

The ROAD AHEAD...

The Corridor Management Plan for Minnesota's Great River Road gathered tremendous data, inspired insights from everyday people, developed synergy and raised expectations of all those involved. Over 100 strategies were developed to carry the byway boldly into the future. Four initial projects are:

- **Wayshowing Signage:** Stakeholders and travelers identified the primary problem with the Great River Road is getting lost while traveling it. A field inventory documented 54% of 620 signs as either missing or needing modification. MN-MRPC and MnDOT will work with counties and cities to restore consistent and continuous wayshowing to provide safe and enjoyable exploration.
- **Plan Your Trip Interactive Mapping Tool:** A GIS database of over 750 Great River Road attractions will be combined with road, bicycle, boat, transit, train and air facility data to provide the kind of modern, online travel tool tourists appreciate and expect, enhancing the experience of planning and doing Mississippi River exploration in Minnesota.
- **Plan Your Project Interactive Mapping Tool:** Similar to Plan Your Trip, the compilation of GIS data will guide Great River Road scoping, design, construction and maintenance. Scheduled road projects, wayshowing signs and attraction-manager contact information will foster coordination between MN-MRPC member agencies, local road managers and attractions.
- **Great River Road Ambassador Development:** Resources, materials and training will be offered for MN-MRPC member facility managers, local road and attraction managers, local businesses and residents to improve corridor management, better serve tourists and encourage economic development.

Join Us.

- Tell us about your river places, river events and river stories.
- Partner with us on projects – ours and yours.
- Become a Great River Road Ambassador.....Requirements:
 - Love for the Mississippi River and your community
 - Curiosity about your area's attractions and events and how they relate to the Mississippi River
 - Willingness to tell the river's story to friends and byway travelers and encourage exploration along the Great River Road.

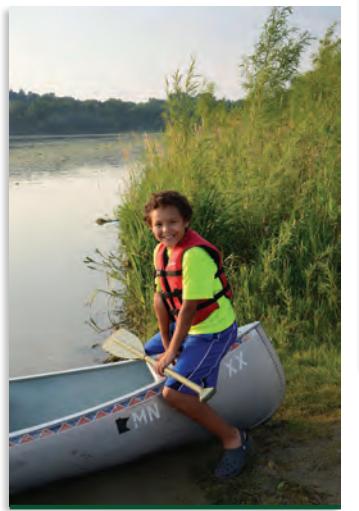


Photo credit - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



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To learn more -

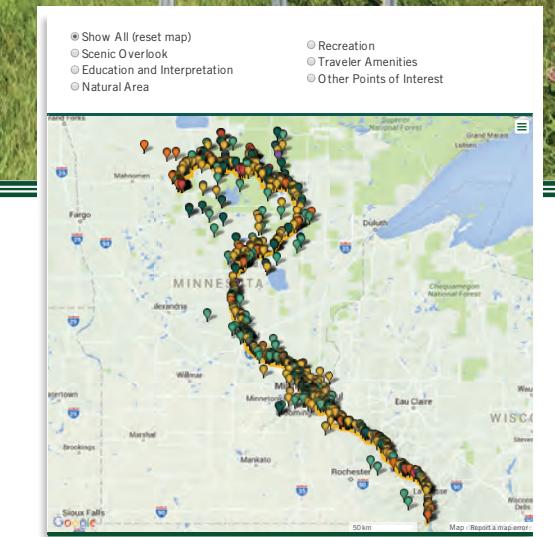
Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission

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Project Funding Partners:

Federal Highway Administration – National Scenic Byways Program,
National Park Service,
Minnesota Department of Transportation,
Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission



GREAT RIVER ROAD:



Parkway of the Mississippi River

America's great river and main artery of this country's vast, continental watershed is born here in Minnesota where it starts an epic journey to the Gulf of Mexico. This magnificent resource ties us all together, connecting, challenging and enriching us through shared environment, history, commerce, recreation and experiences. The Mississippi is ours – as a state – to treasure, celebrate and promote. The Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission offers a plan to do this through Great River Road corridor management.

The GREAT RIVER ROAD...



The Great River Road National Scenic Byway follows the course of the Mississippi River through ten states. Minnesota's Great River Road is a network of roadways offering a bounty of river experiences in a parkway setting. It spans 565 miles, 43 communities, 20 counties, three tribes and six unique destination areas, providing public access to and promoting exploration of America's Great River. Its benefits impact residents, businesses and tourists alike.

From the headwaters of Lake Itasca to the bluffs of Winona, the parkway, like the Mighty Mississippi, spans the state's distinct natural and scenic regions. The parkway ties together river features and history that determined the state's past and will continue to decide its future.

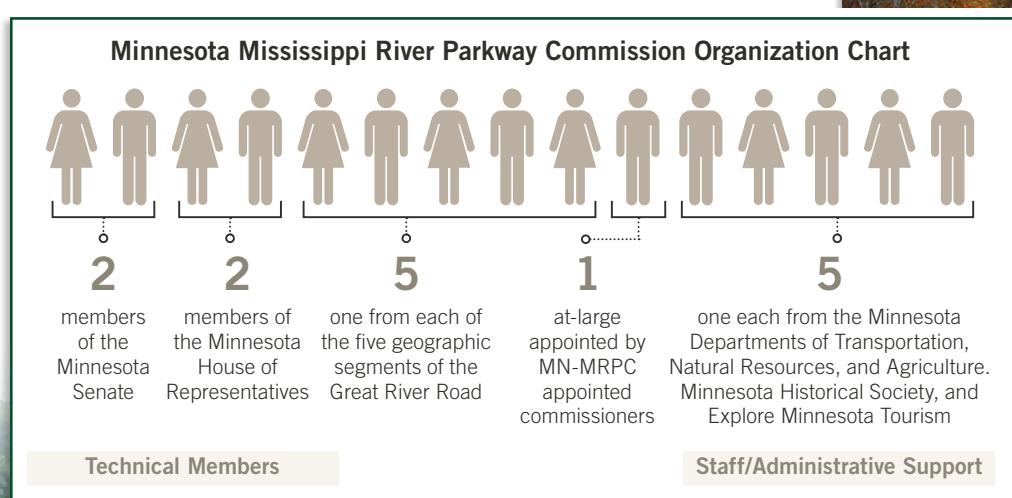
The COMMISSION...

Minnesota's Mississippi River Parkway Commission is the parkway's statutory champion whose mission is to:

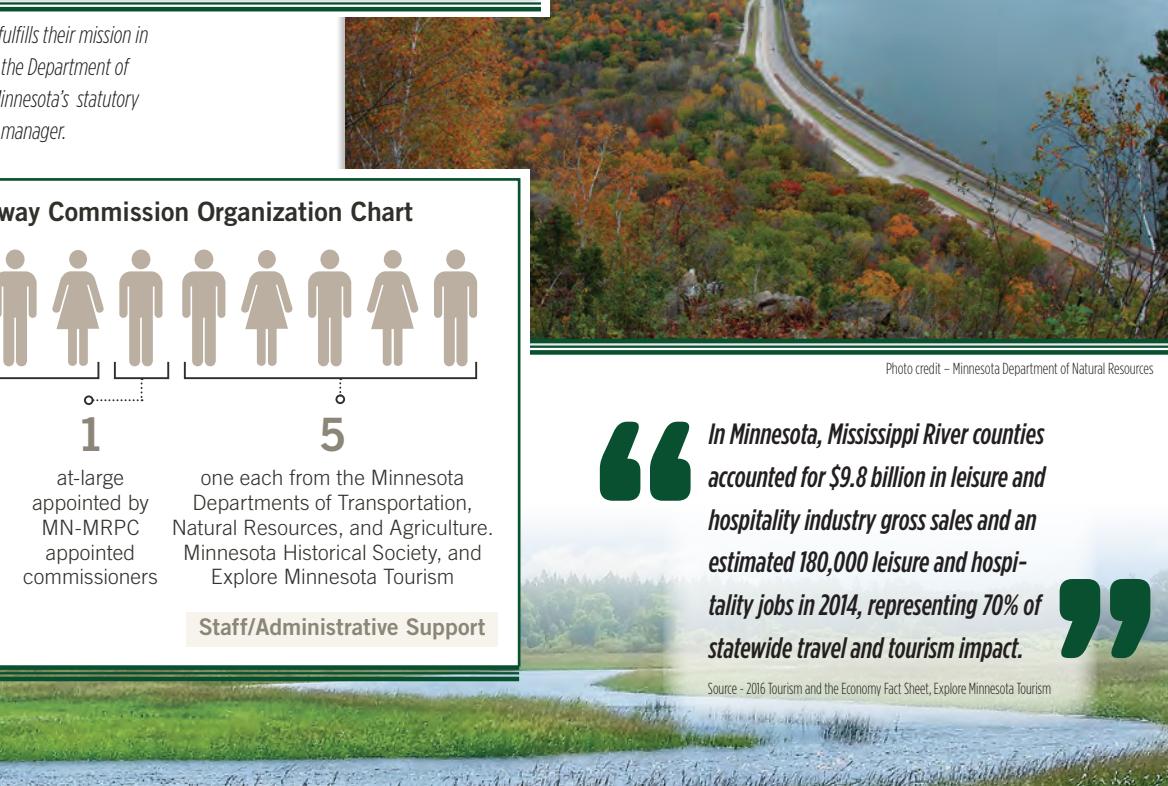
"Preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor and to develop the national, scenic and historic byway known as the Great River Road."

The Commission – citizens, elected officials and agency leaders – oversees the Great River Road as the Mississippi River's continuous, pleasure-drive network. It works to ensure Minnesotans and travelers from around the world can connect to and experience what the river offers, now and into the future.

- Organized and guided under Minnesota Statute 161.1419 and managed under the umbrella of the Legislative Coordinating Commission.
- Promotes and leverages resources, partnerships and activities of river communities and agencies to provide a communication link and collective voice for the Great River Road and its Mississippi River resources.
- One of 10 states in the national Mississippi River Parkway Commission, a community-focused organization supporting the parkway, the river, its amenities and the travel experience.



The Commission fulfills their mission in partnership with the Department of Transportation, Minnesota's statutory Great River Road manager.



The ROAD TRAVELED...

- Corridor Management Plan for Minnesota's Great River Road:** A comprehensive plan to guide the work of the Commission and our partners into the future including:
 - Inventory of attractions: Over 750 Mississippi River-related Minnesota resources and attractions have been mapped and cataloged for use in electronic and printed content for Great River Road trip planning, navigation and target marketing to the wide variety of river explorers the parkway attracts.
 - Wayfinding signage: A signage inventory reveals 22% are missing and another 32% need updating or replacement.
 - Public voice: The public shared 215 river stories, 543 "can't miss" attractions and 99 favorite river views.
 - Public support: Top areas of suggested focus are 1) health and active living, 2) facilities management and 3) placemaking.
 - Host communities: Developed and installed Great River Road/Mississippi River Trail interpretive panels in seven communities.
- Mississippi River Trail:** A planning, funding and marketing partner establishing the bicycle route and installing wayshowing signage.
- Historic Restoration:** Restored 12 historic roadside properties along the Great River Road and estimated restoration for another seven historic sites.
- Roadside Storybook:** Developed interpretive panels in five counties describing Mississippi River hydrology, geology, flora, fauna, people and places then and now, plus maps.
- Context:** Provided design and story-telling assistance for the TH 61 Bridge in Hastings.
- Partnered:** Led by the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, developed an alternative transportation plan and a visual resource assessment and expanded statewide for corridor management.
- Hospitality Training:** Developed staff training for parks, historic sites, tourist centers, and businesses to build knowledge about and encourage exploration along the Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail.
- Destination Areas:** Developed map tablets for each of Minnesota's six Destination Areas to promote river exploration, Minnesota Grown businesses, the Mississippi River Trail and river attractions.
- Find Your Park:** With the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, promoted Find Your Park, emphasizing park and recreation destinations accessed via the Great River Road.
- National Great River Road Interpretive Centers:** Provide maps, promotional materials and signage to 10 designated Interpretive Centers to enhance the centers' offerings and promote traveling the Great River Road.
- National Geographic Mississippi River Geotourism Website:** Nominated the Great River Road and hosted meetings to encourage local businesses and attractions to nominate themselves for inclusion on this iconically branded 10-state Mississippi River story-telling venture.
- National Great River Road Marketing:** Support and leverage 10-state MRPC marketing including contests, Japanese phone application, agritourism content, merchandise with Great River Road logos, website itineraries, Interpretive Center training, and ten-state print maps.
- Preserve and Enhance:** Informed Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area rulemaking, and "Tools to Assist Local Governments in Planning for and Regulating Silica Sand Projects".