



Mississippi River Parkway Commission

701 East Washington Avenue, Suite 202
Madison, WI 53703



Rough Draft: Minutes of the ERA Committee meeting held in Natchez, MS on
September 15, 2016
Time: 2 pm to 5pm
Place: Grand Hotel, Natchez, MS
Submitted by: Nani Bhowmik

The following ERA Committee Members were present: Bob Miller, WI; Dan Petersen, IA; Gip Robertson, AR; Jim Craig, AR; Steven E. Son, AR; Mark Davis, KY; Jay Schweitzer, IA; Michelle Burrell, MS; John P. Threadgill, TN;; Nani Bhowmik, IL; and Terri A. McCullough, AR.

- A total of eight (8) States were represented at this meeting. This is one of the largest gathering of ERA committee members after a long time.
- All the members felt that we must have representation from the Technical Committee Members from all States. Technical Committee members fill an important void in all committee deliberations. They are the main link on what is going on in each state in the areas of Environment, Recreation, and Agriculture.
- There was one Nomination for the Stewardship Award. This was submitted by Dan Petersen of Iowa nominating Central Iowa Power Cooperative for their environmentally friendly dismantling of their coal fired power plant. The nomination came a little late for being considered for 2016 award. The ERA Committee unanimously approved the nomination and recommends to the Board that this award be accepted and the Award should be given next year at the summer meeting to be held in Iowa.
- The Committee spent considerable amount of time discussing the all ten state bicycling event possibly taking place in 2017 or 2018. All the Committee members agreed that the MRPC should be supporting this event whole heartedly. It was also discussed that many abandoned railroad tracks could easily be converted to bicycle trails. The Committee requested Michelle Burrell, an ERA Member to be the point person for this proposed event.
- The Committee Members also discussed that generally public sectors initially takes the lead on any worthwhile cause followed by the local, state, and or federal agencies.
- The Committee agreed that MRPC should develop a calendar of events related to the Harvesting that do take place every year along the Mississippi river from headwater to the Gulf. This is an excellent idea and Bob Miller graciously volunteered to help in the development of the calendar of events on harvesting along the 10 state regions of the Mississippi river.

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- The ERA committee also believes that all of us should take notice that the face of travelers that travels along the Mississippi river are changing. A traveler travelling Great River Road with folded maps are fading fast. Most travelers now travels with GPS and hand held electronic devices with maps directions etc. We have to target our marketing activities to the changing faces of our travelers.
- The ERA committee would like to request \$1,000 for potential expenses during the next year.
- It was a very productive meeting.

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