



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mississippi National River
and Recreation Area

111 Kellogg Blvd. E., Ste
105
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1256

651-290-4160 phone
651-290-3214 fax

News Release

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Contact: Paul Labovitz
651-290-3030 ext 222
paul_labovitz@nps.gov

Rules Published for Use of Islands Owned by National Park Service

The National Park Service has published rules affecting certain behavior on islands it owns in the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities area.

The National Park Service (NPS) owns nine islands within the 72-mile Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) through the Twin Cities and on only a few of those islands there has been sufficient natural resource damage to warrant publication of regulations limiting certain behavior.

The regulations, known as a “Superintendent’s Compendium,” take effect May 11. The regulations control behavior on only about 35 acres of the 54,000-acre park, so will affect only a very few people. These federal rules do not affect activity on private property, on city, county or state park land, or on federal land managed by other agencies like the Corps of Engineers.

“A few inconsiderate campers can ruin the experience for everyone,” according to NPS Park Superintendent Paul Labovitz. “We’ve experienced resource damage in 2006 from campers on an island in Lower Pool 2 near River Mile 828,” Labovitz continued, “including campers who left gear unattended in an attempt to claim a campsite for the entire summer.”

The new rules will enable NPS Rangers to ticket violators for camping beyond a time limit, leaving camping gear unattended, littering, and for cutting live trees.



The NPS owns three islands in the Ramsey-Dayton area upstream of Anoka, but they receive very little public use. NPS also owns one island that today is an island only during very high water periods; it is adjacent to the off-leash dog park at Minnehaha Regional Park. Three former NPS-owned islands are now part of the mainland adjacent to the river channel near Pigs Eye Lake; these lands are remote, heavily vegetated and often have parked barges in front of them, and as a result see very little public use.

The new rules, therefore, will primarily affect users of two islands along the right descending bank near River Mile 828. One of the islands is very small, while the adjacent 12-acre island was the subject of significant resource damage in 2006.

The regulations prohibit cutting of live or dead standing trees, prohibit cutting native understory vegetation or grading sand to alter the topography of an island.

Camping is permitted, but limited to three nights on one site and 30 nights over the course of the summer. Leftover food, garbage and trash must be removed. Human waste must be removed or buried in accordance with regulations. Weapons are prohibited, except in association with legal hunting. Camping gear left unattended for 24 hours will be considered abandoned and will be removed.

“We are interested in providing recreation opportunities along this great river,” Labovitz said, “but we do need to protect the resource so that others may enjoy it in the future.”

A copy of the Superintendent’s Compendium may be requested by calling the park at 651-290-4160 or by downloading it from the park website at www.nps.gov/miss/

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