



RIVERTALK

CITIZEN OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1998

ISSUE AND CONCERN STATEMENTS

MISSISSIPPI RIVER WILD AND SCENIC RIVER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

**ELK RIVER, MINNESOTA
MONTICELLO, MINNESOTA
CLEARWATER, MINNESOTA
ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA**



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“WHAT ISSUES OR CONCERNS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THE RIVER? PUT ANOTHER WAY, WHAT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ADDRESSED DURING THE PROCESS TO REWRITE THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN?”

VERBATIM PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

The following statements were taken verbatim from written input provided by citizens who attended four RiverTalk open houses in:

Elk River on Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Monticello on Wednesday, January 28, 1998

Clearwater on Tuesday, February 3, 1998 and

St. Cloud on Wednesday February 4, 1998.

These RiverTalk open houses were designed to informally gauge public sentiment towards the current Mississippi Wild and Scenic River management plan and river use. This management plan covers the Mississippi River from the 10th Street dam in St. Cloud to the Anoka and Champlin city limits. *(Note: Comments at the St. Cloud meeting were also taken from citizens who expressed their feelings about river use and management for the Mississippi River from the Morrison/Benton county line to the 10th Street Dam in St. Cloud. These comments are **not** contained in this report, but are available by request in another report.)*

The citizen statements have been categorized for clarity and understanding. With the exception of punctuation, each statement appears exactly as written by the author. Statements were categorized on the basis of what was perceived to be the primary intent or point that the writer was making. Statements in which there were a number of different points being made that were not necessarily related were assigned to the category ‘Multiple Topics of Concern’.

The notation in ***boldface italic*** after each statement reflects the meeting at which the statement was recorded. Statements have been grouped within **4 categories and 20 themes** to aid readability and understanding.

Report Coding of Categories and Themes

Land Use and Development

1. *Development in General*
2. *Residential Land Use*
3. *Commercial Land Use*
4. *Private Property Rights*
5. *Bridges/River Crossings*

Wild and Scenic Rules and Regulations

6. *Existing Rules*
7. *Existing Riverway Boundary*
8. *Vegetation Cutting*

Environmental Resources

9. *Sensitive/Critical Resources*
10. *Water Quality*
11. *River Flows*
12. *Erosion*
13. *Fisheries*
14. *Wildlife*

Recreation

15. *Personal Watercraft*
16. *Boating/Canoeing*
17. *Access*
18. *Litter*
19. *Open Space/Parks*
20. *Trails*

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Development in General

1. The river corridor needs to be protected from development that would ruin the "feel" of the area. **(St. Cloud)**
2. Let's continue to restrict development along the river banks. The Scenic designation from St. Cloud to Clearwater seems appropriate. **(Clearwater)**
3. Wise development. Development if and when appropriate should be as unobtrusive as possible. **(Clearwater)**
4. In the city of Clearwater, 5 city lots by the river are slated for development /housing. Some citizens would prefer to see land kept as open space or park. Does the city have enough parks already? Are they able to maintain additional park area? **(Clearwater)**
5. In May of 1997, the city council of Elk River voted "approval" of a strategic plan, that placed our farm as one of eight potential, future, industrial property/business park sites. To accommodate their "Industrial Property Strategic Plan" they intend to do another city initiated rezoning of our farm, putting more of our land into LI (light industrial)-moving the current LI zoned area line, closer to the Mississippi. I don't want them to increase the LI zoning on our farm. In December of 1995 they put us in the Urban Service Area. I want the mayor, and the city staff of Elk River to leave us alone! **(Monticello)**
6. I enjoy floating the river and I am concerned about development ruining the beauty of this wonderful area. **(Elk River)**
7. ...Noxious smells from Cargill's operation carries long distances from their plant contaminating a wide area. **(MT...Monticello)**
8. There should be a buffer strip of perhaps 100-125' that would be preserved and not developed. Private ownership would not be permitted. No docks, boathouses, etc. Except maybe at designated public accesses... **(St. Cloud)**
9. I would like to see housing and development on the river south of the 10th street dam restricted as much as possible. I canoe on this part of the river often and I think it deserves its Wild and Scenic River status and we should do all we can to preserve it. **(St. Cloud)**
10.Consider a buffer zone of ---- feet which remains with the river (no private ownership or private use). **(St. Cloud)**
11. As development and access increases soon what we enjoy will be gone!!... **(St. Cloud)**
12. Limit development from St. Cloud to Clearwater... **(MT...Clearwater)**

13. ...When is it (*development*) too much?! (**St. Cloud**)
14. Use of docks and boat lifts that protrude into the river should be restricted. These items detract from the natural beauty of the river. There should be restrictions on these for the scenic portions of the river. (**Monticello**)
15. Concerned about development ruining good smallmouth bass fishing. (**Elk River**)

2. Residential Land Use

16. Too many houses and other structures and lawns along shore of river. (**St. Cloud**)
17. Need tighter control over residential building on river. (**Clearwater**)
18. Have enjoyed the river for 58 years. Would like DNR to be flexible in working with developers in designing clusters or whatever is most suitable for that terrain. Lifetime land owners care for their investments, but deserve the monetary reward of their investment.
19. Please address and restrict residential development and land use along this beautiful river... (**MT...Clearwater**)
20. Please, please do not let housing encroach on the River Corridor. Wild and Scenic should stay. There's 10 miles of great scenic and pristine acreage between Clearwater and St. Cloud. We don't need to inhabit every acre up to the river's edge. Let's keep the river in a state somewhat

similar to the way it was when the white man first arrived! Let's leave something for future generations!
(**St. Cloud**) ☐

3. Commercial Land Use

21. Concerned about commercial development between 101 and the river in Otsego. I think that strip of land should be kept free of development. (**Monticello**)
22. Concern about commercial development of area: south of 101 Bridge & County Rd 39 Riverside. (**Elk River**)
23. A.) Impacts of regulations upon commercial/industrial land uses along Hwy 101 in Otsego; B.) Restriction/prohibition of commercial/industrial uses east of Hwy 101 in Otsego; (**Elk River**)
24. I'm concerned about all the development in the "McStop" area. How will this impact the river? Already large washouts have formed behind the May printing building. (**Clearwater**)

4. Private Property Rights

25. I think the DNR should buy property like anyone else that wants the pleasure of it. Take donations, sell deer picture license plates, more park permits, do-good tax checkoffs. More restrictions and any loss of value should not fall on the owner without compensation for his investment. (**Clearwater**)

26. Property owners have sacrificed payments and taxes sometimes a lifetime for what they have and enjoy. Others have invested in recreational pleasure and toys. Now it is viewed that the majority have the toys and the conservative have the playground, isn't it time we share? If you have a lifetime savings account, isn't it time we share? Property is an investment like a savings, or stock, not to be discussed as something to compromise or share. **(Monticello)**
27. Effects and measures taken here will directly affect people on the river. Not organizations who do not live on the river or people from other areas; taxpayer's property values etc; recreational use of the river. **(St. Cloud)**
28. ...No one sees or enjoys the river more than a homeowner with silence, sunrise coffee on a deck, looking at the river under a rising fog. They pay for it this way:
 - 6 to 10 dollars per day property tax
 - 50 to 100 dollars per day home property purchase with money they already paid about 38% income taxes **(Monticello)**
29. I own four canoes and enjoy the river from that point of view, but a two dollar a year license should not give me preference over a home owner paying thousands a year in taxes. **(Monticello)**
30. After paying taxes for 40 years I don't appreciate recreation buffs telling me I should furnish them with a playground. If they must find a wild and scenic playground go to the boundary waters. **(Elk River) ☐**

5. Bridges and River Crossings

31. Corridors crossing the river should focus on being multiple use- transportation, utilities, energy, etc. need to be combined to minimize impact on river. **(Clearwater)**
32. I don't want to see any more bridges across the river! **(Elk River)**
33. ...Proposed new bridge site should be at Enfield location. **(MT...St. Cloud)**
34. ...Keep new bridge out of Clearwater area... **(MT...Clearwater)**
35. Put the new highway bridge over Clearwater, not down by Snuffy's Landing or over the Beaver islands. Put it near existing bridges. **(Clearwater)**
36. ...Keep new bridge out of Clearwater area... **(Clearwater) ☐**

WILD AND SCENIC RULES AND REGULATIONS

6. Existing Rules

37. All residential landowners on the river need to know what they can or cannot do to or with their property on the river banks, especially the scenic river section of the river. *(Clearwater)*
38. What are the restrictions going to be in the future, especially for landowners? *(Clearwater)*
39. Consistency of regulations with the ability to deal with unusual situation. *(Clearwater)*
40. City of Clearwater. Development along the Mississippi within the city's boundaries. Old plats vs. new regulations. *(Clearwater)*
41. ...D.) Administration of regulations? user understanding difficult (i.e. base zoning, floodplain, shoreland, and wild and scenic regulations all applying to a single parcel of land; *(Elk River)*
42. No question that we are at a critical juncture for the Mississippi River. I would advocate more stringent enforcement of existing regulations, and certainly be in favor of regulation changes that would err in favor of protecting and preserving this unique resource. *(MT...Clearwater)*
43. ...Also-there should be no variances given. There are rules and regulations for the wild and scenic-don't give variances. When real estate agents or developers sell, their comment is "Don't worry about it. You can get a variance." *(St. Cloud)*
44. I'd like to see the "scenic" portion of the Mississippi extended south to Monticello. That section is profiled by high banks and would be prone to erosion if developed. The scenic section, I assume, has more stringent rules regarding development. The "recreational" section ought to begin at the NSP plant in Monticello and continue south where it has already been developed. *(Clearwater)*
45. Lots of confusion about Wild & Scenic rules, shoreland rules, etc. Would like to see one set of cohesive rules. *(Clearwater)*
46. Lack of clarity in defining bluff line. Cold response from responsible DNR personnel. Their approach is first stake it out, then we will tell you if its OK-what about time and money invested in the property? If we had this property for 30 years, we care-why are we treated like the enemy? *(Monticello)*
47. My wife and I have been from St. Cloud to Minneapolis and St. Louis to Cairo, Illinois on the river. We also have 1800 feet of river frontage north of Monticello. It has been in the family since 1947. I feel that the river is

great just the way it is. Don't change anything now. You may just mess it up. *(Monticello)*

48. ...C) Monitor government action as closely as you monitor public use. *(MT...Monticello)*
49. The DNR is not a good manager. A.) They are not good communicators to the public. B.) They write rules that are self-serving. C.) Their appeal process does not have time lines, and they have the right to veto and pocket veto the decisions they don't like. *(Clearwater)* ☐

7. Existing Riverway Boundary

50. ...C.) Boundary designations which are not consistent with the preservation of the natural corridor (i.e. west of hwy 101 noise wall in Otsego); E.) Certain areas of the district do not have physical characteristics which warrant inclusion within wild and scenic boundaries (i.e. area west of Hwy101 noise wall in Otsego). *(Elk River)*
51. Do not change the boundary lines for the wild and scenic. Not necessary at this time. Boundary lines are well known and the only reason for changing it would be to allow for development. *(St. Cloud)*
52. Concern inequities of the wild and scenic river act boundaries-4 acre parcels with city services in St. Cloud would have to sell for 150.00 to 175.00 virtually unsaleable. *(St. Cloud)*

53. I am concerned the redoing the boundary of the Wild and Scenic river (which needs to be done) not be arbitrary... *(St. Cloud)* ☐

8. Vegetation Cutting

54. Many houses currently sit right on the river bluff and soon remove most of the trees from the view. Unfortunately this destroys the area for those using the river. Development should have strict setbacks and those who issue permits need to have some oversight from the state. Once the trees are removed stability can be a problem. *(St. Cloud)*
55. The upper Mississippi faces numerous threats, one ecologically destructive threat is from individual property owners who clear bank cover (trees, brush, tall grass) causing a loss of fish habitat and eroding banks. *(Clearwater)*
56. My interest is in cleaning up the islands on the east side of Hwy 25 in Monticello. There was a lot of storm damage-mostly huge trees which are unsightly. Some of the property owners along there would like to clean up their banks-but what to do and how to manage the damage on the banks? I am on the Park Commission in Monticello and on the MCP board which is interested in the visual entrance on HWY 25 bridge. *(Monticello)*
57. Clearing and development across from Boy Scout Point campground just north of Clearwater has greatly detracted from view and scenic experience. *(Monticello)*
58. There should be restrictions on landowners preventing

them from clearing and mowing right up to the edge of the river. This interferes with the natural beauty of the river. (*Monticello*)

59. Over last four years of canoeing this stretch of river, I am amazed to see the extent of clearing up to the river that has taken place-from Monticello to Elk River.

(*Elk River*)

60. Let's hope that new development (houses) will keep most of the trees and river frontage shrub and bushes intact.

(*Clearwater*) ☉

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

9. Sensitive/Critical Resources

61. ...Sensitive and critical areas which protect river from erosion and sedimentation should be preserved.... *(Clearwater)*
62. ...The boundary needs to include a natural vegetative edge that includes large upland tracts of woods which abut the floodplain and shoreland area... *(St. Cloud)*
63. Retaining the scenic value of the river area. *(Clearwater)*
64. Protect the scenic-natural undisturbed-along the river banks of the river. *(St. Cloud)*
65. There needs to be protection for the Putnam Woods-a fabulous high quality oak woodland. It should be preserved -acquired as a park if possible. *(St. Cloud)*
66. I would like to see the Beaver islands which are mostly in public ownership designated as a Scientific and Natural area like the Stickney area north of Clearwater, MN. SCSU studies show it unique wildlife habitat within the city. *(St. Cloud)*
67. Recreational efforts on the river should focus on maintaining its wild and scenic beauty... *(Clearwater)*. ☐

10. Water Quality

68. ... Fertilizer from lawns soil erosion from bare hills gas and water films on water in air... *(St. Cloud)*
69. See river cleaned up. *(St. Cloud)*
70. Water quality and ways\ideas to improve. *(St. Cloud)*
71. Would like to see the river cleaned up. It is so dirty that residents can't even swim on their own beaches. *(St. Cloud)*
72. Concerns with agricultural pollution from the major tributaries such as the Sauk River, Clearwater River, Elk River, Crow River. The Sauk River is a major cesspool with feedlot and ag runoff. *(St. Cloud)*
73. Keep pollution out of the river. *(St. Cloud)*
74. This river is so dirty only carp live in it. Its not ours to abuse. Clean it up. *(St. Cloud)*
75. Preservation of water clarity. *(Clearwater)*
76. Water quality is not less people or home density, but planned designs for waste and waste water disposal. I think as each developing situation has its own characteristics, regulation should be made more flexible to adapt, and allow owners to best profit and enjoy their

property, with good design. *(Clearwater)*

77. The siltation resulting from construction for Cty. Rd 39 east wiped out 1/2 mile of excellent fishing holes-its been 9 years for those holes to clean up. *(Monticello)*
78. Judging by the fresh water clam size water quality is good let's keep it that way. *(Monticello)*
79. Water runoff solutions for new developments need to be better thought out and monitored-for instance Craig's River Ridge south of Monticello had a drainage pipe which was not well protected; i.e. sodded & with last year's rain washed half a hill into the river making a huge sandbar! *(Monticello)*
80. Municipal sewage: proactive planning should be done so sewage treatment plants can be constructed large enough to handle future development before it occurs. *(Monticello)*
81. Pollution-we have human waste floating by our house. We are upriver from NSP on the Sherburne side about a mile! *(Monticello)*
82. Care should be taken in assuring no run-off or drainage from landfills along the river (e.g. NSP Sherco plant, VONCO landfill, etc.) actually reaches the river. These landfills should be situated such that they can not be seen from the river. Note: There are also private landowners dumps in ditches that drain to the river. These should be prohibited. *(Monticello)* ☐

11. River Flows

83. River flow during extended periods of drought have been artificially fluctuated by dams that are supposed to be run of river holding water for peak power production. This causes problems for downstream users. *(St. Cloud)*
84. Who monitors or determines water release from St. Cloud hydro plant? Timing may not be appropriate especially at spawning time for smallmouth. What has happened to crayfish population? *(Clearwater)*
85. River concerns – water level changes too much! What or who determines the level? *(Monticello)*
86. ...Also natural wetlands which can reduce potential flooding should be protected. *(Clearwater)* ☐

12. Erosion

87. Restrict cattle watering in the river. This creates a lot of bank erosion. There are watering systems that are available through the county soil and water district that keep the cattle off the river banks. *(Clearwater)*
88. RV park 2 miles south of Clearwater-lots of erosion needs attention. *(Clearwater)*
89. Improve bank erosion control in areas like the Clearwater Travelers RV parks on the Sherburne County side of the river. *(Clearwater)*
90. Riverbank erosion in Elk River. *(Elk River)*

- 91. Riverbank erosion upstream from Elk River Bridge on Otsego side. **(Elk River)**
- 92. Badly eroding bank near houses below Elk River Islands. Vandalism -Otsego County Park **(Elk River)**
- 93. ...Reasons: I live on the river, in this section and I am seeing increased streambank erosion with increasing power boat use. **(MT...Monticello) ☐**

13. Fisheries

- 94. The river is as clean as its been in many years. The fish population is great. I can see bottom while spearing at 7 feet no problem. **(St. Cloud)**
- 95. Fishery studies on the river in the Becker/Monticello area indicated a very healthy resident population. Since the smallmouth regulations were changed in the early 1990's the size of the smallmouth increased ? Our data. Some other changes have also become evident. The catfish population has increased dramatically since the late 1980's. **(St. Cloud)**
- 96. Fishing regulations should focus on creating a trophy fishery. This is especially true for the smallmouth bass-enforce catch and release regulations. **(Clearwater)**
- 97. Slot method is good for small mouth. Consistency and size of fish over 2 pounds is great-fishing is best its ever been! **(Monticello)**

- 98. Slot limit too excessive. **(Monticello)**
- 99. Like to see fishing laws enforced. Have never seen game warden on the river & everyone knows this. **(Monticello)**
- 100. I live on the river and have seen the game warden patrolling quite often. **(Monticello)**
- 101. The most important item in my opinion is to preserve and enhance the trophy smallmouth fishing. But the environment along the river, lack of visible development - adds greatly to the pleasure of being there. **(Elk River)**
- 102. Small mouth bass slot limit needs to be reviewed. Is unnecessary. **(Elk River)**
- 103. Enforce existing laws,... B) Fishing Regulation ... **(MT..Monticello) ☐**

14. Wildlife

- 104. ... They (*jetskis, airboats, etc.*) also affect the wildlife (especially eagles) along the river. **(Monticello)**
- 105. Preserving wildlife-attracting more waterfowl, bald eagles, etc. **(St. Cloud)**
- 106. Re-zone goose hunting on Lily Pond Island. **(Monticello)**
- 107. Hunting regulations need to be made more clear. Enforce current E.R. and Otsego boundaries or revise. **(Elk River)**

108. Waterfowl hunting too close to homes. (*Elk River*)
109. My concerns are regarding duck and game hunters shooting too close to the existing homes. (*Elk River*)
110. ...Noise disturbing wildlife... (*MT...Clearwater*)

RECREATION

15. Personal Watercraft

- 111. ...Outlaw jetskis on the river... *(Clearwater)*
- 112. Access to jet skis-would like to see some restrictions on use. *(St. Cloud)*
- 113. The nuisance of the jet skis are a concern. The noise and wakes are a problem. *(St. Cloud)*
- 114. Ban seasonal water craft on river. Noise and distracting disturb. *(St. Cloud)*
- 115. Eliminate DNR's use of jet skis as a vehicle for enforcement- it sets a bad example! And encourages public to do likewise. *(Clearwater)*
- 116. Jet skis scare geese. *(Clearwater)*
- 117. Ban jet skis. *(Clearwater)*
- 118. Limit jet skis. *(Clearwater)*
- 119. Personal water craft: Restrict or limit the use of this vehicle completely. *(Clearwater)*
- 120. Fisherman are great. Jet skis are the menace. These activities should and must be curtailed. *(Clearwater)*

- 121. Eliminate jet skis. Keep wild life refuges. *(Clearwater)*
- 122. Jet skis are a definite distraction on the river south of Elk River. *(Monticello)* Jet skis. *(Elk River)*
- 123. (Use of) personal water craft growing rapidly. *(Elk River)*
- 124. ...-also, ban jet skis! *(MT...Clearwater)*
- 125. Enforce existing laws, re: A) Jet ski use... *(MT...Monticello)*
- 126. ...2) Would like to see total elimination of "personal" power water craft "jet skis" also from this section of river. *(MT...Monticello)*
- 127. Jet ski nuisance!... *(MT...Monticello)*
- 128. Possible restrictions on use of disruptive watercraft (e.g. jetskis, air boats, etc.). Such use interferes with more leisurely use of the river such as tubing, canoeing, fishing... *(Monticello)* ☐

16. Boating/Canoeing

- 129. Canoeing and small boat use is most compatible with this river section... *(Clearwater)*
- 130. Patrol and check individuals using river. *(Clearwater)*
- 131. Air boat activity. *(Elk River)*

132. ...Limit on power of motors or boat. *(MT...Clearwater)*
133. Would like to see restricted “power” boat operation on this section of the “River.”ie, less than 20 hp....
(MT...Monticello)

17. Access

134. River flow during extended periods of drought have been artificially fluctuated by dams that are supposed to be run of river holding water for peak power production. This causes problems for downstream users. *(St. Cloud)*
135. Who monitors or determines water release from St. Cloud hydro plant? Timing may not be appropriate especially at spawning time for smallmouth. What has happened to crayfish population? *(Clearwater)*
136. River concerns – water level changes too much! What or who determines the level? *(Monticello)* ☐

18. Litter

137. Would like every effort made to keep it clean. The boat landing is like a dump to some people. Someone needs to police it. *(Monticello)*
138. If the river is used for recreation, please respect the owners land and clean up your mess! *(Elk River)*
139. Dumping limbs, trees, and pine needles into river.
(St. Cloud)

140. Need annual or semi annual river cleanups. Can be coordinated between sports and civic groups in the adjacent communities. *(St. Cloud)*
141. Any area open to the public use/access invariably has a serious litter problem. We do a river clean up and any place where fishermen have access are full of bait containers, and empty beverage containers. I do not understand why people can carry in a full 12 pack but are too weak after drinking it to carry out empty cans. *(St. Cloud)*
142. ...Trash in River.... *(MT...Monticello)* ☐

19. Open Space/Parks

143. Preservation of green space... *(Clearwater)*
144. More fee title ownership originally proposed under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. Especially Grand Island, 1.5 miles south of the St. Cloud Dam and the upper Terrace Woods on the Sherburne County side, Sec 24, NE1/4.
(St. Cloud) ☐

20. Trails

145. ...Have a people friendly “green” trail from St. Cloud as far south as possible or at least have some walking area...
(Clearwater)
146. The Beaver Islands trail project has been very successful. I’ve talked to various people who utilize the trail all the

time and they love it. Those people and myself have been wondering if there are future plans to expand this trail.
(St. Cloud)

- 147. I would like to see more trails like Beaver Island trail. It's a great place to roller blade and bike-if we had more of these around town it would give kids a place to go. **(St. Cloud)**
- 148. Would like to see hiking path developed from Clearwater bridge to St. Cloud. **(Clearwater)**
- 149. Planned comprehensive recreational trails between communities (used too little today). **(Elk River)**
- 150. ...Have a people friendly "green" trail from St. Cloud as far south as possible or at least have some walking area... **(MT...Clearwater) ☐**