



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
1st Quarter Meeting – February 16, 2012
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Room 500 North
DRAFT AGENDA

2:30 p.m.	Welcome & Introductions - Welcome New Members!	S. Johnson
2:35 p.m.	Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 11/17/11	S. Johnson/All
2:40 p.m.	Mississippi River Trail - Route Overview & Update	Liz Walton, MnDOT
2:55 p.m.	Commission Business - Election of 2012 Officers - RFP Process/Timeline for Commission Management/Marketing Contract - Financial Status Report - Legislative Session Update	All S. Johnson/Hubinger Miller House/Senate Members
3:10 p.m.	National MRPC Updates - MRPC Board - Strategic Planning Meeting, March 30 in St. Louis (Identify top 3 - 5 MN-MRPC priorities) - National Committees: Culture & Heritage, ERA, Marketing, Transportation	S. Johnson Zoff/All Committee Members
3:20 p.m.	Upcoming Events - Great River Gathering, May 2012 - Other Events Coming Up	All
3:30 p.m.	Old Business - GRR Video Project Update - CapX 2020 Update	Miller Zoff, Miller
3:40 p.m.	New Business - CMP Grant Progress Update, Project Management Team - WI MRPC Resolution on Hydroelectric Project - Federal Surface Transportation Bill	Zoff, Miller S. Johnson Pafko
4:10 p.m.	Work Group Updates - Marketing, Economic Development, Capital Improvement, Organization	Work Group Members
4:20 p.m.	Agency and Regional Updates - Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids - Grand Rapids to Brainerd - Brainerd to Elk River - Elk River to Hastings - Hastings to Iowa Border - Agriculture - Explore MN Tourism - Historical Society - Natural Resources - Transportation - National Park Service/MNRRRA	Lucachick Schaubach Samp Pierson Mulry Poster A. Johnson/Offerman Kajer/Kelliher Parker/Wheeler Pafko/Zoff Labovitz
5:00 p.m.	Wrap Up and Adjourn	



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
4th Quarter Meeting
November 17, 2011
State Office Building, St. Paul MN**

MINUTES - Approved 5/24/12

Commissioners Present

Rep. Sheldon Johnson – MN-MRPC Chair
Frank Pafko – Transportation Appointee
John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Jack Frost – Itasca to Grand Rapids (via phone)
Mark Anderson – At-Large Member
Paul Labovitz – Elk River to Hastings
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border
Sen. Sandra Pappas
Adam Johnson – Explore MN Tourism Appointee

Greg Hubinger – LCC
David Kelliher – Historical Society
Chris Miller - Staff

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

Rep. Branden Petersen
Sen. David Senjem
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee
Charlie Poster – Agriculture Appointee
Keith Parker – Natural Resources Appointee

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

Carol Zoff – Transportation
Cynthia Wheeler – Natural Resources
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism

Others Present

Dan Luke, Hard Working Pictures

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 by Chair Johnson, followed by introductions. A quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes from 8/18/11 Meeting

The Chair noted addition of an item under New Business: 2012 National Scenic Byway Grant Solicitation. Motion by Commissioner Pafko and seconded by Commissioner Mulry to approve the agenda as amended and minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Great River Road Video Project Overview

Dan Luke of Hard Working Pictures provided an overview of the current project to produce a series of seven Minnesota Great River Road videos – one for each destination area and one compilation for the full length of the byway. The project is funded by the Commission's National Scenic Byways marketing grant and a grant from Explore Minnesota Tourism, with the balance coming from MN-MRPC operating funds. Documents were distributed for review including a list of footage that has been shot and draft scripts for three destination areas. Video rough cuts were shown. Commission members provided verbal feedback and were asked to review print information and provide comments by November 23. It was noted that access to any available aerial footage would be appreciated. Additional scripts and information will be distributed via email for comment as available. The project is scheduled for completion by December 31. A limited number of DVD copies will be produced and the videos will be featured on the Minnesota Great River Road website. The Commission thanked Mr. Luke for his work and presentation.

Commission Business

Election of Officers: The election was tabled and will be scheduled for the first meeting of 2012.

Finance Report: Greg Hubinger provided an update. Finance reports are not currently available. The state is changing over to a new finance system and reports are still being built. There have been some delays in processing of invoices as well. Reports should be available soon.

Donation from Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors: Carol Zoff reported on a partnership with the Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors (MSPS) for development and placement of interpretive panels at New Albin, Minnesota. The panels tell the story of how the Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa boundaries were established, and are tools to increase visitation along the Great River Road. Draft panel designs were circulated. MSPS will be contributing \$3,000 toward the panels, with the remaining funds (roughly half of the cost) to come from the MN-MRPC's federal interpretive panel grant as part of that overall project.

Technical Advisors – Consider Addition of MNRRA/National Park Service: Commissioner Labovitz explained that he will be unable to run for re-election as a Regional Commissioner due to recently released information prohibiting federal employees from serving on boards in a decision making capacity. He would like to maintain the partnership between the MN-MRPC and MNRRA and stay involved if possible, in a liaison capacity. An option would be to serve as a Technical Advisor. After general discussion, motion by Commissioner Pappas and seconded by Commissioner Frost to establish a Technical Advisor position for the National Park Service to be filled by the Superintendent of the Mississippi National River and Recreation area or a designee. Motion passed. This is an informal arrangement, and process for creation of technical advisor positions will be reviewed as part of the new Corridor Management Plan. A new Regional Commissioner for Elk River to Hastings will be elected at the upcoming Regional Meeting.

Senator Pappas noted that this will be her last meeting with the MN-MRPC. Senator Patricia Torres-Ray will be joining the MN-MRPC as a new appointee from the Senate. The Commission thanked Senator Pappas for her service and involvement, and invited her to continue with activities related to the river.

Commission Management/Marketing Contract: The Commission's contract for management/marketing services expires on June 30, 2012. A process will be needed to ensure that the Commission has service after that date and as the new Corridor Management Plan grant is implemented. Topic was referred to the Organization Work Group and MN-MRPC Chair for follow up.

National MRPC Updates

Report from 2011 Annual Meeting, Little Rock: Chair Johnson, Senator Senjem, Commissioner Samp and Technical Advisor Zoff attended the meeting, held in late September. Chairman Johnson reported on a good sense of partnership and collaboration among the ten river states. All states continue to struggle with finances. Advisor Zoff distributed minutes from the National MRPC Transportation Committee meeting and highlighted topics including discussion on possible pursuit of All American Road status. Minnesota's attendees commended the Arkansas delegation for their great work hosting the meeting.

MRPC Board: The current officers of the National MRPC Board will continue to serve in those capacities for another year. Commissioner Samp was elected co-chair of the Environment, Recreation and Agriculture Committee and will participate in MRPC Board meetings as a non-voting member.

National Committees: Cheryl Offerman shared information on the upcoming development/printing of a new National Great River Road brochure and map, as discussed by the Marketing Committee. A suggestion was made that the piece should include a drivable map, similar to the previous fold out piece. Carol Zoff noted that 2013 will be the 75th anniversary of the National Great River Road and the National MRPC is seeking ideas for events to mark this milestone. Ideas may be sent to the MN-MRPC office to be forwarded.

Work Group Updates

Commission Project Overview Spreadsheet: A spreadsheet/work plan was distributed to show current projects and specific tasks of the Commission and Work Groups.

Work Group Membership: Lists of MN-MRPC work groups and National MRPC committees were distributed in the meeting packets. All members are asked to participate in at least one work group and consider assisting on a national committee. Contact the MN-MRPC office to be added to a roster.

Old Business

Status of Regional Citizen Committee Meetings & Agency Appointments: MN-MRPC agency appointments have been completed, with Frank Pafko being re-appointed by the Department of Transportation, and Keith Parker newly appointed by the Department of Natural Resources. Regional Commissioner elections are taking place at a series of regional citizen committee/stakeholder meetings, scheduled for completion in December. The Hastings to Iowa Border regional meeting was held June 2; Grand Rapids to Brainerd regional meeting was held September 20; and Brainerd to Elk River regional meeting on September 23. Sheronne Mulry, John Schaubach and Karl Samp have been re-elected as Regional Commissioners. Commissioner Schaubach noted appreciation to the elected officials who attended the Grand Rapids to Brainerd regional meeting. Commissioner Mulry encouraged citizen

applicants for the Metro commissioner position, which could help avoid any organizational conflicts of interest. Upcoming meetings include the Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids Region on December 12 and Elk River to Hastings on December 16. Thank you to Regional Commissioners and the National Park Service for their assistance with these meetings.

MRT Community Engagement Meetings:

Members discussed the recently held Minnesota MRT community engagement meetings, Minnesota Bicycle Tourism Summit, and discussions of MRT Inc. at the national level. Community engagement meetings involved rollout of a Marketing Toolbox for Minnesota's Mississippi River Trail Bikeway, and an overview of opportunities for involvement including how to become "host cities" and/or "hub cities" along the route. Upcoming statewide efforts will focus on confirming the route, signing and promoting it. MN-MRPC members expressed enthusiasm for the efforts, also discussed the route and requested clarification on the route as it now stands versus how it was originally proposed. Concerns were noted on possible standards including speed requirements in order for trails to be considered as part of the route. There are good off-road options, especially in the Twin Cities area. MRT Inc. at the national level encourages access for riders from a variety of levels. It was suggested that Liz Walton and Dan Collins be invited to the first MN-MRPC meeting of 2012 to share information on the route. Motion by Commissioner Schaubach and seconded by Commissioner Mulry stating that the MN-MRPC supports the goals of the MRT, Inc. Board of Directors, including keeping the route close to the river, off road where possible, and accessible to bikers of all levels. Motion carried.

New Business

Corridor Management Plan Project:

Process & Timeline - First steps on the National Scenic Byways Grant for Corridor Management Planning and Implementation will include development of a project management team and project advisory team. The Project Management Team will handle detailed planning and oversight of the project with specific tasks to carry out. The Project Advisory Team will serve as general advisors to the project at a broad level; help facilitate a successful project that meets their needs and the mission of the MN-MRPC, leverages resources, aligns efforts and sets the stage for future partnerships; and serve as a conduit for information ensuring that a variety of viewpoints are considered. Draft lists of possible team members/organizations were distributed. Commission members were asked for feedback and additional suggestions for the teams. The Project Management Team will convene first to get the RFP process underway, with the Advisory Team meeting a bit later in the process. Goal is to release an RFP sometime between late January and mid-February of 2012. Commission members recommended providing options for team members to participate from their local areas via videoconferencing or other means.

Visual Resource Protection Plan Project – The Mississippi National River & Recreation Area (MNRRA) received a 2010 National Scenic Byways Grant to develop a Visual Resource Protection Plan for the Great River Road's Metro Mississippi Region. The project will quantify visual resources and scientifically document a process that defines the value of the views. Volunteers will be needed next spring and summer to assist with identification of views to be protected. The process will be expanded to other areas of the Great River Road as part of the overall Corridor Management Plan.

Alternative Transportation Plan – This MNRRA initiative, led by Susan Overson, seeks to use the MRT as a spine to increase visitation to the park without increasing congestion (multi-modal transportation). Phase II of this plan is now being implemented which will include expansion of Nice Ride to St. Paul. Bike stations will be located along the river from Minneapolis to St. Paul. Alternative transportation principles and this National Park Service example will be shared with other communities, and included in the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan.

Stakeholder Communications Tool/Marketing Ideas: Commissioner Samp recently received information on opportunities for LightSpeed Grants through the Blandin Foundation, which fund projects that demonstrate the value of broadband based technology applications in education, health care, government and business. Discussions have taken place on whether these funds could supplement those in the Commission's Corridor Management Plan Grant, for the task of developing a communication system/outreach to stakeholders. Such a system would likely involve social media. Commissioner Samp also suggested creation of a web portal that would link all CVB's, Chambers, and other tourism related businesses and sites, and a Great River Road blog. Commission members indicated willingness to participate in a blog. Commissioner A. Johnson noted that discussion would be needed on audience, tone

and voices prior to beginning such a project. Commissioner Pafko suggested contacting the Department of Transportation for information on their electronic communications/social media efforts. Members recommended pursuing funding if possible and/or folding these approaches into overall plans for the Corridor Management Plan and the Marketing Work Group.

2012 National Scenic Byway Grant Solicitation: The solicitation for 2012 National Scenic Byway Grants was recently released. The state deadline for applications is December 19. Commissioner Pafko reported that availability of funds at the national level is approximately half of the expected level. At least a couple of applications from along the Great River Road are likely. Letters of support from the MN-MRPC will be needed on a relatively short timeline. Commission members may also be asked to rank the applications via an email process. Motion by Commissioner Pafko and seconded by Commissioner Frost authorizing the MN-MRPC Chair to provide letters of support for National Scenic Byway Grant applications submitted by local partners along the Great River Road. Motion carried.

Agency and Regional Updates

Itasca to Grand Rapids: Commissioner Frost reported that the Mississippi Headwaters Board is seeking grants for operations, redefinition and expansion of mission, and hiring of an executive director. Repairs are taking place on County Road 33 (Great River Road) which will improve the traveler experience. Commissioner Frost worked with Dan Luke on a video shoot recently and noted some of the locations included.

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: Commissioner Schaubach reported that progress continues on the Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Project. The project is still on the list for possible Legacy Funds and other funding options are also being investigated to facilitate the land purchase. One goal would be to create trails that could be part of the MRT in the future. The Cuyuna Lakes Mountain Bike Trail recently received national recognition. The Initiative Foundation, Trust for Public Land and Mississippi Headwaters Board will be convening another Mississippi River Gathering (G3), scheduled for December 10.

Brainerd to Elk River: A report is attached.

Elk River to Hastings: Commissioner Labovitz noted that discussions regarding Asian Carp continue, including a Governor's Summit. The Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure program provided river experiences for 9,000 youth this past summer. The canoes were recently taken to Washington DC for an event serving 1,000 youth. Discussions have been taking place involving the National Park Service, US Army Corps of Engineers and US Fish and Wildlife Service to plan a "Summer of Paddling" for 2012. Ideas or information on existing events that could be promoted as part of this initiative are welcome.

Hastings to Iowa Border: Commissioner Mulry reported on large numbers of hunters in her region, and Chambers/Convention and Visitors Bureaus gearing up for holiday events.

Explore Minnesota Tourism: Technical Advisor Offerman announced that the 2012 Minnesota Tourism Conference will be held January 24 – 25 in Rochester. Commissioner A. Johnson invited everyone to Visit Saint Paul's 11th Annual Taste of Saint Paul Holiday Reception on November 29. He also reported that the Mississippi Queen will be back on the river in the fall of 2012 and Visit Saint Paul will be working with them. Saint Paul will be hosting the Red Bull Crashed Ice event in January, 2012.

Natural Resources: A report is attached.

Transportation: Commissioner Pafko reported that the Mississippi River route has been selected as the preferred route for high speed rail service to Chicago. A series of meetings are coming up including an option on December 13, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Winona County History Center. Construction on the Lafayette and Hastings bridges will be closing down for the season. Planning processes continue for new bridges at Winona, Dresbach and Red Wing.

Next Meeting

To be determined. 2012 meeting schedule will be set in January, 2012.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Regional Update November 2011

Brainerd to Elk River – Commissioner Karl Samp

Video project- I spent all of one day, and part of another (10/6 and 8) with Dan Luke of Hard Working Pictures to capture points of interest to film along the Mississippi and Great River Road. We spent a good deal of time in the Little Falls area as there are several attractions, and their CVB was responsive to our call for sites to shoot. We also went to Camp Ripley's Environmental Center and History Museum, Crow Wing State Park, and in Brainerd, historic downtown, Northland Arboretum, and The Paul Bunyan Trail. Dan also stopped at Munsinger and Clemens Gardens in St. Cloud on his way back south. I put out a call for other stills and video, and we got a link to a DNR video of the Swans of Monticello. Cynthia is helping us access footage from that. Little Falls CVB shared additional photos, as did the Franklin Arts Center in Brainerd.

St. Cloud Area Mississippi River Planning. - The planning efforts in the St. Cloud Area were recognized with two awards for their efforts at public engagement in the planning process for the Mississippi River Corridor. The city received the 2011 River-Friendly Community of the Year from Minnesota Waters, a nonprofit organization that promotes residents and community groups who protect and restore Minnesota lakes and rivers. The city also received Excellence in Community Engagement from the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association. Carol Z., Greg M., Chris M. and Karl S. were actively engaged in the planning process, and the GRR and MRT are listed as partners and assets to highlight.

Brainerd/Baxter Area Planning- These communities were recently selected by the National Park Service to receive support in their efforts to create a Master Plan for the Mississippi River Corridor through their communities by the National Park Service, Rivers and Trails Program. We supported this application with a Letter of Support. See attachments for details. I will continue to stay engaged in this effort.

SOAR- I have been working with John Schaubach and Johnna Johnson (Cuyuna Chamber) on partnership opportunities to support our regions as destinations for SOAR – Silent, Outdoor Active Recreation. We considered a joint proposal to EMT but decided against it based on logistical problems with match sources, etc. We hope to continue to work on this idea, though.

Social Media/ Electronic Marketing Training- In October, the first free workshop aimed at MN-MRPC contacts was held at Sauk Rapids Rice High School. Seven participants took part including one CVB, an agritourism business, and two MN-MRPC Commission members. Other sites for this training will be in Winona and Grand Rapids in partnership with the Blandin Foundation MIRC project and delivered by U of M Extension.

CMP Communication Activities and beyond - Chris and Karl had a meeting with Golden Shovel Agency to help us think through how we might create the communication system for our CMP efforts, while at the same time, creating a platform (Portal) for all CVB's, Chambers, and Tourism related businesses and sites (i.e. agritourism, parks, historical, natural, etc.) along the length of the GRR in Minnesota. There is potential to receive additional funding from the Blandin Foundation for creating this portal.

Other News - In Little Rock, Karl was elected as co-chair of the Environment, Recreation, and Agriculture Committee (ERA) and will sit in on National Commission Meetings as a nonvoting member. Development of the national roster of agritourism sites is first on our list of things to accomplish.



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Agency Update November 2011

Department of Natural Resources – Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor

Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail is one of Minnesota's newest state trails, authorized by the legislature in 2009. The trail is envisioned as a multi-use system, accommodating a variety of motorized and non-motorized uses, linking the Soo Line Trail south of Little Falls to Crow Wing State Park and the Paul Bunyan State Trail.

Local, regional, state and private interest groups are working with a consultant, Bolton & Menk, Inc., to conduct a trail corridor feasibility study. The DNR is responsible for preparing a master plan for the trail, and the two efforts are being jointly undertaken. The feasibility study will be completed by April 2012 and the trail master plan is anticipated to be completed by summer 2012.

There will be numerous opportunities for people with an interest in the trail to be involved in the planning process. An initial open house was held Tuesday, November 15, 2011 at the Morrison County Government Center.

Asian Carp

Water samples from the Mississippi River downstream of the Ford Dam tested positive for genetic material from silver carp. This indicated the invasive Asian species may be present in the Twin Cities stretch of river. The sampling, known as environmental DNA (eDNA) testing, provides a chemical indication that some silver carp are in the river.

Subsequent netting and searching, by both the DNR and a commercial fishery, did not turn up any Asian carp.

Rolling on the River!

The Mississippi River Trail (MRT) is a world-class bicycle route that originates at the headwaters within Itasca State Park and continues through ten states to the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana. It is a 3,000-mile network of bicycle-friendly roads and multi-use paths that provides a cross-section of America.

Within Minnesota, dip your wheel into the river's origins; ride through Paul Bunyan country; explore bicycle friendly communities; try local delicacies; rent a canoe; stay in comfortable north country accommodations or pitch a tent in a rustic setting; linger in bicycle-renowned Minneapolis-St. Paul and the Mississippi National River Recreation Area; and appreciate the grandeur of the river bluffs that frame your journey as you follow river boats to the Iowa border.



Minnesota MRT WEBSITE/MORE INFORMATION <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html>

Bicycling is a unique way to experience the Mississippi River's natural wonders, recreational facilities, and cultural heritage

WHY "MRT?"

- **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.
- **Additional 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.
- **Added value for roads and trails.** The Mississippi River Trail adds value to existing roads and trails by bringing new users to our existing transportation network.
- **Fulfillment of state statutes.** The MRT helps MnDOT 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).

MRT COMPOSITION in MN

Approximately 15% of Minnesota's route is located on separated off-road paths and trails and 85% relies on road shoulders and relatively low-volume roads administered by numerous road authorities.

IT'S A BIKEWAY

Even though it's called the Mississippi River "Trail," this 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 State Trails). Minnesota's route travels on both roads and trails taking 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 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 a total of 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.

MnDOT DOES NOT “OWN” THE MRT

Only 21% of the route is located on state and U.S. highways. MnDOT’s role has been and will continue to be that of the “convener.” By bringing people together and encouraging public-private partnerships, MnDOT endeavors to ignite the fire of self-interest on the part of local governments, businesses and local residents for the common good of all involved.

Like the links of a chain, the route’s appeal and success is tied to the enthusiasm and commitment of the authorities that administer the remaining 79% of the Mississippi River Trail. Moving forward MnDOT sees itself as a key partner with a lot to gain if the vision of a vibrant Mississippi River Trail is realized. For the Mississippi River Trail to be used, appreciated, and reach its full potential, all road and trail authorities will need to collaboratively manage and support the bike route. Now that the route is operational, MnDOT is bringing together MRT partners to discuss how to collaboratively make decisions related to maintenance, route adjustments, future improvements, marketing, and other efforts.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Generally paralleling the motorist-oriented Great River Road and the canoe and boat-oriented Mississippi River Water Trail, 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.



RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Reviewed and refined the route based on collaborative statewide meetings;
- Conducted evaluation rides to confirm route decisions made in the meetings;
- Introduced the concept of bicycle-friendly communities along the route;
- Posted a GIS-interactive map and printable maps on MnDOT’s website;
- Developed a marketing toolbox to enhance local marketing efforts and promote the MRT;
- Completed a signing plan for segments located on state highways;
- Received federal funding to permanently sign the entire route, print maps, and construct 6 MRT orientation kiosks along the route.

PRESENT INITIATIVES (WINTER 2011-SPRING 2012)



- Convene additional statewide meetings to improve the alignment and coordinate activities and expectations amongst MRT’s road and trail authorities. Concentrate on: segments previously identified as 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;
- Implement marketing and outreach. Encourage formation of mutually beneficial marketing partnerships within the public and private sectors, and facilitate local marketing action plans (including a series of festive 2012 MRT Discovery Rides) in selected “MRT Host Communities”, locate and design MRT orientation kiosks in six “MRT HUB Communities,” and develop local bicycle-friendliness recommendations;
- Seek Legislative authorization of the MRT as Minnesota’s first designated Bikeway (H.F.1367);
- Develop signing plan for road and off-road segments not located on state highways;

- Evaluate the need for/best elements of a printed map for general distribution;
- Develop and implement cooperative MRT management structure for road and trail authorities.
- Apply for inclusion within the U.S. Bicycle Route System (as MN’s first route).

WORK STILL TO BE COMPLETED (SUMMER 2012-2013)

- Upgrade access to WEB based maps;
- Print maps;
- Install comprehensive route signing throughout MRT;
- Install MRT orientation kiosks in select communities.



MORE INFO:

Liz Walton, Landscape Architect Liz.Walton@state.mn.us 651-366-4186
Dan Collins, Principal Planner Daniel.Collins@state.mn.us 651-366-4179

Minnesota Department of Transportation
Office of Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian Section, MS 315
395 John Ireland Boulevard St. Paul, MN 55155

MN-MRPC FY 12
Operating Budget - 2/10/12

Obj Code	Description	Budget	Spent	Pending	Remaining	Comments
41070	Other Benefits (Per Diem)	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,611.60		\$ 2,888.40	Commissioners: quarterly mtgs, MRPC Annual Mtg & Semi-Annual Mtg, work group mtgs, Commission representation at meetings and events. Also 2011 NSB Conference.
41100	Space Rental, Maint & Utility	\$ 700.00	\$ -		\$ 700.00	Storage of MN-MRPC brochures, exhibit fees, mtg room rental, etc.
41110	Printing & Advertising	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 125.36		\$ 1,174.64	Commission meeting copies, materials, ads, etc.
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$ 24,500.00	\$ 12,250.02	\$ 2,041.67	\$ 10,208.31	Administrative contract
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$9,000	\$3,789	\$285	\$4,926	Local match (20%) for any remaining FHWA grant project work, any other outside vendor projects and/or hours for Commission projects outside of administrative retainer
41155	Communications	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,040.78	\$ 253.12	\$ 706.10	Website hosting, stats, minor updates, programming changes as needed. Postage/deliveries. MN MRPC phone line and conference calls.
41160	In-State Travel	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 2,820.96		\$ 6,179.04	Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, work groups, events. Includes August 2011 National Scenic Byway Conference in Mpls
41170	Out-State Travel	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 629.73		\$ 4,370.27	MRPC Annual & Semi Annual Meetings
41300	Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ 92.56	\$ 63.63	\$ 343.81	General office supplies for Commission projects.
41400	Equipment	\$ 500.00	\$ -		\$ 500.00	Equipment for GRR video project to be completed by 12/31/11
43000	Other Costs (MRPC Dues)	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -		\$ 6,000.00	Includes National MRPC Dues (\$15,000 annual dues amount, with \$9,500 paid at end of FY 11 leaving \$5,500 balance)
TOTAL:		\$ 63,000.00	\$ 22,359.83		\$ 37,996.57	

National Scenic Byway Conference, Minneapolis, August 2011

MRPC 2011 Annual Meeting - Arkansas

MRPC 2012 Strategic Planning - St. Louis

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING - GREAT RIVER ROAD

BRAINSTORM SESSION

Assumptions:

These are notes from the Brainstorm Session facilitated by the America's Byways Resource Center at the 10-State Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) Annual Meeting on September 11, 2010. These are only brainstorm notes. They should not be construed as a to-do list for the MRPC. These are ideas that can be used in the future to help in collaborative efforts with the MRPC.

Brainstorm Question:

What do you want to see in place in 3-5 years, as a result of our 10-state collaborative byway efforts?

Six Priority Focus Areas (listed with no particular order regarding priority or timeframes)

The Six (6) Priority areas were named and developed by the MRPC from the top Five to Six ideas/concepts generated during the individual group brainstorming sessions. This information was all placed on the "Sticky Wall" for further discussion and comment by the MRPC.

➤ **Technical and Financial Support**

- Congressional Caucus made up of members representing districts along the River
- Effective lobbying efforts
- Reliable, realistic, sustainable funding
- MRPC Categorical Funding
- Effective working relations (as partners) of Federal and State agencies (i.e., a broader constituency)

➤ **Protect the Resource**

- Protecting Intrinsic Qualities
- Clear Water
- Communication among all Ten (10) states regarding assets
- All about the River (Great River Road, Mississippi River Trail, blueway, clean water, multi-modal, recreation, etc.)

➤ **Marketing**

- 60 percent of all domestic travel to and in Great River Road territory
- New strip map with marketing emphasis on Great Mississippi River Road = MRP
- Expansion of Multi-state themed itineraries

- Communication (Internal, External)
- One unifying “Canada to Gulf” yearly event
- A Great River Road organization which compares with the Nature Conservancy, PGA, NASCAR, American Cancer Society, etc. – selling ourselves with name recognition
- Funded Collaborative Marketing Plan
- Children’s parks and activities on the Great River Road

➤ **Focusing Your Organization**

- All Ten (10) states have sustainable MRPC Commissions with strong partnerships in Federal and State agencies
- More diversity of age in Commission Membership
- Effective management/organizational structure

➤ **Greater Recognition through Designation**

- A National Heritage Area – create a new National Designation that reflects global significance
- Highest level of designation (All-American Road)
- Total National Scenic Byway Designation - throughout all Ten (10) states
- Fill in gaps of Great River Road

➤ **Exceptional Seamless Visitor Experience**

- Signage
- Consistent Signage – Seamless Experience
- Multi-language required in all signage
- Themed Itineraries – using Intrinsic Qualities and Great River Road Eleven (11) stories
- National River Story Telling

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING - GREAT RIVER ROAD

BRAINSTORM SESSION – **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

The following are additional notes from the Brainstorm Session facilitated by the America's Byways Resource Center on September 11, 2010. These ideas/concepts were developed by individuals and in groups, but were not incorporated into the Top Six Priority/Focus areas on the "Sticky Wall". These ideas are listed in a bullet format for use by the MRPC in future planning and coordination efforts (*ideas are listed with no particular order regarding priority or timeframes*).

- Update CMP's and Marketing Plans
- World Peace
- 4 G –Communication Corridor to enhance internet along the River
- River events year-round
- Large increase in tourism dollars
- More money from Washington and State Government and Private Sector (permanent funding sources)
- A network of improved signage – multi-lingual that directs people through the Valley
- Assistance to states to complete and improve Route
- A series of excellent informational kiosks for the entire length of the Great River Road that highlight the Intrinsic Qualities of each Region
- A series of "Pulovers" that reveal the scenic highlights of the Mississippi River Valley
- Interactive kiosks accessible to general public with all points on Great River Road linked
- A large increase in tourism dollars
- Ten (10) state All-American Road (AAR)
- More funding to Great River Road
- 50 percent of Intrinsic Resources are vital to public attractions
- Definite Focus
- An efficient, smooth highway with well maintained and well marked lanes, with same systems for all states
- Coordinated marketing efforts
- Individually distinctive Mississippi River corridor designation
- Interpretation continuity
- Full Ten (10) state participation
- Continue the marketing and promotion to area residents of the Route
- Additional press coverage/stories along the Route
- Possible event to promote Route – i.e. bike/boat race
- Look at all signage along the Route – is it enough? Additional spurs along route
- National Park status
- Broader River constituency around the MRPC table
- Greater partnerships between the Ten (10) states
- The tourism agencies of each state (working with partner agencies) fulfilling commitment (funding, human resources) to effectively market the Ten (10) state Byway
- A consistent effort state to state

- Evidence of recognition and support by local entities in states, counties, communities, public, etc.
- Measurable and positive economic (tourism) impacts of Ten (10) state Byway
- National political advocacy campaign
- GPS and mapping along the Great River Road
- Become an Icon
- Wayfinding Signage
- Greater awareness across the U.S. of River's qualities
- A cleaner River
- Support to control negative impacts on scenic nature of National Scenic Byway – i.e., bluff-top development, bad signage, junkyards, powerline location/sitting
- No further degradation of scenic qualities of River
- An ethical preservation of historic resources
- Assured quality of the highway itself
- Detailed Ten (10) state map
- Ten (10) state maps
- Website links between the states
- Coordination with adjacent states
- Facebook communications between interpretive centers
- Engage visitor experience
- Friends development
- Improved understanding all along the National Scenic Byway of its importance to economic development
- Fill in gaps
- Fill in the gaps in the Ten (10) state byway system
- Better collaborative marketing of the National Scenic Byway
- Increased marketing
- Funded marketing plan
- Better signage
- Wayfinding signage
- Update signage
- Sustainable funding sources are in place
- More scenic byway funding
- Combined State and Federal funding for projects
- Sustainable MRPC commissions in all Ten (10) states
- Academic affiliation and ownership
- All Ten (10) states have sustainable state commissions (i.e., byway agency)
- A Ten (10) state dynamite, national, marketing and public outreach plan that is written in Partnership with various agencies such as the Corps of Engineers, Audubon, Nature Conservancy, etc.
- Expansion of multi-state themes itineraries
- Consistent on-going national media attention print, broadcast and social information
- Active communication of interpretative centers
- Marketing Plan – how to Visit the Mississippi River
- Identify a wide range of attractions all along the River
- Encourage tourists to criss-cross the River for bi-state tourism
- Great River Road wine trails, local fresh food trails, art towns along Great River Road
- Create Great River Road multi-state events in garage sales along Great River Road

- Beer Trail
- Efforts to make Mississippi River “Greener”
- Criteria for preservation of natural features
- 85 percent of Great River Road name recognition by residents in Ten (10) states
- Technical assistance for local developers and amenities
- A network of valued historical sites from Canada to the Gulf
- International marketing plan benefitting all Ten (10) states
- International recognition of our Byway
- Push technology optimization
- Full state and national support
- Inventory Intrinsic Qualities
- Global recognition of Great River Road
- Consistent and complete signage
- Fun, Fun, Fun
- Local participation and profit
- Equal funding to all Ten (10) states
- A permanent funding source
- Frequent travel promotions – i.e. geocaching updates; focus changes for same location; architectural vs. history, vs. scenic
- Cohesive management of interpretive centers
- Removal of hazardous chemicals near Mississippi River ports
- Marketing of outdoor opportunities – birding/biking in secure, safe places
- Meditation and scenic locations enhanced
- Appreciation for local culture
- More economic stability for rural areas
- Underground wiring for utility security
- Wider roads for greater travel by vehicles
- Better MRPC – Great River Road recognition
- 75 percent of Intrinsic Resources in protection
- Chain of interpretive centers (the length of the river)
- Local community and regional appreciation of our resources

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Resolution

2012 – 1

Lock and Dams 3, 4, 5, 5A, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 Hydroelectric Projects

WHEREAS, Several companies have proposed a hydroelectric project at Lock and Dam Number 3 by Welch, MN, at Lock and Dam Number 4 by Alma, WI, at Lock and Dam Number 5 by Minnesota City, MN, at Lock and Dam Number 5A by Fountain City, WI, at Lock and Dam Number 6 by Trempealeau, WI, at Lock and Dam Number 7 by Dresbach, MN, at Lock and Dam Number 8 by Genoa, WI, at Lock and Dam Number 9 by Lynxville, WI, at Lock and Dam Number 10 by Guttenberg, IA, and at Lock and Dam Number 11 by Dubuque, IA on the Mississippi River and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission (WIMRPC) and Great River Road National Scenic Byway have a strong connection/relationship to the river through fishing, hunting, boating, recreation, tourism, river preservation and

WHEREAS, studies of fish, mussels, eagles, migratory waterfowl mortality for Lock and Dams 3, 4, 5, 5A, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 hydroelectric projects are not sufficient, or are not applicable to the Upper Mississippi River, or do not account for the effect of variables such as high or low water levels or fish migration, and

WHEREAS, fish migration is essential for the viability of the fish populations of the river and project proposals do not account for it, blocking upstream fish migration, and

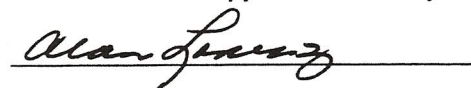
WHEREAS according to State and Federal Conservation Agencies, substantial and expensive efforts will be needed to reestablish aquatic species, including the preservation of endangered species put in jeopardy by fish entrainment and increased mortality issues, and

WHEREAS, any value gained through revenue to the counties is estimated to be far less than the potential cost to the local economy in reduced tourism, revenue, business loss and jobs resulting from decreased area fish and wildlife populations, and

WHEREAS, this project is to be located within, and is indirect contradiction to the intents and purposes of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, and is contrary to the related conservation efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Genoa National Fish Hatchery and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission recommends that no hydroelectric projects be approved for construction without scientific proof from the studies done on the Mississippi River that there will be no adverse impacts to the fish and wildlife populations above and below Lock and Dams 3, 4, 5, 5A, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11, and that this Resolution be sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Governor of Wisconsin, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Western Wisconsin Legislators, local governments and agencies, MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission, IA Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

Adopted this 6th day of January, 2012. I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission at a legal meeting on the 6th day of January, 2012.



Alan Lorenz, Chairperson, WI MRPC



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Agency & Regional Updates February 2012

Brainerd to Elk River – Commissioner Karl Samp

Recent activity in the Brainerd-Baxter Area

- Brainerd Rotary donation of 36 acres of riverfront land south of Kiwanis Park.
- Legacy Trail Grant for a trail to connect the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail to Kiwanis Park to Buffalo Hills Park to the Spur Line trail.
- Preliminary work on College Drive.
- Funding request for an additional section of the Cuyuna Trail within the city of Brainerd in the 2012 State bonding bill. (The section is from Lum Park to the east city limits but has an impact on what we are doing).
- Designation of Brainerd as a Mississippi River Trail (MRT) Hub City.
- A Meeting with MN Bicycle Alliance and the community about MRT.
- The National Park Service accepting the Baxter and Brainerd request for technical assistance in our planning process. Randy Thoreson of the St. Paul office has met with Bill Deblon and me about the NPS role.
- The NPS/Baxter/Brainerd brainstorming ideas about how to get funding for a master plan... the next step in our process.

Grand Rapids to Brainerd – Commissioner John Schaubach

- Karl Samp and I attended the Mississippi River Gathering on December 10 at Camp Ripley. Mississippi Northwood acquisition and the National Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan were among the topics discussed. The Upper Mississippi Gathering process continues. Plans are underway for the 4th of these meetings about the upper Mississippi. There is an opportunity to present further on the Corridor Management Plan project at the next meeting... which has not yet been scheduled.
- Progress continues on the Mississippi Northwoods Project. There is solid local support in Crow Wing County for the acquisition of this magnificent 2000 acre parcel with almost 3 miles of Mississippi shoreline between Brainerd and Cuyuna. The Trust for Public Land and other partners is pushing for final approval within the legislative process. More details below.
- The Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area [CCSRA] continues to evolve with more and more creative ways to bring folks of all ages outdoors. This winter the DNR developed 10 miles of winter mountain bike trails [fat tire bikes] in the Sagamore Unit of the CCSRA at Riverton. [Snowshoe trails too... if we had snow.] This is significant as this large unit of the recreation area is immediately adjacent to the Mississippi just a mile up river from the Mississippi Northwoods Parcel. From an overlook there one has a remarkable vista of the Mississippi Northwoods parcel and the Mississippi River flowing to Brainerd. This March 2 and 3 the CCSRA and the Cuyuna Lakes communities will be the site of the first ever Winter Mountain Bike Festival. There will be a number of race events including a night mountain bike ride. Those attending should keep a wary eye out for the Cuyuna Yeti who has been known to dine on big fat bike tires. In this winter of weird weather, this is an effort by the Cuyuna Lakes Chamber and the local volunteer mountain bike crew to introduce new winter attractions to make our tourism base up here more sustainable.
- On January 25 I gave a talk on the Mississippi River for the Aitkin County Historical Society's Annual Dinner. This was very interesting as the group included a number of folks who lived their whole lives on or adjacent to the river. I found it interesting to hear more of this history of river boats, flooding, logging, and ice gathering for refrigeration... Good connections for the Corridor Management project.
- The Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota have now announced its priorities for the 2012 Bonding process. The list includes projects for more construction of the Cuyuna Lakes Trail and the Veterans Trail... all which would aim to be Mississippi River Trail routes if funded. Brainerd, Cuyuna and Aitkin are working together to accomplish more state trail mileage for the MRT as they become collectively branded and marketed as MRT cities.

- The Mississippi River is a magnet for wildlife and birds. This is one of the best years for that up here as long stretches of the Mississippi have remained open. These have become gathering places for flocks of swans, geese, eagles and otter.

Mississippi Northwoods Heritage Complex Update

- There was great coverage on this project in the Star Tribune <http://www.startribune.com/sports/outdoors/138688084.html>
- The story refers to some of challenges we faced at the LSOHC meeting a few weeks ago and also hints at some challenges ahead.
- To reiterate what was mentioned in the article, the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee last week heard the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) bill. The bill passed this committee unanimously.
- As you may know, Senator Gazelka is on this committee; helped host a committee tour of the property earlier this winter; and is one of the authors of the OHF bill. He has been very interested in and supportive of this project. If you have the chance, please thank Senator Gazelka for his leadership on this effort.
- Next up in the senate is the finance committee. Date and time TBA.
- The OHF bill was just introduced today in the house, but to my knowledge, it is not yet scheduled to be heard. As suggested in the Star Tribune article, this is where we expect we may have some challenges. As mentioned previously, Representatives Ward (in whose district this project is) has been actively supportive of this project. Representatives Howes and LeMieur from neighboring districts have also been very supportive. This support will be critical in the days and weeks ahead.
- We continue to get supporters for the project from the community. Recent additions include the Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and the Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation. The boards of both organizations voted unanimous support. Minnesota B.A.S.S. Federation has also pledged their support.

Department of Natural Resources – Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor

- **Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail** - Planning efforts for this trail continue. The trail is envisioned as a multi-use system, accommodating a variety of motorized and non-motorized uses, linking the Soo Line Trail south of Little Falls to Crow Wing State Park and the Paul Bunyan State Trail. The feasibility study will be completed by May 2012, and the trail master plan is anticipated to be completed by summer 2012. There will be two open houses at end of March to discuss alternative alignments and use recommendations.
- **National Get Outdoors Day** - State Parks open house day is scheduled for Saturday, June 9, 2012, with free admission to all state parks for the day. June 9th is also National Get Outdoors Day. It's the perfect opportunity to get outdoors and explore Minnesota's 72 state parks and recreation areas!
- **Stearns County "Take a Day OFF*" (*Outdoor Family Fun)** - The Stearns County "Take a Day OFF*" is scheduled for Saturday, August, 11, 2012. It is a Department of Natural Resources partnership with Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District, Stearns County Parks, Benton County, St. Cloud State University, local sportsman's clubs, businesses and others to host a day of family fun and provide hands-on instruction with a variety of outdoor activities such as canoeing, archery, laser shooting, fishing, birding, and nature hikes. There is no charge for the activities, and equipment and instructors are provided!
- **Fish Surveying** - DNR will be conducting fish surveys on Pool 2 of the Mississippi River over the summer months. The focus will be on catfish.
- **River Mussels** - Mussels are an indicator species and play an active role in making rivers healthy. They tell us about the history of river and its present condition. There are currently 5 federally endangered mussel species in the Mississippi River: Higgins' eye, Winged Mapleleaf, Snuffbox, Sheepnose, and Spectaclecase. The state list includes additional species. DNR is working to restore 3 of these species.

Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex

PROJECT NAME:

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NORTHWOODS
HABITAT COMPLEX

ACRES:

+/-1,988

OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND RECOMMENDATION:

\$14,040,000

NATURAL RESOURCES:

2.5+ MILES MISSISSIPPI
RIVER FRONTAGE
FISHERIES
WETLANDS
FORESTS
WILD RICE
TROUT STREAM
BLANDING'S TURTLE (THREATENED)
RED SHOULDERED HAWK (CONCERN)
CUYUNA -PAUL BUNYAN STATE
TRAIL CONNECTION

PROGRAMMATIC SIGNIFICANCE:

HUNTING
FISHING
WILDLIFE VIEWING
SNOWMOBILE & TRAIL USE
WATERFOWL MIGRATION HABITAT
MISSISSIPPI RIVER SHORELAND
WILD RICE BAY
CRITICAL HABITAT CORRIDOR
SPAWNING AREA
LARGE-SCALE HABITAT COMPLEX
PREVENTS FOREST FRAGMENTATION
COMPLEMENTS EXISTING PUBLIC
LANDS
CLEAN WATER



Beginning at Lake Itasca in northwestern Minnesota, the Mississippi River is one of the longest rivers in North America, a major route for migratory waterfowl, and a significant source of drinking water for many Minnesota residents. In Minnesota, the river meanders through a diversity of different forest communities and by many growing towns and communities including Brainerd in Crow Wing County. One of the most rapidly growing areas in Minnesota, Brainerd is also a popular recreation spot for tourists and visitors from the Twin Cities, which are only two and a half hours to the southeast, and elsewhere. Recreational opportunities around the region include hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, snow mobiling, canoeing, and camping.

As forested regions of Minnesota experience pressures from growth, efforts are underway to protect forests and open spaces from fragmentation and development in order to provide recreational, natural resource, and economic benefits to the community. In FY 2013 there is an opportunity to protect nearly 2,000 acres through fee title purchase with help from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. This project builds on a nearly ten-year collaborative effort among the State of Minnesota, the Potlatch Corporation, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and local community supporters.

Located several miles northeast of the town, the 1,988-acre property would serve as a significant addition to protected spaces around Brainerd. With 2.7 miles of direct frontage on the southern bank of the Mississippi River, this project would link other adjacent public properties to create a 9 mile stretch of protected natural river shoreline. It would also provide connectivity within an area containing 6,200 contiguous acres of protected lands, including Crow Wing County Memorial Forest, the Loerch State Wildlife Management Area, State of Minnesota School Trust Lands, and Crow Wing County tax-forfeited lands that are managed for timber.

A paper mill dam downstream has contributed to the formation of Stump Bay, a lake-like basin along the property's river front. This basin serves as critical habitat, including spawning, brooding, and rearing areas for fisheries. Sand Creek, which runs through the property for one mile, provides habitat for brook trout, brown trout, and slimy sculpins. As 60% of migrating birds in North America use the Mississippi River Flyway, the property provides crucial riparian habitat and approximately 240 acres of wetlands for migrating and resident waterfowl. These wetlands also play a critical role in upholding the area's water quality. Blanding's turtle, a state listed threatened species, have been documented on the property, and the area also supports bald eagle and red-shouldered hawk, a state listed species of special concern.

Several sites on the property that have been noted for their cultural and archeological value would be protected through this project. As windows into prehistoric and pre-Columbian settlements, these sites may qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

By providing public access to the property for recreation and ensuring that sustainable forestry practices are employed, the Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex project will benefit the Brainerd Lakes area economically. Visitors from Minnesota and elsewhere come to the region throughout the year to experience the outdoors. By providing an alternative to development and fragmentation of the forestlands, by protecting a popular snowmobile trail, and by ensuring that the public can hunt and hike on these lands, this project will also protect the opportunities that draw tourists and residents here to begin with. Once the property is acquired, sustainable timber management on the property will help ensure the long-term availability of timber, which feeds the local economy through logging, transport, processing and product manufacturing and sale.

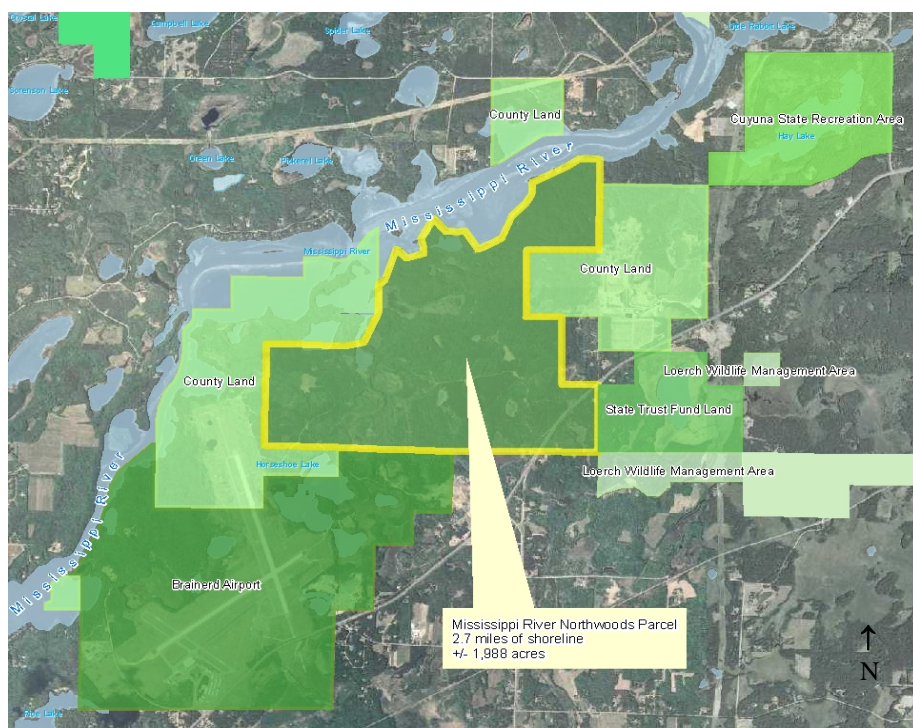
In order to protect this property and its highly valued natural resources from fragmentation and development, \$14.5 million is needed for the effort in fiscal year 2013.

Lead Partners: Anglers for Habitat; Crow Wing County; Cuyuna Lakes Trail Association; Delta Waterfowl (Brainerd Chapter); The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; The Nature Conservancy; The Trust for Public Land

Supporters include: Anderson Bros Construction; Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce; Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission; Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation; Brainerd Nordic Ski Club; Brainerd Snoods; Christenson Agency; Cycle Path and Paddle; International Mountain Bike Association; Minnesota B.A.S.S. Federation; All Chapters in Region 5 of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association (MDHA), including: The Brainerd Chapter, Cuyuna Range Whitetails Chapter, Lakes and Pines Chapter (Longville), Morrison County Chapter, and Wahoo Valley

Chapter (Staples); Mississippi Headwaters Board; Muskies Inc (Brainerd Lakes Chapter); Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota; Rice Lake Association; and the Whitefish Resource Coalition

Area Legislative Supporters include: Senator Paul Gazelka; Representative Larry Howes; Representative Mike LeMieur; and Representative John Ward



CONTACTS:
 CRISTINE ALMEIDA
 612-770-8578
CRISTINE@ALMEIDAPA.COM
 SUSAN SCHMIDT
 651-999-5317
SUSAN.SCHMIDT@TPL.ORG