



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
2nd Quarter Meeting – May 24, 2012
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Room 500 North
DRAFT AGENDA

2:30 p.m.	Welcome & Introductions	S. Johnson
2:35 p.m.	Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 11/17/11 and 2/16/12	S. Johnson/All
2:40 p.m.	Commission Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Election of Officers- Status of RFP Process for Commission Management/Marketing Contract- Financial Status Report	All S. Johnson Miller
2:55 p.m.	National MRPC Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- MRPC Board- Strategic Planning Meeting – Review Results & Provide Comments- 2012 Annual Meeting – Sept 27 – 29, Louisville, KY- Reports from National Committees: Culture & Heritage, ERA, Marketing, Transportation	S. Johnson Samp/Zoff All Committee Members
3:15 p.m.	Events <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Report on G4 Upper Mississippi Gathering, March 30, 2012- Report on Great River Gathering, May 10, 2012- Report on "Challenges and Choices" Event at Hamline University- Upcoming Events	Schaubach S. Johnson/Zoff/Labovitz Wheeler/Zoff All
3:30 p.m.	Old Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CMP Grant - Progress Update, Alignment with Commission Work Groups and Priorities	S. Johnson, Zoff, Miller
3:50 p.m.	New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mapping Community Assets – Recent Workshop Results/Future Plans	Samp
3:55 p.m.	Marketing Work Group <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reminder – Upcoming Projects	Miller
4:00 p.m.	Agency and Regional Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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 Huginin A. Johnson/Offerman Kajer/Kelliher Parker/Wheeler Pafko/Zoff Labovitz
4:40 p.m.	National MRPC Endowment	Andy Golfis/Don Frerichs
4:55 p.m.	Resolution on Frac Sand Mining <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review/consider information from Kristen Eide-Tollefson Florence Township, Goodhue County	
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 – Draft

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.



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
1st Quarter Meeting
February 16, 2012
State Office Building, St. Paul MN

MINUTES – Draft

Commissioners Present

Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Jim Lucachick – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids (via phone)
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee
Keith Parker – Natural Resources Appointee
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings
Mark Anderson – At-Large Member
Frank Pafko – Transportation Appointee

David Kelliher – Historical Society

Chris Miller - Staff

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

Rep. Sheldon Johnson
Rep. Branden Petersen
Sen. David Senjem
Sen. Patricia Torres-Ray
Charlie Poster – Agriculture Appointee
Adam Johnson – Explore MN Tourism Appointee
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

Carol Zoff – Transportation
Cynthia Wheeler – Natural Resources
Paul Labovitz – NPS/MNRRRA
Greg Hubinger – LCC

Others Present

Liz Walton, MnDOT

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 by Karl Samp, Organization Work Group Chair, followed by introductions. New members – Jim Lucachick, Cordelia Pierson and Keith Parker – were welcomed to the Commission. A quorum was not present. The meeting proceeded with information and updates. Action items were tabled.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes from 11/17/11 Meeting

Tabled due to lack of quorum.

Mississippi River Trail (MRT) Route Overview & Update

Karl Samp introduced Liz Walton from MnDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Section, to provide an overview of the route. MRT Google maps from MnDOT's website were shown and discussed. The full MRT route is approximately 800 miles. A series of meetings were held during 2010 to discuss the route and ask for recommendations. Where varying options existed in local areas, a group rode each route for comparison. A sign plan is now being developed resulting in some route change requests from local areas. Most are minimal. One of the more significant route changes has been in Bemidji, where the MRT no longer goes around Lake Bemidji. Another example of a change is in the Hastings area where the route was moved due to new rumble strips on the shoulder of the route. A question was raised regarding whether the process has helped identify gaps and areas needing attention. The answer was yes. Protocol for local trail development was discussed. Minimum Design Guidelines provide information on what trail segments might look like. The MRT is viewed as a spine, providing access points to other trails and loops in local areas. An example – the city of Winona is promoting loops off of the MRT. MnDOT is working with the DNR on "park to park rides."

There was discussion regarding on road and off road portions of the route and the need for both. John Schaubach provided examples from his area, where it would be beneficial to have both on road and off road options. Ms. Walton explained that the term "bikeway" encompasses both on road and off road.

Meetings were held around the state in late 2011 to gather feedback on an organizational structure for the MRT in the future. Meetings in the spring of 2012 will focus on possible models. There was discussion on how the MN-MRPC might be involved. One of the options under consideration is for the MRT to be handled by an existing organization of some type. Other options would involve creation of new structures.

Copies of the MRT Marketing Toolbox were circulated for those interested. MRT information can be accessed at www.dot.state.mn.us, then click on "bikes" at top of page, then on Mississippi River Trail (MRT) for details and Google maps. A one-page information handout was included in the meeting packets.

Commission Business

Election of Officers: The election was tabled due to lack of a quorum and candidates unable to be present.

RFP Process/Timeline for Commission Management/Marketing Contract: Greg Hubinger reported that LCC has forwarded a draft Request for Proposal to Chairman Johnson for review. The Organization Work Group will assist with the process.

Finance Report: A status report showing year to date operating budget expenditures was included in the meeting packets.

Legislative Update: No report due to legislators in session and not present at meeting.

National MRPC Updates

MRPC Board: No report available.

Strategic Planning Meeting: The 10-State MRPC will be holding a Strategic Planning Meeting for State Chairs and National Committee Chairs on March 30 in St. Louis. Carol Zoff (Transportation Committee) and Karl Samp (pending out of state travel approval; Environment, Recreation & Agriculture Committee) will be attending and requested priorities/topics from other MN-MRPC members to be shared with the national group. Cordelia Pierson noted that a bill regarding Asian Carp will be introduced by Senator Klobuchar. Samp offered to share that information with the ERA Committee and will also be discussing broadband needs.

National Committees: Carol Zoff shared information from the Transportation Committee, focused on the proposed federal transportation bill. Mark Anderson asked about possible impact on the highway beautification program, followed by discussion. The National Marketing Committee has been working on a new 10-State Great River Road Map/Brochure. The MN-MRPC has ordered two boxes and members were asked to notify the MN-MRPC office if interested in receiving a supply.

Upcoming Events

Great River Gathering: The St. Paul Great River Gathering will be held May 10. Over the past few years, the MN-MRPC has participated in the dinner event and also the exhibit area in partnership with the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area. MNRAA graciously offered to partner again in 2012. Any Commission members interested in attending the dinner and/or staffing the exhibit area were asked to notify the MN-MRPC office. A list will then be forwarded to the Chair for consideration.

Other Upcoming Events: Take a Day *OFF (*Outdoor Family Fun) will be offered in Stearns County again this summer (August 11), with many free river related activities. June 9 is National Get Outdoors Day, and open house day at all the state parks, with free entrance (no state parks vehicle permit required). The "G4" Mississippi Gathering is scheduled for March 30 in Walker. This series of meetings has focused on a variety of issues affecting the Mississippi from Lake Itasca to St. Cloud, convened by the Initiative Foundation and Trust for Public Land, and involving a variety of partners including the Mississippi Headwaters Board. The MN-MRPC's Corridor Management Plan project is on the March 30 agenda. Summer of Paddling 2012 offers activities on the Mississippi, in a variety of locations. Go to www.SOP2012.org for details and a list of partners/sponsors. A kick-off event is being planned and MN-MRPC members will receive an invitation. Take Aim at Summer – May 19 at DNR Central Region Headquarters, located at 1200 Warner Road in St. Paul. Minnesota Country Sampler Picnic – July 18 at Northland Arboretum, Brainerd (www.northlandarb.com).

Old Business

GRR Video Project Update: Seven MN Great River Road videos (one overview, six regional videos) were completed by December 31 and released in January. DVD copies were mailed to the MN-MRPC database of community travel information offices, state parks, interpretive centers, and travel information

centers as well as MN-MRPC members. Videos are also available on a newly developed YouTube channel linked to the MN Great River Road website. Positive feedback has been received. Commission members noted thanks to Dan Luke of Hardworking Pictures for his excellent work on this project.

CapX 2020 Update – Hampton-Rochester-LaCrosse Transmission Line: The comment period recently closed for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement developed by the US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Office. The MN-MRPC submitted a letter opposing transmission line routes along the Mississippi River/Great River Road in both Minnesota and Wisconsin, along with a copy of the National MRPC resolution on the topic. Minnesota's review process continues. The recommendations of the Administrative Law Judge have been released. Wisconsin's process also continues and the Wisconsin MRPC has filed a series of comments about the proposed routes and potential impact to the Great River Road. Results of the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area's project to develop a Visual Resource Protection Plan for the Great River Road in the region will be directly applicable to this type of issue in the future. The results will also be shared and adapted for other regions of the Great River Road to better define and document visual resources and their value.

New Business

Corridor Management Plan (CMP) Grant Progress Update: The agency agreement between LCC as MN-MRPC fiscal agent and the Department of Transportation has been completed, allowing the National Scenic Byway Grant funds to be accessed. A cooperative agreement is now being developed which will involve LCC, MN-MRPC and the National Park Service, for the grant matching funds. All agreements must be finalized before funds can be utilized. Background work has begun in preparation, including the first meeting of the Project Management Team. There is likelihood that two RFPs will be issued this spring – one for development of a stakeholder communication system for the planning process, which could transition into other applications and traveler information following CMP completion; and one for a GIS database of Great River Road resources. Completion of these items would provide data and communications needed for development of the full Corridor Management Plan, with that RFP tentatively projected for fall of 2012. Carol Zoff mentioned return on investment measures and examples provided by Cordelia Pierson, who indicated she would be happy to share Minneapolis' "Riverfront Results" document.

WI MRPC Resolution on Hydroelectric Project: The Wisconsin MRPC recently adopted a resolution recommending no hydroelectric projects be approved for construction without completion of scientific studies documenting impact to fish and wildlife populations on the Mississippi. A copy of the resolution was included in the meeting packet.

Work Group Updates

The Organization Work Group will likely need a meeting soon to address the RFP for management/marketing services. A reminder was noted that all Commission members are asked to serve on one of four work groups: Capital Improvement, Economic Development, Marketing, or Organization. Short descriptions of the work groups would be of help.

Agency and Regional Updates

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: A report is attached. John Schaubach noted status of the Mississippi Northwoods Habitat Complex and encouraged the MN-MRPC to continue to voice support for this important project and property. Kudos were given to the DNR for opening the Sagamore area of the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area for winter mountain biking. Details on an upcoming event will be emailed to Commission members.

Brainerd to Elk River: A report is attached. Karl Samp highlighted the Brainerd Rotary's purchase of 36 acres of land with Mississippi Riverfront adjacent to Kiwanis Park; and also mentioned the National Park Service providing technical assistance for Brainerd/Baxter's continuing river efforts. Conversations on potential partnerships continue with AmericInn.

Elk River to Hastings: Cordelia Pierson reported that the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area has been awarded a \$1.3 million grant for an Alternative Transportation Pilot to include new nice ride stations along the Mississippi and further overall efforts to increase visitation to the park without increasing congestion. The Downtown Council recently released its plan looking forward to 2025 and a riverfront focus is included. An initiative is underway to improve way finding and signage connections for

the Great River Road in Minneapolis. The Met Council will be announcing scoring of transportation grants soon. Several proposals were submitted related to the river, and the MN-MRPC was thanked for supporting the grant proposal to develop an off road trail next to Marshall Street. The Lowry Bridge is scheduled to open this summer ahead of schedule, and could be an occasion to highlight the Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is working on a River First Proposal, for a system of continuous loops and trails. The Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership is looking for partners and funding (\$25,000 needed) for its "Riverfront Results" initiative that will identify return on investment in the area.

Historical Society: David Kelliher reported that funds are being requested this legislative session for improvements to facilities at the Oliver Kelley Farm. A goal is to make it a gathering place for meetings/discussions related to agriculture. A request will be made to the MN-MRPC Chair for a letter of support. A busy summer is ahead, marking the 150th anniversary of the U.S. - Dakota War of 1862, including events at Fort Snelling and a smart phone tour of the Minnesota River Valley. Results of the smart phone project and a demo will be shared with the MN-MRPC.

Explore Minnesota Tourism: Carol Zoff showed the new 2012 Explore Minnesota Travel Guide, which includes the Great River Road as the featured byway and Mississippi River Trail as the featured bikeway.

Natural Resources: A report is attached. Keith Parker also shared information on the DNR Central Region Headquarters 80 acres of property along the Mississippi in St. Paul, and plans to develop it into a destination with interpretive programs, "I Can" programs (I Can Fish, etc.) and more. On May 19, the "Take Aim at Summer" event will offer activities including archery and hiking. Planning continues for the Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail, for both motorized and non-motorized use. Open houses will be held to gather input in late March; a feasibility study will be completed in May; and a master plan completed in summer 2012. Mussel surveys will be conducted in Pool 2 of the Mississippi River this summer. Informational booklets on mussels were circulated. The DNR is working with MnDOT on the Old Sibley Memorial Highway project to potentially incorporate the old roadbed into the adjacent Fort Snelling State Park and possibly use the old roadbed as part of a trail system.

Transportation (including update on Federal Surface Transportation Bill): Frank Pafko provided background and an overview of the federal transportation bill status. Reauthorization of the transportation bill typically takes place every six years. A continuing resolution is currently in place which expires on March 30, requiring either passage of the new bill or another continuing resolution at that point. Bills have come out of both House and Senate Committees. Both versions would reduce the number of transportation programs. The House currently eliminates National Scenic Byways funding and designation, while the Senate maintains the designation. The House would eliminate five categories eligible for Transportation Enhancement funding, while the Senate would keep all categories in place. Funding for trails currently remains. At this point, Commission members can help deliver the message to congress that byways and transportation enhancements are important and that existing enhancement funding and eligibility categories should be maintained. MnDOT will continue to assist with byway and enhancement projects in the future, although focus could change from direct federal programs to more work with Area Transportation Plans (ATP's). Carol Zoff reported on the status of the interpretive panel project, with a projection that remaining panels will be ready by the end of summer. Four historic wayside restoration projects are yet to be completed and work continues.

National Park Service/Mississippi National River & Recreation Area: Paul Labovitz reported that up to 32 new nice ride stations along the Mississippi will be available due to the Alternative Transportation grant recently received. The Ranger on Call program continues – details available at www.rangeroncall.com. An ice fishing program is coming up soon on Lake Rebecca in Hastings, and a plans are underway for a new eagle cam on Prescott Island. The Coldwater Project (former Bureau of Mines site) is restoring 27 acres to a park setting between Fort Snelling and Minnehaha Park, and will be the first NPS/MNRRRA owned property that is not on an island.

Next Meeting

May 24, 2012, 2:30 - 5:00 p.m., State Office Building Room 500 North.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.



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

Brainerd to Elk River – 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 – 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

- **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.

MN-MRPC FY 12
Operating Budget - 5/7/12

Obj Code	Description	Budget	Spent	Pending	Remaining	Comments
41070	Other Benefits (Per Diem)	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,754.60	\$ 33.00	\$ 2,712.40	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	\$ 310.66		\$ 989.34	Commission meeting copies, materials, ads, etc.
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$ 33,500.00	\$ 20,376.76	\$ 6,125.01	\$ 6,998.23	Administrative contract (24,500) plus local match for FHWA grant project work, other outside vendor projects and/or hours for Commission projects outside of administrative retainer
41150	Computer & System Services	\$0	\$814		(\$814)	Website hosting, stats, email, etc.
41155	Communications	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 573.47	\$ 50.76	\$ 1,375.77	Website - minor updates, programming changes as needed. Postage/deliveries. MN MRPC phone line and conference calls.
41160	In-State Travel	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 3,265.09		\$ 5,734.91	Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, work groups, events. Includes August 2011 National Scenic Byway Conference in Mpls
41170	Out-State Travel	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 949.00	\$ 99.97	\$ 3,951.03	MRPC Annual & Semi Annual Meetings
41300	Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ 40.74		\$ 459.26	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	\$ -	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 500.00	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	\$ 28,084.32	\$ 11,808.74	\$ 23,106.94	

Fiscal year end is June 30.

All expense reimbursement forms must be submitted to the MN-MRPC office by July 6.

MRPC Strategic Plan

Mission/Vision Statement: to be the leader in preserving, promoting, and enhancing the Great River Road National Scenic Byway along the Mississippi River benefiting communities and travelers

Objectives

1. To promote the GRR NSB and Mississippi River corridor communities
2. To enhance and preserve the GRR NSB and its amenities
3. To strengthen the 10-state MPRC organization and its partners
4. To provide education on the intrinsic qualities of the GRR NSB and the Mississippi River corridor

Goals

1. Increase the awareness and economic impact of the Mississippi River corridor and the GRR NSB
2. Preserve the resource and support the public and private investment in the GRR and its amenities
3. Achieve and sustain state and national scenic byway designation
4. Partner along the GRR NSB to enhance its amenities

Strategic Approach

1. Identify and acquire public and private funding
2. Increase community and government interest, support and networking of the GRR by utilizing partnerships
3. Enhance partnerships and protect intrinsic qualities of the GRR NSB
4. Continue to support state and national scenic byway designation
5. Continue and expand interpretation of the GRR NSB, the Mississippi River communities and their amenities
6. To strategically target expanded Mississippi River and GRR NSB marketing using current and emerging marketing techniques
7. Expand and enhance ERA importance of the Mississippi River corridor
8. Support multi-modal opportunities in the Mississippi River corridor including MRT partnership

Challenges

1. National funding threatened
2. State funding threatened
3. Finding other organizations to provide funding
4. Not enough do-ers
5. Lack of diversity
6. Uneven level of participation per state
7. Inadequate number of partnerships
8. Lack of recognition or identification (FAMS, spokesmodel)
9. Need for congressional subcommittee on rivers
10. Absence of political strengths

11. Not enough focus or reflection on other state, federal DOT missions, visions, directions, to obtain emphasis and resources
12. More community within the network of Interpretive Center so they are connected
13. List of partners/partnership inventory
14. Confusion regarding MRPC and Mississippi River Commission
15. Not using past archived materials
16. Lack of interaction with communities on their promotional items
17. Us vs. them instead of a "we" approach
18. International focus on legislative advocacy
19. Remaining intentional and nimble in this environment to respond to change--adaptability
20. Creating realistic and measurable goals for the organization

Themes:

1. Funding
2. Partnerships
3. Awareness/Marketing
4. Advocacy/legislation
5. Focus
6. Internal engagement

Strengths:

1. NSB designation
2. Mississippi River as a National icon
3. 10-state voice/involvement
4. Webinars for meetings/use of new media
5. Passionate river rats
6. 75 year history
7. Enhancement funding
8. Individual state strengths/assets
9. Quality of friendships and relationships on commission
10. Historical knowledge and new insight within the commission
11. NSB designation gave renewed purpose
12. Projects with 10-state involvement have been successful
13. Enthusiasm within the organization
14. Large geographic region
15. 10-state diversity in skills, assets and talents

Tactics (in prioritized order):

1. Talk to local attractions/interpretive centers in the Mississippi River corridor to get them included on Google Maps/Places
 - a. Work with Karl Samp to create opportunities to educate attractions/itineraries to get on Google Places
 - b. Use as an awareness building for organization and each state's assets
 - c. National Office to offer a webinar for GRR attractions/interpretive centers
 - d. Talk to NSB Resource Center to see if they can facilitate the webinar
 - e. Can be done immediately

2. Mobilize technology for mobile site
 - a. Assign to Marketing committee and maybe Transportation
 - b. Karl Samp to provide guidance on this issue
3. Analyze potential and current partners' visions/mission/priorities/directions to focus on those who the MPRC/GRR can add value to their work to create an action plan to become effective partners to those we focus on.
 - a. Within committees
 - b. Mississippi River Commission, Walton Foundation, ADM and Ingraham
 - i. Assign to Executive Committee for review and to determine partners (maybe 5)
 - ii. Assign a college intern to this project to create an extensive inventory
 - iii. Could be a paid position
 - iv. Research could be done online
 - v. Give a report at the 2012 Annual meeting
 - vi. Deliverable would be a report of the findings
4. Create a list of partners along the Mississippi River corridor
 - a. Assign each committee to create a master list of partners
 - b. Use the webinar opportunities to communicate with partners
 - c. Unveil list at the 2012 Annual Meeting
5. Preserve, promote and enhance intrinsic qualities of GRR
 - a. Assign to C&H committee
 - b. Partner with conservation groups
 - c. Create partnerships with CVBs
 - d. Look at website/social media/Google Places as promotional tools
 - e. Work with other Mississippi River organizations
6. Study and focus on time and money for fundraising through endowment and grants
 - a. Assign to Endowment committee
 - b. Look at organizations with commonality and leverage
 - c. Identify possible partnerships through other scenic byway groups
 - d. Tell success stories and promote our accomplishments
7. National Office develop a presentation and make it with changes to byway funding and awareness of the organization
 - a. Assign National Organization to review current presentation
 - b. Add content for current challenges
 - c. Unveil updated presentation at the 2012 Annual Meeting and demonstrate how to do the presentation in each state
 - d. Review other applications for the presentation
8. Tell stories of GRR including the Mississippi River corridor to partners, communities and travelers
 - a. Assign to C&H
 - b. Utilize YouTube to promote stories
 - c. Identifies partners with stories to tell
 - d. Use as a tool to drive people to the Mississippi River
9. Put oral histories on YouTube to share with larger audience
 - a. Assign to C&H committee
 - b. Post videos on national website

- c. Paid intern to identify 3 histories per state to feature
 - d. Discuss project with Dr. Ruth Hawkins
- 10. Request each state come up with two partners in state to focus on needs
 - a. Assign to Marketing and Transportation committees
 - b. Work with Departments of Transportation and Tourism to get lists
- 11. Individuals, corporations and non-profit partners including the Travel Promotion Act
 - a. Assign to Marketing committee
 - b. Promote travel on GRR and in river corridor
 - c. Partner with MRC
 - d. Travel USA partnership
 - e. Educate state-wide tourism organizations on Mississippi River corridor tourism assets
 - f. Create multi-state FAM tours
- 12. Create a fundraising experience and review possible hiring of development director
 - a. Assign to Marketing
 - b. Organize state or national event



Mapping Community Assets

A rapidly growing number of travelers and consumers are using GPS units in their car, their smart-phones, or their laptop to figure out how to get to where they want to go. Are your businesses, services and community amenities ready to attract these modern travelers?

What you will learn:

- digital mapping technology and why it is important
- helping the community by learning about digital maps
- how you can share points of personal or communal interest with the world and more!

Wednesday, June 6, 1~3pm

Bemidji State University

Deputy Hall 163

Presenter: Adeel Ahmed, UMN Extension

\$10 for Chamber Members, \$25 for Non Chamber Members



To register contact Angela at 444-3541
ext. 109 or via email at
events@bemidji.org.
Please register before June 1.



Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management Plan & Implementation 2012 Summary

This project will develop a Corridor Management Plan to guide the work of Minnesota's Mississippi River Parkway Commission for the next 10 – 15 years. With a foundation of planning that reaches back to 1938, we will evaluate current conditions and look to the future to develop strategies addressing:

- livability,
 - changes in personal/global economies,
 - intrinsic resource protection,
 - multi-national culture,
 - multi-modal transportation,
 - context sensitive solutions, and
 - technology.
- Implement a current CMP key strategy - signing the Mississippi River Bicycle Trail statewide.



Byway Traveler Benefits

This project benefits the byway traveler by increasing their enjoyment of a byway corridor where the river's ecological and economic sustainability and the livability of 60 river communities are priorities. They will enjoy preserved and enhanced intrinsic resources within the context of a working river whose engaging stories they take home. The project seeks to embrace the needs of technologically savvy travelers. Active lifestyles will be promoted via more/better coordinated transportation choices to get travelers closer to and on the river and its natural environment for a more personal byway experience.

Project Partners

The Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC) will partner with

- Minnesota Department of Transportation,
- National Park Service (NPS)/Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA),
- Trust for Public Land,
- local/regional river committees,
- community development foundations, and
- other organizations with similar missions along the 575-mile length of the Minnesota Great River Road



Transportation Focus

The CMP is focused on applying FHWA Livability Principles

- **Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- **Support existing communities.** Target Federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
- **Coordinate and leverage Federal policies and investment.** Align Federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
- **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

Please contact info@mnmississippiriver.com to learn more or to get involved in this effort.

Work Plan

Milestone/Task	Start Date	Duration	Responsible Party	Justification
Establish funding agreement with State	AAD*			
Establish contract partnerships	AAD + 30 days*	30 days	MN-MRPC, Mn/ DOT	An RFP process and interviews will be necessary to select an appropriate contractor for the project.
Establish project advisory team	AAD + 30 days*	14 months	MN-MRPC	An advisory team will guide the project and will add value and efficiencies to CMP strategies that reflect complementary and supportive stakeholder and partner missions to assure effective and sustainable implementation.
Establish communication systems for project and future CMP implementation	AAD + 45 days*	15 days	Contractor	Communication methods with all participants and stakeholders will be determined prior to large scale work beginning - could involve web pages, email newsletters, press releases, etc. System will be designed for use during CMP implementation as well.
Inventory and map existing resources/intrinsic qualities	AAD + 2 months*	8 months	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/ DOT, MNRRA, TPL	This step, along with identification of byway visitor impressions and analysis of needs, provides the core information for the CMP and builds awareness of and appreciation for the resources. VRPP will guide scenic resource inventory.
Conduct meetings/focus groups with Commission members, stakeholders and partners	AAD + 2 months*	10 months	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/ DOT, TPL, MNRRA	Input from Destination Area stakeholders and information from local/regional planning efforts is needed to ensure that the plan engages the byway traveler, incorporates partner needs, safeguards intrinsic qualities and sustains the byway organization.
Confirm Great River Road Roadside Storybook content and locations	AAD + 4 months*	6 months	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/ DOT, TPL, MNRRA	Approximately 30% of the stories developed in the Great River Road 2001 Interpretive Plan have been developed into panels and installed. The remaining content will be confirmed as local priorities and specific locations for installation are identified.

Milestone/Task	Start Date	Duration	Responsible Party	Justification
Assess byway route to recommend adjustments and opportunities to apply context sensitive solutions principles to road and other public facilities and river-oriented community planning.	AAD + 4 months*	10 months	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/ DOT	Offering the best and safest Mississippi River experience is critical to the byway traveler. Incorporating land use, transportation and resource development is critical to future byway management.
Purchase and install way finding signs for Mississippi River Bicycle Trail	AAD + 6 months*	6 months	Mn/DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Section in partnership with MN-MRPC	A continually signed route is necessary to assure safe and enjoyable bicycling along the 800 mile statewide Mississippi River Trail state scenic bikeway. Environmental review has been completed, existing sign posts will be used to the maximum extent possible, and new locations will avoid cultural resource impacts.
Incorporate recommendations and process from pilot Visual Resource Protection Plan to all six byway destination areas	AAD + 6 months*	6 months	Contractor with assistance from MNRRA and MN-MRPC	The MNRRA VRPP will list specific recommendations for one of six byway destination areas that will be modified and utilized in all destination areas to appropriately define, assess, and protect byway visual quality.
Identify current visitor impressions via use of surveys and interviews	AAD + 7 months*	3 months	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/ DOT, MNRRA, TPL	This step, along with the analysis of needs and inventory/map of resources/intrinsic qualities, provides the core information for the CMP.
Develop byway organization business model including sustainability provisions	AAD + 9 months*	1 month	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/ DOT, TPL	Sustainability recommendations and a long term business model must be included in the CMP to ensure capacity of the organization to implement the plan over time.
Analyze current and future visitor needs	AAD + 9 months*	3 months	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, MNRRA, Mn/ DOT, TPL	This step, along with identification of visitor impressions and inventory/map of resources, provides the core information for the CMP.

Milestone/Task	Start Date	Duration	Responsible Party	Justification
Develop communications/public relations recommendations	AAD + 12 months*	1 week	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/DOT, MNRRA	MN-MRPC work groups have defined the need for communication and public relations recommendations to build relationships along the corridor and keep the public informed on issues and availability of amenities.
Develop specific corridor management strategies and recommendations	AAD + 12 months*	1 month	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/DOT	The CMP will be a main project deliverable to guide the work of the byway organization and its partners. Specific, actionable recommendations are critical.
Develop, purchase and install in-town informational maps/kiosks for MRT	AAD + 12 months*	3 months	Mn/DOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Section in partnership with MN-MRPC	Includes visible MRT and GRR information for towns identified as Bicycle Friendly Communities based on the League of American Bicyclists “five E’s.”
Plan and execute electronic communication initiatives to promote the MRT	AAD + 12 months*	3 months	Mn/DOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Section in partnership with MN-MRPC	Byway travelers expect and need route, condition, hospitality and amenity information to be available in electronic form, including a presence on social media.
Present draft CMP to National MRPC and gather input	AAD + 13 months*	1 week	Contractor, MN-MRPC	The Great River Road has National Scenic Byway designation in 9 other states. Review and comment will help ensure a coordinated byway experience.
Develop, print and distribute MRT/GRR maps	AAD + 13 months*	3 months	Mn/DOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Section in partnership with MN-MRPC	According to a recent survey, hard copy maps are still a preferred tool at many visitor information centers along with Great River Road. This was also determined as a need for MRT travelers when evaluated in early 2011.
Finalize CMP for distribution in print and electronic form	AAD + 14 months*	2 weeks	Contractor	Final product necessary for distribution and long term usage/implementation. Will be produced and posted in ADA compliant formats.

Milestone/Task	Start Date	Duration	Responsible Party	Justification
Present summary (PowerPoint) and final CMP to MN-MRPC	AAD + 16 months*	2 days	Contractor, MN-MRPC	MN-MRPC members need a detailed understanding of the final plan in order to advocate for recommendations and proceed with implementation. Power Point will be used by MN-MRPC members for ongoing plan implementation.
Present plan to partners and stakeholders	AAD + 17 months*	1 month	Contractor with assistance from MN-MRPC, Mn/DOT, MNRRA, TPL	Implementation of the CMP requires local public, private and non-profit partners to embrace the final strategies so they can help serve as host to byway travelers and incorporate the principles of management in their individual planning and development projects to ensure the intrinsic qualities are honored over time.

* AAD = Actual Award Date (estimated to be October 01, 2011)

MN-MRPC Corridor Management Plan Project

<u>Task</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Communication system for CMP implementation	October 2013
Inventory and map byway resources	December 2013
Great River Road Storybook	January 2014
Byway assessment	June 2014
Visitor impressions survey	October 2014
Assess visitor needs	December 2014
Incorporate VRPP recommendations into CMP	December 2014
Stakeholder meetings/focus groups	December 2014
Create corridor development strategies	March 2015
Develop byway corridor business plan	March 2015
Develop communications/PR plan	March 2015
Fabricate and install MRT signs statewide	June 2015
Develop, print, and distribute 30,000 MRT/GRR Maps and 12,000 Mississippi River Companions	June 2014
Community map/info kiosks and MRT electronic resources	June 2015
Project management & advisory team meetings	June 2015
Create electronic format of CMP	June 2015
50 Copies (1 ADA Compliant) of CMP	June 2015
Contractor travel to byway stakeholders	June 2015



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
CMP Project Management Team Meeting
May 29, 2012
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Transportation Building Room 604

AGENDA

- I. Grant Status (2:00)
 - 1. Funding Agreement
 - 2. Project Timeline
- II. CMP Incorporated Projects Updates (2:05)
 - 1. MRT route selection, sign plan, etc. – Liz Walton
 - 2. MNRRA Visual Resource Protection Plan – Susan Overson
 - 3. MNRRA Alternative Transportation Plan – Susan Overson
- III. GIS Database of Great River Road Resources (2:20)
 - 1. Confirm GIS project goals: 1) consumer trip planning, 2) corridor management, 3) amenity/resource planning and project development, 4) trip package development, 5) return on investment measurement, and 6) integration with other plans.
 - 2. Review resource information in current CMP and list of National Scenic Byway intrinsic qualities
 - 3. Google Maps - Adeel Ahmed on how this application can provide a platform to help meet project GIS goals. Examples: <http://travel.yahoo.com/trip-explore> for Yahoo trip planner, mapping D1 Enhancement project applications
<http://www.google.com/maps/ms?msid=208430543915710774117.0004b5a4b658f9d6f168a&msa=0&ll=47.739323,-91.680908&spn=5.231338,8.701172&safe=active>
& MnDOT's MRT Map <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt/google-earth-map.html>
 - 4. Review data (available or to be gathered) from partner agencies and organizations
 - A. National Park Service – Rory Stierler
 - B. Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership - Cordelia Pierson
 - C. MnDOT, including MRT– Andy Trcka, Liz Walton
 - D. Tourism – EMT data, information from Adam Johnson, Visit Saint Paul
 - E. GRR local assets mapping workshops - Karl Samp, Adeel Ahmed
 - F. DNR – MN Network of Parks and Trails
 - G. Trust for Public Land Greenprint
 - H. MHS
 - I. MDA/Minnesota Grown
 - J. Others?
 - 5. Recommend information to be included/not included in GRR GIS resource database
- IV. Next Steps (3:45)
 - 1. Content and projected timeline for GIS RFP
 - 2. Stakeholder communication system update
 - 3. Other



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

Hastings to Iowa Border – Commissioner Sheronne Mulry

Regional Recent Activities/Updates

- CapX2020
- Asian Carp in Winona
- Frac Mining: A local group named Winona Area Citizens Concerned About Sand Mining has appealed a city permit to allow frac sand to be transported at the new commercial dock.
<http://www.everythingredwing.com/nosand/blog/>. The Buffalo County Zoning Board of Adjustment tabled a request Wednesday for opening a frac sand railway loading station and drying plant near Cochrane-Fountain City School.
- Visit Winona presented its Annual Tourism Award to the Minnesota Marine Art Museum on May 8 at the Winona County History Center.
- Notable river gem/history I learned recently: Puttman Gray built what is known as "Crazy Man's Castle" 1/2 mile south of Minneiska (by the large cottonwood trees, river side of Highway 61). It was built from driftwood, three stories high and decorated with tower, steeples, verandahs, and pagodas. A show place and tourist curiosity, it was advertised in St. Louis and when steamboat lights flashed across the "Castle" at night, Gray's daughters would dance with white sheets covering themselves. Putman Gray invented a vertical amusement ride that was purchased by a man named Ferris and became the "Ferris Wheel" millions of people still enjoy today.
- Storm 5/2/2012 - 75 mile per hour winds hit my place/area
- Current Status of Hydropower on the Mississippi, St. Croix, and Minnesota Rivers
- Fastenal Expansion: Crews work on the new Fastenal expansion Friday, April 13, 2012, on Theurer Boulevard in Winona. Fastenal is constructing a 46,000 square-foot storage facility as an addition to an existing warehouse and office building. The company filed a \$1.7 million building permit with the city earlier this year.
- Hydroelectric Dam Expansion Concerns
- WI/National Updates: Land Acquisition in Nelson, WI; WI GRR <http://wigrr.com/>; Culture and Heritage Committee <http://www.experiencemississippiriver.com/>

ROCHESTER, Minn. — Minnesota Department of Natural Resources officials say two types of Asian carp were caught last week in the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota.

A commercial fisherman caught a silver carp and a bighead carp on March 1 near Winona.

The silver carp is known to jump out of the water and strike boaters in the head. Officials say both types of carp have the potential to cause serious ecological problems to Minnesota fisheries.

Minnesota can still learn from the experience of other states that have dealt with the invasive carp, said Steve Hirsch, the DNR's Eco-Waters Division director.

"The situation is urgent," Hirsch said. In the southern states, he said, "As these fish moved up they went through a period like what we're going through now where they would occasional see big fish and it would start to become more and more common and it seems like they reach a threshold and then they start reproducing and they become abundant."

Asian carp have the potential to out-compete native fish for food, Hirsch said.

"They're intercepting the food chain because they're a big fish that feeds very far down on the food chain," Hirsch said.

"We don't have any fish like that so we're afraid they'd really be able to out-compete our native species."

Bighead carp can weigh up to 110 pounds and silver carp up to 60 pounds. They are voracious eaters, capable of consuming 5 to 20 percent of their body weight each day. They feed on algae and other microscopic organisms.

Officials say individual Asian carp have been caught by commercial fishermen in recent years. Three silver carp were caught between 2008 and 2011 near La Crosse. One bighead carp was caught in 1996 and one in 2011 in the St. Croix River. Six bighead carp were caught between 2003 and 2009 in the Mississippi River between Lake Pepin and the Iowa border.

Fight Against Fracking

Southeastern Minnesota citizens struggle with fracking sand mining expansion proposals

In today's Winona Daily News, county soil and water conservation district boardchairman Jim Riddle lays out the reasons why the board recommended a moratorium on silica sand (fracking sand) mining in the Bluff Country county.

He explains in [Why we support a sand mine moratorium](#) :

- According to the Winona County ordinance, sensitive areas are to be protected. The proposed sites in Saratoga Township are designated by the Minnesota DNR's Minnesota County Biological Survey to contain rare plants. They could also provide habitat for rare mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds and insects. A comprehensive biological assessment cannot be conducted during winter months. The Saratoga sand prairies represent rare ecosystems, and an inventory of the resident species must be conducted during the growing season, in order to know what habitat and species would be destroyed by mining activities.
- The St. Peter Sandstone, where the silica sand is located, is directly above fractured limestone bedrock — karst formations subject to the formation of sinkholes. Removing the shale cap over the sandstone could have detrimental effects on the potential for sinkholes and groundwater contamination. The impacts on sinkhole formation and groundwater contamination need to be fully explored, before any permits are issued.
- The permit applications call for "reclaiming" the sites, leaving side slopes with 3:1 slopes. We have concerns that sandy soils cannot be stabilized, seeded and planted at such steep slopes.
- Given the potential for numerous other sand mines in our county and region, we are looking at the real possibility of drastic and permanent changes to the landscape and quality of life in this area. What is lost, in terms of biological diversity, rare species and unique landscapes, can never be re-created.

These are valid concerns, well within a soil and water board's mission.

Current Status of Hydropower on the Mississippi, St. Croix, and Minnesota Rivers

Most of the hydropower dams that are in operation on the Three Rivers were built before the 1970s. A survey in 1996 found that there are many opportunities left for hydroelectric expansion left in Minnesota, and there have been many discussions between energy companies and local residents about hydropower, but very few new projects have passed the proposal stage. The Minnesota Legislature passed a strong Renewable Energy Standard in 2007 that requires that energy companies such as Xcel provide 30% renewable energy by 2025. Xcel has stated that they are seeking part of their baseload energy to come from hydropower. Hydro Green Energy has installed a 4.4 MW hydrokinetic system at the Lock & Dam #2 on the Mississippi in an arrangement with the town of Hastings.

However, Xcel's search for hydroelectric power sources has also brought some controversy. Xcel recently began purchasing hydroelectric power from Manitoba province in Canada, which has had a long and problematic relationship with the indigenous nations who live on the land. A 2004 report done by the St. Paul Army Corps of Engineers set forth requirements that dam operators must regularly release a minimum amount of water to reduce negative impact on municipalities downstream during droughts and low-flow events.

Existing dams in Minnesota:

River	Plant Name	Capacity	Owner
Mississippi	Blanchard	18 MW	Minnesota
	Lock & Dam #1	14.4 MW	Ford
	St. Anthony	12 MW	NSP/Xcel
	Little Falls	12 MW	Minnesota
	Sartell	9.5 MW	International Paper
	St. Cloud	8.8 MW	St. Cloud

	Lock & Dam #2	4 MW	Hastings
	Bemidji	.7 MW	Ottertail
Minnesota	Granite Falls	1.2 MW	Granite Falls
St. Croix	No hydropower production currently on St. Croix		

Note: Lock and Dam #1 is used by Ford to power its manufacturing, Bemidji and Sartell are used by paper manufacturers, and the St. Croix dams were meant to produce electricity but were never developed.

Benefits:

- Renewable Energy Source
 - Local source of energy benefits the local economy
- No carbon emissions of fossil fuel use during regular use
- Needs little advanced technology and no rare minerals are necessary
- No hazardous byproducts or emissions
- No fuel costs and easy upkeep

Drawbacks:

- High initial environmental and financial cost Turbines can be harmful to fish and dams prevent free movement
- Peaking designs can seriously impact water flow
- Upriver, habitats are made dependent on how much water is released
- Dams can be dangerous to boaters
- Dependent on climate
- Limited potential

161-acre site will be open to the public

May 14, 2012 - "The Hemions' are such forward thinking people. Some exciting & good news for a change. More public access! Another jewel in the Wisconsin Great River Road crown." Facebook post by me

By Don Behm of the Journal Sentinel

Sheer rock cliffs overlooking the community of Nelson in Buffalo County are a well-known landmark.

A pair of sheer rock cliffs that appear to hang above the Mississippi River community of Nelson - visible to motorists and a well-known landmark on Wisconsin's Great River Road - mark the bluff top home of two rare plant communities.

Dry prairies with purple milkweed, shooting star and cliff goldenrod as well as grasslands with scattered massive oaks, known as oak openings, will be protected from development now that The Nature Conservancy has purchased 161 acres from Aimee Hemion and the estate of her late husband, Dwight.

The Buffalo County property, known locally as Twin Bluffs, has numerous residents: bald eagles, redheaded woodpeckers, eastern meadowlarks, cerulean warblers and other migratory songbirds, as well as reptiles suited to its dry soils and rock faces, said Rodney Walter, director of land protection for The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin. A visitor can listen to the distinct nocturnal call of whippoorwill.

The bluffs and their miles-wide views of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge will be opened to the public, Walter said.

The state Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund awarded The Nature Conservancy a grant of \$300,626, about half of the appraised value, to help pay for the acquisition. The group paid the remainder of the purchase price, surveys and closing costs.

George Howe, conservation director for the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, met with the Hemions in 2009 to discuss options for preserving the land, but Dwight Hemion died in 2011 before a preservation plan was completed. The Nature Conservancy stepped in to secure funding for the acquisition.

"They could have sold the property sooner and for more money to other parties, including a sand mining company," Howe said. "But they didn't believe that was an ethical choice. They didn't want the land to be exploited or the community of Nelson to lose its most valuable scenic asset."

Sand in Buffalo County and much of western Wisconsin is in demand by companies drilling for oil and natural gas in deep shale formations beneath Western states. The sand is used in a drilling technique known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

The twin bluffs property had been part of a Hemion family farm in the last century, Howe said in explaining the couple's desire to preserve it. Another reason the Hemions hoped to keep the land intact and undeveloped is its designation by the Wisconsin Historical Society as an important archaeological site once used by American Indians, according to Howe.

"This land is sacred and it was my duty to seek protection for it," Aimee Hemion says in a statement. "It holds the memory of not only my husband but also his grandfather and those who came before them, including my indigenous ancestors. By protecting this land, I not only honor them but also the land that supported them."

Mississippi Valley Conservancy Executive Director Tim Jacobson describes the Twin Bluffs as "a world-class resource for residents of, and visitors to, Buffalo County."

"Now the bluffs can be enjoyed by people and wildlife for countless generations," he said.

Hiking, birding, photos

The Nature Conservancy will build a gravel parking lot for public access. The land will be open for hiking, hunting, birding and photography. A moderate to strenuous hike uphill is required to access the bluff top.

Visitors can now park on a street near the village cemetery. A gate at the north end of the cemetery opens to the conservancy's property. For information, the public can call the Nature Conservancy's Madison office at (608) 251-8140 and ask to talk with Walter.

Historic Twin Bluffs in Buffalo County preserved - JSOnline

www.jsonline.com

A pair of sheer rock cliffs that appear to hang above the Mississippi River community of Nelson - visible to motorists and a well-known landmark on Wisconsin's Great River Road - mark the bluff top home of two rare plant communities.

"The mission of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission is to promote, preserve and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River Valley and to develop the highways and amenities of the Great River Road."

5-22-12

Dear Mississippi Parkway Commissioners,

I am writing to you as a planning commissioner from one of the many towns and townships along the Great River Road, from Hastings to the border, who are grappling with the multiple threats of frac sand mining to our communities and commons. We have been watching with grave concern as mining activities have proliferated at an astonishing rate along Wisconsin's Great River Road, from Maiden Rock all the way to Trempealeau.

On the Minnesota side, our local and county moratoriums have only delayed a full scale "sand rush". These moratoriums will begin to be removed in July. Mining companies have used this time to establish and expand transportation and processing nodes along the Great River Road from Winona to Red Wing and to attempt to purchase existing local quarries to mine for sand. In our particularly beautiful Great River Road niche of the Hiawatha Valley, a site in my township (Florence Township) has been purchased for a potential transfer station site. It is immediately adjacent to Frontenac state park, two local foods operations, and Wells Creek. In neighboring Hay Creek Township, a 155 acre site planned for frac sand mining development, features protected goat prairie, bluff lands and trout streams, and a neighboring campground.

Industrial scale silica sand mining is a highly incompatible land use for the Hiawatha Valley. But the potential profits for mining companies are enormous. Mining land agents scour the valleys and are offering up to 3-5 times existing land values. I am writing to alert you to this threat to the Great River Road, and to ask for your help.

Proliferation of mining operations along the Great River Road in Minnesota will permanently alter the quality of life, the scenic beauty, and the recreational values for which our scenic byway is so well known and loved. A few more details from the "frac sand times":

- Our corridor supports 40% of the state's rare and endangered species (Land Trust).
- Two of three bridges already impacted by increased truck traffic, are fracture critical bridges. Winona is stressed by rapidly expanding transportation and processing sites.
- Trout Unlimited, which has spent millions in the Hiawatha Valley, testified to Goodhue Co. Commissioners that they may suspend investment in these trout streams, if frac sand permits go forward.
- A recent barge shipment contract proposed adjacent to city parks on the Mississippi River, below Barns Bluff in Red Wing is being hotly contested.

Great River Road communities are under siege. To sell off or allow the cultural, historic, and natural resource assets of the Driftless area to be degraded is to undermine not only our irreplaceable environmental assets, but our economies. Minnesota's tourism economy is second only to agriculture. Our scenic byways are the circulation system that feeds the heart of that economy. And no byway is more beloved by the people of Minnesota, than the Great River Road.

I contacted Carol Zoff because planning commissions, citizens, businesses and communities along the Great River Road corridor are in URGENT need of your assistance - to assess and document potential impacts to the *scenic byway* assets and economies. We would like to work with you to determine the potential conflicts of industrial scale silica sand mining with the Great River Road Development Plan and other values of the precious commons the resources under your jurisdiction represent. Action is URGENTLY needed.

The Wisconsin Experience: In 2008 6.5 million tons of sands were extracted from the WI mines, and in 2011 15 million tons were reported by the industry. The Pearce County Herald noted this week that 17 mines in counties along the river road will soon be 24, with more applications pending. Evidence of impacts of these mining operations is multiplying as rapidly. Primary issues include:

- health (silicosis from silica sand exposures from uncovered piles, truck and trains);
- water quality (extraction rates of 1-1.5 million gallons a day for washing, and ill managed 'disposal' in bermed holding ponds);
- impacts to local economies based upon tourism and recreation; and
- transportation pressures on local, county and state roads, bridges, *and scenic byways*.

In the last few weeks, 3 major spills from holding ponds were reported in the media, one pouring directly into the St. Croix River at Grantsburg. Expansion is expected to continue, following along the Jordan and St. Peter outcroppings along Minnesota's rivers – including the Mississippi, St. Croix and Minnesota Rivers. The average number of jobs created by one mine is 38. The average number of jobs in local economies threatened by mining has not yet been calculated. The multiple potential costs to our natural resource commons are unknown.

The “sand gold rush”: The fracking and financial industries are willing to spend any amount of money to keep the sands flowing. Extraction of our “Northern White Sands”, the finest in the country, are being backed by hedge funds and Haliburton holding companies. Frac sand brings up to 10 times, and 100 times, respectively, the value of glass and construction sand. But to get these prices requires intensive, 24/7 operations, major transportation infrastructure and refining that requires millions of gallons of water. And this is only the beginning of the water and quality of life impacts, for which natural gas fracking is well known.

Impacted counties in and adjacent to the Mississippi River corridor include Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona, but also include Olmstead, Fillmore and Scott counties, which share our geology. It is difficult if not impossible for county-wide ordinances to protect the special features and economies of the Ms. River Valley from this level of threat. We need your help.

A statewide moratorium on frac sand mining along MN's scenic byways, pending a cumulative impacts study -- to understand the extent and nature of this threat – would not be too drastic an action, starting with the Great River Road.

Thank you for all that you do to “promote, preserve and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River Valley”. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kristen Eide-Tollefson, Florence Township Planning Commission, Frontenac. 715-317-0228