

6-8: Wisconsin Great River Road – Letters Documenting Support

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Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
4822 Madison Yards Way, S903
Madison, WI 53705

Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Craig Thompson
wisconsindot.gov
Telephone: (608) 266-1114
FAX: (608) 266-9912
Email: sec.exec@dot.wi.gov

June 1, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

I write to express my support for the designation of the Great River Road as an All-American Road.

As you know, the scenic, historic and cultural value of the Wisconsin segment of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway can't be overstated. The wooded hills and bluffs along the Mississippi are some of the most outstanding scenery in Wisconsin, attracting thousands off the Interstate to Highway 35 to experience the natural beauty along the river. Other attractions include the quaint, friendly communities along the route, many of them among the state's first settlements.

A trip along the GRR is also a journey into Wisconsin's history. The region was a trading center for Marquette and Joliet and was the scene of an important battle in the French and Indian War. Cities like La Crosse and Prairie Du Chien were among the state's first important commercial centers, as the Mississippi carried the commerce of much of early Wisconsin. The communities along the route are proud to celebrate their historic past, and the GRR is the best way to experience it.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has had a long and productive relationship with the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, assisting with the auditing of the GRR and improving facilities along it. WisDOT's highway improvement program has made substantial investments in the routes comprising the GRR. In roughly the last five years more than \$60 million in improvements have been made to roads and bridges along the route between Illinois and La Crosse. This includes the reconstruction of Highway 35 in Prairie du Chien and the reconstruction of Exit 3 in La Crosse. Exit 3 now features an eagle viewing area and multi-use paths that have become a "must stop" along the GRR.

The GRR perfectly supports the desire of today's travelers to explore lesser-known destinations, especially those that are relatively untouched or unique. Their search for more meaningful travel experiences leads them off the beaten path to experience the places they visit as if they were a local: eating in local restaurants and learning the stories of the people who live there. This is the travel experience that scenic byways like the GRR provide, and why they are so important to Wisconsin's multi-billion-dollar tourism economy.

In short, the GRR is an important byway that is one of the most beautiful and heavily used in the nation. It richly deserves being designated an All-American Road.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Thompson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Thompson
Secretary designee
Wisconsin Department of Transportation



March 27, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism is pleased to provide this letter of support for designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. The Great River Road is truly worthy of such designation.

Since 1938 the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission has worked to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway benefitting communities and travelers along the Mississippi River. The Great River Road meets All-American Road designation criteria, possessing many and varied intrinsic resources that are of national significance. As *the* official access to the Mississippi River through ten states since the time pleasure driving began, the Great River Road is an iconic destination and reason for travel unto itself for many, whether for a few hours or a few months. We applaud that all ten Great River Road states are seeking All-American Road designation from the Federal Highway Administration and we support Wisconsin and its nine partner states in this endeavor.

The Great River Road has importance for all communities along the river – from small and rural, to large and metropolitan - as an artery of stewardship, storytelling, tourism and commerce along the Mississippi River benefitting visitors and residents alike. In Wisconsin, the Great River Road spans 250 miles along the Mississippi River showcasing unique and exceptional landscapes and experiences in more than 33 historic river towns & villages. Wisconsin's National Scenic Byway meets FHWA requirements for All-American Road designation.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism actively promotes and markets the Wisconsin Great River Road Region. We support the efforts of the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission with direct marketing efforts, and public and media relations. Our Regional Tourism Specialist serves on the WIMRPC Marketing and Promotions Committee. Our relationship continues to be a strong, valued and important partnership for the benefit of all parties.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism enthusiastically endorses Wisconsin's efforts, along with its partner states, to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Meaney", written in a cursive style.

Sara Meaney
Secretary-designee

GOVERNOR TONY EVERS
SECRETARY-DESIGNEE SARA MEANEY

201 WEST WASHINGTON AVENUE P.O. BOX 8690 MADISON, WI 53708-8690 | TELEPHONE: 608.266.7621 | FAX: 608.266.3403

TRAVELWISCONSIN.COM

TAMMY BALDWIN
WISCONSIN

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

April 3, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am pleased to support the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission, Wisconsin Tourism, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's application for designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration.

Since 1938, the ten-state National Mississippi River Parkway Commission has worked to preserve, promote, and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway, which has benefitted communities and travelers along the Mississippi River for decades. It possesses both many and varied intrinsic resources of national significance, and tourism positively impacts rural and metropolitan communities in Wisconsin and in the nine other states along the river. In Wisconsin, the Great River Road spans 250 miles along the Mississippi River, and showcases unique landscapes and diverse experiences in more than 33 river towns and villages. I am delighted to learn that Wisconsin and its nine partner states are collaborating on this effort, making the case that the Great River Road meets all criteria to be designated an All-American Road.

As a US Senator, I strongly support efforts to expand tourism, adventure, and travel, as well as boost Wisconsin's economy. For this reason, I respectfully request that full and fair consideration be given to Wisconsin's application to the Federal Highway Administration's All-American Road program. Please keep Elaine Menigo in my office updated on the progress of this application. She may be reached at 30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 700, Madison, Wisconsin 53703, by phone, 608-264-5338, or by email, projects_grants@baldwin.senate.gov. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

April 6, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Dear Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Fellow Commission Members,

As the State Senator for the 17th Senate District and a fellow member of the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission (WMRPC), I am honored to support the designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

I represent Grant County in the State Senate, which contains many miles of the Great River Road along our state's southwestern border. I recognize the importance of this route to both tourism and the overall economy of our communities. The Commission and local friends have done a terrific job of highlighting the impressive intrinsic resources that are of national significance in our state. Traveling the Great River Road is an experience unlike any other.

As I understand it, Wisconsin's National Scenic Byway meets FHWA requirements for All-American Road designation. I believe that recognition as an All-American Road will enable us to grow our promotion of this route and capitalize on all it has to offer. I am very proud of all of the hard work by volunteers who spend immeasurable time protecting, improving and promoting the Great River Road and all of the communities along the route. They have done a spectacular job and deserve to be further recognized by the FHWA.

Thank you for your consideration of my support for the Great River Road for All-American Road status. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may provide additional information or input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard Marklein". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Howard Marklein
State Senator
17th Senate District



March 30, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

As the State Senator representing the 32nd Senate District, I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. The Great River Road is truly worthy of such a designation.

Since 1938, the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission has worked to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway benefitting communities and travelers along the Mississippi River. The Great River Road meets All-American Road designation criteria, possessing many and varied intrinsic resources that are of national significance. As the official access to the Mississippi River through ten states since the time pleasure driving began, the Great River Road is an iconic destination and reason for travel unto itself for many, whether for a few hours or a few months. I applaud that all ten Great River Road states are seeking All-American Road designation from the Federal Highway Administration and I support Wisconsin in this endeavor.

The Great River Road has importance for all communities along the river – from small and rural, to large and metropolitan - as an artery of stewardship, storytelling, tourism and commerce along the Mississippi River benefitting visitors and residents alike. In Wisconsin, the Great River Road spans 250 miles along the Mississippi River showcasing unique and exceptional landscapes and experiences in more than 33 historic river towns & villages. Wisconsin's National Scenic Byway meets FHWA requirements for All-American Road designation.

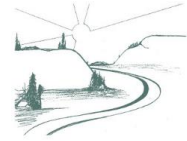
I support Wisconsin's efforts to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter in further detail.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Shilling
Wisconsin State Senate Democratic Leader
32nd Senate District



JEFF SMITH
WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR – 31ST DISTRICT



April 2, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

I am writing to express support for the designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. The Great River Road is truly worthy of such designation.

Since 1938 the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission has worked to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway benefitting communities and travelers along the Mississippi River. The Great River Road meets All-American Road designation criteria, possessing many and varied intrinsic resources that are of national significance. As the official access to the Mississippi River through ten states since the time pleasure driving began, the Great River Road is an iconic destination and reason for travel unto itself for many, whether for a few hours or a few months. We applaud that all ten Great River Road states are seeking All-American Road designation from the Federal Highway Administration and we support Wisconsin and its nine partner states in this endeavor.

Wisconsin's 250-mile span of the Great River Road allows visitors and residents alike to enjoy over 33 historic river towns and villages along the Mississippi River. Local businesses, amenities, and recreational sites come alive along the Great River Road, especially in the spring and summer months. Sightseers often return annually to take in the magnificent views again while partaking in community events with friends and family.

I am proud to represent the 31st Senate District which encompasses this extraordinary part of the state. The Great River Road would continue living up to its name, a truly great addition, as an All-American Road. Finally, the Great River Road meets all FHWA requirements for All-American Road designation.

Again, I support Wisconsin's efforts, along with its partner states, to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. Thank you for your consideration, and, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Smith".

JEFF SMITH
State Senator
31st District



JILL BILLINGS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

April 1, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme,

I write today to provide my support for the designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. As a state legislator whose district includes the Great River Road and as a member of the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission I know firsthand how worthy the Great River Road is of this designation.

The Great River Road is as unique, vast, and historic as the mighty Mississippi River of which the road follows. The national Mississippi River Parkway Commission, established in 1938, includes ten states that work to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road. In spanning ten states, the Great River Road is innately distinctive culturally, showcasing varying historic and cultural changes as you head from north to south.

Even within the 250 miles that span the Wisconsin section of the Great River Road, there is great cultural diversity. The Wisconsin section of the Great River Road features more than 33 historic river towns and villages, highlighting both small rural communities and large metropolitan areas. Many of the smaller communities depend on the tourism brought by the Great River road to feature their local food, customs and history. The Great River Road is also one of the top *Fall Adventure* destinations in Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Tourism Department features it as part of its fall advertising campaign. But whatever the season, people enjoy traveling the Great River Road for just a few hours or for months, sampling all the distinctive local food, customs, history, beauty and culture along the way.

The Wisconsin Great River Road showcases exceptional landscapes, experiences and people. I feel honored to have this road in my backyard, and know this designation will highlight this special National Scenic Byway to more people across the nation and world. Wisconsin's National Scenic Byway meets the Federal Highway Administration's requirements for All-American Road designation, and I request you select it for this distinction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Billings". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Billings
Wisconsin State Representative
95th Assembly District



LOREN OLDENBURG

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 96th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

April 2, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

RE: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

As State Representative for Wisconsin's 96th Assembly District I would like to express my strong support for designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road. I, along with others who have driven along the Great River Road know that it is a magnificent experience.

Wisconsin's 96th Assembly District includes all of Crawford County, most of Vernon County and about half of Monroe County. The Wisconsin Great River Road is on the west coast of Vernon, Crawford and several other counties in Wisconsin. The road is a fine place for tourism, recreational activities, and is home to several businesses. The Mississippi River and the Wisconsin Great River Road meet the necessary requirements to be designated as an All-American Road.

Thank you for considering the Wisconsin Great River Road for an All-American Road designation.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Loren Oldenburg".

Representative Loren Oldenburg
Wisconsin's 96th Assembly District



WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
STEVE DOYLE
94th DISTRICT

March 26, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

I am pleased to provide a letter of support for designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. The Great River Road is truly worthy of such designation.

Since 1938 the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission has worked to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway benefitting communities and travelers along the Mississippi River. The Great River Road meets All-American Road designation criteria, possessing many and varied intrinsic resources that are of national significance. As the official access to the Mississippi River through ten states since the time pleasure driving began, the Great River Road is an iconic destination and reason for travel unto itself for many, whether for a few hours or a few months. We applaud that all ten Great River Road states are seeking All-American Road designation from the Federal Highway Administration and we support Wisconsin and its nine partner states in this endeavor.

The Great River Road has importance for all communities along the river – from small and rural, to large and metropolitan - as an artery of stewardship, storytelling, tourism and commerce along the Mississippi River benefitting visitors and residents alike. In Wisconsin, the Great River Road spans 250 miles along the Mississippi River showcasing unique and exceptional landscapes and experiences in more than 33 historic river towns & villages. Wisconsin's National Scenic Byway meets FHWA requirements for All-American Road designation.

I support Wisconsin's efforts, along with its partner states, to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Doyle'.

STEVE DOYLE
State Representative
94th Assembly District



Warren Petryk

State Representative • 93rd Assembly District

April 15, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

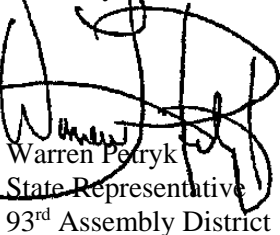
I am writing today to offer my utmost support for designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. The Great River Road is truly worthy of such designation.

Since 1938 the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission has worked to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway benefitting communities and travelers along the Mississippi River. The Great River Road meets All-American Road designation criteria, possessing many and varied intrinsic resources that are of national significance. As the official access to the Mississippi River through ten states since the time pleasure driving began, the Great River Road is an iconic destination and reason for travel unto itself for many, whether for a few hours or a few months. We applaud that all ten Great River Road states are seeking All-American Road designation from the Federal Highway Administration and we support Wisconsin and its nine partner states in this endeavor.

The Great River Road has importance for all communities along the river – from small and rural, to large and metropolitan - as an artery of stewardship, storytelling, tourism and commerce along the Mississippi River benefitting visitors and residents alike. In Wisconsin, the Great River Road spans 250 miles along the Mississippi River showcasing unique and exceptional landscapes and experiences in more than 33 historic river towns & villages. Wisconsin's National Scenic Byway meets FHWA requirements for All-American Road designation.

I strongly support Wisconsin's efforts, along with its partner states, to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. If you have any questions of me, please feel free to contact me in my office at (608) 266-0660.

Sincerely,



Warren Petryk
State Representative
93rd Assembly District



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
51 E. Fourth Street - Room 101
Winona, Minnesota 55987



April 23, 2020

Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is pleased to provide our support for designation of the Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. The Great River Road is absolutely deserving of this designation. Since 1938 the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) has worked to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway benefitting communities and travelers along the Mississippi River. The Great River Road meets All-American Road designation criteria, because it facilitates our access to numerous areas of National Significance such as National Wildlife Refuges and other places of beauty and cultural and historic importance. We are pleased that all ten Great River Road states are seeking All-American Road designation from the Federal Highway Administration and we support Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and the other partner states in this endeavor.

The Great River Road has great importance all along the river benefitting both visitors and residents. In the States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri, the Great River Road brings visitors to National Wildlife Refuges where we welcome them to enjoy the Mississippi River up close and personal. Without the Great River Road many of our visitors wouldn't even know we exist. At our many visitor contact stations along the river, we meet people everyday who say they found us only because they were traveling the Great River Road. We also value the fact that in Wisconsin one of the Great River Road Visitor Centers is located on the Genoa National Fish Hatchery and nearby the Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. Through the partnership with the MRPC and Great River Road we are able to educate visitors about the Mississippi River and its rich natural resources and history.

The Service appreciates the efforts of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri, and its other partner states, to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Refuge Area Supervisor, Sabrina Chandler at 507-494-6218 or via email at sabrina_chandler@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Baird
Regional Refuge Chief



Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 53624

Chairwoman Sherry Quamme and Commission Members,

The La Crosse County Convention and Visitors Bureau (DBA Explore La Crosse) is excited to submit this letter of support for the Great River Road to become an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. I cannot think of a more deserving entity to receive this designation.

I was first introduced to the Great River Road in 2016 when I was hired as the Executive Director of Explore La Crosse. Living and working near the Mississippi River is extremely exciting as it is one of the most recognizable and historically important landmarks in our country. Along with the one of a kind Mississippi River comes the Great River Road which runs along its banks. Truly, this incredible asset to our nation's heartland lends itself to not only our residents but attracts visitors from all over the world.

The Great River Road plays an important role in positively impacting our communities. Explore La Crosse represents six communities throughout our region and they are all reliant on the activity and commerce that is driven by the Wisconsin Great River Road. The Explore La Crosse staff and board of directors have been enthusiastically engaged with the Wisconsin Great River Road for many years. We work closely with the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission assisting with direct marketing efforts and public and media relations, and have found our efforts to be very beneficial to the our region.

Along with our partners, Explore La Crosse is happy to write this letter of support to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration.

Sincerely,

I would as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. The Great River Road is truly worthy of such designation.

A.J. Frels

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A.J. Frels", is written over a horizontal line. Below the signature, the text "Executive Director" and "Explore La Crosse" is printed.

Executive Director
Explore La Crosse



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

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

3 April 2020

Danielle E. Blackshear
Transportation Specialist
Office of Human Environment, Livability Team
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590
Phone: (202) 366-2064 | Room E74-438
Danielle.Blackshear@dot.gov | <https://highways.dot.gov>

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Dear Ms. Blackshear:

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission has worked to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway since 1938. While the Byway title is important, designation as an All American Road would take the Great River Road to the level it deserves. The Mississippi River is one of the world's great rivers, and the Great River Road is the one feature that connects travelers to its entire length.

As Superintendent of the only National Park Service unit whose mission is the Mississippi River, I know what it means to protect, preserve and enhance the nationally and internationally important sites of the Mississippi River. I also know the river's draw for national and international visitors. All American Road designation would enhance the park's visitation and visits to sites all along the river, since more people would make the Great River Road their destination. It would also provide powerful leverage to protect and enhance the river and its key resources.

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area encompasses 72 miles and 54,000 acres of the Mississippi River and adjoining lands running through the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area. We take in five counties, 21 towns and cities, four townships and about 90 local, regional and state parks within our boundaries.

The Mississippi River here runs through one of the most unique reaches along its entire course. Four of the seven reaches in Minnesota occur within the park's boundaries: the Prairie River, Gorge, Where the Big River Begins and the Driftless Area.

Consider some other striking facts about Mississippi River and the places along it in this national park:

- St. Anthony Falls is the Mississippi River's only major waterfall and the reason Minneapolis led the nation and at times the world in flour production between 1880 and 1930. Two National Historic Landmarks stand there: the Pillsbury A Mill and the Washburn A Mill. They bookend James J. Hill's Stone Arch Bridge, which is a National Civil Engineering Landmark.
- Located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, Fort Snelling is our other National Historic Landmark, and it has stories covering the period 1820-1946. It overlooks the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, offering scenic views while adding the landscape's scenic character.
- St. Paul is the head of navigation on the Mississippi River – The bookend to New Orleans.
- Resting high on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in St. Paul, the burial mounds in Mounds Park date back nearly 2,000 years and represent the northern most extension of Hopewell Culture, a culture that occupied the Ohio and upper Mississippi river valleys.
- Far older are the Ordovician period fossils in the bluffs that date from 444 to 488 million years ago, when this place lay near the Equator. National Park Service geologists have said that we have some of the best examples of Ordovician Period fossils of any national park.

Stories and places like these are why Congress established the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area as a National Park Service unit in 1988.

Although not on our fee title land, the Great River Roads runs entirely within the park's boundary. Our Mississippi River Visitor Center, in the Science Museum of Minnesota, in St. Paul, is a Great River Road Interpretive Center.

All American Road designation would bring a new emphasis to the national and international places, resources and stories within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and to the Great River Road. If you have any questions, please contact me at john_anfinson@nps.gov or 651-293-8432.

Sincerely,



John O. Anfinson
Superintendent



March 30, 2020

Federal Highway Administration:

I am pleased to write this letter in support of your application to designate the Great River Road as an All American Road.

Connect Worldwide-Japan is the leading tourism marketing organization representing U.S. destinations in Japan. The Japanese market is vital to the U.S. inbound tourism sector. Each year more than 3.5 million Japanese visit the U.S. and contribute over \$16 billion in travel and tourism spending. In comparison to other inbound markets (excluding Canada and Mexico), Japan is the 2nd largest producer of visitors behind the United Kingdom and the 2nd largest in spending behind China. Japanese visitors have been coming to the U.S. since the 1960's and they represent one of the most stable sources of inbound tourism for the U.S. as a whole and for regions, states and cities across the country.

Japanese visitors have a strong affection for the U.S. Key market motivators are the desire to see our natural beauty and scenery, to experience our famous and noteworthy sites, and to immerse themselves in our local culture and culinary offerings—the things that make us “typically American” to Japanese. The Mississippi River and the states bordering it are seen as typifying the nostalgia of the America they learned about in school, saw in movies and listened to in music. Japanese over 50 in particular grew up on the stories of Mark Twain and Tennessee Williams and other American novels set in the region. They became devotees of New Orleans jazz, Elvis Presley, B.B. King, Bob Dylan and Prince, to name just a few of the musicians who help draw Japanese visitors to the Mississippi River states.

Today that nostalgia for what the Mississippi River represents attracts Japanese tourists who want to explore the region through Mississippi River cruises or by car or motorcoach on the Great River Road. A dream of many Japanese is to travel the length of the Great River Road and discover the charm of the communities lining the river from Minnesota to Louisiana. Japanese are highly attuned to official designations so designating the Great River Road as an All American Road will resonate with them and be a way for tour operators and tourism marketing organizations to draw more visitors to the states.

I wish you much success in your worthy endeavor.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marjorie L. Dewey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marjorie L. Dewey

President

Claasen Communication GmbH | Hindenburgstr. 2 | 64665 Alsbach

Alsbach / Germany, the 23rd of March 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Mississippi River is an icon for Germans, Austrians and people from Switzerland. Just mentioning the name means that everyone has some images in mind immediately. The river is of similar significance such as Route 66, the Florida Keys or the canyons in the Southwest. Exploring the Mississippi area means a trigger and a reason to travel abroad. Visiting the banks of the Mississippi means an all-American experience, which gains its beauty from the authenticity. Small towns, open-hearted people, wide nature and uncountable places, which Europeans consider being the real America: All that together is a guarantee for unique and unforgettable travel experiences.

I personally feel it is about time that the Mississippi River receives a broader attention in the public by stronger promotion efforts. It is a true gem and a perfect destination not only for the experienced traveler to the U.S.



Ralph Steffen
Owner and Managing Director

March 27, 2020

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of Mississippi River Country – the 10 state tourism commissioners and directors along the Mississippi River – to support the Great River Road National Scenic Byway’s designation as an All-American Road.

The Great River Road is an American treasure. It travels more than 3,000 miles, tracing the path of the Mississippi, America’s greatest river. It takes travelers into the heart of America, passing through 10 states—Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana. Marked by its distinctive pilot wheel signs, the National Scenic Byway leads travelers into a confluence of food, music, history, culture and industry.

The route was first established more than 80 years ago, chosen for its natural beauty, cultural and historical significance and important recreational assets. Today it continues to provide travelers rich American experiences—visitors get to hear the blues music where blues music was born, walk historic Civil War battlefields, and discover the remains of Native American empires. They pass the homes of American icons like Charles Lindbergh and Mark Twain, and they see swans, cranes and countless other birds complete their own journey on the Mississippi Flyway, a migratory route that provides some of the best birdwatching in the world.

The Great River Road provides travelers so many uniquely American experiences. As an organization that markets the 10-state region internationally, we understand the appeal of the Mississippi River—especially to visitors who have traveled to the U.S. before but only visited coastal destinations New York, Los Angeles or Orlando. The Great River Road is the perfect destination for these return travelers looking for a trip that takes them deeper into the American experience. The All-American Road designation would be a boon to our marketing efforts, signifying to our international visitors that the byway offers an authentic and rewarding all-American experience that’s worthy of the journey.

We’re excited that the byway is under consideration for this important designation, and we’re pleased to endorse the effort to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration.

Sincerely,



Craig Ray

Chairman, Mississippi River Country
Director, Visit Mississippi

Mississippi River Country represents Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.





Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission



Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission Resolution

Support/Approval of All-American Road Designation for the Great River Road

Whereas, the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission is aware that President Donald J. Trump signed into law the "Reviving America's Scenic Byway Act of 2019 on September 22, 2019; and

Whereas, the Reviving America's Scenic Byways Act of 2019 requires the Secretary of Transportation to start the new Scenic Byway application process and to designate a round of new All American roads within one year; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission is aware that the All American Road nomination deadline is May 15, 2020; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission approves seeking the All American Road designation for the Great River Road in Wisconsin, using Historic as the primary intrinsic quality of national importance and Cultural as the second intrinsic quality. Further, the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission shall communicate this to the Wisconsin Scenic Byway Coordinator.

Resolved, therefore that the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission shall work with the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission – all 10 States of the Great River Road – to achieve this designation and requests that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Department of Tourism, Great River Road Counties and Municipalities take steps to obtain All American Road status for the current National Scenic Byway identified as the Wisconsin Great River Road. Promoting America's Longest Scenic Byway 10 States, 1 Great River Road. Resolved this Friday, January 17, 2020, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Sherry L. Quamme, Chairwoman
WI MRPC
Commissioner, Crawford County, WI

Jean Galasinski, Vice Chairwoman
WI MRPC
Commissioner, Trempealeau County, WI

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