



Mississippi River Parkway Commission ERA Committee Minutes

June 1, 2023

Attendees: Sabrina – US Fish and Wildlife, Erin – US Fish and Wildlife, Nani - IL
John - MN, Lesley - IA, Roz – WI, Anne - MN, National Office (NO)

- I. Committee meeting called to order at 10:05am.
- II. Sabrina and Erin shared information promoting National Pollinator Week Along the Great River Road, June 19-25. The board approved a resolution at their March meeting. Plans are fully underway. Review the toolkit on mrpcmembers.com and add your pollinator events and pollinator locations along the GRR – see form on homepage of mrpcmembers.com. Sabrina shared information on Brice Prairie at the Upper Mississippi Visitor Center and the pollinator programming garden at the GRR IC in Genoa, WI, as examples.
- III. Roz (LaCrosse County, WI commissioner) shared her update on a possible partnership with Rotary International. Chris Stein is leading the efforts of Operation Pollination and is working toward a resolution between Rotary International, MRPC and National Heritage Areas. There will be a pollinator database to collect existing (and potential) location information for the whole Great River Road. The hope is to establish butterfly habitats along the GRR, making it the biggest pollinator project in the world. We'll establish metrics. What is the biggest ask of the group? Take inventory of what we already have in place. This will be a cross-committee collaboration. Which ICs have pollinator gardens? We know, for example, The Putnam in Iowa (participated in spring pollinator webinar). Questions were asked about how it could tie into the USFW monarch database? John requested a one-page description – What is it and how do we connect? Julia has been hired by the Friends of the Mississippi River outside of Minneapolis as the pollinator coordinator. Anne suggested we let Mississippi River House and Senate caucuses know about this initiative that is underway and tied to Rotary International along the River.



- IV. The Stewardship award deadline is June 15. Minnesota's application for their Department of Agriculture – Grown Program. The committee discussed the application and the connection to the Drive the Great River Road month. It's a story nomination activity that developed from one campaign. Everyone agreed the application was worthy of recognition and would move forward pending another nomination.
- V. In other business and updates – John shared that an individual is proposing a Driftless Area National Park in southern Minnesota (Winona CVB), covering part of four states (also a Heritage Area). There is also a proposal from IL, MO – at the Mississippi River confluence for another national park.
- VI. The group discussed carp and a major carp event at Lock and Dam #5 above Winona where carp are jumping about one per minute below the dam. They tagged five carp and released them to see their reproduction. All these findings have serious implications for the system.
- VII. Meeting adjourned at 10:56am