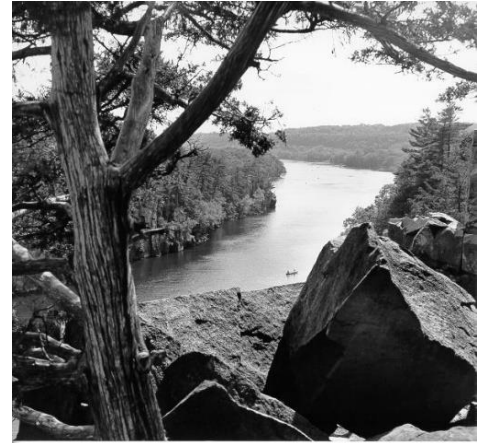


LOWER ST. CROIX MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE – Craig Hansen, NPS
MINNESOTA DNR – Grant Wilson, MN DNR
WISCONSIN DNR – Jill Schoen, WI DNR

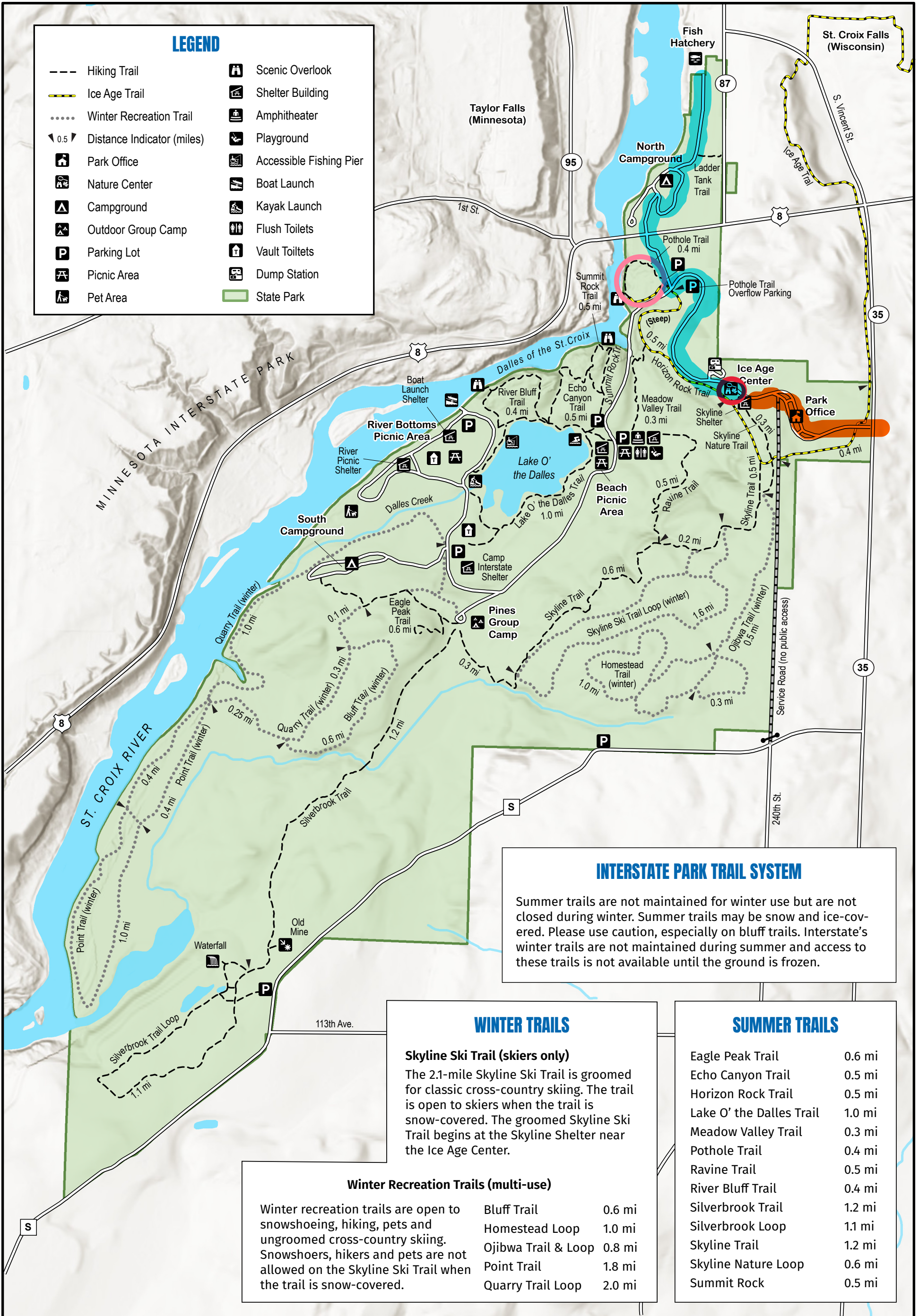
January 16, 2025, 5:00 PM
Interstate State Park Visitor Center
1275 State Hwy 35
St. Croix Falls, WI



AGENDA

- 5:00 Call to Order, Introduction, Approval of Agenda**
- 5:05 Approval of October 4, 2022 Minutes**
- 5:10 Agency/Staff Updates**
- Nick Shope – NPS Chief Ranger
Kay Lutze – WDNR Shoreland/Riverway Zoning Specialist
Matt Bauman – MNDNR LSCR Program Lead
Alissa Reynolds – NPS St. Croix Riverway Environmental Protection Specialist
- 5:50 Partnership Team Update** – Buck Malick, LSCR Partnership Team
- 6:05 Review and Endorsement of Lower St. Croix Riverway Boundary Sign Proposal** – Jan Cuccia, LSCR Partnership Team
- 6:30 Public Forum**
- 7:00 Adjourn**
-
-

INTERSTATE PARK - WISCONSIN



LEGEND

- Hiking Trail
- Ice Age Trail
- Winter Recreation Trail
- 0.5 Distance Indicator (miles)
- Park Office
- Nature Center
- Campground
- Outdoor Group Camp
- P Parking Lot
- Picnic Area
- Pet Area
- Scenic Overlook
- Shelter Building
- Amphitheater
- Playground
- Accessible Fishing Pier
- Boat Launch
- Kayak Launch
- Flush Toilets
- Vault Toilets
- Dump Station
- State Park

INTERSTATE PARK TRAIL SYSTEM

Summer trails are not maintained for winter use but are not closed during winter. Summer trails may be snow and ice-covered. Please use caution, especially on bluff trails. Interstate's winter trails are not maintained during summer and access to these trails is not available until the ground is frozen.

WINTER TRAILS

Skyline Ski Trail (skiers only)
The 2.1-mile Skyline Ski Trail is groomed for classic cross-country skiing. The trail is open to skiers when the trail is snow-covered. The groomed Skyline Ski Trail begins at the Skyline Shelter near the Ice Age Center.

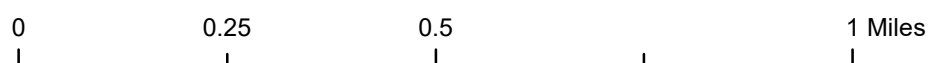
Winter Recreation Trails (multi-use)

Winter recreation trails are open to snowshoeing, hiking, pets and ungroomed cross-country skiing. Snowshoers, hikers and pets are not allowed on the Skyline Ski Trail when the trail is snow-covered.

Bluff Trail	0.6 mi
Homestead Loop	1.0 mi
Ojibwa Trail & Loop	0.8 mi
Point Trail	1.8 mi
Quarry Trail Loop	2.0 mi

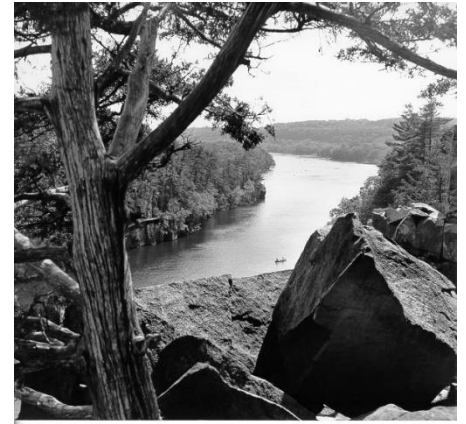
SUMMER TRAILS

Eagle Peak Trail	0.6 mi
Echo Canyon Trail	0.5 mi
Horizon Rock Trail	0.5 mi
Lake O' the Dalles Trail	1.0 mi
Meadow Valley Trail	0.3 mi
Pothole Trail	0.4 mi
Ravine Trail	0.5 mi
River Bluff Trail	0.4 mi
Silverbrook Trail	1.2 mi
Silverbrook Loop	1.1 mi
Skyline Trail	1.2 mi
Skyline Nature Loop	0.6 mi
Summit Rock	0.5 mi



LOWER ST. CROIX MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MINNESOTA DNR
WISCONSIN DNR



Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2022 – 4:00 PM
Afton City Hall
3033 Saint Croix Trail South
Afton, MN

Call to Order, Introduction, Approval of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Grant Wilson MNDNR. Commissioners Baumann, WDNR and Hansen, NPS welcomed attendees. Introductions were then made around the room.

Approval of August 30, 2018 Minutes

Commissioner Baumann moved to approve the minutes without changes. Seconded by Commissioner Hansen. Minutes approved unanimously.

Agency/Staff Updates

Isaac Kruse, WDNR Conservation Warden, reported that one of the biggest issues in law enforcement is the overall increase of use on the river in the past few years. Enforcement cases of slow no wake, boat registration, OUIs and noise are the biggest issues. On the WI side, in the Hudson area, there are complaints about houseboats remaining on the island for extended periods of time. There are also issues with garbage, septic waste, etc. Law enforcement is working with DNR and Hudson regarding their ordinances and any restrictions they may have as to how long a boat can remain on the island. The Hudson boat landing and boardwalk are being worked on, with work expected to be completed this next year.

Q: Commissioner Baumann asked if the increase in use was in all seasons or just summer.

A: All seasons, ATV, boat, hunting, etc. have been on an upswing in last two-year period. WI and MN DNR Wardens patrol the River, along with local law enforcement and NPS officials every day and night of the week and weekends.

Commissioner Baumann informed the group that the issue of wake boats, surf boats, etc. was brought up at the DNR Natural Resources Board meeting last week. He commented that WI was discussing putting together a stakeholder group to look into wake boat impacts and info from Univ of Minn as well as St. Croix River findings could assist that group.

Q: Buck Malick, St. Croix Riverway Partnership Representative, asked how often wardens on both sides, WI and MN meet.

A: Generally, they meet four times a year, but they met only three times this year due to COVID.

Mike Wenzholz, WDNR Shoreland/Riverway Zoning Specialist, reminded the group that the role he plays is shoreland zoning for the Lower St. Croix Riverway, as well as being the statewide coordinator. His role is statutorily and administrative rule directed in the establishment of creating and implementing ordinances as well as being on the LSC Partnership Team. Currently, on the WI side in Riverway Zoning, three large scale projects have been submitted. One, in St. Croix Falls, was withdrawn. Another, a proposed housing development on the site of the old hospital in Osceola is still being discussed. And a third, the building of homes along the River in the City of Hudson is also in planning stages. Several projects are asking for variances, which will make it to the LSC Partnership Team, should they be granted. The City of Hudson doesn't currently have an ordinance. They are working with a consultant on developing and adopting one.

Q: Commissioner Baumann asked if the City of Hudson references NR118 in their current ordinance.

A: Yes, they thought it was in their ordinance, but is not, and so they need to create one.

Q: Buck Malick said that notice of new files haven't been sent to the Partnership Team, and asked if Mike could send them as they are received.

A: Mike Wenzholz will send the notices to Dave Beaudet for distribution to the Partnership Team members.

Matt Bauman, MNDNR LSCR Program Lead, said that they are fully staffed, however many of them are new. A couple of years ago there was a boundary issue with a solar farm in the Taylors Falls area. They were right on the edge of the boundary. DNR's data set was different from other data sets, so he pulled historic minutes from Commission meetings to find all of the different boundary changes since 1972 to verify the true boundary. There was a boundary amendment in 2004, but it was never formally published in the federal register. Erosion has been a hot topic, with a heavy event in 2019. Statewide, they are working with local governments and property owners on best practices. There have been variances with St. Croix Beach regarding accessory dwelling units. There continues to be challenges with rules that haven't been updated since 1976. Meetings are being scheduled to discuss issues and work with local governments along the River, on administrative best practices.

Q: Dave Beaudet said that since the beginning of COVID they haven't received the variances, and asked Matt if they could be forwarded to him over the next 6 months.

A: Matt will send those and establish a protocol for sending them for the Partnership Team to review, when they are received.

Q: Commissioner Baumann asked how to best get municipalities to join the Workshop on the Water training opportunity.

A: Matt, Dan Scollan and Jenny Shillcox continue to work on a workshop targeted to communities.

Lisa Yager, NPS Resource Stewardship and Education Chief informed the Commission that the office has many new hires over the last four years. NPS does extensive work with the Wild River Conservancy. There is a major rehab project of the Osceola Landing on the MN side, the goal is to separate motorized and non-motorized boats. The first phase of the project is expected to be completed in January 2023. NPS will bring a comprehensive river management plan in 2023. This will include visitor caused resource impacts, outdated signage/facilities, NPS-owned historic cabins, quality of visitor experiences, commercial service guidance, etc. Another project is the Fairy Falls day use area north of Stillwater MN, which is owned by NPS. It was open to the public with limited/no facilities. This day use area was closed to public in 2020. They are developing short and long-term options for the property. NPS works with over 800 scenic easements. Wild and Scenic Rivers Journey Program worked with local 4th graders to give them rides on paddleboats between Taylors Falls and Stillwater. So far over 700 4th graders have taken part in the program. NPS has been working on an AIS program collaboratively with partners, including zebra mussels.

They do a dry dock count in winter, block counts, adult and veliger sampling as well. NPS is also working with invasive carp, aiming to stop them before they get to the St. Croix. A project was conducted during low water levels to document the St. Croix's historic water control features. NPS is a cooperating agency on the highway 243 bridge project starting around 2026.

Q: Commissioner Baumann asked if there was a point of contact with the comprehensive River Management plan so that we can partner efficiently.

A: Having someone identified in the January timeline would be ideal. Craig said that early agency partner meetings will be scheduled in the scoping process.

LSCR 50th Anniversary Recognition - Matt Bauman, MNDNR LSCR Program Lead notified the group that a 50th anniversary celebration of the Lower St. Croix designation will be held by the Wild River Conservancy at Marine on St. Croix Village Hall on October 12, 2022.

Review and Endorsement of Wild Rivers Conservancy LSCR Landowner Guide and Earth Tone Color Swatches – Buck Malick, LSCR Partnership Team

Buck Malick asked the Commission to endorse the Landowners Guide and Earth Tone Color Swatches, maintained by the Wild Rivers Conservancy. The colors meet the definition of “safe harbor”. This is a guide, not a requirement and is a tool for communities and residents to use as recommendations.

Q: Commissioner Baumann asked if there is an expectation of regulatory agencies to have contact with zoning Administrators about this.

A: Local units of governments had input during development on the Guide and Color safe harbor materials. Agencies can share it, but it doesn't take place of a process. It can be used as a guide when working with local government.

Commissioner Hansen stated that he appreciates the process, and those involved. This provides clarity and direction.

Motion by Commissioner Baumann to endorse, seconded by Commissioner Hansen. Unanimously passed.

Partnership Team Update & Review Partnership Team 2018 Report of Local Land Use Decisions in the Riverway – Dave Beaudet, LSCR Partnership Team Chairperson

Dave said that there was a review of the 90 variance decisions made between 2008 and 2016. Of the 90 decisions, 49 were in WI and 41 were in MN. In general, most construction permitted generally complied with riverway rules, and most applicants did mitigation. The review identified that variance logic varies by jurisdiction. In general, professional staff are making it easier to get things done. For example, the Town of Troy fined a homeowner \$50K for negative impact on the Riverway, while Davies in Denmark Township permitted a house to be built within the setback zone. The Hubbard decision allowed for the 11-foot variance. The City of Stillwater expanded the Riverfront Park, making the walkway 25-30 feet longer and adding bathrooms. This addition should have been set back 50 feet.

Q: Commissioner Baumann asked if feedback from riverway support groups, like at St. Croix Falls, are causing some developers to withdraw proposals.

A: Dave said that land use decisions are typically local decisions. Both local and state agencies on both sides of the river should be involved. That is something that was found when going through these projects, such as at

Lakeland Shores. Buck Malick agreed and said that Workshops on the River have influence and impact. They provide education for local governments and citizens.

Discussion and Next Steps for Signage related to Boat Speeds/Wakes – Nick Shope, NPS Chief Ranger

Nick informed the Commission that his division is fully staffed until the end of year, they will be losing 3 staff members then. All counties up and down the river have water patrols that help. One of the issues they have is the current signage, which was created through the commission a long time ago. Deficiencies on the sign information, signs not being posted, and the locations of signs, some underwater, are issues. Nick informed the commission that internally MN and WI DNR have been meeting quarterly and have discussed that there are three zones to the Lower St. Croix. From the dam at Taylors Falls to the Arcola sandbars (federally managed zone, NPS) is considered a slow speed zone. From The Arcola Sandbars to the Boom Site Landing (federally managed zone, NPS), and from the Boom Site Landing to the confluence with the Mississippi (state managed zone). Jointly, they are proposing separate signage for each section. Signage would include maps and QR codes to direct to a website with additional information. Additionally, airboat law language may be added to federal zone signage as they are illegal there. Brochures would also need to be updated, since the information can be interpreted differently depending on the user. They are hoping that the changes can be made in the spring.

Q: Commissioner Hansen asked how signage would be distributed.

A: Nick volunteered to be a POC for the communities in the federally managed area (upstream of Boom Site), and to work with the DNRs regarding the state managed zone (downstream of Boom Site).

Q: Representative Malick asked about mud boats, since there is an issue with noise and waves with them.

A: Most mud boats are being used by hunters, and there is a purpose for LE for mud boats. There are no specific laws currently preventing the use of mud boats on the river, if something were created an exemption for LE and emergency services would be needed as they have a specific use and are needed for low water operations.

New jet ski brand pontoons are passing as a boat per current laws. LE face challenges with new technology and old laws when it comes to what qualifies as a boat or personal watercraft (PWC).

National Park Service code of federal regulations (CFRs) were created many years ago and were created at the time for large traditional parks like Yosemite and Yellowstone and not for parks like St Croix. Parks like St Croix allow many activities within the park that aren't typically permitted in larger traditional parks such as hunting, motorized boating and many others. This creates some challenges for us at St Croix when enforcing the laws/CFRs that are on the books.

On April 1, 2022, the Lower St. Croix River Partnership Team requested the LSCMC appoint a committee to recommend clear and consistent "slow-no-wake" signage in the federal zone. MNDNR, WDNR, and NPS have met a few times over the last year or so to update current signage as well as the 2007 pamphlet related to boat speeds. Although this work hasn't been carried out under the umbrella of a committee, there appears to be momentum to work on this over the winter. A project team meeting with MNDNR, WDNR, and NPS is scheduled for November 30, 2022.

Public Forum

John Goodfellow, Citizen of Marine on St. Croix, discussed wake/speed signage and what is on it. He stated that given good information people will make good decisions. He conducted a survey in 2016 and then again this past week. There are no signs at some of the places, and others are damaged or covered up. He believes that we should target the resource and not enforcement. John presented a copy of the study that was completed by the MNDNR, WDNR and NPS, which shows a critical wave height of 5 inches for sediment relocation. Wind caused waves are not high enough to result in sediment suspension and relocation. Wake generated waves are significantly impacting shoreland zones and the wakes are causing a significant amount of erosion. There is an inherent impact on the River by users of wake/surf boats, and these boats are impactful on other users. He believes getting a diverse group of stakeholders involved is vital. Safe Harbor statements need to include users such as kayakers, paddleboarders, Hmong, fishermen, etc. in the discussion. John has submitted a white paper asking to bring together stake holders.

Pam Smith, Scandia Citizen stated that she put up a very large sign in Scandia with simple and clear message so that speeds can be enforced on the River. She believes that the issue is messaging and that a clear message will make users more knowledgeable and that most issues will be resolved. She has also called the NPS Parks tip line and wanted to state that the response has been fabulous. They respond within a few hours, and have provided enforcement at 2:00 a.m.

Doug Rowan, Resident of Troy WI and current Town Board Chairman wanted to share that he appreciates how this group is working to help maintain this natural treasure. It is critical to help the local entities enforce riverway rules and regulations.

Wendy Ward, City of Marina on St. Croix wanted to know if the MN and WI DNRs work together and have discussed the Osceola Bridge coordination. Answer is that the DNRs work together on all transportation projects on the St. Croix, with a listing of what the rules and regulations are.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting by Commissioner Hansen, seconded by Commissioner Baumann. Meeting adjourned by Chair Wilson at 6:05 p.m.

Attendance:

Grant Wilson, MNDNR, Commission Chair
Craig Hansen, NPS, Commissioner
Dan Baumann, WDNR, Commissioner
Buck Malick, Partnership Representative
David Beaudet, Partnership Representative
Matt Bauman, MNDNR
Nick Shope, NPS
Isaac Kruse, WDNR
Mike Wenholz, WDNR
Lisa Yager, NPS
Jenny Shillcox, MNDNR
Dan Scollan, MNDNR
Doug Rowan, Town of Troy

Wendy Ward, Council Member, City of Marine on St. Croix
Carter Hayes, City of Prescott
Jean Hoffman, Citizen
Mark Hoffman, Citizen
Pam Smith, Citizen
Bill Lundquist Mayor of Afton
Susan Snyder, WI DNR