

National Scenic Byways Program

Byway Nomination Form



Background

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Byway Name: Minnesota Great River Road National Scenic Byway

Identify Your State (choose one): Minnesota

Byway Location: Does your byway traverse **more than one state**? If yes, select all states the byway traverses, **including your state**.

Arkansas

Illinois

Iowa

Kentucky

Louisiana

Minnesota

Mississippi

Missouri

Tennessee

Wisconsin

Does your byway traverse **Tribal lands**? If yes, identify the land or lands in the text box.

Yes Leech Lake Reservation

Does your byway traverse **federal lands**? If yes, identify the land or lands in the text box.

Yes Chippewa National Forest, Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, then your byway traverses more than one jurisdiction (i.e., state, Indian tribe, or federal land). This constitutes a multi-jurisdiction nomination. For a multi-jurisdiction nomination, applicants in each jurisdiction are required to submit individual nomination applications.

Submission Agency (or individual): Minnesota Department of Transportation

Desired Designation: all-american road

Change in Designation: Are you seeking to nominate an existing National Scenic Byway as an All-American Road? Yes

If yes, you are required to identify two (2) intrinsic qualities that are nationally significant. One of these may be the same intrinsic quality used to justify previous designation as a National Scenic Byway. However, in Section 1 your application will need to describe the national significance of that intrinsic quality.

Extension: Is this an extension to an existing National Scenic Byway or All-American Road? No

If yes, you are required to submit the nomination application for the proposed extension in context of the existing National Scenic Byway or All-American Road and identify the same primary intrinsic quality(s) that can be found along the previously designated portion of the byway. Applicants are required to identify the same primary intrinsic quality(s) that can be found along the designated portion of the byway, and how the proposed extension relates to and enhances the designated byway.

Section 1

Location: **1-1:** Provide a description of the location of the byway within the State. Use cardinal directions (e.g., north) and reference major cities, regions, and/or landmarks. (Limit 150 words.)
Initiated in 1938 by Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, the 565-mile Minnesota Great River Road National Scenic Byway is designated along a cornucopia of State and local roads marked, mapped and promoted as a continuous route providing byway travelers access to and telling stories about the mighty Mississippi River. From the iconic Lake Itasca headwaters, the byway heads north, east, south, southwest, then southeast – almost statewide, ever twisting, shadowing the Mississippi. Evolving river landscapes feature 40+ cities hosting river exploration, including Minneapolis and St. Paul. Residents and tourists are invited to experience over 700 Mississippi River historical, scenic, recreational, cultural, natural and archaeological features. Minnesota's historic and scenic features are promoted through 12 nationally designated Interpretive Centers, maps distributed by 50+ sites, roadside storybook interpretive panels, and www.mnmississippiriver.com. Minnesota's Great River Road also offers bicyclists the signed Mississippi River Trail, as well as passenger airports, trains, excursion ports and transit.

Date of Local Designation: 1-2: Any road submitted for designation under the National Scenic Byways Program must first be designated, through legislation or some other official declaration, a State, Indian tribe or Federal land management agency scenic byway. List the designating agency(s) and date(s) of designation.

Designating Agency(s): Minnesota Department of Transportation

Date(s) of Local Designation: State Statute 04/24/1959, State Scenic Byway 05/21/1996, National Scenic Byway 06/15/2000

Intrinsic Qualities: 1-3: For the All-American Road designation, select the **two (2)** Intrinsic Qualities that are most evident along the road and that you will demonstrate are nationally significant, and contribute to the byway being considered a "destination unto itself." (Hold the Ctrl button and click on two Intrinsic Qualities.)

For multi-jurisdiction nomination applicants seeking designation as an All-American Road, at least one of the two primary intrinsic qualities cited must match the qualities submitted by the other jurisdictions seeking designation. The applicant may cite the second intrinsic quality as specific to their segment of the byway: Archaeological, Cultural, Historic, Natural, Recreational, or Scenic.

Historic

Scenic

Primary Photo: 1-4: Provide a single image that you feel best represents the experience along your byway. Please select this image carefully as it will introduce the reviewers to your byway. Also, if designated, your byway will be included in the marketing efforts of the National Scenic Byways Program and this image will be used on the traveler website.

Please provide an alternative text description of the image that describes what the image depicts. This text will be used by those who cannot see the photo, and should thoroughly describe what is depicted in the image. For guidelines on submitting images and composing alternative text descriptions, please see our [Image Style Guide](#). (Limit 50 words.)

Alternative text for image: Bucket list: Great River Road travelers find delight crossing America's Mississippi River headwaters atop stepping stones! Countless pictures capturing the moment include the wood post sign "Here 1475 Ft above the ocean the mighty Mississippi begins to flow on its winding way 2552 miles to the Gulf of Mexico".

Image name: Bucket list-Minnesota Great River Road travelers walking across the Mississippi River headwaters at Lake Itasca

Image owner: Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Deb Rose. Contact deb.rose@state.mn.us for permission to use.

Photo release? No

Upload Image: 1-4Mississippi Headwaters Bucketlist.jpg

Before uploading, rename the file to begin with 1-4. For example, rename your file RiverBend.png to 1-4RiverBend.png.

Section 2

2-1: This section will introduce the reviewers to your byway. Provide a description of your byway from the "big picture" point of view, and within the context of your description, include information on the items below. For more information on developing a strong statement of qualification, please reference the [Nominations Guide](#). (Limit 750 words.)

- Theme that reflects the central focus of the byway's nomination story and promotes the Byway.
- An overview of the Traveler Experience navigating the byway. Provide a sense of how the experience unfolds as visible features, byway stories, or important resources form the core quality of your corridor.
- Regional Significance (National Scenic Byway) – explain and justify what is special, significant or unique about your byway in relation to the primary Intrinsic Quality
- National Significance (All-American Road) – explain and justify what is special, significant or unique about your byway in relation to the two (2) primary Intrinsic Qualities, and why the road is considered a destination unto itself.

Statement of Qualification:

The name Mississippi comes from the French "Messipi" - the French rendering of the native American Anishinaabe (Ojibwe or Algonquin) name for the river, "Misi-zibi," meaning "Great River."

Travel writer William Least Heat Moon's library contains over 2,000 travel books. Of those about rivers, most are all or partially about the Mississippi. He asks readers "consider all the reasons you can come up with" for why this is so, but concludes, "still you must face the inevitable: The Mississippi has an encompassing mystique no other American river exerts ..." It is this "encompassing mystique" that compels people from around the world to explore the Great River.

Nowhere along its 2,552-mile course does the Mississippi River's scenic landscape change more than in Minnesota. The Great River Road follows the river as it matures through seven distinct landscapes, each with unique mystique, and over its only waterfall.

Walking across the headwaters at Lake Itasca is an international bucket-list item. It is a place like no other. Itasca State Park interpretation and features engage travelers with hands-on history surrounded by stunning scenic views at the river's cradle.

The Mississippi seems reluctant to leave its birthplace among ancient pines and pristine lakes. After percolating from Lake Itasca, it follows a serpentine course to Brainerd, frequently twisting back on itself, leaving cut-off lands and oxbows. Contributing to the mystique is an ongoing blend of natural and human history, humans having lived along the river here for nearly 10,000 years, and indigenous communities retaining traditional lifestyles along it today. And as anyone who has canoed or kayaked this reach will tell you, every twist and turn creates a new scenic view.

The Mississippi's headwaters include thousands of lakes. The largest contribute to a reservoir system the Corps of Engineers created over 100 years ago. The river dams and reservoirs are historically significant as part of the first national reservoir system in the United States. The resulting Lakes and Reservoirs scenery generate lasting memories.

At Brainerd, the Mississippi straightens and becomes wider. More islands appear, but you see little floodplain and no large or backwater lakes. This is the Prairie River, where the prairie runs up to the river's banks, some rising 40 to 60 feet, providing views of a maturing river. Two national Interpretive Centers

showcase prairie-life history next to the Mississippi in this reach.

No place anchors the Mississippi River's significance in the Twin Cities like St. Anthony Falls or matches its national and international significance. Geologically, it is the Mississippi's only major waterfall. Historically, a who's who of natives, Europeans and Americans explored it. Economically, it's the birthplace of saw and flour milling industries that became the dominant producers of their commodities in the world. Technologically, the falls generated the first commercial hydroelectric central plant in America. Scenically, it has drawn renowned painters capturing the fall's grandeur since before it was capped, and today remains a magnet for artists.

The Gorge is only 8.5 miles long, running from St. Anthony Falls to the mouth of the Minnesota River. Here, the Mississippi plunges 110 feet between bluffs one-quarter to one-third mile apart and 60 to 100 feet high. This is the only place where the river falls so quickly over such a short distance and through such a tight canyon. The three locks and dams of the Gorge are nationally significant, as is the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.

The Big River begins at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers extending 34 miles to Hastings. Fort Snelling, a National Historic Landmark, overlooks the confluence, known as B'dote to Dakota people, each a contrasting feature of this scenic setting. Here the broad valley and wide floodplain offer many side channels, backwater lakes, wetlands and wooded islands with scenic vistas and intimate encounters with a seemingly primeval world.

During the last ice age, glaciers bulldozed the Midwest's landscape but left the Driftless Area alone. Water and wind have been eroding and incising the Driftless Area for far longer than the surrounding lands, creating a unique and nationally significant landscape. From early explorers to modern travel writers, many have tried to capture that landscape's scenic power. Locks and Dams 3 through 8 lie in this reach and are listed on the National Register as nationally significant.

Exploring the Great River Road from Lake Itasca to the Iowa border the traveler comes to know Minnesota's Mississippi River, how it changes here more than anywhere else along its course, and why, historically, it is a destination unto itself.

Section 3

Byway Length: 3-1: Enter the total byway length (in miles) from end to end (including road gaps that aren't included in the nomination but must be traveled).
565

Route Description: 3-2: Please provide a complete, sequential route description that documents all road segments including any gaps and/or intrusions. Include all of the road segments which, when linked together, match the legal description used by your State/Indian tribe/Federal land management agency to officially designate the road. Please work with your State/Indian tribe/Federal land management agency Scenic Byway Coordinator to develop this section so that you accurately reflect State/Indian tribe/Federal land management agency records for the designated route. Please also specify road names and route numbers for all road segments. (Limit 750 words.)
Minnesota Great River Road Driving Directions, Headwaters to Iowa

1. Main Park Dr,
2. N Entrance Dr,
3. County Road 2
4. County Road 9, County Road 40
5. County Road 10,
6. County Road 3
7. County Road 7
8. County Road 11
9. 5th St NW
10. Minnesota 197
11. 1st St E,
12. County Road 12
13. County Road 27
14. County Road 8
15. County Road 33
16. County Road 12
17. County Road 39
18. County Road 54
19. W Winnie Rd NW
20. US 2
21. County Road 9
22. Minnesota 46
23. County Road 39
24. US 2
25. County Road 18
26. 72nd Ave NE
27. County Road 3
28. County Road 74
29. County Road 65 NE
30. County Road 28
31. Minnesota 6
32. County Road 63
33. County Road 76
34. County Road 23
35. 10th St SE
36. 7th Ave SE
37. County Road 3
38. US 169
39. County Road 21
40. County Road 1
41. Minnesota 210
42. Minnesota 6
43. County Road 11
44. County Road 19
45. County Road 3
46. Minnesota 210
47. Minnesota 371B
48. Laurel St
49. E River Road

50. W College Dr
51. College Rd
52. Minnesota 371
53. Minnesota 115
54. County Road 213
55. 9th Ave NW
56. Lindbergh Dr S
57. Great River Rd
58. County Road 1
59. County Road 78
60. County Road 133
61. County Road 78
62. County Road 29
63. County Road 33
64. 2nd St N
65. 9th Ave N
66. County Road 7
67. 9th Ave S
68. County Road 7
69. 33rd St S
70. County Road 75
71. County Road 39
72. County Road 42
73. County Road 12
74. US 169
75. County Road 7
76. W River Rd
77. County Road 12
78. 97th Ave N
79. W River Rd
80. Brookdale Dr N
81. Minnesota 252
82. I-94 W/I-694 W
83. East River Rd NE
84. Marshall St NE
85. County Road 66
86. N West River Rd
87. Godfrey Pkwy
88. Minnehaha Ave
89. County Road 46
90. Minnesota 55
91. Minnesota 62
92. Minnesota 13
93. I-35E N
94. Shepard Rd
95. County Road 36
96. US-10 E/US-61 S
97. I-494 W
98. Minnesota 156
99. US-52 S
100. Minnesota 55
101. Hastings Trl
102. County Road 42
103. E 2nd St
104. US-61 N
105. US-10, Point Douglas Dr (to Wisconsin)
106. Eddy St
107. W 3rd St
108. US-61
109. Minnesota 316
110. US-61
111. I-90 E/US-14/US-61
112. US-14/US-61
113. Minnesota 16
114. Minnesota 26 (to Iowa)

Route Address:

3-3: To assist review of your nomination, please provide the addresses/intersections and the GPS coordinates for the beginning and end points of the byway. You will provide the GPS coordinates for other key points/features in Section 5: Traveler Experience.

Beginning addresses/intersections and the GPS coordinates of the byway.
East Entrance Rd and Main Park Drive 47.193, -95.164

Ending addresses/intersections and the GPS coordinates of the byway.
MN 26 at Iowa 43.501, -91.284

If available, please submit a GIS shapefile of the route.

Uploaded GIS file: 3-3MnGRR.zip

Before uploading, rename the file to begin with 3-3. For example, rename your file RiverBend.png to 3-3RiverBend.png.”

Federal Lands:

3-4: Check the boxes for agencies whose lands occur along the byway or select Not Applicable.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, US Forest Service

Route Map:

3-5: Please provide the following information on a single PDF map which will be used as a central reference point with the other materials you include in your nomination application. The scale and size of the map will be relative to the location and length of your nominated byway. In some cases, this may require two or more pages. The map and supporting legend should clearly show:

- Location of the byway within the State, Indian lands, or Federal lands

- The location of the byway in relation to other State, Indian tribe, and Federal land management agency byways; and America's Byways in your region
- Each end point of the byway
- Location of gaps and/or intrusions
- The location of each community along the route
- Boundaries and/or management areas of major entities (e.g., parks, forests, reserves)
- Locations of critical directional signage, if any
- Locations of existing interpretive panels/information
- Locations of public visitor centers and/or other visitor amenities (e.g., public restroom facilities)
- Locations of the features detailed in the Visitor/Traveler Experience section of this nomination form (Section 5).

Uploaded Map: 3-5MnGRRMaps.pdf

Before uploading, rename the file to begin with 3-5. For example, rename your file RiverBend.png to 3-5RiverBend.png.

Continuity of the Route:

3-6: The continuity of your byway route is an essential requirement for designation as it directly impacts the travel experience and can reflect community support. If you have included a list of gaps and/or intrusions in your official route description, please use this section to provide explanations for any gaps and/or intrusions in your route that interrupt the continuity of the traveler experience (e.g., local zoning decisions, lack of community support, etc.) (Limit 250 words.) Minnesota's Great River Road has no gaps or intrusions.

Nomination by Indian Tribes:

3-7: If this nomination is being submitted for consideration by an Indian tribe, please answer the following questions:

1. Title 23, United States Code (USC), Section 162(a)(3)(B) allows nomination by Indian tribes only if a Federal land management agency (other than the Bureau of Indian Affairs), a State, or a political subdivision of a State does not have jurisdiction over the road or responsibility for managing the road. Briefly discuss who has jurisdiction over the road and who manages the road. (Limit 200 words.)
N/A
2. Section 162(a)(3)(C) requires that Indian tribes maintain the safety and quality of roads nominated. Discuss how the tribe will maintain the safety and quality of the road. (Limit 200 words.)
N/A

Section 4

Vehicle Accommodation:

4-1: Confirm that two-wheel-drive passenger vehicles are accommodated along the entire route, and describe how this is facilitated if segments of the road are not paved. (Limit 150 words.)
Two-wheel-drive passenger vehicles are accommodated along the entire Minnesota Great River Road, year-round. All of Minnesota's 565-mile Great River Road is paved bituminous or concrete, except for a 7-mile section of CSAH 21 in Aitkin County that is the only unpaved segment. Although unpaved, CSAH 21 is well maintained, level and accommodates two-wheel-drive passenger vehicles in all seasons. No bridge height or weight restrictions occur along the route that would preclude two-wheel-drive passenger vehicles.

4-2: Describe the accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian travel, including crossings, along the byway. If non-applicable, indicate N/A. (Limit 150 words.)

Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes' Mississippi River parkway vision included improving pedestrian and bicycle access and preventing unsafe roadside stops at river highlights. Ickes' Great River Road development leveraged Works Progress Administration programs providing waysides, state entrances, interpretive markers and rest areas created from riverine stone showcasing geological wonders, historical accounts, recreation access, and stunning scenery. 12 of the byway's 21 remaining WPA sites were restored during 2008-2013. Minnesota has 85 vehicular and 11 bike/ped crossings. Today's transportation projects from Minneapolis to Bena, and all but one recent river crossing, continue to enhance access to the Mississippi and its amenities, often utilizing NSB, TE and TA grants. Using a 2011 FHWA NSB grant Minnesota signed the Mississippi River Trail bicycle route, largely on byway shoulders, or on trails and lower volume roads, providing the best and safest river ride. Transit, Amtrak, river ports and airports add modal opportunities, too.

4-3: For the All-American Roads designation, discuss the accommodation of conventional tour buses along the route. (Limit 150 words.)

The entire Minnesota Great River Road can accommodate commercial level coach tour buses. Hard-surface paved roads and sufficient bridges are provided along the length of the byway, except for 7 miles of well-maintained gravel county road that can also accommodate tour buses. The Great River Road and Mississippi River has attracted tour buses for generations and is a very popular itinerary for domestic and international receptive operators. Explore Minnesota's 2020 Group Travel Guide features a five-page itinerary: "Wild and Wonderful: Discover the Sites Along Minnesota's Great River Road" and other regional and thematic Guide itineraries feature Mississippi River attractions. River communities and attractions large and small offer Minnesota Nice hospitality to tour buses. Today, cruise lines exploring the Mississippi River provide optional shore excursions to Minnesota Great River Road attractions, benefitting lodging, stores and restaurants, too, with ports in Winona, Red Wing and St. Paul.

Travel Restrictions

4-4: Describe any restrictions to the types of vehicles that are allowed along the route. If non-applicable, indicate N/A. (Limit 150 words.)
The 10-mile segment co-located with the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway in Minneapolis does not allow trucks.

4-5: Describe any seasonal closures or other restrictions along the route. If non-applicable, indicate N/A. (Limit 150 words.)

Generally the Minnesota Great River Road traveler will experience no seasonal travel disruptions along its length, but they will experience the Mississippi River's evolving landscapes as they express Minnesota's four vibrant seasons. Over 40 communities and a system of rest areas and tourist information centers host travelers year round. In intermittent years some isolated byway segments may be closed due to 100+ year floods. Periodically severe seasonal storm conditions may affect travel. Spring weight restrictions would not affect travel and tourism. Minnesota travel information, including closures, is available at <https://hb.511mn.org/>

Seasons:

4-6: Describe the best time during the year to drive the byway and experience the Intrinsic Qualities identified in this application (Limit 150 words.)

The best time to drive the Minnesota Great River Road and experience its Intrinsic Qualities is a personal preference because Minnesota's vibrant seasons each highlight the best of the Mississippi River. Spring's Mississippi River evolves from frozen to melting to, at times and places, flooding. In spring our nation's flyway is filled with migration, budding forests paint softly colored vistas, farm fields are planted, and barges again ply the river. Summer admittedly is high season, with camping, boating, fishing, living history, pow wows, festivals and fairs in cities small and large. Autumn is stellar with a blaze of fall color, harvest festivals, hunting, wild rice, and skies fill with southern migration. Winter is a wonderland when Mississippi scenery features the headwaters trickling over snow-covered steppingstones, winter camping, frozen river lakes dotted with ice fishing shacks, see-through forests without leaves, fallow fields, quiet hikes, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and eagle watching.

4-7: Describe any travel concentrations or high seasons when byway visitors might be more likely to encounter crowds or extra traffic (Limit 150 words.)

Minnesota's Great River Road passes through over 40 communities, many hosting community festivals and events that may result in travel concentrations requiring temporary local traffic control. Roads are managed during these events in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and in coordination with local law enforcement. Special emphasis to assure pedestrian safety improves through-traffic efficiency. While all portions of the Great River Road in Minnesota are accessible throughout the year, exceptions occasionally occur when seasonal flood waters close short portions of the route. Whether festival or flood, alternative routes are signed and communicated to the travelling public through media, websites and mobile apps.

Safety:

4-8: Describe the key factors of your roadway that contribute to its safety for travelers (e.g. rumble strips, low speeds, lighting, guard rails, high friction surface treatments). (Limit 150 words.)
 Approximately 40% of roadways that comprise the Great River Road in Minnesota are state and federal highways, the rest are county, municipal, park and forest roads right of way. The byway has hard surface pavement on 558 of 565 miles. Based upon design requirements and local context segments feature appropriate pavement markings, posted speeds, lighting, guard rails and center or side rumble strips. Today's Mississippi River bridge crossings include safety features benefitting motorists, non-motorists, boaters, birds, terrestrials, and national security. In urban segments sharrow, bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian signage, marked or lighted pedestrian crossings with audible signals, and pedestrian scale lighting improve safety for non-motorized river exploration. Waysides, rest areas, travel information centers and local visitor centers offer travelers refuge, travel information, river views and interpretation. 511 offers on-the-road travel information too. In partnership with local law enforcement traffic regulations are enforced, and emergency services are available.

Section 5

Getting to the Byway:

5-1: Using the table below, provide distance and driving time to the byway from at least two nearby large cities, gateway communities, airports, major roadways, or other locations that would be pertinent to the traveler (limit 5).

Location	Distance (miles)	Avg Driving Time (hours)
Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport	1.5	.03
Rochester, MN	54	1
Duluth, MN	74	1.5
Fargo, ND	107	2

Traveler Services:

5-2: Provide a short description of services and hours of operation at each public visitor/welcome center. (Limit 150 words.)

Explore Minnesota delivered personalized travel planning assistance to 2.9 million travelers in 2019 online, via phone, and face to face at staffed highway Welcome Centers. On the Great River Road the I-90 Welcome Center is located at the state entry from Wisconsin. The St Cloud Welcome Center is operated through the St Cloud State University Tourism and Geography program and is staffed by student interns. A third level of Welcome Centers are affiliated with chamber and tourism organizations and housed at local chamber offices or their independent welcome center. All welcome centers are open seven days a week from May through Labor Day: 9 AM to 5 PM, and eight are open throughout the year, some with limited hours during the winter months. The Explore Minnesota Contact Center in St Paul is also open Monday-Friday 8 AM to 4:30 PM year-round.

5-3: Describe any universal access accommodations to assist travelers of varying abilities. (Limit 150 words.)

Universal access accommodation along the Minnesota Great River Road has been significantly improved in recent years with installation of truncated dome pedestrian ramps and audible signals on all new transportation construction projects and robust retrofit efforts, both at the state and local level. Great River Road roadside storybook interpretive panels are designed with toe space to allow close reading. Restoration of 3 historic roadside properties including improved ADA accommodation while abiding by the Secretary of Interior guidelines for historic preservation. To keep improving access the 2018 Ten-State Great River Road Corridor Management Plan includes Byway Design strategy C. Accessibility: Incorporate ADA-compliant accessibility in scoping, design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure. CMP Great River Road Marketing strategies encourage the MRPC to improve how they promote the Great River Road and intrinsic resources by incorporating ADA-compliant accessibility in website, app, and print materials, too.

5-4: Describe any gaps on the byway of 50 miles or more where no traveler services (food, fuel or restrooms) are available. (Limit 150 words.)

N/A

5-5: Does your byway include alternative fuel corridors, as defined under [FHWA's Alternative Fuels Corridor Program](#)?

no If yes, please list the corridor(s) and date(s) of designation, and discuss the fuel(s) accommodated. (Limit 150 words.)

Wayfinding:

5-6: Describe how travelers will know they are on the byway and list tools such as maps, signs and brochures. (Limit 150 words.)

Minnesota's Great River Road was entirely re-signed in 2018 so travelers can safely and confidently explore the route as it twists and turns following the Mississippi River's serpentine start, past prairies, falls, and river towns to the Mississippi's

braided island backwaters. Distinctive roadside storybook panels reinforce placemaking. A new print map provides drivable detail, highlights 12 byway interpretive centers charting distances between, and shows the Mississippi River Trail, modal options, and 21 other Minnesota byways. Great River Road Interpretive Center signs promote the 10-state network. <https://www.mnmississippiriver.com/> offers the interactive Plan Your Trip map for use by phone, tablet or PC. It includes over 700 places to see and explore, a directions function and links to StoryMaps describing the six destination areas unique to Minnesota's Great River Road. A ten-state mobile application allows travelers to download the map to follow the route from the headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico.

5-7: Please describe directional signage that currently exists that would help travelers access and navigate the byway as well as find their way back to major routes. If non-applicable, indicate N/A (Limit 150 words.)
The Pilot's Wheel is the official emblem of the Great River Road, as adopted by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission Transportation Committee Chaired by J. Alvin Druyer in 1958. The green on white sign is in the MUTCD and includes a green pilot's wheel with 12 spokes representing the 10 member states and two provinces. In the center is a paddlewheel boat steaming along the reflecting Mississippi River. "Great River Road" is etched on the wheel's top and each State's name on the bottom. A "National Route" plaque is included in the sign assembly from the headwaters to Hastings, reflecting an era of FHWA categorical funding requirement. 650 Wayfinding assemblies installed per the MUTCD include turn, confirm and reassurance, as well as to Iowa and Wisconsin. Some brown and white signs to historic and recreational amenities include the Pilot's Wheel if byway funding was secured, further reinforcing the byway streetscape.

Evidence of Intrinsic Qualities:

5-8: Identify up to 8 features (i.e., points of interest, sites or events) in sequential order along your byway that support the Intrinsic Qualities you have identified for nomination. Please keep in mind that the quality of your points of interest, sites or events and their connection to the byway's Intrinsic Quality(s) are more important than citing a large quantity of sites that aren't connected. If using events to support your byway's Intrinsic Quality(s), they must be particularly related to the byway travel experience or connect the byway traveler to the Intrinsic Quality(s) for which the byway is being nominated. For each feature, please include the following (Limit 500 words per feature):

- Name of the feature
- A description of what is found at the feature, and how the feature supports the Intrinsic Quality(s)
- Dates and/or times on which the feature is available for traveler visits
- Driving distance to the feature, and existing signage if the feature is not immediately adjacent to the road. Please ensure the feature is included in the Route Description and on the Route Map in Section 3: Route Information.
- If hiking, cycling, or walking is involved, the distance and degree of difficulty
- A photo highlighting how the feature supports the Intrinsic Quality. **Before uploading photos, rename the file to begin with the Feature Number. For example, for Feature 1, rename your file RiverBend.png to Feature1RiverBend.png.** For guidelines on submitting images and composing alternative text descriptions, please see our [Image Style Guide](#).

Feature 1

Feature name:
Lake Itasca - Scenic

GPS coordinates:
47.239775, -95.207668

Describe the feature:

As the source of America's greatest river, Lake Itasca is nationally and internationally renowned. This byway feature is not just about Lake Itasca or the point at which it spills out. To really know the Mississippi River's source, here byway travelers can see, smell, hear, touch and even taste the rich context of the river's origin.

Sioux and Ojibwe had known for centuries that the Y-shaped lake later named Itasca (from the Latin words veritas and caput, for truth and head) fed the river that had come to be known as the Great River, Father of Waters -- the Mississippi. Ojibwe chief, Ozawindib, guided Henry Schoolcraft, an Indian agent, mineralogist and folklorist, providing maps and taking him to the lake when Schoolcraft set out to find the source of the Mississippi in 1832.

Lake Itasca lies within Itasca State Park. Established in 1891, this park is the second oldest state park in the United States, after Niagara Falls State Park in New York. Itasca State Park encompasses over 32,000 acres, more than 100 lakes and 31 named trails of varying lengths. The Alton fire tower stands 80 feet tall and gives those willing to climb it panoramic views of the park, and from this perspective you will better understand the landscape causing the Mississippi River to begin here.

At the Mississippi's headwaters -- undoubtedly one of the river's most photographed locations - visitors can carefully step their way across the rock dam marking where the Mississippi River flows out of Lake Itasca and begins its 2,552-mile trek to the Gulf of Mexico.

Byway travelers can also drive or hike through ancient red and white pine forest that escaped the logging bonanza of Minnesota's early American settlement, raging storms and wildfires. Some trees are over 250 years old. Wilderness Drive skirts the west edge of a 2,000-acre Wilderness Sanctuary that the Department of the Interior designated as a National Natural Landmark in 1965. Lake Itasca is the Landmark's eastern border. To those looking across the lake from the east side, the ancient northern forest accentuates the setting's scenic qualities.

Itasca State Park includes many nationally significant historic structures associated with Rustic Style architecture. Designed to blend with their surroundings and accentuating a romantic view of nature and pioneer life, the buildings' style and surroundings within the forests of Itasca State Park add to the scenic sense of this place. While completed in 2002, the Jacob Brower Visitor Center also embodies the rustic architecture style and is a national Great River Road interpretive center. Here visitors can interact with hands-on interpretation and park staff to get oriented to all the park has to offer and peruse the gift store for mementos of their visit to the Mississippi River's source.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. Lake Itasca is the central feature in Itasca State Park, where the Great River Road begins its ten-state journey along the east side of the lake, then following the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. Many signs along the byway and trails help visitors find and understand Itasca Lake's scenic and historical features.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

Hiking, walking and bicycling are encouraged with well-developed and maintained paved and unpaved trails and signage to guide safe exploration when sharing the road with motorists is required. The trails and roads around Lake Itasca are generally level and paved, while hiking trails throughout the Park can include hills.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F1a People Crossing Headwaters.jpg	Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Deb Rose. Contact deb.rose@state.mn.us for permission to use.	People enjoy walking across the mighty Mississippi River in Minnesota's Itasca State Park as it starts its winding journey 2,552 miles to the Gulf of Mexico.	F1a People Crossing Headwaters	No
F1b Douglas Lodge.jpg	Credit – National Park Service	Completed in 1905, Douglas Lodge is one of the premier historic structures within Itasca State Park. Visitors today can experience history while enjoying a meal or overnight stay in this iconic building	F1b Douglas Lodge	Yes
F1c Fire Tower View.jpg	Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Deb Rose. Contact deb.rose@state.mn.us for permission to use.	You can climb the fire tower at Itasca State Park and take in a panoramic view of the forests and lakes of the Mississippi River headwaters around Minnesota's oldest state park.	F1c Fire Tower View	No

Feature 2

Feature name:

Rustic Architecture of Itasca State Park - Historic

GPS coordinates:

47.191669, -95.170661

Describe the feature:

History comes to life within Itasca State Park through a series of structures on the National Register of Historic Places that truly transcend time. Constructed over a 37-year period from 1905 through 1942, these Rustic Style buildings include many of the finest log structures in the state.

By the late 1800s, Minnesota's logging era was at its peak and many companies moved north in search of prime timber. The headwaters were threatened with deforestation when Jacob Brower, a land surveyor and historian, began his heroic battle to establish the park. Brower became Itasca's first superintendent and devoted the last 14 years of his life to acquiring land for the park and enhancing its beauty until his death in 1905.

Development of recreational facilities in the park began in 1905 with the construction of Douglas Lodge, the very first Rustic Style building in the state park system. Subsequent construction over the next 20 years added 12 more Rustic Style buildings to the park. The park contains the first examples of Rustic Style state park design and the largest concentration of Rustic Style buildings that predate the Depression Era. These structures represent a remarkably diverse and well-developed collection of buildings featuring irreplaceable labor-intensive construction and finely crafted detailing, several still serving as lodging for today's byway travelers.

With the Rustic Style already firmly established, the federal work programs of the 1930s continued the tradition when they began large-scale recreational development in the park. Development was undertaken by two CCC camps as well as two WPA transient camps. Historic resources in the park now total 45 contributing buildings, 16 contributing structures, 11 contributing objects, and one contributing site.

CCC Camp SP-1 was the first state park CCC camp approved in Minnesota and was assigned to Itasca State Park. The camp occupied a site just north of the park beginning on June 27, 1933. One of the camp's more notable projects was the construction of the Old Timer's Cabin built in the summer of 1934. The cabin was the first CCC-constructed building in the park and it represents a spectacular example of Rustic Style log construction with walls only four massive logs high.

Transient relief camps located at Lake Ozawindib and Elk Lake were also involved in the expansion of the park. Workers from these camps improved trails, built bridges and worked on reforestation and landscaping. CCC camp SP-1 closed in 1937 and was replaced by CCC camp SP-19. One of the projects the CCC workers constructed, the Forest Inn, is one of the largest buildings in the state park system. CCC camp SP-19 closed on July 15, 1942, the last Civilian Conservation Corps state park camp in the United States.

Excerpted from MN Historical Society website: <http://www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/stateparks/Itasca.php>

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 miles. The Great River Road begins at the entrance to Douglas Lodge, from which visitors can walk to several of the rustic architecture historic buildings. The buildings are marked on maps and signs along the byway and trails help visitors find and understand the collection of Rustic Architecture buildings that contribute to this historical feature.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

Hiking, walking and bicycling to explore the Rustic Architecture of the Park is encouraged by well-developed and maintained paved and unpaved trails, and signage guides safe Rustic Architecture exploration when sharing the road with motorists. While many trails and roads around the lake are level, the trails and roads leading up to Rustic Architecture features typically follow the undulating Park landscape, so moderate inclines, stairs and foot bridges are common as one approaches each site, and bicycles may need to be walked or parked.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F2a Old Timers Cabin.jpg	Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Deb Rose. Contact deb.rose@state.mn.us for permission to use.	The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) constructed Itasca State Park's Old Timer's Cabin. Itasca State Park itself is designated as a National Register Historic District. There are many historic sites within the park.	F2a Old Timers Cabin	No
F2b Lodging Clubhouse.jpg	Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Deb Rose. Contact deb.rose@state.mn.us for permission to use.	Itasca State Park's Clubhouse is a two-story log structure built in 1913 and is the park's premier lodging facility, great for family gatherings and celebrations.	F2b Lodging Clubhouse	No
F2c Lodging Cabin.jpg	Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Deb Rose. Contact deb.rose@state.mn.us for permission to use.	Itasca State Park has numerous CCC era log cabins that are available for rental including this cabin located near the historic Douglas Lodge Restaurant.	F2c Lodging Cabin	No

Feature 3

Feature name:
Serpentine River – Scenic

GPS coordinates:
47.347736, -94.210836

Describe the feature:

The Mississippi seems reluctant to leave its birthplace among ancient pines and pristine lakes. After noisily percolating from Lake Itasca through a low, rocky dam, it follows a serpentine course for some 337 river miles to Brainerd. Over this reach, the river drops 323 feet or about .96 feet per mile. This shallow slope explains, in part, why the river frequently twists back on itself, leaving cut-off lands and oxbows reminiscent of the lower Mississippi. Nowhere above Cairo, Illinois, does the Mississippi display this character. As anyone who has canoed or kayaked this reach will tell you, the meandering river is the defining feature, every twist and turn creating a new scenic view or point of interest.

Kids and adults balance their way from rock to rock over the little dam where the Mississippi begins, and wade through the knee-deep waters of the newly-born river. Young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps built the dam during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Mississippi River guide Mark Walter describes one of the first stretches after leaving Lake Itasca as “a boat beater section” and “the scratchy river section,” for how a canoe can grate over the river’s bottom. He says you can canoe this section in the spring but will be better off walking down the river in the fall, dragging your canoe.

Through another section dominated by floating bogs, Walter explains how the channel can change course in only a few days, and water that appears shallow could be over eight feet deep. Here Connie Cox, Itasca State Park’s lead interpretive naturalist, warns those canoeing the river will find “mystery channels that lead to nowhere.” It can take a paddler more than an hour to travel one mile, Walter says, but adds they will see numerous waterfowl and other wildlife as reward.

Below Bemidji and after the headwaters lakes, the river continues its serpentine nature, winding through the Leech Lake Reservation and Chippewa National Forest’s pine, birch and tamarack forests. In some places the river appears flat and in others you can see class one rapids.

While best viewed from a canoe or kayak, the Great River Road crosses the Serpentine River in many places between Lake Itasca and Brainerd. Throughout this reach, the Great River Road brings travelers to Tribal lands, trails, parks, state and federal forests, scientific and natural areas and interpretive centers. One section of this reach runs through the Chippewa National Forest, which “was established in 1908 and is the first National Forest east of the Mississippi River.” In this reach, the river also courses through or connects to Buena Vista State Forest, Bowstring State Forest, Schoolcraft State Park, North Country Trail (National Park Service), Avenue of the Pines Scenic Byway and Lady Slipper Scenic Byway.

Together, with small towns, resorts and campgrounds as hosts, these places provide a rich and very different scenic experience from any other on the Great River.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. The Great River Road follows and crosses the Mississippi River throughout the Serpentine River feature. Many signs along the byway and at adjacent public lands help visitors enjoy and understand the Serpentine River’s scenic features.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

Within the Serpentine River feature the Mississippi River Trail often is on Great River Road shoulders, following local and forest trails and local roads when they provide a better bicycle experience. Hiking, walking and bicycling are encouraged along the feature at parks and in communities. While the byway is generally level and paved (7 miles in Aitkin County are gravel), hiking trails can include hills of moderate difficulty and the Cuyuna Rec Area offers international -caliber mountain biking.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F3a Serpentine River.jpg	Credit – Mississippi Headwaters Board	The serpentine reach of the Mississippi River winds serenely through a landscape of fall colors.	F3a Serpentine River	Yes
F3b Serpentine River Wide.jpg	Credit – Mississippi Headwaters Board	The narrow northern sections of the Mississippi River near her birthplace bear little resemblance to the mighty reaches further south but hold a charm all their own.	F3b Wide View Serpentine River	Yes
F3c Kayaker.jpg	Credit - Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota	A kayaker peacefully floats the Mississippi River as it twists and turns, meandering south.	F3c Kayaker	Yes

Feature 4

Feature name:
Headwaters Lakes & Reservoirs - Scenic

GPS coordinates:
47.429641, -94.051217

Describe the feature:

The headwaters of the Mississippi River includes thousands of scenic lakes, but the largest are part of a reservoir system the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers created in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The dams and reservoirs are nationally significant as part of the first reservoir system in the United States built by the Corps.

Hoping to ensure a more reliable flow for the flour mills at Saint Anthony Falls and for navigation from the Twin Cities south, Congress authorized the Corps to construct six dams in the Mississippi’s headwaters. Under the Headwaters Project, the Corps built the Winnibigoshish Dam in 1883-1884 and then completed dams at Leech Lake (1884), Pokegama Falls (1884), Pine River (1886), Sandy Lake (1895), and Gull Lake (1912). The Mississippi River flows through Lake Winnibigoshish and, with Leech Lake, they are two of the 10 largest lakes in Minnesota. Still in operation, the dams offer byway travelers a glimpse back in time, and forward, the power of the Mississippi River never going out of style.

The Great River Road rewards with occasional stunning long Lake and Reservoirs views, seasonally, if not hourly changing with the light. Fringed with wild rice, the Mississippi River landscape, including Lake Winnibigoshish, is a major feature within the Leech Lake Reservation. The dams changed the land and native settlement along the river. Today the tribal seal symbology reflects “members have been able to continue to maintain their cultural identity while remaining in harmony with nature,” including pine trees reflecting an obvious canvas viewed every day on tribal lands, and the soaring eagle representing the continued strength and perseverance of members from generation to generation. Pow Wows and native harvested wild rice are but two opportunities to experience this native culture. (<http://www.llojibwe.org/aboutUs/demographics.html>)

The Chippewa National Forest, between Bemidji and Grand Rapids was established in 1908, “the first National Forest east of the Mississippi River. It is also home to more lakes and wetlands than any other National Forest.” In addition to welcoming resorts, Chippewa National Forest offers camping and a wide range of recreational facilities for bikers, boaters, paddlers, birders, photographers, fishers and hikers. (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/chippewa>)

The scenic context of this feature is formed by the nationally significant dams, reservoirs, Leech Lake Reservation and Chippewa National Forest. Lake Winnibigoshish’s 141-mile shoreline is mostly undeveloped, a mix of red pine, hardwoods and rolling hills. Whether open or frozen over, the sun rising and setting on these immense lakes with the distant shore simply a thin line dividing the landscape is always magical.

Peeks of the many lakes through pines, someone casting their line in hopes of catching a trophy Muskie, huge waves rolling across the open water, the smell of a campfire from the many campgrounds, the call of a Loon across the morning water are all experiences byway visitors are likely to encounter in this feature.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 to 5 Miles. The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River past the large headwaters lakes and reservoirs created by Corp of Engineers dams, often along the shore, never more than a few miles away. The lakes and reservoirs are home to well-signed resorts, campgrounds, parks and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail often is on Great River Road shoulders as it weaves around the Lakes and Reservoirs features, occasionally following local and forest trails and local roads when they provide a better bicycle experience. Hiking, walking and bicycling are encouraged at public lands and in communities. While the byway is generally level and paved, hiking trails can include hills of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F4a Winnie Dam.JPG	Credit – US Army Corps of Engineers	Winnibigoshish Dam, or “Winnie” as it’s locally known, transforms the Mississippi River into one of the largest lakes in Minnesota.	F4a Winnie Dam	Yes
F4b Crosslake Rec Area.jpg	Credit – US Army Corps of Engineers	The United States Army Corps of Engineers maintains a system of headwaters dams in Minnesota, creating beautiful lakes in the pines with recreational facilities to help visitors experience and enjoy the area.	F4b Crosslake-Pine River Rec Area	Yes

Feature 5

Feature name:
Headwaters Dams - Historic

GPS coordinates:
47.429641, -94.051217

Describe the feature:

Thousands of lakes lie at the Mississippi River’s headwaters, but the largest are part of a reservoir system created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The dams are nationally significant as part of the first reservoir system built by the Corps.

Hoping to ensure a more reliable flow of water for the flour mills at St. Anthony Falls and for navigation from the Twin Cities south, Congress authorized the Corps to construct six dams in the Mississippi’s headwaters. Under the Headwaters Project, the Corps built the Winnibigoshish Dam in 1883-1884 and then Leech Lake (1884), Pokegama Falls (1884), Pine River (1886), Sandy Lake (1895), and Gull Lake (1912).

Initially proposed as an “experimental dam and reservoir,” the Corps completed the project at Winnibigoshish first. Built where the Mississippi River exited the lake, the dam created a 67,000-acre reservoir, making it the fifth largest in Minnesota. Originally built of timber in 1883-1884, the Corps replace the dam with a concrete structure in 1899-1900. Below the dam, the Mississippi becomes a river again.

In their 1895 Annual Report, the Corps announced that releasing water from the Headwaters reservoirs raised the water level in the Twin Cities by 12 to 18 inches. Twenty-seven river miles downstream, at Hastings, the Corps recorded a rise of about 12 inches, and 15 miles farther down, at Red Wing, about 6 inches. As some of the river’s worst sandbars lay between St. Paul and Hastings, the reservoirs promised to help navigation through this critical reach.

Water for navigation and milling came at great cost to the Ojibwe Indians. The reservoirs flooded 178,000 acres of their reservation lands, including villages sites, cemeteries and wild rice beds, their main source of subsistence. So the story of the Headwaters dams, and reservoirs, is also about America’s treatment of Indian Tribes during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It took 100 years for the Ojibwe to get some semblance of compensation.

The Ojibwe are very much present in the headwaters today. Winnibigoshish and Leech lakes fall within the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe’s reservation, and the town of Cass Lake is the reservation’s largest community. Tribal Pow Wow’s are open to the public and introduce outsiders to Ojibwe culture (see <http://www.llojibwe.org>). Wild rice, a staple of the Ojibwe foodway and reason for Ojibwe migration to the region, is still harvested in the traditional manner and available for sale.

By 1940, milling at St. Anthony Falls had nearly ended, and the Corps had completed most of the 9-Foot Channel Locks and Dam. The millers and shippers no longer needed water released from the reservoirs. Today, the Corps manages all six dams and reservoirs for recreation, flood mitigation and environmental stewardship, including wild rice production for the Leech Lake Ojibwe. Each of the dam and reservoir sites has campgrounds and day-use areas, with boating, swimming, picnicking, fishing and playgrounds to meet a variety of byway traveler interests.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 to 8 Miles. The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River past the large headwaters lakes and reservoirs created by six Corp of Engineers dams, never more than a few miles from the byway. The dam sites are well signed, some with campgrounds, picnic areas, interpretation, and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail often is on Great River Road shoulders as it weaves around the Lakes and Reservoirs the historic Corps of Engineers' dams create, occasionally following local and forest trails and local roads when they provide a better bicycle experience. Hiking, walking and bicycling are encouraged at public lands. While the byway is generally level and paved, hiking trails can include hills of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F5a Crosslake Dam.jpg	Credit – US Army Corps of Engineers	This aerial view of the Crosslake Dam shows both sides of a site within the headwaters dam system. A “before and after” if you will.	F5a Crosslake Dam	Yes
F5b Pokegama Dam.jpg	Credit – MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission	Pokegama Dam just outside Grand Rapids, Minnesota in the stunning Northwoods, provides an up close view of the river and also a recreation area for those wishing to spend a little more time here. And who wouldn't?	F5b Pokegama Dam	Yes

Feature 6

Feature name:

Prairie River - Scenic

GPS coordinates:

46.360024, -94.192148

Describe the feature:

At Brainerd, the Mississippi River mostly straightens out, becoming noticeably wider, as more islands appear. There is little floodplain and no large backwater lakes. This is the Prairie River, where the prairie runs up to the river's banks – sometimes rising 40 to 60 feet above the river. While not the towering, rocky bluffs that begin below St. Anthony Falls, byway travelers exploring the high banks are rewarded with expanding views of a maturing river.

The Prairie River runs for about 150 river miles, from Brainerd to Saint Anthony Falls. Here the Mississippi drops 353 feet or 2.35 feet per mile, more than twice that of the Serpentine River upstream. So, it not surprising to see more rapids. The steeper slope also explains why this feature has seven dams that impound the river, as well as the Mississippi River's last free-flowing stretch.

There are many historic sites, scientific and natural areas, and river parks between Brainerd and Saint Anthony Falls, but two sites are of national and international significance. Operated by the Minnesota Historical Society, both are national Great River Road interpretive centers.

The boyhood home of Charles Lindbergh lies along the Mississippi River in the southwestern corner of Little Falls. Lindbergh's flight from New York to Paris, France, in 1927, announced the world had just become smaller. The fastest ocean liner still took around five days; Lindbergh's flight lasted 33½ hours.

While a historic site, it is scenic for its river setting, the well-preserved home nestled within the forested yard, and adjacent Lindbergh State Park backdrop. Visitors can walk the Historic Site's Nature Trail to the river. From the home's setting, one can understand why Lindbergh remarked that the Mississippi River "has wound its way in and out of my life like the seasons." (www.mnmississippiriver.com)

Outside Elk River, the Oliver Kelley Farm is a living museum. Led by Kelley, farmers formed the Grange or Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in 1867. While not founded as a political organization, the Grange became a political force. They focused on breaking railroad monopolies through legislation, lawsuits and transforming the upper Mississippi River into a viable shipping alternative. They were a principal proponent of the 4½-Foot Channel Project, the first project to fundamentally begin transforming the upper Mississippi's physical and ecological character for navigation.

The Mississippi River flowing by the Kelley Farm looks much like the one Oliver Kelley saw from 1850 to 1871, when he worked the farm. The picturesque setting and authentic character of Kelley's farm make it a scenic and historic site at the national level. The farm is a National Historic Landmark.

Because of outstanding scenic value within this feature Minnesota declared the Mississippi from St. Cloud to Anoka a State Wild & Scenic River, and Congress the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), a 72-river-mile national park. While the Lindbergh home, Kelley farm and MNRRA stand out, it is the Great River Road's cumulative Prairie River visual experience that paints Mississippi landscape memories unlike any other.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River as it grows in width flanked by a prairie landscape that is predominantly agricultural today. Public sites offering direct river access and intimate views are well signed, some with campgrounds, picnic areas, interpretation, and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail often is on Great River Road shoulders as it follows the Prairie River, occasionally following local trails and roads when they provide a better bicycle experience. Hiking, walking and bicycling are encouraged at public lands. While the byway is generally level and paved, hiking trails can include hills of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F6a Prairie River Sartell.JPG	Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Eric Altena.	Sartell, Minnesota's river dam backs up the water to form a shallow lake used by wildlife like this heron, captured on film by a trail cam.	F6a Prairie River Sartell	Yes

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F6b Mississippi River at Dayton.jpg	Credit – National Park Service	The Mississippi River at Dayton retains a prairie river quality, calling for quiet reflection.	F6b Mississippi River at Dayton	Yes
F6c Kayaks Lowry Bridge.jpg	Credit – National Park Service	Kayakers paddle their colorful watercraft on the Mississippi River in Minneapolis with the spectacular Lowry Avenue Bridge and Minneapolis skyline as a backdrop.	F6c Kayakers Lowry Bridge	Yes

Feature 7

Feature name:
Charles Lindbergh House and Museum - Historic

GPS coordinates:
45.959834, -94.386919

Describe the feature:

Before Charles Lindbergh did extraordinary things, he grew up as an ordinary boy on a farm in central Minnesota on the Mississippi River. Today, visitors can enjoy his boyhood home, a National Historic Landmark, a river-side museum, and the adjacent state park, with its rich collection of WPA structures.

The Charles Lindbergh House & Museum is a national Great River Road Interpretive Center where you can see why, from the freedom to explore the surrounding woods and river as a child to traveling across the country by train and automobile, adventure shaped the individual who would become one of the most famous men in the world.

"Science, freedom, beauty, adventure: what more could you ask of life? Aviation combined all the elements I loved," Charles Lindbergh wrote in his book *The Spirit of St. Louis*. Here byway travelers come to understand his love of aviation, science, and the environment can all be directly linked to various experiences throughout his youth along the banks of the Mississippi.

Charles Augustus Lindbergh was born in Detroit, Michigan, on Feb 4, 1902. The infant Charles was brought home to Little Falls, to the home his parents had built on the banks of the Mississippi River on a 110-acre farm outside of town.

During World War I, Lindbergh joined the war effort but returned to the farm after the war ended. He farmed for two years before heading off to the University of Wisconsin in 1920. He attended college for three semesters then left to pursue a career in aviation. While Lindbergh returned to the farm for short visits over the next several years, he would never live in Little Falls again.

On May 21, 1927, 25-year-old Charles A. Lindbergh landed his airplane, the Spirit of St. Louis, in Paris, France. It was a record-breaking 33.5-hour, nonstop, solo flight from New York City. Instantly, Lindbergh became one of the most famous men in the world and his feat helped advance the aviation industry.

Lindbergh's aviation career spanned his years as a barnstormer providing entertainment across the Midwest, through his famous flight, to his role in helping to establish modern commercial aviation as we know it today.

While Charles Lindbergh is best known as an international hero for completing the first solo, nonstop flight between New York City and Paris, in addition to being a skilled aviator, Lindbergh was also an amateur scientist, inventor, and leader in the early conservation movement. However, just like many of our role models, Lindbergh was a complex individual, known also for his involvement in the isolationist movement leading up to WWII and extramarital affairs as an older adult.

Today, visitors can walk along the banks of the Mississippi River in Little Falls, and learn about Lindbergh's complex legacy, as well as the creation of the historic site and state park, and the foundation that honors Charles and his wife, Anne. (<http://www.mnhs.org/lindbergh/learn>)

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. The Charles Lindbergh House & Museum is on the Great River Road as it follows the Mississippi River through Little Falls. The site offers direct river access and intimate views. It is well signed, including interpretation and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail is on Great River Road shoulder as it passes the Charles Lindbergh House & Museum. While the byway is generally level and paved, site hiking trails can include short hills of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F7a Lindbergh House.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	Visitors can tour the 1906 family home of Charles A Lindbergh, furnished with original Lindbergh family objects.	F7a Charles Lindbergh House	Yes
F7b Lindbergh River View.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	The Charles A Lindbergh House and Museum sits on the banks of the Mississippi River in Little Falls, Minnesota. The property includes prime spots for river viewing – both to enjoy the beauty and contemplate the accomplishments that began to take flight here.	F7b Lindbergh's River View	Yes
F7c Lindbergh Visitors.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	Visitors to the Charles Lindbergh House discover how his life along the Mississippi River influenced his future as an environmental activist, inventor, and aviation pioneer.	F7c Lindbergh Visitors	Yes

Feature 8

Feature name:
Oliver Kelley Farm - Historic

GPS coordinates:
45.295589, -93.535791

Describe the feature:

The Oliver Kelley Farm, another national Great River Road Interpretive Center on the Mississippi River, represents Minnesota's rich history of agricultural innovation and leadership. A State Historic Site operated by the Minnesota Historical Society, this National Historic Landmark invites visitors to learn how their food is produced: past, present and future. Oliver Kelley's 19th century home and farm, a short walk to the Mississippi, provide hands-on living history experiences for visitors of all ages.

On January 7, 1826, Oliver Hudson Kelley was born in Boston, the fifth child of a tailor. He would significantly impact Minnesota, national, and agricultural history. At age 21, Kelley left New England and ventured west.

He carried a letter of introduction to territorial Governor Alexander Ramsey from a mutual friend, who noted that Kelley "possesses ample business capacity, with active mind; and is anxious for steady employment." Within a few months, Kelley was made a messenger of the territory's House of Representatives and an aide-de-camp to Gov. Ramsey. Less than a year after Kelley arrived in St. Paul, word spread that the legislature was attempting to make the new town of Itasca (near present-day Elk River) the territory's capital. Speculators, including Kelley, rushed to stake a claim to land in Itasca. The town didn't become the capital, but Kelley - with no former farming experience - decided to cultivate his new property. In autumn of 1850 he and wife Lucy moved to the homestead, becoming "book farmers," learning the latest techniques from agricultural journals.

In 1864, Kelley moved to Washington, D.C., to work in the US Department of Agriculture, but kept his farm in Minnesota and returned to it on occasion. He began working on agricultural issues, including touring the South in 1866 to aid irrigation and agricultural reconstruction after the Civil War. He began to imagine a brotherhood for farmers around the country. For the next few years he focused primarily on his idea of developing a fraternal organization for farm families. In December 1867 — with insight and help from his niece, Caroline Hall, Kelley and six other men created the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, the country's first nationwide farm organization. The Grange served as both a social and advocacy group for farmers. He wrote newspaper articles that were increasingly critical of manufacturing and processing monopolies that fixed prices at rates unfair to farmers and of railroads with exorbitant freight rates.

Within two years, Minnesota had 40 Grange chapters and a state organization. By 1873, with farmers battling falling crop prices and rising railroad shipping costs, the United States had around 9,000 chapters with nearly 700,000 members.

Oliver Kelley died in Washington, D.C., in 1913 at age 87.

Today, the farm he established and stories of Kelley's life live on, including views of the river as Kelley would have seen it along an interpreted River and Woodland Trail that heads upstream along the Mississippi before running into oak woods, home to dozens of varieties of songbirds.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

3.5 Miles. The Oliver Kelley Farm is on the opposite side of the Mississippi River. The site offers direct river access and intimate views. It is well signed, including interpretation and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

Oliver Kelley Farm site hiking trails are generally level but can include short hills of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F8a Kelley Farm Aerial.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	An aerial view of the original 1860s historic homestead on the banks on the banks of the Mississippi River. People come to experience the story of farming, food and agriculture — past and present.	F8a Kelley Farm Aerial	Yes
F8b Kelley Farm Animals.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	The Farm Lab barn, where kids of all ages can meet Minnesota raised livestock that provide our meat, dairy, eggs, and wool, and learn about the modern livestock industry.	F8b Kelley Farm Animals	Yes
F8c Kelley Farmhouse.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	Visitors are invited inside this large Italianate-style house to help with household chores, from sewing to preparing a 19th century meal. This is the second Kelley home, built in 1876.	F8c Kelley Farmhouse	Yes

Feature 9

Feature name:

Saint Anthony Falls - Scenic

GPS coordinates:
44.979275, -93.247665

Describe the feature:

No place anchors the Mississippi River's significance in the Twin Cities like St. Anthony Falls. No place can match its regional, national, or even international significance. Geologically, it is the only major waterfall on the Mississippi River. Historically, its visitors comprise a who's who of native, European and American exploration. A natural resting and trade point between Dakota and Anishinaabe peoples, French explorer Father Louis Hennepin visited in 1680, English colonist Jonathan Carver in 1766, and Zebulon Pike, the first American explorer, portaged around the falls in 1805. Economically, the falls created a city with no peer from Chicago to the Rocky Mountains and south to St. Louis. It gave birth to saw milling and flour milling industries that became dominant producers of their commodities nationally and worldwide.

Technologically, the falls produced the first commercial hydroelectric central plant in the country. Scenically, its painters include George Catlin, Henry Lewis, Alexis Fournier, Albert Bierstadt and many modern-day painters and photographers.

Immediately below St. Anthony Falls two National Historic Landmarks, the Pillsbury A Mill and the Washburn A Mill, bookend James J. Hill's remarkable Stone Arch Bridge, which is a National Engineering Landmark. The two A Mills helped Minneapolis lead the nation and, at times, the world in flour production from 1880 to 1930. Many people around the nation and the world have heard of Betty Crocker, Gold Medal and Pillsbury Flour and General Mills. All were born of St. Anthony Falls.

In 1823, Lt. James E. Colhoun captured the sense of astonishment and confusion presented by the falls. "I confess," Colhoun admitted, "I was at first disappointed from the difficulty of embracing the whole at once." The whole only became more complex over time.

During the 1840s and 1850s, lumber millers built what is called the Horseshoe Dam above the falls to direct the current to their mills on the east and west sides. Excess water flowed over a timber apron covering the falls leading edge. In the 1870s, after the millers nearly destroyed the falls, the Corps of Engineers fortified the Horseshoe Dam, and a concrete spillway eventually replaced the timber apron. In 1963, the Corps of Engineers completed the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock, the highest lock on the river, having a 50-foot lift. And, all around the falls, Minneapolis development grew increasingly dense.

Today, St. Anthony Falls is as difficult to embrace as a whole as Colhoun described it in 1823. While dramatically altered from its natural state, the power of so much water falling over the Horseshoe Dam, next to the massive concrete lock and then down the spillway still forms a compelling scene, ever changing with light of day and season. At the spillway's bottom, concrete blocks cause the water to jump and then arch back into the river, adding to the spectacle. Rainbows often reflect off the mist. The falls' scenic power continues to draw people to it. Over two million visitors, many from around the nation and world, cross the Stone Arch Bridge annually.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. St. Anthony Falls is on the Great River Road as it follows the Mississippi River through Minneapolis. While visitors cannot go on the Falls themselves, the views to them are stupendous from all surrounding vantage points. A major attraction, the St. Anthony Falls are well signed, including interpretation and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail is on a separated path next to the Great River Road as it passes St. Anthony Falls. While the byway is generally level and paved, hiking trails to the river's edge here can include short hills of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F9a St Anthony Falls.jpeg	Credit – National Park Service	St. Anthony Falls, the birthplace of Minneapolis, draws visitors and residents alike to its power and beauty.	F9a St Anthony Falls	Yes
F9b Painter at St Anthony Falls.jpeg	Credit – National Park Service	A modern day painter sets up studio at the National Park Service-run Lock and Dam overlook to capture the perfect subject, St. Anthony Falls	F9b Painter at St Anthony Falls	Yes
F9c NPS Ranger Interpreting on Lock.jpg	Credit – National Park Service	A National Park Service Ranger from the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area tells the story of the St. Anthony Falls area to a small group of visitors, while viewing the falls and both the east and west banks of the river.	F9c NPS Ranger Interpreting on Lock	Yes

Feature 10

Feature name:

St. Anthony Falls Historic District - Historic

GPS coordinates:

44.978690, -93.257392

Describe the feature:

For centuries, this part of today's Mississippi riverfront has remained a place of cultural significance for many different people. Today, visitors enjoy a rich context of history including numerous National Historic Landmarks, a National Park, two National Scenic Byways and a National Millennium Trail within this National Register Historic District.

The story of Minneapolis begins with St. Anthony Falls, the only major waterfall on the Mississippi River. The falls has been a gathering place for many different people, for many different reasons, for thousands of years and today.

Located in Dakota homeland, Owamniyomni (St. Anthony Falls) was a place of spiritual power and a gathering place for resources like the sugar maples on Nicollet Island and nearby springs. The Dakota name for the river, Haha Wakpa (Mississippi), means "river of the falls."

Owamniyomni is part of a larger landscape — Bdote, the confluence of the Mni Sota Wakpa (Minnesota) and Haha Wakpa (Mississippi) rivers — a place of cultural importance to many Dakota people as a site of creation, as well as a historical gathering place.

The falls were given the name St. Anthony Falls by Father Louis Hennepin, who came to the area in 1680. The Europeans and Americans who followed prized the falls as a place of beauty and a source of waterpower for industry.

In 1805, Zebulon Pike made an agreement with several Dakota representatives to acquire land for the Fort Snelling military reservation at Bdote, which included the land at St. Anthony Falls. The first sawmill and gristmill at the falls were built by Fort Snelling soldiers in the 1820s.

By the 1850s the falls were harnessed as a source of power for the commercial lumber and flour milling industries, and the riverfront settlement transformed into a city that led the world in flour production for nearly 50 years, beginning in 1880. Later, as changes in transportation and industry led to a move away from the river, business departed, and the area declined.

Today, the Minneapolis riverfront has been revitalized. It is now a place where visitors enjoy sightseeing, walking and biking trails, dining, live music, and theater amongst a backdrop of many nationally significant historic buildings that have been thoughtfully re-developed for new uses, including the Washburn A Mill, which is now the home of Mill City Museum. The National Civil Engineering Landmark Stone Arch Bridge provides a bicycle and pedestrian connecting point for the east and west banks of the river and a spectacular view of the Mississippi River, St. Anthony Falls and the complex network of water power structures and buildings that harnessed the power of the Mississippi here.

Event programming reinforces the District's historic context, including NPS's new Mississippi National River Recreation Area visitor facilities at the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. The Mill City Museum, a Great River Road Interpretive Center, provides visitors with information about the river locally, as well as from the headwaters to the Gulf, within the delicious context of river-powered flour, cereal, pancakes and cake mix.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. St. Anthony Falls Historic District and the Mill City Museum are on the Great River Road as it follows the Mississippi River through Minneapolis. A major attraction the entire St. Anthony Falls Historic District is well signed, including interpretation and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail is on a separated path next to the Great River Road as it passes through the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. While the byway is generally level and paved, hiking trails to the river's edge here can include short hills of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F10a St Anthony Falls Historic District.jpg	Credit - John Cross courtesy Minnesota Historical Society	The buildings that developed Minneapolis into a milling and trade center remain in what is designated as the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.	F10a St Anthony Falls Historic District	Yes
F10b Mill City Museum Interior.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	At Mill City Museum, see 19th-century flour milling machines, view vintage advertising, sit at a huge dinner table outfitted to feed a wheat harvest crew, trace the journey of wheat from farm to market, design your own cereal box, and meet a history player from the city's past.	F10b Mill City Museum Interior	Yes
F10c St Anthony Falls visitors on Stone Arch Bridge.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	Visitors on the Stone Arch Bridge flock to the St. Anthony Falls area of Minneapolis to take photographs and take in the spray of the water as they overlook the scene below and around them.	F10c St Anthony Falls Visitors on Stone Arch Bridge	Yes

Feature 11

Feature name:
The Gorge - Scenic

GPS coordinates:
44.953832, -93.206081

Describe the feature:

The Gorge scenic feature is only 8.5 miles long, running from below St. Anthony Falls to the Minnesota River confluence. Here the Mississippi plunges 110 feet, through and over three locks and dams, surrounded by steep wooded bluffs only one-quarter to one-third mile apart, soaring 60 to 100 feet high. This is the only place on the Mississippi where the river falls so quickly over such a short distance and through such a tight canyon.

The entire gorge is parkland. In addition to being part of NPS's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, the Gorge Regional Park is designated on both sides below St. Anthony Falls, connecting with Hidden Falls Regional Park, Fort Snelling State Park, and Historic Fort Snelling at the downstream end. Whether hiking or biking riverside trails, or canoeing or cruising on a paddleboat low on the water, in the deeply wooded Gorge it is hard to tell you are in the heart of a metropolitan area home to three million people.

The Gorge explains why the Twin Cities exist as two cities. Before dams, the Gorge was often a turbulent rapids or shallow, rocky stream. Few steamboat pilots dared venture through it. By 1857, steamboats came and went from St. Paul at over 1,000 per year, while Minneapolis counted about 50. So, relying on the steep drop, Minneapolis became a timber and flour milling powerhouse, and St. Paul thrived as the Mississippi River's head of navigation.

Minneapolis recognized locks and dams could bring navigation through the Gorge. Congress responded to City lobbying in 1894, authorizing the Corps to build two low locks and dams. The Corps completed the first one, called the Meeker Island Lock and Dam, in 1907. This structure became the Mississippi's first lock and dam.

2.9 miles downstream, the Corps had completed Lock No. 1 and was designing the second dam. Between 1894 and 1907, however, hydroelectric power came of age in America. Some argued that one high dam would serve both hydropower and navigation. In 1910, advocates convinced Congress to reauthorize the project, allowing engineers to demolish Meeker Island Dam and abandoned its lock. They then raised Lock & Dam No. 1 to about 35 feet. The Meeker Island ruins and Dam No. 1 are on the National Register as nationally significant, both adding to the scenic mystique of the Gorge for Great River Road explorers.

Other important Gorge scenery includes the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway, collocated with the Great River Road for about 10 miles. Originally proposed by prominent landscape architect Horace Cleveland, the tree-lined byways provide views and access to the Mississippi River's only Gorge. Also designed by Cleveland, Minnehaha Regional Park lies along the Gorge, a major Grand Rounds/Great River Road feature highlighted by the storied Minnehaha Falls. The University of Minnesota's main campus straddles the Gorge. Seemingly rising from the bluff edge internationally renowned architect Frank O. Gehry's Fredrick R. Weisman Art Museum is a contemporary signature scenic structure on the river's east bank.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. The Gorge is on the Great River Road as it follows the Mississippi River through Minneapolis and St. Paul. Byway visitors can enjoy driving, hiking or biking to see the unique Gorge vistas from above, or hike down to water level to enjoy the wooded bluff walls from below. Gorge features are well signed, including interpretation and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail is on a separated path next to the Great River Road as it passes the Gorge. While the byway is generally level and paved, hiking trails down to the river's edge here can include bluff trails of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
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File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F11a Gorge from Lake St Bridge.jpg	Credit – National Park Service	The Gorge area of the Mississippi River has much to offer the visitor throughout the year. Hiking, paddling, bird watching, and photography are all popular activities in the Gorge.	F11a Gorge from Lake Street Bridge	Yes
F11b Gorge Meeker Island.jpeg	Credit – National Park Service	Meeker Island was the site of the first and northernmost lock and dam on the Mississippi River. Modern day water enthusiasts enjoy the river in its current form	F11b Gorge Meeker Island	Yes
F11c Ranger with Kids at Hidden Falls.jpg	Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Gina Bonsignore	Shore fishing opportunities abound in Gorge area of Minneapolis and St. Paul's Mississippi National River Recreation Area. Hidden Falls Park is a popular place to picnic and launch boats, as well as fish	F11c Rangers with kids at Hidden Falls	Yes

Feature 12

Feature name:

Where the Big River Begins – Scenic

GPS coordinates:

44.897248, -93.149864

Describe the feature:

The Mississippi's Big River is the large floodplain river, beginning at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers in the Twin Cities, flowing to the Gulf of Mexico. It is characterized by a broad valley and a wide floodplain, with many side channels, backwater lakes, wetlands, and wooded islands. Where the Big River Begins feature offers byway travelers these new broad vistas and intimate backwater encounters with a seemingly primeval world along 34-miles from the confluence to Hastings, between the Gorge and the Driftless Area scenic features.

As glaciers covering North America melted some 12,000 years ago, Lake Agassiz formed, stretching across central Canada and south between Minnesota and North Dakota. The lake drained through the Glacial River Warren (modern day Red and Minnesota rivers). On and off for over 2,000 years, Lake Agassiz poured down the River Warren. Flowing at times over one million cubic feet per second, it carved out the deep, broad valleys of the Minnesota River and of the Mississippi River below their confluence. This is the river of Mark Twain and steamboats, the Mississippi River most people know.

The confluence, or Bdote, as the Dakota call it, holds special meaning to some Dakota tribes. In 1851, missionaries Samuel and Gideon Pond reported that "one of the great natural facts: is that the mouth of the Minnesota River lies immediately over the center of the earth and under the center of the heavens." The Dakota placed their dead upon Pilot Knob scaffolds with panoramic views of the two rivers from some 200 feet above. And, on Pilot Knob, the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute bands of the Dakota signed the Treaty of Mendota, giving up their ancestral lands. They would return 11 years later, following the Dakota Conflict, to a prison camp in the floodplain below Fort Snelling, an important story about the consequences of American expansion for Native American tribes.

Today Fort Snelling, a National Historic Landmark, still offers commanding views of Where the Big River Begins. The fort's bluff top stone architecture accentuates the picturesque feature's beginning when seen from the river below or from surrounding blufftop parks.

Below Ft. Snelling, the Big River is lined with parks, trails, marinas and excursion boats that offer byway travelers visual and physical access to Mississippi River wooded beaches and backwaters, and parkways above offer long views to the big river below.

On the downstream end of Where the Big River Begins, resting high on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in St. Paul, the burial mounds in Mounds Park date back nearly 2,000 years. They represent the northern most extension of Hopewell culture, a culture that occupied the Ohio and upper Mississippi river valleys from 100 BC to 500 AD. The mounds remind us that the expansive view of the Big River at St. Paul has been admired by humans for thousands of years, the mounds adding a reverent sense of place to today's views.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River as it grows to Where the Big River Begins. Public sites offering direct river access and intimate views are well signed, some with excursion boats, marinas, picnic areas, interpretation, and trails.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail often is on Great River Road shoulders as it follows Where the Big River Begins, but more often here it follows local trails and roads when they provide a better bicycle experience, often at water level. Hiking, walking and bicycling are encouraged in this park-lined feature. While the byway is generally level and paved, hiking and a few biking trails can include hills of moderate difficulty.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F12a Riverboat below Ft Snelling.jpg	Credit – National Park Service	The Jonathan Padelford, a classic paddlewheel riverboat, approaches Fort Snelling at its historic and important location at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers.	F12a Riverboat below Ft Snelling	Yes
F12b St Paul Riverfront.jpg	Credit – Explore Minnesota	Clear skies, calm blue water and a variety of boats standing ready at a marina are visible from the Wabasha Street Bridge in downtown St. Paul.	F12b St. Paul Riverfront	Yes

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F12c Fort Snelling State Park.jpg	Copyright: MN Department of Natural Resources/Deb Rose. Contact deb.rose@state.mn.us for permission to use.	Ice and snow provide a storybook winterscape along the Mississippi River at Fort Snelling State Park.	F12c Ft Snelling State Park	No

Feature 13

Feature name:
Historic Fort Snelling - Historic

GPS coordinates:
44.892746, -93.180700

Describe the feature:

With over 10,000 years of human history, Historic Fort Snelling, a National Historic Landmark, and Great River Road Interpretive Center, is a place where complex stories of many peoples are told.

The confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers is a place of major social, cultural and historical significance. Archaeologists have documented human activity to at least 9,000–12,000 years ago. This place is centered within Dakota creation stories and is an important place in traditional Ojibwe history. Along with the Dakota and Ojibwe, the Ho-Chunk, Cheyenne, Oto, Iowa, and the Sac & Fox tribes also acknowledge it as important to their tribal histories. Strategically important to indigenous peoples for thousands of years, they used the waterways for transportation and food and to develop an extensive trade relationship with other native peoples; trade items from this and other regions have been found along the entire Mississippi River.

In 1805 the United States Army ordered Lieutenant Zebulon Pike to explore the Mississippi River and select sites for potential military posts. The first troops arrived in 1819 and began construction on the stone fort the following year. Colonel Josiah Snelling arrived in 1820 to supervise construction, and by 1825 the fort was completed. It served many vital roles until its decommissioning in 1946.

Fort Snelling played a central role in the US Civil War, the US Dakota War of 1862 and the Dred Scott case. When the Civil War began on April 12, 1861, Minnesota's governor, Alexander Ramsey, was in Washington, D.C. Ramsey immediately promised President Lincoln a regiment of 1,000 volunteer soldiers from Minnesota.

The causes of the US-Dakota War of 1862 were many and it remains one of the most important events in Minnesota history. After this brief war concluded, Dakota non-combatants traveled to Fort Snelling beginning November 1862, numbering 1,658. The vast majority were children, women, and elderly, who were housed on the river bottom, directly below the fort. It is estimated that between 130 and 300 Dakota people died in this camp over the winter of 1862–63, mainly due to measles, other diseases, and harsh conditions.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the fort was a training center, both in peacetime and wartime. When the US entered World War II in 1941, Fort Snelling became the induction point for more than 300,000 men and women. After 1944 the fort was the location of the Military Intelligence Service Language School, where Japanese Americans learned language and culture in preparation for overseas service as interpreters, interrogators, and intelligence workers. Fort Snelling was decommissioned as an active military post in 1946.

Today, Great River Road visitors experience the depth of stories at Historic Fort Snelling, a historic site, and adjacent Fort Snelling State Park, which contains the Upper Post, the location of the significant historic structures of this nationally significant site, contained within NPS's Mississippi National River Recreation Area.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

1 Mile. The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River as passes Historic Fort Snelling which offers broad river views over the confluence with the Minnesota River. Historic Fort Snelling is well signed from the byway, and includes multi-level interpretation and several trails

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail drops below Historic Fort Snelling into Fort Snelling State Park, between the State Highway 5 river crossing and Minnehaha Regional Park. Hiking, walking and bicycling are encouraged in the Historic Fort Snelling feature which is generally level.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F13a Ft Snelling at Bdote.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	The confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers is one of the most historically significant landscapes in Minnesota, known to many Dakota people as Bdote. It is a place where rivers and people have come together for at least 10,000 years.	F13a Ft Snelling at Bdote	Yes
F13b Historic Ft Snelling.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	Historic Fort Snelling is managed by the Minnesota Historical Society and was designated in 1960 as Minnesota's first National Historic Landmark.	F13b Historic Ft Snelling	Yes
F13c Ft Snelling Dred Scott Storytelling.jpg	Credit – Minnesota Historical Society	Within Historic Fort Snelling, a variety of programs and presentations showcase this unique place's deep and diverse history.	F13c Ft Snelling Dred Scott Storytelling	Yes

Feature 14

Feature name:
"I-mni'-za-ska-dan" (Daytons Bluff) - Historic

GPS coordinates:
44.945344, -93.054854

Describe the feature:

High above the Great River Road on Dayton's Bluff, or "I-mni'-za-ska-dan," in St. Paul lie American Indian burial mounds dating back nearly 2,000 years. Thirty-seven mounds once ran along the bluff's edge. Only six remain. The stories here speak to national and international connections.

Some 1,700 to 1,900 years ago, American Indians, practicing traditions of a culture archaeologists call Hopewell, built the mounds. Hopewell culture flourished between about 200BC to 400AD, centered in Ohio. Large earth works and mounds characterize their major sites.

Many tribes participated in Hopewell culture and were part of an extensive trade network, exchanging fossilized shark's teeth from Chesapeake Bay, seashells from the Gulf of Mexico, mica from North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, copper from the Great Lakes and obsidian from Yellowstone. Some experts contend that Hopewell artisans ranked among the best of pre-contact America. Cultural representations of Hopewell disappeared around 400AD.

In 1879, Theodore Lewis began investigating the mounds. He found burials interred in log tombs and limestone crypts and unearthed artifacts of shell, bear's teeth and copper arrowheads. In the 1893, St. Paul bought the land around the mounds for Indian Mounds Park.

At the time of European contact, the Dakota Indians lived in villages around Mille Lacs Lake, in east central Minnesota, traveling up and down the Mississippi. In 1680, 120 Dakota warriors paddled down the Mississippi to what is now Illinois. On their way, they met three Frenchmen, including Father Louis Hennepin. With this encounter, the Dakota world would change forever. The Dakota turned around and headed upriver with the Frenchmen. On about March 19, 1680, they beached their canoes below Dayton's Bluff and continued on foot to their villages at Mille Lacs Lake.

In the 1750s, the Dakota dispersed from Mille Lacs, the Mdewakanton Dakota moving south into the lower Minnesota River valley and the Mississippi River from the Twin Cities down to Red Wing and Wabasha.

The Dakota had names and stories for places all along the Mississippi River. The river was Ha-Ha-Wakpa, or "River of the Falls." They named Dayton's Bluff "I-mni'-za-ska-dan," meaning white rocks for the bluff's light appearance. They called Carvers Cave "Wakan Tipi" or "Dwelling Place of the Sacred."

Below the mounds, Carvers Cave, or Wakan Tipi, carves deep into the bluff's sandstone layer. On November 14, 1766, British colonist Jonathan Carver visited the cave. He found "many strange hieroglyphicks cut in the stone some of which," he said, "was very ancient and grown over with moss." Carver attended a council of eight Dakota bands near the cave on May 1, 1767. The site was an important annual meeting place. The Dakota gathered here to bury their dead on the bluff above and to consider plans for the coming year. Just downstream lay their village of Kaposia. Founded sometime in the mid-18th-century, the Dakota occupied it until the mid-1830s.

Today's Great River Road traveler can explore the parks that pass on these stories and experience the expansive river views as people have done for 2000 years.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River low at water level in St. Paul as passes "I-mni'-za-ska-dan" (Dayton's Bluff) which offers broad river views from above of Where the Big River Begins. Signs, interpretation and several trails provide byway travelers access and meaning of place.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail is along the Great River Road on a separated trail below Mounds Park which include several connections for hikers and cyclists.. Hiking, walking and bicycling are encouraged in the "I-mni'-za-ska-dan" (Dayton's Bluff) feature which is generally level below, but requires a moderate climb to Mounds Park above the bluff.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F14a Kids at Mounds Park.JPG	Credit – National Park Service	Children sit in view of the sacred burial mounds at aptly named Mounds Park in Saint Paul.	F14a Kids at Mounds Park	Yes
F14b Mounds Park.jpeg	Credit – National Park Service	A Native statue reminds visitors of the peoples who were here in the Dayton's Bluff area thousands of years ago, with their presence still felt here today.	F14b Mounds Park	Yes
F14c St Paul from Mounds Park.JPG	Credit - National Park Service	Mounds Park provides the perfect view of downtown Saint Paul upstream on the Mississippi River.	F14c St. Paul from Mounds Park	Yes

Feature 15

Feature name:
Driftless Area - Scenic

GPS coordinates:
44.569861, -92.526039

Describe the feature:

During the last ice age, glaciers bulldozed much of the Midwest's landscape but left the Driftless Area alone. Water and wind have been eroding and incising this landscape for far longer than the surrounding lands, creating a unique and nationally significant landscape.

From early explorers to modern travel writers, many have tried to capture the scenic power of this landscape. On September 14, 1805, Lt. Zebulon Pike paused from his journey up the Mississippi River to find its source. Somewhere between Wabasha and Winona, he described the view as "altogether a prospect so variegated and romantic that a man may scarcely expect to enjoy such a one but twice or thrice in the course of his life." He had climbed one of the many bluffs byway visitors can climb today to view the Mississippi River's immense valley through this reach.

At Red Wing, visitors can hike up to Barn Bluff Regional Park, and between Winona and La Crescent, they can explore Great River Bluffs State Park. The latter features two Scientific and Natural Areas, and King's and Queen's Bluff. Both parks have trails leading to views that evoke Pike's description. Such views show how the Mississippi's river towns through the Driftless Area are nestled between the river and the bluffs. The towns, however, are best explored by strolling through their historic downtowns, museums and river parks.

Stretching 21 miles from Red Wing to Reads Landing, Lake Pepin, birthplace of waterskiing, is the largest natural lake on

the Mississippi River. The lake draws sailboats large and small that, whether sailing the lake, with the rocky and wooded bluffs as their backdrop, or huddled in the marina at Lake City, add to the picturesque scenery.

Bald eagles, having come back from near extinction, are common along the Mississippi River through this reach but especially between Red Wing and Wabasha. Drawn by open water and an abundant supply of fish, hundreds of bald eagles make this area their winter home. Stopping at the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, visitors can see eagles from a few feet away and learn all about them. Travelers on the Great River Road can often see bald eagles perched in trees or flying down the road in front of them, a mystical scenic experience.

From Wabasha to the Iowa border, most of the Mississippi River's floodplain falls within the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife & Fish Refuge. From the river and along the shore, the refuge delivers spectacular wildlife viewing opportunities through all the seasons.

Locks and Dams 3 through 8 lie in this reach and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as nationally significant. The Corps of Engineers constructed them during the Great Depression as part of the 9-Foot Channel Project, a project that fundamentally transformed the upper Mississippi River's physical and ecological character. The locks and dams, the reservoirs they create, and towboats pushing up to 15 barges are part of every traveler's scenic experience on the Great River Road.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River through the Driftless Area. Signs, interpretation and riverfront parks provide byway travelers river access and meaning of place.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail is primarily along the Great River Road but diverts to local roads and separated trails in the Driftless Area when they provide an improved bicycle experience. Although generally level, the Driftless Area can require short moderate climbs.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F15a Panoramic Bluffs at Lake Pepin.jpg	Credit – Explore Minnesota	The Driftless Area boasts many overlook spots like this one, inviting visitors to take a seat and view the charming town and river below.	F15a Panoramic Bluffs at Lake Pepin	Yes
F15b Girls at Barn Bluff Overlook.jpg	Credit – Explore Minnesota	Barn Bluff is a popular hiking spot and worth the effort needed to reach the top of the 340-foot bluff. The cliff showcases a spectacular view of the Mississippi River on one side and Red Wing on the other.	F15b Girls at Barn Bluff Overlook	Yes
F15c River Bluffs Scene.jpg	Credit – Explore Minnesota	Wide span views of the Driftless Area abound from blufftops like this one showcasing the majesty of the Mississippi River.	F15c River Bluffs Scene	Yes

Feature 16

Feature name:

Mississippi River Towns - Historic

GPS coordinates:

44.736543, -92.852610

Describe the feature:

Clarence Jonk launched his Betsy-Nell into the Mississippi River in Minneapolis in early October 1933. She floated on 80, 55-gallon oil drums and was propelled by two model T engines. While planning his trip, he walked through an oak savanna north of St. Paul with two women friends. "After we had eaten our fill" of berries, he wrote, "we lay upon the warm grass of a hillside in the shade of a large oak tree. We got to roaming in our fancies, traveling to far-away places I took them with me on the great river where I knew I would soon be going. ... Once on the river they could not wait for the next bend to unfold and reveal the charms and romantic history of some old town." He could have been describing a pleasure drive on Highway 61 and the Great River Road today.

Minnesota's River Towns feature maintains deep historic connections to the Mississippi. Four, in particular, fit Clarence Jonk's depiction. The National Register Historic Districts in these towns, individually and, more powerfully, together, harken back to when the river was each city's commercial engine driven by lumber and flour milling, grain shipping and steamboat passenger traffic. Three Great River Road Interpretive Centers share these stories.

Unlike cities that lost their historic downtowns during 1950s and 1960s urban renewal, Hastings saved theirs. Two historic districts lie near the Mississippi River, one commercial and the other residential. The East Second Street Commercial Historic District includes 35 buildings erected between 1860 and 1900. The West Second Street Residential Historic District embraces 13 homes dating from 1857 to 1890.

Red Wing lists five historic districts: St. James District; Downtown District; Historic Mall District; West Residential Conservation District and South End Residential Conservation District. Built in 1874 and anchoring the St. James District, the St. James Hotel still serves tourists and business travelers. Designed in the Italianate architectural style, it is one of the only remaining hotels of its size and character along the river in Minnesota.

Wabasha's Commercial Historic District counts nearly 60 properties constructed between 1856 and 1928. Wabasha, Minnesota's oldest city, also showcases National Register-listed historic homes built by early community leaders. In 1874, capitalizing on his successful agriculture and mercantile businesses, William Campbell erected a Greek Revival house with a "mid-century side-hall plan." Listed as the William and Alma Campbell House, the National Register nomination states that "Although the railroad had come through Wabasha by the time the house was constructed, its style and veneered manner of construction place it in the state historic context of Early Agriculture and River Settlement."

The Winona Commercial Historic District features 65 properties built during the 1880s and 1890s. The Romanesque Revival Grain and Lumber Exchange building downtown Winona exemplifies the city's heritage tied to grain, lumber and the Mississippi River. Part of the River Town feature, Lake City, Minneiska, Reads Landing, La Crescent, and Brownsville also share their history with walking tours, interpretation and events.

What is the best time to visit, please provide the start and end dates.

Start date: 1/1/2021 End date: 12/31/2021

Describe the driving distance and signage related to the feature.

0 Miles. The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River through a series of historic River Towns. Signs, interpretation, Main Streets, historic districts and riverfront parks provide byway travelers river access and meaning of place.

If hiking, walking, or cycling are involved, describe the difficulty.

The Mississippi River Trail is primarily along the Great River Road but diverts to local roads and separated trails in Mississippi River Towns when they provide an improved bicycle experience. Although generally level, the Minnesota's Mississippi River Towns can require short moderate climbs.

File Name	Image owner	Alternative text	Image name	Photo release
F16a Winona.JPG	Credit – Visit Winona	Historic downtown Winona includes nearly a dozen blocks lovingly preserved and on the National Historic Register.	F16a Winona	Yes
F16b Hastings City Hall.jpg	Credit - David Youngren	Built between 1869 and 1871, Hastings City Hall was originally the Dakota County Courthouse and was renovated in 1912. This is just one example of a River Town historic jewel that travelers encounter on their journeys.	F16b Hastings City Hall	Yes
F16c Winona Fall Overlook.jpg	Credit – Explore Minnesota	A birds eye view of historic downtown Winona and the magical Mississippi River provides fall season inspiration.	F16c Winona Fall Overlook	Yes

Telling Your Story:

An important part of supporting the America's Byways brand is providing travelers with information about the Intrinsic Qualities that form the essence of your byway.

5-9: Describe the materials you use to tell your byway story and interpret its Intrinsic Qualities, (e.g., maps, brochures, DVDs, etc.) (Limit 150 words.)

The Minnesota Great River Road story is told through a new print map, online Plan Your Trip interactive map, new website, StoryMaps, Facebook, and YouTube, as well as face to face. Minnesota also participates in ten-state contests and an annual Drive the Great River Road month each September. StoryMaps offer in-depth interactive content from intrinsic resource-rich sites along Minnesota's six destination areas. A new StoryMap targets younger river rats by featuring a college student exploring state parks along the byway. Hospitality training is being developed to help Interpretive Center staff leverage these resources and tell their byway stories.

5-10: Provide the website(s) and/or social media sites where travelers and media can find information specific to your byway (other than byways.org). Separate URLs with a semi-colon.

<https://www.mnmississippiriver.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/GreatRiverRoadMN/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/mnmississippiriver>

<http://arcg.is/H4X5G>

<https://mndot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=81864dc50942413ca311d53c6c93decc>

<https://www.exploreminnesota.com/article/follow-great-river-road-to-these-historic-mississippi-river-towns>

<https://experiencemississippiriver.com/states/minnesota/>

Section 6

Community Support:

Community support and the openness of the planning process are considered important components in both the designation and determination of the sustainability of a byway.

6-1: Provide a list of key participants/organizations in the planning and development of the Corridor Management Plan (CMP), and describe critical coordination efforts with these organizations. (Limit 150 words.)

MnMRPC member agencies DOT, Tourism, Historical Society, Agriculture, and Natural Resources, 5 Regional Commissioners and House and Senate members led development of the 2016 Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management Plan. The CMP was guided by a 16-member project advisory team that met 7 times over 18 months, 20 key stakeholder meetings, 6 Mississippi River Parkway Commission meetings including a ten-state meeting, 4 social media platforms, on-site intercept surveys, online surveys, and 12 public open houses at intrinsic sites along the river. PAT members included Federal land management agencies, 3 Tribal communities, education, health, non-profit and regulatory partners. MnDOT, who co-led the CMP, met periodically to understand District-level opportunities and concerns and align with administrative priorities. MnMRPC continue to lead CMP implementation, with PAT members, counties, cities and Interpretive Centers involved individually if related to the strategy. Ten-state CMP strategies focus on active relationships to implement plan strategies.

6-2: Identify any significant objections to the CMP and describe actions taken to resolve them. (Limit 150 words.)

During 2016 Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management Plan development no significant objections were encountered. Rather, from public meetings, intercept surveys, online surveys, Project Advisory Team meetings, Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission meetings, a ten-state meeting and online comments the feedback was "We are glad you are doing this work." The strongest concern was from local and state transportation agencies faced with competing demands and concerned about capacity to facilitate strategy implementation. To help address this the Plan Your Project interactive map includes intrinsic resource contact information, Mississippi River Trail and other modal travel connection points, and MnDOT's ten-year plan project data so planners, designers and maintenance can readily learn more about their projects' byway context. Learning modules will be developed before a hard launch as part of the Minnesota Great River Road Ambassador training strategies aimed at engaging local and state transportation agency staff at all levels.

6-3: Describe how you have addressed the control of outdoor advertising with your stakeholders. (Limit 150 words.)

About 12 years ago, MnDOT's Scenic Byway, Outdoor Advertising and Great River Road program coordinators worked with byways statewide to reduce or eliminate all byway gaps through local zoning ordinances. Upon site review during the recent CMP only two gaps remained on the Great River Road. The program managers determined no additional outdoor off-premise advertising (billboards) could be physically accommodated due to existing billboards. As a result, all gaps were eliminated in Minnesota's Great River Road communities.

6-4: Describe how this byway nomination and who was involved, including critical coordination efforts with key industries and organizations along the corridor and any significant objections to the nomination of the road. (Limit 200 words.)

At the 2019 Mississippi River Parkway Commission Annual Meeting the new opportunity to apply for All-American Road designation was discussed and enthusiastically embraced by the ten-state organization. The MRPC Transportation Committee led coordination with the ten state byway coordinators, FHWA, national MRPC Board and standing committees, and the ten state commissions who would each apply individually. Skype and phone meetings with key state contacts, MRPC Transportation Committee, Board and committees, plus meeting minutes and a webpage to share content and guidance facilitated vibrant discussion and moved nine states towards applications. National and international marketing organizations provided compelling letters supporting designation.

In Minnesota the full Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission unanimously approved the application, recommended intrinsic resources and helped develop a list of potential intrinsic features. The Commission also approved a core team led by the Commission Director, with assistance from National Park Service, Minnesota Historical Society and MnDOT, with significant contributions from DNR and Tourism. Written content, images, maps, data, permissions, letters of support, fact checking, and editing were accomplished with assistance from Federal land management agencies, Tribal communities, Mississippi Headwaters Board, CVBs, mayors, and Commission members and agencies. Understandably COVID-19 precluded some partners providing intended collaboration.

6-5: Document that you have received support from road management authorities responsible for each segment of the road and Federal land management agency(s) through whose lands the byway runs. (Limit 150 words.)
The Minnesota Great River Road has long enjoyed support from the many agencies that manage designated roads. During the original designation process cities, counties, Tribes, and parks provided resolutions supporting road designation and signage. In 2013 signing the Mississippi River Trail reinforced agency byway support with 53 cooperative construction agreements. Annually the Commission provides letters of support to local road agencies seeking Transportation Alternative Program and other grants. During the 2016 CMP, local and state transportation staff participated in public open houses and online surveys. Ongoing, some also participate at MnMRPC Regional meetings. Ambassador training will help transportation staff leverage the Plan Your Project interactive map. Federal land management agencies were active members of the CMP Project Advisory Team, participating at public open houses and online surveys too. We support each other's grants and leverage our projects to benefit byway travel and protect and enhance intrinsic resources.

6-6: List actions the byway leader or organization will take to assure ongoing community involvement and citizen participation. (Limit 150 words.)
The MnMRPC assures ongoing community involvement and citizen participation in a multi-layered way. Citizen participation was greatly enhanced when the 2000 CMP strategy to add 5 citizen members to the Commission was signed into law. Citizen members complement two House, two Senate, 5 state agencies and a member-at-large by bringing local wisdom, issues and opportunities to help "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." Regional meetings are held periodically, hosted by a CVB, Chamber or Interpretive Center. MnMRPC shares project updates and seeks feedback, while locals share project updates, issues, and ideas. The fourth of four 2016 CMP initial implementation strategies develops Great River Road Ambassadors so communities better leverage the byway and transportation staff provide a positive byway travel experience.

Supporting Documentation: You must include an electronic PDF copy of the Corridor Management Plan and a single PDF document combining any letters documenting support. Applicants are limited to providing these two forms of supporting documentation along with the Route Map (and optional GIS file) and the photos referenced within the body of the nomination application. Additional documentation/attachments will not be considered.

6-7: **Corridor Management Plan** – Your application must be supported by a Corridor Management Plan that addresses the required points of corridor management planning detailed in [the Interim Policy](#).

6-7 2016MnGRR_CMP-2018MRPC_TenStateGRR_CMP.pdf

Before uploading, rename the file to begin with 6-7. For example, rename your file RiverBend.pdf to 6-7RiverBend.pdf.

6-8: **Letters Documenting Support** – Reviewers find supporting letters that document local support useful as they corroborate statements you make in your application. The most effective documentation is personalized support statements that describe the writer's relationship to the byway and expected benefits from national designation. It is also useful to see indications of how the writer will continue their support in the future.

6-8MN Great River Road Ltrs of Support.pdf

Before uploading, rename the file to begin with 6-8. For example, rename your file RiverBend.pdf to 6-8RiverBend.pdf.

CMP Information:

6-9: Name of CMP: Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management Plan

6-10: Date CMP was adopted: 3/16/2016

6-11: Does your State/Indian tribe/Federal land management agency require that CMPs be regularly updated to reflect current policies?

No

If yes, how often?

If no, in a few concise bullet points, describe your byway priorities for the next five (5) years. (Limit 150 words.)

While Minnesota doesn't require CMP updates, it encourages and facilitates CMP updates, with about 15 updates to 21 CMPs, including the Great River Road, in 2016, and more currently in development. Minnesota Great River Road CMP priorities for the next five years include building upon four initial implementation strategies including 1) 565 miles completely resigned in 2018; 2) Develop Plan Your Project to safeguard wayfinding system and provide transportation project and planning context. (Map refinement ongoing, Ambassador training to be developed and launched); 3) Develop Plan Your Trip interactive map showcasing 700+ places to see and explore, featuring 12 Interpretive Centers, Mississippi River Trail and multi-modal options. (Map launched on new website, refinement ongoing, 7 StoryMaps expand content, print map version out for printing, instructional videos under development, and Ambassador training to be developed and launched); 4) Develop and Ambassador development with beta at Interpretive Centers (funding secured, program outlined).

6-12: Your byway's CMP must address each of the following points. Using the table below, identify the principal pages in your document that discuss each point.

Item that the CMP Addresses	Discussed on Page Number(s)
1. A map identifying the corridor boundaries, location, intrinsic qualities, and land uses in the corridor.	03-2
2. An assessment of the intrinsic qualities and their "context" (the areas surrounding them).	03-20 to 03-24
3. A strategy for maintaining and enhancing each of those intrinsic qualities.	04-5 to 04-13
4. The agencies, groups, and individuals who are part of the team that will carry out the plan, including a list of their specific, individual responsibilities. Also, a schedule of when and how you'll review the degree to which those responsibilities are being met.	01-8, 04-15 to 04-22
5. A strategy of how existing development might be enhanced and new development accommodated to preserve the intrinsic qualities of your byway.	04-49 to 04-52
6. A plan for on-going public participation.	05-7 to 05-8
7. A general review of the road's safety record to locate hazards and poor design, and identify possible corrections.	03-10 to 03-11
8. A plan to accommodate commercial traffic while ensuring the safety of sightseers in smaller vehicles, as well as bicyclists, joggers, and pedestrians.	04-49
9. A listing and discussion of efforts to minimize anomalous intrusions on the visitor's experience of the byway.	03-25 to 03-29
10. Documentation of compliance with all existing local, state, and federal laws about the control of outdoor advertising.	03-29
11. A plan to make sure that the number and placement of highway signs will not get in the way of the scenery, but still be sufficient to help tourists find their way. This includes, where appropriate, signs for international tourists who may not speak English fluently.	03-4 to 03-10
12. Plans of how the byway will be marketed and publicized.	04-33 to 04-39
13. Any proposals for modifying the roadway, including an evaluation about design standards and how proposed changes may affect the byway's intrinsic qualities.	04-40 to 04-43, 05-1 to 05-8
14. A description of what you plan to do to explain and interpret your byway's significant resources to visitors.	04-44 to 04-46
15. A narrative on how the All-American Road would be promoted, interpreted, and marketed in order to attract travelers, especially those from other countries. The agencies responsible for these activities should be identified.	10 State CMP p 11 - 12
16. A plan to encourage the accommodation of increased tourism, if this is projected. Some demonstration that the roadway, lodging and dining facilities, roadside rest areas, and other tourist necessities will be adequate for the number of visitors induced by the byway's designation as an All-American Road.	04-5, 04-7, 04-8, 04-11 to 04-13
17. A plan for addressing multi-lingual information needs.	10 State CMP p 11
18. A demonstration of the extent to which enforcement mechanisms are being implemented in accordance with the corridor management plan.	04-57

Byway Organization

6-13: Describe the structure of any byway organization that currently exists. (Limit 100 words.)
 Per Minnesota Statute 161.1419 the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission has 15 voting members including state legislators; Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Transportation, Tourism, and Historical Society; five citizens; and an at-large. The National Park Service is an ex officio member. Statute acknowledges the MnMRPC has 10-state National MRPC responsibilities. Per Minnesota Statute 161.142, "the commissioner of transportation shall establish and locate the route or routes of the Great River Road and shall thereafter construct, reconstruct, improve, and may maintain same... designating one employee who shall advise with and assist the commission in carrying out its functions and duties."

6-14: Describe plans to strengthen the organization over the next five years. (Limit 100 words.)
 The Minnesota and ten-state Great River Road CMPs include robust strategies to strengthen both state and national organizations including focusing on CMP implementation to demonstrate planning and project delivery success, thereby engaging intrinsic resource and transportation facility managers, businesses and local officials to leverage CMP implementation for maximum reciprocal benefit. Organization strengthening will also result from strategic outreach to byway travelers to improve understanding of trends and target audience preferences and needs, as well as to develop measures of investment success. Implementing Minnesota's Ambassador development, visual resource protection process and roadside storybook development will strengthen Commissioner and stakeholder relationships, too.

6-15: Provide a description of the stewardship actions and practices your byway organization intends to follow so that your Intrinsic Quality(s) remains evident or available to travelers along the byway. (Limit 100 words.)
 Minnesota Great River Road intrinsic qualities encompass all six FHWA-definitions at some point along its 565-mile length. The Plan Your Trip interactive map includes over 700 places with intrinsic value contributing to Mississippi River exploration, available to travelers on mobile devices, tablets and PCs. Seven StoryMaps offer travelers a deep dive e-visiting intrinsic sites in six distinct destination areas, and one showcasing state parks through the lens of youth. A series of interpretive panels tells stories of place at restored historic waysides, rest areas and parks. A Visual Resource Protection framework was developed for the CMP, although not yet implemented.

Contacts

FHWA will use these contacts to obtain additional information during the nomination process and after designation, if it occurs. It is important for you to assure the individuals you list in your nomination are available for such contacts and will maintain up-to-date knowledge about byway activities.

Role**7-1: Signatory for State, Indian Tribe, or Federal Land Management Agency**

Name: Holly Slagle Agency: Minnesota Department of Transportation Title: Scenic Byway Program Coordinator
Work Email: holly.slagle@state.mn.us Work Phone: 651-366-3623

7-2: Principal Point of Contact for Byway

Name: Chris Miller Agency: Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission Title: Director
Work Email: chris@togpartners.com Work Phone: 651-341-4196

7-3: Nomination Form Preparer

Name: Carol Zoff Agency: Minnesota Department of Transportation Title: Principal Landscape Architect
Work Email: carol.zoff@state.mn.us Work Phone: 651-366-4705

Signatory Review

Status: endorsed
Comments: Endorsed as submitted



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Federal Highway Administration

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