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Mississippi Headwaters - Biennial report.



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Mississippi Headwaters Board Biennial Report

1991-1993

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LETTER TO THE 1993 MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

The Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) is providing its sixth report on the status of its program and operations to the Minnesota Legislature, as required by statute.

The MHB must assess the effectiveness of its plan and its implementation in protecting and enhancing the natural, scientific, historical, recreational and cultural values of the Mississippi River and related shorelands within the member counties.

In the 1991-93 biennium, the MHB updated its land use regulations and administration procedures; extended ambient water quality monitoring to nine Headwaters communities; and sponsored a variety of conferences, workshops, publications and programs promoting stewardship of land and water resources. Our video, "Mississippi Waters", was named one of 1991's top ten environmental videos by the North American Association of Environmental Educators. Hundreds of people learned about enforcing land use regulations to protect water quality; measured the health of lakes and streams; or floated the Mississippi River at programs organized by the MHB.

Protecting the natural, cultural, scenic, scientific and recreational values of the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River requires regulations, monitoring, information and education. The MHB is working to provide consistent and strong enforcement of its zoning provisions by monitoring the quality of the river to determine the impact of land uses on the water and by educating river property owners, decision makers and students about how their actions can protect land and water.

Sincerely,



Jay Braford, Chairman

HISTORY AND AUTHORITY OF MHB

Mississippi Headwaters Board is a joint powers board of Clearwater, Hubbard, Beltrami, Cass, Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing and Morrison counties organized to protect and preserve the natural, cultural, scenic, scientific and recreational values of the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River. It achieves this goal through administration of local land use regulations (set forth in Minnesota Statutes), water quality monitoring (privately funded) and through information and education programs designed to build stewardship of the river and adjacent lands.

The Mississippi River is North America's largest river; the 400-mile Headwaters section is the longest section of the entire river flowing within a single state. The Mississippi is a working river from Lake Itasca to New Orleans. In the headwaters, the Mississippi is a corridor for pipelines, highways and rail traffic; important for fish and wildlife and the accompanying recreation industry; a spot for seasonal homes, and an important water source for local industry and treatment of municipal wastes. Protection of this section of the river was recommended for federal control in 1979, but the Legislature provided a unique and innovative model of local control of the river in the eight member counties in 1981. This program has become a model for other local programs protecting natural resources, either through land use regulations, water quality monitoring or stewardship. The MHB has consistently built citizen involvement into its programs and activities.

ASSESSMENT OF MHB ACTI

The MHB established the following goals to measure the effectiveness

Identify and protect natural, cultural, scenic, scientific and recreational values of the Mississippi River.

Together with the Minnesota Project, the MHB held a series of community meetings to identify local values for the Mississippi River. Approximately 200 people participated. A report was published in October 1991.

The video program, "Mississippi Waters", surveys the natural and cultural history of the Mississippi Headwaters and explores the differences of Native American and European traditions towards the land. This program was released in June 1991, and more than 300 copies are circulating in schools, libraries and community groups of Minnesota. "Mississippi Waters" has been broadcast on public television stations from the Washington, D.C. metro area to New Orleans to California. A companion study guide was published in October 1991. Ninety-five people participated in a conference exploring how cultural values inform management of natural resources. Production of the video and the conference, "Who Owns the Mississippi River?", was supported by the Minnesota Humanities Commission.

An inventory of resources of the river corridor is being researched and will be written by the MHB by July 1993. This publication documents natural, scenic, scientific, recreational, and cultural resources along the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River.

Increase and enhance local participation in decision making regarding land use protection and management in the river corridor. Provide for consistent and fair administration of land use regulations.

MHB regulated land use and building in a defined corridor of the Mississippi River running through eight counties. Specific activities accomplished in this area in the 1993 biennium are:

Review and certification of zoning actions received from the counties and one township. This required consistent information describing the property owner request, on-site reviews, public meetings and research. MHB is the oversight agency for local action on the river and nine Headwaters lakes.

MHB created forms for common administration of zoning in its eight counties, both in the permitting and in the enforcement process. These forms were distributed to the counties and training provided on effective use of these forms.

MHB sponsored two training workshop for members of county boards of adjustment and planning commission. More than 200 people attended these sessions. The 1991 workshop explored how land uses affect water quality, and how local boards can incorporate water quality information in decisions about land use and building. In the 1992 workshop, participants role-played the responsibilities of various agencies in administering wetlands protection. This has helped local decision makers better understand the differences among local, state and federal regulations. It is the only routine training program for this group in the state. MHB has published a "Shoreland Zoning Manual" examining zoning and its administration.

ACTIVITIES IN 1991-93 BIENNIUM:

Assessment of its activities in the 1991-93 biennium:

MHB educated river and lake property owners about how land use practices affect water quality and other values of important water resources by publishing and distributing "User's Guide to Shoreland Development", a booklet describing actions individuals can take to protect shoreland; producing and distributing the videos, "Lake Protection: Everyone Benefits" and "Living with Water", which describe water quality successes, how individuals can manage for water quality and how water quality monitoring works. The MHB organized or helped organized a variety of meetings, conferences and workshops on issues related to management of water and land resources.

Monitor water quality routinely and provide information and education programs that support individual actions to protect land and water resources. Recognize and honor individual and local actions to protect land and water resources.

MHB conducted routine ambient water quality monitoring at 36 sites in nine communities. The program is organized through high schools and middle schools in Bagley, Blackduck, Bemidji, Deer River, Remer, Grand Rapids, Aitkin, Brainerd and Little Falls. Participants analyze water quality for temperature, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand, nitrate-nitrite, total phosphorus, fecal coliform and turbidity according to a scientific monitoring plan and U.S. E.P.A. standards and methods for quality assurance and quality control. Two reports on the river's health, one focusing on chemical measurements and the second on biological measurements, were produced in the biennium. In at least one area, water quality monitoring indicated a land use problem contributing nutrients to the stream. Two nonconforming septic systems were brought into compliance and the water quality has returned to desirable levels.

MHB trained more than 200 teachers, students and volunteers in sampling procedures and methods. In Aitkin County, students established a mentor program with community volunteers to increase the number of sites under analysis. In Crow Wing County, community members organized an investigation of the quality of tributaries to the river.

ASSESSMENT OF PLAN EFFECTIVENESS

To assess its effectiveness at realizing stated goals, the MHB assesses its annual workplan in December of each year and then sets the next year's work plan. The MHB also proposes its yearly budget at this time, although the budget year begins July 1. The MHB may revise its annual workplan in June, at the close of the budget year. The member counties are asked to review and comment on the proposed work plan and budget. The members of the MHB review each work plan in light of specific recommendations of the counties.

ACTIVITIES PROPOSED FOR THE 1995 BIENNIUM:

The following goals have been established by the MHB for the 1995 biennium:

Research, publish and communicate information about the natural, cultural, scenic, scientific and recreational values of the Mississippi Headwaters. Establish technical assistance program for private property owners.

MHB will publish its Inventory of River Resources July 1, 1993. The MHB will provide a database of information compiled for that inventory to member counties. The MHB will schedule workshops on specific values and work with counties and property owners on developing actions to protect those values at the local level.

MHB will launch the Mississippi Headwaters Inquiry and Education Project, which will review biological information about the river, predict location of cultural sites and investigate surface-ground water connections.

MHB will complete its two-year river recreation management study, evaluating recreational experiences at selected sites in the eight counties.

MHB will develop a program of technical assistance for private property owners to help them implement actions to protect the values of the river corridor.

Improve administration and enforcement of vegetative management provisions of the Mississippi Headwaters Ordinance and continue to provide for efficient and effective administration and enforcement of land use regulations in the river corridor.

MHB will continue to review and certify zoning actions in the river corridor. MHB will establish an audit system to evaluate compliance with zoning decisions, especially in the area of vegetative management. MHB will sponsor at least two workshops for members of boards of adjustment and planning commissions. MHB will publish a "Guide to Shoreland Regulations and Regulators" to assist local government and private property owners.

Continue monitoring health of the Mississippi River and develop sustainable community action programs aimed at protecting desirable water quality.

MHB will continue water quality monitoring at existing sites and may add additional sites, especially in the Cass Lake or Grand Rapids to Brainerd areas. MHB will work to build volunteer support for its River Watch project, both to extend existing sampling efforts and to assist in implementing solutions to protect water quality.

MHB will offer its one-day River Class through community education and other interested groups. MHB will schedule River Congresses to develop community actions to protect the Mississippi River in its region. MHB will publish results of river sampling biannually. MHB will work with similar organizations to share results, issues and concerns related to volunteer monitoring statewide.

BUDGET ISSUES

MHB was established in 1980 and empowered by the 1981 Legislature. In 1981-83 biennium, funding came from Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources. In 1983-85 biennium, MHB became a line item in DNR Division of Planning budget. MHB, through Minnesota Statutes, requests stand-alone status for funds to be expended in fulfillment of state law.

Funding now comes from a variety of sources in addition to the state including: member counties, private foundations and corporate contributions.

Statement of 1991-93 Revenues and Operations

STATE OF MINNESOTA GRANT APPROPRIATED: \$197,554.00

SUMMARY OF IN-KIND EXPENSES REPORTED BY MEMBER COUNTIES

County	General Revenues	Land and Parks	Road and Bridges
Aitkin	\$ 19,369.60	\$ 50,779.10	Not Reported
Beltrami	\$ 41,645.02	\$ 3,099.38	Not Reported
Cass	\$ 34,473.15	\$ 280.00	\$ 1,046,891.57
Clearwater	\$ 8,143.97	\$ 1,026.54	Not Reported
Crow Wing	\$ 32,961.98	\$ 1,256.92	\$ 181,542.52
Hubbard	\$ 1,422.40	\$ 1,362.03	Not Reported
Itasca	\$ 2,322.50	\$ 192.64	\$ 168,892.94
Morrison	\$ 6,398.44	\$ 18,565.00	\$ 147,865.00
Totals	\$ 146,737.06	\$ 76,561.61	\$ 1,545,192.03

SUMMARY OF 1991-93 OPERATIONS BY BUDGET FUND

Office Expenses	\$192,611.83
Meeting Expense	\$ 53,999.08
Professional Services	\$ 77,563.91
Information and Education	\$ 33,092.27
River Stewardship Programs	\$ 85,314.11

*OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUES: \$ 272,450.00

*Charles K. Blandin Foundation \$ 190,000.00

This funding supports entirely Mississippi Headwaters River Watch Project. Per agreement with the foundation, these funds are managed separately from the MHB's state appropriation.

Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources \$25,000

Part of the multi-agency proposed entitled "Water Watch", managed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; MHB produced its Shoreland Zoning Manual and related workshops and will publish its River Resources Inventory with this money.

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources,
from the Clean Water Act 205 (j) 3 \$36,000

This money was used to produce the video program, "Living with Water".

Chippewa National Forest \$10,000

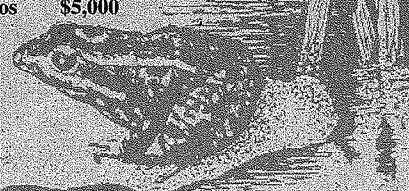
This money was used to produce the video program, "Message of the Eagle".

Rajala Companies, Blandin Paper Company, Deer River Telephone,
Paul Bunyan Rural Telephone, Dairyland Electric Cooperative,

Squaw Lake H.A.L.E. VFW \$6,450

These grants were in support of video production, distribution and related public programs.

Sales of publications and videos \$5,000



Members of the 1992 Mississippi Headwaters Board

Margaret Sherman • Aitkin County
Robert Treuer • Beltrami County
Virgil Foster • Vice Chairman • Cass County,
Gene Petersen • Secretary-Treasurer • Clearwater County
Barbara Uppgaard • Crow Wing County
Patricia Alberg • Hubbard County
Jay Braford • Chairman • Itasca County
William Block • Morrison County

Staff

Molly MacGregor • Director
Theresa Eclov • Office Manager
Lloyd Nesseth • Legislative Coordinator
Sandra Holm • River Watch Coordinator
John Valen • Attorney

Headwaters Heritage Award Recipients

1991

Jim Cairns
Elizabeth Smith
Otto Norenberg
Jonathan Rowe
Ray Barton, Wayne Barton and Kent Lorentzen,
the Verdon Town Board
Colonel Benton Murdock
Dale Krystosek

1992

Lonnie Lyman

1992 Mississippi Headwaters River Watch Scholarship Recipient

Teyana Kayser



MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS BOARD

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