

1995 Project Abstract

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 30, 1995

This project was supported by the MN Future Resources Fund.

Title: Local River Planning
Program Manager: Daniel G. Retka
Organization: Department of Natural Resources, Division of Waters
Legal Citation: M.L. 93, Ch. 172, Sec. 14, Subd. 11(b)
Appropriation Amount: \$480,000

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Design and organize planning processes for select rivers and provide grants and administrative and technical assistance to facilitate these processes.

OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS

Local river plans were recently completed on the Little Fork, Rat Root, and Vermilion Rivers. The Snake River Watershed Management Board is approximately 85% completed with its river planning project on the Snake River, and the Board is anticipating full completion of the project by December 31, 1995. The river boards on the Roseau and Middle Rivers have completed their program development for those rivers and recently received approval of their work plans and budgets for the next phase of the planning process: i.e. develop strategies to address the issues they have identified along the rivers and incorporate them into a management plan. Participants on the Long Prairie River expect to have a work program and budget submitted in time to initiate their river planning phase early in the next biennium.

PROJECT RESULTS USE AND DISSEMINATION

For the completed projects on the Little Fork, Rat Root, and Vermilion Rivers, model land-use management ordinances have been developed that prescribe review procedures and performance standards for activities within the river corridors. These procedures and standards will be incorporated into the official land use controls administered by Koochiching and St. Louis Counties. On all three rivers, the designated river corridors were extended a distance of 500 feet landward from the banks of the rivers so that specific land use management objectives and zoning provisions of each plan would apply beyond the traditional 300-foot boundary that the state uses for its Shoreland Management Program. The management recommendations and development standards specified within the plans are intended to guide the planning activities of various public entities and set development standards for landowners within the river corridors. Accordingly, these plans have been disseminated to all potentially affected parties including the respective County Boards, Planning Commissions, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Zoning and Land Departments of Koochiching and St. Louis Counties, the City of Littlefork, Town of Portage, MDNR, MPCA, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, MN Association of Contract Loggers, MN Timber Association, Friends of the Boundary Waters, and the Boise Forte Reservation.

Status Report: July 1, 1995

LCMR Final Workprogram Update Report

I. Program Title: Local River Planning - Continuation

Project Manager: Daniel G. Retka
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A. M.L. 93 Chapter 172, Section 14, Subd: 11(b)

Biennial Total: \$480,000 Balance: \$62,131.41

This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the commissioner of natural resources for contracts of up to two-thirds of the cost to counties or groups of counties acting pursuant to a joint powers agreement, to develop comprehensive plans for the management and protection of rivers in northern and central Minnesota. The commissioner of natural resources shall include in the work plan for review and approval by the legislative commission on Minnesota resources a proposed list of rivers and a planning process developed by the consensus of the affected counties. All plans must meet or exceed the requirements of state shoreland and floodplain laws. Up to \$100,000 is available for administration and technical assistance.

B. Compatible Data:

During the biennium ending June 30, 1995, the data collected by the projects funded under this section that have common value for natural resource planning and management must conform to information architecture as defined in guidelines and standards adopted by the Information Policy Office. Data review committees may be established to develop or comment on plans for data integration and distribution and shall submit semiannual status reports to

the legislative commission on Minnesota resources on their findings. In addition, the data must be provided to and integrated with the Minnesota Land Management Information Center's geographic data bases with the integration costs borne by the activity receiving funding under this section.

C. Status of Match Requirement:

Match Required: \$190,000
Funds Raised to Date: In-kind services are being provided and monitored by grant recipients on an ongoing basis and actual in-kind services provided are documented upon project completion.

The match requirement will be met by provisions of in-kind services by the local planning authorities conducting local river planning activities. This match is a requirement of the grant agreement to the local planning authority(s) and is documented throughout the planning process.

II. Narrative:

The purpose of this project is to continue to assist local units of government to plan for the wise management of rivers within their jurisdictions. Many rivers need land use management programs which go beyond the state's shoreland and floodplain management standards to ensure their protection and to guide development. The locally controlled planning effort will integrate local, state and federal management capabilities while avoiding the stigma associated with state or federally mandated planning programs.

III. Statement of Objectives:

- A. Select rivers to be planned.
- B. Design and organize river planning processes through program development grants.

C. Issue river planning grants.

D. Provide administration and technical assistance.

IV. Objectives:

A. Select rivers to be planned.

A1. Narrative: The focus of this objective is to be planned by evaluating planning applications using standard criteria.

A2. Procedures: Criteria for selection of rivers will include: miles of river, population, type of existing development including land ownership and land use, development potential, special problems or threats to the river, number of local units of government, whether all governmental units along the river reach are included, Outstanding Rivers Inventory rating, National Outstanding Rivers Inventory, proposed shoreland classification(s), significant resources such as endangered species or historic and archaeological sites, amount requested, and others. The Department will solicit applications for specific planning proposals from counties or groups of counties in July, 1993 and will again in December, 1993 and June, 1994.

A3. Amount Budgeted: 0

A4. Product timeline: July 93 Jan 94 July 94 Jan 95 July 95
Solicit Application Aug. Dec. June
Selection of Rivers Aug. Dec. June
Formation of Local
Planning mechanisms July, 1993 - ongoing

A5. Status: During the biennium, the Roseau River in Roseau County, the Littlefork and Rat Root Rivers in Koochiching County, the Vermilion River in St. Louis County, the Snake River in Aitkin, Kanabec, Pine and Mille Lacs Counties, the Long Prairie River in Douglas, Todd and Morrison Counties, and the Pine River in Cass, Crow Wing and Hubbard Counties were selected. Local authorities along the Pine River were

unable to organize their planning efforts and, therefore, advised that they were not ready to proceed at this time. Instead, the Middle River in Marshall County was selected based on interest expressed by the Marshall County Board.

A6. Benefits: This process will allow local units of government and their river constituencies, where there is local interest in river protection and management, to nominate rivers for planning grants.

B. Design and organize river planning processes through program development grants.

B1. Narrative: For the selected rivers program development grants not to exceed \$5,000 will be made to facilitate formation of local steering committees, to identify river management issues, to develop a river planning organizational structure and work program, and conduct public meetings to ensure support for river planning.

B2. Procedures: Program development grants will be made to counties or groups of counties to:

a. Initiate and facilitate organizational and planning meetings with affected township, city, county and other governmental entities (watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, Indian reservations);

b. Assist the governmental entities in establishing a steering committee;

c. Assist in the development of any necessary joint powers agreement;

d. Assist in the development of a proposed planning process, a work plan schedule, and budget;

e. Assist in conducting public meetings and workshops;

f. Modify the planning process consistent with public input for submission for funding for plan development through the local river planning program;

g. Assist in conducting steering committee and joint powers board meetings.

B3. Amount budgeted: \$30,000

Grants made:	Vermilion River (St. Louis Co.)	\$5,000
	Rat Root River (Koochiching Co.)	\$5,000
	Littlefork River (Koochiching Co.)	\$5,000
	Long Prairie River (Todd Co.)	\$5,000
	Roseau River (Roseau Co.)	\$5,000
	Middle River (Marshall Co.)	\$5,000

Balance: \$ 00

B4. Timeline: Due to interest expressed to date, grants have been offered to the Roseau, Littlefork, Rat Root, Vermilion, Long Prairie, and Middle Rivers. Additional grants will be made as proposed planning processes develop.

B5. Status: Program development grants of \$5,000 each were made to the Koochiching County Board for the Littlefork and Rat Root Rivers (\$5,000 for each river), to the St. Louis County Board for the Vermilion River, to the Roseau County Board for the Roseau River, to the Todd County Board for the Long Prairie River, and to the Marshall County Board for the Middle River. Program development including issues identification by stakeholders along the rivers has been completed for each of these projects. The Snake River Watershed Management Board had provided documentation that earlier planning and organizational efforts on the Snake River already satisfied Objective IV B. Accordingly, the Board proceeded to the next phase by submitting a proposed work plan and budget pursuant to Objective IV C.

B6. Benefits: This objective will ensure public support for the local river planning proposal, will result in river resource

threats and development pressures being appropriately addressed, and will begin the development of "local ownership" of the river plan. Experience shows this to be a necessary component of a successful planning program. It is possible that all planning program development grants will not result in proposed river planning programs.

C. Issue river planning grants.

C1. Narrative: For the selected rivers, grant agreements based on the work program developed pursuant to objective B will be executed with the planning authority for each river planning project. The agreements will specify the geographic scope of the project, the range of issues to be addressed, and the public participation process.

C2. Procedures: The following general process will be followed:

- a. Assemble existing data on river resources including land ownership and land uses;
- b. Assess the condition of the river and related land resources;
- c. Identify the issues which need to be dealt with in the plan;
- d. Develop the goals and objectives to be achieved as a result of the planning process;
- e. Develop an action plan to address the issues identified and which will achieve the goals and objectives;
- f. Develop an implementation program with responsibilities, costs and schedules for accomplishing the actions identified.

C3. Amount budgeted: \$350,000
Amount transferred in from Objective D \$60,000
Littlefork and Rat Root River Board: \$106,600

Snake River Watershed Management Board:	\$60,000
Vermilion River Board:	\$57,900
Roseau River Management Board	\$71,200
Middle River Management Board	\$57,400
Balance:	\$56,900

- C4. Timeline: There will be several individual local planning processes undertaken through this initiative. Each project will develop its own planning process and time frame under the general guidance of this work plan. It is anticipated 18 to 24 months will be necessary to complete projects. Individual grant agreements will include time frames as proposed in the planning proposal.

This Local River Planning Program is being managed with the intent to conduct the development of additional river plans in the future. Any planning proposals not able to be funded from this appropriation due to lack of funds or timing will be submitted as proposals for funding in future biennia for consideration of the Legislature.

- C5. Status: Planning processes including the development of management plans, have been completed on the Little Fork, Rat Root, and Vermilion Rivers. At their June 7, 1995 meeting, the Commission approved local river planning grants to the Roseau River Management Board in the amount of \$71,200, and to the Middle River Management Board in the amount of \$57,200. Formal grant agreements are now being processed for those projects. The Snake River Watershed Management Board is continuing its planning efforts on the Snake River and has consistently maintained that the project will be completed by December 31, 1995.
- C6. Benefits: Plans for individual rivers will be developed which address issues and problems that pose threats to the river resource. A logical planning process will be followed within a local planning framework that has a proven track record for success.
- D. Provide administration and technical assistance.

- D1. Narrative: The State of Minnesota has ongoing management and regulatory programs which provide river protection and management, i.e. shoreland and floodplain management, trails, canoe and boating routes, fish and wildlife management, etc.. Identification of programs, informing local planning committees of program purposes, and incorporation of programs into local management plans will be accomplished. Local river planning activities will be coordinated with ongoing state and local programs.

- D2. Procedures: An experienced DNR Hydrologist will be assigned as the Department contact individual for each local planning effort. This employee attends meetings for the governing board and advisory committee providing input on an ongoing basis to provide coordination, technical assistance, and assure consistency with other DNR management programs. Other Department personnel representing specific resource management expertise will be called upon as necessary.

The Department has employed replacement staff services in the Grand Rapids Regional Office to free the experienced hydrologist for local river planning support. Other expenditures under this activity, depending on the location of the additional rivers to be planned, could take place in any one of eleven areas within the three northern DNR regions. Payroll cost coding will document staff contribution to local river planning.

- D3. Amount Budgeted: \$100,000.00
Balance: \$ 5,231.41
- D4. Timeline: Ongoing as required by grant allocations.
- D5. Status: The staff assistant employed at the Grand Rapids Regional Office terminated his employment in October 1994. Since the program is now expanding to other areas of the state outside the Northeast Region, the Department will refill this position at its St. Paul Headquarters so that the program can be better served as it expands statewide.

This position will be filled after the current biennium.

At its June 7, 1995 meeting, the Commission approved the redirect of \$60,000 of the balance in Objective D into Objective C where it could be applied to additional river planning projects.

- D6. Benefits: Past local planning activities have demonstrated that DNR staff participation as a partner in the development of local management plans results in bridges between local and state goals and objectives and management strategies. Much of the rancor toward state management programs which exists at the local level has evaporated. DNR/local relationships on other resource management programs has improved as well. Also, conflicts with agency policies and regulations have been raised sooner than later because of the hands on involvement of the DNR contact person. Serious conflicts have been avoided at the plan adoption/implementation stage. Local officials value the support and encouragement of DNR staff provided throughout the planning effort.

V. Evaluation

Public participation is a necessary and significant component of the planning processes. Citizen advisory committees, public meetings and hearings, media relations, and newsletters will be utilized to ensure the developed plans have a broad base of public support while providing protection to river resources. Implementation of the developed plan is expected to be considerably enhanced as a result. The local river planning concept is predicated on the active grass roots involvement of ordinary citizens in actually writing the river plan. It is imperative that local officials and citizens lead the design of the specific planning process, and the development of each unique river plan.

Individual plans will be reviewed by DNR and other state and local agencies for consistency and compliance with established management programs. The various state and federal management

agencies will be invited to review and comment on draft plans. All plans will have to meet the minimum standards of the shoreland and floodplain management programs. The overall results of the project will be evaluated as to the degree to which the plans protect the rivers as well as meet local objectives regarding the appropriate development/protection mix. Through ongoing participation, this review by the Department (and necessarily by other state and federal agencies) will be provided throughout the planning process thereby avoiding disagreements upon project completion.

VI. Context

- A. After river planning activity in the 1970s during which six rivers were designated as state Wild and Scenic Rivers, there has been a low level of interest in designating additional rivers in the 1980s. However, more recently local resource conflicts or threats have stimulated renewed interest in planning. At the same time, the DNR has exhibited a renewed interest in providing additional protection for rivers. The Shoreland Rules which have recently been adopted provide enhanced opportunities for greatly improved river corridor management. The Department also realizes that some rivers merit comprehensive management and protection which go beyond the minimum standards of the Shoreland Program. This project will continue planning for rivers which local citizens and governments feel need special management and protection, and allow a local/state partnership in the implementation process as well. The state's role will be to oversee the process to ensure that it meets applicable state standards such as those of the Shoreland Program as well as commonly accepted planning standards.
- B. This project would supplement other available river planning efforts such as the Wild and Scenic River program by providing an opportunity for local communities to initiate the planning process on rivers where they feel it is needed, and to control the planning process as well as the implementation of the plan. Department participation

in the development of the plans will avoid inconsistencies with state management programs.

status report by June 30, 1995.

- C. This project would complement other similar efforts which have occurred, or are occurring, on the Big Fork River, the Upper Mississippi River, the North Shore of Lake Superior Management Plan, the Project Riverbend on the Minnesota River, the St. Louis, Cloquet & Whiteface River Management Plans, and the Rainy and Rapid River Management Plans. In addition, DNR has various internal river management activities including hydropower project review, local water planning input and review, a Rivers Task Force, the Canoe and Boating Route program, and others. The proposed project would be consistent with and would complement these other programs.

VII. Qualifications

1. Project manager

Daniel G. Retka
Regional Hydrologist, Region II
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
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DNR Regional Hydrologist for 20 years; total of 23 years with the Department. B.S. in Aeronautical Engineering, post-graduate work in Civil Engineering.

2. Cooperators

Plans will be developed through Joint Powers Boards or other existing planning authority by qualified planners or consultants with the assistance of technical and citizens advisory committees.

VIII. Reporting Requirements

Semi-annual status reports will be submitted not later than January 1, 1994, July 1, 1994, January 1, 1995, and a final