



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
111 E. Kellogg Blvd., Ste 105
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1256

December 3, 2008

Dear friends:

It has been two years since the public comment period ended concerning the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Disposition of the Bureau of Mines Property, Twin Cities Research Center Main Campus in Hennepin County near Fort Snelling, Minnesota. The campus lies entirely within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. The Department of the Interior has selected its preferred alternative for disposition of the property and the purpose of this letter is to inform you of that decision and lay out the next steps for the campus.

The 27-acre property is owned by the U.S. government and would remain in federal ownership under Interior's preferred alternative. The property will be restored to a condition that emphasizes its ecological and historical significance, with all buildings, driveways, roads and other infrastructure removed.

The National Park Service will lead a public planning process to help determine the exact nature of the site's restoration, including restoration of Coldwater Spring. This will include completion of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) concerning the property's future. Once that document is complete, the Department of the Interior will issue its final decision about the future of the property. Based on information obtained in completing the FEIS, that decision could be somewhat different than the preferred alternative

Public meetings will be conducted in the winter and spring of 2009 to help determine some of the details for restoration of the site. The FEIS will be completed by summer 2009. Assuming the final decision is no different than the preferred alternative, demolition of the buildings and physical restoration of the site may begin as soon as fall 2009 and will likely be completed by the end of the 2010 construction season. At that time, the National Park Service will assume responsibility for the site. An interpretive plan for the site will be completed in late 2009 or early 2010.

Once the planning tasks are completed, the National Park Service will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on managing the contracts for demolition of the buildings and restoration of the site. Once the site has been restored, long-term management of the property will be the responsibility of the National Park Service.

This site holds great significance for American Indian people, for its role in early European settlement of the region, and for its 20th Century role in development of mining and mine safety technology. I am excited that this site will be preserved and managed by the National Park Service and we will be able to tell the many stories of this site to present and future generations of Americans.

Questions about the next steps in the planning process should be directed to Steve Johnson of my staff at 651-290-3030 x223 or steven_p_johnson@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Labovitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping tail.

Paul Labovitz
Superintendent