<b>5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Wrap Up and Adjourn</b>	



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
3rd Quarter Meeting  
August 26, 2010  
Heartwood Conference Center - Crosby, MN**

**MINUTES – Approved 2/23/11**

**Commissioners Present**

Andy Golfis – Member At-Large  
Rep. Sheldon Johnson – MN-MRPC Chair  
Frank Pafko – Transportation Appointee  
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border  
Paul Labovitz – Elk River to Hastings  
John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd  
Greg Murray – Natural Resources Appointee  
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee  
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River

**Others Present**

Miranda Anderson – Brainerd Lakes Chamber  
Todd Holman – The Nature Conservancy

**Tech Advisors & Staff Present**

David Kelliher – Historical Society  
Carol Zoff – Transportation  
Cynthia Wheeler – Natural Resources  
Chris Miller - Staff

**Commissioners & Advisors Absent**

Robin Kinney – Agriculture Appointee  
Senator Sandy Pappas  
Representative Greg Davids  
Don Frerichs – Explore MN Tourism Appointee  
Jack Frost – Itasca to Grand Rapids  
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism

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Following lunch, meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. by Chairman Johnson, followed by introductions. A quorum was present. Andrea Hart-Kajer, appointee from the Minnesota Historical Society, was welcomed.

**Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Schaubach provided an overview of special portions of the agenda, including guest speakers from the region and a visit to the Cuyuna Country Recreation Area to view new amenities along the Great River Road. Commissioner Golfis made a motion seconded by Commissioner Mulry to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes from May 27, 2010**

Minutes from the 2010 Second Quarter Meeting (May 27, 2010) were distributed via email in advance and hard copy at the meeting. Commissioner Samp made a motion and Commissioner Pafko seconded to approve the May 27 minutes as presented. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**Commission Business – Financial Report and Authorization to Sign Commission Contracts**

A financial report showing FY '10 final status was distributed and discussed. Commissioner Golfis made a motion to approve the FY '10 final financial report, seconded by Commissioner Schaubach. Motion passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed a resolution authorizing the Chair to sign contracts on behalf of the MN-MRPC, in consultation with LCC as fiscal agent. It was noted that this is recommended documentation of current practice. Commissioner Kajer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Samp, that the MN-MRPC authorizes the Chair to negotiate and execute contracts on behalf of the Commission with concurrence of the Executive Director of the Legislative Coordinating Commission as fiscal agent for the Commission, and in keeping with approved Commission budgets. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion also took place regarding MRT (Mississippi River Bicycle Trail) maps currently under development at the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Commissioner Pafko made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Labovitz, to request that Mn/DOT include the Great River Road on MRT maps and all other public maps produced. Motion passed unanimously.

**National MRPC Updates**

**2010 MRPC Annual Meeting:** The 2010 Annual Meeting will be held in La Crosse, Wisconsin on September 10 – 11. This will be the only opportunity to attend a National MRPC Meeting in the current

fiscal year, since a Semi-Annual meeting will not be held on the spring of 2011, as a one time change to the regular meeting schedule. MN-MRPC members discussed one versus two national meetings per year, with varying opinions from the group. The MN-MRPC has received authorization to fund six attendees for the La Crosse meeting. Don Frerichs, Andy Golfis, Sheronne Mulry, Rep. Johnson, Paul Labovitz and Sen. Senjem will attend. Carol Zoff will also be in attendance. The MN-MRPC submitted two nominations for National MRPC awards, Karl Samp, for his outstanding service to the Commission including serving as chair for the 2009 Annual Meeting, and Tine Thevinin, for long term dedication to river related causes in the Bluffs Region.

**Future MRPC National Meeting Host States:** 2011 Annual Meeting – Arkansas; 2012 Semi-Annual Meeting – Illinois; 2012 Annual Meeting – Tennessee; 2013 Semi-Annual Meeting – Iowa; 2013 Annual Meeting – Missouri.

**Committee Updates:** Culture & Heritage – Louis Intres of Arkansas State University is working on the oral history project, and was in the Twin Cities earlier in August to conduct interviews. He met with Andy Golfis and Nina Archabal at the Mill City Museum. Thanks to both for their help, and also to the Minnesota Historical Society for providing the meeting space and help arranging interviews. Marketing – the 2010 National Great River Road Geocaching Contest is running from August 1 – December 31. This is a later end date than originally discussed to give more time for entries. Prizes will again be needed for a Minnesota basket, including an overnight stay. Please notify the MN-MRPC office if you can help.

### **State MRPC Travel Updates and Upcoming Events**

Chairman Johnson reminded everyone to request approval prior to attending events to be reimbursed by the MN-MRPC. An email serves as sufficient documentation. The requests assist in budget planning. Special authorization must be obtained in advance of any out-of-state travel or reimbursement/per diem cannot be approved. Expense reimbursement forms and instructions were distributed.

Commissioner Mulry reported that the Nina and Pinta recently traveled up the Mississippi with stops in Winona and Lake City.

The 2010 Minnesota Scenic Byways Conference will be October 26 – 27 at the Gunflint Lodge, hosted by the Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway.

### **CapX 2020 Update**

Technical Advisor Zoff provided background on the August 2 meeting and van tour focused on the Monticello – St. Cloud route, attended by representatives of the MN-MRPC, Mn/DOT, and CapX2020/Xcel Energy. Notes from the meeting/tour were distributed. Advisor Zoff described the high level of impact the new power transmission lines will have on the Great River Road in this area, including crossing the GRR in six locations. CapX 2020 is asking for the MN-MRPC's specific recommendations related to minimizing the impact on the Great River Road, and enhancing the Great River Road experience in general, including projected costs which could likely be covered by CapX 2020. Minimizing impact would involve maintaining trees and vegetation as much as possible where power poles are to be placed and putting in new plantings where practical and effective. Enhancements to help offset negative impacts could include plantings to better screen the Great River Road from I-94; road shoulder improvements and/or interpretive and MRT signage. Detailed maps of the area will be marked up to note specific recommendations and will be shared with MN-MRPC members and also the counties involved (Wright and Stearns).

Commissioner Mulry shared information on the Hampton – La Crosse route. She served on a task force to determine the scope of content for the Environmental Impact Statement to be developed for the route. The MN-MRPC Office has registered electronically to receive information updates as the process continues and will send dates/details out to the Commission as they become available. Technical Advisor Zoff noted the importance of aligning efforts with the Wisconsin MRPC, since the route will impact both states. Commissioner Mulry mentioned efforts to begin pursuit of Scenic Byway designation in the Zumbro Valley, an area also affected by the proposed CapX project.

### **Work Group Updates**

**Capital Improvement:** Commissioner Golfis reported on the closed plank road portion of the Great River Road in Minneapolis. He attended a recent meeting of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board

advising the opening of the closed section as soon as possible; along with treatment to maintain the historic feel of the section. Technical Advisor Kelliher distributed copies of the Minneapolis Star Tribune article about the closed plank road. He also noted that the plank road is not an actual historic features but rather a replication to re-create the feel of a particular era. Maintenance, safety and noise issues have been noted. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has authority over the road section and had decided to remove the planks and replace with concrete, after considering cost and maintenance. It has been determined that a design in the concrete would be impractical, but planks will be kept in the sidewalk to maintain some of the character.

**Economic Development:** Commissioner Pafko reported on status of the 35W bridge debris in Bohemian Flats Park. An order has been issued by a judge allowing the debris to be removed. Work will begin after Labor Day and will likely take around one month to complete. Debris will be moved to a Mn/DOT storage area near I-94 at Lakeland. Mn/DOT has an obligation to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to restore the current site. The associated clean up and restoration will take place in the summer of 2011. Three FHWA Scenic Byways projects have been on hold but now will re-start: a picnic shelter; restrooms; and parking.

**Marketing:** The map tablet project was recently completed, with six different designs produced, one for each Minnesota Great River Road destination area. Regional Commissioners received copies for their areas. Maps were available at the meeting for anyone else interested, and can also be accessed at [www.mnmississippiriver.com](http://www.mnmississippiriver.com). A question was raised about the possibility and cost if businesses would like to use the maps as placemats, etc. Cost information can be gathered upon request. The MN-MRPC has received positive comments about the maps, along with notification of an omission. Along with the positive comments, we've also been contacted about an error. Unfortunately, after all of the drafts produced and multiple reviews/proofing by many, Historic Fort Snelling was inadvertently left off the Metro map. The group discussed options including a reprint of the Metro maps. Commissioner Golfis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kajer, to revise and reprint the Metro maps. Motion passed unanimously. All Commissioners were asked to review the Metro map for items to be included in the current revision, as well as all other maps for any corrections to future printings or other related projects.

### **Agency and Regional Updates**

**Natural Resources:** Technical Advisor Wheeler referred to the attached report and highlighted an August 14 event held on the Mississippi River in the St. Cloud area, involving a number of partners.

**Transportation:** Technical Advisor Zoff reported that Mn/DOT has hired someone on a part-time, temporary basis to work on the MRT project. Signage is being planned for trunk highway segments of the MRT, with another phase later for additional signage. Zoff and Labovitz noted that the MN-MRPC's concerns and recommendations for the MRT should be considered as part of the process. Commissioner Golfis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Samp, authorizing the MN-MRPC to send a letter noting concerns. Motion passed unanimously.

**Brainerd to Elk River Region:** Commissioners Samp and Murray reported on recent St. Cloud area river planning meetings. Task forces have been created to focus on different topics and will be making recommendations to the overall planning group.

**Elk River to Hastings Region:** Commissioner Labovitz announced release of the Mississippi River Companion, a new guide to exploring the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). Copies were available for all MN-MRPC members. MNRRA hosted an August 4 listening session for the White House Outdoors Initiative. Commissioner Labovitz attended a Corps of Engineers meeting in St. Louis and has been involved in discussions related to the future of the Coon Rapids dam.

**Hastings to Iowa Border Region:** Commissioner Mulry noted positive comments about the historic wayside restoration projects in the area.

### **Brainerd Mississippi River Revitalization Project**

Commissioner Samp introduced Miranda Anderson of the Brainerd Lakes Chamber. Ms. Anderson provided an overview of the Brainerd-Baxter Area Mississippi Riverfront Vision Plan. The initiative grew out of the Blandin Leadership Program and recognition that awareness of the river was lacking for the

area, and that the different entities working on river related projects were not well aligned. SEH helped coordinate a six month project to start overall discussions on what role the Mississippi could play in the area. 120 organization and individuals have become involved. The following vision has been developed: The Brainerd-Baxter Area Mississippi River corridor should be a place where residents and visitors can easily access and enjoy year-round natural scenery along with a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities in harmony with a healthy river environment. Four main project areas have been identified: community gathering places; pedestrian/bicycle bridge; trail system; and environmental enhancement/protection. The next step involves master planning including possible partnership with the MN-MRPC on pursuit of a National Scenic Byways Grant.

#### **Update on Potential Mississippi River Land Acquisitions**

Commissioner Schaubach introduced Todd Holman from The Nature Conservancy. Mr. Holman shared information on an opportunity for land acquisition along the Mississippi River in the Brainerd area. Discussions began in 2004 regarding a 2,000 acre tract of land belonging to Potlatch. A group of partners is exploring ways to secure funding for the acquisition of this land, which could protect over two miles of Mississippi River shoreline, a link to an additional seven miles of public shoreline, a development corridor for the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail, and an undeveloped buffer for the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport and Crow Wing County Landfill. Numerous statewide, county and local initiatives are consistent with and supportive of this project concept. Mr. Holman will continue to keep the MN-MRPC informed.

#### **Visit to Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area and Croft Mine Historical Park**

Commissioner Schaubach provided background information on the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area (CCSRA) and shared maps depicting the lakes and trails. The CCSRA was created in an area of abandoned iron ore mines. The resulting mine pit lakes now feature fishing and scuba diving opportunities, and construction is underway on a new mountain bike trail sanctioned by the International Mountain Bike Association. The trail is already being recognized as world class, with 25 miles scheduled for completion soon, with additional length to be added in future years. The Commission departed in carpools to view the area, including stops at a scenic overlook, points along the bike trail, and the Croft Mine Historical Park. Commission members noted appreciation for the opportunity to visit this amenity along the Great River Road.

#### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, November 18, 2010  
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.  
State Office Building, St. Paul, Room 500 North

#### **Adjournment**

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



## Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Regional Updates - August 2010

### **Department of Natural Resources – Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor**

An overview of the Mississippi River Renaissance project is attached. The DNR helped secure funding for it and has been partnering with other entities on its implementation.

A copy of a flyer is attached for an outreach and education event at Stearns County Mississippi River County Park that was held on August 14<sup>th</sup>. DNR was a partner in sponsoring this event. It is estimated over 650 people turned out for the event. Considering a storm ripped through the area the afternoon before, carrying straight line winds in excess of 75 miles per hour, and downing trees and power lines, it was an amazing turnout!

Another project the DNR is currently involved with is a design for a Mississippi Whitewater Park on the Mississippi River in Minneapolis in the vicinity of the Stone Arch bridge. This park would be for whitewater rafters, canoers, and kayakers. The Corps of Engineers is currently the lead on a (re)design of the project. The DNR is the local sponsor.



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
4th Quarter Meeting  
November 18, 2010  
State Office Building, St. Paul MN**

**MINUTES – Approved 2/23/11**

**Commissioners Present**

Andy Golfis – Member At-Large  
Rep. Sheldon Johnson – MN-MRPC Chair  
Frank Pafko – Transportation Appointee  
John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd  
Sen. Sandra Pappas  
Jack Frost – Itasca to Grand Rapids

**Tech Advisors & Staff Present**

Greg Hubinger – LCC  
Carol Zoff – Transportation  
Cynthia Wheeler – Natural Resources  
Chris Miller - Staff

**Commissioners & Advisors Absent**

Robin Kinney – Agriculture Appointee  
Rep. Greg Davids  
Don Frerichs – Explore MN Tourism Appointee  
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River  
Paul Labovitz – Elk River to Hastings  
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border  
Sen. David Senjem  
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee  
David Kelliher – Historical Society  
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism

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The meeting was called to order by Chairman Johnson at 2:45 p.m. A quorum was not present. Members reviewed the proposed agenda and minutes from August 26, and the Chair proceeded through the agenda for information and discussion.

**Commission Business**

**2011 Financial Status Report:** A year-to-date status report listing budget by line item, expenditures to date, and amounts remaining for the 2011 fiscal year was distributed. The report also included balances for federal grants held by the Commission and detail on required local match amounts to complete the grant work. Discussion followed on funding needs for the current year. An invoice will be requested from the National MRPC Office to ensure that 2011 dues are paid soon. Staff time will be needed to do background work for a possible National Scenic Byways Grant application for development of a new Corridor Management Plan (CMP). Input on the process was provided by the group including review of information recently gathered at the MRPC Annual Meeting regarding the GRR five and ten years from now; Mn/DOT's current database from MRT projects that could also be used for CMP development; review and use of information available in the most recent CMP; and development of a possible ad hoc work group. Supplies of Minnesota Great River Road marketing materials for shipment to local visitor centers, state parks, interpretive centers, etc. have been depleted. There was discussion about a reprint of the current map/travel planner. Minimal updating would be required. General consensus was to survey our list of sites regarding desired quantity and then plan for a reprint to last up to two years; and also to proceed with background work for a possible National Scenic Byways Grant/Corridor Management Plan. Staff was asked to prepare a budget plan for the remainder of the fiscal year.

**Projections for FY '12 and Beyond:** The Commission's operating budget could be reduced due to state budget constraints, and securing local match for any federal grant applications could also be very difficult. Other options to seek matching funds were discussed including Legacy Funds, LCMR, and contributions from partner state agencies. Advance payment of National MRPC dues was noted as an option to provide increased flexibility with operating funds for necessary federal grant match. A suggestion was made to prepare for grant applications but submit later as matching funds are secured. It was also noted that there is a window of time for funded National Scenic Byway projects to begin, which could provide options to begin in a fiscal year when matching funds would more likely be available.

The current sunset date listed in statute for the MN-MRPC is June 30, 2012. Planning should begin during the upcoming legislative session to extend that date and allow for continued appropriation of state operating funds.

**Commission Member Vacancy:** Commissioner Golfis announced that he will be leaving the MN-MRPC after many years of service. Today will be his last official meeting. Chairman Johnson thanked

Commissioner Golfis for his dedication and service to the MN-MRPC and National MRPC, and announced that recognition will take place at the 2011 First Quarter Meeting.

### **National MRPC Updates**

**Report from 2010 Annual Meeting:** The MN-MRPC had seven representatives in attendance at the meeting held in La Crosse. Technical Advisor Zoff reported that there was representation from all ten states, providing good information on activities and issues along the full length of the Great River Road. A brainstorming session on the future of the Great River Road identified ideas on where things should be five and ten years into the future. A copy of the information will be forwarded to staff, and then sent out to the Commission. Commissioner Golfis noted the milestone of all ten states being current on dues and having state commissions operational. Commissioner Pappas noted that she did not attend due to a conflict with Rosh Hashana and requested that this conflict be considered in future scheduling.

### **State MRPC Travel Updates and Upcoming Events**

Commissioner Pafko and others attended the Minnesota Scenic Byways Workshop, hosted by the Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway. The Chik Wauk Museum, a restoration project utilizing National Scenic Byway funds, was featured. The 2011 Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference will be held January 25-26 in Nisswa. Commission members were asked to notify the MN-MRPC Office if interested in attending.

### **Old Business**

**CapX2020 Updates:** Technical Advisor Zoff, Commissioner Frost and Commissioner Golfis reported. A route has been selected for the Bemidji-Grand Rapids transmission line. Mn/DOT and MN-MRPC representatives agree that the chosen route is the best available option to reduce impact to the Great River Road. There is concern over herbicides that will be needed in the right-of-way area, and negative impact to desired vegetation. Commissioner Frost was a member of the local citizen advisory group and participated in meetings, tours and hearings. He reported that good efforts were made in addressing concerns and placing the route accordingly. The Monticello – St. Cloud project is moving forward without implementation of the MN-MRPC's full mitigation recommendations. The position is that impact within the transmission line right-of-way will be mitigated, fulfilling requirements of the permit. Earlier involvement in the process may have resulted in a different outcome. The Environmental Impact Statement is currently in development for the Hampton – La Crosse project. A meeting with the permit manager will be requested to ensure that Great River Road concerns are included. Advisor Zoff discussed efforts to gather information on Mn/DOT investments along the Great River Road in the Bluffs Region including items such as scenic easements and waysides. Other partner agencies may also be asked for this information, which can then be mapped to demonstrate specific intrinsic qualities of the byway for protection. At the recent Annual Meeting, the National MRPC Board discussed CapX 2020 implications to the Minnesota and Wisconsin Great River Road. The board approved a resolution to request additional research on the potential to two National Scenic Byways prior to any finalization of actual routes. A draft is pending.

**Unpaved Section of GRR in Aitkin County:** Commissioner Golfis reported on his conversation with John Welle, Aitkin County Engineer, regarding three unpaved segments of the Great River Road. These are the last unpaved sections on the entire national route. The first segment has been paved, the second is in the design phase, and the third (7 miles in length) has funding in the transportation bill but no definite plans for completion. Commissioner Golfis noted the importance of completing these projects since they are the only unpaved sections in all ten Mississippi River states.

**Historic Roadside Property Ribbon Cutting Event:** Chairman Johnson shared information on the ribbon cutting held at the Lake City Concourse on October 21. He attended along with Commissioners Mulry and Labovitz, and Technical Advisor Zoff. The event showcased the recently completed restoration project, along with providing an overview of all restorations occurring up and down the river. Chairman Johnson noted the tremendous job that was done on the Lake City restoration and how it will serve travelers for years to come. The event was well received by local and regional officials.

### **2011 National Scenic Byways Conference, Aug 21 – 24, 2011 – Minneapolis**

**MN-MRPC Attendance:** Since the conference will be held in Minneapolis, it offers MN-MRPC members the opportunity to participate in a national level event without out-of-state travel. All members were asked to notify the MN-MRPC Office if interested in attending. The current Federal Seed Grant could be used to pay for registrations, but travel funds would need to come from the 2011-12 budget.



**Nominations for National Scenic Byways Awards:** Discussion took place on the possibility of application for a National Scenic Byway Award in the "historic" category as well as a 2011 FHWA National Environmental Excellence Award. The entire Minnesota Great River Road Historic Roadside Property Restoration Project could be highlighted, or certain specific sites could be featured. Consensus was to proceed with award applications for the entire statewide project.

**Presentation Proposals:** Presentation proposals for the National Scenic Byways Conference are due December 17. Mobile workshops featuring local sites will also be developed soon. Ideas discussed included a canoe trip on the river in conjunction with MNRRA/Urban Wilderness Canoe Area/Wilderness Inquiry; bike trip along the MRT; and bus tour down Highway 61.

### **Work Group Updates**

Meetings or conference calls of the Organization and Marketing Work Groups are needed to address work plan items and grant projects. Work Group chairs will be contacted regarding dates.

### **Agency and Regional Updates**

**Itasca to Grand Rapids:** Commissioner Frost referred the group to his written report (attached) and also mentioned activities of the Mississippi Headwaters Board, which he currently chairs. A new river book is being developed. Also in the region, work is taking place on the County Roads 33 and 39 sections of the Great River Road.

**Grand Rapids to Brainerd:** Commissioners Schaubach and Frost invited all MN-MRPC members to a meeting on December 9 from 8:30 to 3:30 at the Northland Arboretum in Baxter. "Mississippi River Headwaters: Sharing Information on Habitat, Water Quality, Recreation, and Community Development" will involve multiple organizations and communities reaching from the Headwaters to St. Cloud area. It is designed to be a brainstorming session to identify common concerns and related initiatives. Discussion could be useful as development of a Great River Road Corridor Management Plan is considered.

**Natural Resources:** Technical Advisor Wheeler referred to the attached report and highlighted information related to the Whitewater Kayak Park; designation of the Upper Mississippi River floodplain wetlands as a "Wetland of International Importance;" and Mississippi River Renaissance initiative in Central Minnesota. She also distributed information on the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Program and upcoming rulemaking.

**Transportation:** Technical Advisor Zoff reported on progress of the historic roadside restoration project. The Camp Commander has requested a ribbon cutting to showcase the recently restored Camp Ripley Walls. Memorial Day 2011 has been set as the tentative date. The Burns Avenue Overlook project is in final stages of completion. Plans to address security concerns by locking the site overnight are being discussed with local partners. It was suggested that a neighborhood event be scheduled in spring. Work on the interpretive panel project is continuing. Final proofs of the first two signs were shared with Regional Commissioners.

### **Next Meeting**

2011 meeting dates have not yet been determined. Dates will follow a similar pattern as 2010 meetings. More information will be forwarded as it becomes available.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.



## Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Regional Updates - November 2010

### Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids – Commissioner Jack Frost

It has been a busy fall with the long campaign season finally over. I am pleased to report that I was re-elected to another term as Beltrami County commissioner by a margin of 66% to 33% over my opponent. Now, back to work on a full time basis....

The Mississippi Headwaters Board has kept me, as chair, very busy. The MHB, after two stakeholder group visioning sessions, has elected to embark on a revitalization and rebranding initiative. We have engaged the services of Chip Borkenhagen, Publisher of Lake Country Journal, to facilitate this initiative. After three project review committee meetings, we have developed a new logo, commenced a new incarnation of the MHB website and plan to publish a new printing of the MHB River Book. Other projects include: a revitalized, fully accredited River Watch Program, a potential working relationship with the Nature Conservancy, and a new power point presentation for funding at the state legislature.

I attended the Heartland Tourism Association annual meeting at Bemidji's new Sanford Regional Event Center on October 21st. MRPC was mentioned in my introductory remarks. John Edman of the Minnesota Office of Tourism was the keynote speaker on "Opportunities in the New Normal - Changing Trends and Impacts to MN Tourism."

I have been asked to attend and make a short presentation on the MHB at the first meeting of the Upper Mississippi Stake Holders meeting in Baxter on December 9th. The theme is "Sharing a Mississippi River Vision."

**MN-MRPC FY11 Operating Budget - Status 2/4/11**

Obj Code	Description	Budget	Total Pd/Pending	Encumbered	Available	Comments
1E0	Other Benefits (Per Diem)	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,255.00		\$ 3,245.00	Commissioners: quarterly mtgs, MRPC Annual Mtg & Semi-Annual Mtg, work group mtgs, Commission representation at events.
2A0	Space Rental, Maint & Utility	\$ 600.00	\$ 398.00		\$ 202.00	Storage of MN-MRPC brochures. Also exhibit space, mtg room rental, etc.
2C0	Printing & Advertising	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 1,740.39		\$ 3,759.61	Local match for printing of FHWA grant marketing projects, Commission mtg copies, etc.
2D0	Prof/Tech Services	\$ 24,500.00	\$ 12,148.02	\$ 12,250.02	\$ 101.96	Administrative contract for 7/10 through 6/11. Donations received (for maps/brochures) are added back into this code. \$102 rcvd to date.
2D0	Prof/Tech Services	\$9,000	\$2,728.30		\$6,271.70	Local match (20%) for FHWA grant project work, other special projects
2F0	Communications	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 1,064.40		\$ 635.60	Website hosting, stats, minor updates. Postage/deliveries. MN MRPC phone line.
2G0	In-State Travel	\$ 8,272.46	\$ 1,348.41		\$ 6,924.05	Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, work groups, events.
2H0	Out-State Travel	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 2,350.11		\$ 4,649.89	MRPC Annual & Semi Annual Meetings
2J0	Office Supplies	\$ 300.00	\$ 36.60		\$ 263.40	General office supplies for Commission projects.
2K0	Equipment	\$ 400.00	\$ -		\$ 400.00	Equipment for GRR video project - match to federal grant funds. Also rental of A/V equipment for meetings.
2L0	Employee Development	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	In-state training/conference registrations.
2M0	Other Costs (MRPC Dues)	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,332.49		\$ (332.49)	2011 National MRPC Dues
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$ 76,772.46</b>	<b>\$ 38,401.72</b>	<b>\$ 12,250.02</b>	<b>\$ 26,120.72</b>	

**Open Grants**

	<u>Total Balance</u>	<u>Fed Share</u>	<u>Local Match</u>	(To be taken from operating budget above or in FY '12)
FHWA Interpretive Panels	49,732.75	49,290.20	442.55	
FHWA Seed Grant	8,728.68	6,982.94	1,745.74	
FHWA Marketing Grant	18,154.73	12,803.78	<u>3,100.95</u>	Plus 2011 EMT Grant of \$2,250
			5289.24	

**Projection to Year End**

Operating and project expenses	9,000.00
Map reprint	10,000.00
National MRPC dues for 2012	7,120.72
Total	26,120.72



**MN-MRPC/Cap X 2020 Monticello – St. Cloud Route Vegetation Plan Meeting**  
**January 10, 2011**  
**Monticello Community Center**

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**Attendees:** Darrin Lahr, Brad Weidenfeller – Xcel Energy; Lisa Agrimonti – Briggs & Morgan; Jake Burggraff – Barr Engineering; Andy Golfis, Karl Samp, Chris Miller – MN-MRPC; Dave Seykora, Mn/DOT

**Discussion**

- Review of past communication including a meeting on August 2, 2010 and subsequent correspondence.
- MN-MRPC concern over vegetation removal was presented, as expressed in a letter sent on December 13, 2010. The Commission's understanding was that vegetation would be preserved as much as possible in areas of pole construction. Current vegetation removal does not seem to be in keeping with the permit language. The permit also states that the permittee will consult with Mn/DOT and the MN-MRPC regarding minimizing damage to vegetation along the Great River Road. Meetings or discussions have not taken place since August and so today's meeting was requested. On-going communication is important.
- Xcel and Barr representatives noted that pole installation requires clearing at the base of each pole and also that some poles are subject to the approved vegetation plan and others are not depending on location. In general clearing is taking place 100 feet from the pole in each direction down the line, and 75 feet out from each side of the pole. It was also explained that landowners determine vegetation to be removed. For example, for pole locations within the county road right-of-way, Wright County's Right-of-Way Permit directs clearing of all trees along with stump removal up to 42 feet from the centerline and refers to the Vegetation Preservation Plan for all other trees within the county's right-of-way. Private landowners' directions vary.
- Documents outlining vegetation removal were distributed: the approved vegetation plan; 12/28/10 status report and affiliated documentation from Barr Engineering; sample pages from website showing all activities related to certain poles along with photographs; and the Wright County Right-of-Way Permit.
- The permittee's approach is that the MN-MRPC maps and requests presented in the past are recommendations, above and beyond requirements listed in the permit. The MN-MRPC must be consulted but not all requests must be implemented. There is also a disconnect when the MN-MRPC/Great River Road asks that vegetation be kept, but the county asks for it to be removed. The vegetation plan is being followed in the field, where practical.
- It was summarized that the vegetation plan represents the best case scenario, affected by decisions of landowners.
- Trees to be kept were marked with yellow ribbons early on, but larger stands of trees not necessarily marked. There was discussion on whether additional marking could take place. 19 sites affected by the vegetation plan have not yet been cleared.
- Barr Engineering noted that in some areas, large amounts of invasive species such as buckthorn are present and will be removed.
- MN-MRPC representatives mentioned that although today's focus is on the vegetation plan, further discussion will also be needed on the mitigation plan. Other groups, such as the Turkey Federation, might be interested in assisting with plantings and discussions will take place after construction.

**Next Steps**

- A future meeting will be scheduled to discuss the mitigation plan and implementation.
- The MN-MRPC will gather further information on National Scenic Byway Status and any restrictions on landscape alterations that may be in place, agreed to by counties and local jurisdictions. Conversations will then take place with counties, etc. as appropriate. (Update: It was found that National Scenic Byway Status does not place restrictions on vegetation removal unless scenic easements are in place.)
- MN-MRPC requested copies of any future information related to the permit section noting the MN-MRPC and/or vegetation plan.
- A suggestion was made that for other routes now progressing, the MN-MRPC consider holding its own meetings with landowners early in the process to explain National Scenic Byway Status and request cooperation in maintaining intrinsic qualities of the byway.



## Mississippi River Parkway Commission

222 State Street, Suite 400  
Madison, WI 53703



December 16, 2010

### Board of Directors

Pilot  
Bill Seratt

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Robert Miller

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Garland Hayes  
AR MRPC Chair

Treasurer  
M.J. Smith

Pilot Emeritus  
Patsy Ramacitti

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IA MRPC Chair

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Greg Pruitt  
KY MRPC Chair

Brian Parsons  
LA MRPC Chair

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MN MRPC Chair

Faye Wilkinson  
MS MRPC Chair

Frank Nickell  
MO MRPC Chair

John Sheahan  
TN MRPC Chair

Al Lorenz  
WI MRPC Chair

### RESOLUTION

#### **OPPOSING THE CAPX2020 ROUTE PROPOSAL TO LOCATE A 345 KILOVOLT TRANSMISSION LINE ALONG THE WISCONSIN GREAT RIVER ROAD NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY AND THE CAPX2020 ROUTE PROPOSAL TO LOCATE A 345 KILOVOLT TRANSMISSION LINE ALONG THE MINNESOTA GREAT RIVER ROAD NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY.**

WHEREAS the 10-state Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) has been duly informed of the CapX2020 ongoing project regarding the proposed future location of a 345kV high tower transmission line extending from near Hampton, Minnesota to near La Crosse, Wisconsin, and

WHEREAS the ten Mississippi River states established the Mississippi River Parkway Commission in 1938, and Congress began authorizing funds for advancing the parkway concept in the 1940's and 1950's, initiating a heritage of national significance, and

WHEREAS the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission was legislatively established in 1963- with the stated purposes as expressed (in part) in the current Minnesota Statute 161.1419: "it is declared to be the policy of the state and to be in the best public interest for the promotion of public safety, recreation, travel, trade, and the general welfare of the people to cooperate with the federal government and with the interstate Mississippi River Parkway Planning Commission... to carry out such policy and to aid in the promotion and securement of a scenic parkway and ...work toward the planning, construction, maintenance, and improvement of the Great River Road", and

WHEREAS the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission was legislatively established in 1961- with the stated purposes as expressed (in part) in the current Wisconsin Statute 14.85: "assist in coordinating the development and preservation of the great river road in Wisconsin and its embellishments, such as scenic easements, roadside parks, and scenic overlooks..."assist in promoting as an attractive traveler designation the Great River Road in Wisconsin and its unique historical, cultural, aesthetic and recreational features along the route...", and

WHEREAS the National, Minnesota and Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commissions continue to fulfill their responsibilities to the best of their abilities, and

WHEREAS scenic easements along the Wisconsin Great River Road were purchased (beginning in the 1950's) by the State Transportation Agency for the specific purpose of preserving the unique scenic qualities of the Route---and their enforcement has been continuous, and

WHEREAS the Wisconsin and Minnesota Great River Roads were designated as National Scenic Byway's in 2000 together with Illinois and Iowa and since that time all 10 States have attained National Scenic Byway status, and

WHEREAS the Great River Road National Scenic Byway in Minnesota and Wisconsin allows travelers to follow the Mississippi River corridor from its source at Lake Itasca in Minnesota through the majestic bluffs along the Minnesota/Wisconsin border and on to the Gulf of Mexico enjoying the scenic, historical, archeological, cultural, natural and recreational intrinsic qualities of the river and its amenities, and

WHEREAS the Mississippi River, its valley corridor and its intrinsic qualities are unique in the world and a national asset, and

*Mission Statement: Preserving, promoting and enhancing the Mississippi River Parkway for communities and travelers*

Phone: 866-763-8310 • Fax: 608-242-8896

Web Site: [www.ExperienceMississippiRiver.com](http://www.ExperienceMississippiRiver.com) • E-mail: [info@experiencemississippiriver.com](mailto:info@experiencemississippiriver.com)



## Mississippi River Parkway Commission

222 State Street, Suite 400  
Madison, WI 53703



### Board of Directors

Pilot  
Bill Seratt

WHEREAS one of the alternative routes in Minnesota follows the Great River Road from Watopa Township north to approximately Wabasha County Road 18, and

WHEREAS one of the 2 alternate routes in Wisconsin follows the Great River Road National Scenic Byway from Alma to La Crosse, and

Pilot Pro-tem  
Robert Miller

WHEREAS the construction and maintenance of the 345kV lines could include up to 150' high towers with a 150' wide right of way and within that right of way require all woody vegetation higher than 20' to be permanently removed, and

Secretary  
Garland Hayes  
AR MRPC Chair

WHEREAS the location, construction and maintenance of the 345KV lines will negatively impact the scenic, historical, archeological, cultural, natural and recreational intrinsic qualities of the river and its amenities, and

Treasurer  
M.J. Smith

WHEREAS the cumulative investment by local, State, Federal, non-profit and private entities of properties, including Wildlife Management Areas, Scientific and Natural Areas, forests, preserves, parks, scenic easements, rest areas, trails, historic markers, geological markers, museums, interpretive centers, historic properties, etc., that offer the public access to and enjoyment of the Mississippi River and river valley intrinsic resources will be compromised by the location, construction and maintenance impacts of the 345KV lines, and

Pilot Emeritus  
Patsy Ramacitti

WHEREAS the current and future economic impact from tourism will be compromised by the location, construction and maintenance of the 345kV lines, and

John Goodmann  
IA MRPC Chair

WHEREAS the cumulative impacts of the location, construction and maintenance of the 345KV lines from Bemidji to Grand Rapids, and from St. Cloud to Monticello and from Hampton to La Crosse are greater to the byway, its travelers and its resources than each segment individually, and

Sen. John Sullivan  
IL MRPC Chair

WHEREAS degradation of the Byway intrinsic qualities jeopardizes future Federal Highway Administration program grants, and

Greg Pruitt  
KY MRPC Chair

WHEREAS alignments are presented by the CapX2020 study that avoid following the Great River Road National Scenic Byway in Minnesota and Wisconsin, therefore

Brian Parsons  
LA MRPC Chair

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mississippi River Parkway Commission strongly supports the Minnesota and Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commissions in opposing the CapX2020 Hampton to La Crosse 345kV high tower transmission lines that follow the Great River Road and support the alignments that avoid this National Scenic Byway.

Rep. Sheldon Johnson  
MN MRPC Chair

Faye Wilkinson  
MS MRPC Chair

Frank Nickell  
MO MRPC Chair

John Sheahan  
TN MRPC Chair

Al Lorenz  
WI MRPC Chair

Bill Seratt  
Pilot  
Mississippi River Parkway Commission

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The Mississippi River Trail is a world-class bicycle route that travels from the headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca, Minnesota to the Delta at the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana. It is a 3,000-mile network of bicycle-friendly roads and multi-use paths. As such, the Mississippi River Trail is a virtual “string of pearls” connecting Minnesota with nine other states, cities such as St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans, and hundreds of other smaller towns and river communities. It is a unique way to experience the Mississippi River’s natural wonders, transportation system, recreational facilities, and cultural heritage.



## Mississippi River Trail – the “MRT”

**THE MRT IN MINNESOTA** The Mississippi River Trail began in the 1990s as a community and economic development project for the lower Mississippi River delta region between New Orleans and St. Louis, and was later adopted by states between St. Louis and the Headwaters in Itasca State Park.



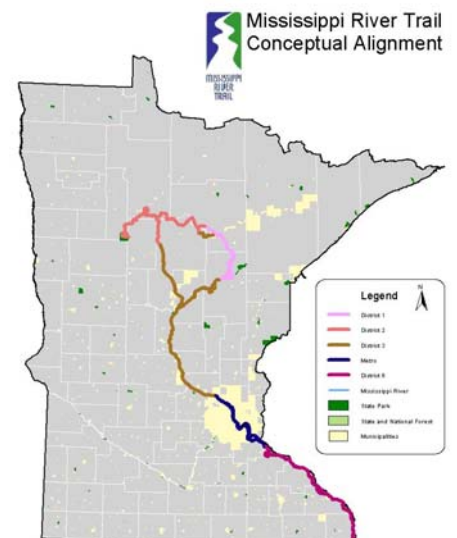
Minnesota’s initial route was developed almost 10 years ago by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), with assistance from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the National Park Service, local authorities, and many enthusiastic bicyclists. In 2010, Mn/DOT revisited the route with a renewed commitment to cooperatively evaluate and refine what makes a great bicycle route. Mn/DOT will continue this work in 2011.

**COMPOSITION** Although certain stretches of the route are located on separated off-road paths and trails, most of the MRT within Minnesota relies on road shoulders or low-use roads.

Approximately 60%	Local, township and county roads
Approximately 25%	State and U.S. highways
Approximately 15%	State, regional & local trails

**CONCEPT** Though it’s called the Mississippi River Trail, the bikeway is different from exclusively off-road state trails largely built on abandoned railroad grades, such as the DNR-managed Paul Bunyan, Gateway, and Root River Trails. Minnesota’s route travels on both roads and trail and on takes advantage of existing facilities. The route will continue to change over time as improvements to roads and trails that can “host” the MRT are made. And even though additional off-road segments will presumably be incorporated into the future MRT alignment, most of the route will continue to share the road right-of-way with cars, trucks, and motorcycles.

The distance between the Headwaters in Itasca State Park and the Minnesota-Iowa border is approximately 575 miles however, with the miles of roads and trails Minnesota has added, riders in Minnesota can pedal nearly 800 miles—the longest distance in any of the ten states. Riders between Bemidji and Brainerd can choose to ride portions of the



Heartland and Paul Bunyan State Trails or choose a rustic on-road route. And bicyclists in the Twin Cities can ride both sides of the river, which offers the chance for a 144-mile Metro MRT loop.

**TARGET AUDIENCES** Generally paralleling the Great River Road, the entire route has special appeal to adventurous bicyclists that are comfortable with and knowledgeable about sharing the road with vehicles. Off-



road segments have been incorporated within the route, which are very popular with less experienced bicyclists (but none the less adventurous). The MRT has served as a venue for charitable bike rides, an avenue for recreation, and as an entry point for people rediscovering the joys of cycling. The hope is that it will contribute to more vibrant and healthy communities that take full advantage of the bicycle for travel and fun.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- **A great adventure!** Visitors and residents alike have a chance to explore America's cultural and natural heritage and see what tourists in an automobile will never see.
- **Local economic activity.** The MRT represents opportunities for businesses to profit from a new set of travelers seeking locally provided services. The University of Minnesota Tourism Center identifies bicycling as the state's second most popular outdoor recreation activity. In 2009, road bicyclists' total trip spending was \$337,641,000.
- **Better health.** At its core, the MRT encourages healthy and life-extending outdoor activity.
- **Enrichment and social cohesiveness.** The trail represents an opportunity to remember and celebrate important Mississippi River people, places, and stories that have made Minnesota's communities great. Through local interpretation, the bikeway can encourage a sense of community locally and with neighboring communities that share a common heritage.
- **Adds value to roads and trails.** The Mississippi River Trail adds value to existing roads and trails and brings new users to our transportation network that's "ready to ride" today.
- **Fulfills state statutes.** The MRT helps Mn/DOT fulfill its statutory requirements to develop bikeways (Statute 160.265), to encourage tourism through transportation, and promote and increase bicycling and healthy forms of transportation (Statute 174.01).



**Mn/DOT's ROLE** Mn/DOT convened numerous local meetings in 2010 to review the alignment in an effort to capture recent route improvements and coordinate mapping and signing, but Mn/DOT does not "own" the route. **MnDOT is serving as champion to bring people together and re-ignite the fire of self-interest on the part of local governments, businesses and residents.**

Only 25% of the route is located on state and U.S. highways. Like the links in a chain, the route's appeal and success is tied to the enthusiasm and commitment of the authorities that administer the remaining 75% of the Mississippi River Trail. Moving forward MnDOT sees itself as a key partner with a lot to gain if the vision of vibrant Mississippi River Trail is realized. For the Mississippi Trail to be used, appreciated, and reach its full potential, road and trail authorities will take a leadership role in managing and improving the bike route.



## 2010 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Review and refine the route based on collaborative statewide meetings;
- Conduct evaluation rides to confirm route decisions made in the meetings;
- Introduce the concept of bicycle-friendly communities along the route;
- Post a GIS-interactive map and printable maps on Mn/DOT's website available for the 2011 bicycling season (February, 2011);
- Develop a marketing toolbox to enhance marketing efforts and promote the MRT (February, 2011);
- Complete a signing plan for segments located on state highways (early 2011).



## 2011 - NEXT STEPS

- Convene additional statewide meetings to improve the alignment and coordinate activities and expectations amongst MRT's road and trail authorities. Concentrate on: 2010 areas needing additional review; the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) in the Twin Cities; and on developing recommended design guidance for off-road segments in MNRRA;
- Implement marketing and outreach. Encourage formation of mutually beneficial marketing partnerships within the public and private sectors and facilitate local marketing action plans and bicycle-friendliness recommendations for select communities;
- Complete a signing plan for road and off-road segments not located on state highways;
- Post new GIS-interactive and printable maps on Mn/DOT's and other's website for the 2012 bicycling season. Evaluate the need for a printed map for general distribution;
- Develop and implement cooperative MRT management.

### Contact information

Mississippi River Trail (MRT) Bicycle Route website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html> (comment form available on-line)

#### **Dan Collins, Principal Planner**

Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Office of Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian Section, MS 315  
395 John Ireland Boulevard St. Paul, MN 55155-1899  
[Daniel.Collins@state.mn.us](mailto:Daniel.Collins@state.mn.us) 651-366-4179

#### **Liz Walton, Landscape Architect**

Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Office of Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian Section, MS 315  
395 John Ireland Boulevard St. Paul, MN 55155-1899  
[Liz.Walton@state.mn.us](mailto:Liz.Walton@state.mn.us) 651-366-4186



# Mississippi River Trail Bikeway

January 2011

## Background

Ten states bordering the Mississippi River are in various stages of developing a world-class bikeway from the headwaters of the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico using low-use roads and recreational trails. Within Minnesota, approximately 25 percent of the proposed designated route is located on state and U.S. highways.

## The Proposal

Mn/DOT proposes legislation to authorize the Commissioner of Transportation to cooperatively designate a continuous bikeway upon existing roads and bicycle trails between the headwaters of the Mississippi River and the Iowa border. Mn/DOT would work with local and state road and trail authorities to enhance the bikeway and make certain bike trail segments eligible for a variety of trail grant programs.

## The Resource

The Mississippi River is the largest river in North America. It originates at Lake Itasca in Minnesota and meanders slowly southward to the Gulf of Mexico. It is the fourth longest river in the world and the tenth most powerful.

As North America's core natural artery, the Mississippi River attracted early explorers and settlement, inspired writers and presently connects regions of great economic importance. Its natural beauty and natural resource significance continue to lure a wide range of recreationists seeking travel by canoe, car and bicycle.

## If Designated the Bikeway Offers

- **Adventure**—Visitors and residents will be able to explore—on bicycle—America's cultural and natural heritage along the Mississippi River.
- **Local economic activity**—As bicycling and bicycle tourism continue to grow, the designated bikeway will offer modest business opportunities to provide services for the biking community.
- **Better health**—At its core, the designated bikeway encourages healthy and life-extending outdoor activity.
- **Enrichment and social cohesiveness**—Through local historical interpretation, the designated bikeway can encourage a sense of community and a shared common heritage.
- **Expanded vision for highways**—The Mississippi River Trail may help break the stereotype that roads are the sole domain of cars and trucks.

## Cost-Effective

The Mississippi River Trail will be a designated bikeway that exclusively utilizes existing low-use roads and trails. The bikeway does not require land acquisition or development. It does require signing and a cooperative relationship between a variety of road and trail authorities. Although most of the route will remain on roads, the bikeway will continue to evolve as future recreational trails are incorporated in the alignment.



For More Information Contact:

Tim Mitchell  
Mn/DOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Section Director  
651-366-4162  
Tim.mitchell@state.mn.us

*Your Destination...Our Priority*



## Target Market

Generally paralleling the Great River Road National Scenic Byway, the entire route has special appeal to bicyclists that are comfortable with and knowledgeable about sharing the road with vehicles. However, significant off-road trail segments have been incorporated in the route within the Twin Cities metro area and upon some state trails. These routes should be popular with less experienced bicyclists. The trail can also serve as a venue for charitable bike rides and as an entry point for people rediscovering the joys of biking.



### State Context Map

Mississippi River Trail (MRT) Bicycle Route



20 0 20 Miles

- Mississippi Headwaters
- Mississippi Northwoods
- Mississippi Crossings
- Scenic Mississippi
- Metro Mississippi
- Mississippi Bluffs
- Paul Bunyan
- County Boundary
- Interstate Highways
- US Trunk Highways
- Open Water
- County Boundary

December 20, 2010



## The 2011 Federal Budget: Funding issues for trails

The Federal government, under a Continuing Resolution (CR), is funded through March 4, 2011. This week in Washington, the focus is on the federal budget, the deficit, and proposed cuts to spending on every aspect of national programs. This means that every program we rely on could be cut or eliminated: Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails Program, Safe Routes to School, Federal land management agency (Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish & Wildlife Service), trail budgets, and more.

The House of Representatives will vote on legislation (H.R. 1) that would cut current spending by at least \$100 billion below the President's FY 2011 request. Floor debate begins Tuesday.

American Trails is committed to bringing you all the vital news about funding and policies that affect you. Watch for our ongoing alerts about the budget process – [www.americantrails.org](http://www.americantrails.org).

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### URGENT....CONTACT MINNESOTA'S CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS TODAY FY 2011 Historic Preservation Funding is at Stake!

Preservation Action, the national historic preservation lobbying nonprofit, has been reporting that the funding levels for the federal government are currently being provided through a Continuing Resolution (CR) that expires on March 4, 2011. This CR, as result of Congress being unable to agree on a budget, extended funding for FY 2011 at FY 2010 levels.

What happens in February and March is anyone's guess. Many believe that there will be a serious attempt to cut funding for the rest of FY 2011 to FY 2008 levels, or much worse. Here is what a rollback to FY 2008 would mean:

	<b>NPS Budget Line Item</b>	<b>FY 2008</b>	<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>Impact</b>
State Historic Preservation Officers	Historic Preservation Fund	\$ 39,376,000	\$ 46,500,000	-15.3%
Tribal Historic Preservation Officers	Historic Preservation Fund	\$ 6,399,000	\$ 8,000,000	-20%
Save America's Treasures	Historic Preservation Fund	\$25,000,000	\$ 25,000,000	0
Preserve America	Preservation & Recreation Account	\$7,500,000	\$ 4,600,000	63%
Heritage Areas	Preservation & Recreation Account	\$15,500,000	\$ 18,000,000	-13.8%

With so many disparate voices on the Hill, [bills specifically calling for the elimination of Save America's Treasures, Preserve America and Heritage Areas](#), and a focus on reduced spending and deficit reduction, it is important that we let our legislators know how important historic preservation is – not only for the protection of our American heritage, but for their ability to stimulate economic development and to [create jobs](#).

WE NEED YOU TO CONTACT YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES AND ASK THAT HE OR SHE:

1. Provide at least level funding for the rest of FY 2011 (at FY 2010 levels) for our nation's historic preservation programs.
2. If necessary, defend our nation's historic preservation programs from elimination or substantial cuts.
3. Support the heritage preservation and job creation effects of our federal historic preservation programs.

It is even more important that you make contact if you are represented by Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-St. Paul) as she sits on the House Appropriations Committee and is a member of the House Preservation Caucus.

## **MN-MRPC Marketing Work Group Conference Call Notes February 14, 2011 • 3:30- 4:30 p.m.**

**Attendance:** Sheronne Mulry, Paul Labovitz, Robin Kinney, Cheryl Offerman, Cynthia Wheeler, Chris Miller

### **Video Project – Process and Timeline**

Development of Great River Road Destination Area videos is our next project under the current Federal Highway Administration Marketing Grant. Total project cost including vendor, commissioner and staff time, is tentatively estimated at \$13,500. Discussion took place on vendor vs. commissioner/staff roles, in preparation for a vendor RFP for the project. The group felt that regional commissioners would be interested in shooting the video for their regions, and that commissioners doing their own voice/narrative would be preferred. Showing different seasons was recommended if possible. Robin noted that MDA has both male and female voice talent available if we need it and also would provide assistance with script critiquing. Paul offered to do a test shoot with equipment and staff from MNRRA. The bald eagle nest survey might be a good test subject along with other things coming up in the park. Paul will forward Chris some possible dates to plan and do the test shoot, and work group members will be invited to join in if possible. Before shooting the regional “favorite places” videos, commissioners will need instructions on camera operation, length of footage needed, and other tips to be determined by the vendor. Cameras will also need to be purchased. Cheryl and Sheronne mentioned that cameras can be borrowed from local cable companies, which could provide more camera availability. It was recommended that an RFP be developed and a vendor be selected soon since they're likely to be the expert and can assist with the specifics for the video shoots. DVDs should be available for commissioners and our materials distribution list, but the video should also be available for download from our website. Don Frerichs has requested a video presentation about the Great River Road that could be given to community groups. Discussion followed on potential uses and whether something could be done as part of this project. A suggestion was made to produce a 3 – 5 minute GRR overview compilation of the regional videos, as another item in the RFP. This would be useful at conferences, trade shows, meetings, etc. Chris will begin work with the Legislative Coordinating Commission on the RFP and will forward a draft to the work group for review.

### **Great River Road Map/Travel Planner Reprint**

We are currently out of stock on GRR promotional materials, except for a small office supply to fulfill individual requests from our website and provide to Commissioners for meetings (Map/Travel Planners, Explorer's Guides, one of each Map Tablet). We've received several requests for more. At the November 2010 meeting, the MN-MRPC suggested surveying our distribution sites and possibly printing a two-year supply of maps, with funds from our operating budget. A brief survey was sent out to our distribution sites to determine interest and numbers. Several sites did request copies and also provided feedback and other marketing ideas. The design/print firm used in the past has copyrighted the design of the Map/Travel Planner and so we'd need to utilize that same vendor to remain cost effective on the project. Prices for minimal changes (contact panel, one possible map revision, adding an interpretive center, and color change on cover to indicate updated piece) and printing would be: \$4,838 for 15,000 - \$5,488 for 20,000 - \$6,200 for 25,000. Tax and shipping to all sites would be an additional cost. Chris will request a shipping estimate and then forward to the work group for consideration. General consensus was that the Map/Planner is a useful piece and we should move forward with a re-print of the piece, print as many as budget and storage allow, and send a one-time shipment of a two-year supply out to local sites. The piece should also be available in pdf form on our website, and be mobile device friendly if possible. Chris will send a pdf version of the current piece out to the work group for review/revision.

### **Minnesota Bike Trail Brochure Ad**

Explore Minnesota Tourism has contracted with Minnesota Monthly to produce a new, two-year edition of Minnesota Biking, a brochure promoting Minnesota's recreational bike trails, mountain bike areas, and the new Mississippi River Trail bike route. Ad space is available starting at \$725 for 1/12 page. The MRT will be the featured on-road biking route. Promotion of the MRT is listed in the MN-MRPC work plan, as is continued web marketing. The group discussed an ad in this publication, along with other options/different publications. Benefits of placing an ad in Minnesota Biking would include showing the MN-MRPC/GRR as a visible partner with other state entities in bicycling development and promotion. The group recommended placing a 1/12 page ad, including the GRR logo and driving readers to our website. Ad space must be reserved by 2/17 and ads are due 2/22. Chris will request approval from the chair and move forward, and will send the group a proof of the ad if time allows.

### **2010 National GRR Geocaching Contest Update**

The contest ended December 31, 2010. Each of the 10 MRPC states had been asked to prepare prize baskets for the winners, including an overnight stay. The National MRPC Office did not receive enough entries to select winners, and so the Minnesota prize will not be needed at this time. The National MRPC Marketing Committee will be revisiting geocaching at their next meeting.



## Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Agency & Regional Updates February 2011

### Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids – Commissioner Jack Frost

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This regional commissioner has been quite busy with the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) re-branding initiative. We have the latest draft of our Mississippi Headwaters Guidebook in draft form which I will bring to the meeting on 2/23. Chip Borkenhagen of Lake Country Journal created a video presentation for the Senate Environmental Committee hearing which will occur on Thursday as well as a meeting with Governor Dayton. The web site is being updated and plans to introduce a number of new initiatives and alliances planned subject to obtaining continuing funding from the legislature. We remain optimistic on that issue.

Beltrami County has completed a very promising partnership with the Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District. The SWCD retains its governance board and staff are domiciled at the county administrative building in Bemidji. This will save \$275,000 per year and produce a proactive environmental service team to better serve Beltrami County.

Make sure to check out the geo-caching opportunities on the Mississippi headwaters area and great events like the Dragon Boat Festival on Lake Bemidji this summer.

### Grand Rapids to Brainerd – Commissioner John Schaubach

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On December 9 I [along with Chris Miller and Jack Frost] attended a conference at the Northland Arboretum in Baxter, Minnesota, "Mississippi River Habitat: Sharing Information on Habitat, Water Quality, Recreation and Community Development". This conference was sponsored by the Minnesota Initiative Foundation and the Trust for Public Land. The purpose of the conference was to gather presentations from a range of stakeholders and advocates of the Mississippi River Headwaters region for shared knowledge and identification of common ground for mutual support. I found the program enlightening and encouraging. I appreciated Commissioner Frost's presentation on the role of the Mississippi Headwater's Board. I was able to share information on some river related community development efforts from my area. I was especially encouraged by the presentations from representatives of St. Cloud and Brainerd about their efforts to transform their communities as Mississippi River towns. We also were able to share information about the MRT and the potential for a Mississippi Corridor Management Plan update. There was such good information sharing that now there is talk now of repeating this conference with additional stakeholders who were not present at this time.

On January 25-26 I represented the MN-MRPC at the Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference in Nisswa. There were much information and reports of about tourism opportunities that are consistent with the mission of the MRPC. Presentations of note in this regard covered topics about changing generational interests for tourism, the new and emerging international travel market potential, bicycle tourism with note of the significance of the MRT, the measured economic impact of national byway status, and the importance of mobile marketing [cell phone application tools] as examples. It was to me additional evidence that there is more and more potential to continue to elevate the Mississippi to its rightful iconic status within the mainstream of our state's tourism marketing. There was also a presentation at the conference by a representative from the International Mountain Biking Association about the new mountain bike course in the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area which our commission toured this past summer. IMBA will be joining the DNR and others in a grand opening ceremony in Crosby on June 10. It was good to see the interest in this development by other attendees of the tourism conference.

Todd Holman of the Nature Conservancy informs me he continues to work on acquiring the Mississippi shore lands that he discussed with the Commission at our meeting last summer. He appreciates the interest and support of the MN-MRPC in this effort. And he will keep me apprised of developments that might be in the interests of the commission so that I can share them with you.

## **Department of Natural Resources – Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor**

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### **Mississippi River Critical Area (MRCCA) Rule Making**

DNR ran out of time to adequately evaluate the public input and missed the rule making deadline. The fate of the MRCCA rule making is now in the hands of the Legislature. The Legislature can extend rulemaking authority if an agency missed the statutory deadlines in Chapter 14; however, a bill has been introduced to make sure that doesn't happen for the MCRRA. SF0039/HF0095 repeals the MRCCA rulemaking. As of February 15, 2011, the bill had made it to the Senate floor, but had not yet gone through the House. Even if the bill does not pass, the rulemaking cannot move forward unless the Legislature acts to extend DNR's authority. A lot is up in the air right now however work is continuing on the draft rules and SONAR, both of which are near completion.

### **Mississippi Whitewater Park Project**

The Corps of Engineers contractor has been working on the development of a third design alternative for the Mississippi Whitewater Park - one that starts the whitewater park further upstream and provides greater visibility of the whitewater course from the Stone Arch bridge. We don't anticipate seeing any designs until the end of March. A presentation of the draft report to the Design Coordination Team (key stakeholders) is planned for early May.

### **Mississippi River – Update from DNR's Sauk Rapids office**

Brainerd is continuing to move forward with a Chamber of Commerce led initiative to refocus on the Mississippi River. They are continuing to pull together plans.

The Central Minnesota Community Foundation in St. Cloud is continuing a discussion about refocusing St. Cloud on the river. This effort ties in with all the river planning initiatives that are happening in the St. Cloud area, along with the St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan – a draft which should be revealed within the next couple of weeks.

The Central Minnesota Community Foundation also gathered about 40 local community leaders and visited the city of Dubuque, Iowa earlier this year. They are continuing to have conversations about how to make St. Cloud a more river centric city – more along the lines of Dubuque, or at least borrowing some themes from Dubuque.

There is a Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council proposal to purchase land around the Little Nokasippi Wildlife Management Area (WMA) for public outdoor recreation, and to protect the viability of the WMA, which is adjacent to the Mississippi River near Camp Ripley.

### **Friendship Tour Project Wins Statewide Collaboration Contest**

Check out <http://www.curemriver.org> for a story on the "Friendship Tour Project" that won a collaboration award by bringing "up streamers" (farmers along the Minnesota River) together with "down streamers" (Lake Pepin area residents) to get a grassroots understanding of each other's issues. Pretty cool, if you ask me.