



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mississippi National River
and Recreation Area

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

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

News Release

Sept 13, 2011

For more information:

Lyndon Torstenson, 651-293-8426
Mississippi National River & Recreation Area

Amy Barrett, 651-259-5582
Minnesota DNR Public Information Officer

Captain Gus Gaspardo, 651-227-1100
Padelford Packet Boat Co., Inc.

50,000 students served on floating classroom! “Big River Journey” introduces kids to Mississippi River

St. Paul, MN. On September 20 the fifty thousandth student will board the Anson Northrup riverboat for a “Big River Journey,” one of the most desired educational field trips in the Twin Cities area. The students will cruise on the Mississippi River from Harriet Island, St. Paul, to Fort Snelling State Park, enjoying science learning stations both onboard and on land. They will use binoculars and microscopes to explore the natural life of the river – from bugs to birds. They’ll examine rocks to understand how a waterfall once greater than Niagara Falls carved the river valley and set the stage for our Twin Cities to be located here. They’ll visit the pilot house to learn what it takes to be a riverboat pilot, and they’ll learn about water pollution, and how to prevent it. They will land at the historic riverboat landing that once served Historic Fort Snelling, and continue their explorations with State Park naturalists and a costumed soldier from the Fort.

Begun fifteen years ago, and led by the National Park Service’s Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Big River Journey is a partnership with eight additional groups. Co-founders of the program include the Padelford Packet Boat Co., Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Science Museum of Minnesota. Additional partners include the Minnesota Historical Society, Center for Global Environmental Education, Friends of the Mississippi River, St. Paul Public Schools, and Mississippi River Fund. Some partners support classroom activity components, while others assist on the field trips.

The Big River Journey field trip is just the beginning for many of the students, whose average involvement with the river subject matter extends six weeks or more. Back in the classroom, students write, read and create art for the Big River Art Contest (with winning art displayed at the Science Museum). They continue their science explorations, but with more interest now – having found it to be relevant and fun through Big River Journey.



The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) is the unit of the National Park System that represents America's greatest river. One of 394 units in the National Park System, the MNRRA extends 72 miles south from the cities of Dayton and Ramsey, through Minneapolis and St. Paul, to just south of Hastings. The National Park Service works with partners and local governments to care for the river's nationally significant resources found here – including natural and historic sites, as well as recreational and economic assets. For further information about Big River Journey and the MNRRA, see the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov/miss.

-NPS-

NOTE: Press and media are invited to join us Sept 20, 10:45-12:00, at Fort Snelling State Park to witness the 50,000th student on Big River Journey as the Anson Northrop riverboat lands at the park to exchange school groups. (Directions: take Post Road exit from Highway 5; do NOT go to Historic Fort Snelling.) Fort Snelling State Park Visitor Center: 612-725-2724.

Media interested in joining us onboard to see the entire Big River Journey may inquire with the Padelford Boat Co, 651-227-1100.

Photos available at www.nps.gov/miss/parknews/media_brj.htm