



Culture & Heritage Committee meeting

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

10:00am

I have two agenda items I'd like us to talk about, but feel free to add any you would like us to consider.

The first is the status of the Checklist in each state. How are you all doing on this? Will we have enough done by our fall meeting to have a meaningful conversation about what we have learned?

The second, and our primary focus, is identifying or developing a model interpretive center application. If you have one you think we should consider, please send it to all of us.

The purpose is to get better applications and make the committee's job easier. We should see the same application structure and quality with every application. "Our goal," as stated in the application form, is "to have a network of premier institutions that are willing to work together to further the interpretive and marketing goals for the Great River Road." How rigorous should we be in holding applicants to our guidelines? What level of quality do we expect from the narrative and the images? How long do we want an application to be? I'm sure there are others you can think of.

Section 1, No. 1, is the most important at this time and is what we can focus on next Tuesday. See below excerpt from our application form below.

Section 1 Qualifications

1. The institution must interpret the Mississippi River or some significant aspect or relationship to the river with a high level of quality and be open to the public on a published, regular basis.

- What story does your institution tell about the Mississippi River as part of its regular daily visitor experience?
- How does it relate to the themes for interpretation which are attached?
- Why do you feel that this significant aspect or relationship to the river is presented at a high level of quality?
- Describe the quality of the visit your guests receive.

I've looked at five nominations and identified a number of issues that we should consider how to address.

1. Some do a great job of tying their exhibits to our themes, but they don't answer these two questions: Why do you feel that this significant aspect or relationship to the river is presented at a high level of quality? And, Describe the quality of the visit your guests receive. A model example should address all the questions under Section 1:1.
2. Some address our themes directly but too briefly. What is our baseline for enough information?
3. Other nominations addresses our themes but do not identify those themes directly. We have to go back to our themes and relate them to the text. And, multiple themes can be scattered through a single paragraph.
4. The quality of the narratives vary greatly, from many pages to a few sentences and from well-written to a stream of loosely connected details.
5. Most did not speak to how their exhibits or programs were presented at a high quality or did so very briefly.
6. A couple nominations provided a description of each of their exhibits, even though some exhibits were not river-related.

Overall, I think it would really help applicants if they could look at a well-done application.