



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Explore Iowa's Great River Road, National Scenic Byway

All American Road Status

Voted BEST Scenic Byway in 2025

June 19, 2025

To: Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Attn: Culture & Heritage Committee

RE: Letter of Endorsement for the Fairport Fish Hatchery

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Iowa MPRC to advise you of the Commission's support for the Fairport Fish Hatchery to be considered and approved as an I-Center along the Great River Road for the Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

The Fairport Fish Hatcher was formerly called the Fairport Biological Station. Its purpose was to study the propagation of siph and mussels that were critical to the success of the pearl button industry. A friends group assists the Iowa DNR in sharing the rich history of this unique area. It is a place where fish were raised for many years and distributed throughout the state at first to help feed people during the great depression, and later to stock ponds and lakes for sport fishing. The Hatchery has ties to the Pearl Button industry, mussel protection, and conservation efforts.

In recent years the Friends group has secured grant funding to build an interpretive pavilion and they have their building with interpretation and native fish tanks. Last year they were raising paddlefish and had some in their tanks for people to view. They are so neat, and it was really interesting. They also secured a REAP grant to fund two interpretive trail systems that take people past all the historic buildings and shares information about how they were used.

The Fairport Fish Hatchery has been promoting eco-tourism for quite some time and is well connected to the other I-Centers in Muscatine including the Mississippi River Pearl Button Museum and the Environmental Learning Center at Discovery Park.

Sincerely,

Katie Hammond, Chair
Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission