



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mississippi National River
and Recreation Area

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4, 2009

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What: Grand Opening: Mississippi River Trail – 10 States, 1 River

When: At 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 6

Where: Chestnut Plaza, Shepard Road and Eagle Parkway in Saint Paul

Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, National Park Superintendent Paul Labovitz, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Division Director Mike Barnes, Mississippi River Trail, Inc. (MRT Inc.) Board Chair Terry Whaley, and very special guest Congresswoman Betty McCollum will kick off the celebration, fittingly held on National Trails Day in the capital city and our local national park – the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). The event is co-sponsored by the National Park Service (NPS), MnDOT, MRT Inc., and the City of St. Paul, and is hosted by Mayor Coleman. The festivities include ribbon cutting ceremonies for the MRT and Historic City House, the MRT's newest trailhead, and a nine-mile Bike to a Ranger ride.

Beginning at the headwaters in Lake Itasca State Park, the MRT is a world class 3,000 mile-long bicycle route, a system of bicycle-friendly roads and multiuse pathways that pass through ten states, 14 national parks and wildlife refuges and a diversity of landscapes. In the Twin Cities, the route runs through Fort Snelling State Park and multiple regional parks. A true example of partnership, the MRT in Minnesota is the result of the labors of the MNDOT, NPS - MNRRA, MRT Inc., the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and numerous other local partners.

With a nod to the romance of adventure along the Mississippi River, the MRT has been referred to as a “string of pearls,” connecting the cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, St. Louis, Memphis, New Orleans, and hundreds of small towns along the way. In 2000, the MRT was designated by Congress as one of 16 national millennium trails and recipient of the Kodak American Greenways and Coastal Partnership Awards in 2007. It includes the Great River Road and Grand Rounds Scenic Byways.

The MRT in MNRRA is the first segment to be signed in Minnesota. The signs are identical to the ones distributed along 1600 miles of the MRT in the ten other MRT states with the addition of one line: “Ten States - One River”.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/miss/mrt.htm> and <http://www.mississippirivertrail.org/>.

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