

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

This final comprehensive management plan is the product of an extensive public involvement effort undertaken by the Mississippi River Coordinating Commission and the National Park Service over a four-year period. The 22-member commission includes representatives from several federal, state, and local agencies, and the general public of the area. The commission held 20 public meetings while the plan was being developed. Members of public were provided with opportunities to speak at each one, and many people did so. In addition, National Park Service personnel worked extensively with other interested parties through informal meetings and telephone contacts.

Work groups and subset focus groups were formed early in the planning process to assist the commission and National Park Service planning team in developing vision statements, gathering data, and reviewing preliminary alternatives. About 180 people from state and local agencies, businesses, and organizations participated in these groups. See appendix D for a list of agencies and organizations that participated in the work groups.

As a result of these meetings, draft purpose and vision statements were issued for public review in a project newsletter in October 1991. A postage-free response form was included in the newsletter to facilitate public response. The vision statements contained in this document received strong public support. They are a result of that input and subsequent comments on later newsletters. The results of these and other newsletter response forms are contained in summary reports on file at park headquarters.

Conceptual alternatives grounded in these visions were developed for public review based partially on input received. They were issued for public comment in a second newsletter published in March 1992. A postage-free response form was also included in that newsletter to facilitate public feedback. A special round of meetings was held with local government representatives from communities in the corridor during that period. The resource

protection alternative and the alternative emphasizing a wide range of uses and activities in the corridor were almost equally supported. There was little enthusiasm for the alternative emphasizing economic development. Among the management options there was a clear preference for the alternative that emphasized equal responsibility among the partners. One of the most distinct preferences was for strengthened pollution control. Another was a clear preference for a variety of visitor activities and access.

The University of Minnesota conducted a resident survey of attitudes about the river in 1992 that was used to help prepare the plan.

Planning issues were identified for the project throughout the early phases of the project. A "notice of intent" to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) was published in the Federal Register on July 14, 1992, which officially announced the scoping process for the environmental impact statement, and public input was solicited on EIS issues throughout the remainder of that year.

A preliminary proposed action was developed and issued for public review in a third newsletter published in September 1992. Again a response form was provided. A series of three public open house meetings was held to further define issues and alternatives in this plan/EIS.

The Draft Comprehensive Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement was published in June 1993. Four public hearings were held in July 1993, and public input was accepted through the fall. Over 1,000 pages of written comments and more than 100 pages of hearing comments were received on the Draft Comprehensive Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement. Review comments were analyzed and summarized by the planning team, and responses were developed by the commission and NPS team through a series of three working papers and commission meetings during late 1993 and early 1994. Additional public input was received during each of these meetings. A draft revised plan was made available for public inspection and comment at commission meetings in February and March 1994, and a motion was adopted by the commission in an April 1994 meeting (after public comment) to recommend the final plan for review by the governor of Minnesota and approval by the secretary of the interior.

NPS personnel and commission members have also held numerous additional meetings, one-on-one consultations, and telephone discussions with corridor communities, agencies, businesses, environmental groups, other interested organizations and individuals to seek advice, coordinate efforts, and help prepare this document. This extensive program to work with others in the area will continue. The commission and the National Park Service are sincerely grateful to everyone who contributed to make this a better plan.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

National Environmental Policy Act

An environmental impact statement was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations and guidelines. A notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement was published in the Federal Register in July 1992. A Federal Register notice was published announcing the availability of the draft environmental impact statement, which was published in June 1993, and four public hearings were held during the public comment period. Following publication of the final environmental impact statement in December 1994, the secretary of the interior approved the plan and the National Park Service issued a record of decision in 1995.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act

Because the corridor includes species listed on the federal endangered and threatened species list, the National Park Service has been informally consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Lists of species were obtained from the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Species locations were entered in the GIS database. Policies were developed to protect species, and data were used in the analysis of alternative interpretive facility sites. The Fish and Wildlife Service regional director sits on the commission and all project documents were reviewed by his staff. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed the draft environmental impact statement and concurred in its conclusion that listed species will not be adversely affected by the MNRRA plan. If it is later determined that actions under this

plan could have significant adverse effects on a federally listed species, formal consultation will be initiated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

E.O. 11988 Floodplains and E.O. 11990 Wetlands Compliance

The MNRRA corridor includes extensive areas of floodplains and wetlands, and NPS activities are subject to executive orders protecting these areas. Available data were obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and floodplain boundaries were entered in the GIS database. Wetland information was collected from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and also entered into the GIS database. The proposed NPS interpretive center/administrative headquarters at Harriet Island will be outside the 100- and 500-year floodplains, and the site is not classified as wetland. No other construction is proposed by the National Park Service that might adversely affect floodplain or wetland values. Policies were developed to protect floodplains and wetlands and the data were used in the analysis of alternative facility sites.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

The National Park Service has the responsibility to seek preservation and protection for significant cultural resources within the boundaries of units of the national park system. The National Park Service also supports the secretary of the interior's guidelines for adaptation of historic resources. Because the corridor includes buildings and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the National Park Service consulted with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) pursuant to the programmatic agreement, including a review of the task directive, project newsletters, and the Draft Comprehensive Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement. Available data on cultural resources were gathered and sites mapped in the GIS database. Policies were developed to protect cultural resources and the data were used in the analysis of alternative interpretive facility sites. The state historic preservation officer is a member of the commission, and she or a representative of the Minnesota Historical Society has attended all commission meetings and commented on project documents. This plan documents the results of this consultation under section 106.

Following is a list of actions contained in the final comprehensive management plan and a notation as to need for additional SHPO/ACHP review.

(1) The most significant NPS action in this plan that could potentially affect national register properties is the proposal to acquire land and build and manage a new interpretive center/headquarters facility in St Paul. The proposed site at Harriet Island does not contain any known cultural resources, but it will be surveyed for possible archeological resources prior to facility construction. The Harriet Island Pavilion, a building listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is in the general vicinity of the proposed interpretive center site. There will be no adverse effect on that structure. This project will require additional SHPO/ACHP review after additional details become available.

(2) As currently envisioned, the cooperative interpretive facility in Minneapolis will involve adaptive use of a historic structure. A final site has not yet been selected. The city of Minneapolis or the Minnesota Historical Society will probably have the lead in this project. The National Park Service will not have the lead and will be a cooperating partner in the project. SHPO/ACHP review will be required when a preferred site is selected and enough is known about the adaptive use to facilitate review. Additional consultation will be sought after the comprehensive management plan is completed and as further details become available. The National Park Service will ensure that this consultation is completed.

(3) The cooperative interpretive facility at the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park will use relatively new facilities and will not impact cultural resources. No further SHPO/ACHP review will be required for this proposal. NPS involvement will be limited to staffing and exhibits.

(4) The site for an interpretive center in the Hastings area has not been identified. If the final selection has potential to impact cultural resources, additional SHPO/ACHP review will be sought. When a preferred site is identified, additional consultation with

the state historic preservation office will be undertaken to see what 106 compliance steps, if any, are needed.

(5) The Fort Snelling State Park interpretive center is proposed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The National Park Service proposes to be a cooperative partner and assist the state in interpretive planning for the facility, provide design and financial assistance for some exhibits, and supplement state-offered interpretive programs in the area. The National Park Service will ensure that any section 106 compliance consultation that is needed for this proposal is completed.

(6) The follow-up interpretive plan developed for the corridor will specify additional exhibits and programs that will be provided by the National Park Service. This plan will include involvement by the State Historic Preservation Office. If additional cultural resources might be affected, concurrent SHPO/ACHP review will be sought at that time.

(7) Land and water use management and pollution control activities in the corridor will continue to be the responsibility of local governments and other state and federal agencies. Except on lands that it owns, the National Park Service will not have a permitting authority, licensing authority, approval authority, or delegation of approval authority, and therefore these activities will not require SHPO/ACHP review.

(8) The National Park Service (acting for the secretary of the interior) has authority in the MNRRA legislation to give grants for state or local acquisition and development consistent with the plan. It is uncertain how much funding might be available for this program, and specific projects are not listed in the plan. All grants will be subject to additional SHPO/ACHP review.

During and following public review of the comprehensive management plan/environmental impact statement, additional consultation took place between the National Park Service and the Minnesota Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to determine what additional 106 compliance will be needed from actions resulting from this plan. No comments were received from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on the draft plan. The above list of projects documents future

compliance requirements as agreed to by the National Park Service and Minnesota Historic Preservation Officer. Because no comments were received from the ACHP, concurrence is assumed.

LIST OF AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WHOM COPIES OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT WERE SENT

There are over 2,500 entries on the mailing list for this project. All will be given an opportunity to receive the final document. The National Park Service is circulating the final comprehensive management plan/environmental impact statement to the agencies and organizations listed below. A complete list of individuals who will receive the document is available at park headquarters.

City/Township Government
City of Anoka
City of Brooklyn Center
City of Brooklyn Park
City of Champlin
City of Coon Rapids
City of Cottage Grove
City of Dayton
City of Fridley
City of Hastings
City of Inver Grove Heights
City of Lilydale
City of Maplewood
City of Mendota
City of Mendota Heights
City of Minneapolis
City of Newport
City of Ramsey
City of Rosemount
City of South St. Paul
City of St. Paul
City of St. Paul Park
Denmark Township
Grey Cloud Island Township
Minneapolis Community Development Agency
Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board
Nininger Township
Port Authority of the City of St. Paul

Ravenna Township
County Government
Anoka County
Dakota County
Hennepin County
Ramsey County
Washington County
Regional Government
Metropolitan Council
Metropolitan Parks and Open Commission
Metropolitan Mosquito Control District
Metropolitan Waste Control Commission
Minnesota/Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission
Suburban Hennepin Regional Park District
State Government
Board of Water and Soil Resources
Department of Agriculture
Department of Natural Resources
Department of Trade and Economic Development
Department of Transportation
Environmental Quality Board
Minnesota Army/Air National Guard
Minnesota Historical Society
Minnesota House of Representatives
Pollution Control Agency
State Planning Agency
University of Minnesota
Federal Government
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
Department of Energy
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Department of Health and Human Services
Federal Emergency Management Agency
General Services Administration
Small Business Administration
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of the Army
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Department of the Interior

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Geological Survey
Bureau of Mines
Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Maritime Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs
VA Medical Center
Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis