

## Letter to the 2011 Legislature

In fulfillment of the requirements of Minnesota Statutes 103F.361-378 the Mississippi Headwaters Board makes the following report to the Minnesota Legislature.

That statute charges the MHB with the biennial assessment of the effectiveness of its plan in protecting the natural, cultural, scenic, scientific and recreational values of the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River.

In the 2009-11 biennium, the MHB reviewed regulatory zoning actions w/in the corridor of the eight member counties, held two 'Strategic Planning Sessions' (Oct '09/April '10), underwent re-branding activities and started development of a "Project Review Committee" (PRC), all in the effort to re-vitalize our mission and relevancy.

Spring 2011 marked the re-publishing of the 'Mississippi Headwaters Guide Book' which was funded in part by the Central Minnesota Imitative Foundation. This book contains valuable details of the history and culture of the headwaters region while outlining the economic and recreational values associated with MHB's continued protection of the resource. We are excited to have this quality coffee-table resource available at [www.mississippiheadwaters.org](http://www.mississippiheadwaters.org).

Minnesota statutes provide the standards for protection of the Mississippi River. The efforts of the MHB and the eight member counties within the corridor in the '09-'11 biennium, helped to make river protection comprehensive, by improving knowledge of the river and the communication amongst stakeholders and citizens.

The MHB looks forward to many more years of providing local regulatory oversight of this portion of the river for the benefit of the communities that live here and future generations.

Together in Public Service,

Paul M. Thiede, '11 Chairman

## HISTORY AND AUTHORITY

The Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) was organized in 1980 as an alternative to federal control of the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River. The counties of Clearwater, Hubbard, Beltrami, Cass, Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing and Morrison entered into a joint powers agreement under Minnesota Statutes 103F.361-378 to preserve and protect the shorelands of the Mississippi River and seven Headwater lakes. The counties adopted a shoreland zoning ordinance for land and recreation use within the corridor as a means to carry out its mandate of protection.

The Mississippi River is North America's largest River and also 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 recreational seeker. It is an important water source for northern Minnesota industry and communities and those far beyond the first 400 miles of the river.

This is a report on the MHB's progress toward meeting its goal to protect this great river.

[www.mississippiheadwaters.org](http://www.mississippiheadwaters.org)

218.824.1307



PROTECTING THE FIRST 400 MILES

2009  
to  
2011

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**Celebrating 30 years**

...to identify and protect the natural, cultural, scenic, scientific and recreational values of the Mississippi River's 400 miles

• CLEARWATER

• HUBBARD

• BELTRAMI

• CASS



• ITASCA

• AITKIN

• CROW WING

• MORRISON



**'10 & '11  
NORTHERN MN  
REGIONAL  
SCIENCE FAIR  
MHB AWARD  
RECIPIENTS:**

**.... 2010 ....**

**1<sup>st</sup> Place -**  
Kylie Stinar and  
Janelle Dunn

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place -**  
Tiffany Tischer

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place -**  
Andrew Larson

**.... 2011 ....**

**1<sup>st</sup> Place -**  
Andrew Larson

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place -**  
Walker Cage

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place -**  
Kylie Stinar  
and  
Janelle Dunn



**2010 Mississippi Headwaters Board (left to right):** Dean Newland (Clearwater), Sec/Treas. Dick Downham (Cass), Brian Napstad (Aitkin), Tom Wenzel (Morrison), Chair Jack Frost (Beltrami), Vice Chair Lori Dowling (Itasca), Lyle Robinson (Hubbard), Paul Thiede (Crow Wing) and Office Asst. Pam Kichler



**2011 Mississippi Headwaters Board (left to right):** Davin Tinquist (Itasca), Neal Gaalswyk (Cass), Chair Paul Thiede (Crow Wing), Jack Frost (Beltrami), Brian Napstad (Aitkin), Sec/Treas. Tom Wenzel (Morrison), Vice Chair Lyle Robinson (Hubbard), Dean Newland (Crow Wing) and Office Asst. Pam Kichler

**Assessment of 2009-'11 Biennium**

**Activities**

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

Simply stated, our mandate is: regulate land use and building activities in a defined corridor along the Mississippi River. These regulations limit density of development, protect water quality and favor natural aesthetics in the river corridor.

As in the previous 7 years, the MHB suffered another cut to their state funding through this biennium. In the 2009 - '11 biennium, the MHB continued to engage in researching BMP to sustain their existence and held two Strategic Planning Sessions (10/09 & 4/10) to better understand how to further achieve its mission of protecting water and shoreland within the Headwaters region.

Through those meetings several items were identified as key to the board's viability and continued protection of the great river. It outlined key elements demanding attention to sustain board activity as well as relevancy throughout the corridor stakeholders. Some of the following were a direct result of those preemptive meetings:

- ◊ Review of the Management Plan as required by Statute
- ◊ Letter of Support offered to the Headwaters Science Center for a River Watch (RW) grant
- ◊ Met with MPCA to discuss collaboration on River Watch activities w/in and through the corridor / watershed
- ◊ Toured Itasca Community College water testing labs to discuss rejuvenation of the MHB RW program
- ◊ Met with Itasca Water Legacy Partnership to learn of river protection programs for potential collaboration
- ◊ Established an ID-redevelopment plan for the MHB
- ◊ Preliminary development of a 'Project Review Committee' involving area stakeholders (i.e. SWCD, ESD and The Nature Conservancy etc.)
- ◊ Continued award support of the annual Northern MN Regional Science Fair
- ◊ Roll-out of new board logo and publication of the new 'Mississippi Headwaters Guide Book'

**STATEMENT OF REVENUES**

REVENUES	'09-'10	'10-'11
State of Minnesota Grant Appropriations -	\$ 60,000	\$ 53,000
Other Appropriations (County) -	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
Other Grants / Income -	\$ 1,119	\$ 5,000
Sales	\$ 116	\$ 530
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 73,235</b>	<b>\$ 70,530</b>

**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**

OPERATION EXPENSES	'09-'10	'10-'11
Salaries (inc benefits)	\$ 39,038	\$ 39,470
Per Diem	\$ 4,300	\$ 5,700
Professional Services	\$ 3,350	\$ 2,464
Mileage	\$ 4,665	\$ 6,177
Office Operations	\$ 8,324	\$ 6,552
Programs / Projects	\$ 3,102	\$ 54,935
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 62,779</b>	<b>\$ 115,298</b>

**SUMMARY OF COUNTY ACTIONS  
(all 8 Counties)**

	'09-'10	'10-'11
• Permits	33	8
• Variance	17	3
• Conditional Use	-----	-----
• Denials/non-approvals	1	-----
• Plats	-----	-----
• Amendments	2	-----
• Annexations	-----	-----
• Complaints	6	2
• Appeals	-----	-----
• Admin. Approvals	-----	1
• Public Meetings	8	4
• Educational Workshops	4	-----
• Forest Management Plans	-----	-----
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>18</b>

**SUMMARY OF '09-'11 IN-KIND EXPENSES  
(within corridor)**

	General & Zoning	Land	Highway
• Aitkin		\$ 57,209	\$
• Beltrami		\$ 125	
• Cass	\$ 10,218		\$ 98,121
• Clearwater	\$ 9,559		
• Crow Wing		462	\$ 183,085
• Hubbard	\$ 150		\$ 52,446
• Itasca	\$ 3,688	\$ 2,792	
• Morrison	\$ 4,578	\$ 8,099	\$ 19,502
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 28,193</b>	<b>\$ 68,687</b>	<b>\$ 353,154</b>



**PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR  
THE 2012, 2013 BIENNIUM**

The next biennium will prove to be very busy for the MHB. The final months that remain of '11 will be spent continuing our involvement with review and certification of zoning actions in the river corridor, and doing some much needed house cleaning to set us up for some ambitious opportunities and challenges in the coming years.

For several of the past biennium, the board has suffered from devastating funding cuts which have forced us to reduce staffing that ultimately tamed our ability to continue with past successful programs and development of new ones. This board has come to determine that we are working within a completely different environment than the past. We understand that in order to continue to provide river protection and the necessary stewardship that has been mandated of us, we need to become more fiscally creative and learn superior networking skills in order to survive.

**The following are some of the MHB goals for the 2012, 2013 Biennium:**

- ▶ Redraft our mission statement to clearly map our future.
- ▶ Define the MHAC role and jump start their involvement
- ▶ Further develop the PRC (Project review Committee) direction
- ▶ Better leverage our current dollars and promote the 'Power of 8' to attract grant opportunities
- ▶ Create communication vehicles (brochures/newsletter/citizen forums etc) to succinctly tell our story and invigorate public involvement in conservation stewardship practices
- ▶ Improve involvement in river communities and reignite area River Watch programs