



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
3rd Quarter Meeting
August 23, 2012
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
Mark Anderson – At-Large Member
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Keith Parker – Natural Resources Appointee
Jim Lucachick – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids (via phone)
Sen. David Senjem
Blanca Martinez Gavina – for Sen. Torres-Ray

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

Carol Zoff – Transportation
Cynthia Wheeler – Natural Resources

Paul Labovitz – National Park Service/MISS
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism
David Kelliher – Historical Society
Chris Miller - Staff

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

Adam Johnson – Explore MN Tourism Appointee
Rep. Branden Petersen
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee
Paul Huginin – Agriculture Appointee

Speakers & Guests Present

Susan Overson, NPS/MISS
Kate Schwarzler and Geoff Brady, Otak
Lynn Clarkowski, MnDOT
Marion O'Neill, Senator Howe's Office

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

Approval of Meeting Agenda and Minutes from 5/24/12 Meeting

Motion by Sheronne Mulry and seconded by Frank Pafko to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Cordelia Pierson to approve the 5/24/12 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Great River Road Visual Resource Protection Plan Project

Susan Overson of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MISS), project manager, provided background. In 2010, a National Scenic Byways grant was received to develop a Visual Resource Protection Plan for the Great River Road in the Metro area. The National Park Service's Denver Service Center is assisting and Otak is the firm selected to carry out the project. Otak brings experience working with the Bureau of Land Management and visual resource protection in several western states. The project will identify the visual resources that people come to the area to see. Opportunities for public input will be provided soon and volunteers will also be needed to assist with viewpoint evaluations. The general timeline includes viewpoint evaluations the week of September 17 (leaf on) and again in November (leaf off), with a draft of the plan to be available for public comment in spring of 2013.

MISS is the first national park to develop a process for visual resources. A goal is to share the results with other national parks and byways as well as application in all regions of the Minnesota Great River Road. Results will be included in the new Corridor Management Plan and applied corridor wide. Kate Schwarzler and Geoff Brady of Otak were introduced and shared details about the project to date, future plans, and desired results. They drove the full Metro Great River Route and suggested that additional way finding signage and amenity signage would be helpful to travelers. GIS has been integrated into the visual resource project from the beginning. Public input will be gathered using a tool called Crowd Map, an online application allowing people to define where views are located. All processes utilized on this project will be documented for adaptation/use/updating by others as appropriate. Visual resources are gaining more prominence and research shows that certain elements are more scenic than others, providing a basis to scientifically document and classify views.

Four layers of data will be collected: 1) existing characteristics of the landscape, 2) viewpoint evaluations, 3) stability of the landscape, and 4) how people use and access views. The information can be utilized as a tool for decision making. Economic value of views may be addressed in the future. The Blue Ridge Parkway model included information on tolerance of change, and the percentage of change that would impact when visitors would reduce visits or no longer visit.

Opportunities for Involvement: 1) Public Input on Favorite Views: Starting next week, public input will be sought on favorite views in the region. People will be able to submit as many views as they like, online or on paper. Links to the feedback site will be provided and everyone is encouraged to forward the request to any and all interested partners and groups. Public input is crucial to the project. 2) Volunteers to Evaluate Viewpoints: Volunteers will be needed during the week of September 17 to participate in field work to evaluation specific viewpoints. Orientation and detailed guidelines will be provided. Another opportunity will be available in November. Details will be forwarded as available.

Questions, answers and discussion followed. Topics included making the information available on mobile devices in the future; developing/restoring views; whether views from the river itself will be considered (yes); the possibility of ideas for both public and privately owned locations; will there be identification of views needing to be upgraded (yes); context and history related to the river; need for better way finding of the Great River Road and more labeling of amenities, restaurants, restroom facilities, etc.

Commission Business

FY '13 Preliminary Budget: The draft FY '13 budget was distributed. Line items will need to be adjusted to reflect carry over from FY '12, and also needs related to the Corridor Management Plan grant and related projects.

National MRPC Updates

MRPC Board: Rep. Johnson noted that the Board holds quarterly conference calls. Carol Zoff announced that the National Office and Transportation Committee have distributed an electronic survey to all ten state Departments of Transportation, with results to be utilized at the upcoming Annual Meeting.

2012 Annual Meeting: Rep. Johnson reported that out-of-state travel authorization has been requested to send two MN-MRPC representatives to the 2012 Annual Meeting in Louisville.

MN-MRPC Annual Report: Copies of the 2012 MN-MRPC Annual Report were included in the meeting packets. The report has been sent to the National MRPC, the Minnesota Scenic Byways Office, and posted on the Minnesota Great River Road and LCC websites. Where else should it be sent? Suggestions included stakeholder lists; National Scenic Byway Foundation; legislative leaders and members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees.

GRR Interpretive Centers – Winona County History Center Nomination: Nominations were due August 1 for the Great River Road Network of Interpretive Centers. The Winona County History Center submitted a nomination, with a letter of recommendation from the MN-MRPC. A list of all current GRR Interpretive Centers is available at <http://www.experiencemississippiriver.com/interpretive-centers.cfm>.

Culture and Heritage Committee: Sheronne Mulry reported that the committee is planning a multi-state Art & Music Festival to highlight local arts in river communities. The committee also continues to gather river stories for the oral history project.

Environment, Recreation and Agriculture Committee: Karl Samp reported that recent projects have included the agritourism database, and plans for community resource mapping (which will be the focus of a session at the annual meeting). The committee is also discussing a "Mississippi River Day" for all ten states.

Old Business – Updates

CMP Grant – Progress Update, Special MN-MRPC Meeting: Chris Miller and Carol Zoff reported. The grant agreement and memorandum of understanding have been completed, finalizing arrangements needed to access the matching funds from the National Park Service. Expenses can be incurred when all fully executed documents are received back. The Project Management Team met in late May and discussed potential data elements to be included in the GIS database of Great River Road resources, as well as how data can be used for multiple purposes and audiences. The GIS project would be the first

portion of the Corridor Management Planning process. A possible timeline for the GIS RFP: development in October, distribution and selection in November/December. Signage for the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) is also included in the grant and the sign plan and cost estimates are currently being finalized. First signage activities and expenses currently planned for spring of 2013. At the last MN-MRPC meeting, members requested a special meeting to focus on details the Corridor Management Plan project. Survey responses have not shown enough availability for October meeting dates. Members decided to extend the November 29 meeting instead of setting an additional date. The November meeting will now be from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m., with 1:00 – 2:30 dedicated to the Corridor Management Plan project.

Frac Sand Mining: As authorized at the last meeting, the MN-MRPC sent a letter to Governor Dayton and copied to cities, counties and townships in the Hastings to Iowa Border region, requesting a study of potential cumulative impacts of silica sand mining. The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) met on August 15. Carol Zoff provided informational testimony on the National Scenic Byways Program, Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail. Much testimony was received from a variety of individuals and organizations. Sheronne Mulry has attended meetings in the Bluffs Region. Permitting for new mining is currently done on a municipal basis and there are many issues to consider. Several moratoria have been in place but some are expiring. The EQB has authority to initiate a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) although funding from the legislature would likely be necessary to complete it. A GEIS could provide consistent information for use in local decision making. The EQB's next meeting is scheduled for September 19 and that would be the soonest timeline for any decision on a GEIS. Marion O'Neill discussed Senator Howe's interest in the issue including working with the EQB and possible legislation to appropriate funds. Rep. Johnson asked about activity in the House and will contact Sen. Howe.

Great River Road Interpretive Panels: Carol Zoff reported on this project, which is funded by a National Scenic Byways Grant and MnDOT. A total of 26 panels will be developed, placed at five sites along the Great River Road. Content has been taken from the MN Great River Road Interpretive Plan and updated as needed with help from local partners. Draft panel layouts were distributed. Pilot panels were placed last year at the Highway 371 Travel Information Center near Brainerd. Remaining panels are soon to be placed at Itasca State Park, Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area (St. Cloud), Sibley Pioneer Church Memorial (Mendota) and New Albin (near Iowa border). Members asked whether QR codes will be included. The current plan is not to do so because of the speed of technology changes and expected life of the panels. Stickers were suggested as an option.

2012 National Scenic Byway Grants Funded: Chris Miller shared good news that two projects along the Great River Road have been awarded 2012 NSB grants – Aitkin County for a project to pave gravel sections of the Great River Road; and Dakota County to construct parking, trail connections, signage and restrooms near the Rock Island Swing Bridge. Cordelia Pierson announced more good news from another federal funding source – the Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has been awarded \$1 million for design and construction of the East Bank Trail, .75 miles of off-road bicycle and pedestrian trail on the Mississippi River's east bank, linking Boom Island to the BNSF railroad bridge.

CapX2020: Sheronne Mulry requested that CapX 2020 be included as an old business item on future agendas.

New Business

Great Northern Transmission Line: John Schaubach reported on a meeting held on August 7 in Grand Rapids. Minnesota Power is in the early stages of route determination for the Great Northern Transmission Line and invited input. The area being considered is very large and there appears to be little to no impact on the Great River Road.

Proposed Motorized Trail – Cuyuna Lakes Area: John Schaubach referenced a letter in the meeting packet. Trail expansions including a destination level ATV trail are being considered in the Cuyuna Lakes area. The Cuyuna Lakes Chamber has asked Crow Wing County to support or assist with a comprehensive impact study of current and potential future use of all public land adjacent to the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area.

Journal for America's Byways – June Edition: An article in the journal references partnership activities of both the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, and the MN-MRPC. Journal copies were available for those interested.

Reprint of Minnesota Great River Road Map/Travel Planner: Chris Miller reported that little stock remains. Requests for boxes of maps have been received recently from several distribution sites. Quantity will also be needed for the Corridor Management Plan process (public meetings, etc.), for

general Commission member use, and fulfillment of individual requests from the Great River Road website. 20,000 were printed in spring of 2011. Topic was referred to the Marketing Work Group for discussion and a recommendation. Cordelia Pierson suggested consideration of a print ready document that can be customized by local sponsors, with a space to add their information.

Minnesota Great River Road Website Statistics: Reports on recent activity were included in the meeting packets. Details included number of visits, and items downloaded from the website.

Agency and Regional Updates

Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids: Jim Lucachick reported that the City of Bemidji recently constructed a bicycle and pedestrian bridge that connects to the Paul Bunyan Trail. Bemidji continues to focus on its "First City on the Mississippi" theme.

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: John Schaubach reported that negotiations are in process for acquisition of the Northwoods Heritage Complex land along the Mississippi. The Mississippi Gathering 5 (G5) will be held on October 6 at the Heartwood Conference Center in Crosby. The gatherings are convened by the Initiative Foundation, Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, and Mississippi Headwaters Board to bring together river related initiatives in the general Mississippi Headwaters Board area (first 400 miles). The October 6 gathering will begin at 9:00 with an outdoor tour of area highlights followed by presentations and small group discussions. A panel of successful river initiatives will be featured.

Brainerd to Elk River: Karl Samp reported on the dedication of the St. Cloud River Bluffs Regional Park; and a September 18 meeting initiated by The Nature Conservancy to discuss a historic site/property in the area and interest in ways to preserve and manage it. Additional discussions have been planned.

Elk River to Hastings: Cordelia Pierson referenced activities underway in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, including the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure program being a finalist for LCCMR funding and a planning process for partners in the Minnesota/Mississippi River confluence area. An update on Asian Carp was distributed, provided by Paul Labovitz. Concerns have been raised regarding biking on Marshall Avenue, a county highway that is part of the MRT. Hennepin County will not place MRT signage without a bike facility in the area. MN-MRPC discussion and input on this topic could be requested in the future. The Lowry Bridge will be opening soon, which is great news. The Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership held a Riverfront Vitality Summit on July 26, with 160 people in attendance. Top priorities identified at the Summit: riverfront parks and trails; private investment along the river; and increasing riverside venues (restaurants, etc.). A team will be meeting on August 29 to give feedback on draft vitality indicators. Minneapolis has received funding to do a health impact assessment, which will help guide redevelopment of an industrial area along the upper Mississippi riverfront in Minneapolis. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will be revising its park plans over the next 18 months.

Hastings to Iowa Border: Sheronne Mulry encouraged all to attend the 5th Anniversary Event at the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, September 29 – 30. She is working with Don Frerichs on activities in Minnesota related to the National MRPC Foundation, including a recent planning meeting with Frerichs, Andy Golfis and Al Quie. A variety of articles and promotional items from the region were available for review. Frac sand mining is the topic of several of the articles. A Mississippi River fold out historical map was shown, and is being considered for a reprint by a local shop.

Explore Minnesota Tourism: Cheryl Offerman reported that Explore Minnesota Tourism is focusing on promoting the Great River Road in 2013, the 75th anniversary of the byway. This will include a cover feature on a travel guide and travel ideas along the river. All were reminded to encourage others to enter attractions into the Explore Minnesota database. An industry meeting will be held on September 6 to gather input. The Mississippi Queen will be on the river again this fall, offering trips stopping in St. Paul, Red Wing, Wabasha and Winona.

Minnesota Historical Society: David Kelliher discussed exhibits, information and activities related to the 150th Anniversary of the US-Dakota War of 1862. The exhibit at the Minnesota History Center has been busy and hopefully all have had a chance to see it.

Department of Natural Resources: Keith Parker and Cynthia Wheeler reported. U.S. Secretary of the Interior Salazar was here last week and joined DNR Commissioner Landwehr and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Superintendent Labovitz on a boat tour of the Mississippi. Take a Day OFF (Outdoor Family Fun) on the Mississippi was held in Stearns County on August 11 with 1,300 people in attendance. Discussions have been taking place regarding Pool 2 and the state's jurisdiction on permitting, island mitigation and possible dredging. The Emerald Ash Borer has now been found near Fort Snelling. DNR is working collaboratively on a joint powers agreement to receive proposals on development of the Upper Post. A sculpture made of material pulled from the Mississippi will be on display at the Minnesota State Fair, and will then go to the DNR Central Region Headquarters. The

Mississippi Whitewater Park will not be moving forward due to lack of priority and funding at both the state and national levels. Other options are being looked at and Cynthia Wheeler is meeting with partners to discuss. Cordelia Pierson suggested consideration of the water trail to provide improved canoe access in Minneapolis.

Department of Transportation: Frank Pafko and Carol Zoff reported. Several topics were mentioned earlier in the meeting including the Visual Resource Protection Plan, Great River Road Interpretive Panels and frac sand mining. Work continues on the historic wayside restorations. Phase II of the Burns Avenue Overlook project (redeveloping pavement, storm sewers, automatic gate) began last week and will be complete by the end of September. The Reno Springs restoration project will not include the well itself, due to no bids received for well development. Overall, four restoration projects remain in progress.

Next Meeting

November 29, 2012
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building 500 North

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
3rd Quarter Meeting – August 23, 2012
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Room 500 North

DRAFT AGENDA

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| 2:30 p.m. | Welcome & Introductions | S. Johnson |
| 2:35 p.m. | Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 5/24/12 | S. Johnson/All |
| 2:40 p.m. | Great River Road Visual Resource Protection Plan Project <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Project Overview- MN-MRPC Involvement | Kate Schwarzler &
Geoff Brady, Otak
Susan Overson, MNRRA |
| 3:10 p.m. | Commission Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- FY '13 Preliminary Budget | S. Johnson/Miller/All |
| 3:20 p.m. | National MRPC Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- MRPC Board- 2012 Annual Meeting – Sept 27 – 29, Louisville, KY- MN-MRPC Annual Report- GRR Interpretive Centers – Winona County History Center Nomination- Reports from National Committees: Culture & Heritage, ERA, Marketing, Transportation | S. Johnson
S. Johnson
Handout
Miller
Committee Members |
| 3:45 p.m. | Old Business - Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CMP Grant - Progress Update, Special MN-MRPC Meeting- Frac Sand Mining- Great River Road Interpretive Panels- 2012 National Scenic Byway Grants Funded | Zoff/Miller
S. Johnson/Zoff
Zoff
Miller |
| 4:05 p.m. | New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Great Northern Transmission Line- Proposed Motorized Trail – Cuyuna Lakes Area- Journal for America's Byways – June Edition- Reprint of Minnesota Great River Road Map/Travel Planner- Minnesota Great River Road Website Statistics | Schaubach
Schaubach
Copies Available
Miller
Miller |
| 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- National Park Service/MNRRA | Lucachick
Schaubach
Samp
Pierson
Mulry
Huginin
A. Johnson/Offerman
Kajer/Kelliher
Parker/Wheeler
Pafko/Zoff
Labovitz |
| 5:00 p.m. | Wrap Up and Adjourn | |



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
2nd Quarter Meeting
May 24, 2012
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
Mark Anderson – At-Large Member
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border
Adam Johnson – Explore MN Tourism Appointee
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee
Keith Parker – Natural Resources Appointee

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

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

Rep. Branden Petersen
Sen. David Senjem
Sen. Patricia Torres-Ray
Keith Parker – Natural Resources Appointee
Jim Lucachick – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

Carol Zoff – Transportation
Cynthia Wheeler – Natural Resources
Paul Labovitz - NPS

Others Present

Don Frerichs

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 11/17/11 and 2/16/12 Meetings

Motion by Frank Pafko and seconded by Andrea Hart-Kajer to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried. Minutes from 11/17/11 and 2/16/12 meetings were reviewed. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Frank Pafko to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Commission Business

Election of Officers: Karl Samp, Chair of the Organization Work Group, opened nominations for Chair of the MN-MRPC. Frank Pafko made a motion to nominate Sheldon Johnson for the position of Chair, seconded by John Schaubach. After a final call for additional names, nominations were closed and motion carried. Rep. Johnson then called for Vice-Chair nominations. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Frank Pafko to nominate Sheronne Mulry for the position of Vice-Chair. Nominations were closed and motion carried. Rep. Johnson called for nominations for Treasurer. Motion by Andrea Hart-Kajer and seconded by Karl Samp to nominate Mark Anderson for the position of Treasurer. Nominations were closed and motion carried.

Status of RFP Process for Commission Management/Marketing Contract: Karl Samp reported that three proposals were received in response to the RFP. The Organization Work Group met to review proposals and recommends accepting the proposal submitted by The Odyssey Group. After discussion, motion by Sheronne Mulry and seconded by John Schaubach to accept the proposal from The Odyssey Group. Motion carried. The Organization Work Group also recommends that the selected management/marketing contractor be given the title of Director of the MN-MRPC, to help clarify the role as the Commission moves forward. Motion by Sheronne Mulry and seconded by Andrea Hart-Kajer to approve the title of Director as recommended. Motion carried.

Finance Report: A report including budget for the year and expenditures through 5/7/12 was included in the handout packet. After discussion, motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Mark Anderson to approve the finance report. Motion carried.

National MRPC Updates

Strategic Planning Meeting: Karl Samp and Carol Zoff reported on the National MRPC Strategic Planning Meeting, held on March 30 in St. Louis. They referred to the notes in the handout packets and

discussed the new goal of mobilizing technology, along with a strengthened vision and mission intended to empower all state commissions. The inclusion of multi-modal opportunities in the river corridor, including partnership with MRT Inc., was also mentioned. The meeting notes will be converted into a strategic plan format and input has been requested. A suggestion was made to spell out ERA (Environment, Recreation and Agriculture) Committee name, as well as spelling out all acronyms when used for the first time.

2012 Annual Meeting: The MRPC 2012 Annual Meeting will be held September 27 – 29 in Louisville, Kentucky. Registration information has not yet been released. MN-MRPC members were asked to indicate interest by emailing or calling the MN-MRPC office. A list will then be forwarded to the Chair for consideration based on available budget. Priorities include members who have not attended in the past, and members of national committees. Carol Zoff will attend with costs covered by MnDOT. Rep. Johnson encouraged members to consider this opportunity with a goal of sending four people. Sheronne Mulry, Andrea Hart-Kajer and Karl Samp indicated interested.

Culture and Heritage Committee: Sheronne Mulry did not have a report but continues to serve as Co-Chair.

Environment, Recreation and Agriculture Committee: Karl Samp reported on efforts to promote agritourism along the Great River Road; and Google Mapping workshops.

Transportation Committee: Carol Zoff reported for the committee, which met prior to the Strategic Planning Meeting and discussed the new transportation bill and future of scenic byways. The National Scenic Byway designations will remain but funding eligibility categories will likely be reduced. Frank Pafko discussed additional details of the transportation bill: another continuing resolution has been passed which will run until fiscal year end; action on a new bill will be needed prior to the election; America's Byways Resource Center has been eliminated; both House and Senate versions of a new bill eliminate National Scenic Byways as a separate funding source but retain the designation and eligibility for enhancement funding; there will be increased competition with other programs/projects. Sources of information on bill status include MnDOT and the National Scenic Byway Foundation website (www.nsbfoundation.com). Carol Zoff described the MRPC's effort to provide information to decision makers including sending two people to Washington DC to share details on completed projects and benefits to communities.

Marketing Committee: Chris Miller reported. New 10-state Great River Road maps have been printed and received by each state, please contact the MN-MRPC office for copies; a subcommittee will be convened to plan for the Great River Road 75th Anniversary (Sheronne Mulry indicated interest); a Facebook contest will be held asking people to submit photos and their favorite food related places along the river; prizes will be needed for the contest such as non-perishable food and food related items, cookbooks etc.; thank you to the Minnesota Historical Society for their donation.

Events Attended

John Schaubach reported on the G4 Upper Mississippi River Gathering held on March 30 in Walker. Information on the Corridor Management Plan project was presented to the group which included members of the Mississippi Headwaters Board and partners from counties and organizations in the region. The St. Paul Great River Gathering was held on May 10, with Sheldon Johnson, Carol Zoff, Adam Johnson and Cordelia Pierson in attendance. Special thanks to the National Park Service for providing exhibit space! Cynthia Wheeler and Carol Zoff attended "Challenges and Choices" at Hamline University and reported that information was targeted at engaging young people in river issues. On May 19, an event was held at the DNR's Central Region Office on Warner Road in St. Paul, with a variety of outdoor activities along the river and nearly 500 people in attendance.

Upcoming Events

Cordelia Pierson announced the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership's "Riverfront Vitality Summit & Celebration" to be held on July 26. Don Shelby will be the moderator. The Department of Natural Resources is co-sponsoring a National Get Outdoors Day event at Powderhorn Park in Minneapolis on June 9. Karl Samp mentioned the Little Falls Dam Festival, June 15 – 17 including a bike ride from Little Falls Dam to Blanchard Dam. Adam Johnson noted the River's Edge Music Festival at Harriet Island on June 23 – 24 with 40,000 people expected.

Old Business – Corridor Management Plan (CMP) Project Update

Carol Zoff and Chris Miller shared information on progress. An agreement and related documentation to access the matching funds from the National Park Service are still in process but should be completed soon. After that is finalized, work can begin and project expenses incurred. Greg Hubinger shared concerns related to the size of the project as compared to regular MN-MRPC operations. Response was that a revised project timeline should assist in breaking down the project (copy included in handout packet); and that Commission and work group efforts will need to focus most attention on the CMP project moving forward. The work plan from the grant application was included in the handout packet as reference, along with the revised timeline. The project includes both development of a new Corridor Management Plan for the Minnesota Great River Road to guide activities for the next 10 – 15 years; and a visitor information initiative for the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) including route signage, community information kiosks, route maps and electronic communication. Carol Zoff explained that one of the first activities under the grant will be development of a database/map of resources. A project management team has been convened, responsible for detailed planning and oversight of the grant. Membership includes representatives from MN-MRPC work groups, LCC, MnDOT, MRT and National Park Service. The team will be meeting on May 29. Agenda will focus on updates related to the project and discussion of items to be included in the resource database. A main objective will be to utilize sources of data that are already available, as much as possible, as well as partnering with related initiatives. One of those is the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership's economic impact matrix. Cordelia Pierson provided background on the project which involves key partners including the City of Minneapolis and Minnesota Department of Health.

There was discussion on how MN-MRPC members and work groups will be involved in the CMP project. Carol Zoff mentioned the importance of local meetings/visits up and down the river as part of the process. Karl Samp talked about this being a great opportunity to build closer links to local communities and also allow those local communities to build on plans they have developed.

Members requested a special Commission Meeting to focus on the Corridor Management Plan project. Fall was selected as the timeframe for this meeting, possibly late October. A river location was requested with options including Mill City Museum, McKnight Foundation or Minneapolis Watershed Management Organization. Information on possible dates and locations will be sent out to members from the MN-MRPC office as plans are made.

New Business – Mapping Community Assets Workshops

Karl Samp shared information on a workshop in Bemidji on June 6, through the Bemidji Chamber of Commerce and University of Minnesota Extension. A similar workshop was held on April 27 in Sauk Rapids, and planning is underway for sessions in Grand Rapids southeastern Minnesota.

Marketing Work Group

Hospitality training, itinerary development and return on investment measures still remain to be completed under the current marketing grant. A Marketing Work Group conference call will be scheduled to discuss plans for those items along with a possible reprint of the Minnesota Great River Road Map/Travel Planner.

Agency and Regional Updates

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: John Schaubach referenced the G4 Upper Mississippi River Gathering mentioned earlier in the meeting. Also, the Mississippi Northwoods Heritage Complex was included in passed legislation for Legacy Funding. This project will result in 2,000+ acres of property being available for public use, and connected to trails and other open space in the area. The Commission was thanked for their support.

Brainerd to Elk River: Karl Samp reported that the Brainerd-Baxter Mississippi River Planning Group met again recently. They would like to move forward with initiatives but lack funding and are looking for opportunities to partner.

Elk River to Hastings: Cordelia Pierson discussed items related to the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area's Alternative Transportation Plan, including an event launching new Nice Ride bicycle

stations in St. Paul on June 4. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is looking at planning for improved access to the river and a continuous trail running on both sides of the river. Businesses are often not aware of the Mississippi River Trail and Great River Road, which presents an opportunity for marketing and public information activities. It is an important time for discussions on Asian Carp and overall changes to the waterfront. Meet Minneapolis has branded itself "City by Nature" and the Downtown Council is working on drawing 21st century visitors to the riverfront.

Explore Minnesota Tourism: Adam Johnson reported on a river event held last night for an effort called "Active America China" designed to showcase Twin Cities area attractions to visitors from China and representatives from other United States cities. He also reminded the group about the Rivers Edge Music Festival which will draw many visitors to Harriet Island and is projected to grow over the coming years.

Minnesota Historical Society: David Kelliher announced that this time of year brings the unofficial kick-off of the season for historical sites. The funding request for capital improvements at the Oliver Kelley Farm did not make it through the legislature this year, but the Commission was thanked for their support. A brochure describing activities related to the 150th anniversary of the U.S. - Dakota War of 1862 are at the printer and will be distributed soon. Information is also available on the Minnesota Historical Society website. Historic Fort Snelling is undertaking strategic planning for the future of the site. The Mill City Museum will again offer many summer events, including opera – new this year.

Department of Natural Resources: Keith Parker and Cynthia Wheeler shared details on several topics. Take a Day OFF* (*Outdoor Family Fun) will be held in the St. Cloud area on August 11. DNR partners on this event with Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District and other local partners. A variety of free activities are provided along the river. 1,500 people participated in 2011. Brochures on the State Parks "I Can" program were distributed – options include I Can Camp and I Can Fish. DNR is working with St. Cloud, Sartell and Sauk Rapids on a draw down on the Mississippi's St. Cloud pool, and working with shoreline management in Sartell. Enforcement efforts statewide have been stepped up to minimize the spread of aquatic invasive species. Discussions are taking place with counties and local governments regarding collaborative management of state owned lands.

Department of Transportation: Carol Zoff reported that a student worker has been assisting with the Great River Road Interpretive Panel Project, and funds are being secured to hire a graphic artist to finalize designs for the panels. The panels will be placed at Itasca State Park, Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area in St. Cloud, Mendota, and New Albin. The project is funded by a National Scenic Byways grant. Four historic wayside restorations are in the final phase of design, and phase II of the restoration project for the Burns Avenue Overlook will be underway soon which will include automatic gates. Work has been taking place to get the CMP Grant up and running. MnDOT is working on a long range plan called MnGO that could incorporate Great River Road CMP information. Frank Pafko reported on a series of bridge projects including: Lafayette and Hastings bridges under construction; I-90 bridge at Dresbach in final design; Winona bridge in project development and likely to include rehabilitation of the main span with new approaches; and Red Wing scoping just recently started. Future inner city passenger rail between the Twin Cities and Milwaukee would route along the Mississippi. There are also discussions on possible addition of a second Amtrak train coming into the Twin Cities. Pafko also announced his recent retirement from MnDOT, and noted that he will continue with the Commission until a successor is appointed.

National Park Service: Paul Labovitz reported on the Partner Paddle held to kick off the season for the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure (UWCA) program. The 72-mile stretch of river in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) was recently designated as the 2nd National Water Trail in the United States. Nice Ride will be adding 32 stations along the river, related to MNRRA's Alternative Transportation Plan. The National Park Service is asking recreational boaters to voluntarily avoid use of the locks to reduce incidence of invasive species upstream. Also, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is no longer allowing the Minneapolis Queen to use the locks. Fathers' Day weekend will feature a birding festival with events along the river. Friends of the Mississippi River will be holding the "Mississippi River Challenge" July 27-29, with the paddling event to begin on the Minnesota River this year. On June 13 an event will be held to highlight restoration plans for the Coldwater Site, with project completion scheduled for early fall. This property connects Minnehaha Park to Fort Snelling and will result in 100 acres of open space owned by various agencies. Information on MNRRA/National Park Service and Wilderness Inquiry

events is available at www.nos.gov/miss and www.wildernessinquiry.org. In addition, all Commission members were invited to contact Paul Labovitz if interested in a boat or canoe experience on the Mississippi.

Hastings to Iowa Border: Sheronne Mulry referenced her written report distributed at the meeting and included at the end of this document).

Resolution on Frac Sand Mining

Sheronne Mulry provided information in her report, and the Commission has received a letter (which was distributed in the meeting packet) from Kristen Eide-Tollefson of Florence Township, Goodhue County, asking for assistance. Silica sand mining operations have been rapidly expanding in bluff country along the Mississippi in Wisconsin, and are moving into Minnesota. Concerns include the potential for irreparable damage to the intrinsic qualities of the scenic byway, water and air quality issues, and road safety. Members discussed the request for Commission assistance/action and a variety of issues related to the subject. The Wisconsin MRPC has passed a resolution that was sent to county commissioners, requesting that counties and local governments establish moratoria until adequate research has been done and procedures established to protect resources. There was discussion on the role of the MN-MRPC which is to preserve, promote and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River Valley. Members advised a focus on the intrinsic qualities of the byway, cumulative effects in the region, and general caution related to new development to ensure that potential impacts are adequately studied. After discussion, the Commission's recommendation was to send a letter to the Governor regarding the Commission's position on this topic. Frank Pafko, Keith Parker, Paul Labovitz, and David Kelliher offered to assist. Cumulative impact to the byway was noted as the top concern.

National MRPC Endowment

Representative Johnson introduced Don Frerichs, past member of the MN-MRPC and currently on the National MRPC Endowment Committee. A history of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission was shared for distribution to the MN-MRPC, and mention was made of the many accomplishments of the group over the years. The National Mississippi River Parkway Commission has created a foundation to help ensure continuation of this important work. A fundraising effort is underway with a goal of reaching \$500,000. Four levels of giving have been defined – founders, legacy, sustaining and member. Brochures were distributed. MN-MRPC members were asked to make a donation commitment and to share the information with others. Endowment brochures and Great River Road brochures/maps are available for presentations. Don Frerichs and Andy Golfis would be willing to assist as needed. Members are asked to contact the MN-MRPC office if able to help on this effort.

Next Meeting

August 23, 2012

2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

State Office Building 500 North

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.



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," Hirsh 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.

Allotment of FY 13 Funds

Legal Citation: ML 2011 Ch 10, Art 1, Sec 2, Subd 4 (approp to LCC). General Funds/1000 Fund

FY: COMMISSION NAME:

AMOUNT:

2013	Mississippi River Parkway Commission Operations (MRPC)	63,000
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Object

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	
41000	Full-time	
41030	Part-time, Seasonal, Labor Services	
41070	Other Benefits	3,000
41100	Space Rental, Maintenance, and Utilities - Non-State Owned Space	
41110	Printing & Advertising	1,000
41130	Professional and Technical Services - Outside Vendor	28,800
41145	IT Professional and Technology - Outside Vendor Services	
41150	Computer and Systems Services	1,000
41155	Communications	700
41160	Travel & Subsistence - Instate	4,000
41170	Travel & Subsistence - Outstate	9,000
41180	Employee Development	
41190	Agency Provided Prof/Tech Service	
41300	Supplies	500
41500	Repairs to Equipment and Furniture	
42010	Statewide Indirect Costs	
43000	Other Operating Costs	15,000
47060	Equipment	
TOTAL*		63,000

**Total must be equal to:*

63,000



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission

2011-12 Annual Report

July 2012



300 33rd Ave S, Suite 101, Waite Park, MN 56387 • 651-341-4196 • www.MnMississippiRiver.com

Mission

The mission of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota 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. The Commission is organized and guided by Minnesota Statute 161.1419.

Quarterly Meetings of the Full Commission

The MN-MRPC held four full Commission meetings between July 2011 and July 2012 - August 18, 2011; November 17, 2011; February 16, 2012; and May 24, 2012. Each meeting included updates from regional citizen Commissioners and state agencies. Work is carried out by the full Commission along with four work groups – Capital Improvement; Economic Development; Marketing; and Organization.

Projects & Activities

Great River Road Corridor Management Planning and Implementation

The Commission was awarded a 2011 National Scenic Byways Grant for Corridor Management Planning and Implementation. 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, current conditions will be evaluated and strategies developed addressing livability, changes in personal/global economies, intrinsic resource protection, multi-national culture, multi-modal transportation, context sensitive solutions, and technology. The project will also implement a current CMP key strategy - signing the Mississippi River Bicycle Trail (MRT) statewide. Partners include the MN-MRPC, MnDOT, National Park Service, Minnesota Legislative Coordinating Commission, and Trust for Public Land. Required matching funds are being provided by the National Park Service. A Project Management Team has been convened, responsible for detailed planning and oversight of the project. First tasks will likely include development of a GIS inventory/database of Great River Road resources and a stakeholder communication system to be used during the planning process and for future implementation. The Corridor Management Plan will include an inventory and map of GRR resources; confirmed Great River Road Storybook content and locations; route assessment and recommendations; visitor impressions and analysis of visitor needs; corridor development strategies; byway organization business plan; and communications/public relations plan. The MRT implementation portion of the project includes signage; community information kiosks, maps and electronic traveler information. This will be a multi-year project carried out in phases, with completion tentatively planned for June 2015. A project overview sheet is attached.

Great River Road Videos

The Commission released a series of Minnesota Great River Road videos in January 2012. Videos are available on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/mnmississippiriver/>, or via a link on the Minnesota Great River Road website, www.mnmississippiriver.com. Seven videos were developed, one for each of the six destination areas, as well as one overview video for the full length of the Minnesota Great River Road. The videos highlight unique features and attractions while telling the story of the Great River Road. MN-MRPC Regional Commissioners and the MN-MRPC Marketing Work Group determined content. Hard Working Pictures of St. Paul produced the videos, which were promoted via email to stakeholder lists and also distributed on DVD to tourism information sites along the river. The project was funded by National Scenic Byways and Minnesota Tourism grants.

Great River Road Regional Meetings

Great River Road Regional Meetings were held around the state during the year - one in June 2011, two in September 2011, and two in December 2011. Stakeholders and partners from the regions were invited and agendas consisted of updates on Great River Road and related initiatives, gathering of input and updates from the region, and election of MN-MRPC Regional Commissioners to new four-year terms. Votes were accepted at the meetings or electronically for those unable to attend. Three Regional Commissioners were re-elected, and the Commission welcomed two new Regional Commissioners. Two of the regional meetings were held in conjunction with the Mississippi River Forums held by the National Park Service. Great

River Road meetings began immediately after the Forums in an effort to expand audiences for both meetings.

Member Elections and Agency Appointments

Regional Commission members were elected as noted above, and state agencies were asked to confirm or change their appointments to the Commission as needed. The Commission also voted to establish a new technical member position on the MN-MRPC, to be filled by the Superintendent of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area or his/her designee. A new member orientation session was provided in conjunction with the February Commission meeting.

Great River Road Visual Resource Protection Plan Project

A National Scenic Byways grant was received by the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) for this effort. The project will create a Visual Resource Protection Plan for Minnesota's Great River Road that will serve as a prototype for protecting visual resources in the byway's six destination areas, one of which is the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area where the project will take place. The plan will 1) develop a methodology to preserve high quality scenic resources along the byway, many of which are threatened by urban development; 2) identify opportunities to enhance the byway traveler's visual experience; and 3) identify new scenic resource viewing opportunities along the byway. The project is a partnership between the National Park Service, Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission, and MnDOT. During FY '12, a contractor was selected, project kick off meetings were held with partners, and the project approach and process were developed. The project will rely heavily on public input to help identify specific views and volunteer involvement (including MN-MRPC members) to participate in a scientific process to classify and rate the views. Completion is tentatively scheduled for June 2013. The process and results will be utilized in Corridor Management Planning for the full length of the Minnesota Great River Road.

Community Asset Mapping Workshops

The Commission partnered with University of Minnesota Extension to offer and promote workshops to assist local Great River Road communities in establishing and strengthening their presence on electronic maps to better reach today's travelers using mobile devices. Participants received free training to learn about digital mapping technology, why it is important, and how to share points of interest with the world. A sample flyer is attached. Commissioner Karl Samp led the efforts.

Interpretive Panels

The Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors is partnering with the MN-MRPC on the interpretive panels to be placed at New Albin, near the Iowa border. MSPS donated funds to assist with the cost, and are assisting with content. This partnership supplements the National Scenic Byways Grant currently managed by the Commission for placement of Great River Road interpretive panels in several locations along the river. Plans are also underway to place panels at Itasca State Park, Bemidji, St. Cloud, and Mendota locations. Draft panel layouts have been developed and a sample is attached. These are in addition to the first set of completed panels, placed last year at the Highway 371 Travel Information Center in Brainerd. The full project will result in an estimated 24 panels at six sites, utilizing stories developed for the Minnesota Great River Road Interpretive Plan.

Historic Roadside Property Restorations

Eight of twelve planned restorations have been completed, funded by a state appropriation targeted toward restoration of Great River Road wayside properties on or eligible for National Historic Register status. Work was delayed in the summer of 2011 due to a shutdown of state government. Planning and contracting has been proceeding for the final four restoration projects with completion scheduled for 2013.

National Scenic Byways Conference

The MN-MRPC was a byway sponsor at this event, held August 21 - 24 in Minneapolis. It provided a perfect opportunity to showcase the Great River Road. Commission members hosted a field workshop on historic property restorations along the Great River Road, visiting the Burns Avenue Overlook (St. Paul) and Sibley Pioneer Church Memorial (Mendota). Partners from MnDOT and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area provided a mobile workshop on the Mississippi River Bicycle Trail (MRT). Several Commission members also attended the conference and staffed the Great River Road exhibit.

GRR Route/Signage Review

In preparation for the Visual Resource Protection Plan and Corridor Management Planning projects, representatives from the MN-MRPC and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area drove and reviewed the Elk River to Hastings Destination Area route and signage in December of 2011. Several signage recommendations were made and differences in seasonal views were noted as an important consideration. GRR Pilot Wheel way showing signs were fabricated and delivered during the year to Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Crow Wing County, and Brainerd-Baxter.

Road and Bridge Projects

MnDOT continues work on several Mississippi River bridge projects along the Great River Road

and provides regular updates to the MN-MRPC. Projects include – Lafayette (St. Paul) and Hastings bridges currently under construction; I-90 Dresbach bridge in final design phase; Winona bridge in project development and likely to include rehabilitation of the historic main span with new approaches; and scoping process just beginning for the new Red Wing bridge.

Resource Protection - CapX2020

CapX 2020 is a high voltage transmission line project involving several routes across Minnesota, three of which will impact the Great River Road. Activity during 2011-12 focused on the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse transmission route which will include a Mississippi River crossing and impacts to the Great River Road in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. The MN-MRPC monitored information from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and provided comment on the Federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement issued by USDA Rural Development. The National MRPC resolution was included with the MN-MRPC's letter.

Resource Protection - Silica Sand Mining

A Great River Road stakeholder contacted the MN-MRPC regarding concerns resulting from rapid expansion of silica (frac) sand mining near the Great River Road in Wisconsin and Minnesota. After discussing the issue, the Commission requested a study of potential impacts of silica sand mining to the Great River Road and Mississippi River, including: landscape and cultural resource degradation; increased road and bridge pressures and potential damage; road and shoulder safety; pedestrian and bicycle conflicts; air and water quality; noise; reduced tourism activity and related economic losses; and cumulative impacts on the Great River Road National Scenic Byway. Such a study would provide consistent information to be used by the various jurisdictions involved in decision making. The letter was sent to the Governor and copied to counties, cities and townships in the Bluffs Region of the Minnesota Great River Road.

Mississippi River Bicycle Trail (MRT)

The MN-MRPC and MnDOT continue to partner on efforts to fully implement and promote the MRT. Commission members participated in MRT regional meetings. An MRT update was included on the agenda for each Great River Road Regional Meeting held during the year. A status and route update was provided at the February 16 MN-MRPC meeting by Liz Walton of MnDOT. Ms. Walton also serves on the Project Management Team for the MN-MRPC's National Scenic Byways Corridor Management Planning and Implementation Grant. The grant will provide MRT signage, information kiosks, maps and electronic information for travelers. 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, Google Maps, and a marketing toolbox. A Minnesota MRT overview is attached.

2012 State Legislative Session/Great River Road Highlights

Mississippi Northwoods Habitat Complex

Funding was approved by the legislature for purchase of this nearly 2,000 acre parcel of land with 2.5+ miles of Mississippi River frontage northeast of Brainerd. The MN-MRPC provided a letter of support for this important effort and MN-MRPC Commissioner John Schaubach serves on the leadership team for this project. A fact sheet is attached.

Mississippi River Trail State Bikeway Designation

The MRT was officially designated as Minnesota's first state bikeway, through legislation passed on May 7, 2012 and signed shortly thereafter by the Governor. The Mississippi River Trail utilizes shouldered highways, low use roads and available off-road paths to guide bicyclists along one of the world's most significant Rivers throughout the state to provide over 800 miles of bicycle opportunity.

Funding/Great River Road Investments

The Minnesota Great River Road and its amenities are supported by several funding sources, including those managed by the MN-MRPC as listed below (state operating budget, FHWA and state grants) and those managed by related organizations (other scenic byways, partner organizations such as the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, State of Minnesota, etc.).

State Operating Budget

The MN-MRPC operated with state funding at levels allowing the Commission to proceed with most priorities. State operating funding for FY '12 was \$63,000.

Federal Highway Administration Grants

- Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management Planning & Implementation (\$560,000) - Grant work will begin in fiscal year 2013.
- Minnesota Great River Road National Scenic Byway Marketing (\$43,000) - Remaining projects remaining include hospitality training and group travel planning. 92% of the grant has been utilized to date with completion scheduled during fiscal year 2013.
- Great River Road Corridor Management Plan Implementation (\$25,000) - This is the fifth in a series of five Corridor Management "Seed" Grants. Regional meetings, public relations, in-state and out-of-state travel for Commissioners and staff are included. Grant activities were completed in 2011-12.
- Minnesota Great River Road Interpretive Panels, Phase 1 (\$50,000) - This project will place a series of interpretive signs in various Minnesota Great River Road destination areas. Sign holders have been fabricated, pilot signs were designed, ordered, produced and placed at the Highway 371 Travel Information Center in Brainerd, and plans are underway for placement at five additional sites. The Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors has donated funds to assist with the project at one of those sites. 25% of the grant funds have been utilized to date.

State Grants

Explore Minnesota Tourism (\$2,500) Funds provided match to the National Scenic Byways Marketing Grant, for development of Minnesota Great River Road videos.

2012 National Scenic Byways Grant Program

Three grants were submitted by local partners for Great River Road projects. The MN-MRPC provided letters of support for 1) Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge – creation of an Education Station for visitors; 2) Aitkin County – paving and addition of shoulders on gravel section of Great River Road and 3) Dakota County – multimodal wayside rest and trailhead project. The Commission also sent letters to Congress regarding importance of the NSB program and maintaining designation and funding eligibility as well as provided information to National Office for their efforts in Washington.

Local & Regional Activities and Amenity Development

- **Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership** - The Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership is launching the Riverfront Vitality Indicators Project, in partnership with the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). This initiative will report on indicators of revitalization: healthy ecosystem; exceptional parks and trails, world-class history and culture; and vital, livable communities. The partnership project will inform private and public decisions affecting diverse, challenged neighborhoods of North and Northeast Minneapolis and the city's entire 15.5 miles of riverfront. This report may provide a model for other waterfront cities facing challenging choices about public and private investments. Cordelia Pierson, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership, is a member of the MN-MRPC, representing the Elk River to Hastings Region.
- **Mississippi National River and Recreation Area: Alternative Transportation Plan** – The goal of this plan is to increase visitation to national park without increasing congestion, via a multi-modal transportation system. Implementation includes installation of 32 new "Nice Ride" bike stations along the Mississippi. A kick off ride event was held on June 4. Park Superintendent Paul Labovitz serves as a technical advisor to the Commission.
- **National Water Trail Designation** – The 72 miles of river within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area was designated as the 2nd National Water Trail in the United States.
- **Coldwater Site Restoration** – The National Park Service is restoring this 27 acre parcel to a park setting between Fort Snelling and Minnehaha Park. The project will result in 100 acres of connected open space owned by various agencies.
- **Brainerd-Baxter Mississippi River Revitalization Project** – This group applied for and is receiving assistance from the National Park Service's Parks and Trails Program as they move forward with plans for the Brainerd-Baxter area. MN-MRPC Commissioner Karl Samp serves on the committee.
- **St. Cloud Area** – "Mississippi Partners" was established in 2012 to champion implementation of the recently completed urban river plan by prioritizing, educating, marketing/promoting, advocating, and fundraising for future river initiatives. Committee membership consists of active representatives from area cities and counties, environmental organizations, local businesses, and other river stakeholders meeting quarterly to spur greater interest, support, and leadership in riverfront projects. The City of St. Cloud received an award for Excellence in Community Engagement from the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association.
- **Take a Day OFF* (Outdoor Family Fun) on the Mississippi** - This annual event at Stearns County Mississippi River Park is organized by Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District, Minnesota DNR Benton County. St. Cloud State University and several other local partners. 1,300 people participated in the August 13, 2011 event. Free activities included fishing, river rides, archery, river education, nature hikes, kayaking, canoeing, kids games, native plantings, nature art, river shore landscaping, know your duck, and family picnics.

- **Cuyuna Lakes Mountain Bike Trail** – This new world class trail, located within the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area, is attracting both visitors and attention. The trail is considered a model by the International Mountain Bike Association and has been featured in the Wall Street Journal.
- **Mississippi Headwaters Board** – The Headwaters Board, a joint powers board involving the first eight counties along the Mississippi River, published its newly updated guidebook. The guide is available at <http://mississippiheadwaters.org>.
- **Upper Mississippi Gatherings** - The third and fourth gatherings in this series were held during 2011-12, convened by the Initiative Foundation, Mississippi Headwaters Board and Trust for Public Land, focused on bringing together partners and initiatives along the first 400 miles of the river. MN-MRPC members have participated in and presented at these meetings and look forward to continuing.

Membership

The MN-MRPC is organized by state statute to include:

(2) Members of the House of Representatives

(2) Members of the Senate

(5) Members of State Agencies - (1) appointed by each: DNR, Mn/DOT, Historical Society, Agriculture & Tourism

(5) Regional Members – (1) from each of the Great River Road regions established by statute

(1) Member-At-Large – appointed by the other 14

New members welcomed over the past year: Keith Parker, Natural Resource Appointee; Paul Hugunin, Agriculture Appointee; Jim Lucachick, Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids Region; Cordelia Pierson, Elk River to Hastings Region; and Senator Patricia Torres-Ray. Thank you to outgoing Commissioners Paul Labovitz, Jack Frost, Greg Murray, Charlie Poster and Senator Sandra Pappas for their service to the MN-MRPC.

This report is respectfully submitted on July 30, 2012.

Rep. Sheldon Johnson, MN-MRPC Chair

Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management & Implementation Plan

June 2012 Summary



This project will develop a Great River Road Corridor Management Plan to guide the work of Minnesota's Mississippi River Parkway Commission and their byway partners for the next 10 years. The Commission will evaluate current and projected future conditions to develop strategies that:



- enhance livability in Mississippi River communities (see principles below),
- increase tourism economic benefits including target marketing to increase length of stay and revisitation
- enrich travelers' byway experience by updating and implementing the interpretive plan
- protect intrinsic resources via GIS database & applying NPS/MNRRRA Visual Resource Protection Plan,
- integrate multi-modal transportation by applying the NPS/MNRRRA Alternative Transportation Plan statewide, highlighting the Mississippi River Trail and transit for getting to, and exploration along, the river.
- develop target marketing that recognizes and anticipates changes in personal/global economies,
- embrace and support the multi-national cultures of our river communities and travelers,
- apply context sensitive solution principles to road, trail and resource management and GIS database,
- improve communication with stakeholders and travelers thorough technology, and
- install Mississippi River Trail bikeway signage statewide.

Great River Road Traveler Benefits

This project will expand the traveler's enjoyment of the river's ecological, recreational and cultural resources. Travelers will experience preserved and enhanced intrinsic resources within the context of a working river whose engaging stories they take home. This project will improve Minnesota Mississippi River trip planning and on-the-fly tools for technologically savvy travelers. Authentic and active lifestyles will be promoted with more sustainable and better coordinated transportation choices that get travelers closer to and on the river. Local businesses will learn how to welcome Great River Road travelers and leverage cross promotion of other river businesses and destinations so travelers can return again and again for fun and memorable Minnesota Mississippi River byway experiences that meet their personal needs.

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

- MN Departments of Transportation, Natural Resources, Agriculture, Tourism and Historical Society
- National Park Service (NPS)/Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA),
- Trust for Public Land,
- local/regional river communities, work groups and development foundations,
- National Mississippi River Parkway Commission and Mississippi River Trail Inc., and
- partners with similar missions along the 575-mile length of the Minnesota Great River Road
- Federal Highway Administration



Project funding provided by the Federal Highway Administration and National Park Service.

Livability principles

- **Provide more transportation choices.** Safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices decrease costs, reduce dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce emissions, and improve public health.
- **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through educational opportunities, services, and expanded business access to markets.
- **Support existing communities.** Increase community revitalization, increase the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes the byway celebrates.
- **Coordinate and leverage Federal policies and investment.** Remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth.
- **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

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



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? How easy is it for them to find a place to eat or drink coffee in your community? Can they find the local farmer's market and learn when it's open? Can visitors find your trail heads or the best public beaches?

Mapping Community Assets is an opportunity for people to help their communities while they learn more about digital maps and how these can be used to market businesses, locations, and communities. Participants will receive free training to learn about digital mapping technology, why it is important, and how they can share points of personal or communal interest with the world. Participants will add and update points of interest in their communities on a variety of digital map databases.

Friday, April 27 9-11 a.m.

Sauk Rapids-Rice High School, NW 224, Enter Door 23


Presenter: Adeel Ahmed, UMN Extension

To register contact Sauk Rapids-Rice Community Education Phone: 320-258-1577 or visit
[www. SaukRapidsRiceOnline.org](http://www.SaukRapidsRiceOnline.org)



GREAT RIVER ROAD INTERPRETIVE PANELS

SHERBURNE COUNTY, MINNESOTA



Great River Road

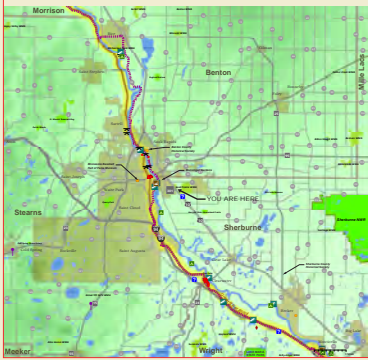
The Mississippi River's National Scenic Byway

One of 150 National Scenic Byways in 46 States, the Great River Road stretches nearly 1,600 miles from the Mississippi River headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minnesota through five river states to the Gulf of Mexico. The Great River Road was developed by the Mississippi River Parkway Planning Commission which was formed in 1938.

Finding Your Way in Minnesota


In Minnesota, the Mississippi River includes diverse ecological and cultural resources along its length. Six distinct destination areas have been developed based on the unique characteristics of the Mississippi as it flows through the state. These destination areas are shown in blue and orange on the Minnesota map below.

Sights to See, Places to Explore in the St. Cloud Area



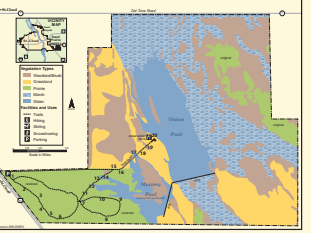
Map Legend

- Great River Road
- Mississippi River Trail
- State Capitol
- Red Area
- Historic Sites
- State Historic Site
- Historic Site
- Wildlife Refuge
- State Park
- City/City Park
- Campground
- Parking Area
- Other
- Chlorine
- State Prison
- State Capitol
- U.S. Highway
- Minnesota Highway



Self-Guided Nature Trail

Welcome to the Sand Prairie Wildlife Management and Environmental Education Area managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, for the conservation of plant and animal resources. A self-guided nature and hiking trail, developed for your enjoyment.



Did You Know...
80 years ago this area was once a coastal lake. The Mississippi River and was drained for reclamation.

Today, native prairie plants reclaim the abandoned fields and make up more than 600 acres of natural wetland, prairie, and native prairie landscape and woods.

Did You Know...
Unlike Minnesota's other 1,200+ wildlife management areas, hunting and trapping is not allowed.

This self-guided, paved trail has various stops, each designated by a numbered wood post. At these stops you can read about Sand Prairie natural features, geology, history, etc.

As you walk, keep your eyes and ears open for signs of prairie wildlife and be mindful of the hundreds of prairie grass and wildflower species that occur here. Sand Prairie is a unique natural area. Please help by not picking or collecting plants and animals, and by not littering on the trail. Please keep your pets leashed. Keep in mind there are no poisonous snakes here, but wood and deer ticks are present in the spring, summer and fall. While we value and promote hunting and trapping, Sand Prairie is closed to these activities to encourage full use of this area for nature observation and hiking year-round.

Did You Know...
Wildlife is with include everything from warblers to woodpeckers in wetland. Frogs, toads, muskrats, turtles, deer, fox, and arrays of butterflies and other insects are among the other wildlife you may come across as you stroll the paved prairie trail and across the backwoods.

Did You Know...
Wildlife is with include everything from warblers to woodpeckers in wetland. Frogs, toads, muskrats, turtles, deer, fox, and arrays of butterflies and other insects are among the other wildlife you may come across as you stroll the paved prairie trail and across the backwoods.



Sand Prairie Fire Management

Generally, prairie burns with the occasional influence of grass and fire. Without such influences, the prairie grasslands would slowly evolve into woodland. Grazing is a natural phenomenon and herbivores, or animals that eat only plants or natural materials, are an important component of the prairie ecosystem.

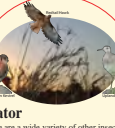
Fire patterns are typically patchy, random, and irregular, depending on wind, temperature, terrain of the land, and the amount of vegetation left by grazing. Historically, fires were set by lightning and American Indians kept the prairie from becoming brush lands and forests. Fire kills the above ground parts of shrubs and small trees. Prairie plants grow more vigorously when built-up plant materials and shade are removed. Spring fire uncovers the soil, so it warms sooner, thus extending the growing season.

Prescribed fire is a carefully planned and controlled fire conducted to manage natural areas such as prairie, oak savanna, wetlands and oak woodlands.




Did You Know...
Today, purple loamseed is a non-native species introduced from Europe for flower gardens, its invasive Minnesota wetlands, choking out many native species.

Did You Know...
For more information about the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, call (763) 388-3323 or visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/sherburne/.



Butterflies, a Prairie Pollinator

The best known pollinators may be bees, but there is a wide variety of other insects and animals that contribute to pollination. Butterflies are diurnal, pollinating a wide variety of flowers that open during the day. They frequent bright and beautiful colored blooms. Butterflies have great color vision and are able to sense more color "wavelengths" than humans, or bees, and unlike bees, butterflies are able to see the color red.



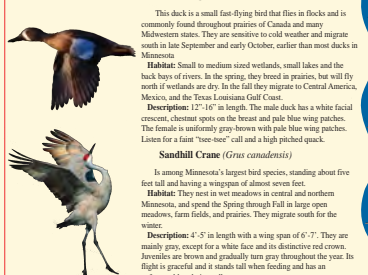
Monarch (*Danais plexippus*)
The monarch is one of the most recognizable and abundant butterflies and was discovered in 1759 by Linnaeus. They eat up staggering amounts of milkweed in the California coast and in central Mexico. At the Mexican winter sites, butterflies will nest in trees and form large aggregations that may have millions of individuals.

Dakota Skipper (*Hesperia dacotae*)
The Dakota skipper is a small butterfly with 1-1.5 wingspans. Scientists have recorded spotting these butterflies from northeast Illinois to southern Saskatchewan. Its current distribution extends the border between tallgrass and mixed grass prairie, covering, with adequate sources of nectar and a quality habitat, females may lay up to 250 eggs.

Ureus Skipper (*Hesperia ureus*)
This butterfly is an extensive one in western North America. In the Canadian prairie south of the U.S. border, it is an isolated population in Saskatchewan. The population is confined to a large complex of sand dunes that make up of dry sand prairie and open barbed wire, dominantly marked prairie areas, and grass. The Ureus Skipper is a small butterfly with a robust body, narrow, angular forewings, and dorsal, more rounded hind wings. Length is 0.5 to 0.7 in.

Royal Freckle (*Speyeria idalia*)
The Royal Freckle was first discovered in 1776 by Drury in Minnesota. The butterfly is strongly associated with areas of open and wet prairie habitat. The adult Royal Freckle is a very powerful flier and is capable of winging widely across the landscape. The butterfly is kept, dominantly marked prairie areas, and grass. The Ureus Skipper is a small butterfly with a robust body, narrow, angular forewings, and dorsal, more rounded hind wings. Length is 0.5 to 0.7 in.

Bird Visitors



Blue-Winged Teal (*Anas discors*)
This duck is a small fast-flying bird that flies in flocks and is commonly found throughout prairie of Canada and many Midwestern states. They are sensitive to cold weather and migrate south in late September and early October, earlier than most ducks in Minnesota.


Habitat: Small to medium sized wetlands, small lakes and the back bays of rivers. In the spring, they breed in prairie, but will fly north if wetlands are dry. In the fall they migrate to Central America, Mexico, and the Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast.

Description: 12-14" in length. The male duck has a white facial crescent, chestnut spots on the breast and pale blue wing patches. The female is uniformly gray-brown with pale blue wing patches. Listen for a "flea" "one" call and a high pitched quack.

Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*)
Is among Minnesota's largest bird species, standing about five feet tall and having a wingspan of almost seven feet.

Habitat: They nest in wet meadows in central and northern Minnesota, and spend the Spring through Fall in large open meadows, farm fields, and prairie. They migrate south for the winter.

Description: 4' to 5' in length with a wing span of 6-7'. They are mainly grey, except for a white face and its distinctive red crown. Juveniles are brown and gradually turn gray throughout the year. Its flight is graceful and it usually tall when feeding and has an unforgettable scolding call.



What Lies Below - Prison Quarry

The Minnesota Legislature voted to construct a reformatory for offenders between sixteen and thirty years old who were seen as medium risk and could be salvaged from a life of crime. The new prison, originally named the Territorial Prison in Stillwater, and the state Reform School in Red Wing.


During the selection process for the prison location legislators agreed that the new facility should be built near one of Minnesota's stone quarries, and the Brown & Young Quarry established in 1868, Minnesota's oldest quarry, was unanimously selected. The site is roughly 240 acres, including 40 acres of usable granite, was chosen not only for the quality and abundance of granite, but also for the availability of land and water and its proximity to transportation. Plans were to teach inmates to quarry, cut, dress, and lay stone.

Johnson designed the administrative building and adjoining cell blocks were designed in the Richardson Romanesque style, which includes massive stonework, arched openings, and bold masonry elements.

One of the most popular elements of the prison is the four-foot thick at the base tapering to three feet wide at the top, 22-foot high granite wall that surrounds the entire perimeter of the compound. The wall was quarried, dressed and constructed from 1905 to 1922 completely by inmates of the prison, and inmates from the Stillwater prison. The tailings, scrap and remnants from the building process were used as crushed stone for highways, up until 1930.

Reformatory Wall Claim to Fame


- The second longest connected wall in the United States (Roughly 1.5 miles long)
- The largest granite wall in the United States
- One of the most extensive outlays of granite in the United States
- The longest wall in the world built entirely by prisoners



Did You Know...
Butterflies lay their eggs on a small number of host plants, because butterfly caterpillars are herbivores. Insects, which eat only plants, are herbivores. Insects, which eat only plants, are herbivores. Insects, which eat only plants, are herbivores.

Did You Know...
License plate stamping was done here for many years and 2000 in stock license plates were converted from aluminum to plastic.

Did You Know...
During the first decade the prison was built, when released, it was used to house two a horse, saddle, rifle, and a gold piece.



St. Cloud Historical Marker

Designed by Arthur R. Nichols and built in 1937, the St. Cloud Historical Marker is a small site with a symmetrical design. The original yardside rest was planted with American elms, silver maples, and red, and Chinese juniper shrubs. Its historical marker has a rational, stone-paved terrace that is surrounded on three sides by low walls. A granite tablet describes Minnesota's first granite quarry that opened just west of the site in 1868.

Arthur R. Nichols (1880-1970)

Nichols was the consulting landscape architect for the Minnesota Department of Highways from 1932-40 and became the Roadside Development Division's first Consulting Landscape Architect where he designed most of the division's waysides, scenic overlooks, and historical markers built during the 1930's and '40's.


Arthur Nichols attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where he studied engineering, architecture, and landscape design. He was the first person to graduate from the newly created landscape architecture program at MIT. Nichols partnered with Anthony Morsell in 1909. Their firm completed a wide range of projects that included dozens of parks, city master plans, residential subdivisions, civic centers, and college campuses. They also designed private estates, country clubs, cemeteries, and parkways.

Many of the works Nichols produced while consulting for the Minnesota Department of Highways represent excellent examples of the "National Park Service Rustic Style," a movement in American architecture and landscape design that produced appropriately scaled, well-crafted structures of stone, concrete, and log that were designed to harmonize with the environment, rather than dominate it. The Minnesota Department of Highways was fortunate to call upon the skills of Nichols, perhaps the most productive landscape architect in the history of the state, and one of the individuals credited with establishing the field of landscape architecture in Minnesota.

Roadside Development

Roadside development projects are defined as structures and landscapes that were designed, built, or used for what are broadly termed "roadside development" purposes. Roadside development is a field of landscape architecture and highway design that is concerned with improving highway safety and aesthetics. Roadside development engineers blend roadways into the natural environment, control erosion, increase driver visibility, ease road construction scars, screen ugly views, and enhance scenic vistas.

Many properties were built during the difficult days of the Depression by unemployed Minnesotans who sought work through such federally-funded programs as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Not only did these properties fulfill the objectives of roadside development, but they are the legacy of a broad public effort to reduce poverty by providing meaningful work for the unemployed and, at the same time, invest in needed public facilities that would serve future generations.



Did You Know...
During the summer of 1938, approximately one million people, 25% of whom lived out of the state, visited Minnesota's state parks. By 1938 tourism was Minnesota's third most profitable industry.

Did You Know...
The American Automobile Association (AAA) was founded in 1902 shortly after the invention of the motorized automobile.

Rolling on the River!

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

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



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

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

WHY "MRT?"

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

MRT COMPOSITION in MN

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

IT'S A BIKEWAY

Even though it's called the Mississippi River "Trail," this bikeway is different from exclusively



off-road state trails largely built on abandoned railroad grades (such as the DNR-managed Paul Bunyan, Gateway, and Root River State Trails). Minnesota's route travels on both roads and trails taking advantage of existing facilities. The route will continue to change over time as improvements to roads and trails that can "host" the MRT are made. And even though additional off-road segments will be incorporated into the future MRT alignment, most of the route will continue to share the road right-of-way with cars, trucks, and motorcycles.



The distance between the Headwaters in Itasca State Park and the Minnesota-Iowa border is approximately 575 miles however, with the miles of roads and trails Minnesota has added, riders in Minnesota can pedal a total of nearly 800 miles—the longest distance in any of the ten states. Riders between Bemidji and Brainerd can choose to ride portions of the Heartland and Paul Bunyan State Trails or choose a rustic on-road route. And bicyclists in the Twin Cities can ride both sides of the river, which offers the chance for a 144-mile Metro MRT loop.

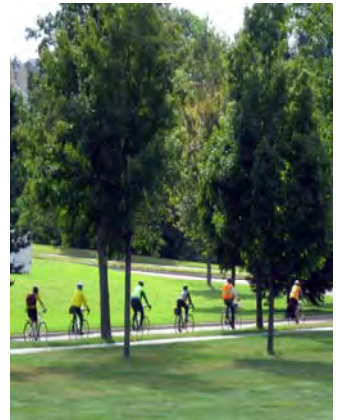
MnDOT DOES NOT “OWN” THE MRT

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

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

TARGET AUDIENCES

Generally paralleling the motorist-oriented Great River Road and the canoe and boat-oriented Mississippi River Water Trail, the entire route has special appeal to adventurous bicyclists that are comfortable with and knowledgeable about sharing the road with vehicles. Off-road segments have been incorporated within the route, which are very popular with less experienced bicyclists (but none the less adventurous). The MRT has served as a venue for charitable bike rides, an avenue for recreation, and as an entry point for people rediscovering the joys of cycling. The hope is that it will contribute to more vibrant and healthy communities that take full advantage of the bicycle for travel and fun.



RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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

PRESENT INITIATIVES (WINTER 2011-SPRING 2012)



- Convene additional statewide meetings to improve the alignment and coordinate activities and expectations amongst MRT’s road and trail authorities. Concentrate on: segments previously identified as needing additional review; the National Park Service’s Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) in the Twin Cities; and on developing recommended design guidance for off-road segments;
- Implement marketing and outreach. Encourage formation of mutually beneficial marketing partnerships within the public and private sectors, and facilitate local marketing action plans (including a series of festive 2012 MRT Discovery Rides) in selected “MRT Host Communities”, locate and design MRT orientation kiosks in six “MRT HUB Communities,” and develop local bicycle-friendliness recommendations;
- Seek Legislative authorization of the MRT as Minnesota’s first designated Bikeway (H.F.1367);
- Develop signing plan for road and off-road segments not located on state highways;
- Evaluate the need for/best elements of a printed map for general distribution;
- Develop and implement cooperative MRT management structure for road and trail authorities.
- Apply for inclusion within the U.S. Bicycle Route System (as MN’s first route).

WORK STILL TO BE COMPLETED (SUMMER 2012-2013)

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



MORE INFO:

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

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

Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex

PROJECT NAME:

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NORTHWOODS
HABITAT COMPLEX

ACRES:

+/-1,988

OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND RECOMMENDATION:

\$14,040,000

NATURAL RESOURCES:

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

PROGRAMMATIC SIGNIFICANCE:

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

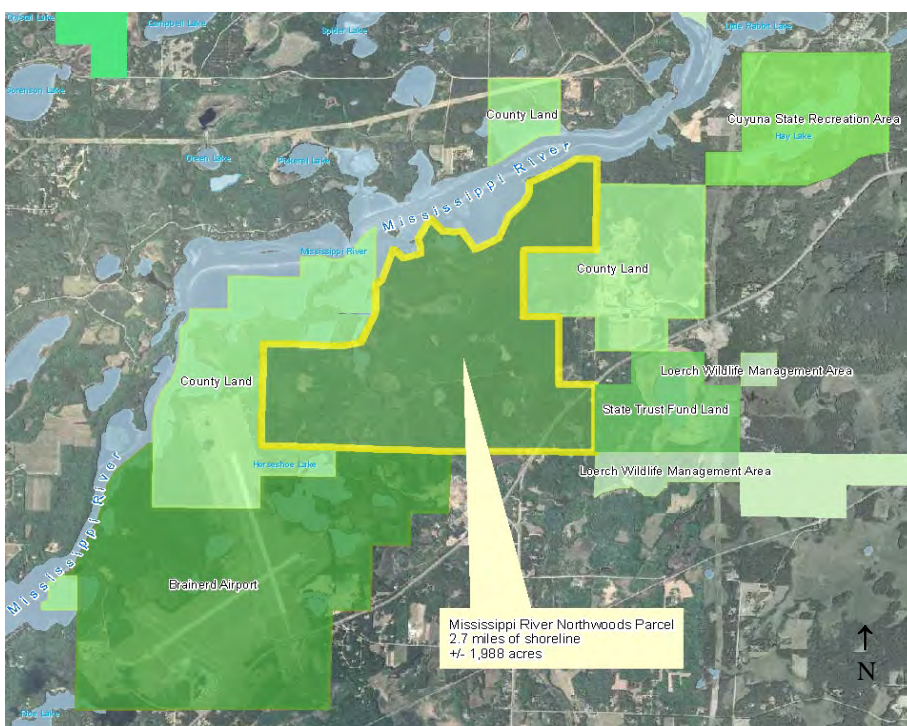
In order to protect this property and its highly valued natural resources from fragmentation and development, \$14.5 million is needed for the effort in fiscal year 2013.

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

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

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

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



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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); Patricia Torres Ray (DFL – 62) **State Agency Appointees:** Paul Hugunin – Agriculture, Frank Pafko – Transportation, Adam Johnson – Explore Minnesota Tourism, Keith Parker – Natural Resources, Andrea Kajer – Historical Society **Regional Appointees:** Jim Lucachick – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids, John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd, Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River, Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings, Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border **Member at Large:** Mark Anderson

June 20, 2012

The Honorable Mark Dayton
Governor of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Dayton:

The mission of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota 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. The potential for rapid expansion of silica sand (frac sand) mining is of significant concern related to this mission, as it would directly affect the Mississippi River Valley and Great River Road. Issues have been noted by both Commission members and stakeholders. We believe that further study is warranted prior to permitting new mining operations in order to preserve the unique qualities of the southeastern Minnesota Mississippi River Bluffs Region and evaluate potential cumulative impacts on the Great River Road.

The Great River Road has achieved the esteemed designation of a National Scenic Byway because it possesses characteristics of regional and national significance demonstrating intrinsic qualities in each of the following areas – archaeological; cultural; historic; natural; recreational; and scenic. It is imperative for our state to protect the byway, its intrinsic qualities and the river it celebrates for current and future residents and byway travelers. The Great River Road is a National Scenic Byway through ten states. Activities on the Minnesota side of the river also impact the Wisconsin Great River Road – and vice versa – since the scenic and recreational experiences of travelers cross the entire river valley and include the majestic bluffs on both sides of the Mississippi.

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota requests that cumulative impacts of silica sand mining be studied, specifically including potential impacts to the Great River Road and the Mississippi River. Until the study is complete, we recommend a statewide moratorium on new silica sand mining operations along Minnesota Scenic Byways. This approach would help preserve not only the resources of the Great River Road but also other areas of the state similarly affected by potential silica sand mining; and would provide consistent information to be used by the various jurisdictions involved in decision making.

Topics to be addressed include:

- Landscape and cultural resource degradation
- Increased road and bridge pressures and potential damage
- Road and shoulder safety
- Pedestrian and bicycle conflicts
- Air and water quality
- Noise
- Reduced tourism activity and related economic losses
- Cumulative impacts on the Great River Road National Scenic Byway

We appreciate your consideration. Our Commissioners and Technical Advisors are available to provide further information as appropriate, and we would also welcome the opportunity to provide a representative to serve on a committee and/or assist with the cumulative impact study. We look forward to hearing from your office on its position on this issue. I can be reached via phone at 651-442-4658 or email at rep.sheldon.johnson@house.mn, or through the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Office at 651-341-4196 or info@mnmississippiriver.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheldon Johnson /cm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small "cm" at the end.

For the MN-MRPC
Representative Sheldon Johnson, Chair

cc: Minnesota Great River Road Bluffs Region (Hastings to Iowa Border) Cities, Counties and Townships
Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission



MnEQB 8-15-2012

Frac Sand Mining Update & Opportunity for Public Testimony

- Good Afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify.
- My name is Carol Zoff.
- I work for the Minnesota Department of Transportation, in the Office of Environmental Stewardship.
- I serve as MnDOT's Great River Road program coordinator. As such, I have been asked by local byway partners and the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MnMRPC) to present to this Board the **context of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway** which is a part of the region predicted for frac sand development.
- Like the EQB, the MnMRPC is comprised of state agencies and citizen members, as well as two Senate and two House members. Unfortunately due to an accident and scheduling conflicts, no MnMRPC Commissioners are able to attend today's meeting.

In lieu of their appearance, please refer to the Commission's June letter to Governor Dayton, in which they request **further study in order to preserve the unique qualities of the region**, and they offer to **serve as a partner**.

- As Great River Road program coordinator, my testimony is intended to provide the EQB with the context of the:

Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byway Program,
the Great River Road National Scenic Byway, and
the newly designated Mississippi River Trail state bikeway.

- **First, FHWA bestows National Scenic Byway** designation to roads managed to protect and enhance one or more of 6 byway intrinsic qualities. The six are **archaeological, natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and historic**. This region has all six.

For More
Information

Contact:

Carol Zoff
Env Stewardship
651-366-4705
carol.zoff@state.mn.us

Your Destination...Our Priority



- **Second, Minnesota's Great River Road National Scenic Byway context:**

- When the National Scenic Byway program was first announced, the GRR was named as a model. Minnesota has a long tradition of GRR intrinsic resource protection and enhancement, including scenic easements, overlooks, parks and forests.

Small wonder that this summer a Huffington Post poll named Wisconsin's' GRR **America's prettiest drive!** After all, Wisconsin drivers are looking at Minnesota!

- Stretching 575 miles in MN from the headwaters at Lake Itasca State Park to the Iowa border,
- the GRR was established in 1938 by then Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes to celebrate America's largest river and to restore it to parkway status.
- As the GRR winds through 10 states, it offers byway explorers access to 1,583 historic sites, 217 state and national wildlife areas, 90 historic landmarks, 72 state parks and 288 cities, including 60 cities in Minnesota.
- State Statute 161.142 describes the Great River Road and its management by the Commissioner of Transportation and our partners.
- State Statute 161.1419 describes the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission, the byway's primary stakeholder and champion, of which MnDOT, Ag and the DNR are members.
- Currently, the MnMRPC, National Park Service and MnDOT are partnering to develop a new Minnesota Great River Road corridor management plan. It is funded by a FHWA National Scenic Byway grant with local match provided by the U.S. Department of Interior. This 18 month effort strives to apply FHWA Livability principles to corridor management - aiming to enhance people's lives, and the byway corridor, in a sustainable manner.
- MnDOT is also currently managing a Chapter 152 bond-funded effort to restore 12 historic roadside properties along the Great River Road, 7 of which are in this region, and establishing engineer's estimates for 7 others, 3 of which are in this region.
- MnDOT is also developing 26 interpretive panels telling the river's stories and aiming to extend length of stay and increase re-visitation.
- Today your discussion centers on the byway's Mississippi Bluffs Destination Area, from Hastings to the Iowa border, and it is uniquely rich with all six intrinsic resources. It has been called Minnesota's South Shore.



- **Last, the newly designated Mississippi River Trail state bikeway context**

Through State Statute 160.266 Minnesota's Mississippi River Trail was designated in July.

It requires MnDOT, in conjunction with local authorities and the DNR, to identify a Mississippi River Trail bikeway.

MnDOT is currently completing a series of projects that

1. identify the route,
2. develop a sign plan and marketing plan, and
3. conduct bike-friendly assessments of river communities.

The MRT relies primarily on on-road rather than off-road routing, sharing these roads with all users.

MRT route signage and other travel tools will be paid for and administered as a part of the GRR Corridor Management Plan.

In closing I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit this information for your use.



Small stone burial mound on ground level of Mt. Sagami

Small stone burial mound on ground level of Mt. Sagami

Illustration of a burial mound on Mt. Sagami, Japan, showing the burial mound on the ground level of Mt. Sagami

Mendota, The Meeting Place

The Dakota called the spot where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers met "Bé-dé," which loosely translated means "Meeting Place," and for over 1,000 years, human beings have also been converging at the naturally strategic location, now called "Mendota," maintaining and developing their cultures in relation to the Landscape.

Early Inhabitants

Nomadic Paleo Indian people were the first to congregate here, hunting wildlife who were drawn to the river for water and food. 10,000-year-old stone and copper tools have been found by archeologists in this area and ancient burial mounds once dotted the land. In fact, the main business of modern-day Mendota was once the site of eight massive burial mounds, one of which was nearly 100 feet in diameter.

Aerial of Campground Area

The Nature of Commerce

The location of nearby Pike Island, just west where the two rivers meet, made it a perfect gathering place for the Dakota Indians thought by many to be distant descendants of the mound building Woodland peoples of ages past and Paleo-American Indians making their way up river from the settlement at Prairie Du Chien in the late 1700's. In 1826, availing themselves of the island's fortunate location as well as the protection of nearby Fort Snelling, the American Fur Company established a post on the island. Now, the potential for profit drew traders and settlers by burgeoning Mendota much like the ample wildlife and supply of fresh water drew nomadic hunters centuries earlier.

View of one of the burial mounds

The Sibley House: Layers and Layers of Life

The most prominent for today to visit is Mendota's oldest house, now Henry Hastings Sibley. Sibley was the Minnesota Territory's first delegate to Congress during the Territorial Period (1848-1858) and later Minnesota became a state. Sibley was the first Governor. The stone house he built with his own hands, which still stands in this location at the Sibley House Museum, is a brilliant example of how life - history exists in layers over time, and how searching the surface of the present can reveal realities from the distant one.

Not only are visitors to the museum able to see how Sibley gradually transformed what was initially a rudimentary bachelor residence into a gracious Victorian home for his wife, Sarah Jane Steele, but the feast of archeological research from around the Sibley House and grounds are also on display. These artifacts reveal a rich history of continuous human habitation on the very same spot, dating back thousands and thousands of years ago, a testimony to the rich cultural vitality of this place and evidence that long legions would meet.

Henry Hastings Sibley
1812-1881
First Governor and Minnesota's
first Congressman

Photo by David L. Johnson. Photo by David L. Johnson

Photo by David L. Johnson. Photo by David L. Johnson

Photo by David L. Johnson. Photo by David L. Johnson

The Snakes of Dakota County

The wide-open prairies and prairies of Dakota County are home to a host of small burrowing snakes, but none so named representative of the area (as well as the broad-based popularity of local farmers) as Plains pocket gophers and "veined" gophers, which are rarely 13-lined ground snakes, especially around. In many ways, these small invertebrates are tremendously beneficial.

Their burrows aerate the soil, and they spread the seeds of wild flowers and grasses for a wide. Pronghorn beetles, however, they would likely consume local fields and farms were it not for the wide array of snakes which have historically kept their populations in check. Here are a few of the snakes who help maintain nature's delicate balance in Dakota County.

Bullsnake

(*Pituophis melanoleucus*)

Minnesota's largest native snake, often reaching five feet in length. Their habits of hanging on sun-baked rocks serve in order to regulate their body temperature prior to their search for the path of cool, damp, and they are numbers here due to their ability to survive in years. Bull snakes and their members have evolved by living and sharing their tails against dry vegetation, but they prove to be dangerous at all to human beings.

Racer

(*Coluber constrictor*)

True to its name, the Racer has a gift for speed. Some have been clocked at an mph, good walking pace for a human being. This gives them an advantage when hunting small rodents like the Six-lined Racer, which is a primary food source. Large eyes, skin-like to brown bodies, and a highly yellow throat are the hallmarks of this swift and sinuous species.

Western Hognose

(*Rhopoglossus lateralis*)

Also known as the "prairie moccasin," the Western Hognose Snake lives in loose, sandy soil, and spends winters hibernating below the frost line in the burrows of the same small rodents it hunts throughout the remainder of the year. When threatened, the snake vents up its most recent meal and flips one of its hind, irritating flesh. It cannot bite, while, however, and the Western Hognose is harmless, can be quite painful.

Striped Gopher
(*Urotaenia stansburiana*)
Did You Know...
The 13-lined Ground Squirrel is the nemesis of the University of Minnesota Gopher Gopher team, and is responsible for Minnesota's nickname as the "Gopher State."

Six-lined Racer
(*Coluber lateralis*)
Did You Know...
Typically dark green, brown or black in color with six yellow or green-yellow stripes.
Lays eggs and lays nesting with speeds of up to 18 mph, during for cover if approached.

Bird Visitors

Loggerhead Shrike

(*Lanius ludovicianus*)

This bird has evolved its aggressive behavior of applying to prey on thorns or barbed wire. Because of this practice, it is also known as the "Barbed Bird." Look for it to open the fields and fields.

Cerulean Warbler

(*Dendroica cerulea*)

Watch for this neotropical migrant in the Great Dakota County. The males are a striking blue, with white lining on the wings and a white underbelly.

Loggerhead Shrike

Cerulean Warbler

[illegible]

used to provide context (not printed on map)

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The States of the River

MapSource from GoogleMap & Toponym

As you travel from state to state along the Mississippi River on the Great River Road, you might notice variations in appearance, especially along the river's banks. In some areas, the banks are void of human habitation; in others, houseboats line the river's edge. The architecture of industry; skyscrapers; manicured public spaces; marinas; private homes; bare cliffs; deserted floodplains... whatever kind of environment you see along the river's banks is a function of specific river-related laws and regulations. These laws also determine what kind of boats or barges you'll see in the middle of the river, as well, and many of these laws vary from state to state.

Rivers with waterfalls to steep for canoes or kayaks might be, for all practical purposes, unnavigable.

Nevertheless, if logs could be floated over the waterfall (as was often the case in early Minnesota history) then the river is usable for commerce and therefore legally navigable.

Working Within Limits

What individual states can and cannot legally do with rivers within their borders is determined at the federal level. For instance, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that all navigable rivers are owned by the states and "held in trust" for the public. So even if your house or business is located on the bank of the river, you don't own that stretch of river. Federal law also prohibits states from selling or giving away rivers. Each state has some latitude with regard to how it manages the river, but in all cases the public's right to use the river for navigation, fishing and commerce must be protected.

MapSource from GoogleMap & Toponym

The federal requirements for determining navigability do not exist in any law. They are merely historical precedents that have come before the U.S. Supreme Court.

As for those rivers which have been determined to be unnavigable, they can be owned by private interests. Predictably, a majority of the river-law cases that come to court have to do with determining whether a river is navigable, i.e., whether the state owns it or whether a private citizen can do with the river as they wish. The federal definition of "navigability" has nothing to do with the depth or width of the river. By law, a river is navigable if it is usable as a route by the public. And if, according to that definition, the river is navigable, then it is owned by the state.

Image (not printed) used for design

Image (not printed) used for design

Source: photo created from archival map of 1847

Source: photo created from archival map of 1847

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Initial Point Monument

For more information on the survey, visit the Initial Point, which is about five miles west of here. The monument has been historically recreated (shown above) by the Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors. (See location map below.)

Burt's Solar Compass
In 1834, while surveying in land that would one day become northern Wisconsin, government surveyor William A. Burt of Michigan came to a key realization: Most levels of soil are on the region were disturbing Burt's magnetic compass, making it difficult to determine north-south survey lines. After a year of experimentation, Burt devised a solution to this problem by inventing a solar compass that did not depend on magnetic readings.

Iowa - Minnesota Border Initial Point

On December 28, 1846, the state of Iowa was admitted to the Union. The Iowa Constitution fixed the northern boundary of the state at the parallel of latitude of 43 degrees 10 minutes north. This line became the southern border of the Minnesota Territory which was created by an Act of Congress on March 3, 1859. The work was assigned to the Surveyor General of Iowa and Wisconsin under the direction of the General Land Office.

The Boundary Line

The first task is to establish a point on the parallel of latitude so that guide lines can be run and from which efforts to the parallel can be calculated. In 1867 the primary instrument used for surveying was a Burt's Solar Compass, but the instrument wasn't considered accurate enough. Instructions from Washington, D.C., directed the survey crew led by Capt. Thomas J. Lee to develop more accurate surveys and test new survey equipment for accuracy.

The actual running and marking of the line was done in the spring of 1872 under the direction of Capt. Andrew Talbot. Talbot had a crew of 40 men, many of whom were sons of prominent political figures and co-workers from previous survey projects.

Capt. Talbot was given detailed instructions for every procedure, including the automatic observations, double chaining of measurement, the types of instruments to place, the notes to keep in copy of the original notes (see shown below), and the maps to create and test the accuracy of Burt's Solar Compass for further work.

Made of brass, the solar compass was first built in the 1840s by William J. Young, an instrument maker from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Talbot's Map

Capt. Andrew Talbot
1870-1872

Talbot's Original Notes

Source: <http://www.usfws.gov/darwin/cowbird/04/04.asp>

Source: <http://www.usfws.gov/darwin/cowbird/04/04.asp>

Source: <http://www.usfws.gov/darwin/cowbird/04/04.asp>

Evolution of the Iowa and Minnesota Borders

July 3, 1848 – Wisconsin Territory

Originally the area included all of the former Territory of Michigan that lay west of the state of Michigan. It was bounded on the north by the international border, on the west by the Missouri and White Earth Rivers and on the south by the states of Missouri and Illinois.

June 12, 1838 – Iowa Territory

Organized from a portion of Wisconsin territory, the limits of the Iowa Territory were defined as: "all that part of the present territory of Wisconsin which lies west of the Mississippi River and west of a line drawn due north from the headwaters or sources of the Mississippi to the territorial line."

December 28, 1846 – State of Iowa

When Iowa was declared a state by an act of Congress, its western border became the Missouri and Big Sioux rivers. Several attempts were made by the Iowa territorial legislature to include the area southeast of the Mississippi River as part of the State of Iowa. But Congress set the north border at the parallel of 43 degrees 30 minutes north latitude. The admission of Iowa as a state left a large area to the north and west unmatched.

May 29, 1848 – State of Wisconsin

The western border of Wisconsin was described as: "through the center of Lake Superior to the mouth of the St. Louis River; thence up the main channel of said river to the first rapids in the same, above the Indian Village, according to Nicollet's Map, thence due south to the main branch of the River St. Croix; thence down the main channel of said river to the Mississippi." This left more than 30,000 square miles without a governing body.

March 3, 1849 – Minnesota Territory

The Territory of Minnesota comprised of the unmatched portions of the former Iowa and Wisconsin territories.

May 11, 1858 – State of Minnesota

The western boundary was described as: "Beginning at the point in the center of the main channel of the Red River of the north, where the boundary line between the United States & the British Possessions crosses the same, thence up the main channel of said river to that of the Bois des Sioux River; thence the main channel of said river to Lake Traverse, thence up the center of said lake to the southern extremity thereof, thence a direct line to the head of Big Stone Lake, thence through its center to its outlet, thence by a due south line to the north line of the state of Iowa."

May 2, 1861 – Dakota Territory

The remainder of the Minnesota Territory became part of the Dakota Territory.

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Excerpts from a Letter to Col. I. I. Abert, Chief Corp. of Topographical Engineers, Washington from Capt. Thomas J. Lee (December 15, 1849)

I have the honor herewith to transmit the computation of the observations made, in obedience to your orders to ascertain the intersection of the Parallel of 43° 30' North Latitude with the Mississippi River for the Northern Boundary of Iowa, with a sketch of the vicinity of the monuments."

Principal Monument

"This is a hollow pyramid of Cut Iron, Six feet high, 11 inches at the top, weighs nearly 600 lbs. It has upon the four sides the inscription, in raised letters as follows:

Iowa, Lat 43° 30'; 1849;
Minnesota (c) 18

is conspicuously placed at the northern extremity of an open prairie of some 2½ miles in extent, near Iron Horse Creek passes within a few feet of it."

Lat & Mip

Point of Observation

"The point of observation was on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi River. The instrument was mounted on an oak blank about 3 feet from the shore, placed about 100 yards from the River bank. Upon the rise of the hill to the north of this is another block of the same kind."

As taken by Photograph & Sonnet, London.

Lee's Original Monument

As seen from Minnesota

Placing the Principal Monument

"From the block 800 feet north of the point of observation, there is a good view of the country to the westward. By means of signals, a flag was placed in this new direction upon the slope of the hills on the Iowa Side of the River, from which the distance measured to the northwest for the position of placing the principal Monument."

Lat & Monument Location

Certainty (sic) of Position

"Errors of chaining, in the observation of the azimuth, observations on Polaris, probable errors in the determination of the local time, errors in the tabular declinations, and also errors of locality, it is not to be expected that we could be certain of our position within 20' of space or say 200 ft."

and Chronometer by Graham & Sonnet, London."

Illustration of the steamboat used by the expedition.

Illustration of the steamboat used by the expedition.

Illustration of the steamboat used by the expedition.

Minnesota River and Minnesota River Steamboat
St. Paul, 1850

Steamboats Delivered Supplies to the Surveyors

On December 28, 1846, Iowa was admitted as a state into the Union. The Iowa Constitution fixed the northern boundary of the state at the latitude of 43 degrees and 30 minutes north. This line became the southern border of the Minnesota Territory, which was established on March 3, 1849.

In early April 1852, the steamer *Lamarine* left Dubuque, Iowa, loaded with equipment and crew to survey the northern boundary of the state. Under the direction of Capt. Andrew Talbot (Principal Surveyor and Astronomer), Quartermaster David Sears outfitted a crew of 40 men for a six-month survey expedition.

Talbot's Crew Arrives

Captain Talbot and members of his astronomical party left Galien, Illinois, on the Steamboat *Northern* and arrived in Dubuque on May 13, 1852.

On May 17th Talbot recorded in his diary:

"Made many purchases & wrote letters at about 7 P.M. left on Steam Boat *Northern* for Lansing, very heavy load and crowd of passengers."

On May 18th he recorded:

"Landed at Lansing at 10 P.M. delivered all my tools and blankets concluded to visit and interview. Lansing is a new place & favorably situated for business."

Steamboat Northern
from "Steamboats on the Mississippi"
by William H. Jackson

The following list of expenses and amounts brought on the *Lamarine* for surveying the boundary line:

- 14 Engines had a capacity of 1,000 pounds
- 2 Saw engines
- 1 Lumber
- 122 Bags of iron (24 mads)
- 4 Barren horses

Typical Frontier's Camp
Minnesota River, Spring 1852

Report from the Expedition

On May 18th, Sears wrote a letter to George B. Sargent, Surveyor General, reported: "We landed here on Saturday last, just one month before the steam commenced, to pitch our tents and make ourselves comfortable for the night, it rained. Saturday night and Sunday morning about two inches. Our Cattle & Horses landed but muddied, while our men found very wet. . . We found our box of Powder on the *Lamarine*, please have it forwarded. On opening our Dubuque Package we find they have left our lanterns & coffee pot out. Mr. Smith thinks we know (said) to be decease. He also wants you to send him a gallon olive oil and 8 balls large with."

Sears Respectfully,

D. B. Sears

P. S. The *Franklin* has just landed and delivered our powder."

Quartermaster David B. Sears
Lansing, Minnesota, Spring 1852



JULY, 2012 DRAFTS



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Park & Recreation Board**

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Operations Center
3800 Bryant Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409-1000

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August 9, 2012

Sheldon Johnson, Chair
Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota
300 33rd Ave S, Suite 101
Waite Park, MN 56387

Dear Mr Johnson,

I am writing to thank you for your December 2011 letter of support for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration for funding under the Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program. The application was successful and the Park Board has been awarded a grant of \$1 million!

This federal funding will go towards the design and construction of the East Bank Trail in 2012-2015. The completed project will provide 0.75 miles of off-road bicycle and pedestrian trail on the Mississippi River's east bank from 16th Avenue NE in Above the Falls Regional Park to 8th Avenue NE in Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park, eventually linking Boom Island to the BNSF railroad bridge. The Park Board will match this \$1m grant with \$500,000 of its own funds.

Cordelia Pierson, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership, worked closely with me to identify the grant opportunity and write the application. We were grateful to include thirteen letters of support from government agencies, non-profit partners and our neighbors along the upper Mississippi River. These letters were critical to the application's success. Thank you for your continuing partnership and support of the Park Board's efforts to improve our parks and trails along the river and throughout the city.

Sincerely,

Andrew Caddock, RLA, LEED-AP
Project Manager
Planning Services Division

President
John Erwin

Vice President
Liz Wielinski

Commissioners
Brad Bourn
Bob Fine
Carol A. Kummer
Jon C. Olson
Anita Tabb
Scott Vreeland
M. Annie Young

Superintendent
Jayne Miller

Secretary to the Board
Michael P. Schmidt



July 10, 2012



Crow Wing County

Doug Houge, Chair of Crow Wing County Board of Commissioner; and
Tim Houle, Crow Wing County Administrator
326 Laurel Street
Brainerd, MN 56401

RE: Support for Economic Impact Study and Development of a Master Trail Plan

Honorable Commissioner Houge & Administrator Houle:

The Cuyuna Lakes Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors (Board) is writing this letter to provide input into current and future permit requests for trail expansion and development in the areas adjacent to and surrounding the Cuyuna Country State Recreational Area (CCSRA). This letter was written after lengthy discussion and careful consideration on the potential direct or indirect impact of such development on the new Cuyuna Lakes Mountain Bike Trail (CLMBT). It's the Board's desire to communicate that our discussions raised many questions regarding the impact of such prospective development.

After a thoughtful consideration, we concluded there is insufficient information to fully understand and appreciate both the complexity and impact of any expansion with the exception of that already identified as future trails within the CCSRA master plan. Furthermore, any proposed expansion undertaken without adequate understanding of the economic and social consequences, could have a significant negative impact to the Cuyuna Lakes business community and on the investments made by the Federal and State governments as well as private contributions to the CCSRA and CLMBT.

A New Community Asset

As you are aware the CCSRA is home to a world-class IMBA Bronze Level - Mountain Bike Ride Center. This complex is the result of a decade of visioning, planning, political lobbying and actual hands-on work; most-of-which was provided by volunteers & leaders within DNR, IMBA, MORC, the Cuyuna Lakes Trails Association and the Cuyuna Lakes communities. The multi-year funding & fundraising came after many years of discussions with key Federal and State political leaders, as well as private funds received from grants and other fundraising efforts. In total, funding from all funding sources exceeds millions of dollars. The end result is an exciting new community asset to businesses and residents of the Cuyuna Lakes area and Crow Wing County.

The active outdoor trail system is much more than a mountain biking venue. The planned interconnection between paved and off-road trails, calculated use of terrain & slopes, and incorporated scenic overlooks were purposefully designed to provide users of all ages an enjoyable experience. For experienced riders the trail system offers a stimulating, challenging,

yet safe trail to ride and at the same time captures the beauty unique to the Cuyuna Lakes historic mine pits. The CCSRA and adjacent areas are attractive not only to expert mountain bike enthusiasts, but beginning riders and families simply passionate about being outdoors to take in the beauty unique to our region.

During CLMBT's inaugural year (2011), Chamber businesses experienced a significant increase in tourist visits. It is estimated that over 15,500 mountain bikers visited the CCSRA, making the CLMBT the most attractive utilized community asset in the Cuyuna Lakes Area. These visitors are not locals, evident on the license plates and thru social media available to anyone who does a simple internet search. The CLMBT provided overnight acclaim, and mountain bike visitors are estimated to reach over 30,000 in 2012, with the potential for continued growth.

Chamber is Not Anti-ATV

Please know that the Board's opinions are not negative towards motorized-trails (ATV/Snowmobile) within our region. Nor should this statement be construed as such. Contrary to this, many of our member businesses realize a direct economic benefit to any increased tourism to the area - regardless of their reason, or what attracted them to visit.

Furthermore, we understand that increased tourism helps to build successful downtowns and that all visitors bring indirect benefit to all Chamber members and the community. The Board asserts our support for initiatives that attract regarded-visitors to the area to enjoy our resources and in doing so provide an economic benefit to the region.

The Board also realizes these efforts to attract visitors to partake in our resources must be well planned in order to be offered in ways that complement all community interests, activities and needs. Without proper planning and supportive infrastructure, certain activities could create conflicting situations unattractive to users and community residents alike. These potentially negative experiences may ultimately lead to a decline in tourists, eventually eroding the economic return on the Legislative investments made to the Cuyuna Lakes area, jeopardizing future investments.

Our Questions

We request the County - and all associated Committees charged with evaluation of development and approval of trail permits - to reflect on the following questions for any current and future requests affecting land use within the Cuyuna Lakes area:

- What are all the potential interests, associations, clubs, etc. currently using this area; *OR* would be interested in its use if fostered and/or allowed? (i.e. camping, mountain biking, ATV, snowmobile, geocaching, cross country skiing, horseback riding, walking trails, etc)
- Do these interests complement one-another maximizing their collaborative use?
- Are any of the interests in conflict (i.e. safety concerns, unattractive to one's experience, etc.) limiting the ability to share the same space and/or be adjacent to each another without contradictions?

- Given the scarce public land in this area, how does the region provide a system which best meets all interests needs?
- Should representation from each of these interests be included in any visioning & planning process for the region?
- Given the relative newness of the CLMBT: What is the future economic benefit of increased tourism calculated as a direct result of the trails?
- Are there activities which would either attract increased use or make use unattractive, limiting the Cuyuna Lakes Chamber's ability to promote and attract state, regional, national and international tourism to the area?
- What is the economic and social impact of trail or developmental expansion including camping, mountain biking, horseback riding, walking trails, ATV and/or snowmobile to the Cuyuna Lakes community? Should decisions be based on positive potential?

Concluding Considerations

In conclusion, the Cuyuna Lakes Board feels public land is scarce. Careful and transparent planning for its use is a must. Any associated infrastructure, interconnectivity to other uses and downtown business needs should be well thought out.

Along these lines, the Board asks the County to complete and support our request for a **comprehensive impact study** of the current and potential future use of all public land adjacent to the CCSRA. Such study would seek input from key stakeholders including visiting tourists. We would request the study be comprehensive enough to address questions regarding the economic and social impact(s) of expanding the use of land adjacent to the CCSRA and the CLMBT.

We're confident that taking extra time to complete this important step will ensure necessary information and data and provide a framework by which careful planning and informed decision making will occur. This additional planning will ensure both new opportunities for expanded activities and at the same time protect our current CLMBT investments; ensuring the overall success of what Cuyuna Lakes has to offer.

We ask the County to financially support and/or allow for Chamber and private efforts to solicit funds to financially support such an impact study. Along these lines, last year the Cuyuna Lakes Chamber submitted and plans to resubmit (in October 2012) a grant to the *University of Minnesota Tourism Center*. This grant is an effort to fund a Graduate student project to measure the CLMBT impact on the Cuyuna Lakes economy. We are aware of other efforts and association support for similar grants and studies related to the CLMBT.

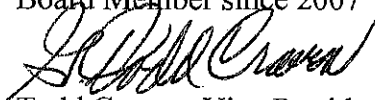
In summary, both our State and Federal Legislative leaders saw the social and economic benefits developing the CCSRA would bring to Cuyuna Lakes. These representatives deemed us a worth project of investment, commissioned the DNR to work in partnership with us, and provided funding to make this a unique and attractive tourist destination.

We ask the County respect the original visions for use of this space by supporting these studies and placing a moratorium on expansion permits which fall outside the current CCSRA Master Plan, until all information is fully understood. We likewise understand this may take up to three year to complete.

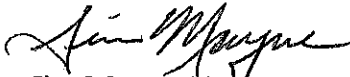
Respectfully and unanimously submitted by the Cuyuna Lake Chamber Board of Directors:



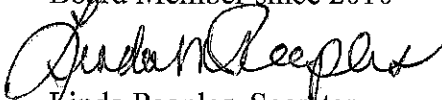
Jon R. Rauén, Chamber President
Board Member since 2007



Todd Craven, Vice President
Board Member since 2001



Jim Mayne, Treasurer
Board Member since 2010



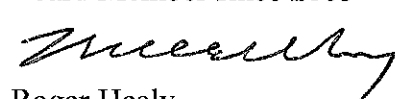
Linda Peoples, Secretary
Board Member since 2005



Robert Olson
Board Member since 2006



Erik Christenson
Board Member since 2005



Roger Healy
Board Member since 2004

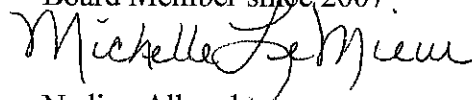


Buzz Neprud
Board Member since 2006

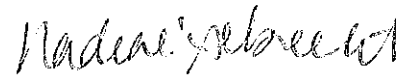
Mary Lee Dallman
Board Member since 2009



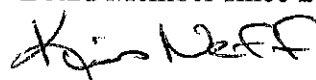
Michelle LeMieur
Board Member since 2007



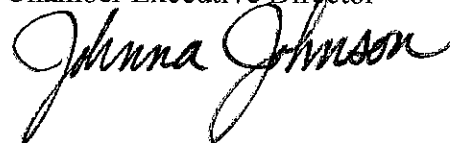
Nadine Albrecht
Board Member since 2012



Kris Neff
Board Member since 2012



Johnna Johnson
Chamber Executive Director



copy: *Appropriate Committees and Board for Permits*
Kirk Titus – Land Services Supervisor of the National Resource Manager Division
Lisa Paxton - Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce

Traffic and Activity > Visits

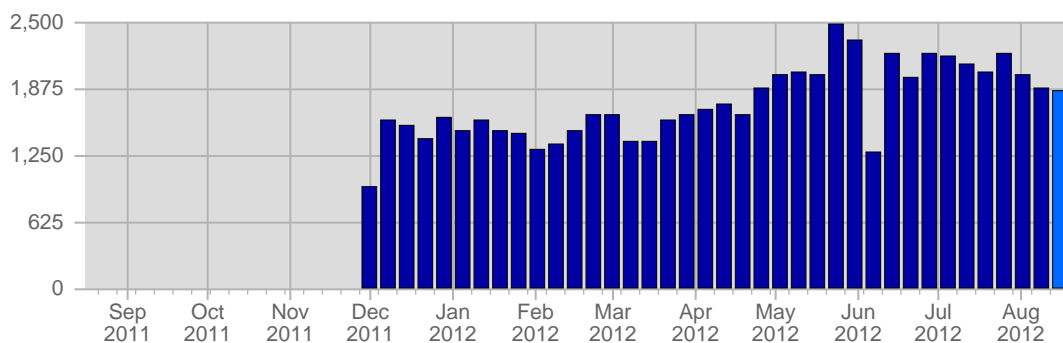
Report Description

Report Description: Visits during the week of Aug 12th, 2012

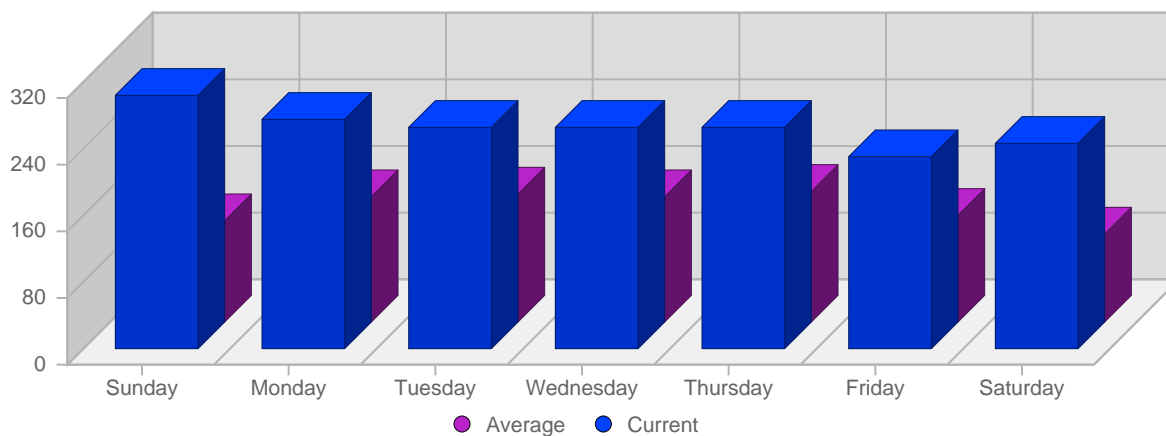
Report Range: Week of Aug 12th, 2012

Report Scope: Historical Data

Historic Breakdown



Breakdown



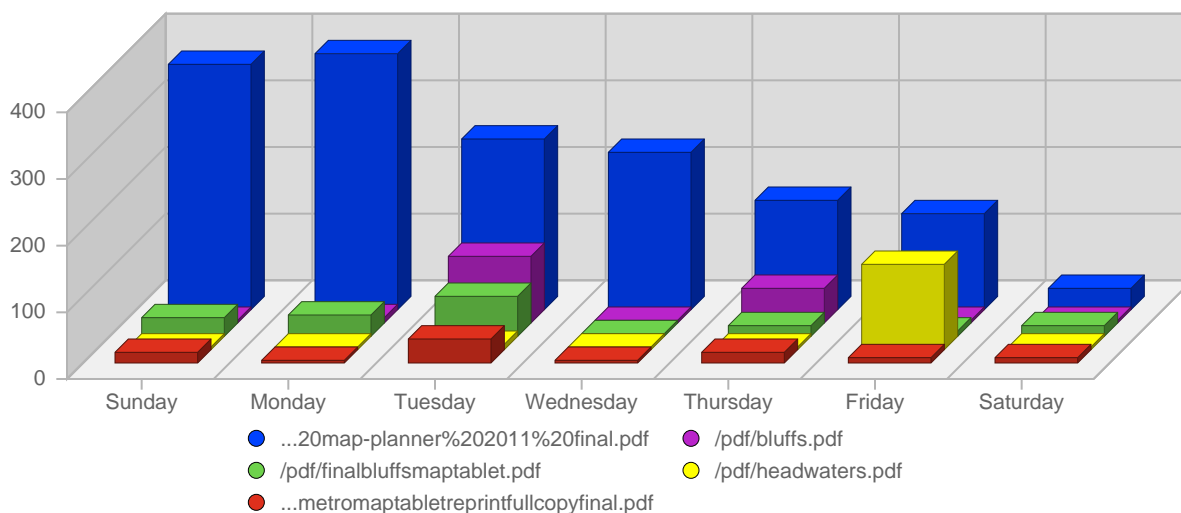
Date	Total Visits	Average Visits Historically	Change	Percent of Total Visits
Sun Aug 12th, 2012	305	121.74	-18 ▼	16.35%
Mon Aug 13th, 2012	278	151.18	-25 ▼	14.91%
Tue Aug 14th, 2012	267	156.43	+27 ▲	14.32%
Wed Aug 15th, 2012	267	150.84	+16 ▲	14.32%
Thu Aug 16th, 2012	268	157.51	+40 ▲	14.37%
Fri Aug 17th, 2012	231	130.71	-33 ▼	12.39%
Sat Aug 18th, 2012	249	108.67	-29 ▼	13.35%
	1,865	977		

Pages and Content > Media & Downloads

Report Description

Report Description: Downloads during the week of Aug 12th, 2012
 Report Range: Week of Aug 12th, 2012
 Report Scope: Historical Data
 List Size: 19 of 19

Breakdown



#	File	Total Downloads	Average Downloads Historically	Change	Percent of Downloads
1.	/.../grr%20map-planner%202011%20final.pdf	1,582	856.28	-214 ▼	65.56%
2.	/pdf/bluffs.pdf	163	55.52	-7 ▼	6.76%
3.	/pdf/finalbluffsmaptablet.pdf	161	75.72	+42 ▲	6.67%
4.	/pdf/headwaters.pdf	135	75.96	-332 ▼	5.60%
5.	/pdf/metromaptabletreprintfullcopyfinal.pdf	82	54.30	0 ▬	3.40%
6.	/pdf/finalcrossingsmaptablet.pdf	73	19.75	+20 ▲	3.03%
7.	/pdf/finalscenicmaptablet.pdf	61	38.58	-43 ▼	2.53%
8.	/pdf/finalnorthwoodsmaptablet.pdf	53	18.45	+4 ▲	2.20%
9.	/pdf/scenic.pdf	33	11.38	+33 ▲	1.37%
10.	/pdf/metro.pdf	32	8.41	+20 ▲	1.33%
11.	/pdf/finalheadwatersmaptablet.pdf	28	30.40	-29 ▼	1.16%
12.	...20mississippi%20river%20flyer%20(2).pdf	2	59.00	-57 ▼	0.08%
13.	/pdf/covers.pdf	2	7.21	-11 ▼	0.08%
14.	/pdf/northwoods.pdf	1	10.46	-21 ▼	0.04%
15.	/pdf/crossings.pdf	1	9.44	+1 ▲	0.04%
16.	/.../mn%20statute%20161.1419%202011.pdf	1	2.50	-2 ▼	0.04%
17.	/pdf/scavhunt.pdf	1	2.08	+1 ▲	0.04%

Continued on Page 2 ...

... continued from Page 1

18.	/pdf/crosswordpuzz.pdf	1	2.92	+1 ▲	0.04%
19.	/pdf/licplategame.pdf	1	2.43	+1 ▲	0.04%
		2,413	1,217		

MN DNR Asian Carp Update

Bonding appropriations and Outdoor Heritage Funding (OHF) are now available for barrier construction and evaluation. DNR priorities for barrier sites are: 1) Mississippi River Lock 1; 2) five sites in the Little Sioux River watershed in southwest Minnesota; 3) cost share one site in northwest Iowa with Iowa DNR; and 4) evaluate barrier sites for the Minnesota and St. Croix rivers. Funding for the barrier in northwest Iowa (to keep them out of the Iowa Great Lakes) is pending a legal determination on whether OHF money can be spent in another state. These priorities are based on locations threatened by Asian carp where barriers have the greatest chance for success.

The Lock 1 barrier will prevent Asian carp from getting further up the Mississippi River and keep them out of tributaries like the Rum River that lead to Mille Lacs Lake. The barrier at Lock 1 requires Corps of Engineers approval through the Section 408 process, which is required by law and includes evaluation of safety at the lock. This is a significant issue that will take time to resolve, as there has never been an electric barrier installed in a navigation lock. It will ultimately be the Corps of Engineers decision whether or not to allow this. My previous update provided a schedule for this work.

The southwest Minnesota and northwest Iowa barriers will prevent Asian carp from getting into Minnesota from the Missouri River basin, or prevent them from crossing into sub watersheds if they do get into Minnesota. The five sites in southwest Minnesota could have barriers completed in one year. The Iowa site could be done by the end of this year, which is the Iowa DNR's goal.

There are many other locations where barriers have been suggested, especially the Minnesota and St. Croix rivers. It is simply not possible to stop fish wherever we desire, especially in large river systems. Nearly all of the Lower Minnesota River has a huge floodplain and under flood conditions it would be impossible to create a barrier that would effectively stop fish unless a massive dam is built. Mankato is a possible exception because there is a 500-year flood control levee that confines the channel. Nevertheless, this site is much larger than any other location where electric barriers have been built. Lock and Dam 2 on the Mississippi is also a constriction and a potential site that would prevent fish from getting into the Minnesota River as well as further up the Mississippi. The mouth of the St. Croix is a confined channel. We have been evaluating these sites.

Aside from a permanent dam, electricity is the most effective deterrent barrier available. To my knowledge the largest electric fish barrier in the world is at the Chicago Ship Canal. They have three barriers to provide backup when one goes down for maintenance. They have highly qualified engineers and their contractors have been building electric barriers for years, but they have still experienced technical problems that resulted in temporary shutdowns, power outages, and revisions to their operating parameters.

The distance across the Chicago Ship Canal is 165 feet. The Minnesota River at Mankato is 500 feet across, Lock and Dam 2 is 770 feet across plus it has a lock, and the St. Croix mouth is over 500 feet across. All three sites are deeper than the Chicago Ship Canal during floods and experience greater flows. The Chicago barriers took many years to build and cost \$35-40 million and over a million a year to operate and maintain. The Chicago Ship Canal makes sense as an electric barrier site, but this location cannot be compared to the sites in MN that are much larger and more challenging.

A Risk Assessment conducted by Canada with assistance from US Geological Survey concluded only 10 adult female and 10 adult male Asian carp could establish a population in the

Great Lakes. With the understanding that it does not take very many adults to establish a population, if we are to spend many millions on electric barriers we must place them where they can be most effective. If barriers are built at sites that have little or no chance of success, we will have spent money and time that could have been used for long term control, barriers at smaller sites where the technology can be more effective, and improving habitat for native fish.

Some have stated that 100% effective barriers could be constructed at large river sites in Minnesota. Based on past experiences, many electric barriers have experienced unforeseen technical or weather related problems and despite the best intentions are not 100% effective. A 2005 study concluded "the complexity of electrical barrier systems and problems such intricacy creates for operation and monitoring may always preclude absolute effectiveness". Because of other potential pathways (bait buckets, intentional or accidental stocking, etc.), and because it takes only a few individuals, if Asian carp become established upstream of a barrier it will be difficult to determine whether or not it is because they passed through the barrier.

In evaluations done thus far, DNR has concluded that barriers are unlikely to be effective at the mouth of the St. Croix, Lock and Dam #2, or the Mankato flood control site. Yet, this is a critical issue with high stakes and the DNR wants to make sure that there is not an engineering solution at one of these sites that has been overlooked. We intend to hire an impartial contractor to evaluate whether an effective barrier could be constructed at one of these sites. We anticipate that this contractor would take an in-depth look into the effectiveness of electric barriers, what's happened in other locations, what real costs would be incurred, technical problems, potential engineering solutions for the sites in question, etc. This will enable the DNR to make a final determination on whether there is a practical and feasible alternative for an effective barrier at one of these sites.

I would also like to point out that there are significant issues regarding potential barrier impacts on native fish, which have been too often overlooked in discussions about Asian carp barriers. When I speak of barriers to my peers (career fish biologists), for many their first concern is harm to native fish by further restricting movements to spawning and wintering areas. One of our main goals with Asian carp is to prevent impacts to native fish. We must weigh the risks of Asian carp barriers on native fish and be strategic about where we placed barriers, so we do not end up harming the very resource we are trying to protect.

The Asian Carp Coalition is making a difference and the DNR very much appreciates and supports your work. I look forward to continuing to work with you to get the barriers built at Lock 1 and in SW MN, support federal legislation to provide authority for lock closure at Upper St. Anthony Falls, complete the evaluation of Lock and Dam 2, Mankato, and the mouth of the St. Croix River as potential barrier sites, improve water quality and habitat for native species in the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, and do whatever we can to help the new University of Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center and the federal agencies speed up the research on tools to control these fish long term. Additional funding would help in all of these areas.