



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
3rd Quarter Meeting – August 18, 2011
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Room 500 North

DRAFT AGENDA

2:30 p.m.	Welcome & Introductions	Johnson
2:35 p.m.	Approve Today's Agenda, Minutes from 2/23/11 & 5/26/11	Johnson/All
2:40 p.m.	Commission Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review and Approve FY '12 Budget- MN-MRPC Sunset Extension, Other Legislative Updates	All Legislative Members
2:50 p.m.	National MRPC Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2011 Annual Meeting – Little Rock, Sept. 29 – Oct. 1- MRPC Board- National Committees: Culture & Heritage, ERA, Marketing, Transportation	All Johnson Committee Members
3:10 p.m.	Old Business - Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CapX 2020- Historic Roadside Properties Restoration Project- GRR Interpretive Panel Project	All Zoff Zoff
3:30 p.m.	New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Regional Citizen Committee Meetings – Review Schedule & Agenda- Agency Appointments- Letter of Support - Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex- Great River Road Video Project – Identify Story Ideas and Locations	Miller/Regional Members Johnson/Miller Schaubach Marketing Work Group/All
4:00 p.m.	2011 National Scenic Byways Conference, Aug 21 – 24 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review Great River Road Offerings, Last Minute Needs	
4:10 p.m.	Work Group Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organization – Google Mapping Workshops	Samp
4:20 p.m.	State MRPC Travel Updates & Upcoming Events	All
4:30 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	Frost Schaubach Samp Labovitz Mulry Poster Johnson/Offerman Kajer/Kelliher Murray/Wheeler Pafko/Zoff
5:00 p.m.	Wrap Up and Adjourn	



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
2nd Quarter Meeting
May 26, 2011
State Office Building, St. Paul MN**

MINUTES – Approved 8/18/11

Commissioners Present

Rep. Sheldon Johnson – MN-MRPC Chair
John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Mark Anderson – At-Large Member
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Adam Johnson – Tourism Appointee

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

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

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

Rep. Branden Petersen
Sen. Sandra Pappas
Sen. David Senjem
Frank Pafko – Transportation Appointee
Charlie Poster – Agriculture Appointee
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee
Greg Murray – Natural Resources Appointee
Jack Frost – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids
Paul Labovitz – Elk River to Hastings
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border
Cheryl Offerman - Tourism

Others Present

Dan Collins, Liz Walton - Transportation
Don Frerichs

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Johnson at 2:45 p.m. A quorum was not present. Members reviewed the proposed agenda and minutes from February 23, and the Chair proceeded through the agenda for information and discussion. Adam Johnson of Visit Saint Paul was welcomed as a new appointee, representing Explore Minnesota Tourism. Mr. Johnson shared information on his background including his current role as Vice President for Marketing at Visit Saint Paul, and previous work with the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation.

Commission Business

Financial Status Report: A report showing budget, year to date status, open grant amounts, and projected expenses to year end was distributed and discussed. Potential for a state government shutdown on July 1 and its effect on the MN-MRPC was mentioned. Details would not be available until closer to the July 1 date.

Legislative Session Update: Chairman Johnson reported on several bills.

HF 95/SF 39 – Mississippi River Critical Area Repeal – incorporated into Environment, Energy and Finance Bill, passed by Conference Committee, vetoed by Governor.

HF 554/SF 346 – MN-MRPC Sunset Extension from 2012 to 2016 – passed by Senate, included in State Government Finance Bill, vetoed by Governor.

HF 1367/SF 1077 – Mississippi River Trail – State Bikeway Designation – included in Omnibus Transportation Bill, passed both the House and Senate.

HF 528/SF 290 – Funds for Camp Ripley Veterans' Trail - Referred to Legacy Funding Division and not included in final bill.

HF 612/SF 418 – Appropriate for the Mississippi Headwaters Board – not passed in House or Senate.

National MRPC Updates

Spring Webinar: Technical Advisor Zoff reported on the webinar, which was offered in lieu of the Semi-Annual Meeting this year. The first portion of the webinar was much like a board conference call with various updates and reports. There was also a keynote speaker. Topic was a recent project undertaken by the Iowa Department of Transportation, utilizing GPS technology to identify resources and amenities along scenic byways. The project turned out well and can serve as a model for others. Overall feedback on the webinar indicated that it is a good option for sharing of information but was not recommended as a long-term substitute for the Semi-Annual Meeting.

MRPC Board: The May MRPC National Board conference call included discussion on the Spring Webinar; changes to eligibility for the Stewardship Award to include organizations as well as individuals as potential recipients; agri-tourism information due from each state by September 1 to fulfill a National Scenic Byway Grant project (10-state agri-tourism database); discussion on Iowa's 2010 National Scenic Byways Grant to develop an updated Corridor Management Plan; and discussion on various transmission line project crossing the Great River Road.

Old Business - Updates

Mississippi River Bicycle Trail (MRT): Dan Collins and Liz Walton of the Minnesota Department of Transportation provided a status report on the MRT in Minnesota. A summary is provided below. Copies of the new 2011 Minnesota Biking Guide were distributed. An overview of the concept for the US Bike Route System was provided and a map circulated. The MRT would be Minnesota's first route to be included in this national system. Many communities passed resolutions in 2010 in general support of the MRT. Continuing partnership between the MN-MRPC and MRT are important for success. Areas include route selection, marketing, and participation on board/cooperative management structure. The MRT is a partner in the MN-MRPC's 2011 National Scenic Byway Grant application. Funds would be used for statewide signage, and visitor information including a series of community kiosks.

2010 MRT Accomplishments

- Review and refine the route based on collaborative statewide meetings;
- Conduct evaluation rides to confirm route decisions made in the meetings;
- Introduce the concept of bicycle-friendly communities along the route;
- Post a GIS-interactive map and printable maps on Mn/DOT's website available for the 2011 bicycling season;
- Develop a draft marketing toolbox to enhance marketing efforts and promote the MRT.
- MRT website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html>

2011 MRT Next Steps

- Seek Legislative authorization as Minnesota's first designated State Scenic Bikeway.
- Convene additional statewide meetings to improve the alignment and coordinate activities and expectations amongst MRT's road and trail authorities. Concentrate on: segments previously identified as needing additional review; the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) in the Twin Cities; and on developing recommended design guidance for off-road segments;
- Signing plan for road and off-road segments not located on state highways;
- Implement marketing and outreach. Encourage marketing partnerships within the public and private sectors and facilitate local marketing action plans and bicycle-friendliness recommendations for select communities;
- Develop and implement cooperative MRT management by road and trail authorities.

CapX 2020: The MN-MRPC provided comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statements for the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse route in late April. Public hearings have been scheduled for June 14 – 16 in Plainview, Pine Island and Cannon Falls. Written comments will be accepted by the Administrative Law Judge through June 30.

2010 National Scenic Byway Grants: Congratulations to the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area on receiving a 2010 National Scenic Byways Grant. The MN-MRPC is a partner on this project and commission members will be asked to help with the process of identifying visual resources to be protected. The process developed through this project can be modified and expanded to all destination areas of the Great River Road.

New Business

2011 National Scenic Byway Grants: The solicitation for 2011 grant applications was released on May 6 with a state deadline of May 26. The MN-MRPC has been working in partnership with the National Park Service/Mississippi National River and Recreation Area; Mn/DOT and the MRT; and the Trust for Public Land to develop an application for Corridor Management Planning and Implementation. The Corridor Management Planning would be a comprehensive process for the full 575-mile route, to guide the work of the MN-MRPC and partners over the next 10 – 15 years. The implementation piece would involve signage and visitor information for the MRT. The application was finalized and submitted on May

26. The National Park Service is providing the required 20% match for the project. Funding awards should be announced in 3 – 12 months.

Regional Citizen Committee Meetings and Commissioner Elections: Regional citizen committee meetings were last held in 2007 and due to be held again in 2011. Election of Regional Commissioners will take place. The Organization Work Group developed a tentative agenda and plan for the meetings including Great River Road updates and discussion on regional topics. The Hastings to Iowa Border Regional Meeting has been scheduled for June 2 at the Winona County History Center, and will serve as a pilot for the other meetings. Each Regional Commissioner will be asked to identify agenda topics specific to that region as well as names/lists to receive the meeting invitations.

All member appointments will need to be confirmed unless recently completed. Letters will be sent to agency Commissioners/Directors to request appointments. House appointments have been completed, with Senate appointments pending.

2011 National Scenic Byways Conference

Confirm MN-MRPC Attendees: The 2011 National Scenic Byways Conference will be held at the Marriott City Center in Minneapolis, August 21 – 24. This provides a unique opportunity to participate in a national conference and learn from other byways. Registration forms were distributed, which include a link to the full conference information at www.bywaysresourcecenter.org. Several MN-MRPC members have indicated interest and were asked to confirm with the MN-MRPC office so that Chair approval, planning and budgeting can take place.

Great River Road Field Workshops: Field workshops to be offered at the NSB Conference include a tour of Historic Roadside Properties; agricultural interpretation; and biking/multi-modal transportation through the MNRRA Corridor. A total of 11 different Mississippi River related workshops and presentations will be included in the conference.

Work Group Updates

Organization: A meeting was held on March 30. Notes were distributed. Main topics included regional citizen committee meetings, possible GIS workshops, Dresbach Bridge design, and Great River Road Corridor Management Planning.

Marketing: Minnesota Great River Road Map/Travel Planners have been revised, printed and distributed to the database of sites along the Great River Road.

State MRPC Travel Updates and Upcoming Events

Commissioner Schaubach reported on his attendance at the St. Paul Great River Gathering, and thanked the National Park Service for sharing exhibit space with the MN-MRPC again this year. Adam Johnson provided background on the history of the event.

Agency and Regional Updates

Brainerd to Elk River: Commissioner Samp has contacted the AmericInn regarding renewing the partnership discussions began with the MN-MRPC several years ago. Advice was to contact again in six months after internal restructuring has been completed. Inquiries have been received about the possibility of reprinting the regional map tablet to be used as placemats in restaurants. The Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) included presentations on Brainerd and St. Cloud Mississippi River planning initiatives at a recent meeting. An open house was held at the St. Cloud Civic Center to roll out their Mississippi River Urban Corridor Plan. Trails and river amenities have been identified as priorities. The Brainerd Rotary is in process of purchasing 30 acres of land along the Mississippi, adjacent to Kiwanis Park. Brainerd has also recently reviewed the Great River Road route due to expansion of College Drive including a roundabout. MN Master Naturalists were mentioned as a resource for projects. The candidates must do volunteer work and are looking for projects. Go to www.mnmasternaturalist.org.

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: Commissioner Schaubach distributed materials and reported on upcoming events related to the Cuyuna Lakes Mountain Biking Trail. A Mountain Bike Festival, including trail ribbon cutting and races, will be held June 10 – 12. 30 miles of mountain bike trails will be a part of the MRT. A meeting will be held on June 16 at the Initiative Foundation in Little Falls as a follow up to the

Mississippi Headwaters meeting in December 2010. Organizations from the Headwaters to St. Cloud area have begun working together to share information, as well as align plans and initiatives.

Elk River to Hastings: Representative Johnson has been participating in St. Paul Lower Town strategic planning, to build connections to the river from Lower Town. He has also been working with buckthorn removal.

Natural Resources: Technical Advisor Wheeler referred to the written update provided. A preferred alignment has been identified for the proposed new Mississippi Whitewater Park. There was discussion on the Mississippi River Critical Area Rulemaking. The DNR stands ready to continue the work if authorized.

Transportation: Technical Advisor Zoff provided an update on bridge projects currently underway including Lafayette Bridge (under construction); 494/Cottage Grove (near completion); Hastings (underway); Red Wing (early planning); Winona (preliminary design); Dresbach/I-90 (final design). The 2011 Tour de Pepin bike ride will be on June 4 and Mn/DOT is assisting with route preparation/detour signage. The Sibley Pioneer Church Memorial restoration is beginning and should be completed this year. The "Complete Streets" program is geared toward transportation facilities serving a greater purpose of livability and accessibility.

Recognition of Distinguished Service to the Commission – Don Frerichs

Chairman Johnson provided commentary about the contributions of Don Frerichs, who has served both the MN-MRPC and 10-State MRPC in many roles over many years. Commission members shared their thoughts and thanks as well. Mr. Frerichs shared his thoughts, recommendations and parting comments with the group.

Next Meeting

Thursday, August 18, 2011

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 May 2011

Department of Natural Resources – Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor

Mississippi River Critical Area (MRCCA) Rule Making

Language repealing the rule making for the Critical Area is winding its way through the legislature. Even if the repeal bill does not pass, the rule making cannot move forward unless the Legislature acts to extend DNR's authority.

The draft rules are at the Revisor of Statutes office. DNR staff are working on finishing the Statement of Needs and Reasonableness (SONAR), and getting everything in order so it is ready to move forward if the legislation is extended. If the legislation is not extended, the work will be available if it is picked up some time in the future.

Mississippi Whitewater Park Project

The Mississippi Whitewater Park Project is a proposal for a whitewater park on/adjacent to the Mississippi River just down river from the Stone Arch Bridge in Minneapolis. The Corps of Engineers (COE) is the federal project sponsor. The State of Minnesota (DNR) is the state (local) project sponsor.

The project consultants for the COE recently presented three design alternative alignments to key stakeholders and other interested organizations. There was consensus on a preferred alignment. Legislation is proposed to extend DNR's project funding until June 30, 2012. During this time the federal and local sponsors will need to make a determination about their respective interests in proceeding with further design of the preferred alignment, and working on the next steps.

Mississippi River – St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan

DNR staff have been actively involved in planning efforts, along with the cities of St. Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and local citizens "to create a regional one-of-a-kind urban river plan that will restore the natural habitat and ecology of the river, create economic vitality, and provide better connections to the Mississippi River that runs through these communities."

A community celebration is being held (May 25th) in St. Cloud to celebrate how the ideas of residents came together to create this plan.



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
1st Quarter Meeting
February 23, 2011
State Office Building, St. Paul MN**

MINUTES – Approved 8/18/11

Commissioners Present

Rep. Sheldon Johnson – MN-MRPC Chair
Frank Pafko – Transportation Appointee
John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Jack Frost – Itasca to Grand Rapids
Mark Anderson – At-Large Member
Charlie Poster – Agriculture Appointee
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Paul Labovitz – Elk River to Hastings
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee

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

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

Rep. Branden Petersen
Sen. Sandra Pappas
Sen. David Senjem
Don Frerichs – Explore MN Tourism Appointee

Others Present

Andy Golfis
Michelle Johnson, Wayne Gannaway – America's
Byways Resource Center (via phone)

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Johnson at 2:40 p.m. A quorum was present. New member Charlie Poster from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture was welcomed to the Commission. Rep. Branden Petersen was also announced as a new member.

Approval of Minutes from 8/26/10 and 11/18/10 Meetings

Draft minutes from 8/26/10 and 11/18/10 were distributed. Motion by Commissioner Kajer and seconded by Commissioner Mulry to approve the 8/26/10 minutes as presented. Motion passed. Motion by Commissioner Pafko and seconded by Commissioner Samp to approve the 11/18/10 minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Commission Business

Election of 2011 Officers: Chairman Johnson recommended tabling this item until the 2nd Quarter Meeting due to Commission appointments from the Senate to be completed soon. Members agreed and current officers will continue to serve until the next meeting.

Appointment of At-Large Member/Secretary: The MN-MRPC has a vacancy in the at-large position, which is to be appointed by the other 14 members. Three nominations were received. Jack Frost nominated Paul Thiede, Crow Wing County Commissioner and member of the Mississippi Headwaters Board; Frank Pafko nominated Mark Anderson, long-time Mn/DOT employee and current State Scenic Byways Coordinator; and Carol Zoff nominated Craig Churchward, who recently moved back to the area and has Scenic Byways experience including work on the Great River Road Development Study. Nominators provided information on the candidates, followed by ballot voting. Mark Anderson was appointed as the new at-large member of the Commission.

Financial Status Report: A report showing budget, year to date status, open grant amounts, and projected expenses to year end was distributed and discussed. Motion by Commissioner Frost and seconded by Commissioner Pafko to approve the report as presented. Motion passed.

Legislative Session Update: Chairman Johnson presented information on the MN-MRPC to the House State Finance Committee recently. He also noted House File 554/Senate File 346 which would extend the sunset date of the MN-MRPC for four years. Other bills are listed as separate items later in the agenda.

National MRPC Updates

MRPC Board: The Board made a one-time change and will not hold a Semi-Annual Meeting in the spring of 2011, for a variety of reasons including budget constraints in member states. A webinar will be held on April 8 at 10:00 a.m., open to all MRPC members in lieu of a spring meeting. The webinar will focus on the National MRPC work plan.

MRPC National Committees: Technical Advisor Offerman reported on a recent conference call of the Marketing Committee. The 2010 National Great River Road Geocaching Contest did not receive enough entries to award prizes, and so prizes from the states are not needed at this time. The contest criteria will be revised for 2011 and the new geocaching event/contest is scheduled to begin around June 1. Technical Advisor Zoff reported that the MRPC will be assessing whether All American Road designation should be pursued for the 10-State Great River Road; and whether application would be made by the National MRPC or the individual states. This will be discussed as part of the April 8 MRPC webinar.

State MRPC Travel Updates and Upcoming Events

Travel Updates: Commissioner Schaubach reported on the 2011 Minnesota Tourism Conference, including presentations focused on interests and activities of different generational groups and a presentation by a representative from the International Mountain Biking Association. Commissioner Frost reported on a regional tourism meeting in Bemidji, held in a refurbished industrial site along the Mississippi and providing a great example of improvements along the river.

Upcoming Events: The Commission discussed the upcoming Great River Gathering, scheduled for May 12 at the St. Paul RiverCentre. Recent practice has been to purchase two tickets for Commission members to attend. The MN-MRPC has also participated in the exhibit hall thanks to space shared by MNRRA. The following indicated interest in attending: Sheronne Mulry, Andrea Hart-Kajer and John Schaubach. Details will be emailed to them. MNRAA offered to share exhibit space again this year and Commissioner Mulry volunteered to staff on behalf of the MN-MRPC. Commissioner Schaubach noted that a second meeting of the Mississippi River group organized by the Initiative Foundation and Nature Conservancy could be coming up in late April, possibly the 21st. Members felt that the MN-MRPC should have representation at the meeting and Commissioner Samp offered to attend. The Central Minnesota Community Foundation will be holding a meeting on February 25 to finalize a list of community priorities.

Old Business

CapX2020 Updates: The route from Bemidji to Grand Rapids is proceeding and seems to have minimal impact on the Great River Road. Vegetation removal and pole installation are underway in the Monticello to St. Cloud area, with significant impact to the Great River Road. A meeting was held with MN-MRPC, Mn/DOT and CapX representatives on January 10 to discuss vegetation removal concerns. It was learned that individual landowner preferences, including those of counties, supersede the approved vegetation plan. Future meetings will be scheduled regarding the implementation of the mitigation plan for the Monticello-St. Cloud area; and the MN-MRPC requested copies of any future information related to the permit section involving the MN-MRPC. It was also suggested that for the Hampton – La Crosse route, the MN-MRPC hold its own meetings with landowners early in the process to explain National Scenic Byway status and issues. Discussion followed on the Hampton – La Crosse route and process. There is significant potential impact to the Great River Road in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Wisconsin MRPC is interested in meeting and working jointly with the MN-MRPC. It was suggested that a work group be designated to attend related meetings; develop a white paper; work with the WI-MRPC and develop a joint proposal on the preferred route; and meet with local communities. Sheldon Johnson, Sheronne Mulry, Carol Zoff and Chris Miller will serve on this group. Others are welcome and invited to notify the MN-MRPC office.

Mississippi River Trail (MRT): Status updates on the MRT in Minnesota were provided in the handouts, and Liz Walton of Mn/DOT has offered to present information at the next MN-MRPC meeting. Commissioner Labovitz reported that the MRT is moving ahead nationally with a common vision, there is optimism about progress, and the support of the MN-MRPC is appreciated. The MRT is a scenic byway for bicycles and pedestrians making it possible for people to get closer to the river and on trails. Technical Advisor Zoff noted the possibility of the MRT being designated as the state's first scenic bikeway. This new designation would help provide clarity for future funding opportunities. Chairman Johnson offered to follow up on any recommended language for legislation.

New Business

HF 95/SF39 – Mississippi River Critical Area Repeal: Commissioner Labovitz provided background, having served on the Advisory Board for Mississippi River Critical Area Rulemaking. House File 95 and Senate File 39 would repeal the Mississippi River Critical Area designation, including repeal of authority for the Department of Natural Resources to finish the rulemaking project that has been underway and is near completion. The 72-mile Critical Area provides the boundaries of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Issues include incremental loss of protected property over time and decreased vitality of the national park. Commission members expressed concern that much public input has been gathered through the rulemaking process and all should be fully considered through completion of the rulemaking process. Motion by Commissioner Schaubach and seconded by Commissioner Samp authorizing the MN-MRPC to write letters in opposition of HF 95/SF 39 and requesting that the DNR be given authority to complete the rulemaking process that was underway. Motion passed.

Action Request: FY '11 Federal Scenic Byways, Historic Preservation, Trails and

Bike/Pedestrian Funding: Details on Great River Road related federal funding and program reductions were included in the handout packets. Discussion followed on importance of the federal programs and funding sources to the Great River Road, its partners and local communities. Although eligibility to apply for funds would still likely exist if levels are reduced and/or programs combined, opportunities would be reduced. Members discussed the importance of these tools to the commission and local communities and advised that a letter be sent to Minnesota's congressional delegation, outlining the benefits of the programs and requesting support. Personal contacts from individual members of the commission can also be made using content of the letter as background, with additional local detail. It was also advised that the MN-MRPC letter be shared with the National MRPC. Draft letters will be developed and sent to members for revision/approval via email.

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

Chairman Johnson welcomed Michelle Johnson and Wayne Gannaway of America's Byways Resource Center, joining the meeting by phone. They are pleased that the conference will be held in Minneapolis. There are several means for local scenic byways such as the Great River Road to be involved in the event and showcase the local area: pre-conference tours, field workshops, and byway sponsorships. Several field workshops will involve the Great River Road including a tour of historic waysides, Fort Snelling, the Oliver H. Kelley Farm, and a Great River Road experience by bike and other modes of transportation. MN-MRPC members look forward to attending the conference and suggested providing a byway sponsorship. Commissioners Mulry and Samp offered to help staff the booth. Additional requests for volunteer time at the event or donations from throughout the state will be communicated by the State Scenic Byways Office as the conference date approaches.

Work Group Updates

Marketing: Commissioner Mulry reported on the February 14 conference call, with information also provided by Commissioner Labovitz and Technical Advisor Offerman. The group discussed and made recommendations for a re-print of the MN Great River Road Map/Travel Planner; developed initial parameters for the destination area video project; and discussed an opportunity/made a recommendation to place a Great River Road ad in the new Minnesota Biking Guide. Suggestions were made for future agendas of the work group – social media, mobile applications, and consider partnering with communities/offering a workshop on roadside marketing.

Organization: Commissioner Samp noted that a meeting will be held soon.

Agency and Regional Updates

Itasca to Grand Rapids: Commissioner Frost noted Mississippi Headwaters Board initiatives and an upcoming meeting with Governor Dayton, a county partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation District, and area events including geocaching and the Bemidji Dragon Boat Festival. Further detail is included in the written report following the minutes.

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: Commissioner Schaubach reported on a December 9 meeting sponsored by the Initiative Foundation and the Trust for Public Land, which brought together many Mississippi River partners from Lake Itasca to St. Cloud. This provides a good opportunity for partnership on initiatives including a possible update of the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan. Commissioner Schaubach

suggested that the group could facilitate identification of intrinsic qualities and then align efforts as well as partner on initiatives. Further detail is included in the written report following the minutes.

Brainerd to Elk River: Commissioner Samp reported that groups in Brainerd and St. Cloud continue to meet regularly regarding river related plans and topics. The Brainerd group meets quarterly and would like to participate in any processes related to updating the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan. One of the projects under consideration is a white water rafting park.

Elk River to Hastings: Commissioner Labovitz reported that the National Park Service has participated on the Coon Rapids Dam Commission, with results to be shared with the legislature soon. The Urban Wilderness Canoe Area was featured in the Presidents Great American Outdoors report. A Great River Canoe Race is being planned which will involve local companies and organizations. St. Paul is currently working on a master plan for the Great River Park. Minneapolis recently selected a firm to develop an area of riverfront, demonstrating a re-focusing on the Mississippi.

Hastings to Iowa Border: Commissioner Mulry discussed concerns in her region over potential for significant spring flooding, which some projections indicate could rival 1965 levels.

Explore Minnesota Tourism: Cheryl Offerman reported that Don Frerichs will be resigning his position on the MN-MRPC after many years of service, and EMT is in the process of considering potential candidates to fill the appointment.

Natural Resources: Cynthia Wheeler provided updates on Mississippi River Critical Area Rulemaking; status of the white water park in Minneapolis; central Minnesota river initiatives; and an award recently won by the Friendship Tour Project which connected people from various areas of the river. Further detail is provided in the written report following the minutes.

Transportation: Commissioner Pafko listed several current bridge projects, including Lafayette and Lowry bridges now under construction; and Dresbach, Winona and Red Wing bridges in planning stages. Carol Zoff is active on the bridge projects related to visual quality, vegetation and wall design. She requested input from Commission members on wall design and material/design preferences. Information including photos or diagrams will be sent to the MN-MRPC office for distribution to members and gathering of comment.

Historical Society: David Kelliher reported that the Minnesota Historical Society has completed its Legacy Funds report to the legislature. Information is available at www.mnhs.org/legacy. The grants program provided 474 grants, covering all 87 counties. An example is the "Paul & Babe Geocaching" organized by the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway. A series of Legacy Weekends will be coming up to highlight programs in communities across the state.

Recognition of Distinguished Service to the Commission – Andy Golfis

Chairman Johnson and Technical Advisor Zoff provided commentary about the contributions of Andy Golfis. Commission members shared their thoughts and thanks as well. Commissioner Golfis served for many years and in many capacities including State MRPC Chair and National MRPC Pilot. His dedication and perseverance will be greatly missed.

Next Meeting

Thursday, May 26, 2011

2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

State Office Building Room 500 North

Adjournment

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



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

Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids – Commissioner Jack Frost

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

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

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

Grand Rapids to Brainerd – Commissioner John Schaubach

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

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

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

Department of Natural Resources – Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor

Mississippi River Critical Area (MRCCA) Rule Making

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

Mississippi Whitewater Park Project

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

Mississippi River – Update from DNR's Sauk Rapids office

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

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

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

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

Friendship Tour Project Wins Statewide Collaboration Contest

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

MN-MRPC FY 12 Draft Budget
8/4/11

Obj Code	Description	FY 12	Comments
41070	Other Benefits (Per Diem)	\$ 4,500.00	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	Storage of MN-MRPC brochures, exhibit fees, mtg room rental, etc.
41110	Printing & Advertising	\$ 1,300.00	Commission meeting copies, materials, ads, etc.
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$ 24,500.00	Administrative contract
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$9,000	Local match (20%) for any remaining FHWA grant project work, any other outside vendor projects and/or hours for Commission projects outside of administrative retainer
41155	Communications	\$ 2,000.00	Website hosting, stats, minor updates, programming changes as needed. Postage/deliveries. MN MRPC phone line and conference calls.
41160	In-State Travel	\$ 9,000.00	Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, work groups, events. Includes August 2011 National Scenic Byway Conference in Mpls
41170	Out-State Travel	\$ 5,000.00	MRPC Annual & Semi Annual Meetings
41300	Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	General office supplies for Commission projects.
41400	Equipment	\$ 500.00	Equipment for GRR video project to be completed by 12/31/11
43000	Other Costs (MRPC Dues)	\$ 6,000.00	Includes National MRPC Dues (\$15,000 annual dues amount, with \$9,500 paid at end of FY 11 leaving \$5,500 balance)
TOTAL:		\$ 63,000.00	

National Scenic Byway Conference, Minneapolis, August 2011

MRPC 2011 Annual Meeting - Arkansas

MRPC 2012 Semi Annual Meeting - Illinois

Touring Areas



Marisgate Plantation

Marisgate Plantation

Tour a stately columned Greek Revival Mansion shaded by ancient oaks and a pecan grove overlooking the waters of Bearskin Lake.

Plantation Agriculture Museum

See exhibits that interpret the history of cotton agriculture in Arkansas from statehood in 1863 through World War II, when modern agricultural practices became prevalent.

Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie

This museum features more than 10,000 artifacts and a number of historic outbuildings. Exhibits range from regional waterfowl to agriculture.

Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center

Tour this important, state-of-the-art research facility that includes laboratories, seed storage and greenhouses.

Mack's Prairie Wings

Located in the heart of some of America's best duck hunting, this waterfowl outfitter offers everything from ammunition to duck blinds.

Mississippi River Parkway Commission

222 State Street, Suite 400 • Madison, WI 53703
www.experiencemississippiriver.com
1-866-763-8310 • 1-608-268-0902
FAX: 1-608-242-8896



Annual Meeting Pricing:

Delegates (all sessions & meals included):

\$175 – Early Bird - By September 6

\$200 – After September 6

One Day (Day of sessions and meals included):

\$100 – Early Bird - By September 6

\$125 – After September 6

Spouses/Guest of Delegate (Field education, tours and meals included):

\$125 – Early Bird - By September 6

\$150 – After September 6

Remember—September 6 is the deadline for Early Bird pricing.

Overnight Accommodations:

Doubletree Hotel

424 West Markham, Little Rock, AR 72201

Tel: 501-372-4371 or 800-222-TREE

Lodging: \$119/night

* Reserve by September 6. Please mention "Mississippi River Parkway Commission" when making reservations to receive group rate.

* Complimentary transportation to and from airport

* \$7.50/day self-parking

Travel Information:

The following airlines service Little Rock National Airport:

American Airlines	Southwest Airlines
Continental Airlines	United Airlines
Delta Airlines	US Airways

Approximate Driving Distances:

La Crosse, WI	890 miles
St Paul, MN	860 miles
Quad Cities, IA	660 miles
Quincy, IL	530 miles
New Orleans, LA	437 miles
St Louis, MO	400 miles
Clinton, KY	295 miles
Greenville, MS	150 miles
Memphis, TN	139 miles



Mississippi River Parkway Commission Annual Meeting

Don't miss the 2011 MRPC Annual Meeting Little Rock, Arkansas September 29 - October 1, 2011

Who Should Attend?

State commissioners, technical members, tourism professionals, Interpretive Center personnel, stakeholders, honorary members and anyone who cares about the Great River Road National Scenic Byway will want to be a part of the 2011 MRPC Annual Meeting in Little Rock.

Little Rock, Arkansas—

Little Rock is a beautiful community located on the banks of the Arkansas River, a short two-hour drive from Memphis, Tennessee, and the Mississippi River. We've scheduled some opportunities to allow you to get a taste of this community's unique culture, history, agriculture, attractions and cuisine.

Register today—Complete and return the registration form or register online at www.mrpcmembers.com/meeting by September 6 for an early registration discount.



experience
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
ten states. one river.



Mississippi River Parkway Commission Annual Meeting • Little Rock, AR • September 29 - October 1, 2011



Mississippi River Bridge

Mississippi River Parkway Commission 2011 MRPC Annual Meeting Agenda

Thursday, September 29

6:30-8pm **REGISTRATION** (*Hotel Lobby*)

8pm **HOSPITALITY**

Friday, September 30

7am **REGISTRATION**

7:30-8:30am **BOARD MEETING**

7:45-8:15am **NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION**

8:30-9am **GENERAL SESSION**

- Welcomes and Introductions
- National Updates

9:15am **BOARD BUSES** (*Depart 9:30am*)

9:30am-7:30pm **FIELD EDUCATION, TOURS
AND MEALS**

- Plantation Agriculture Museum State Park in Scott
- Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie in Stuttgart
- Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center in Stuttgart
- Mack's Prairie Wings, America's Premier Waterfowl Outfitter in Stuttgart
- Marlsgate Plantation in Scott

8pm **HOSPITALITY**

Saturday, October 1

6:30-8pm **REGISTRATION**

7:30-8:30am **STATE COMMISSION MEETINGS**

8:30-10am **GENERAL SESSION**

- Arkansas Tourism Welcome
- National Updates
- Arkansas State University Delta Heritage Sites (*including, Johnny Cash Boyhood Home project at Dyess, Arkansas*)– Dr. Ruth Hawkins

10am-12:15pm **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
SESSIONS**

12:15-1:30pm **LUNCH AND STATE
COMMISSION UPDATES**



Johnny Cash Boyhood Home

1:45-3:45pm **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
SESSIONS**

4-5pm **GENERAL SESSION**

- MRPC Business
 - Technical Committee Reports
 - Request for Bylaw Changes
 - Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers
- Other Business

5-5:30pm **BOARD MEETING**

6:30-8pm **PILOT'S BANQUET**



Touring the Mississippi River

Be part of the national discussion...

- National Scenic Byway Grants
- 75th Anniversary 10-state event
- All-American Road designation



experience
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
ten states. one river.



Mississippi River Parkway Commission Annual Meeting • Little Rock, AR • Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2011

Registration Form (Please print)

To receive **Early Bird Pricing** (marked with an **asterisk***), reserve your spot for the 2011 MRPC Annual Meeting by completing and submitting a form and fee payment by **September 6**. If paying by check, complete the form below and mail it with your registration fee. You can also register online and submit fee payment through the mail. If paying by credit card, you must fill out the form online at www.mrpcmembers.com/meeting.

ALL SESSIONS

- ☐ **\$175 Full Days*** (All Sessions & Meals included) ☐ **\$125* Spouse/ Guest of Delegate Rate** (Meals included)
☐ **\$200 Full Days** (All Sessions & Meals included) ☐ **\$150 Spouse/ Guest of Delegate Rate** (Meals included)

ONE DAY OF SESSIONS

- ☐ **\$100 One Day*** (Day of Sessions & Meals included) ☐ **\$125 One Day** (Day of Sessions & Meals included)

Check all of the meals you will attend: ☐ Friday Lunch ☐ Friday Dinner ☐ Saturday Lunch ☐ Saturday Dinner

☐ Check here if you prefer a vegetarian meal

☐ Check here if your state commission will be paying your registration fee

Full name (as it should appear on name tag): _____

Spouse/Guest of Delegate Full name (as it should appear on name tag): _____

Which State Commission do you represent? (Circle one)

AR IL IA KY LA MN MS MO TN WI

Are you a first-time attendee? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Will you attend the 7:45-8:15am New Member Orientation on Friday, Sept. 30? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Non-MRPC Delegates, please indicate Organization Name: _____

How many MRPC meetings have you attended in the past? 0 - 3 4 - 8 9 - 12 13 or more

When was the last MRPC meeting you attended? _____

On which technical committee do you currently serve?

☐ Marketing ☐ Culture & Heritage ☐ Transportation ☐ Environment, Recreation and Agriculture ☐ Don't Know

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Our preferred method to send registration confirmations is via e-mail—please include your e-mail address.

Emergency contact: _____ Phone: _____

Please indicate any special needs you may have related to transportation: _____

Please list any pre-existing medical conditions or food allergies that might require special attention: _____

Please make checks payable to: "Mississippi River Parkway Commission." Questions? Call the National Office at (866) 763-8310.

Cancellations made on or prior to Friday, September 16th will receive a full registration fee refund minus \$20 processing fee.

Cancellations made after Friday, September 16th will not be eligible for a refund.



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

300 33rd Avenue South, Suite 101 • Waite Park, Minnesota 56387

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

Members of the House: Sheldon Johnson (DFL – 67B) – Chair; Branden Petersen (R – 49B) **Members of the Senate:** David Senjem (R – 29), Sandra Pappas (DFL – 65) **State Agency Appointees:** Charlie Poster – Agriculture, Frank Pafko – Transportation, Adam Johnson – Explore Minnesota Tourism, Greg Murray – Natural Resources, Andrea Kajer – Historical Society **Regional Appointees:** Jack Frost – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids, John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd, Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River, Paul Labovitz – Elk River to Hastings, Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border **Member at Large:** Mark Anderson

June 30, 2011

Kathleen D. Sheehy
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings
600 North Robert Street
P.O. Box 64620
St. Paul, MN 55164-0620

Re: OAH Docket # 3-2500-21181-2, Hampton-Rochester-LaCrosse Transmission Line Permit

Dear Judge Sheehy:

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota (MN-MRPC) exists to promote, preserve and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River and to develop the highways and amenities of the Great River Road. The Minnesota Great River Road, 575 miles in length, is part of a larger ten state National Scenic Byway. The proposed transmission line for the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse area will have significant impact on our National Scenic Byway in both Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Vegetation removal was not reflected in the Great River Road photo simulations provided and simulations should be modified to show a more realistic view prior to route selection. The MN-MRPC has requested a video visual impact simulation including peripheral, front and rear views, in motion as travelers actually experience the byway, whether by car or bicycle. The simulations presented do not accurately or completely relate the cumulative experiential and resource impacts. Also, the underground river crossing should not be ruled out as a possibility. This option would result in the most minimal visual impact near the Mississippi River and Great River Road. Further, every effort should be made to co-locate the route with existing lines in the vicinity.

We ask that decision makers, in keeping with non-proliferation statutes, utilize all possible strategies to avoid, minimize and mitigate any impact to the Great River Road and Mississippi River corridors; and exercise due diligence in assessing potential impacts to the Great River Road. The MN-MRPC requests inclusion in the permit language to ensure on-going communication on these important topics. The Permittee would be responsible for providing plans to the MN-MRPC for review and response prior to proceeding with implementation. For example, "The Permittee shall make every effort to minimize the impact of the project on the intrinsic qualities for which the Great River Road received National Scenic Byway designation when installing the high voltage transmission line on the approved route. The Permittee shall consult with Mn/DOT and the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC) regarding final structure locations and design, construction methods that minimize damage to vegetation along the Great River Road, installation of replacement vegetation to limit visual impacts from surrounding areas, and other methods to minimize any negative impact or maximize any positive impact on the Great River Road and the Mississippi River/byway travelers' experience. The Permittee shall minimize the number of trees to be removed in selecting the right-of-way and designing a prescribed removal plan for construction."

These requests come after experience with another CapX 2020 route affecting the Great River Road, in the St. Cloud to Monticello area. The Great River Road National Scenic Byway has incurred irreparable damage due to vegetation removal and pole construction/installation. We believe that requiring both consultation and response from the MN-MRPC in the permit language will assist all parties involved by clarifying communication and relationships.

The Great River Road has achieved the esteemed designation of a National Scenic Byway because it possesses characteristics of regional and national significance. These characteristics are worthy of protection and inclusion in the route permit language. We look forward to participating in the process as it continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheldon Johnson /cm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rep. Sheldon Johnson, Chair

Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex

PROJECT NAME:

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NORTHWOODS
HABITAT COMPLEX

ACRES:

+/-1,988

OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND REQUEST:

\$14.M (LAND ACQUISITION)

\$ 500K (INITIAL SITE
DEVELOPMENT, RESTORATION)

NATURAL RESOURCES:

2.5+ MILES MISSISSIPPI
RIVER FRONTAGE

FISHERIES

WETLANDS

FORESTS

WILD RICE

TROUT STREAM

BLANDING'S TURTLE (THREATENED)

RED SHOULDERED HAWK (CONCERN)

CUYUNA -PAUL BUNYAN STATE

TRAIL CONNECTION

PROGRAMMATIC SIGNIFICANCE:

HUNTING

FISHING

WILDLIFE VIEWING

SNOWMOBILE & TRAIL USE

WATERFOWL MIGRATION HABITAT

MISSISSIPPI RIVER SHORELAND

WILD RICE BAY

CRITICAL HABITAT CORRIDOR

SPAWNING AREA

LARGE-SCALE HABITAT COMPLEX

PREVENTS FOREST FRAGMENTATION

COMPLEMENTS EXISTING PUBLIC

LANDS

CLEAN WATER



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

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

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

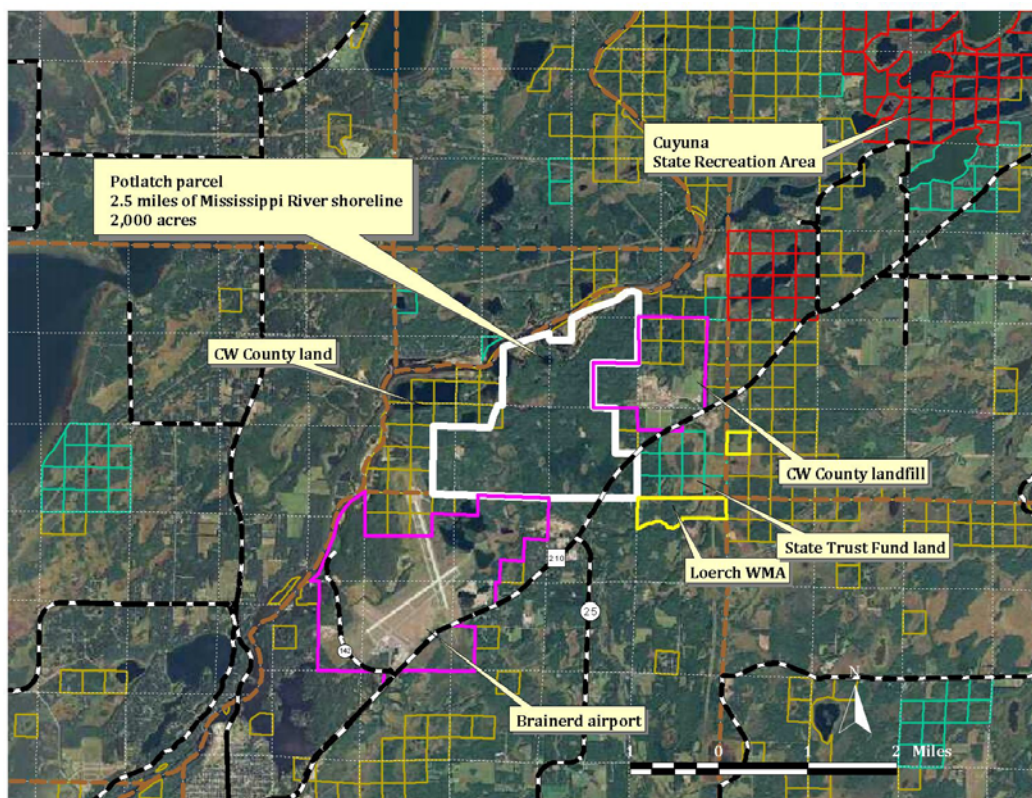
A paper mill dam downstream has contributed to the formation of Stump Bay, a lake-like basin along the property's river front. This basin serves as critical habitat, including spawning, brooding, and rearing areas for fisheries. Sand Creek, which runs through the property for one mile, provides habitat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

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

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

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

Supporters include: Anglers for Habitat, Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission, Delta Waterfowl (Brainerd Chapter), Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation, Cuyuna Lakes Trail Association, International Mountain Bike Association, Muskies Inc (Brainerd Lakes Chapter), the Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and the Whitefish Resource Coalition



Chris Miller

From: Karl Samp <ksamp@charter.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 17, 2011 8:39 AM
To: Holly.Slagle@state.mn.us
Cc: Chris Miller; 'Rep. Sheldon Johnson'; 'Carol Zoff'; Hans Muessig; Susanne Hinrichs; 'John Schaubach'; Sheronne Mulry; Jack Frost; 'Paul Labovitz'; Bill Coleman
Subject: Heads up

Hi Holly,

Chris Miller and I met with U of M Extension folks yesterday about partnering with them on some half day workshops related to Social Media and On-Line Roadside Marketing (Google Mapping.)

We intend to piggy back in communities where Extension is currently working with the Blandin Foundation MIRC project (I am a consultant on that project), in the communities of Winona, Sauk Rapids, and Grand Rapids. We may also do a separate workshop paid for by MMRPC in the Metro area. These would all take place late Fall, early Winter. If response is great enough, we may do two in a day. (Hans, thanks for that offer)

Extension will be serving businesses in those "Demonstration Communities", while we will be inviting CVB and Chamber staff, as well as Hospitality/Restaurant/Tourism businesses from Great River Road communities. Our thought was, it may be a great opportunity to invite Scenic Byway leads as well, room permitting. It is a great hands-on workshop where attendees can actually bring in local (byway) assets and map them on Google Maps, while learning how to do it and help out businesses when they get back home.

More will be coming as we nail down dates.

Thanks,

Karl

Karl Samp

10769 River Hill Circle
Brainerd, MN 56401-5234
(H) 218-828-0752
(C) 218-821-5619
www.karlsamp.com

"The time is always right, to do right."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Agency & Regional Updates August 2011

Grand Rapids to Brainerd – Commissioner John Schaubach

The opening of the new mountain bike trails in the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area has been very successful drawing riders from throughout the region. This trail system has been designated and certified by the International Mountain Bike Association as a Bronze Level Ride Center. This is the first ever "Ride Center" designation for the mountain bike sport. To be a Ride Center the designation requires:

- An extensive professionally constructed trail system to IMBA standards.
- Must have single track trails for riders of every level.
- Must serve as educational and social hubs to connect and introduce visitors to the sport.
- Must support tourism and economic development in the region they are present.

IMBA's immediate priority is to promote additional trail construction in the CCSRA to attain Gold Level Ride Center Certification.

What a great opportunity for this abandoned mine land to be significant as a recreational tourism destination. We see it helping our local economy already. And the presence of the paved trail as a component of the MRT should help this further.

Potential acquisition of Mississippi River shore from the Potlatch Corporation: It is called The Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex. I am on the Project Lead Team for this request for funding to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for FY 2013. The parcel has 2.5 miles of riverbank and 2000 acres of forest land. It is considered the premier Potlatch property in the state. The cost is estimated at \$14.5 million. The Project lead entities are the Brainerd Lakes Community Foundation, Delta Waterfowl, Anglers for Habitat, The Cuyuna Lakes Trails Assn. and the Trust for Public Land. TPL is managing the project application. This land has high quality natural beauty and would serve as the trail corridor for the Mississippi River Trail. We need a broad range of support in this application and desire the backing of the MRPC in this.