

# 2015 Corridor Management Plan

## The Iowa Great River Road



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Adopted March 2015

Adopted by the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Prepared by David L. Dahlquist Associates



## 2015 Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Membership

### Allamakee County

Jane Regan  
jregan@leschenskyins.com  
563-380-3635

### Clayton County

Lori Wallace  
huknorth@yahoo.com  
319-551-6171

### Clinton County

Edith Pfeffer  
edithrpfeffer@gmail.com  
563-243-7751

### Des Moines County

Debra Jochims  
debjochims@aol.com  
319-752-4455

### Dubuque County

John Goodman  
jgoodmann@real-good.com  
563-599-4350

### Jackson County

Lori Roling  
tlroling@yahoo.com  
563-542-1243

### Lee County

Larry Kruse  
kruselw@hotmail.com  
319-469-2018

### Louisa County

Jay Schweitzer  
jayts@yahoo.com  
319-728-2219

### Muscatine County

Daniel Petersen  
srpeters@hotmail.com  
563-263-3527

### Scott County

Scott Tunnickliff  
hcvscott@gmail.com  
563-322-8293

### Technical Advisors

Iowa Department of  
Transportation  
Mary Stahlhut

Travel Iowa – Iowa  
Economic Development  
Authority  
Shawna Lode

Department of Natural  
Resources  
Margo Underwood

US Army Corps of Engineers  
Ron Deiss

Retired and former  
Commissioners who served  
during the preparation  
of the 2015 Corridor  
Management Plan

Clayton County  
MJ Smith

Jackson County  
Ronald Thielen

Muscatine County  
John Oberhaus

Scott County  
Patsy Ramacitti

Scott County  
Glenn Pelecky



Mary Stahlhut  
Iowa Byways  
Program Manager  
mary.stahlhut@dot.iowa.gov  
515-239-1369



Byway Planning  
Consultant

● ● ● ● ●  
DAVID L. DAHLQUIST ASSOCIATES, LLC  
ddahlquist@outlook.com  
office: 515-963-1989  
www.ddaforum.com

breann bye + associates, llc



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Photography Credits: David L. Dahlquist, Breann Bye, Jane Regan, Michael Kearney

## The 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road:

- 1** Illustrates and tabulates the 341-mile route through Iowa's 10 eastern counties along the Mississippi River and more than 500 sites which provide the authentic qualities of scenery, nature, history, archaeology, culture, and recreation.
- 2** Presents the case that this American Byway is Iowa's most significant leisure and community-based corridor with untapped potential for sustainable and compatible growth.
- 3** Summarizes the values, preferences and suggestions of more than 800 visitors and residents: in 2013 these views were expressed for the Iowa Great River Road and the Mississippi River with strength, highly positive perspectives, and a clear need for conserving and expanding visitor services, development of access, and protection of tangible resources.
- 4** Identifies that significant new benefits to the state of Iowa and Eastern Iowa are only feasible when substantially greater investment is made by all levels of government, nonprofit, and private sector to conserve, develop, promote and interpret the Iowa Great River Road corridor.
- 5** Confirms that the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission – – the Governor-appointed Commission with legislated responsibilities for promoting and protecting the Iowa Great River Road is indeed limited in its ability to make any real accomplishments toward meeting its responsibilities with its current unjustifiably low legislative financial support.
- 6** Presents four Core Management Directions along with more than 40 targeted Actions for conserving, developing, promoting and interpreting, and administering the Iowa Great River Road which address the conditions for maintaining National Scenic Byway Designation and, much more importantly, offer an accountable framework to compel all partners, public agencies, private stakeholders, and local citizens to be part of the "village" needed to steward this national resource.
- 7** Calls for the formation of a new Iowa Great River Road Leadership Group composed of highly effective leaders to step up and fill a void in the coordinated and lasting commitment to adding real value for Iowa and the Midwest from the Iowa Great River Road.
- 8** Provides an extensive library of information and data that will be valuable to public and private decision-makers in eastern Iowa, the State of Iowa, and the other nine states which support the entire 3,000-mile Great River Road from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.
- 9** Points to the unlimited opportunities for appropriate entrepreneurial ideas, development and growth along the Iowa Great River Road, particularly focused on the authenticity of small Mississippi River towns and cities.
- 10** Provides "pathways" for the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and their partners to take actions so the reliance, the values, the needs and the dreams all Iowans have for the Mississippi River and the Iowa Great River Road can finally and ultimately be realized.



# Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

*Explore Iowa's Great River Road*

Jane Regan  
Allamakee County

Lori Wallace  
Clayton County

John Goodman  
Dubuque County

Lori Rohling  
Jackson County

Edith Pfeffer  
Clinton County

Scott Tunncliff  
Scott County

Dan Petersen  
Muscatine County

Jay Schweitzer  
Louisa County

Debra Jochims  
Des Moines County

Larry Kruse  
Lee County

Welcome to the future of the Iowa Great River Road.

The Iowa Mississippi River Valley and its companion parkway—the Iowa Great River Road—form Iowa's richest travel corridor with scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archaeological and recreation assets known across the world. These lands were significant highlands for North American Indians, these waterways provided the course of early European continental exploration, this corridor serves as a flyway for the birds of the western hemisphere, and its early settlements have grown into today's vibrant River towns and cities. This is a River of commerce, transportation and pure recreation integrated with a Byway that connects ten states providing rewarding experiences for today and every day into the future.

The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission is privileged to have the public responsibilities for understanding the PLACE of the River, respecting the PEOPLE who rely on the Great River Road, and ascribing to solid PRINCIPLES for stewarding this National Scenic Byway.

Since its waters first carved channels across this continent, the Mississippi River has evoked awe, respect, love, and fear, and brought wealth, death, loss and gain, struggles and the unexpected. For nearly 100 years, the National Great River Road has provided the world a way to travel the Mississippi River Valley - to feel connected to and learn from the past, enjoy the present, and wonder about the future of this wonderful place.

As you have come to open the pages of this document, you likely hold more than a casual interest in the Mississippi River and the Iowa Great River Road. And hopefully, this manual will serve your needs and interests as a stakeholder, a partner, a steward and an advocate for all that the Iowa Great River Road has, does and will continue to mean for Iowa and America.

This is a plan—your plan—for conserving, developing, promoting and interpreting, and managing the rich, diverse and unique resources we treasure. And while we all have so much to gain from dedicating our efforts to the resources of the Iowa Mississippi River Valley, we also



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understand that much is at stake if we fail to act. Degradation of the authentic character of the corridor; undeveloped access and unsafe conditions, ineffective communication and visitor information services, and inadequate public and private investment threatens the long-term potential of the Iowa Great River Road as well as the day-to-day economic livelihood and quality of life for tens of thousands of Iowans who live within this corridor.

This plan—the 2015 Corridor Management Plan—builds on the long history of thoughtful consideration by the Iowa Mississippi Parkway Commission; the respect for more than a 1,000 Iowans who expressed their values, needs, expectations and dreams; the support provided by the National and Iowa Scenic Byways Programs; and the dedication of State of Iowa departments and staff, many partner organizations in eastern Iowa, and the citizens all along this 341-mile treasured route.

In adopting this manual and its attendant documents, the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission is confident the future of the Iowa Great River Road can and will provide all of Iowa a multitude of benefits as more and more stakeholders and partners play their important roles in developing and stewarding Iowa's world treasure. In turn, the Commission urges governmental agencies and private organizations to incorporate and adopt the principles, actions and resources of this Plan into your own missions, policies, and operations.

IOWA MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION

John Goodman, Chair

Date of adoption: March 24, 2015



MISSISSIPPI RIVER BLUFFS | ALLAMAKEE COUNTY

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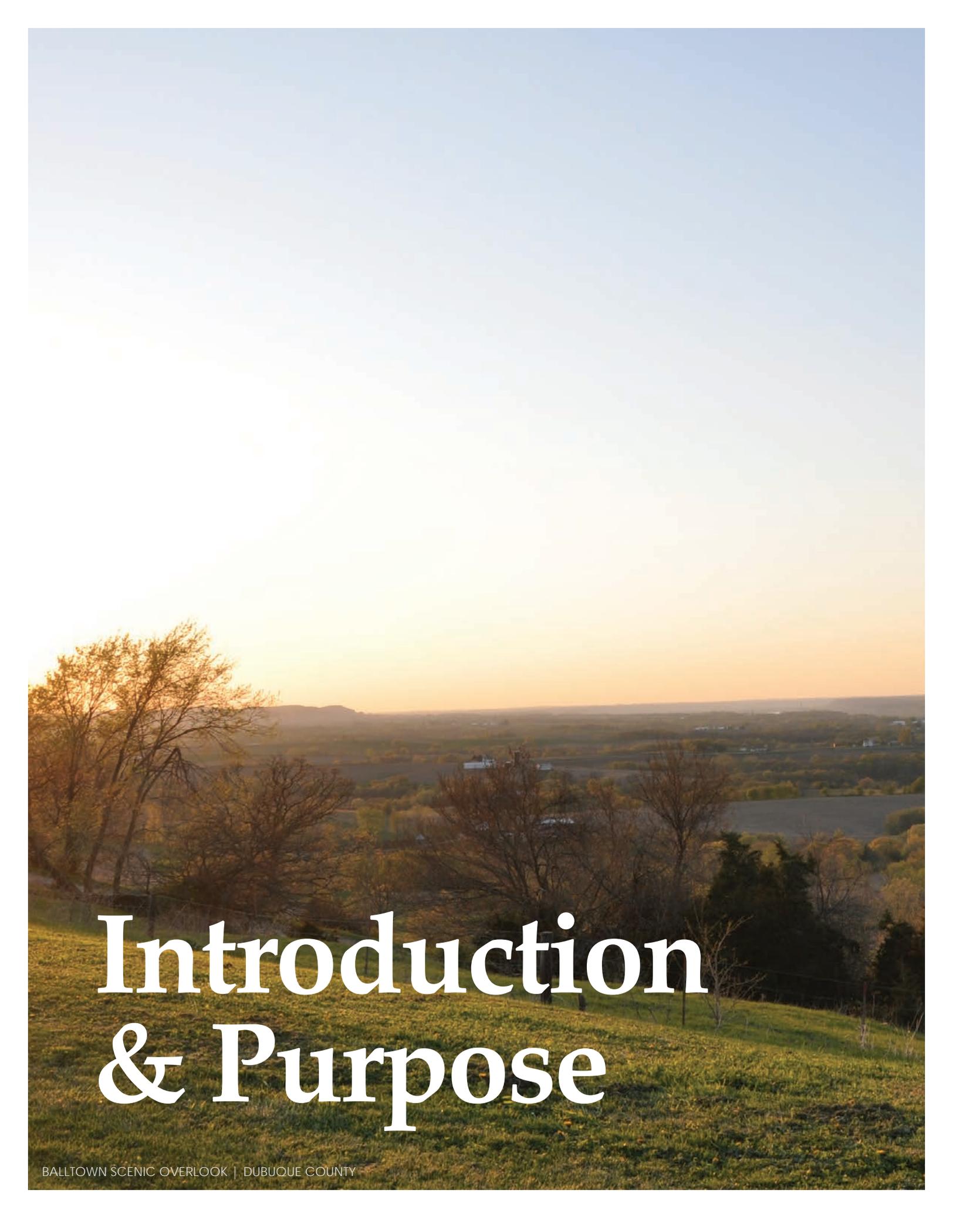
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Look for these colors and section headings to guide your journey as you explore the 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road.





# Introduction & Purpose

*The 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road is modeled after similar plans for other National Scenic Byways: it is a dynamic, written document that describes the broad range of goals, objectives, policies, programs, projects and activities which can assist with protecting the intrinsic resources of a byway; interpreting the engaging stories of the byway; and promoting and presenting the byway with services and amenities to meet the needs and expectations of the traveling public.*

Welcome to the 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road. The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission hopes you find this manual to be informative, relevant and useful to your interests in the Mississippi River Valley of eastern Iowa and the way—the Iowa Great River Road--the world travels to the “Old Man River”.

This Plan provides a broad understanding of the resources of the Iowa Great River Road and presents a broad and comprehensive vision for the management of this national treasure.

## **Why is the Iowa Great River Road Important?**

The Mississippi River Valley is Iowa’s richest historic, cultural, archaeological, natural, recreation, and scenic corridor.

This essential fact, supported by centuries of records—archaeological evidence, explorers’ journals, historic records to official proclamations and designations underlying the latest public research and reports all provide a record of international importance. Yet the distinction of literal libraries of records pale in the light of the public and personal opinions voiced everyday about why the Mississippi River means so much to so many people.

In short, through its flow of life, the Mississippi River shapes the land and the peoples of Iowa, the United States, and the world. A collection of byways, highways, country roads and city streets, the Iowa Great River Road leads everyone to the history, the present and the future of the Father of Waters.

## **Byway Designation**

Scenic byways are special routes that provide travelers access to beautiful scenery and the historical, cultural and natural riches of a region. They provide an alternative to the monotony of lineal, high-speed travel and introduce travelers to places they may otherwise pass by and experiences they may never have enjoyed. With its history approaching nearly 100 years, the Iowa Great River Road is in many ways exemplary of the reasons why driving for pleasure and exploring the nation’s countryside is so popular for leisure travelers. Even more importantly, the corridors of roadways which are official designated and locally valued as “byways” are wonderful places to live.

## The Iowa Byways Program

The Iowa Byways Program is established in the Iowa Code to identify, protect and enhance roadways in Iowa which exemplify the state's scenic and historic resources. The program is administered by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT).

The Iowa DOT designates a route as a State Scenic Byway on the basis of scenic qualities and as a State Heritage Byway based on historic qualities. Currently, eleven routes are designated as state scenic or heritage byways in Iowa. Two of the eleven state byways, the Iowa Great River Road and the Loess Hills Scenic Byway, have also achieved National Scenic Byway designation by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

For more information on the Iowa Byways Program, visit [www.iowabyways.org](http://www.iowabyways.org).

## The National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration established in Title 23, Section 162 of the United States Code under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and reauthorized and expanded significantly in 1998 under the TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU in 2005, the program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States.



IOWA BYWAYS PROGRAM LOGO



IOWA GREAT RIVER ROAD GUIDE SIGN WITH IOWA BYWAYS LOGO



NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM LOGO



AMERICA'S BYWAYS BRAND

Along with the benefits that are realized with having the Iowa Great River Road designated an Iowa Scenic Byway and a National Scenic Byway, certain basic responsibilities need to continually be fulfilled in order to maintain these designations. With cause, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation may de-designate roads or highways designated as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads if they no longer possess the intrinsic qualities nor meet the criteria which supported their designation. The primary responsibilities of sustaining a National Scenic Byway designation include:

- The byway needs to maintain its state-awarded designation as a byway. For the Iowa Great River Road, its designation as an Iowa Byway fulfills this obligation.
- An organization needs to be identified as the sponsor of the byway. The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission is the designated sponsor of the Iowa Great River Road.

- A Corridor Management Plan needs to be maintained and updated to reflect a variety of elements related to the management and operations of the byway as a National Scenic Byway.

This document, the 2015 Iowa Great River Road Corridor Management Plan, fulfills this responsibility and the fourteen elements of a Corridor Management Plan as defined by the Federal Highway Administration are herein addressed.

Look for these symbols and the corresponding CMP numbers to identify portions of the 2015 Corridor Management Plan which satisfy the planning requirements established by the National Scenic Byways Program of the Federal Highway Administration.

For more information about the National Scenic Byways Program, visit [www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways).



**Route Identification:** A map identifying the corridor boundaries and the location of intrinsic qualities and different land uses within the corridor.



**Development Strategy:** A strategy describing how existing development might be enhanced and new development might be accommodated while still preserving the intrinsic qualities of the corridor. This can be done through design review, and such land management techniques as zoning, easements, and economic incentives.

feasible, and a plan for making improvements to enhance the experience.



**Intrinsic Quality Identification:** An assessment of the important intrinsic qualities of a byway and of their context.



**Outdoor Advertising Compliance:** A demonstration of compliance with all existing local, State, and Federal laws on the control of outdoor advertising.



**Intrinsic Quality Protection:** A strategy for maintaining and enhancing the byway's intrinsic qualities. The level of protection for different parts of a byway can vary, with the highest level of protection afforded those parts which most reflect the intrinsic values.



**Public Participation Plan:** A plan to ensure ongoing public participation in the implementation of corridor management objectives.



**Signage Plan:** A plan that demonstrates how the State will insure and make the number and placement of signs more supportive of the visitor experience.



**Partnership Identification:** A schedule and listing of all agency, group, and individual responsibilities in the implementation of the corridor management plan, and a description of enforcement and review mechanisms, including a schedule for the continuing review of how well those responsibilities are being met.



**Safety Assessment:** A general review of the road's safety and accident record to identify any correctable faults in highway design, maintenance, or operation.



**Marketing Plan:** A narrative describing how the byway will be positioned for marketing.



**Commerce Accommodation:** A plan to accommodate commerce while maintaining a safe and efficient level of highway service, including convenient user facilities.



**Roadway Modification:** A discussion of design standards relating to any proposed modification of the roadway. This discussion should include an evaluation of how the proposed changes may affect the intrinsic qualities of the byway corridor.



**Visitor Experience Plan:** A demonstration that intrusions on the visitor experience have been minimized to the extent



**Interpretation Plan:** A description of plans to interpret the significant resources of the byway.

## The National Context for the Great River Road

The Mississippi River Parkway Planning Commission was formed in 1938 to develop plans for what was to become the Great River Road. Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes urged governors of the 10 states along the Mississippi River to form the Commission. State planning officials had been developing the concept of a Mississippi River Parkway as an extension of an idea for a recreational river road put forward by the Missouri Planning Board in 1936.

The Commission was instrumental in the early planning and development of the parkway as well as its construction, promotion, and marketing. Now known as the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, the National Commission works for promoting, preserving, and enhancing the resources of the Mississippi River Valley and the Great River Road.

The National Mississippi River Parkway Commission is the umbrella organization that coordinates multi-state programs on behalf of the 10 member states (Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, and Wisconsin). Each state has its own commission established by state statute or Governor's Executive Order. Membership consists of state legislators, state and local officials, and/or general members appointed by the Governor or state agency director in the individual states. The chair of each state commission serves on the National MRPC Board of Directors.

The MRPC advocates efforts on federal, state, and local levels to leverage dollars for highway improvements, recreation

trails, bikeways, scenic overlooks, and historic preservation. The MRPC also coordinates domestic and international marketing and facilitates efforts to enhance economic development and resource awareness.

## Why this Plan was Prepared and Adopted

The 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road was prepared and adopted by the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission to:

- Provide a broad understanding of the many intrinsic resources—**THE PLACE**—of the Mississippi River Valley in the 10 eastern Iowa counties which comprise the corridor of the Iowa Great River Road.
- Solicit, record and respect the insights, needs, desires and dreams of residents, visitors, and stakeholders—**THE PEOPLE**—who live along, travel to, and rely on the Iowa Great River Road.
- Identify the vision, the goals and objectives, Core Management Directions and the tangible actions—**THE PRINCIPLES**—needed to underpin effective conservation, development, promotion and interpretation, and management of the resources and experiences of this National Scenic Byway.
- Provide guidance—**PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE**--for the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission, the Iowa Legislature, the Governor's Office, and State of Iowa Departments all

of which have mandates to steward and promote this national treasure for the citizens and visitors of Iowa.

Additionally, the 2015 Corridor Management Plan:

- Is prepared based on the guidelines and required for the Iowa Great River Road to sustain its designation as a National Scenic Byway by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation and an Iowa Scenic Byway by the Iowa Department of Transportation.
- Replaces the 2000 Corridor Management Plan and its June 2006 Update and Supplement as the official management document for the Byway.

## Audiences for the 2015 Corridor Management Plan

The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission invites and encourages a wide variety of audiences to find value in the 2015 Corridor Management Plan. The Plan provides accountable guidance for the operations of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission to manage the future of the Iowa Great River Road within the jurisdictional limits and fiscal realities which the Commission exists. Equally important, the **2015 Corridor Management Plan Library** offers many features that can be valuable to elected and appointed public officials; governmental agencies from federal to local levels; non-profit organizations; travel and tourism promotion and economic development groups; corporations and local businesses;

property owners; and Iowa citizens. The 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road is available for these and other appropriate purposes:

- Adoption by public agencies as reference and guidance for their respective jurisdictional responsibilities
- Guidance to individuals, businesses and organizations along the byway which may be contemplating projects or marketing campaigns
- Increasing public awareness of the Iowa Great River Road
- Supporting grant applications—public and philanthropic
- Solicitation of additional partners and stakeholders

Please note that the 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road is not designed to:

- Impose regulations on a county, city or town along route.
- Require the adoption of any new local ordinances or special districts.
- Require the governmental acquisition of privately-held property.
- Prohibit new construction or development.
- Deny any community its right to pursue funding for local projects.
- Require participation in corridor-wide projects or programs

## Authorization and Role of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission was created by an act of the Iowa Legislature in 1959 and is organized to:

- Preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic, natural, archaeological, cultural, and recreation resources of the Iowa Great River Road National Scenic Byway and the Iowa Mississippi River Valley.
- Foster economic growth of the Mississippi River corridor.
- Develop the Iowa Great River Road National Scenic Byway.

## Summary of how the 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road was Developed

The following table presents major milestones and activities for the preparation of the 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road.

Date	Event or Activity
Spring 2011	Award of National Scenic Byways Program Discretionary Grant
Summer 2011	Selection of David L. Dahlquist Associates Byway Planning Team for corridor management planning services
Fall 2011	Project kickoff
April – May 2012	Iowa Great River Road stakeholder meetings
June – October 2013	Iowa Great River Road visitor and resident survey fieldwork
April – May 2014	Iowa Great River Road stakeholder meetings
February – September 2014	Development of Core Management Directions and Actions
September – December 2014	Evaluation of financial considerations for undertaking management Actions
December 2014	Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission adoption of vision, goals and overall interpretive theme for the Iowa Great River Road
March 2015	Iowa Mississippi Parkway Commission adoption of the 2015 Corridor Management Plan
April – June 2015	Presentations of the adopted 2015 Corridor Management Plan to public organizations along the Iowa Great River Road

## The 2015 Corridor Management Plan Library for the Iowa Great River Road

A comprehensive collection of data, research findings, reports, maps, and presentations which provide additional detail and support for the 2015 Corridor Management Plan of the Iowa Great River Road. Each document is referenced with a lettered icon and title.

Document files can be downloaded at [www.iowadot.gov/iowasbyways/IAGRR-CMP.html](http://www.iowadot.gov/iowasbyways/IAGRR-CMP.html) and [www.ddaforum.com/DocumentLibrary.aspx](http://www.ddaforum.com/DocumentLibrary.aspx).



### Iowa Great River Road Designated Route Update

Map atlases for the ten Iowa Great River Road counties illustrating the routing of the Byway.



### Summary Report of Representative Intrinsic Qualities and Resources, Tabulation and Map Sets

Report, tabulations and map county atlases of the intrinsic resources of the Iowa Great River Road.



### Condition of the Road Report

A review of the existing conditions associated with the Iowa Great Road using 14 key topics recommended by the Federal Highway Administration.



### Iowa Great River Road Route Traffic Data and Safety Report

A tabular presentation of traffic data and safety indicators for segments of the Iowa Great River Road prepared by the Iowa Department of Transportation.



### Iowa Great River Road Document Library

An extensive listing of a wide variety of reference documents pertaining to the Mississippi River as well as the National and Iowa Great River Road.



### Report of Spring 2012 Stakeholder Meetings

A complete report of the production, results, and public direction provided during the Spring 2012 Stakeholder Meetings.



### The 2013 Iowa Great River Road Visitor Survey

Summary report, detailed result tabulation, and survey instrument for the 2013 Iowa Great River Road Visitor Survey.



### The 2013 Iowa Great River Road Resident Survey

Summary report, detailed result tabulation, and survey instrument for the 2013 Iowa Great River Road Resident Survey.



### Report of Spring 2014 Stakeholder Meetings

A complete report of the production, results, and public direction provided during the Spring 2014 Stakeholder Meetings.



### Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Stakeholder List

A tabular presentation of the contact listing for the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission current as of January 2015. (Available upon request to the Commission)



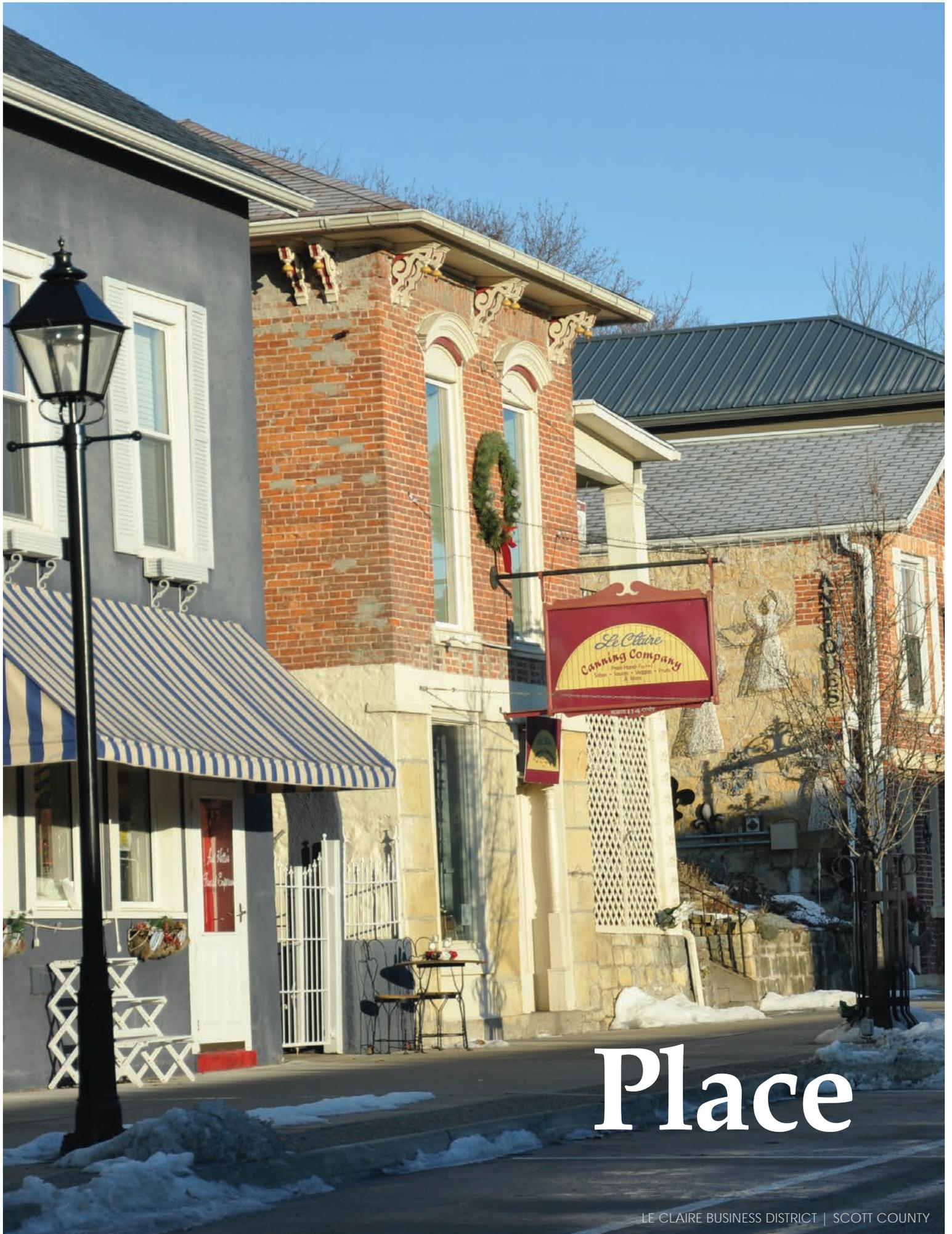
### Core Management Directions, Actions, and Financial Considerations

Detailed background and descriptions of Actions and financial considerations supporting the Core Management Directions of the Iowa Great River Road.



### Great River Road Interpretive Plan and Tool Kit

A comprehensive guide for themes and stories for interpreting the entire Great River Road.



# Place

## The Importance of Understanding the Place of the Iowa Great River Road

Managing and stewarding the Iowa Great River Road is most effectively accomplished by understanding the **PLACE**—the context, the geography, and the essence—of the corridor of intrinsic qualities which warrant its roads being designated a State Scenic Byway as well as a National Scenic Byway.

This chapter summarizes these physical characteristics of the **PLACE** of the Iowa Great River Road. The following documents contained in the Corridor Management Plan Library provide supplemental and detailed information pertaining to this chapter.

	<b>Iowa Great River Road Designated Route Update</b> Map atlases for the ten Iowa Great River Road counties illustrating the routing of the Byway.
	<b>Summary Report of Representative Intrinsic Qualities and Resources, Tabulation and Map Sets</b> Report, tabulations and map county atlases of the intrinsic resources of the Iowa Great River Road.
	<b>Condition of the Road Report</b> A review of the existing conditions associated with the Iowa Great Road using 14 key topics recommended by the Federal Highway Administration.
	<b>Iowa Great River Road Route Traffic Data and Safety Report</b> A tabular presentation of traffic data and safety indicators for segments of the Iowa Great River Road prepared by the Iowa Department of Transportation.
	<b>Iowa Great River Road Document Library</b> An extensive listing of a wide variety of reference documents pertaining to the Mississippi River as well as the National and Iowa Great River Road.

## Broad History of the Mississippi River

As part of the longest river system in North America, the Mississippi River is one of the world's greatest rivers. It lives up to its many names – Mighty Mississippi, Father of Waters, Old Man River, American Treasure.

No river has played a greater part in the development and expansion of America than the Mississippi. Our nation's chief navigable water route, it was – and still is – a vital factor in the physical and economic growth of this country. It is a place where people live, work, and play.

Mississippi is an Ojibwe (Chippewa) word for “great river” or “gathering of waters.” When combined with the Missouri and

Illinois Rivers, two of its major tributaries, the Mississippi River system forms the third-largest drainage basin in the world.

The Mississippi River flows 2,340 miles (3,705 kilometers) from its source in Minnesota to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico. The headwaters of the Mississippi River is Lake Itasca in northwestern Minnesota. A small glacial lake, it sits 1,475 feet (450 meters) above sea level. The lake is fed by a number of smaller streams, sometimes considered the river's source.

The Mississippi River's watershed covers about 40% of the continental United States and drains 31 states and two Canadian provinces. It flows north to south from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and stretches east to west from the

Appalachian Mountains to the Rocky Mountains. Only the watersheds of the Amazon and Congo Rivers are larger.

### European Exploration

In the 1500s, Europeans were on the move. France, Britain, and Spain had developed a taste for spices, sugar, silks, and other exotic goods from the Far East, and they were looking for a new, easier route to the east that would make these trade items cheaper. As they explored North America looking for the fabled Northwest Passage, they noticed this new world was a land of riches for the country that could claim, explore, map, and control it.

European explorers and traders soon learned that the Mississippi River was a major water route in the middle of this large continent. Like the Native Americans that had lived there for centuries, European explorers began using the river as a major transportation route. In many ways, the Mississippi River is North America's first major highway.

### Native Americans

North America was anything but new to the Native Americans who had lived here

for millennia. Artifacts such as projectile points and stone and bone tools suggest that people came to the Upper Mississippi area about 12,000 years ago. The tribes that lived along the river in the 1600s included the Dakotas, Illinois, and the Ioway. Other tribes that lived in the area in the 1600s were the Menominee, Ho-chunk, Fox, Kickapoo, Miami, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Shawnee, Sac, Sioux, and Winnebago.

Europeans also noticed the many furbearing animals that inhabited the waterways of the upper Midwest, including beaver, otter, mink, bear, and deer. Many decided to settle in the Upper Mississippi River to invest in the rich fur trade, the success of which depended on Native American cooperation and assistance.

The first Europeans to travel south on the Mississippi River were Louis Jolliet and Jacques Marquette. In 1673, they were searching for a water route that led to the Pacific Ocean, which would make the fur trade easier and more profitable.

As Britain, France, and Spain squabbled over colonies in North America, the



MUSCATINE RIVER CROSSING AND INDUSTRY | MUSCATINE COUNTY



RIVER VIEW IN LANSING | ALLAMAKEE COUNTY

Louisiana Territory kept changing hands between France and Spain. In the 1800s, the Mississippi River was one of the most important geographic locations in North America. Whoever owned the Mississippi River controlled the movement of people and goods within the large expanse of land between the Appalachian and Rocky Mountains.

In October 1802, Spain closed the mouth of the Mississippi to American vessels. Petitions began to pour into Congress from the Western settlements for the defense of their commerce.

### **The Louisiana Purchase and Mississippi River Valley Settlement**

Realizing the importance of the Mississippi River to farmers, trappers, and traders, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson negotiated with France to purchase the Louisiana Territory. The Louisiana Purchase was one of the most important events in American history. It gave the United States ownership and control of the Mississippi River and the

vast western part of its watershed. A vital transportation route, the Mississippi River was key to the survival and expansion of a growing nation.

However, the Louisiana Purchase was unexplored territory. The only estimates of its actual size were based on the explorations of Robert LaSalle in 1682. The interior of North America was essentially a blank map. To settle the new territory and make use of its natural resources, the United States needed to map it and catalog its riches.

U.S. President Thomas Jefferson immediately began planning several missions to explore and chart the territory. The most famous of these was the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804–1806. Headed by the United States Army soldiers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, it was the first overland expedition undertaken by the United States to the Pacific coast and back.



When the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory, it gave American farmers use of a vitally important waterway—the Mississippi River. Having free access to the river allowed American farmers and traders to move their goods to market much more quickly and easily. Between 1800 and 1850, the Mississippi River Valley went from being America’s frontier to its heartland.

During the 1820s, pressure from a growing U.S. population pushed thousands of Americans westward in search of fertile land and a better life. Many people from Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania settled in the Mississippi Valley. This influx of people, along with the advent of railroads and steamboats, made the Mississippi River Valley one of the nation’s most complex cultural and commercial regions.

### **Controlling the Mississippi River**

Because of the Upper Mississippi River’s slow current and relative depth, a series of locks and dams were built on the river

in the 19th and 20th centuries to facilitate navigation for a steady stream of barge traffic. Dams were built on shallow rivers to hold back water and form deeper navigation pools with a constant minimum water depth of 9 feet in the channel for safe navigation. These dams make it necessary for river vessels to use a series of locks to “step” up or down the river from one water level to another.

Construction of these structures occurred mostly in the 1930s and 1940s and resulted in a total of 29 locks and dams. This system created what is commonly called a “Stairway of Water” as the Mississippi falls 420 feet from the Falls of St. Anthony in Minnesota to Locks #27 in Granite City, Illinois. The dams create slack-water pools for navigation during periods of low and medium flows. The locks pass river traffic from one pool to another, like a stairway of water.

Most of the Mississippi River's big tributaries – the Missouri, Illinois, and Ohio Rivers – have also been developed for navigation.

Before the locks and dams, the Upper Mississippi River was a natural, meandering river filled with shifting sand bars and shallow areas. Starting at Lake Itasca in north-central Minnesota, the Upper Mississippi flows more than 500 miles before it becomes navigable near St. Paul, Minnesota. From there, it flows 670 miles south to St. Louis. Along the way, the Upper Mississippi is fed by several rivers including the Minnesota, St. Croix, Chippewa, Wisconsin, Rock, Des Moines, and Illinois Rivers.

At places such as the Des Moines and Rock Island Rapids, the river's current could be dangerously swift and treacherous, depending on water levels.

The depth of the Upper Mississippi averaged approximately three feet and, at certain seasons, amounted to as little as one foot in the 200 miles below St. Paul. During times of flooding, the Upper Mississippi was deep but turbulent. More frequently, long dry spells made the river too shallow to navigate. In addition, the

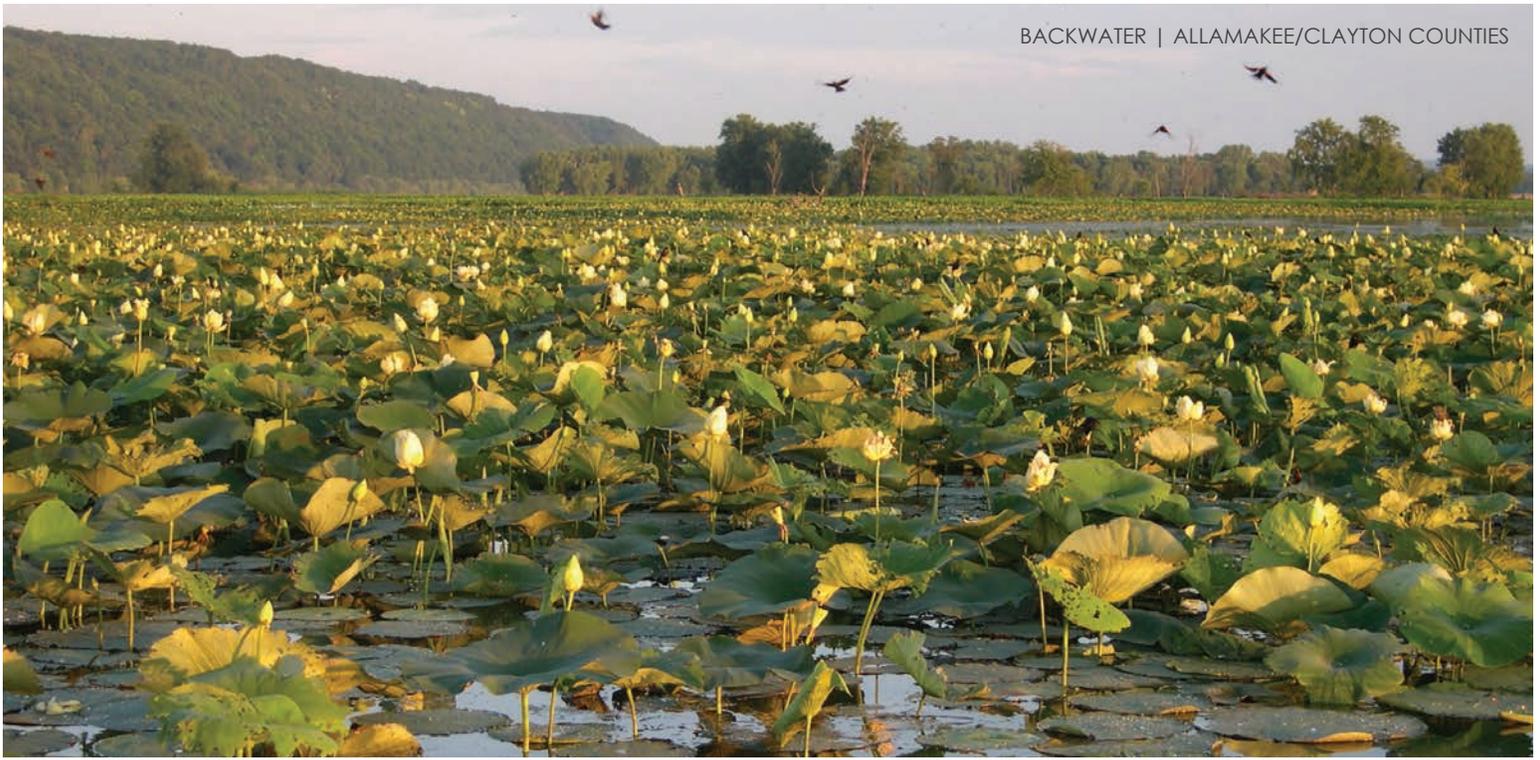
river's uncharted shoals and sand bars presented a constant danger. Equally dangerous were the snags, debris, and trees that storms had washed from the river's banks into its waters.

Just above St. Louis the Mississippi River joins with the Missouri River, where it gains strength and volume. About 170 miles south of St. Louis at Cairo, Illinois, the Mississippi River meets with the Ohio River and doubles its volume. At this point, it becomes the Lower Mississippi, that "mile-wide tide, shining in the sun" described by Mark Twain.

Prior to 1900, the Mississippi River transported an estimated 400 million metric tons of sediment per year from the interior of the United States to coastal Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico. However, during the last two decades, the Mississippi River transported an average of just 145 million metric tons per year. This reduction of sediment was the result of engineering modification of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio Rivers and their tributaries by dams, meander cutoffs, river-training structures, bank revetments, and soil erosion control programs in the areas drained by them.



KEOKUK PLANT | LEE COUNTY



## The River's Lasting Importance

The Mississippi River Watershed includes some of our nation's most productive agricultural and industrial regions. Agriculture has been the primary user of the lands in the Mississippi River Watershed, continually altering the hydrologic cycle and energy budget of the region.

The Mississippi River serves as our nation's main transportation artery for gas, oil, fertilizer, industrial chemicals, lumber, pulp and paper, sand and gravel, steel, and coal. Corn, soybeans, and wheat are shipped from farms in the Midwest downriver to ports in south Louisiana and exported to foreign lands.

The Mississippi River plays a large and complex role in the economy of the Upper Midwest states, both in rural and urban areas. Some economic uses, such as manufacturing, urban development, and tourism, benefit from a healthy river as well as attract people and jobs.

Birds follow the Mississippi Flyway to fly from central Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Some use it to migrate from the Arctic Ocean to Patagonia in South America. They choose this route because of its north-south orientation, lack of large obstacles such as mountain ranges, and its abundance of habitat, including channels, backwaters, sloughs, wetlands, and adjacent uplands.

The Upper Mississippi River is losing its ecological vitality as parts of the fragile ecosystem disappear. The river's environment needs to be adequately monitored by observing indicator species and preventing habitat reduction, which could also pose risks to human health. Much of the harm done to the Upper Mississippi over the last 150 years can be traced to human activities.

Progress has been made to improve the environment but many parts of the river system remain in need of help. The cumulative effects of these problems may further impact human use and enjoyment of the river.

# Mississippi River Facts

- **Human habitat:** More than 30 million people live in the Mississippi River basin. Nearly 80% of the population lives in urban areas such as Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; St. Louis, Missouri; Chicago, Illinois; the Quad Cities, Illinois and Iowa; Des Moines, Iowa; La Crosse, Wisconsin; and Peoria, Illinois.
- **Water supply:** About half of the residents in the Mississippi River Watershed rely on the Upper Mississippi River and its tributaries for their water.
- **Food supply:** Over 60% of the basin is cropland or pasture. Major cash crops include corn and soybeans.
- **Transportation and commerce:** About 850 miles of the Upper Mississippi River, extending from Minneapolis- St. Paul to the Ohio River, are commercially navigable.
- **Flood control and water quality:** Wetlands along the river help absorb flood water and filter pollutants.
- **Recreation:** The river generates over \$6.6 billion dollars in revenue annually from people who hunt, fish, boat, or sightsee. Recreation and tourism employ 143,000 people.
- **Inspiration:** More than 1,300 river miles of diverse natural, rural, and urban open space are available for human exploration, education, spiritual renewal, and aesthetic enjoyment.

*Historical overview of the Mississippi River adapted from the US Army Corps of Engineer's "Our Mississippi" Educational Guidebook. For more information visit [www.mvd.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil).*

## Route Identification



The Iowa Great River Road is a 341-mile route that parallels the west bank of the Mississippi River in eastern Iowa between the Missouri and Minnesota state borders. The Byway passes through 10 Iowa counties, numerous towns, and several urban centers. Travelers along the route experience a variety of settings including magnificent vistas of the River; upland woodlands and floodplain forests; various parks, preserves and conservation areas; agricultural, small farms and rural countryside; small-town main streets; diverse and distinctive architecture; metropolitan centers and, most importantly, river life.

The entire route is paved two-lane and four-lane roadway. The 341-mile route length figure includes the length of exit

and entrance ramps associated with divided and controlled access highways. Both portions of “one-way paired” streets are also included in the total figure. Approximately 188 miles (55%) are under the jurisdiction of the Iowa Department of Transportation. Approximately 153 miles (45%) are under county and municipal jurisdiction.

The route functions in a number of different capacities including: through traffic, local service, commercial use and recreational traffic. All portions of the route are maintained for year round use. The entire route is signed as the “Great River Road”.

The following table presents the route segments of the Iowa Great River Road traveling from north to south.

	Route	From	To	Miles	Type
<b>ALLAMAKEE COUNTY</b>					
	IA 26	Iowa-Minnesota State Line	IA 9 / Main St, Lansing	11.2	State/City
	Main St, Lansing	IA 26	South Front St, Lansing	0.2	City
	South Front St, Lansing	Main St, Lansing	X52	0.8	City
	X52	South Front St, Lansing	Winfield Rd	12.3	County
	Winfield Rd	X52	North 1st St, Harpers Ferry	0.4	City
	North 1st St, Harpers Ferry	Winfield Rd	Chestnut St, Harpers Ferry	0.7	City
	Chestnut St, Harpers Ferry	North 1st St, Harpers Ferry	X52	0.2	City
	X52	Chestnut St, Harpers Ferry	IA 76	6.3	County
	IA 76	X52	Clayton County Line	4.0	State
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	IA 282	IA 26	Iowa-Wisconsin State Line	0.2	State
			<b>Total</b>	<b>36.3</b>	

	Route	From	To	Miles	Type
<b>CLAYTON COUNTY</b>					
	IA 76	Allamakee County Line	7th St, McGregor	4.5	State/City
	7th St, McGregor	IA 76	Walton St, McGregor / X56	0.1	City
	Walton St, McGre- gor / X56	7th St, McGregor	Kosciusko St, Guttenberg	17.5	County/ City
	Kosciusko St, Guttenberg	X56	3rd St, Guttenberg	0.2	City
	3rd St, Guttenberg	Kosciusko St, Guttenberg	Broadway St, Guttenberg	0.2	City
	Broadway St, Guttenberg	3rd St, Guttenberg	River Park Drive, Guttenberg	0.1	City
	River Park Drive, Guttenberg	Broadway St, Guttenberg	Koerner St, Guttenberg	1.4	City
	Koerner St, Gut- tenberg	River Park Drive, Guttenberg	US 52	0.3	City
	US 52	Koerner St, Guttenberg	C9Y	5.4	County/ City
	C9Y	US 52	Dubuque County Line	12.5	County
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	US 18	IA 76	Iowa-Wisconsin State Line	0.5	State
			<b>Total</b>	<b>42.7</b>	
<b>DUBUQUE COUNTY</b>					
	C9Y / N. Buena Vista Rd /Balltown Rd	Clayton County Line	Circle Ridge Rd	8.8	County
	Circle Ridge Rd	C9Y / N. Buena Vista Rd / Balltown Rd	Mud Lake Rd	4.8	County
	Mud Lake Rd	Circle Ridge Rd	Sherrill Rd	2.2	County/ City
	Sherrill Rd	Mud Lake Rd	US 52 / IA 3	0.2	County
	US 52 / IA 3	Sherrill Rd	US 52 / US 61 / US 151	6.6	State
	US 52 / US 61 / US 151	US 52 / IA 3	US 52	3.3	State
	US 52	US 52 / US 61 / US 151	Jackson County Line	8.1	State
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	US 61 / US 151	US 52	Iowa-Wisconsin State Line	2.5	State
	US 20	US 52 / US 61 / US 151	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.7	State
			<b>Total</b>	<b>37.2</b>	
<b>JACKSON COUNTY</b>					
	US 52	Dubuque County Line	US 67 / IA 64	32.4	State/City
	US 67 / IA 64	US 52	Clinton County Line	2.9	State
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	US 52 / IA 64	US 52	Iowa-Illinois State Line	3.8	State
			<b>Total</b>	<b>39.1</b>	

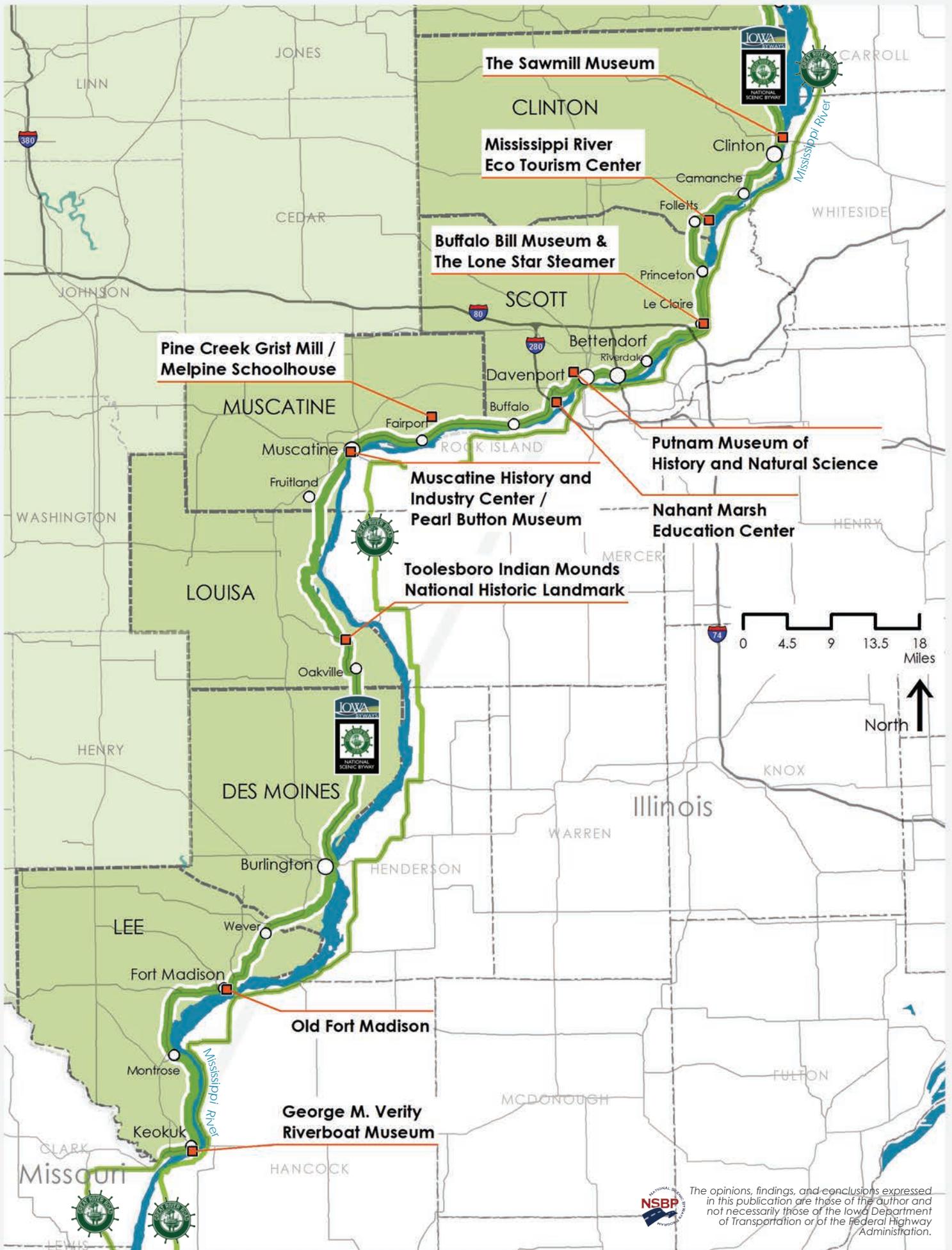
	Route	From	To	Miles	Type
<b>CLINTON COUNTY</b>					
	US 67	Jackson County Line	Bus US 67 / Washington Blvd, Camanche	21.3	State
	Bus US 67 / Washington Blvd, Camanche	US 67	US 67	2.6	City
	US 67	Bus US 67 / Washington Blvd, Camanche	Scott County Line	5.9	State
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	IA 136	US 67	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.5	State
	US 30	US 67	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.4	State
			<b>Total</b>	<b>30.7</b>	
<b>SCOTT COUNTY</b>					
	US 67	Clinton County Line	US 67 Bus, Davenport	25.6	State/City
	US 67 Bus, Davenport	US 67	IA 22	3.9	State/City
	IA 22	US 67	Muscatine County Line	9.5	State/City
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	I-80	US 67	Iowa-Illinois State Line	1.2	State
	I-74	US 67	Iowa-Illinois State Line	1.0	State
	US 67	US 67 / Bus 67	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.8	State
	US 67	Iowa Street and E 2nd St, Davenport	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.2	City
			<b>Total</b>	<b>42.0</b>	
<b>MUSCATINE COUNTY</b>					
	IA 22	Scott County Line	IA 38	13.6	State/City
	IA 38	IA 22	Bus US 61 / IA 38	0.7	State/City
	Bus US 61 / IA 38	IA 38	X61	2.1	City
	X61	Bus US 61 / IA 38	Louisa County Line	5.9	County
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	IA 92	IA 38	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.3	State
			<b>Total</b>	<b>22.6</b>	
<b>LOUISA COUNTY</b>					
	X61	Muscatine County Line	X99	15.4	County
	X99	X61	Des Moines County Line	6.6	State
			<b>Total</b>	<b>22.0</b>	
<b>DES MOINES COUNTY</b>					
	X99	Louisa County Line	N Main St, Burlington	19.7	State/City
	N Main St, Burlington	X99	Harrison Ave, Burlington	1.7	City
	Harrison Ave, Burlington	S. Main St, Burlington	Madison Ave, Burlington	0.5	City
	Madison Ave, Burlington / X62	Harrison Ave, Burlington	US 61	5.0	County
	US 61	X62	Lee County Line	2.9	State
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	US 34	X99 / N Main St, Burlington	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.7	State
			<b>Total</b>	<b>30.5</b>	

	Route	From	To	Miles	Type
<b>LEE COUNTY</b>					
	US 61	Des Moines County Line	Bus US 61 / 354th Ave, Fort Madison	5.8	State
	Bus US 61 / 354th Ave, Fort Madison	US 61	Ave H, Fort Madison	4.0	State/City
	Ave H, Fort Madison	Bus US 61 / 354th Ave, Fort Madison	20th St, Fort Madison	1.7	City
	20th St, Fort Madison	Ave H, Fort Madison	IA 2	0.4	City
	IA 2	20th St, Fort Madison	US 61	3.6	State
	US 61	IA 2	X21	6.9	State
	X21	US 61	Pine St, Montrose	1.2	County
	Pine St, Montrose	X21	Water St, Montrose	0.1	City
	Water St, Montrose	Pine St, Montrose	Elm St. Montrose	0.1	City
	Elm St. Montrose	Water St, Montrose	Tesson St, Montrose	0.1	City
	Tesson St, Montrose	Elm St. Montrose	Cherry St, Montrose	0.1	City
	Cherry St, Montrose	Tesson St, Montrose	River Road / X28	0.1	City
	River Road / X28	Cherry St, Montrose	NCL Keokuk	7.4	County
	River Road, Keokuk	NCL Keokuk	Rand Park Ter, Keokuk	1.9	County
	Rand Park Ter, Keokuk	River Road, Keokuk	Grand Ave, Keokuk	0.1	City
	Grand Ave, Keokuk	Rand Park Ter, Keokuk	Orleans Ave, Keokuk	0.8	City
	Orleans Ave, Keokuk	Grand Ave, Keokuk	4th St North, Keokuk	0.1	City
	4th St North, Keokuk	Orleans Ave, Keokuk	US 136	0.5	City
	US 136	X28	US 61	2.4	State/City
	US 61	E. Jct. US 136	Missouri State Line	0.5	State/City
	<i>Extension(s) to Mississippi River</i>				
	IA 9	Bus US 61 / 354th Ave	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.3	State
	US 136	4th St North, Keokuk	Iowa-Illinois State Line	0.5	State
	<b>Total</b>			<b>38.4</b>	

Total miles in all 10 counties: 341.4

# Iowa Great River Road National Scenic Byway Route and Corridor





The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Iowa Department of Transportation or of the Federal Highway Administration.



## Corridor of the Iowa Great River Road



Defining the corridor of the Iowa Great River Road recognizes the geographic area on both sides of the Byway route in which travelers can experience the Byway's intrinsic qualities. In the case of the Iowa Great River Road, the corridor is defined as the area of the 10 counties through which the Iowa Great River Road passes. Intrinsic resources associated with the Iowa Great River Road exist throughout each of the Iowa Great River Road counties. Frequently the location of an intrinsic resource site is located within a relatively short or reasonable driving distance from the main Byway route. Please note that defining the corridor of the Iowa Great River Road is not a regulatory determination or definition.

## Existing Land Uses



Existing land uses in the corridor are typical for the setting and include the following general categories:

- Agricultural uses including pasture, grazing, and row crops
- Publicly and privately owned and managed open spaces, including floodplains, bluff lands, forests, wetlands, waterways and prairies
- Transportation improvements including roadways and railroads
- Riverfronts adjacent to the Mississippi River
- Town and urban developments including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses

## Intrinsic Qualities



Intrinsic qualities and resources associated with the Iowa Great River Road National Scenic Byway are the visible and tangible resources that make this corridor special, unique and highly desirable to visit and experience.



Identifying intrinsic qualities associated with a byway is a condition of securing the byway's designation by the State of Iowa and the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. Conserving intrinsic resources of a Byway over time is a requirement for maintaining the state and federal byways designations. Perhaps most importantly, telling the stories associated with the intrinsic resources of a byway offers the most effective means to attract visitors and provides the basis for providing authentic and rewarding visitor and resident experiences.

An effective and widely accepted means of describing and categorizing the visual, tangible, and ephemeral characteristics of a byway is to identify its intrinsic qualities and resources. Six intrinsic qualities—archaeological, cultural, historical, natural, recreational, and scenic—are valued qualities used to describe and categorize a byway's special sense of place and meaning to local residents and byway travelers alike. Furthermore, these six intrinsic qualities aid byway stakeholders and managers to determine, conserve, develop, interpret and promote the local, regional, and national significance of each individual site, event, and the stories they contribute to the authenticity of visitor experiences. In short, intrinsic qualities and resources are representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctive characteristics of the Iowa Great River Road National Scenic Byway corridor.

The intrinsic resource inventory for the Iowa Great River Road exists in several digital forms. Over 500 sites are documented in an MS Excel spreadsheet and a PDF version is available as part of the Summary Report of Representative Intrinsic Qualities and Resources, Tabulation and Map Sets. Map atlases for each of the ten Iowa Great River Road counties are provided separately. Additionally, ArcGIS shapefiles—digital files formatted for geographic information system (GIS) software—are available from the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

The Iowa Great River Road possesses features representing the six intrinsic qualities. The following types of resources appear to make the strongest contribution to creating the unique appeal of the Iowa Great River Road. For reference, the colored circular symbols correlate with the symbols associated with resource sites in the intrinsic resource inventory map atlases.



## Scenic Intrinsic Quality

Scenic Quality is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and manmade elements of the visual environment of the scenic byway corridor. The characteristics of the landscape are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and most memorable visual experience. All elements of the landscape—landform, water, vegetation, and manmade development—contribute to the quality of the corridor's visual environment. The visual character of places along the byway are in harmony and share in the intrinsic qualities.

For the Iowa Great River Road, examples of scenic qualities include:

- The Mississippi River itself
- Dramatic bluff land views and vistas
- Rock outcroppings
- Agricultural fields, farmsteads
- Distinctive architecture
- Small town main streets
- Vegetation of the fall and spring seasons
- Winter scenes with fresh snow
- Upland and floodplain forests
- Tributary rivers and streams, wetlands and backwaters
- Diverse topography
- Narrow channel and wide channel diversity

Approximately 95 scenic resource sites along the Iowa Great River Road are listed in the inventory.



## Na

### Natural Intrinsic Quality

Natural Quality applies to those features in the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state. These features predate the arrival of human populations and may include geological formations, fossils, landform, water bodies, vegetation, and wildlife. There may be evidence of human activity, but the natural features reveal minimal disturbances.

For the Iowa Great River Road, examples of natural qualities include:

- Geology, landforms and river hydrology
- Diverse wildlife including bald eagles
- Caves and natural springs
- Mississippi River tributary crossings and river level fluctuations

- Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
- Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge
- Protected wildlife management properties, state preserves
- State, county and city parks
- Nature centers, interpretation programs and watchable wildlife programs and opportunities

Approximately 60 natural resource sites along the Iowa Great River Road are listed in the inventory.



## Historic Intrinsic Quality

Historic Quality encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or manmade, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past. The historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity. Historic features can be inventoried, mapped, and interpreted. They possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.

For the Iowa Great River Road, examples of historic qualities include:

- National Register of Historic Districts
- National Register of Historic Places
- Historic vehicle and railroad bridges
- Century Farms and classic farm buildings
- Railroad routing, depots and structures
- Locks and Dams of the Mississippi River adjoining Iowa
- Historic cemeteries
- City and county historical museums
- Historic factory buildings, docks, commercial buildings, brewery buildings
- Country schools and small town school buildings
- Churches
- Riverfront parks
- Mormon Trail route
- Pedestrian walkways, stairs and elevators set in the bluff faces of towns and cities
- Historic markers

Approximately 130 historic resource sites along the Iowa Great River Road are listed in the inventory.



## Archaeological Intrinsic Quality

Archaeological Quality involves those characteristics of the byway corridor that are physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activity that are visible and capable of being inventoried and interpreted. The byway corridor's archaeological interest, as identified through ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence have scientific significance that educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past.

For the Iowa Great River Road, archaeological resources include:

- Effigy Mounds National Monument
- Toolesboro Indian Mounds National Historic Landmark
- Various officially identified and protected archaeological sites
- Protected native American sites
- Museums and artifacts

Five archaeological resource sites along the Iowa Great River Road are listed in the inventory.



## Cultural Intrinsic Quality

Cultural Quality is evidence and expressions of the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people that are still currently practiced. Cultural features include but are not limited to crafts, music, dance, rituals, festivals, speech, food, special events, and vernacular architecture.

For the Iowa Great River Road, examples of cultural qualities include:

- All towns and cities along the Iowa Great River Road
- Various ethnic and community festivals and events
- Farmers markets
- Iowa Main Street Program districts
- Art galleries
- Music performance venues featuring locally-based artists
- Wineries
- Restaurants featuring locally-grown food and immigrant/ethnic food
- Mississippi River commercial barge and recreational boat traffic particularly associated with all locks and dams

Nearly 80 cultural resource sites along the Iowa Great River Road are listed in the inventory.



## Recreational Intrinsic Quality

Recreational Quality involves outdoor recreational activities directly associated with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the corridor's landscape. The recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive recreational experiences. They include but are not limited to downhill skiing, rafting, boating, fishing, and hiking. The recreational activities may be seasonal, but the quality and importance of the recreational activities as seasonal operations must be well recognized.

For the Iowa Great River Road, examples of recreational qualities include:

- Water-based recreation opportunities for boating, fishing, hunting
- Developed recreation access areas of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, the Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Protected wildlife management properties, state preserves
- State, county and city parks
- Nature centers
- Many types of hiking and bicycling trails including the Mississippi River Trail
- Primitive and modern campgrounds
- Wildlife viewing
- Antique and art shopping
- Performing arts and cultural events
- Art museums

Approximately 200 recreational resource sites along the Iowa Great River Road are listed in the inventory.

Iowa Great River Road Counties	Iowa Great River Road Intrinsic Resource Locations by County						TOTAL RESOURCE SITES BY COUNTY	Number of Designated National Great River Road Interpretive Centers	Number of Facilities which provide Interpretive Communication	Number of Facilities which provide Visitor Information	Mississippi River can be reached or seen from this Location	Supplemental Attractions or Points of Interest	Attractions Included in 2014 Iowa Tourism Office Inventory	Number of locations included in 2000 IA GRR CMP list of Intrinsic Resources
	Scenic	Natural	Historical	Archeo-logical	Cultural	Recrea-tional								
Allamakee	13	7	8	1	8	23	60	1	5	4	18	6	10	6
Clayton	14	5	16	1	10	20	66	2	9	5	14	8	24	8
Dubuque	10	7	22	1	16	21	77	2	10	3	16	26	50	13
Jackson	7	8	8	0	5	21	49	1	3	2	3	11	22	7
Clinton	6	7	10	0	6	30	59	2	9	2	19	20	21	7
Scott	3	3	16	0	17	16	55	3	9	2	15	16	35	10
Muscatine	5	3	7	0	4	10	29	2	6	1	9	8	16	6
Louisa	7	15	4	1	1	23	51	1	3	0	17	1	13	3
Des Moines	19	6	16	1	8	18	68	0	13	2	20	13	23	3
Lee	11	0	21	0	6	19	57	2	3	4	20	8	20	6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>69</b>

SUMMARY TABLE OF THE INTRINSIC RESOURCES OF THE IOWA GREAT RIVER ROAD

## Existing Conditions along the Iowa Great River Road

Three supplemental documents in the Corridor Management Plan Library provide a review of a variety of conditions along the Iowa Great River Road as observed and assessed during the planning process throughout 2012 to early 2015.



The Condition of the Road Report addresses the current condition of all of the “14 points” that are required of a Corridor Management Plan (see inset on page 4 for a review of these points).



The Iowa Great River Road Route Traffic Data and Safety Report is a document prepared by the Iowa DOT and includes a summary of traffic and crash data for all routes comprising the designated Iowa Great River Road.



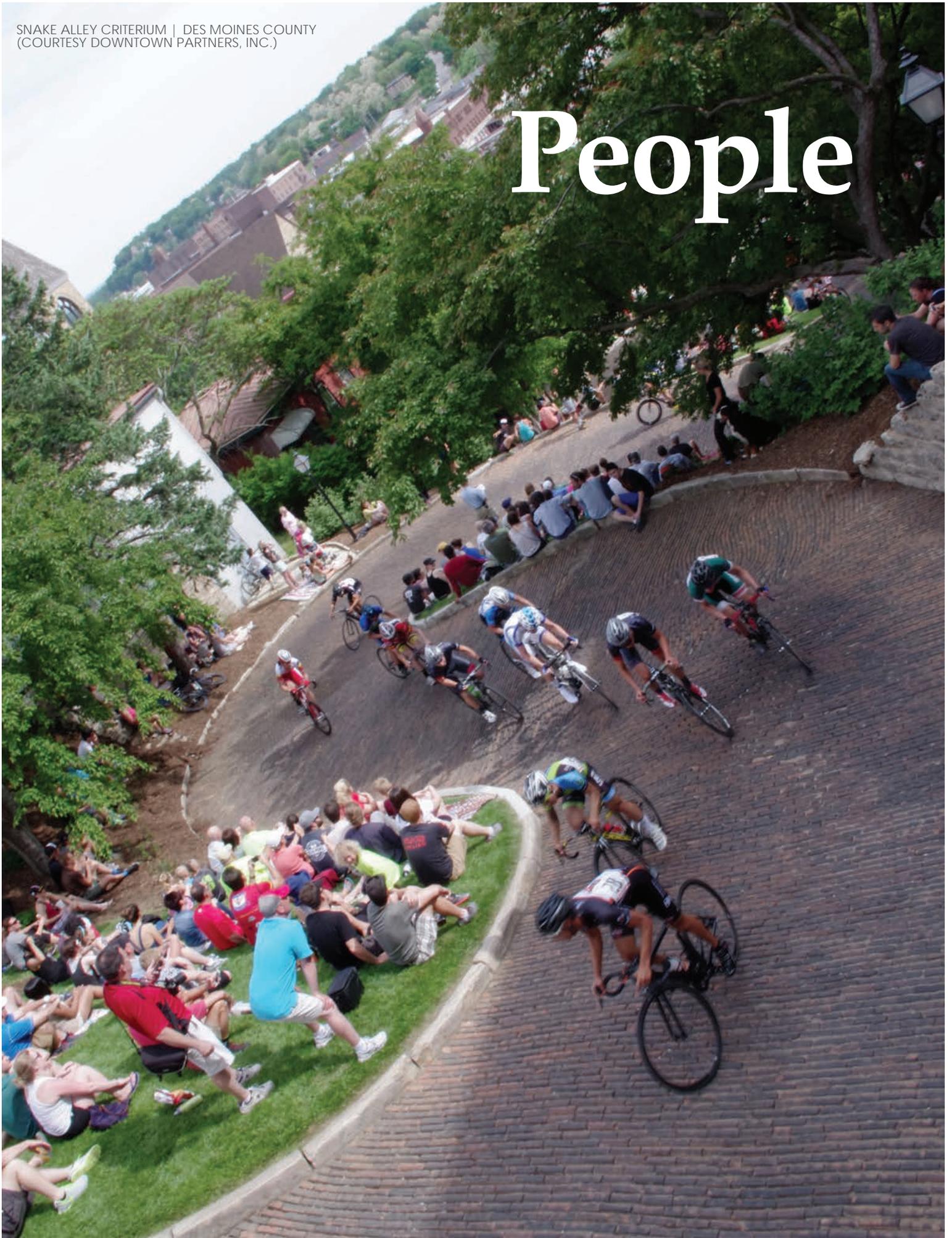
Finally, the Iowa Great River Road Document Library provides an annotated description of hundreds of local, state, and national documents which pertain to the Great River Road, the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, and the various diverse resources found along the Iowa Great River Road.



MISSISSIPPI RIVER RECREATION

SNAKE ALLEY CRITERIUM | DES MOINES COUNTY  
(COURTESY DOWNTOWN PARTNERS, INC.)

# People





## Importance of Public Input

Continuing to engage byway partners and stakeholders in implementing the vision laid out in this 2015 Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road is necessary for success. Throughout the planning process, organizational and agency representatives, governmental officials, business owners, and corridor residents have demonstrated their strong commitment to the Iowa Great River Road and its future and their desire to maintain involvement or deepen their support.

The following documents contained in the Corridor Management Plan Library provide supplemental and detailed information pertaining to this chapter.

	<b>Report of Spring 2012 Stakeholder Meetings</b> A complete report of the production, results, and public direction provided during the Spring 2012 Stakeholder Meetings.
	<b>The 2013 Iowa Great River Road Visitor Survey</b> Summary report, detailed result tabulation, and survey instrument for the 2013 Iowa Great River Road Visitor Survey.
	<b>The 2013 Iowa Great River Road Resident Survey</b> Summary report, detailed result tabulation, and survey instrument for the 2013 Iowa Great River Road Resident Survey.
	<b>Report of Spring 2014 Stakeholder Meetings</b> A complete report of the production, results, and public direction provided during the Spring 2014 Stakeholder Meetings.
	<b>Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Stakeholder List</b> A tabular presentation of the contact listing for the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission current as of January 2015. (Available upon request to the Commission)

## Stakeholder Meetings



A significant portion of the planning process that influenced the 2015 Corridor Management Plan involved providing input opportunities for the general public and representatives of stakeholder organizations such as municipal and county governments



and elected officials; state and federal agencies; non-profit interest groups; private organizations; and individual citizens.

In the spring of 2012, with the assistance and guidance provided by the Commission's byway planning firm, David L. Dahlquist Associates, Ankeny, Iowa, eleven public stakeholder meetings were conducted in six communities along the Iowa Great River Road. Approximately 175 attendees participated in these hour and half long meetings.

Two years later, in April of 2014, six stakeholder meetings were again conducted in the close vicinity (and in three cases, at the same facility) to the communities which hosted the 2012 meetings. Approximately 200 attendees participated in these two-hour meetings.

The following pages provide the Executive Summaries from the 2012 and 2014 Iowa Great River Road stakeholder meetings.

Throughout the planning process, the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Stakeholder List was significantly expanded with names and contact information for local, state, and regional stakeholders. This list formed the basis for project communications and announcements and grew from a few hundred to over 1,000 individuals.





# Iowa Great River Road

## CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

*Visioning our future in changing times*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | Spring 2012 Stakeholder Meetings



Pilot Emeritus Patsy Ramacitti introducing the March 28 Bettendorf Stakeholder Meeting

#### Iowa Great River Road Stakeholder Meetings Elicit Feedback about the Past, Present, and Bright Future for the National Scenic Byway

During the eleven 90-minute sessions, a brief presentation provided a historical background of the Iowa Great River Road and the Iowa MRPC. Information was shared with participants about the necessity for long-range planning for the route and details given about the project scope and anticipated timeline. However, the majority of each meeting was spent discussing the following key questions:

1. What is the Iowa Great River Road **known** for?
2. What can the Iowa Great River Road be **more well-known** for?
3. How has the Iowa Great River Road **been important** to organizations and communities?
4. How have organizations and communities **supported** the Iowa Great River Road?
5. How can the **effectiveness** of the Iowa Great River Road be increased?
6. What are those **big picture ideas** or outcomes that we should aim high to achieve for the Iowa Great River Road?

The most prominent topics which characterized the stakeholder meetings' discussions are summarized on the following page.

#### Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Initiates Stakeholder Meetings

In late 2011, the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission (Iowa MRPC) began the important process of updating the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Iowa Great River Road, the nationally-designated byway for which the Commission is responsible for stewarding. The Corridor Management Plan is a written document which outlines the **vision** for the Iowa Great River Road and guides a wide range of activities including resource protection, marketing, partnership organizing, and strategies for sharing the unique culture and history of the area.

A critical component of a successful CMP update focuses on **engaging** the Iowa Great River Road's varied stakeholders - including the agencies, organizations, and citizens in the many communities through which the route travels as well as state and federal partners. In the spring of 2012, the Iowa MRPC initiated a stakeholder input process. In total, more than **175 people** attended **eleven meetings** in six different Iowa Great River Road communities. Meetings took place on the following dates and in the following locations:

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| March 26   Burlington | April 11   Dubuque   |
| March 28   Bettendorf | April 12   Camanche  |
| April 10   McGregor   | April 24   Muscatine |



Attendees of the April 12 Camanche Stakeholder Meeting

## Iowa Great River Road 2012 Stakeholder Meetings | Prominent Discussion Topics

- All meetings conveyed a **positive, optimistic outlook** for the future of the Iowa Great River Road. No inherent opposition regarding the Byway's past focus and current planning efforts were expressed; rather participants offered support and many ideas.
- Participants' comments reaffirmed the diverse and internationally **significant intrinsic qualities** of the Iowa Great River Road and noted the Mississippi River and its communities as the corridor's most important assets.
- Discussions revealed an underlying appreciation for **multiple layers of value** in the corridor: recreation access, tourism, quality of life attributes, economic development, historic and cultural heritages, and the region's strong sense of place.
- With the lineal quality of the Iowa Great River Road's route, the corresponding Mississippi River, and the developing Mississippi River Trail; the Byway offers travelers and residents **lineal multi-modal experiences**.
- An unfulfilled need or desire to have an organization facilitate **multi-jurisdictional coordination** and partnership building and strengthening. Participants spoke of the benefit of enhancing communications between agencies, organizations and attractions - fostering a collaborative environment in which these groups can learn from one another and increase the effectiveness of their own service delivery.
- The need for an **integrated array of media** to communicate the intrinsic values and experiences of the Iowa Great River Road corridor. From printed maps and brochures to electronic apps, social media and websites, participants recognized the difficulty of providing the appropriate mix of media and shared their own struggles to find balance.
- There were no particularly strong or pointed expectations or demands placed on the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission. While several participants were unsure about the Commission's past roles and projects, the overall tone of the conversations suggest **support for a variety of future actions** the Commission might take to benefit the Byway, its communities, and its travelers.



MRPC Treasurer M.J. Smith and IA Commissioner Jane Regan at the April 10 McGregor Meeting



Attendees of the April 24 Muscatine Stakeholder Meeting

This first round of stakeholder input will support the development of the upcoming "Condition of the Great River Road" report. The Iowa MRPC looks forward to your continued engagement!

A copy of a detailed report of the Spring 2012 Stakeholder Meetings is available by request to [ddahlquist@mchsi.com](mailto:ddahlquist@mchsi.com)



For updates, "like" the Iowa Great River Road on Facebook

Iowa Great River Road website: [www.iowagreatriverroad.com](http://www.iowagreatriverroad.com)



### Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

**Allamakee County**  
Jane Regan  
[jregan@leschenskyins.com](mailto:jregan@leschenskyins.com)  
563-380-3635

**Dubuque County**  
John Goodmann  
[jgoodmann@real-good.com](mailto:jgoodmann@real-good.com)  
563-599-4350

**Muscatine County**  
John Oberhaus  
[jloberhaus@louisacomm.net](mailto:jloberhaus@louisacomm.net)  
319-252-2232



**Iowa Department of Transportation**  
Troy Siefert, LA  
Iowa Byways  
Program Coordinator  
[Troy.Siefert@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:Troy.Siefert@dot.iowa.gov)  
515-239-1369

**Clayton County**  
M.J. Smith  
[mjsmith@alpinecom.net](mailto:mjsmith@alpinecom.net)  
563-252-2232

**Jackson County**  
Ronald Thielen  
[rthielen@westphalec.com](mailto:rthielen@westphalec.com)  
563-590-1621

**Scott County**  
Patsy Ramacitti  
[bettplr@aol.com](mailto:bettplr@aol.com)  
563-332-5446



**Clinton County**  
Edith Pfeffer  
[edithrpfeffer@yahoo.com](mailto:edithrpfeffer@yahoo.com)  
563-243-7751

**Lee County**  
Larry Kruse  
[kruselw@hotmail.com](mailto:kruselw@hotmail.com)  
319-469-2018

● ● ● ● ●  
**DAVID L. DAHLQUIST ASSOCIATES, LLC**  
2020 Grand Avenue, Suite 200  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
[www.ddaforum.com](http://www.ddaforum.com)

**Des Moines County**  
Debra Jochims  
[debjochims@aol.com](mailto:debjochims@aol.com)  
319-752-4455

**Louisa County**  
Jay Schweitzer  
[jayts@yahoo.com](mailto:jayts@yahoo.com)  
319-728-2219

David L. Dahlquist, President  
[ddahlquist@mchsi.com](mailto:ddahlquist@mchsi.com)  
office: 515-528-8182  
cell: 515-326-1593

Breann Bye, Associate  
[breannashlie@hotmail.com](mailto:breannashlie@hotmail.com)  
office: 515-528-8182  
cell: 641-521-9340



# Iowa Great River Road CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

*Visioning our future in changing times*

An Initiative of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | Spring 2014 Stakeholder Meetings



Panel discussion at the April 3 Marquette stakeholder meeting

### Iowa Great River Road Stakeholder Meetings focus on “Core Management Directions” and Associated Implementation Actions

The primary purpose of the six 2014 Iowa Great River Road (IA GRR) stakeholder meetings was to allow the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission (IA MRPC) a forum to hear from a wide variety of stakeholders from local, state, and federal agencies and organizations as well as the general public.

To help guide the six two-hour stakeholder meeting discussions, “A Complete Management Approach” framework was presented, with a variety of Iowa Great River Road-supporting actions organized into four “Core Management Directions” – **Intrinsic Resource Conservation; Physical Improvements; Promotion and Interpretation;** and **Administrative Operations.**

A key component of each of the six meetings was a facilitated panel discussion of 4-6 panelists representing a diverse array of local, state, and regional agencies and organizations.

The most prominent topics which characterized the stakeholder meetings’ discussions are summarized on the following page.

### Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Initiates Stakeholder Meetings

In late 2011, the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission (Iowa MRPC) began the important process of updating the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Iowa Great River Road, the nationally-designated byway for which the Commission is responsible for stewarding. The Corridor Management Plan is a written document which outlines the **vision** for the Iowa Great River Road and guides a wide range of activities including resource protection, marketing, partnership organizing, and strategies for sharing the unique culture and history of the area.

A critical component of a successful CMP update focuses on **engaging** the Iowa Great River Road’s varied stakeholders - including the agencies, organizations, and citizens in the many communities through which the route travels as well as state and federal partners. In the spring of 2012, the Iowa MRPC initiated a stakeholder input process by hosting meetings in six locations. In the spring of 2014, meetings were again held in these communities to continue this important process. In total, nearly **200 people** attended **six meetings** in six different Iowa Great River Road communities. Meetings took place on the following dates and in the following locations:

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| April 2   Camanche   | April 9   Muscatine  |
| April 3   Marquette  | April 10   Davenport |
| April 8   Burlington | April 15   Dubuque   |



Panel discussion at the April 2 Camanche stakeholder meeting

## Iowa Great River Road 2014 Stakeholder Meetings | Prominent Discussion Topics

### Primary Observation: Multidimensionality

#### Multidimensionality of Importance

The Iowa Great River Road and Mississippi River are important at many scales and for many audiences. The Iowa Great River Road and the Mississippi River are assets to local communities within the 10-county corridor, they provide a regional presence linking Iowa with neighboring states, they make the state unique, they're national resources, and they're internationally known and valued.

#### Multidimensionality of Access and Experience

The Iowa Great River Road provides an appreciated spine of vehicular access for resources along the Mississippi River and in the 10 counties, but it also provides a way to connect visitors and residents with the landscape and experiences by means of bicycle and watercraft.

#### Multidimensionality of Communication Methods Required

Enhancing the Iowa Great River Road as a national, state and local asset and travel destination requires considering ongoing investments in multiple types of communications methods and media.

### Secondary Observation: Connections

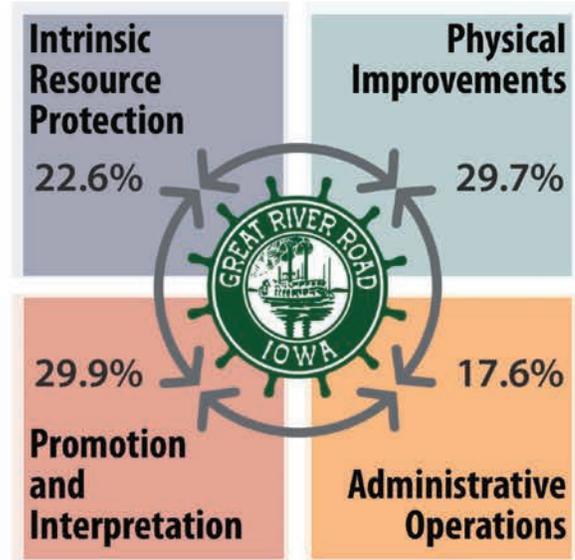
Stakeholders consistently expressed a desire for the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission to be more visible within the counties and communities along the Iowa Great River Road.

### Secondary Observation: Reaching Multiple Visitor Demographics

The findings from the 2013 Visitor and Resident Survey reveal an predominantly older demographic of visitors to the sites and attractions along the Iowa Great River Road. This data was shared with meeting panelists and attendees and prompted reflections about the need for resource managers and the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission to find ways to connect with younger traveler demographics to understand their interests and travel requirements.

### Secondary Observation: Investment Levels are Inadequate

Stewarding and promoting the Iowa Great River Road is currently the primary responsibility of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission. Though regional and state tourism and transportation organizations share information about the National Scenic Byway, the majority of effort is left to the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission. After learning that the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission is ten member volunteer organization with no compensated staff and a modest state appropriation of \$40,000, panelists and attendees expressed the need to find other ways of financially investing in the national treasure and resource that is the Iowa Great River Road.



A Complete Management Approach - Percentages of Votes for each Core Management Direction area

A copy of a detailed report of the Spring 2014 Stakeholder Meetings is available by request to [ddahlquist@outlook.com](mailto:ddahlquist@outlook.com)



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The document was prepared with financial support provided by the Federal Highway Administration with a National Scenic Byways Program Grant as well as financial and in-kind assistance provided by the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

## Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

<b>Allamakee County</b> Jane Regan <a href="mailto:jregan@leschenskyins.com">jregan@leschenskyins.com</a> 563-380-3635	<b>Dubuque County</b> John Goodmann <a href="mailto:jgoodmann@real-good.com">jgoodmann@real-good.com</a> 563-599-4350	<b>Muscatine County</b> Daniel Petersen <a href="mailto:srpeters@hotmail.com">srpeters@hotmail.com</a> 563-263-3527
<b>Clayton County</b> Lori Wallace <a href="mailto:huknorth@yahoo.com">huknorth@yahoo.com</a> 319-551-6171	<b>Jackson County</b> Lori Roling <a href="mailto:troling@yahoo.com">troling@yahoo.com</a> 563-542-1243	<b>Scott County</b> Scott Tunnicliff <a href="mailto:hcvscott@gmail.com">hcvscott@gmail.com</a> 563-322-8293
<b>Clinton County</b> Edith Pfeffer <a href="mailto:edithpfeffer@yahoo.com">edithpfeffer@yahoo.com</a> 563-243-7751	<b>Lee County</b> Larry Kruse <a href="mailto:kruselw@hotmail.com">kruselw@hotmail.com</a> 319-469-2018	Prepared by: ● ● ● ● ● <b>DAVID L. DAHLQUIST ASSOCIATES, LLC</b> 1321 SW 31st Lane Ankeny, IA 50023 <a href="http://www.ddaforum.com">www.ddaforum.com</a>
<b>Des Moines County</b> Debra Jochims <a href="mailto:debjochims@aol.com">debjochims@aol.com</a> 319-752-4455	<b>Louisa County</b> Jay Schweitzer <a href="mailto:jayts@yahoo.com">jayts@yahoo.com</a> 319-728-2219	<b>David L. Dahlquist, President</b> <a href="mailto:ddahlquist@outlook.com">ddahlquist@outlook.com</a> office: 515-963-1989 cell: 515-326-1593



**Mary Stahlhut**  
 Iowa Byways  
 Program Coordinator  
[mary.stahlhut@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:mary.stahlhut@dot.iowa.gov)  
 515-239-1369



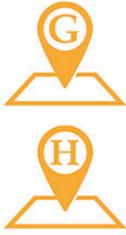
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Iowa Great River Road website:  
[www.iowagreatriverroad.com](http://www.iowagreatriverroad.com)

**Breann Bye, Associate**  
[breannashlie@hotmail.com](mailto:breannashlie@hotmail.com)  
 office: 515-963-1989  
 cell: 641-521-9340

## Visitor and Resident Surveys



The primary goal of 2013 Iowa Great River Road Survey was to gather and report indicators of the needs, desires and perceptions of Iowa Great River Road National Scenic Byway travelers and area residents.

The survey findings will assist the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and its stakeholder organizations in providing information, services and facilities that are more effective for people to experience the Iowa Great River Road National Scenic Byway.

### Survey Objectives:

1. Determine the current level of awareness of the Iowa Great River Road.
2. Determine whether the overall perceptions of the Byway are positive, neutral, or negative.
3. Recognize the degree to which visitors' trip expectations were or were not fulfilled.



4. Determine what qualities and/or amenities bring visitors to Iowa Great River Road counties.
5. Determine what community qualities or amenities residents value and how they feel the Iowa Great River Road impacts those qualities and amenities.
6. Collect information about the types of traveler/visitor service improvements that could be implemented along the Iowa Great River Road.
7. Collect demographic information about travelers to and residents of the region.
8. Identify the frequency of travel to the area, and what else visitors do with their leisure time.
9. Collect information about spending patterns.
10. Develop a survey instrument and methodology that can be replicated in the future to measure changes in a variety of key indicators including visitor/resident needs, values, and perceptions of the Iowa Great River Road National.
11. Provide visitor and user satisfaction indicators which may be useful to other state segments of the Great River Road.

The following pages provide the Executive Summaries of the 2013 Visitor and Resident Surveys.

SCENIC OVERLOOK | DUBUQUE COUNTY





# Iowa Great River Road 2013 VISITOR SURVEY



## Here's information about Iowa Great River Road VISITORS...

**50%** of visitors plan to spend **2-3 days** along the Mississippi River



**26%** of visitors plan to spend **4 days** or longer along the Mississippi River



...of **Visitors** are either "**Somewhat**" or "**Very Much Aware**" of the Iowa Great River Road. 20% of Visitors report they are "**Not Aware**" of the Iowa Great River Road



**42%** of Visitors report their trip **exceeded** expectations



**55%** of Visitors report their trip **met** expectations



**3%** of Visitors report their trip **was less than what they expected**



Byway signs,

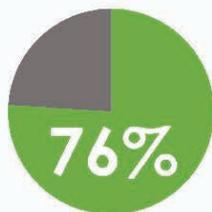


Maps,



and Word of Mouth...

...are the ways **75%** of **Visitors** became aware of the Iowa Great River Road



**76%** of **Visitors** say **no additional tourism services or visitor amenities** are needed in the area

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From the **24% of Visitors** and **55% of Residents** who felt additional tourism services or visitor amenities were needed, the following were most requested:



Public restroom facilities



Maps



Guide signs and Attractions Signs



Bicycle trails and paths



Expanded advertising and marketing of local attractions

Summary results of a self-administered survey completed by 430 self-identified visitors to the Iowa Great River Road region from June to October 2013.

Visitors ranked the importance of various factors in their decision to visit the area



**70%** of visitors are **repeat visitors**

**40%** of repeat visitors have been visiting the area for

**25+** years

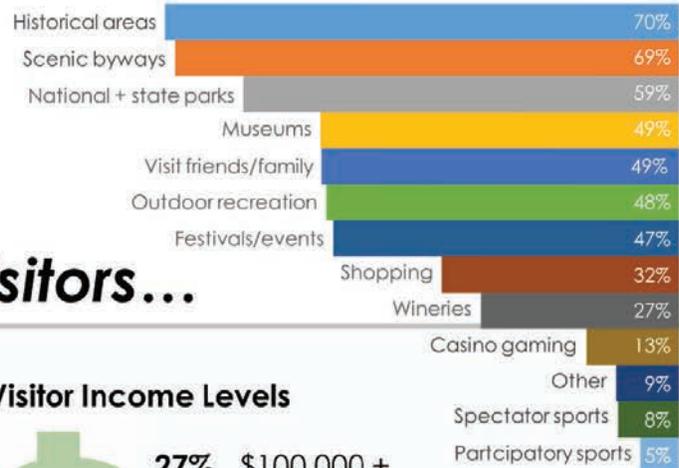


of repeat visitors feel the area has **changed for the better**. Only 1% feel it has changed for the worse.



plan to **visit again** specifically to experience the Iowa Great River Road

When traveling for pleasure, Visitors selected the following areas of interest:



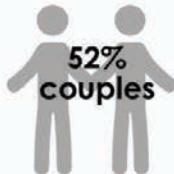
## Information about Visitors...

**75%**



of visitors plan to stay overnight along the River

**52%** couples



### Visitor Income Levels



**27%** \$100,000 +

**43%** \$50,000 - \$99,999

**30%** \$0 - \$49,999

**65.3**

Average Age of Visitor Respondents



**41%**



**59%**

**67%**

of Visitors are either **Retired** or work in **Management/Professional** fields

**62%**



of Visitors have at least an Associate's Degree



Iowa Great River Road  
2013 VISITOR SURVEY

For more information please contact John Goodmann, Chair, Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission, at 563-599-4350 or David L. Dahlquist Associates at 515-963-1989 or ddahlquist@outlook.com.

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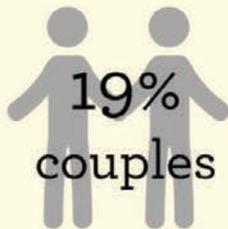


# Iowa Great River Road 2013 RESIDENT SURVEY



## Information about Residents...

81.4% have been a resident of the area for **11+** years



### Visitor Income Levels



<b>21.4%</b>	\$100,000 +
<b>39%</b>	\$50,000 - \$99,999
<b>40%</b>	\$0 - \$49,999

# 62%

of Residents are either **Retired** or work in **Management/Professional** fields



39%



62%

# 61%



of Residents have at least an Associate's Degree

# 56.9

Average Age of Resident Respondents

For more information please contact John Goodmann, Chair, Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission, at 563-599-4350 or David L. Dahlquist Associates at 515-963-1989 or [ddahlquist@outlook.com](mailto:ddahlquist@outlook.com).



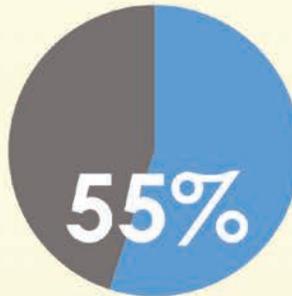
# Iowa Great River Road 2013 RESIDENT SURVEY



Here's information about Iowa Great River Road **RESIDENTS**...



73% of residents feel the area has **changed for the better**. 4.3% feel it has changed for the worse.



55% of **Residents** say **additional** tourism services or visitor amenities are needed in the area

78% of residents feel tourism is either **Very Important** or **Extremely Important** to the local area economy



57% of residents feel the Iowa Great River Road **Contributes to a Great Extent** or **Contributes Significantly** to local area tourism



82% ...of **Residents** are either **"Somewhat"** or **"Very Much Aware"** of the Iowa Great River Road. 10% of Residents report they are **"Not Aware"** of the Iowa Great River Road

*"Completion of the Great River Road has increased the number of people coming into our community. More tourists mean more money being spent in our communities."* - resident from Guttenberg

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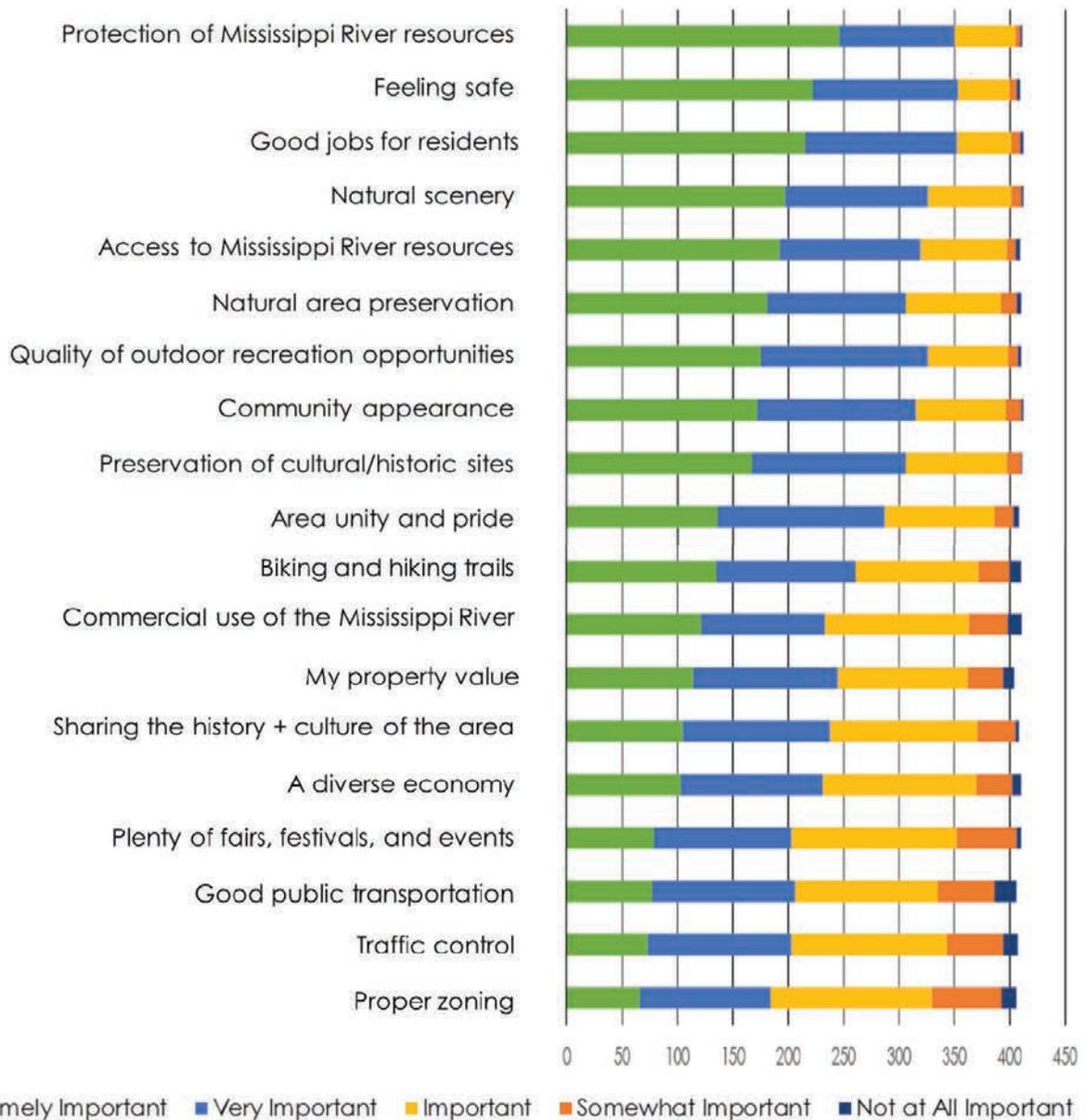
Summary results of a self-administered survey completed by 428 self-identified residents of the Iowa Great River Road region from June to October 2013.



# Iowa Great River Road 2013 RESIDENT SURVEY



## Residents rated the importance of a variety of local and regional characteristics



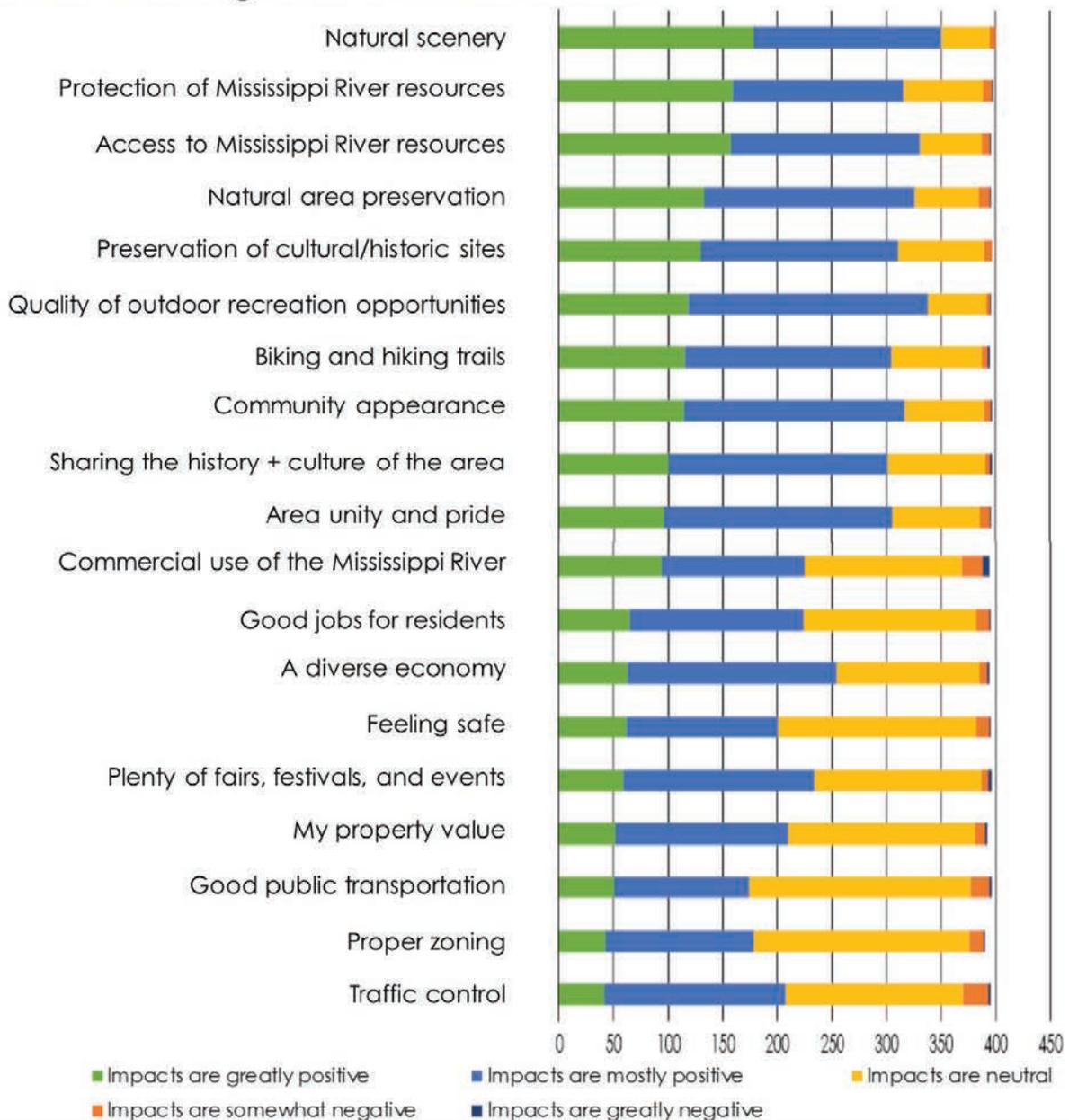
Summary results of a self-administered survey completed by 428 self-identified residents of the Iowa Great River Road region from June to October 2013.



# Iowa Great River Road 2013 RESIDENT SURVEY

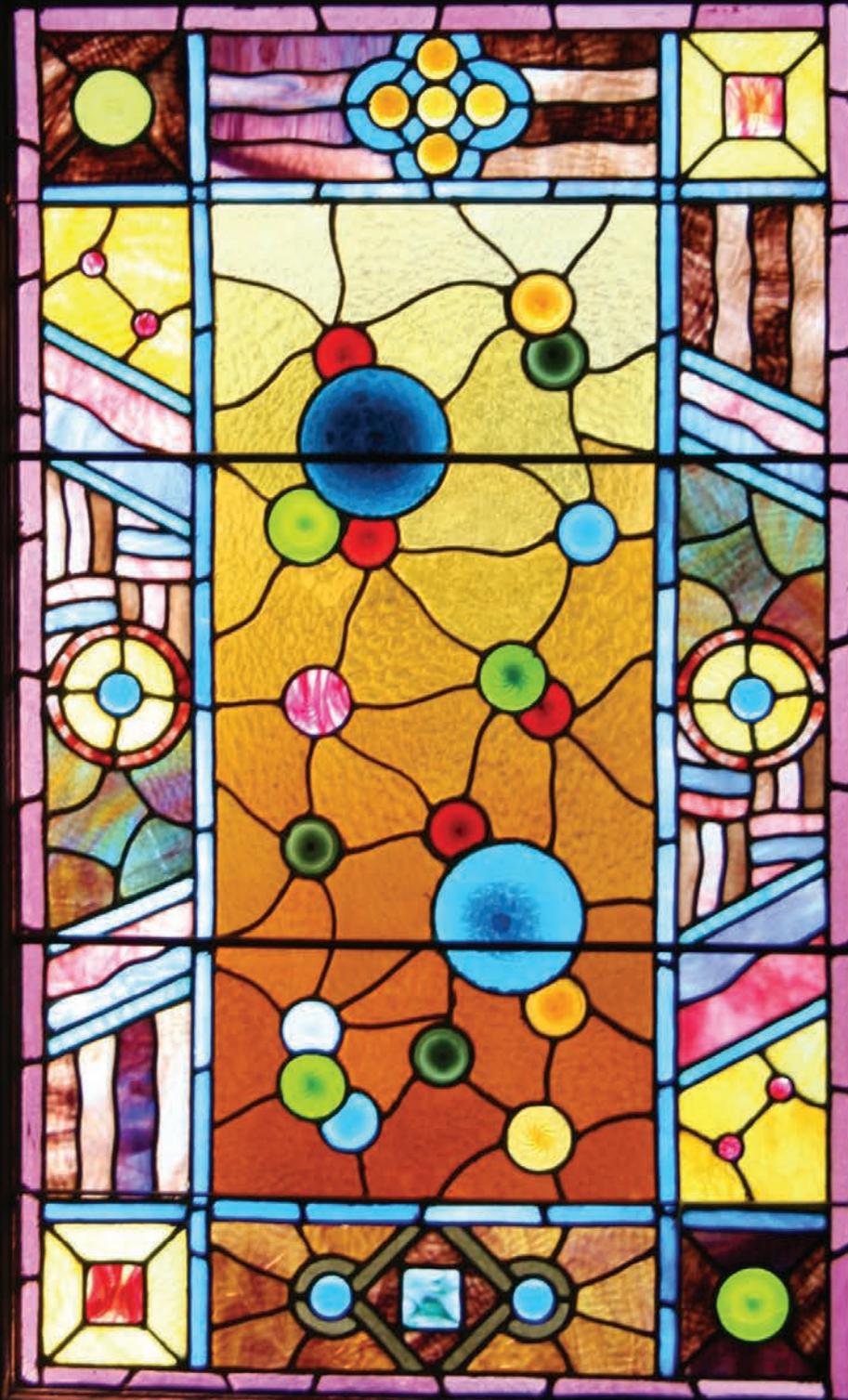


## Residents rated the impacts the Iowa Great River Road has on local and regional characteristics



For more information please contact John Goodmann, Chair, Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission, at 563-599-4350 or David L. Dahlquist Associates at 515-963-1989 or ddahlquist@outlook.com.

# Principles



## Principles for the Iowa Great River Road

To respect the incredible **place** that is the Iowa Great River Road corridor and the input of the **people** involved in developing this plan, specific **principles** have been adopted by the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission to offer a framework for implementation. This chapter describes the broad vision of the Iowa Great River Road, communicates specific goals the Commission and its partners hope to achieve, outlines four Core Management Directions and 40+ associated Actions that can structure effective enhancement of the Byway, discusses the importance of meaningful interpretation, and considers the financial context within which this plan is presented.

The following documents contained in the Corridor Management Plan Library provide supplemental and detailed information pertaining to this chapter.



### Core Management Directions, Actions, and Financial Considerations

Detailed background and descriptions of Actions and financial considerations supporting the Core Management Directions of the Iowa Great River Road.



### Great River Road Interpretive Plan and Tool Kit

A comprehensive guide for themes and stories for interpreting the entire Great River Road.

## Vision

The Iowa Great River Road will sustain rewarding lifelong experiences for Iowans and visitors from around the world through the support of a cooperative network of partners and stakeholders, each of which invest in and benefit from the conservation, development, promotion, interpretation and management of the diverse intrinsic resources of the Iowa Mississippi River Valley.

## Goals

1. Continue the identification, documentation and protection of the intrinsic resources of the Great River Road.
2. Expand the local citizen awareness of the resources and importance of the Great River Road in Iowa and the adjoining states.
3. Provide new travel experiences through effective interpretation and promotion of the Great River Road.
4. Increase information services to residents and organizations along the Great River Road.
5. Identify economic development opportunities based on the sensitive use of the Road's intrinsic resources.
6. Sustain existing alliances with other organizations that are interested in the future of the Great River Road and develop new partnerships where needed.
7. Identify volunteer opportunities for individuals and organizations along the Great River Road.
8. Assist in coordinating the increase of investment and awareness of the Great River Road and its resources

with development of a variety of amenities and delivery of programs for public awareness, interpretation and promotion.

9. Increase the awareness for Great River Road stakeholders of availability of public and private funding for resource conservation, transportation enhancement, interpretation and promotion.
10. Develop communication opportunities to tell the stories of the Great River Road.
11. Arrange community involvement meetings and workshops pertaining to a variety of Great River Road-related topics.

12. Advocate for the Great River Road research, planning, and development studies.
13. Advocate for transportation-related projects in the Great River Road corridor that incorporate the principles of context sensitive design.
14. Advocate for the use of sustainable design principles such as L.E.E.D. (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), native plant community restoration, multi-functional streets, etc.



## Core Management Directions and Actions

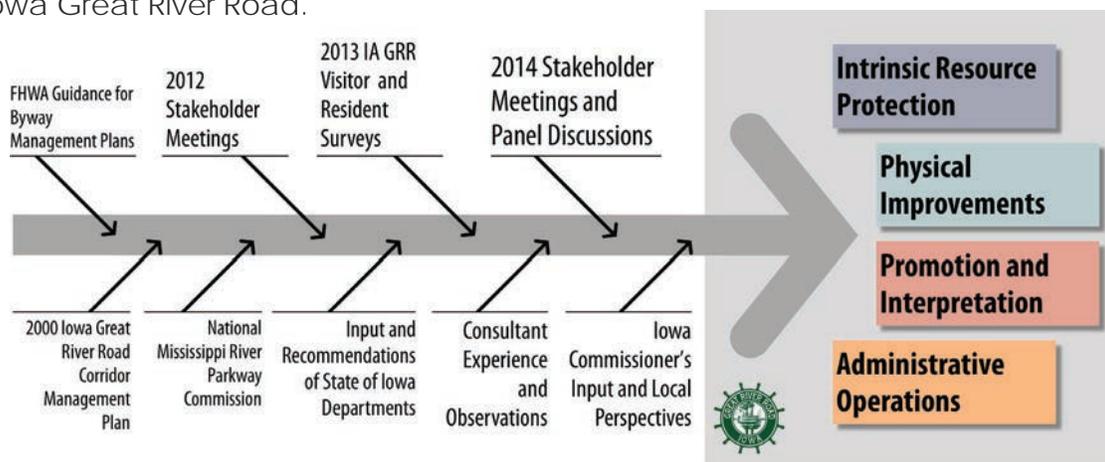


The Iowa Great River Road, the National Scenic Byway that connects people and their communities with Iowa’s most important scenic, historic, cultural, natural, and recreation corridor, deserves thoughtful, comprehensive and long range planning and management. Conserving intrinsic resources, building physical improvements, promoting and interpreting, and effectively administering this dynamic resource are the four pillars for supporting the ongoing, new and long range investment of human talents and financial resources. After all, the Great River Road coupled with the Mississippi River and the Midwestern rural landscapes and communities are Iowa’s equivalent of ocean seashores, large freshwater lakes and majestic mountains.

“Core Management Directions” describe the four broad, goal-oriented, mainstays that will continually support the effective sustenance, development, promotion and administration of the Iowa Great River Road. These are constants which can guide and direct as well as account for and evaluate the investments of human and financial resources made on behalf of the Iowa Great River Road.

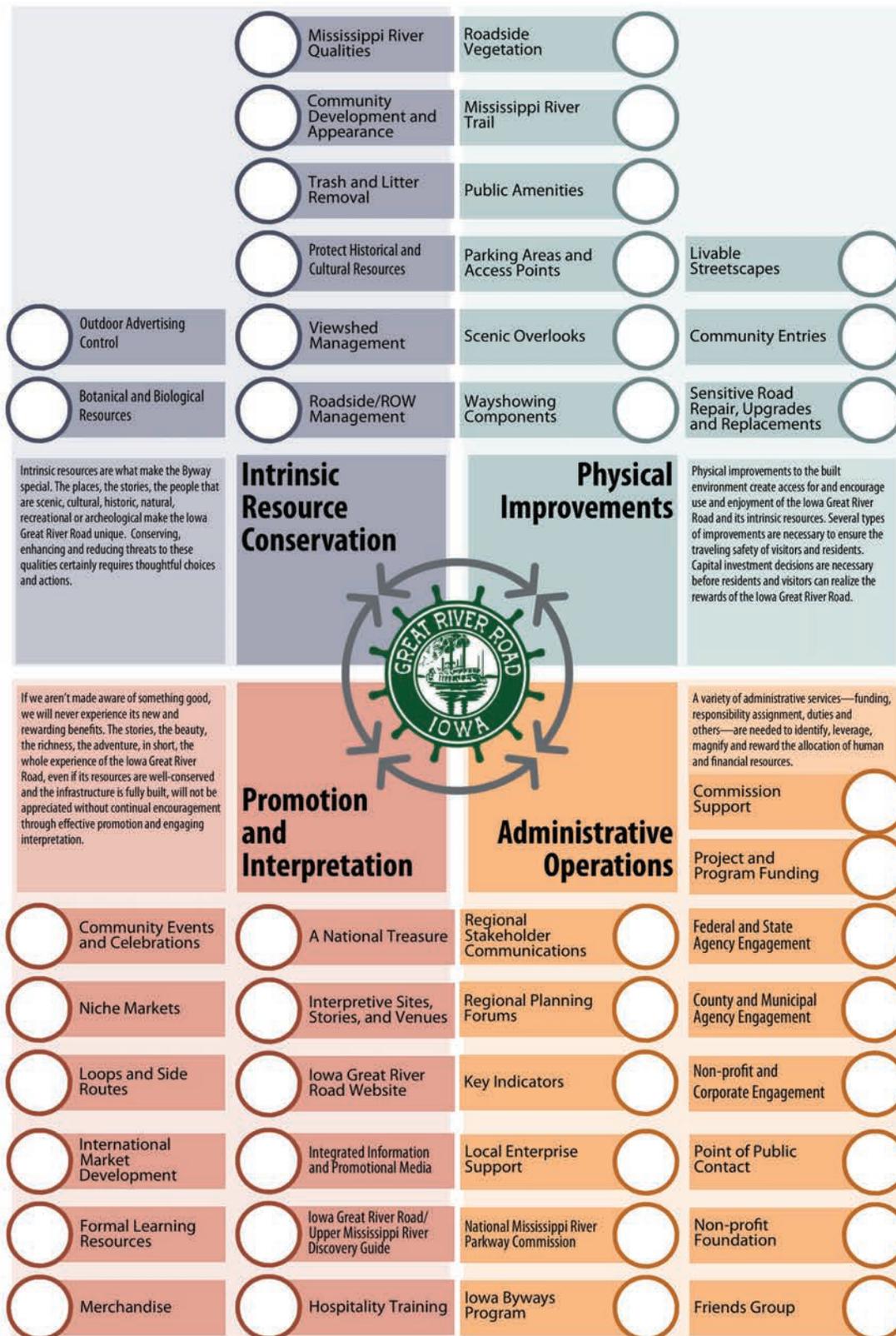
“Actions” are the expression of projects, programs and even day-to-day activities undertaken by the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and its broad range of partners and stakeholders—“fulfillment partners” -- which are dedicated to and require the effective management of the Iowa Great River Road. The dynamics that come with time will and should bring the Commission and each engaged partner to regularly consider the effectiveness of their fulfillment of specific actions.

The future of the Iowa Great River Road rests in the hands of a multitude of invested and committed stakeholders. Local citizens and property owners to a full array of local-, regional-, state-, and national-level agencies and organizations representing appropriate public and private interests all have needs and opportunities that can only be met through effective management of the Byway. The Commission through its ten members and its legislatively mandated mission, is the only organization which can draw the roadmap for the future and lead, motivate, challenge, encourage and support the “village of partners” needed to care for the Iowa Great River Road.



INPUT LEADS TO MANAGEMENT DIRECTIONS

# Four Integrated Management Directions Supported by more than 40 Distinct Actions



## Intrinsic Resource Conservation

Intrinsic resources are what make each byway special. People, places and stories are what make the scenic, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and archaeological resources of the Iowa Great River Road truly unique.

**CORE MANAGEMENT GOAL:** Conserve, reduce threats to, and enhance the Great River Road's intrinsic qualities and resources.

### IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

**A Roadside/ROW Management**  
 Manage the roadsides and rights-of-way of the Iowa Great River Road for visual and environmental sustainability purposes.

**B Viewshed Management**  
 Recognize and enhance authentic scenic qualities that can be seen from the roadway of the Iowa Great River Road.

**C Protect Historical and Cultural Resources**  
 Identify, protect and communicate the intrinsic qualities of historical and cultural personalities, events, sites, artifacts, photographs, art, crafts, livelihoods, and oral histories of the Mississippi River and Iowa Great River Road region.

**D Trash and Litter Removal**  
 Remove and recycle trash, litter and debris from along the Iowa Great River Road roadway.

**E Community Development and Appearance**  
 Recognize, conserve, and enhance the appearance and compatible development of the communities along the Iowa Great River Road.

**F Mississippi River Qualities**  
 Recognize, conserve, and enhance the appearance, water quality and compatibility of the multiple uses of the Mississippi River and its shoreline.

**G Botanical and Biological Resources**  
 Recognize, conserve, and enhance the quality and quantity of botanical and biological resources of the corridor related to the Iowa Great River Road and the water tributaries leading to the Mississippi River.

**H Outdoor Advertising Control**  
 Regulate the erection of new outdoor advertising signs in accordance with federal, state and local laws, policies and ordinances.

## Physical Improvements

Physical improvements to the built environment create access and encourage use and enjoyment of the Iowa Great River Road and its intrinsic resources. Several types of improvements are necessary to ensure travel safety for visitors and residents.

**CORE MANAGEMENT GOAL:** Make capital investments in physical improvements for the Great River Road which allow residents and visitors to more fully realize the rewards of this National Scenic Byway.

### IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

-  **A Wayshowing Components**  
Install and maintain, according to IDOT policy, new Iowa Great River Road Byway route guide signs; Byway entrance and exit markers; directional signage for Byway attractions; and attraction identification signage. Prepare and distribute printed and digital Byway maps and construct Byway orientation stops at key locations.
- 

-  **B Scenic Overlooks**  
In all ten Iowa Great River Road counties, create and enhance scenic overlooks at key locations on or near the Iowa Great River Road to provide public access and parking for travelers to view the Mississippi River; rare geological and water features, agricultural landscapes, historic sites, city views, etc.

-  **C Parking Areas and Access Points**  
At key locations along the Iowa Great River Road, maintain, improve and, where needed, construct public parking areas for automobiles, recreation vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles and pedestrian access to trails; public boat launches and water bodies; federal, state, county and municipal parks; historic sites, museums, and interpretive centers; and other public assets and attractions associated with the Iowa Great River Road.

-  **D Public Amenities**  
Maintain, improve and, where needed, construct public amenities including restrooms, drinking water stations, rest areas, shelters, and trash receptacles. Provide accessibility during reasonable times of the day and incorporate universal design features.

-  **E Mississippi River Trail**  
Implement the routing of the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) from Minnesota to Missouri to provide a continuous bicycle path and connections to public amenities, parking areas, and attractions within the corridor of the Iowa Great River Road.

**F Roadside Vegetation**

Plant, rehabilitate and maintain ground covers, trees and shrubs in the roadsides of the Iowa Great River Road which are consistent with the principles of the Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund and community aesthetics and remove overgrown vegetation which otherwise blocks views of the Mississippi River and scenic vistas of the Byway.

**G Sensitive Road Repair, Upgrades and Replacements**

Undertake routine maintenance, repair and replacement of roadway infrastructure -pavement, traffic control devices, drainage structures, bridges, fencing, etc.-in ways that are sensitive to and support a positive driving experience and visual appearance for the Iowa Great River Road.

**H Community Entries**

Implement and maintain high quality and locally authentic community entrances for each town and city along the Iowa Great River Road and encourage expressions of the community's connection to the Iowa Great River Road and the Mississippi River.

**I Livable Streetscapes**

Encourage communities to implement and maintain street and sidewalk improvements which will enhance the overall livability and usefulness (complete streets, green streets, quiet streets) of urban portions of the Iowa Great River Road.

## Promotion and Interpretation

If we aren't made aware of something good, we will never experience its new and rewarding benefits. The stories, the beauty, the richness, the adventure, in short, the whole experience of the Iowa Great River Road, even if its resources are well-conserved and the infrastructure is fully built, will not be appreciated without effective promotion and engaging interpretation of the Byway's intrinsic resources and travel opportunities.

**CORE MANAGEMENT GOAL:** Effectively promote and interpret the Great River Road's intrinsic resources and travel opportunities.

### IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

**A** ***National Treasure***  
 Emphasize in all promotion and interpretation related to the Iowa Great River Road, that it provides the link to America's greatest river and a corridor of international importance.



**B** ***Interpretive Sites, Stories, and Venues***  
 Expand the offering of interpretive experience opportunities to build on the presently identified Interpretive Centers by including additional types of sites, interpretive programs, tours, and itineraries using a variety of authentic themes, messages, stories and media.



**C** ***Iowa Great River Road Website***  
 Redevelop, activate, and maintain an up-to-date website for the Iowa Great River Road and support it with widespread promotion and public awareness.



**D** ***Integrated Information and Promotional Media***  
 Design, produce, print, upload and distribute a variety of promotion and information media developed to serve the various needs and desires individuals and travel groups have in the pre-visit, visit and post-visit stages of experiencing the Iowa Great River Road.



**E** ***Iowa Great River Road/ Upper Mississippi River Discovery Guide***  
 Facilitate a well-known travel author to write, produce and market a top level, commercially produced travel discovery guide (book) focused on the varied intrinsic resources associated with the Iowa Great River Road region and the upper Mississippi River Valley.



**F** ***Hospitality Training***  
 Deliver training, information and support materials pertaining to the Iowa Great River Road for the diverse audience



of 'front-line' hospitality personnel in the public and private sectors who provide information to the public.

### **G** *Community Events and Celebrations*



Emphasize, promote and strengthen the effectiveness of local community events and celebrations by linking them with being part of the Iowa Great River Road and the Upper Mississippi River valley.

### **H** *Niche Markets*



Emphasize connecting niche travel market groups—agri-tourism, culinary tourism, ecotourism, geo-tourism, recreation tourism, art tourism, motorcycle groups, vintage or special car clubs, bicycle tour groups, etc. with the Iowa Great River Road.

### **I** *Loops and Side Routes*



Identify and inform travelers of highway, road and street segments that provide them with loops, spurs and alternative routes of travel in exploring the Great River Road region in Iowa and the adjoining states.

### **J** *International Market Development*



Participate in programs intended to develop travel to the Iowa Great River Road by international travel markets through targeted promotion and group tour support. Translate promotional and interpretive media into additional languages.

### **K** *Formal Learning Resources*



Facilitate and support education-focused groups (school districts, colleges and universities, home school associations) to promote and use the intrinsic resources of the Iowa Great River Road as a rich teaching and learning resource.

### **L** *Merchandise*



Develop a licensing program to encourage the creation of product and merchandise lines that emphasize the Iowa Great River Road and its many resources.

## Administrative Operations

The many interested parties, the long geographic area, and the complexity and fascinating dynamics of stakeholder groups naturally pull people and organizations in many directions. A variety of administrative operations—funding, responsibility assignment, communication duties,—are needed to identify, leverage, magnify and reward the allocation of human and financial resources.

**CORE MANAGEMENT GOAL:** Effectively administer the Iowa Great River Road to communicate with stakeholders, coordinate partnerships, implement projects, and ensure long-term organizational sustainability.

### IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

**A** *Regional Stakeholder Communications*  
 Conduct regular communications with a full range of local, regional, state, Great River Road states and national stakeholders.

**B** *Regional Planning Forums*  
 Periodically facilitate regional planning forums which bring together a variety of public and private interest organizations to address issues, challenges and opportunities which effect a larger area of influence than what is covered by any single organization or agency along the Iowa Great River Road.

**C** *Key Indicators*  
  
  
 Identify, measure and report key indicators related to the Iowa Great River Road including visitor and resident opinions about the Byway and its management; measures of intrinsic resource conservation; economic impacts of the Iowa Great River Road and associated features; and economic impact and influence of the Iowa Great River Road corridor.

**D** *Local Enterprise Support*  
 Identify, emphasize and support local business enterprises, locally produced food, arts and crafts, etc. through public relations activities, collaborative programs and facilitate the availability of start-up and investment funding.

**E** *National Mississippi River Parkway Commission*  
  
  
 Participate in multi-state programs and projects of the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission which offer distinct benefits for the Iowa portion of the Great River Road.

**F** *Iowa Byways Program*  
 Integrate the multi-faceted program activities of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

and the Iowa Great River Road with the activities and projects of the Iowa Byways Program offered by the State of Iowa and the Iowa Byways Foundation.

**G Commission Support**  
 Provide one management level (full-time equivalent position) to support the various project and program activities required for continuous and reliable operations of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and fulfillment of resource conservation, facility development and maintenance, and promotion related to the Iowa Great River Road.

**H Project and Program Funding**  
  Secure long-term dedicated funding to support direct operations of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission. In addition, secure funding to develop a competitive grant program for local governments and eligible private organizations in the 10 Iowa Great River Road counties to support projects and programs which fulfill resource conservation, facility development and maintenance, and promotion related to the Iowa Great River Road.

**I Federal and State Agency Engagement**  
 Expand and recognize the effectiveness and financial commitments of federal and state agencies with roles and responsibilities for resource conservation, facility development and maintenance, and promotion related to the Iowa Great River Road.

**J County and Municipal Agency Engagement**  
 Expand and recognize the effectiveness and financial commitments of county and municipal agencies with roles and responsibilities for resource conservation, facility development and maintenance, and interpretation at the local level related to the Iowa Great River Road.

**K Non-profit and Corporate Engagement**  
  Identify and support cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations and corporations in the fulfillment of resource conservation, facility development and maintenance, and promotion related to the Iowa Great River Road.

 **L Point of Public Contact**  
Establish, promote and operate a single point of information contact and administrative operations for all public, stakeholder and organization communications regarding the Iowa Great River Road.

 **M Non-profit Foundation**  
Expand and elevate the effectiveness of the existing non-profit organization representing the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the Iowa Great River Road in securing donations from individuals and corporations as well as funding from other foundations for broad program support and targeted projects which support the Iowa Great River Road.

 **N Friends Group**  
Establish a membership-based "friends" group for Iowa Great River Road enthusiasts and supporters by securing membership at the national, state and local levels and providing information, events and other member benefits.

Throughout 2014, the Core Management Directions and Actions for the Iowa Greater River Road were presented as the subject of numerous public and stakeholder input opportunities. This fundamental approach for the long-term management of the Iowa Great River Road was the primary focus of the 2014 stakeholder meetings. Additionally the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission solicited input from representative stakeholders in late 2014 to consider how Core Management Directions and Actions might be implemented with and through localized projects. Please refer to the **Core Management Directions, Actions, and Financial Considerations Report** in the Corridor Management Plan Library for additional information.



## Interpreting the Iowa Great River Road



The myriad of diverse intrinsic resources found in the corridor along the Iowa Great River Road only gain true meaning for the visitor and value for local residents when effectively interpreted. Revealing the Iowa Great River Road's stories is the job of interpretation, now and in the future.

Interpretation is *"A communication process that reveals meanings and relationships of our culture and natural history to the public (visitors and users) through firsthand experiences with objects, artifacts, landscapes, or sites."*

Interpretive communication takes the "information" available and **transforms** and **translates** that information into "the language of the visitor". To be truly "interpretive", the message (Byway brochures, wayside exhibits, programming at resource sites, etc.) should incorporate the following criteria:

- The communication must first **provoke** the attention or curiosity of the audience.
- **Relate** to the everyday life of the visitor – tell them "why they need to know this information".
- **Reveal** the key concepts of the message or story through a unique viewpoint – save the surprise ending or answer for last.
- **Address the Whole** – illustrate to the visitor how each individual stop along the byway relates to the larger main interpretive theme or educational concept of the total byway experience or story.

- **Have Message Unity** – the design and presentation of the interpretive media along the total byway will have a uniformed themed look (design, fonts, historic dating, etc.).

Significant numbers of organizations already provide site-specific interpretive facilities and programs that communicate local stories that relate to the Iowa Great River Road. For additional information about these resources see (Insert Intrinsic Resource Document name) and discussion regarding existing interpretation see the Condition of the Road Report, Section 14. However, a coordinated and comprehensive effort to connect these interpretive resources has not been undertaken and will be required to maximize the opportunities of these resources.

While a focused effort to develop an Interpretive Management Plan for the Iowa portion of the Great River Road is essential, foundational work has already been conducted by the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission. In 2002, a collaborative initiative of diverse partners developed a Great River Road Interpretive Plan and Tool Kit. The Plan identifies an overall theme and eleven related major sub-themes for telling the stories of the Great River Road, which are presented below. The document also outlines potential interpretive strategies, methods, and media. The National Plan specifically states that it must be complemented by the interpretive efforts of states, regions, communities, organizations and individuals acting within their areas of impact and that it does not take precedence over, nor limit, interpretive plans for individual states.

## Iowa Great River Road Interpretive Themes

### Central Interpretive and Story Theme:

*People, communities, the nation and the world are sustained by the life, the history, the nature and the society of the Mississippi River.*

### Sub-themes

Theme 1: *The Mississippi River is a ribbon of life for people, plants and animals.*

Theme 2: *As the river has influenced people, people have influenced the river.*

Theme 3: *The Mississippi River has nurtured prehistoric and historic cultures.*

Theme 4: *The Mississippi River inspires a variety of folk life, literary, fine art, and musical forms.*

Theme 5: *The Mississippi River has profoundly shaped American history.*

Theme 6: *The strategic importance of the Mississippi River has resulted in conflict between nations and peoples.*

Theme 7: *Mississippi River architecture reflects distinctive styles affected by cultural and natural resources.*

Theme 8: *The Mississippi River is one of the world's great rivers noted for its beauty, grandeur and diversity.*

Theme 9: *The history of Mississippi River transportation is a dramatic story reflecting the river's economic and commercial importance.*

Theme 10: *Mississippi River towns and cities reflect mid-19th century life.*

Theme 11: *The Mississippi River is a working river sustaining many industries.*



## Financial Support in Changing Times

In the time since the original Corridor Management Plan for the Iowa Great River Road was approved in 2000, considerable change has occurred in the world of byways. In the fifteen years that has transpired, America's collection of nationally designated byways has expanded to 150 routes recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. The number of state-designated byways has likewise greatly increased. Between 1992 and 2012, technical and financial support for byway projects and programs grew substantially with more than \$500 million being awarded through the National Scenic Byways discretionary grant program administered by the Federal Highway Administration for nearly 3,200 individual projects. The Iowa Great River Road was the recipient of nearly \$10,000,000 in federal funds to support Byway-related projects.

With Congressional passage in 2012 of the transportation authorization legislation—Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) — the world for byway organizations changed significantly. While the National Scenic Byways Program continued under the direction of the Federal Highway Administration, the National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grant program which had annually provided approximately \$40 million in byway grant funding was not included in the provisions of MAP-21. Another important impact was the 2012 closing of the America's Byways Resource Center which had provided a wide range of technical assistance for individual byway organizations and state byway programs during the previous 15 years. These

changes along with more localized challenges are, as of this time, bringing many byway organizations across the country to assess how they can and must adjust their current operations, as well as their long range plans, to effectively align with the relatively unexpected changes in the support once provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

From a broader perspective, many national and state byway organizations, including the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission, are addressing a variety of dynamics which influence the effectiveness of their missions as byway stewards. These include but are not limited to:

- Reduced Financial Support from traditional sources
- Increased (changing) Expectations from Stakeholders, Politicians, and the public
- Fluctuating Consumer Marketplace Trends
- Human Resource Capacity and Limitations

In the wake of the MAP-21 eliminating the National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grant program (\$40 million annually) in 2012, nearly every one of the country's local byway organizations are reassessing how to sustain their obligations, commitments and effectiveness in managing the best roads for accessing nation's scenic, recreational, natural, historic and cultural intrinsic resources. While the backlog of projects and programs will consume all of the previously awarded National Scenic Byways Program

funding within the next few years, byway organizations including the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission will need to explore all possible source of future funding including:

- Limited Transportation Alternative Program funds within the provisions of MAP-21 and Iowa DOT
- Land and Water Conservation funds as administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior and Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Other federal, state and local grant programs for natural and historic resource protection, economic development, and other project and program types
- Funds and grants which may become available through the Iowa Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund with the enactment of the next Iowa sales tax increase
- Interagency funding agreements
- Federal and state land management budgets
- Operating budgets of state agencies such as Iowa DOT, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Economic Development Authority and Travel Iowa, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and others
- Cooperative programs with public and private universities and colleges
- Major gifts

- Marketing and branding partnerships with corporations
- Planned giving and bequests
- Grants from foundations
- Proceeds from merchandise sales and events sponsorships

Financial planning for the Iowa Great River Road and the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission should use the four Core Management Directions established for this Corridor Management Plan as a framework for financial and revenue planning and implementation.

- Intrinsic Resource Conservation
- Physical Improvements
- Promotion and Interpretation
- Administrative Operations

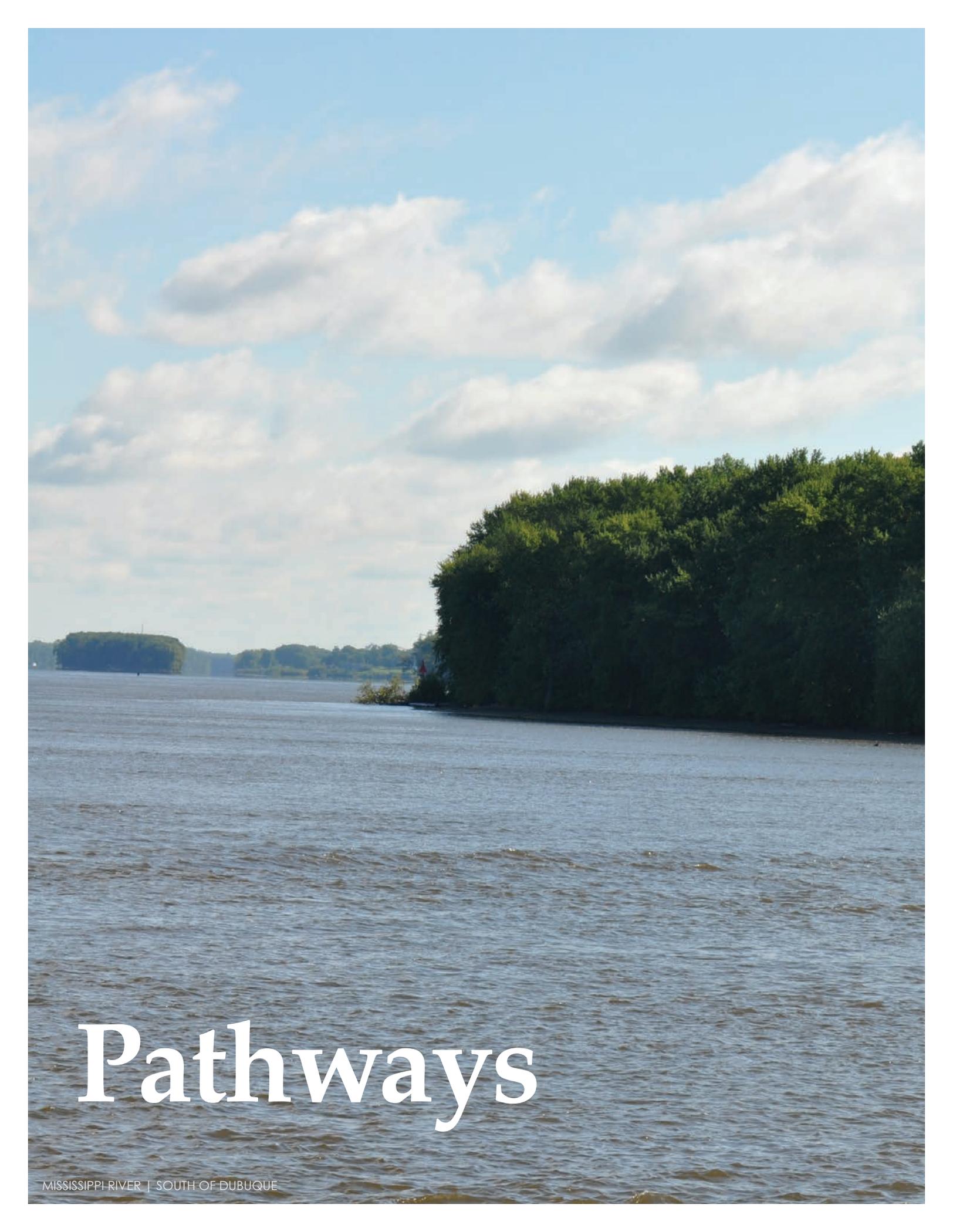
In the absence of there being any other official organization which provides a 10-county perspective for the Iowa Great River Road, the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission needs to take a higher and more active role in securing and managing investments for conserving resources, making physical improvements, interpreting and promoting, and conducting administrative operations for the Iowa Great River Road. There are many state and local agencies that can serve as essential partners but the Commission is the only established overarching organization serving the interest of all ten Iowa Mississippi River counties, the State of Iowa, and, in turn, Iowa's role with the other nine Mississippi River Parkway Commission partner states of the Mississippi River.

The Iowa Great River Road corridor and its integration with the Mississippi River are arguably Iowa's most significant collection of nationally important natural, historic, cultural, recreation and scenic resources. Additionally, the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission is the only state commission which has a long-standing connection with a network of similar organizations all of which focus on conserving, enhancing, promoting and interpreting, and managing one the United States' most important assets—the Mississippi River.

When compared with other State of Iowa-supported endeavors few, if any, have the potential to provide the economic return and positive visibility for Iowa as does the Iowa Great River Road and its integration

with the natural, historic, cultural and commercial aspects of the Mississippi River. However, this potential cannot be realized without a dedication and focus of human and financial resources for specific projects and programs in support of the Iowa Great River Road and the resulting benefits. The real financial investment needs to be significantly increased over the present \$40,000 level. Spending by travelers and investments by businesses made in response to leisure travel and the desire for heightened livability of Iowa Great River Road corridor communities will continue to divert to areas outside of Iowa until core investments are made here in direct support of the Iowa Great River Road.





# Pathways

MISSISSIPPI RIVER | SOUTH OF DUBUQUE

## Pathways to the Future

The previous chapter, Principles for the Iowa Great River Road, describes an informed consensus reached by the Iowa Mississippi Parkway Commission about the four Core Management Directions that should be pursued to achieve a desired future for the Iowa Great River Road.

This chapter, Pathways to the Future, provides an approach for the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the stakeholders and partners of the Iowa Great River Road to work in progressive steps—the term used here is “Levels”—toward achieving and accomplishing the Core Management Directions for the Iowa Great River Road.

The objective of suggesting the “Pathways to the Future” be accomplished one level at a time respects the overall conclusion that conserving, developing, promoting and interpreting, and managing a resource as significant as the Iowa Great River Road is presently significantly underfunded. The “Pathways” approach, taken one level at a time, also respects that positive and real change won’t happen overnight. Increasing the effectiveness of the many diverse aspects of the Iowa Great River Road will require that each level of investment of financial and human resources must prove the merit of that level as a predecessor for moving to the next level.



Additionally, the Principles for the Iowa Great River Road identified more than 40 Actions which, if implemented or undertaken, would meet needs and opportunities identified by the Commission, stakeholders, residents, visitors, and the byway planning team. The Core Management Directions and

Actions provide the Commission along with partners, stakeholders, policymakers as well as citizens and even frontline staff with an accountable “agenda” for conserving, developing, promoting and interpreting, and administering the Iowa Great River Road.

There’s little question the “agenda” prescribed in the Actions is aspiring if not awesome in its scale and scope. Yet, it can certainly be argued that the scale and scope of the Iowa Great River Road is aspiring and awesome. Thus any proposed effort directed to the future of this National Scenic Byway should be considered in light of how effective the effort would support local needs as well as how the effort would support these and other characteristics of the entire Iowa Great River Road:

- Can a proposed effort, project, program or initiative support more than one Core Management Direction and multiple Actions?
- Will a proposed project or program support and expand recognized interpretive themes and objectives for the National and Iowa Great River Road?
- How will a proposed effort sustain or increase out-of-state and international travel to the Iowa Great River Road?
- Will a proposed initiative support programs and projects of the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the other state Great River Road segments?

In late 2014, the Commission examined realistic financial projections for the implementing and undertaking the Actions of the Core Management Directions throughout the full corridor of the Iowa Great River Road. Instead of considering specific projects and sites, this evaluation assumed a uniform application of actions across the full length of the Byway. Attention was given to identifying what units of state and local government are generally best suited for fulfilling specific actions as well as appropriate roles for the private sector. The general conclusion of this examination suggested the level of public investment could reasonably range from \$1.8 million to \$2.0 million per year.

In a separate evaluation conducted at the same time, each Commissioner, along with local representatives and stakeholders, conceptualized specific local projects and programs in their respective counties that would support the Core Management Directions and Actions for the Iowa Great River Road. Many of the ideas reflected previously identified project and program proposals with supporters who are presently seeking funding from local and state public funding sources and/or the private sector. Across the ten Iowa Great River Road

counties, this evaluation suggested that there are at least 120 projects with a broad financial need of \$105 million to \$170 million.

It is important to note that these two evaluations conducted with respect to the current and long term needs of the Iowa Great River Road identified many legitimate projects and programs which are not necessarily or specifically eligible for consideration under existing competitive or targeted grant and local programs offered by the State of Iowa or federal grant programs. Additionally, many of the project ideas would have likely been eligible for discretionary grant awards under the federal National Scenic Byways Program prior to its recent abolition by Congress in the current federal transportation funding program.

At the time the 2015 Corridor Management Plan was adopted, the annual appropriation and budget for all operations of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway commission totaled \$40,000. Realistically it was understood that there was little prospect that many, if any, of the actions could be accomplished by relying on this level of financial support.



2012 IOWA GREAT RIVER ROAD STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS | CLINTON COUNTY

## Principle Fulfillment Partners

Conserving, developing, interpreting and promoting, and administering the Iowa Great River Road will inherently need to be shared by a broad range of local to national entities. No single agency or organization has the authority, resources or experience to do it all. Listed here are nearly 50 of the principle fulfillment partners which can play important roles in the future of the Iowa Great River Road.

### Local Entities

- 01 Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
- 02 Iowa Great River Road Interpretive Sites
- 03 Private Property Owners
- 04 Family and Corporate Farm Operators
- 05 Local Businesses
- 06 Local Travel Attractions
- 07 River—and Great River Road Corridor—based Industrial and Commercial Operations
- 08 County Conservation Boards
- 09 County Boards of Supervisors and related Departments and Boards
- 10 Municipal Governments and related Departments, Boards and Commissions
- 11 Local Chambers of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureaus
- 12 Local Charitable Foundations
- 13 Local Civic and Community Organizations
- 14 Local Historical Societies
- 15 Local Main Street Iowa Programs
- 16 Roadside Beautification Groups, Adopt-a-Highway sponsors, Keep Iowa Beautiful, etc.
- 17 K-12 Education (Public, private and homeschooling, etc.)

### Regional Entities in Multiple Counties

- 18 Eastern Iowa Tourism
- 19 Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- 20 Rural Planning Agencies
- 21 Resource, Conservation, and Development Councils
- 22 Agricultural Interest Groups

- 23 Leisure Travel and Activity Groups (Outdoor recreation, vintage cars, wildlife viewing, boating, bicycling, arts, antiques, wine, food, etc.)
- 24 River Cruise Operators
- 25 College and University Programs
- 26 Dubuque Community Foundation--Mississippi River Parkway Commission Non-profit

### State-wide Agencies

- 27 Iowa Governor's Office
- 28 Iowa Legislature and State Legislators
- 29 Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
- 30 Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
- 31 Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, State Historical Society
- 32 Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- 33 Iowa Department of Transportation
- 34 Iowa Department of Transportation - Iowa Byways Program, the Byways of Iowa Coalition, and the Byways of Iowa Foundation
- 35 Iowa Economic Development Authority
- 36 Iowa Economic Development Authority--Travel Iowa
- 37 Iowa U.S. Congressional Delegation
- 38 Land Trust Organizations (i.e. Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, County Conservation Foundations, etc.)
- 39 Travel Writer/Publisher/Digital Production Company

### National and Federal Agencies

- 40 National MRPC/Mississippi River Country
- 41 National Park Service
- 42 US Fish and Wildlife Service
- 43 US Army Corps of Engineers
- 44 US Department of Agriculture
- 45 Federal Highway Administration - National Scenic Byways Program
- 46 Dedicated River Interest Organizations (1Mississippi, Mississippi River Collaborative, River Action, etc.)
- 47 National Travel Promotion Organizations (Brand USA, U.S. Travel Association, etc.)

## **Strategies for Growing the Core Management Effectiveness for the Iowa Great River Road**

Two important evolutions will need to occur before significant accomplishments and advancements can occur in any of the four Iowa Great River Road Core Management Directions.

### **A New Companion Leadership Team – The Iowa Great River Road Leadership Group**

First, leadership for the future of the Iowa Great River Road needs to expand beyond the present capabilities of Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and its technical advisors. A separate, yet associated group should be established, comprised of dedicated, local and diversely talented leaders who would bring additional proven experience and skills at mobilizing human and financial resources from the private sector to focus on the Iowa Great River Road.

The Iowa Great River Road Leadership Group would be composed of highly effective leaders in the areas of economic and rural development; regional tourism growth; environmental conservation and sustainability, education; agriculture; community foundations; and politics. This group would be recruited and activated to focus on mobilizing the private as well as political sectors to support the conservation, development, promotion and interpretation, and administration of the Byway. Securing much-needed financial support for the core management directions and actions from both public and private sources would be a primary objective for the Iowa Great River Road Leadership Group.

### **Elevated Effectiveness Levels – The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**

The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission is presently limited in its ability to effectively manage the future of the Iowa Great River Road in several ways.

First, due to the inherent nature of Governor-appointed boards and commissions, the members of the Commission are restricted in their operational capacities despite their personal desires and professional effectiveness. The Commission has no power to determine or direct public funds for programs related to the Iowa Great River Road. There is no dedicated source of revenue to support the legislatively mandated mission of the Commission. It has no authority to regulate any activity. It has no direct ability to influence the activities of any particular state department. These realities constrain the ability for the Commission to facilitate significant positive advancements for the Great River Road.

Secondly, Commissioners receive no compensation for their time in service to the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and only receive per diem reimbursements for travel, meals, and lodging. The current annual appropriation limits the total available per diem to less than \$2,500. Therefore, despite their personal levels of dedication, Commissioners are encumbered by state administrative rules and inadequate funding to cover even their direct out-of-pocket expenses. Commissioners often choose to not even submit expense reimbursement requests.

Finally, for the most part, the Commission is very limited in its capacity to effectively and repetitively raise funding for its operations from other governmental or private sources.





## Level 1: Existing Level of Appropriation

With nearly 50% of the Commission's \$40,000 annual appropriation earmarked for annual membership to the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission and per diem for Commissioners to attend the National's twice-a-year meetings, the amount of annual financial support for Core Management Direction activities is limited. Consequently, at its present level of appropriation and funding, the Commission must restrict the number of projects with which it can engage and financially support.

At this existing level, Level 1, performance of the Commission is likely to be limited to individual Commissioners engaging and communicating with local stakeholders and partners in their respective counties. Communicating the importance of the Iowa Great River Road, urging local stakeholders to adopt the principles of the 2015 Corridor Management Plan, and informing local organizations of the useful initiatives of the National

Mississippi River Parkway Commission and State of Iowa agencies will be among the most essential actions the Commission can take. Additionally, for any significant implementation of this Corridor Management Plan to occur, State of Iowa Departments and Federal Agencies with interests in the corridor of the Iowa Great River Road will need to assume a much more proactive role in sharing information since the Commission, at its present level, does not have the capabilities to effectively fulfill that function.

Once again it must be noted that the overall effectiveness of the Iowa Great River Road will fully rely on the extent to which all 10 Commissioners are willing to give significant amounts of their individual time and personal financial resources to communicate with local stakeholders and partners by delivering information from other sources that these local stakeholders and partners can use for projects and initiatives related to the Iowa Great River Road.

## Level 2: Effective Administration and Communications

The next level of effective performance would elevate the operations of the Commission to a point where consistent, competent and reliable communication services would be implemented. Some examples of tasks within Level 2 include:

- Informative and frequent newsletters communicated with a growing list of stakeholders
- Regularly scheduled meetings with stakeholder groups
- Developing and delivering effective presentations to local, statewide, and national organizations
- Providing follow-up information and facilitating communication on a variety of issues affecting stakeholders and the fulfillment of Core Management Directions
- Representing the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the State of Iowa at conferences, tradeshows, meetings of stakeholder organizations
- Communicating with federal lands agencies, state agencies, elected officials, tourism organizations and the Iowa Byways Program

Primary objectives for reaching Level 2 performance by the Commission would include:

- Increase awareness among a larger audience of stakeholders, supporters

and prospective partners in eastern Iowa.

- Improve collaboration among stakeholders and partners for fulfilling their respective roles in implementing the Core Management Directions and Actions.
- Increase the effectiveness of the Commission in addressing policy issues and opportunities for manifesting the Core Management Directions and Actions.

Achieving Level 2 performance by the Commission would most effectively occur by engaging or employing an experienced director at a half-to full-time level. The retained individual should be experienced and skilled in a number of areas including:

- Proactive outreach communications with stakeholders and constituent groups
- Public speaking and interpersonal communication and writing skills
- Partnership building
- Ability to manage time and budgets
- Capability to travel and work “on-the-road”
- Organize, facilitate and support meetings of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
- Identify and apply for grant and private funds
- Organize, produce and facilitate effective stakeholder meetings

To achieve Level 2, an effective budget of the Commission would need to cover Level 1 activities plus:

- Salary and employment expenses or services of the director/administrative position
- Basic support for startup services and expenses, workspace rental and fees, and office supplies
- Travel expenses
- Production of information brochures, exhibits, mailings, electronic distribution services
- Additional per diem for Commissioner travel

Ideally, the full-time working location for the administrative position should be in eastern Iowa to facilitate efficient travel throughout the 10-county Iowa Great River Road corridor. Reasonable estimates for the budget increase to support Level Two performance range from \$160,000 and \$180,000. Sources of new revenue for annual Level Two performance could include an increased appropriation by State of Iowa, multi-year foundation

support, Iowa Great River Road Leadership Group support or combinations of these and other sources.

Another, but perhaps less ideal, option for administering the management functions of the Iowa Great River Road could involve agencies and organizations involved in the Byway dedicating staff time to Byway coordination and administration. A capable and interested resource site or organization could provide this function perpetually, or administrative tasks could alternate among organizations over time. This could also be an interim approach while the Commission and its partners seek funding to support a dedicated administrative position for the Iowa Great River Road.

The primary focus of Level 2 performance would be achieving measurable advancement of the needs and opportunities for more effective administration of the Iowa Great River Road. Fulfillment of the conservation; development; and promotion and interpretation Core Management Directions would continue to be principally assumed by stakeholders and partners throughout the 10-county corridor.



## Level 3: Effective Promotion and Interpretation

Level 3 represents a targeted expansion of Level 2 to achieve significant and annually increasing visitation to the Iowa Great River Road accompanied by additional travel and leisure expenditures in the 10 Iowa Great River Road counties and Iowa as a whole. This objective would be accomplished through the following:

- Preparing and implementing a Market Development and Promotion Plan focused on the diverse travel and experience opportunities of the Iowa Great River Road.
- Preparing and implementing an integrated Interpretive Management Plan focused on the means and methods for more effectively communicating the diverse and interrelated themes and stories of the Iowa Great River Road for all audiences, visitor segments and local residents.
- Producing and purchasing well-planned promotional media for travel markets which the Market Development Plan would have identified as having high potential for generating travel to the Iowa Great River Road.
- Producing and distributing travel planning information including multi-day itineraries, reliable maps, and other information designed to support travelers who are unfamiliar with the Iowa Great River Road corridor.

- Coordinating and collaborating with the market development and promotional efforts of various state, eastern Iowa, multi-county and municipal convention and visitors bureaus.
- Designing and producing interpretive exhibits, video programs, discovery guides, etc., to meet the needs and opportunities of the designated interpretive centers and provide well integrated delivery of interpretive themes and objectives.
- Facilitating annual training sessions for frontline staff and volunteers at visitor and interpretive centers.

The outcomes of Level 3 are threefold:

- Increased travel to the corridor of the Iowa Great River Road by Iowa residents, out-of-state residents from across the country and international travelers.
- Enhanced visitor experiences brought about by increasingly effective interpretive communication and media telling the many stories of the Mississippi River associated with the Iowa Great River Road.
- Increased effectiveness and efficiency by tourism development and promotion organizations, interpretive providers, and many private and public organizations which provide visitor information services along the Iowa Great River Road.

Implementing Level 3 will be most effective with the collaborative engagement of a number of organizations and agencies including but not limited to:

- Federal lands management agencies with presence in the Iowa Great River Road corridor
- Iowa Tourism Office
- Eastern Iowa Tourism
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
- County Conservation Boards
- Designated interpretive centers and museums throughout the Iowa Great River Road corridor
- Municipal and multi-county convention and visitors bureaus

The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission would fulfill several important roles at this Level 3 performance:

- serving as the primary support and facilitation group
- serving as a constructive review board offering local perspectives
- the administrative director role as envisioned in Level Two could be expanded to provide project management, communication and coordination services

Overall budget parameters for Level 3 performance would include the following:

Item	Low Range	High Range
Market Development and Promotion Plan	\$75,000	\$100,000
Integrated Interpretive Management Plan	\$75,000	\$100,000
Promotional advertising and programs	\$100,000 per year	\$200,000 per year
Development, electronic and print distribution of travel information media	\$50,000 per year	\$75,000 per year
Interpretive media development for on-site delivery and presentation	\$150,000 per year	\$200,000 per year
Annual training seminars and materials	\$25,000 per year	\$50,000 per year

## Level 4: Facilitator for Capital Investment

To summarize, Level 2 increases the administrative and management effectiveness of the Commission's role in stewarding the Iowa Great River Road. The outcome of successfully implementing Level 3 would bring increased annual economic return to the Iowa Great River Road through coordinated, corridor-wide promotion and interpretive communication. Level 4 envisions how longer-term investments can be directed toward the conservation of intrinsic resources and the development of the physical aspects of the Iowa Great River Road.

Investing in the conservation of resources and capital development naturally necessitates a larger investment of financial resources relative to those required for Level 2 and Level 3. The discretionary funding that was once available through the National Scenic Byways Program afforded a dedicated yet competitive funding mechanism for projects associated with the Iowa Great River Road as well as other national scenic byways. Projects associated with the Iowa Great River Road were funded in excess of \$10 million through discretionary grants afforded by the National Scenic Byways Program. The absence of that funding source has left a significant shortfall in how the stakeholders and partners of the Iowa Great River Road can meet their obligations and goals for protecting and developing the resources that make the Byway unique and appealing.

Eastern Iowa communities have been relatively fortunate in the number of state-based designations and funding

initiatives as summarized in the Condition of the Road Report. The Iowa Main Street Program, Vision Iowa, Iowa Great Places, Reap, and most recently the Parks to People project in Dubuque, Jackson, and Jones Counties are examples of State of Iowa programs that have recognized just how important investing in the intrinsic resources of Mississippi River communities and counties are to the long-term benefit of the state as a whole.

In its essence, elevation of the management of the Iowa Great River Road through the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission to Level 4 performance recognizes the need to establish one or several sources of public and private funding – state and local – which would be dedicated to new locally-conceived projects and programs to meet the needs and opportunities associated with two of the four Core Management Directions: conservation of intrinsic resources and physical improvements for the Iowa Great River Road.

The Core Management Directions Actions and Financial Considerations Report that supplements this document presents several options envisioning how securing increased investment in the Iowa Great River Road might occur. The options range from increasing and targeting existing budgets of state and local governments; a conservation, development and promotion grant program; to a multifaceted Iowa Great River Road investment initiative involving a six part accelerated program to meet infrastructure, innovation, beautification, and interpretation development needs and opportunities.

The evaluations conducted by the members of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the byway planning team for the purpose of identifying examples of investment projects for the Iowa Great River Road suggests that the scope of financial investment to meet the conservation and development needs and opportunities of the corridor could range between \$100 million to \$500 million or more. While it is beyond the scope of a corridor management plan to conduct a comprehensive assessment and ranking of prospective projects utilizing individual project budgets, cost-benefit analysis, and other means to estimate a construction-oriented budget, it is arguably apparent that in order for Iowa and the country as a whole to realize the potential of the Iowa Great River Road, new and significant targeted investments will need to be made.

As the premise may be accepted that the Mississippi River and the 10 eastern Iowa counties within the Iowa Great River Road corridor represent one of Iowa's most promising opportunities due to their scenic, natural, historic, cultural, and recreational qualities, the question follows as to how the State of Iowa and the private sector separately and jointly can provide an effective means to fund the conservation, development, promotion and interpretation, and administrative management of these unique resources. The dedicated commitment which the State of Iowa now provides is essentially the \$40,000 annual appropriation for the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission. While multiple organizations have developed localized or county-wide sites, programs, and resources that benefit the Iowa Great River Road, there have been no coordinated, corridor-wide efforts in the private or local sectors to direct significant financial resources specifically into the conservation or development of this vitally important National Scenic Byway.





## Monitoring the Status of Core Management Directions



Regardless at what level of management the Commission may be operating, monitoring conditions in the corridor of the Iowa Great River Road with respect to the Core Management Directions will be an important function of the Commission. Identifying conditions which may be considered intrusive or negative as well as observing and recording desired conditions are equally important for the future of the Byway.



The following checklist, organized according to the four Core Management Directions, is presented for individual Commissioners to consider undertaking on a repetitive basis.

### INTRINSIC RESOURCE CONSERVATION



#### Biannually

- Drive the entire length of the Great River Road in your county and make note of the following:
  - Viewshed intrusions (overgrowth of trees and vegetation, illegal dumping, etc.)
  - New off-premise signs or billboards within 300 feet of the Iowa Great River Road

- Areas of unsightly litter and trash along the roadside and public access areas of the Mississippi River

#### Annually

- Communicate with local resource conservation agencies (county conservation board, US Fish and Wildlife Service, etc.) to remain aware of particular conservation programs, opportunities, and threats to the Byway corridor
- Check community and county planning departments regarding any major residential, industrial, or commercial development proposals, including any proposed above or below-ground utility line installations

## PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS



### Twice yearly

- Drive the entire length of the Great River Road in your county and make note of the following:
  - Any damaged or missing Iowa Great River Road byway guide signs (once the project has been completed and a county-by-county inventory provided to the Commission)
  - Any damaged or missing route guide signs and traffic control signs (stop signs, yield signs, etc.)
  - Availability of gas stations, public restrooms, scenic and roadside pulloffs, picnic facilities, etc.
  - Condition of parking areas and access points to off-route trails and resource sites
  - Condition of road surface, making note of needed maintenance (potholes, lane stripping, shoulder conditions, etc.)
  - Any visual intrusions at scenic overlooks or otherwise scenic segments of the route

### Annually

- Meet with community planning departments to remain aware of any plans for improvements to municipal

streetscapes along the Iowa Great River Road

- Meet with community and county planning/engineering departments to remain aware of any plans to alter the roads or infrastructure related to the Iowa Great River Road
- Meet with appropriate Metropolitan Planning Organization representatives to determine impacts on the Iowa Great River Road of long-term transportation planning
- Meet with community planning departments to remain aware of any trail projects along the Iowa Great River Road

## PROMOTION AND INTERPRETATION



### Annually

- Visit each designated Great River Road Interpretive Center and utilize the site assessment form provided by the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission
- Invite interpretive providers and site managers within your county to a roundtable meeting to review the Great River Road Interpretive Plan and Toolkit, discuss local visitation trends, explore ways to locally coordinate message delivery of Iowa Great River Road themes and stories, and promote the route at resource facilities
- Write a feature article for your local media outlets about the Iowa Great River Road, local resource sites associated with the route, corridor-wide projects in Iowa and along the 10-state route, etc.
- Review materials distributed by your local Convention and Visitors Bureau to monitor the degree to which the Iowa Great River Road is being promoted. At a minimum, look for a description of the route, the use of the Great River Road pilot wheel, the inclusion of the Iowa Great River Road website, and the Iowa Great River Road marked on maps (digital, print, and map kiosks). Explore with local staff ways the promotion of the Great River Road could be enhanced locally.

- Meet with representatives from local school districts to remind them of the Iowa Great River Road and its ability to link resource sites for field trips, serve as a basis for curriculum units of study. Encourage teachers and staff to include the Iowa Great River Road as an option for fulfilling volunteer hour requirements for high school students.
- Encourage local events organizers to use the Iowa Great River Road name and pilot wheel in promoting existing events
- Encourage the development of an annual local event to celebrate the Iowa Great River Road
- Review digital and print materials developed by Travel Iowa and Eastern Iowa Tourism to confirm inclusion of the Iowa Great River Road and check accuracy of information provided.

### Twice-yearly

- Distribute Iowa Great River Road tear-off maps to visitor experience and information sites within your county.
- Observe trends or changes in visitor behavior or use patterns.

### Quarterly

- Review the Iowa Great River Road website and respond to requests for photographs or content suggestions
- Review the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission website ([www.experiencemississippiriver.com](http://www.experiencemississippiriver.com))

## ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS



### Annually

- Meet with representatives from any intersecting Iowa byways to review plans for the year and discuss projects and opportunities
- Distribute an update, via email or physical mail, to stakeholders within your county regarding local and corridor-wide projects and initiatives
- Convene an annual meeting of local stakeholders to share information, discuss concerns, brainstorm projects, etc.
- Meet with major employers in your county to remind them of the existence of the Iowa Great River Road and encourage them to distribute information about the Great River Road to existing and potential employees. Remind them that the Iowa Great River Road enhances the local quality-of-life.
- Actively participate on one of the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission sub-committees (Cultural and Heritage; Environment, Recreation and Agriculture; Transportation; Community/Marketing). Request pertinent information from other Iowa Commissioners before each sub-committee meeting and report back to the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission with notes from each sub-committee meeting (telephone or in-person).

### Annually or Twice-yearly

- Present a brief "awareness presentation" to governmental and interest-area groups within your county, including but not limited to, the Board of Supervisors, County Conservation Board, City Councils, chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, economic development organizations, local historical societies, etc. Urge these agencies to adopt the Iowa Great River Road Corridor Management Plan if they have not done so already.
- Present a brief "awareness presentation" to representatives from federal and state agencies active within the county (State Parks, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, etc.). Urge these agencies to adopt the Iowa Great River Road Corridor Management Plan if they have not done so already.
- Meet with state and federal legislative representatives for your county

### Quarterly

- Convene a "Friends of the Iowa Great River Road" meeting in your county. Consider the active participants as a pool of potential candidates to be appointed to the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and "groom" potential replacements.
- Update the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Stakeholder List
- Alert stakeholders of grants or funding opportunities for projects related to the Iowa Great River Road

