



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
4th Quarter Meeting
November 29, 2012
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Room 300 North

DRAFT AGENDA

1:00 p.m.	Welcome & Introductions	S. Johnson
1:05 p.m.	Special Topic: MN GRR Corridor Management Plan Project - Overview, Timelines & Planning	Zoff/Miller/All
2:30 p.m.	Approve Today's Regular Meeting Agenda & Minutes from 8/23/12	S. Johnson/All
2:40 p.m.	Commission Business - FY '13 Budget Status - Travel and Reimbursement Requests/Forms	Anderson/Miller S. Johnson/Miller
3:00 p.m.	National MRPC Updates - MRPC Board - 2012 Annual Meeting Report - MPRC Committee Updates - Tasty Traditions Contest	S. Johnson Samp/Zoff/Mulry/Miller Committee Members Miller
3:30 p.m.	Old Business - Updates - Visual Resource Protection Plan - Frac Sand Mining - CapX 2020 - Mississippi River Trail	Zoff/Miller Mulry/Zoff/Miller Mulry Handout
4:00 p.m.	New Business - Marketing Work Group Projects & Recommendations - Great River Road 75 th Anniversary Celebration – Brainstorm	Mulry/Group Members All
4:20 p.m.	Agency and Regional Updates - Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids - Grand Rapids to Brainerd - Brainerd to Elk River - Elk River to Hastings - Hastings to Iowa Border - Agriculture - Explore MN Tourism - Historical Society - Natural Resources - Transportation - National Park Service/MISS	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
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 11:00 – 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.

MN-MRPC FY 13
Operating Budget Draft - 11/27/12

Obj Code	Description	FY 13 Current Budget	Spent	Remaining		FY13 Proposed	FY 11 Final	FY 12 Final	Comments
41070	Other Benefits (Per Diem)	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 605.00	\$ 4,395.00		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,946.00	\$ 1,755.00	Commissioners: quarterly mtgs, MRPC Annual Mtg & Semi-Annual Mtg, work group mtgs, Commission representation at meetings and events, special projects. Additional funds could be needed in FY 13 as CMP project starts up.
41100	Space Rental	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 630.00	\$ -	FY 11 cost was for brochure storage, remaining quantities now at MN-MRPC office
41110	Printing & Advertising	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 131.80	\$ 8,868.20		\$ 13,000.00	\$ 2,550.00	\$ 422.00	Commission meeting copies, materials, ads, etc. FY 13 possible GRR map reprint and lapel pins. Map reprint was last done in FY 11 and cost is reflected under prof/technical services. Metro region map tablet reprint also in 2011 prof/tech svcs.
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$ 38,800.00	\$ 10,335.39	\$ 28,464.61		\$ 38,800.00	\$ 37,930.00	\$ 26,502.00	Administrative contract (26,000) + local match for marketing grant (2,700), other outside projects and/or hours for Commission projects outside of admin retainer (incl Visual Resource Protection Plan, admin or cash flow on CMP grant). Current est for yr = 33,300 includes regular admin contract, marketing grant match, visual resource protection plan hours
41150	Computer & System Services	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 814.00	\$ 186.00		\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 814.00	Website hosting, stats and email. Minor updates and programming changes.
41155	Communications	\$ 700.00	\$ 151.00	\$ 549.00		\$ 700.00	\$ 1,390.00	\$ 668.00	Postage/deliveries. MN MRPC phone line and conference calls. Additional funds could be needed for conference calls, but likely to balance against travel line items.
41160	In-State Travel	\$ 6,526.21	\$ 896.97	\$ 5,629.24		\$ 5,026.21	\$ 3,565.00	\$ 3,759.00	Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, work groups, events, related projects.
41170	Out-State Travel	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 2,363.15	\$ 6,636.85		\$ 6,500.00	\$ 2,350.00	\$ 949.00	MRPC Annual & Semi Annual Meetings. No semi-annual meeting in FY 12, and Seed Grant funds used for most of Annual Meeting costs. Seed Grant is now closed out. 2012 Annual Mtg - Louisville, 2013 Semi-Annual Meeting - Bettendorf, IA
41180	Employee Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 130.00	
41190	Agency Prof/Tch Svcs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ (24.00)	
41300	Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ (55.00)	\$ 555.00		\$ 500.00	\$ 483.00	\$ -	General office supplies for Commission projects.
43000	Other Costs (MRPC Dues)	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00	\$ 24,832.00	\$ 5,500.00	National MRPC Dues (\$15,000 annual dues amount). Portion of FY 12 dues paid at year end of FY 11.
TOTAL		\$ 85,526.21	\$ 15,242.31	\$ 70,283.90		\$ 85,526.21	\$ 75,676.00	\$ 40,475.00	

MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Commission Member Travel Request Form

Today's Date: _____

Name of Member: _____

Date(s) of Travel: _____

Traveling to: _____ from _____

Purpose of the Travel (attach a brochure or agenda if applicable):

How will your attendance at this event benefit the Commission and the State of Minnesota:

Estimated of Travel Cost:

Cost of the Registration Fee, if applicable: \$ _____

Is overnight lodging required? YES NO

If yes, How many nights _____ and approximate cost _____ per night.

Anticipated meal reimbursement: _____ # of breakfast _____ # of lunch _____ # of diner

Estimated Round Trip Mileage: _____

Staff Notes:

Approved (date: _____) Denied (date: _____)

MN-MRPC Chair Signature: _____

** By approval and acceptance of this travel, you agree to submit a summary of this learning experience/meeting/activity to be shared with Commission members and be on file in the MN-MRPC office. This summary shall be submitted in writing with your expense reimbursement form.

MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Commission Member Post Travel Brief

Today's Date: _____

Name of Member: _____

Date(s) of Travel: _____

Traveling to: _____ from _____

Activity/Event/Meeting: _____

Person/s met with:

Summary of Discussion/Event/Activity:

MN-MRPC Marketing Work Group Conference Call Notes

October 30, 2012

Participants: Sheronne Mulry, Carol Zoff, Cynthia Wheeler, Chris Miller

Great River Road Map/Travel Planner Reprint

Background - The MN-MRPC had funds remaining at the end of fiscal year 2012 and carried them over into the second year of the biennium, fiscal year 2013. The Minnesota GRR Map/Travel Planner was last printed in spring of 2011. Cost of revisions, printing, and shipping was \$7,451.54 for 20,000 pieces. Most of the quantity was shipped directly to our list of travel information centers, state parks/national parks, and interpretive centers. 3,000 were held at the MN-MRPC office for individual requests, boxes requested by distribution sites, meetings, etc. We are no longer able to send boxes of maps as requested. Quantity for meetings and events is limited. Individual requests from the website continue to be fulfilled. Approximately 300 maps remain. The MN-MRPC referred this topic to the Marketing Work Group. A suggestion was made to consider a print-ready document that could be customized by local partners and printed at their cost.

Discussion – Yes, a reprint should be done; the 2013 Great River Road 75th Anniversary should be noted on the front cover if possible; distribution sites should be emailed regarding desired quantity; the quantity printed last time (20,000) can serve as a general first estimate; one time shipping to sites should be included as it was last time; extra copies should be printed for use during public outreach for the Corridor Management Plan; storage might need to be added to the price quotes; add the date to the bottom of the piece so people know which version it is (75th Anniversary notation will also help); make only necessary changes (such as on contact panel); consider a blank box for customization and printing by local sites at their cost for future print runs, and address this as the marketing plan is developed as part of the CMP – ask if local sites would be interested in such an option.

Next Steps – The recommendation for a re-print will be forwarded to the MN-MRPC Chair. If approved, price quotes for printing/shipping will be requested and forwarded to the Marketing Work Group for consideration.

Lapel Pins

Background - 1,000 Great River Road lapel pins were purchased in 2007. Cost was \$1,784. Approximately 120 remain. Supplies have been requested for distribution at meetings recently.

Discussion – all recommended that pins be re-ordered; prices should be requested for 1,000 – 1,500 – 2,000 pieces; pins are useful for meetings, trade shows, and distribution to people who help with any GRR-related activities to show that they are “in the club.” Each commission member could be given a supply for distribution, also could be used during CMP public outreach.

Next Steps – The recommendation for purchase will be forwarded to the MN-MRPC Chair. If approved, price quotes will be requested and forwarded to the Marketing Work Group for consideration.

Marketing Grant Tasks

Background - Projects remaining are listed below, with descriptions taken directly from the grant application. The grant end date is June 30, 2013. Enough information for return on investment may already be in place and/or could be gathered from existing records. Budget amounts can be adjusted among the three projects.

Hospitality Training - Conduct hospitality training with GRR community tourism offices and Minnesota travel information staff, front desk and management staff from GRR hotels/motels, and area attractions, which will maximize the knowledge base of local hospitality staff on fun things to see and do along the Mississippi River/GRR in their specific destination area and facilitate cross-promotion up and down the river. Original budget - \$3,400; current budget – \$1,200

Group Travel – Develop a group travel plan to market the Great River Road Destination Areas that are suitable to this niche, including participation in group travel trade shows, trade publications and websites, and develop partnerships, including AmericInn. Original budget - \$1,000; current budget - \$1,000

Return on Investment Measures – In order to measure the effectiveness of this project, we will develop benchmarks, on-going measurement and reporting for each project element. Original budget - \$2,600; current budget - \$2,217.43

Discussion –

- Tight timeline and budget
- This grant is on an extension and though another could be requested it would be best to close it out
- Some return on investment information is available, such as number of video views on You Tube
- Focus groups and/or email surveys could gather opinions from partners/stakeholders on the various items funded by the grant

- U of M Extension/Tourism could be a resource – though discussion indicated that this option was explored in the past and was not workable for purposes of this grant
- Intent is to provide hospitality training on things to see and do along the river
- How do we do hospitality training for the full length of the GRR with the budget available – maybe through a pilot in one area?
- Could we do something that would take all three remaining projects, roll them together and combine the dollars?
- Identify group travel/hospitality training curriculum with built in ROI measures?
- Work with agency partners especially DNR (state parks), MHS and Ag to promote group travel at their sites
- Do state parks have group travel elements to their marketing?
- For group travel, target soft times of the day, week, year example – Itasca State Park offers winter lodging at reduced rates
- To measure return on investment, use coupons for local businesses or online clicks?
- What's the outcome – a product that can be used, or training that has occurred?
- Identify which locations are appropriate for group travel and work with those
- Package existing options; talk with Explore MN Tourism for recommendation on itineraries and enhance those
- Should this project be done internally by Commission partners or put out on RFP?
- Tight timeline and budget could make it difficult to hire this out
- Consider getting agency partners together to discuss options that will benefit all and then plan for completion
- Piggy back on things already happening and determine how to package for this purpose
- GRR videos and map tablets are useful tools for hospitality training

Next Steps – Marketing Work Group members will review notes, consider options within their agencies/areas and send recommendations and/or additional input back to Chris. Another conference call will be scheduled if needed.

EMT Tourism Marketing Award – Nomination for Video Project?

Background - The Minnesota Travel Marketing Awards Program is conducted each year to salute outstanding achievements in travel promotion, public relations, and the advertising of Minnesota's many travel destinations and attractions. The 2013 Minnesota Tourism conference will be February 12-13 and award nominations are due November 23. Sheronne Mulry recommended that the MN-MRPC nominate the Great River Road videos.

Discussion – All recommended submitting a nomination for the GRR video project. Sheronne mentioned the positive comments she's received on the videos in her region.

Next Steps – Marketing Work Group members will review the draft nomination and send changes/additions to Chris via email by November 12. The nomination and two video DVDs will be submitted.

Great River Road 75th Anniversary Activities

Background - The National 10-State MRPC is planning activities to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Great River Road in 2013. Possibilities discussed by the MRPC Marketing Committee include the 2013 Great Race (vintage race cars from St. Paul to the Gulf); 75 featured events up and down the river; MRT activities/partnership; 75th anniversary boat tour. A form letter might be used for each state to send to local communities, to ask if they'd like to participate. Help will be needed from all ten states after activities are determined.

Discussion – Are we limited to what the National MRPC highlights? Minnesota could do its own celebration in addition to what the National MRPC chooses.

Next Steps – Marketing Work Group members will brainstorm ideas of "75's" we could promote, such as 75 state park activities along the GRR, 75 restaurants, 75 geocaches, etc. Ideas will be forwarded to Chris and the Marketing Work Group will review and prioritize, then develop a recommendation for the MN-MRPC.



**Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota
Agency & Regional Updates
November 2012**

Mississippi River Trail – Info from Liz Walton, MnDOT

- The bike-friendly community work we began appears to be paying off. Bemidji was just announced as a bike-friendly community, along with 2 Bemidji businesses designated as bike-friendly businesses.
- Lake City is working with Lake Pepin communities to develop a Lake Pepin Bike Guide (rough draft attached). It will include Tour de Pepin and MRT maps along with loops out of each of the MN/WI Lake Pepin communities.
- We expect to hear any day now if the Elk River to Itasca section is designated as another segment of the U.S. Bicycle Route System. Working on Metro—assuming will apply this April for that last segment.
- Organized or played a role in various MRT rides this summer. I biked them all—so I've seen much of the MRT this year.
 - MRT Have Fun Tours ride; Itasca to Ft. Snelling.
 - Lake City: Tour de Pepin—this was 5th annual ride.
 - Northstar train/MRT ride—sold out at ~150 riders and had a wait list.
 - Little Falls: 3 history tours on bike + MRT ride added to Dam2Dam Festival.
 - MRT River and Rails ride. Bike from St. Paul Amtrak to Iowa border; train back from La Crosse.
- Developed a map for GPS/Garmin-type unit.
- MRT planning work received the MN APA Innovation award (Sept.)
- Various presentations on MRT (from Pro Walk Pro Bike in California to Goodhue County Economic Development Summit)
- Facebook page slowly gaining a following.