

Name of person making nomination

Anne Lewis

State Commission

Minnesota

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Name of Nominee (Individual, Organization or Community)

Tennessee Department of Transportation

Nominee Address

Mike McClanahan, Highway Beautification Manager
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United States
[Map It](#)

Nominee Phone

(615) 741-2848

Nominee Email

Michael.McClanahan@tn.gov

Describe the history of involvement of the nominee in issues relating to the Great River Road, the Mississippi River, or a river community.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation's involvement in the Great River Road and pollinators began in earnest in about 2017 with the help of Mike McClanahan, T-DOT's manager of highway beautification. The Tennessee MRPC and Great River Road had earlier been organized through a private nonprofit. In keeping with its highway beautification goals, Mike's office revamped the Interpretive Center at Reelfoot Lake to be the Great River Road Gateway Interpretive Center and found a new home for MRPC.

Shortly after that, the T-DOT team gingerly launched efforts to raise public awareness of pollinators at the elementary school level. This awareness campaign started in 2022 with "Polly the Bee from Tennessee". The program consisted of videos and lesson plans aimed at elementary-age children to instill the value of pollinators. This was accompanied by public observance of National Pollinator Week that year.

Last year, T-DOT energetically focused its pollinator efforts on the Great River Road in Tennessee, creating the Pollinator Playbook for the Great River Road. Meant as a prototype for other Great River Road states, the T – DOT Playbook introduces state DOTs to the need for pollinator habitat, the resources available to plan for increased roadside pollinator habitat, and catalogs best management practices for DOTs to adopt and plan for increased pollinator habitat on their Great River Roads and other scenic byways. It serves as a beacon - and invaluable tool - to Mississippi River states to plan and incorporate pollinator habitat into roadways all up and down the River.

Please state examples of enhancing the environment, agriculture, recreation, and/or transportation on or along the Great River Road.

Pollinator plantings on roadsides have proven to be good for the environment by reducing roadway run off and insecticide use, and they are also good for pollinator development, human recreation, and enhanced traveler experience. Furthermore, many of the MRPC's Interpretive Centers have taken up the pollinator garden cause and the T-DOT playbook assists them. They have marketed pollinator gardens as attractions to further leverage visitor assets.

Recently, this resulted in a multi-interest proclamation joining the signees in an effort to develop the National Great River Road Pollinator Trail. This, the work of Roz Schnick, WI-MRPC, also nominated in this category, conjoins the work of an MRPC state technical partner with the work of an individual MRPC member and is the reason for the request of recognition for them both as a part of this important ERA 10-state effort.

References

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