



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

MINUTES – Draft

Commissioners Present

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

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

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

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

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

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

Others Present

Dan Luke, Hard Working Pictures

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

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

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

Great River Road Video Project Overview

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

Commission Business

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

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

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

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

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

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

National MRPC Updates

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

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

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

Work Group Updates

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

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

Old Business

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

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

MRT Community Engagement Meetings:

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

New Business

Corridor Management Plan Project:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Agency and Regional Updates

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

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

Brainerd to Elk River: A report is attached.

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

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

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

Natural Resources: A report is attached.

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

Next Meeting

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

Adjournment

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



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Regional Update November 2011

Brainerd to Elk River – Commissioner Karl Samp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Agency Update November 2011

Department of Natural Resources – Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor

Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail

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

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

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

Asian Carp

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

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



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
4th Quarter Meeting – November 17, 2011
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Room 500 North

DRAFT AGENDA

2:30 p.m.	Welcome & Introductions	Johnson
2:35 p.m.	Approve Today's Agenda, Minutes from 8/18/11	Johnson/All
2:40 p.m.	GRR Video Project Overview	Dan Luke, Hard Working Pictures
3:00 p.m.	Commission Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Election of Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer)- Finance Report- Donation from Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors- Technical Advisors – Consider Addition of MNRRA/National Park Service- Commission Management/Marketing Contract Discuss Timeline & Process	All Miller/All Zoff Chair/All Chair/All
3:20 p.m.	National MRPC Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Report from 2011 Annual Meeting, Little Rock- MRPC Board- National Committees	Johnson, Senjem, Zoff Johnson Committee Members
3:35 p.m.	Work Group Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Commission Project Overview Spreadsheet- Work Group Membership – Review and Update	Zoff All
3:45 p.m.	Old Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Status of Regional Citizen Committee Meetings, Agency Appointments- MRT Community Engagement Meetings	Miller Commission Members
3:55 p.m.	New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Corridor Management Plan Project (CMP)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review Process and TimelineFeedback on Proposed Project Management/Advisory Team ListsVisual Resource Protection Plan – Review MN-MRPC RoleAlternative Transportation Plan – Update- Potential Funding Opportunity for Stakeholder Communications Tool	Zoff/Miller Miller (for Samp)
4:30 p.m.	Agency and Regional Updates (including Travel Updates & Upcoming Events) <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 (including Historic Properties, Interpretive Panels)	Frost Schaubach Samp Labovitz Mulry Poster Johnson/Offerman Kajer/Kelliher Parker/Wheeler Pafko/Zoff
5:00 p.m.	Wrap Up and Adjourn	



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
3rd Quarter Meeting
August 18, 2011
State Office Building, St. Paul MN**

MINUTES - Approved 11/17/11

Commissioners Present

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

Cynthia Wheeler – Natural Resources
Chris Miller - Staff

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

Rep. Branden Petersen
Adam Johnson – Explore MN Tourism Appointee
Charlie Poster – Agriculture Appointee
Greg Murray – Natural Resources Appointee
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism
David Kelliher – Historical Society
Greg Hubinger - LCC

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

Carol Zoff – Transportation

Others Present

Holly Slagle – MN Scenic Byways Office

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 by Vice Chair Mulry, followed by introductions. Chair Johnson arrived and presided at 3:05 p.m. A quorum was present. The following topic was added to the agenda under New Business – 2011 National Scenic Byway Grants.

Approval of Minutes from 2/23/11 and 5/26/11 Meetings

Draft minutes from 2/23/11 and 5/26/11 were distributed. Motion by Commissioner Pafko and seconded by Commissioner Kajer to approve the 2/23/11 minutes as presented. Motion passed. Motion by Commissioner Samp and seconded by Senator Senjem to approve the 5/26/11 minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Commission Business

Review and Approve FY '12 Budget: A draft FY '12 budget was distributed. The Commission's total allocation for FY '12 is \$63,000. The line item breakdown is based on patterns of expenditures over the past few years along with planned activities for FY '12. Motion by Senator Pappas and seconded by Commissioner Pafko to approve the budget as presented. Motion passed.

MN-MRPC Sunset Extension, Other Legislative Updates: The MN-MRPC sunset date has been extended from June 30, 2012 to June 30, 2016.

National MRPC Updates

MRPC 2011 Annual Meeting: The 2011 MRPC Meeting will be held in Little Rock, Arkansas, September 29 – October 1. MN-MRPC members interested in attending were asked to confirm with MN-MRPC office within a week, so that travel authorization can be requested. Minnesota representation is needed at the National MRPC Board Meeting as well as standing committee meetings.

MRPC Board: Chair Johnson reported that he has recommended Karl Samp for a leadership position on the National Board with the election to take place during the Annual Meeting.

MRPC National Committees: The National Great River Road Geocaching Contest will be closing soon and the Marketing Committee will be requesting prize basket donations from each state, including an overnight stay package. The MN-MRPC office will send out a reminder to members. New National Great River Road Rack cards were recently printed and distributed to sites in all states. Technical Advisor Zoff reported that the Transportation Committee recently had a conference call giving all states an opportunity to provide updates on Mississippi River Bicycle Trail (MRT) progress. Livability initiatives are likely to be a main focus of the new federal transportation bill, with fewer individual programs included.

The MRPC Transportation Committee will be discussing how to align efforts in that regard. Commissioner Samp reported for the Environment, Recreation & Agriculture Committee on the National Great River Road agri-tourism inventory project. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is assisting by providing updated Minnesota Grown data on sites near the Great River Road. MN-MRPC members will be asked for additional recommended sites to include in the inventory.

Old Business

CapX2020: The MN-MRPC recently provided comments to the Administrative Law Judge regarding route selection for the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse project. Copies of the letter were distributed. Commissioner Mulry attended the public hearing and provided input for the letter, which also summarized other MN-MRPC comments/positions filed previously. Commissioner Pafko reported on communications with the Wisconsin DOT to coordinate responses.

Historic Roadside Property Restoration Project: Advisor Zoff reported on project status. Repairs were needed and have been done at the completed Lake City Concourse. Of the eight projects that have been started, all are complete. Four projects remain – Sibley Pioneer Church Memorial; La Crescent Entry Marker; La Crescent Overlook; and Reno Springs. The Sibley Memorial was scheduled for completion this summer but has been delayed due to the state shutdown and weather restrictions. Additional work will be necessary at Reno Springs after requirements related to wells on the property were determined. The Burns Avenue Overlook and Sibley Memorial will be featured as part of a field workshop during the upcoming National Scenic Byways Conference.

GRR Interpretive Panel Project: Advisor Zoff reported on the plan for project completion. The MN-MRPC has a National Scenic Byway Grant for fabrication and installation of Great River Road interpretive panels in several counties along the length of the river. The goal is at least one set of panels in each destination area. Content/stories are taken from the Interpretive Plan completed in 2001. The first two panels were recently installed at the Highway 371 Information Center in Brainerd. Suggestions for future sites are welcome.

New Business

2011 National Scenic Byway Grants: Holly Slagle of the MN Scenic Byways Office announced that information on 2011 National Scenic Byway Grants was released this week by the Federal Highway Administration. Five Minnesota projects will be funded, including the MN-MRPC's application for Great River Road corridor management planning and implementation. The project includes signage and visitor information initiatives for the MRT statewide. \$560,000 in Scenic Byway funds will be received, with \$140,000 in match to be provided by the National Park Service. Special thanks were noted to the MN-MRPC's partners on this application: MNRRA/National Park Service; Mn/DOT; and the Trust for Public Land; as well as to the State Scenic Byways Office for their assistance. The project will be approximately 18 months in length. A project advisory team will be convened including MN-MRPC members, with a subgroup possible for initial set up of processes and funding. A funding agreement must be in place before any work begins. Members will be advised when this is complete. Press releases and letters were discussed.

Regional Citizen Committee Meetings: Regional Great River Road Citizen Committee meetings will be held in five locations this fall. Purposes are to give updates on the Great River Road including the new corridor management planning project; gather input from local communities; and elect regional commissioners. The Hastings to Iowa Border meeting was held on June 2 and served as a pilot. Tentative dates/locations have been set as follows: Grand Rapids to Brainerd – Sept 20 in Crosby; Brainerd to Elk River – Sept 23 in St. Cloud. When possible, meetings will be held in partnership with other river related initiatives such as the National Park Service Mississippi River Forums, and Mississippi Headwaters Board. Topics for the meetings agendas were discussed.

Agency Appointments: Letters will be going out to state agencies requesting re-appointment or new appointment of MN-MRPC members, unless members were recently appointed. This in combination with the regional commissioner elections will update the commission roster.

Letter of Support – Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex: Commissioner Schaubach provided an information sheet and overview of the proposed Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex. The project would involve purchase of 2.5+ miles of Mississippi Riverfront and a total of nearly

2,000 acres of land northeast of Brainerd. It would create a 9 mile stretch of protected shoreline along the Mississippi; connectivity within an area containing 6,200 contiguous acres of protected lands; and connections between existing trail systems. The project builds on a ten year collaborative effort involving the State of Minnesota, Potlatch Corporation, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and local community supporters. The project also has several organizations on a growing list of supporters as funding is sought from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Mulry and seconded by Commissioner Labovitz to authorize a letter of support from the MN-MRPC. Motion passed.

Great River Road Video Project – Story Ideas and Locations: An RFP will be released soon seeking a vendor to develop a series of MN Great River Road Videos. This project is funded by the Commission's federal marketing grant and a byways grant from Explore Minnesota Tourism. The goal will be one 3 – 5 minute video per destination area, and one overall Minnesota Great River Road video. The concept for destination area videos will be somewhat similar to Explore Minnesota Tourism's "My Favorite Minnesota" concept. Commission members were asked to send video/story ideas to the MN-MRPC office for consideration by the Marketing Work Group.

2011 National Scenic Byways Conference, Aug 21 – 24

The 2011 National Scenic Byways Conference will be held at the Marriott City Center in Minneapolis, August 21 – 24. Several MN-MRPC members will be in attendance. The Great River Road will be highlighted in several field workshops. The MN-MRPC is a byway sponsor for the conference and will be provided with exhibit space on August 23 and 24. Plans were discussed for set up, take down, and exhibit staffing. Commissioner Anderson encouraged attendees to participate in the National Scenic Byways Foundation reception on Tuesday evening.

State MRPC Travel Updates and Upcoming Events

Travel Updates: Updates on any recent events attended will be included within the agency and regional updates.

Organization Work Group Update

Commissioner Samp reported on recent discussions with University of Minnesota Extension regarding workshop opportunities on Social Media and On-Line Roadside Marketing (such as Google Mapping). The workshops utilize a train-the-trainer format where attendees bring in lists of local assets that are mapped at the workshop, and then can take the information back to local communities to assist others and map additional sites. The workshops are being offered as part of an initiative to help rural communities utilize technology. Several of the locations are along the Great River Road and stakeholders including Convention/Visitors Bureaus and Chambers could be invited. The opportunity could also be shared with other byways. If the MN-MRPC would decide to hold a similar workshop in the Metro region, there would be costs involved since the session would not be included in the technology initiative for rural communities. Mn/DOT's Arden Hills Training Center was noted as a possible site. More information will be shared as available.

Agency and Regional Updates

Itasca to Grand Rapids: Commissioner Frost reported that the Mississippi Headwaters Board is alive and well and has been working on strategic planning involving eight counties and the first 400 miles of the river. The Initiative Foundation is assisting with this "rebranding" of the Headwaters Board. Offices are now housed in the Land Management Building in Brainerd. The newly updated Mississippi Headwaters Guidebook was recently completed and is available at <http://mississippiheadwaters.org>. Commissioner Frost also reported on the popularity of geocaching in the Bemidji area, coordinated by the Bemidji Convention and Visitors Bureau; and mentioned the interest generated by the Lake Andrusia/Mississippi River webcam at Joe's Lodge.

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: Commissioner Schaubach highlighted items from the attached regional report including the grand opening of the Cuyuna Lakes Mountain Bike Trail. The trail was recently mentioned in the Wall Street Journal and is considered a model by the International Mountain Bike Association. Addition of more miles is under review.

Brainerd to Elk River: Commissioner Samp noted that efforts continue in the Brainerd and St. Cloud areas to develop and implement master plans making the river a focal point. The cities of Brainerd and

Baxter recently joined forces with the intent of a plan to include both communities and align efforts related to the river.

Elk River to Hastings: Commissioner Labovitz shared information on a variety of developments in the region. Minneapolis recently held a design competition seeking ideas for a six mile stretch of riverfront above St. Anthony Falls. St. Paul unveiled its master plan for Great River Park at an event in June. The City of Dayton recently purchased a historic home property on the river. The Mississippi River is being considered for designation as a National Recreation Trail/Water Trail as part of the "America's Great Outdoors" initiative. A Minnesota Bicycle Tourism Summit will be held in November, likely in Red Wing. MNRRA/National Park Service is a partner. Work on MNRRA's alternative transportation plan continues under the direction of Susan Overson, possibly to include the expansion of Nice Ride bike stations to St. Paul. Weather and water conditions affected the Urban Wilderness Recreation Adventure (UWCA) programming this summer, resulting in some news routes for the canoes. On September 17, the first Great River Race will be held on the Mississippi as a corporate event through Wilderness Inquiry. Large canoes will be "raced" by sponsors with proceeds to benefit UWCA programs. MNRRA is actively working with partners including DNR, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and local entities on a planning to address Asian carp and other invasive species. The "Ranger on Call" program is a new opportunity for MNRRA visitors to call in for interpretive information at various sign locations. MNRRA is also pursuing a sister park project with Corcovado National Park (Costa Rica) focused on migratory birds.

Hastings to Iowa Border: Commissioner Mulry reported that the region survived spring/summer flooding, but was then affected by the state government shutdown during a popular time for state park visits. A great deal of biking, both motorized and non-motorized, is taking place. Camping has increased and festivals and fairs in the area have had high attendance. Winona was recently recognized as a Legacy City, highlighting the Beethoven Festival, Shakespeare Festival and Frozen River Film Festival.

Natural Resources: Technical Advisor Wheeler distributed a flyer on Take a Day OFF (Outdoor Family Fun), an event held at Stearns County Mississippi River Park on August 13. The event is a partnership of many organizations and offers a variety of free activities including kayaking, nature hikes, river shore landscaping, fishing, and more. The weather was excellent contributing to high attendance numbers. A DNR news release describing developments and actions related to Asian carp in Minnesota was also distributed. The DNR recently began a pilot using high pressure hot water washers, targeting certain locations to wash zebra mussels off boats. The DNR Central Region Headquarters includes 102 acres of land along the river, at Warner Road and Highway 61, and is looking at ways to better utilize and feature the river.

Transportation: Commissioner Pafko reported that the current Federal Highway Bill expires on September 30 after two years of continuing resolutions. House and Senate proposals for the new bill vary in some ways, but it seems likely that a variety of programs will be consolidated which could result in an increased focus on certain projects such as interstates and less discretionary funding. The America's Byways Resource Center recently announced that its current funding source will not continue into 2012. Completion of the Hastings Bridge project has been delayed due to high water levels and the state government shutdown.

Next Meeting

Thursday, November 17, 2011

2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

State Office Building Room 500 North

Adjournment

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



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

Grand Rapids to Brainerd – Commissioner John Schaubach

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

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

IMBA's immediate priority is to promote additional trail construction in the CCSRA to attain Gold Level Ride Center Certification. What a great opportunity for this abandoned mine land to be significant as a recreational tourism destination. We see it helping our local economy already. And the presence of the paved trail as a component of the MRT should help this further.

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

MN-MNRPC
Work Group and National Committee Rosters
11/17/11

MN-MRPC Capital Improvement

Sheldon Johnson
Carol Zoff

MN-MRPC Organization

Karl Samp, Chair
Mark Anderson
David Kelliher
Carol Zoff

MN-MRPC Economic Development

Paul Labovitz, Chair
Frank Pafko
John Schaubach
Sandy Pappas
Carol Zoff

National MRPC Board

Sheldon Johnson
Sheronne Mulry, Proxy

National MRPC Culture/Heritage

Sheronne Mulry, Co-Chair

National MRPC Transportation

Carol Zoff, Co-Chair
John Schaubach, Alternate
Frank Pafko

MN-MRPC Marketing

Sheronne Mulry, Chair
Paul Labovitz
Cynthia Wheeler
Cheryl Offerman
Carol Zoff

National MRPC ERA

Sheldon Johnson
Karl Samp, Alternate

National MRPC Marketing

Jack Frost
Cheryl Offerman
Dave Senjem, Alternate

Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management Plan & Implementation 2011 National Scenic Byways Grant

Project Management Team

Role: Detailed planning and oversight of project, with specific tasks to carry out.

Possible members/organizations:

- MN-MRPC: 4 members, representing work groups (Capital Improvement, Economic Development, Marketing, Organization), plus Chris Miller
- Department of Transportation – Carol Zoff, Frank Pafko
- MNRRA/National Park Service – Susan Overson
- Legislative Coordinating Commission – Greg Hubinger and/or Diane Henry-Wangenstein
- Trust for Public Land – Susan Schmidt or designee
- MRT – Dan Collins or Liz Walton

Project Advisory Team

Role: General advisors to the project at a very broad level. Help facilitate a successful project that meets their overall needs, meets the mission of the MN-MRPC, leverages resources, aligns efforts and sets the stage for future partnerships. Serve as a conduit for information and ensure that a variety of viewpoints are considered in the project.

Possible members/organizations:

- National Park Service
- Randy Thoreson, National Park Service, Trails & Waterways
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Chippewa National Forest
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Housing and Urban Development
- Federal Highway Administration
- League of Minnesota Cities
- League of Minnesota Counties
- Association of CVBs and/or Chambers
- MN County Engineers Association
- MN Association of Museums
- Foundation (such as McKnight, Initiative or Blandin)
- Mississippi Headwaters Board
- MN Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee
- Jenny Winkelman, Minneapolis Watershed District, Non-English Speaking Outreach
- Rebecca Fabunmi, Mn/DOT Commissioners Office and Mn/DOT Diversity Council
- National Audubon Society
- 10-State MRPC (National Office rep or Chair)
- Mn/DOT GIS Lead
- Governor's Office
- Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Explore MN Tourism and MN Historical Society (Application noted that advisory team would include reps from 5 state agencies on the Commission. DOT is already represented on this list.)
- Ex-Officio members: MN-MRPC lead, Carol Zoff, Chris Miller

Acknowledgments

The Great River Road Development Study involved scores of dedicated people serving in various capacities. Many volunteered their knowledge and time primarily because they loved the Mississippi River and the Great River Road. In particular, the effort was guided by the unflagging assistance from a talented Advisory Committee. Without the guidance and insight provided by the Advisory Committee, this study would not have reached its final scope or resulted in anything other than predictable pedestrian musings. By keeping the study focused on the river and the tourist, the Advisory Committee has created a document that will serve as a blueprint for people and organizations trying to improve the experience of a tourist and enhance the quality of life of those people who call the Mississippi River valley their home.

For all of their talented assistance, grateful acknowledgment is made to the following individuals:

Mr. Bob Brown, *State Aid Engineer, Metro Division, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Roseville*

Mr. Craig Collison, *Transportation Planner, Northwest Transportation District, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Bemidji*

Mr. John Edman, *Executive Director, Mississippi Parkway Commission of Minnesota, Minneapolis*

Mr. Dennis Erickson, *Construction and Operations Division, St. Paul District, United States Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul*

Mr. Ron Erickson, *Educational Programs Manager, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, Minneapolis*

Mr. Andy Golfis, *Secretary, Mississippi Parkway Commission of Minnesota, St. Paul*

Mr. Dick Haskett, *Assistant Director of Tourism, Minnesota Office of Tourism, Department of Trade and Economic Development, St. Paul*

Mr. David Kelliher, *Legislative Liaison, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul*

Ms. Sue McDonald, *Director of Interpretive Programs, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, United States Fish and Wildlife Services, United States Department of the Interior, Bloomington*

Mr. Bob Mayhew, P.E., *Project Manager, District 6, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Rochester*

Mr. Marvin Moriarty, *Deputy Regional Director, United States Fish and Wildlife Services, United States Department of the Interior, Bloomington*

Mr. Jim Pederson, *Legislative Liaison, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul*

Mr. Dan Ray, *Program Officer, The McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis*

Mrs. Margaret Sherman, *former Board Member, Mississippi Headwaters Board, Palisade*

Mr. John Strohkirch, *Development and Acquisition Manager, Parks and Recreation Division, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul*

Mr. Steve Voss, *Transportation Planner, District 3, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Baxter*



This Great River Road Development Study was instigated and directed by three dedicated employees of the State of Minnesota:

Mr. Dennis Adams, *Unit Chief, Environmental Studies Unit, Office of Environmental Services, Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul*

Ms. Allyson Brooks, *Historian, Cultural Resources Unit, Office of Technical Support, Minnesota Department of Transportation*

Ms. Carol Zoff Pelton, *Project Manager, Landscape Unit, Office of Environmental Services, Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul*

The Great River Road Development Study was conducted by a team of consultants including:

Economics Research Associates, Inc.

Elaine Carmichael, *Lead Economist*

David Versel, *Assistant Economist*

Gartner Consulting

Bill Gartner, *Lead Investigator and Analyst*

Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.

Veronica Anderson, *Lead Resource Investigator and Administrative Assistant*

Becky Blue, *Lead GIS Analyst*

Gus Blumer, *Resource Investigator*

Dan Carlson, *GIS Technician*

Craig Churchward, *Project Manager*

Wendi Conley, *Word Processing*

Brad Digre, *GIS Technician*

Sue Herlund, *Word Processing*

Jennifer Kunz, *Graphic Designer*

Candis Nord-Sheptak, *Planning Graphics Designer*

Michelle Pelvit, *Administrative Assistant*

Tammy Orf, *Database Administration*

Tricia Rezin, *Graphic Designer*

Mark Salzman, *Urban Designer*

April Warwick, *Lead Graphic Designer*

The 106 Group

Anne Ketz, *Project Advisor*

David Ketz, *Project Manager*

Andrew Schmidt, *Lead Cultural Resource Investigator*

All photographs, unless noted otherwise, are by Craig Churchward or Andrew Schmidt. Text is by Craig Churchward, except the discussions of cultural resources in the four demonstration areas found in Section 7 which are by Andrew Schmidt or the economic development discussions in Sections 5, 6, and 8 which are by Elaine Carmichael and David Versel. Veronica Anderson was instrumental in keeping the project moving ahead and Becky Blue doggedly developed the GIS database. April Warwick developed the graphic format and laid out the entire report.

Great River Road Development Study





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

Brainerd to Elk River – Commissioner Karl Samp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For Immediate Release:
October 5, 2011

Contact: Matt Glaesman (320) 255-7218

**City of St. Cloud Receives Two State Awards Recognizing
the St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan**

St. Cloud, MN – October 3, 2011 – The City of St. Cloud has been presented two state awards in recognition of the St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan, which is a regional one of a kind urban river plan aimed at restoring the natural habitat and ecology of the river, create economic vitality, and provide better connections to the Mississippi River that runs through the communities of Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and St. Cloud.

The first award, 2011 “River-Friendly Community of the Year”, was presented by Minnesota Waters, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting responsible stewardship of Minnesota’s water resources by engaging citizens, local and state policymakers, and other partners in the protection and restoration of Minnesota’s lakes and rivers. The award was formally presented to the City of St. Cloud during Minnesota Water’s “River Night, Lake Night, Great Night! Celebration” on September 14, 2011.

The second award, “Excellence in Community Engagement”, was presented by the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association, an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities in the State of Minnesota. The award was formally presented to the City of St. Cloud during the MNAPA’s “Riding the Waves of Change Conference” on September 29, 2011.

“In May 2011, we celebrated the completion of the St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan at the St. Cloud River’s Edge Convention Center, which was formerly known at the St. Cloud Civic Center” says Mayor Dave Kleis. “Now we are very excited to take the ideas generated by thousands of residents and focus on getting more people actively interacting with this incredible natural resource we have running through our communities.”

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November 1, 2011

L74(MWR-P/RTCA)

Mr. Mark Ostgarden
City Planner AICP
City of Brainerd
501 Laurel Street
Brainerd, Minnesota 56401

Dear Mr. Ostgarden:

Thank you for your application to the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program for new project assistance. Upon review of your application it has been determined that your request for assistance meets the program goals and guidelines of RTCA, so a preliminary decision has been made to accept your application and work with you on the Brainerd-Baxter Mississippi Riverfront Master Plan (herein after referred to as the "Project").

For the next two fiscal years (October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2013) we will work together towards the goal of developing a plan that will protect, revitalize and establish the Mississippi River as a Brainerd and Baxter focal point. The plan area includes over seven and one half (7 ½) miles of river in the two communities. Objectives and elements of the plan include existing and new riverfront revitalization, riverway park development and establishing connecting trails both adjacent to and within the Brainerd and Baxter communities.

It is understood that NPS/RTCA assistance will be mainly the following work items:

- Assist in guiding the joint venture Mississippi River Master Plan development process for both communities within the framework established in the *Brainerd – Baxter Mississippi River Vision*.
- Assist in organizing, developing and facilitating project planning and development strategies
- Work with, as part of a project team, existing and potential new project partners.
- Assist in the development and implementation of a public involvement process.
- Work with the project partners to develop existing and future funding sources.
- Assist in addressing future project processes, phasing and timelines.
- Work with any project consulting individuals/firms.

It is also understood that you, as the primary project contact, will:

- Provide meeting space and local administrative support.
- Assist in and work with RTCA in project development and implementation.
- Assist in and work with RTCA to develop a public involvement process.
- Work with, as part of a project team, existing and potential new project partners.
- Assist, as part of the project team, in identifying funding sources.

At this time we cannot make a final decision pending an approved budget from Congress and the President. However, since it may be some time before we have an approved budget, we wanted let you know that barring unexpected circumstances we fully expect to accept your application and provide the assistance you requested.

I look forward to working with you on the Brainerd-Baxter Mississippi Riverfront Master Plan!

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 651-293-8450 or our Midwest Region Program Chief Dave Thomson at 402-661-1570.

Sincerely,

Randy Thoreson
Outdoor Recreation Planner

Cc
David J. Thomson
Chief, Rivers & Trails Program, Midwest Region
National Park Service
601 Riverfront Drive-Omaha, NE 68102
v 402.661.1570

July 18, 2011

David Thompson, Program Manager
National Park Service, Midwest Region
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102

Dear Mr. Thompson:

This letter is in support of the Mississippi River corridor revitalization plan application. An ad hoc committee that includes City of Brainerd and Baxter representatives as well as many groups and organizations (listed in the application) committed to this effort has been meeting on a regular basis. To date it has developed the **Brainerd-Baxter Mississippi River Vision**. A copy of “the **Vision**” is included in the application.

Our area of the state is a vacation destination with an abundance of lakes; we are the “*Land of 10,000 Lakes!*” However we have only one (1) Mississippi River. Historically our attention has been on the lakes with little regard paid to the jewel we have flowing in our region. This river is particularly important to the sister cities of Brainerd and Baxter. With over seven (7) miles of river flowing through the two cities, economic, recreation, and quality of life opportunities abound. However, because of historical ambivalence we do not have a plan to capitalize on these opportunities.

Our organization strongly believes that it is critical for the success of the River corridor revitalization endeavor that a plan to implement “the **Vision**” is a next critical step. It is particularly important to note that this will be a cooperative planning effort by the two cities through which the River flows as well as the many groups and organizations identified in the application.

As Citizen Representative on the MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission, I have taken part in much of this process and feel taking this next step in developing a master plan for the river corridor will guide future opportunities for enhancing the river experience for residents and visitors to the area, to incorporate joint marketing efforts with the Great River Road, and Mississippi River Trail, as well as identify key natural assets to be preserved.

I would urge the National Park Service approve this very important application.

Thank you.

Karl Samp
MN Mississippi River Parkway Commissioner



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Agency Updates - November 2011

Department of Natural Resources – Cynthia Wheeler, Technical Advisor

Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail

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

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

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

Asian Carp

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

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

Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail

Legislative Authorization

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail was legislatively authorized in 2010 (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 85.015, Subd. 28). The attached map illustrates the conceptual alignment.

Subd. 28, Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail. The trail shall originate at Crow Wing State Park in Crow Wing County at the southern end of the Paul Bunyan Trail and shall extend from Crow Wing State Park westerly to the city of Pillager, then southerly along the east side of Camp Ripley, then easterly along the south side of Camp Ripley across to the east side of the Mississippi River, and then northerly through Fort Ripley to Crow Wing State Park. A second segment of the trail shall be established that shall extend in a southerly direction and in close proximity to the Mississippi River from the southeasterly portion of the first segment of the trail to the city of Little Falls, and then terminate at the Soo Line Trail in Morrison County.

The Planning Process

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Trails, is working in cooperation with the Camp Ripley/Veterans Trail Committee, and Bolton and Menk, a consulting firm, to develop a master plan for the trail. Bolton and Menk was hired by the Region 5 Development Commission at the request of the trail committee to do a feasibility/corridor study. Bolton Menk has established a steering committee comprised of representatives from Cass County, Crow Wing County, Morrison County, MnDOT, Camp Ripley, DNR, the National Park Service, and the Camp Ripley/Veterans Trail Committee to assist with the study. The purpose of this study is to evaluate potential trail routes and identify acquisition, development, and management issues.











In order to avoid duplication of effort and avoid confusion by the public, the Division of Parks and Trails will coordinate development of the master plan with the corridor study. The DNR master planning process and corridor study process are very similar, the difference being the DNR master planning process will work more closely with DNR resource staff to identify issues and opportunities relative to the trail, and includes a formal DNR internal review and public review of the plan document.

DNR staff will be developing the resource inventory section of the master plan and identifying opportunities and concerns for future trail development and management.

The consultant's study is expected to be completed by spring 2012. It is anticipated that the master plan process will take about another 6 months, or a year total.

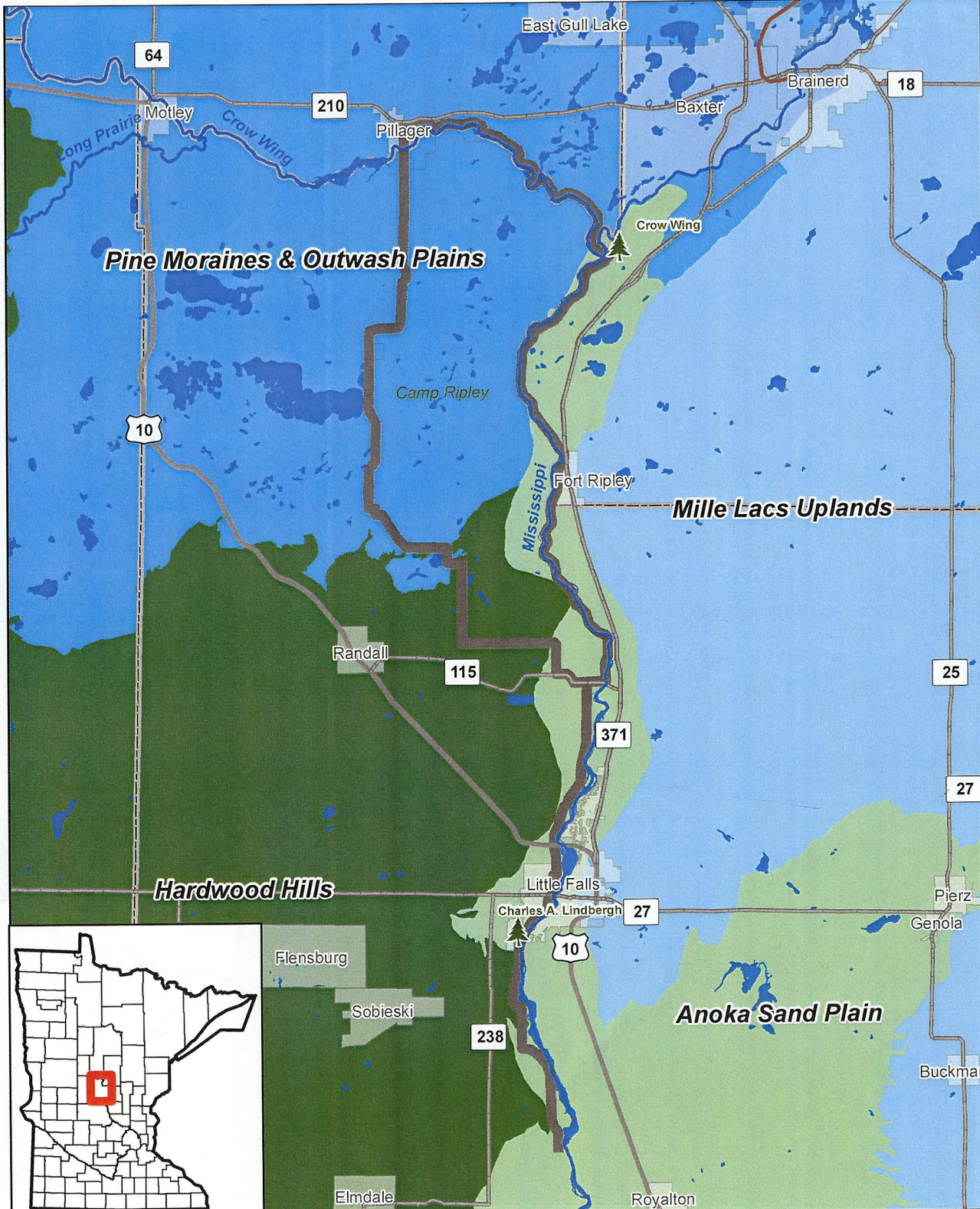
Camp Ripley Veterans State Ecological Subsections

Legend

-  State Park
-  Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail
-  Minnesota State Trails
-  Rivers
-  Federal Trunk Highway
-  State Trunk Highway
-  Lake
-  Military Base
-  City Boundary
-  County Boundary

Ecological Subsections of Minnesota

-  Pine Moraines & Outwash Plains
-  Hardwood Hills
-  Mille Lacs Uplands
-  Anoka Sand Plain











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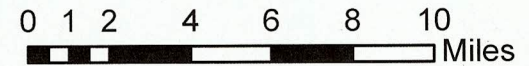
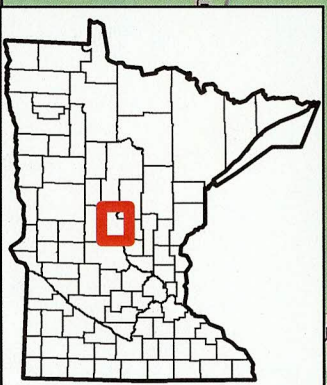
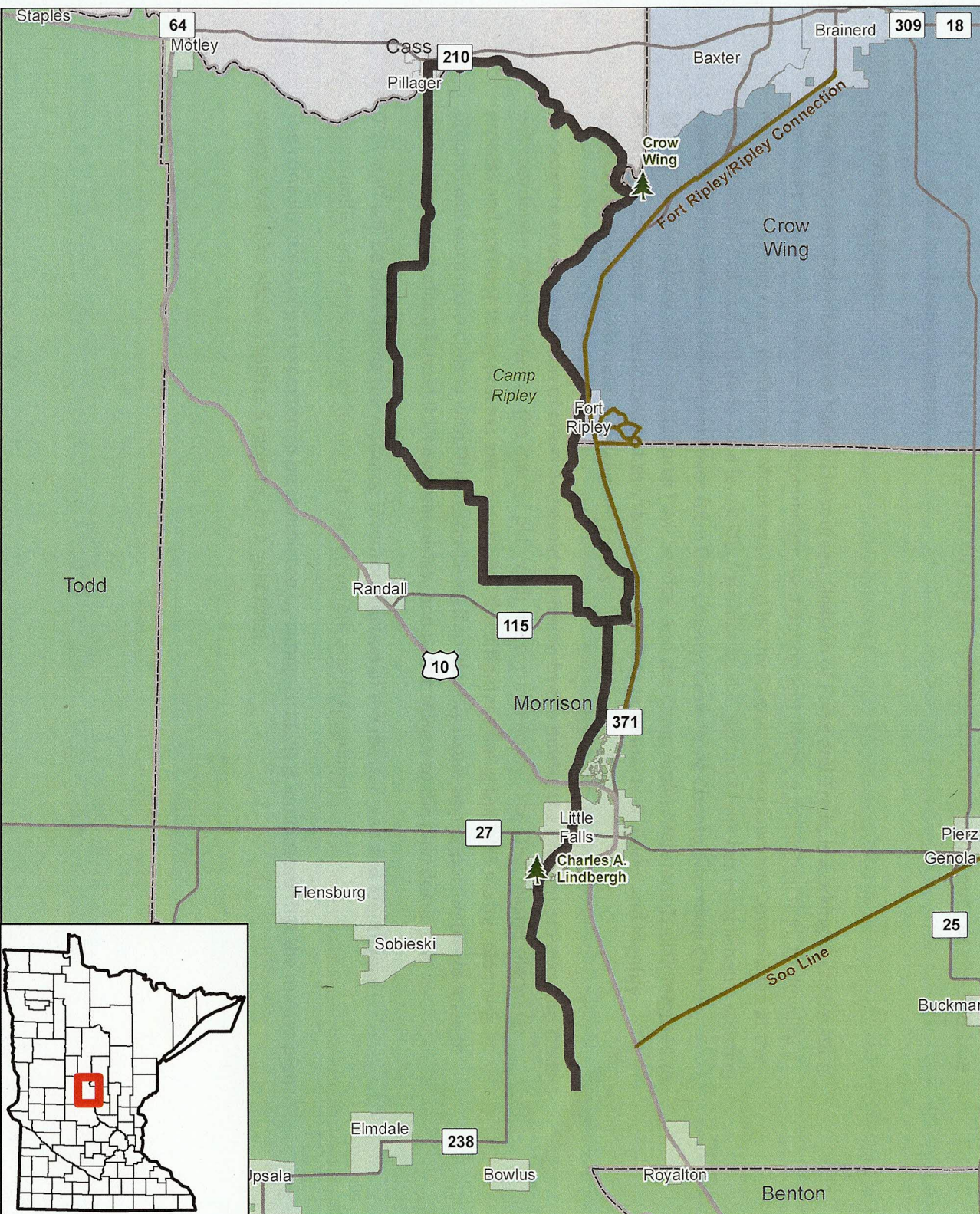
Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail Overview

Legend

-  State Park
-  Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail
-  Regional Trails
-  U.S. Trunk Highway
-  State Trunk Highway
-  Military Base
-  City Boundary
-  County Boundaries

DNR Regions

-  Region 1
-  Region 2
-  Region 3



MN Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Trails