

FINAL REPORT

1999 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2002

401 - 8 2002

TITLE: Traverse des Sioux Site Development
PROJECT MANAGER: Thomas R. Ellig
ORGANIZATION: Minnesota Historical Society
ADDRESS: 32469 Cty. Hwy. 2
WEB SITE ADDRESS: www.mnhs.org
FUND: Trust Fund
LEGAL CITATION: ML 1999, Ch. 231, Sec. 16, Subd. 005(d)

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$250,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

Of the many results from this project, of most importance is the fact that the site has changed from an undeveloped to a developed site. Traverse des Sioux historic site is now more accessible to the entire public and interpretation of the site has been dramatically expanded and improved. The site now has approximately 1.25 miles of ADA compliant trails, 2 interpretive kiosks, 12 interpretive markers and 7 building identification markers. The trail also includes 5 benches for rest areas. Besides the trail and marker development, there is a new hard-surfaced parking lot that will accommodate more vehicles. Also, approximately 25 acres of the site have been restored to native prairie that when fully established, will include 7 grasses and 30 flower species. Prior to this development, site attendance was about 1,000 visitors per year. Annual attendance is now estimated to increase to 5,000 annually.

A major public benefit of ^{were} this project will be the expansion of the interpretive programming at the site. Of the ten major interpretive themes identified for Traverse des Sioux, only 3-4 of them ~~was~~ being interpreted prior to this project. Now, all 10 themes are part of the site's daily interpretive program. Besides daily interpretation, the site can now offer special programs. This will allow for increased use of the site by the public, and especially, school groups.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

The primary result of this project has been to improve public access to the site and to expand and improve site interpretation. This result is being disseminated in a variety of ways. The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) promotes the site through its web page at www.mnhs.org (Museums & Historic Places – Historic Sites). The site is also promoted through the MHS Special Events advertising and in the Society's quarterly news magazine *Minnesota History*. The site also has its own brochure as well as being promoted through the MHS's Sites Guide. The site's close proximity to the Nicollet County Historical Society museum means that the NCHS will be disseminating information about the site on a frequent basis.

Date of Report: July 1, 2002

Date of Next Status Report: NA

Date of Work Program Approval:

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2002

LCMR Final Work Program Report

I. PROJECT TITLE: Traverse des Sioux Site Development

Project Manager: Thomas R. Ellig
Affiliation: Minnesota Historical Society
Mailing Address: 32469 Cty. Hwy. 2, Morton, MN 56270
Telephone Number: (507) 697-6321
E-Mail: thomas.ellig@mnhs.org
Fax: (507) 697-6310
Web Page Address: www.mnhs.org

Total Biennial Project Budget:

\$ LCMR: \$250,000

- \$ LCMR

Amount Spent: \$249,873

= LCMR Balance: \$ 127

A. Legal Citation: ML 99, Chap. 231, Sec. 16, Subd. 005(d).

Appropriation Language: (d) Traverse des Sioux Site Development.

\$125,000 the first year and \$125,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the Minnesota Historical Society to improve public access to state historic site Traverse des Sioux including trails, interpretive markers, and basic visitor amenities.

Laws 2001, First Special Session, Chapter 2, Section 14, Subd. 18 (g)

The availability of the appropriations in Laws 1999, chapter 231, section 16, is extended to June 30, 2002, if an approved work program submitted before June 30, 2001, requires an extension of time for completion of the project due to the flooding of 2001.

B. Status of Match Requirement: NA

II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY:

Of the many results from this project, of most importance is the fact that the site has changed from an undeveloped to a developed one. Traverse des Sioux historic site is now more accessible to the entire public and interpretation of the site has been dramatically expanded and improved. The site now has approximately 1.25 miles of ADA compliant trails, 2 interpretive kiosks, 12 interpretive markers and 7 building identification markers. The trail also includes 5 benches to rest areas. Besides the trail and marker development, there is a new hard-surfaced parking lot that will accommodate more vehicles. Also, approximately 25 acres of the site have been restored to native prairie plantings that when fully established, will include 7 grasses and 30 flower species. Prior to this development, site attendance was about 1,000 visitors per year. Annual attendance is now estimated to increase to 5,000 annually.

A major public benefit of this project will be the expansion of the interpretive programming at the site. Of the ten major interpretive themes identified for Traverse des Sioux, only 3-4 of them was being interpreted prior to the project. Now, all 10 themes are part of the site's daily interpretive program. Besides daily interpretation, the site can now offer special programs. All of this development will result in more educational programming at the site, especially for school groups.

The project results, outcomes and benefits are being disseminated to the public in a variety of ways. The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) promotes this site through its web page at www.mnhs.org as well as through the Society's Special Events advertising and in their quarterly news magazine *Minnesota History*. Traverse des Sioux also has its own site brochure as well as being promoted through the MHS's Sites Guide. The site's close proximity to the Nicollet County Historical Society museum means that the NCHS will be disseminating information about the site on a frequent basis.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: Archaeological Monitoring
LCMR Budget: \$30,000
Balance: \$0
Completion Date: June 2001

Archaeological investigation is an essential part of the initial research for this project. Especially at a site of this nature, we must know what is now in the ground before we disturb it in other ways. The budget will be used to pay salary and expenses for project archaeologists to conduct this work. Their work will be overseen and augmented by the head of the MHS archaeology department (non-LCMR dollars). Archaeologists will monitor the project through its completion.

(July 1, 2002) All Work has been completed. The work completed in this section tested all areas that would be impacted by construction. Test results told us that no areas of substantial historical/cultural resources would be disturbed. This allowed the project to be implemented as planned. The results also gave us a better understanding of the site and they expanded documental resources of the site. At each step along the way, licensed archaeologists examined the work of construction workers to ensure compliance with preservation standards. In future projects, I would ensure that the archaeologists had more lead-time to prepare for their work to ensure even more thorough testing and results.

Result 2: Architectural/Engineering Fees
LCMR Budget: \$30,0000
Balance: \$0
Completion Date: March, 2000

A landscape architect will be hired to prepare construction documents for the access roads, knoll replacement, and trails. This budget figure is a rough estimate of the cost for these services.

(July 1, 2002) All work has been completed. Hiring a qualified landscape architect was very helpful in planning the actual site work, in providing high quality construction drawings, and in monitoring and overseeing the work of the contractor. The architect brought a "fresh pair of eyes" to the project. This resulted in looking at the site and what we were trying to accomplish from different perspectives. The architect also helped us better understand the topography of the site and to a better job of laying out and designing the trails. Having certified construction drawings and written specifications helped the prospective bidders understand the project and this lead to better and less expensive bids. These clear and concise documents also helped whenever questions arose during the construction phase.

Result 3: Site Preparation
LCMR Budget: \$67,000
Balance: \$0
Completion Date: September, 2000

This result involves removal of grass, brush, trees, etc. to prepare for building the trails. It will also include removing unnecessary roads and improving those that will remain. Contractors will be hired to do the work according to the specifications created in Result #2.

(July 1, 2002) All work has been completed. One unofficial ATV trail that transected the north end of the site was removed so it no longer has a negative impact on the site. Unnecessary trees were removed from the Treaty Monument area of the site, which will allow for the area to be reclaimed as a prairie savanna. Also, debris from two old buildings was removed and two abandoned

wells were filled and capped according to MN Department of Health Standards. This work allowed the site to become more aesthetically pleasing and also will allow for it to appear more as it did in the mid-19th century.

Result 4: Trail Construction
LCMR Budget: \$33,000
Balance: \$0
Completion Date: October, 2000

The trail will begin near the Nicollet County Historical Society's museum building and take people through the old Traverse des Sioux townsite, to the river crossing and the location of the 1851 Treaty signing. This ADA compliant trail will be approximately 1.25 miles long. It will be eight feet wide with a crushed limestone aggregate surface. The trail will provide access to the entire site and will be both recreational and interpretive in nature.

(July 1, 2002) All work has been completed. A new 1.25 mile long trail was designed and implemented. The trail is 8' wide with a gravel base and an aglime surface. The old trail that this one replaces was a mowed grass one that was not handicapped accessible. The trail grades and surfaces of this new trail are all within handicapped accessible standards and makes the trail ADA compliant. The trail is longer than the old trail and allows access to more areas of the site. The trail is a walking trail in the summer and can be used by cross-country skiers in the winter. No motorized travel is allowed on the trails.

Result 5: Prairie Restoration
LCMR Budget: \$35,000
Balance: \$0
Completion Date: June 30, 2002

The site now contains intrusive plants that will be replaced with prairie grasses and flowers that were once found in the area. Over an area of about thirty acres, native grass and flower seeds will be planted into the existing plants.

(July 1, 2002) All work has been completed. Approximately 25 acres of the site has been reseeded to native prairie plants. This includes both grasses and flowers. The site was sprayed to kill non-native plant species and undesirable woody plants. It will take 3-5 years before the prairie is fully established but when it is, the site will have 7 native grasses and 30 native flowers growing on it.

Result 6: Visitor Amenities
LCMR Budget: \$10,000
Balance: \$127
Completion Date: June 30, 2002

Visitor amenities at the site need to be improved. Amenities exist in the Nicollet County Historical Society building, which will serve visitors as they begin their site experience, but there is nothing at the extreme ends of the site or during hours when the Nicollet County Historical Society is closed. A small shelter will be built at the north end of the site to provide protection for visitors and an interpretive kiosk. A well will be upgraded to provide drinking water.

(July 1, 2002) Two components of this result were not completed. First, neither of the wells had a suitable water supply. So rather than using one of them, both were abandoned. The site will use the public drinking water provided by the Nicollet County Historical Society (NCHS) in their nearby museum. Second, the shelter on the north end of the site was not constructed. Funds were insufficient to build this shelter. Also, it was discovered that there was sufficient tree cover to provide adequate shade for visitors to rest in. A total of 5 benches were installed at strategic locations to supply ample opportunities for site visitors to rest. Also, parking facilities were improved by abandoning the small dirt parking area. Visitors will now use the hard-surfaced parking lot by the NCHS museum.

Result 7: Interpretive Research and Design
LCMR Budget: \$20,000
Balance: \$0
Completion Date: August, 2000

This part of the project will begin immediately, but will continue through most of the project's development and inform decisions along the way. The budget for this result will primarily be spent on project-based staff, but actually two kinds of Minnesota Historical Society staff will work on this project. Society staff are not "classified" in the same way as state employees, but some staff are paid with ongoing operating dollars while others are hired with project dollars from a variety of sources and do not have ongoing appointments. The work for the above result will be led by staff whose salaries will not be charged to LCMR for this project, but much work will also be done by staff who are paid exclusively with these project funds for their work on Traverse des Sioux.

(July 1, 2002) All work has been completed. A variety of resources were used to complete the research. Most important of these was the first person accounts from the Dakota community. Research was done at the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux and the Upper Sioux Community's in Minnesota and the Flandreau and Sisseton Communities in South Dakota. This research not only strengthened and improved site interpretation, it also established a stronger relationship between the MHS and the Dakota communities. As a result of additional site research, a broader and more thorough understanding of the site is now available.

Result 8 Interpretive Markers and Kiosks
LCMR Budget: \$25,000
Balance: \$0
Completion Date: June, 2001

Large kiosks will be used to orient visitors and give them an introduction to the history of the site. Markers will be placed along the paths to tell the story of the site, river crossing, Traverse des Sioux townsite and the treaty signing. For many site visitors, their knowledge of the site pertains to the treaty signing. A primary objective of the additional site interpretation will be to expand visitors' awareness about the long and diverse history of the site.

(July 1, 2002) All work has been completed. As a result of this work, the site now has a much improved and expanded system of interpretive markers and kiosks to tell the site story. Prior to this project, there were no kiosks and 3-4 combination interpretive/identification signs. Now, there are two kiosks, 12 interpretive markers and 7 building identification markers. One kiosk is at the trailhead to orient visitors to the site, describe the overall site history and to inform visitors of other historical sites in the area. The second kiosk interprets one of the most noted historical events to take place at the site, the signing of the 1851 Treaty with the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of Dakota.

The interpretive markers are used to tell the overall history of the site together by weaving the stories of the ten site interpretive themes together. Finally, the building markers identify locations of some of the structures that were part of the town site of Traverse des Sioux. This helps visitors acquire a better spatial understanding of the old town site.

V. Dissemination:

In the initial research phase, we consulted extensively with interested groups. These included American Indian advisors from Minnesota and South Dakota, local constituents, a variety of government agencies, site scholars and historians and the Nicollet County Historical Society. This work was done to get a better understanding of the site, to determine how local constituents viewed the site and to be better prepared to provide a viable development. Now that the site is developed, it will be promoted with the rest of the historic sites across the state through the Society's overall marketing efforts.

The Society has and will continue to work closely with the Nicollet County Historical Society in the development and operations of the site. Both agencies will use their individual and collective resources to disseminate information about the site. The MHS and NCHS are now negotiating a management contract for the NCHS to assume responsibility for the daily management, programming and operations of the site. This will allow limited resources to be better used to ensure adequate site programming and maintenance.

The Society will also use its web page, www.mnhs.org, brochures and highway signs to promote the site.

VI. CONTEXT:

A. Significance:

The Traverse des Sioux site in Nicollet County has an important place in both pre- and post-contact history of this area. It served as a home, gathering place and travel route for Dakota long before European settlers entered the land. Euro-American used the site as a primary crossing for the Minnesota River and as well as for a Red River oxcart trail. In 1851, the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux between the Dakota and the U.S. government was signed here. This treaty reduced the size of lands that the Dakota had to live on and allowed white settlers to begin moving into the area.

After 1851, the site continued to be an important river crossing as well as a small town. Located on a historic Red River oxcart trail, the site can tell the long history of the site, the story of Indian-White interaction, the fur trade, the townsite, 19th century commerce and the treaty signing.

Development of the site has allowed it to become an important link in the "history corridor" along the Minnesota River Valley. Other state historic sites related to this one include the Lower Sioux Agency, Fort Ridgely, Birch Coulee and Lac qui Parle. This project has allowed the Traverse des Sioux story to be told as an individual site as well as part of a collective of sites.

B. Time:

All aspects of the project were completed by June 30, 2002.

C. Budget Context:

	July 1993- June 1995	July 1997- June 1999	July 1999- June 2001
	Prior expenditures on this project	Proposed expenditures on this project	Anticipated future expenditures on this project
1. LCMR	\$68,000	\$250,000	\$
2. Other State	\$	\$	\$3,500
3. Non-State Cash	\$	\$	\$
Total	\$68,000	\$250,000	\$3,500

BUDGET:	
Personnel	\$43,000
Equipment	\$
Acquisition	\$
Development	\$207,000
Other	\$
Total	\$250,000

VII. COOPERATION:

The project team included the following MHS staff members (non-LCMR funding): Thomas Ellig, Southern District Manager; Erik Holland, Interpretive Program Specialist; Tom Pfannenstiel, Preservation and Construction Manager; Kari Grabinski, Project Manager and several staff of the MHS Exhibits Dept. MHS will also cooperate with the Nicollet County Historical Society, area residents, and local units of government.

VIII. LOCATION:

The site is located one mile north of St. Peter, MN on U.S. Hwy. 169. It lies on the north side of the Traverse des History Center that is the Nicollet County Historical Society's headquarters.

IX. Reporting Requirements:

Besides this Final Work Program Report, periodic Work Program Progress Reports were submitted in May and November of 2000 and May and November of 2001.