

Confluence Project Partners Meeting
Tuesday, June 7th, 2011 9:00 a.m.
Carpenter Nature Center's Flint Hills Trailside Conference Center
12355 St. Croix Trail, Hastings MN

Agenda

- 1. Pt Douglas Trail developments**
- 2. Report on the eagle camera project**
- 3. St Croix 100 yr anniversary paddle and the Kinship of Rivers project**
- 4. Corcovado Sister Park agreement**
- 5. Next Confluence Symposium ideas**
- 6. Grant possibilities**
- 7. Follow up on the April 7th Watchable Wildlife Workshop**
 - .. **Discuss area brand**
 - .. **Collection/identification of area tourist sites**
 - .. **Site evaluation process**

Attendees:

Margaret Smith, Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center
Char Vick, Friends of Freedom Park
Jim Shiely, Friends of Freedom Park
Julie Galonska, National Park Service (SACN)
Randy Thoreson, National Park Service (RTCA)
Emily Shively, National Park Service (RTCA)
Mark Huber, Prescott City Council
Dick Thorsen, Rosewood Inn, Hastings ????

1. Pt Douglas Trail developments

- Randy Thoreson is on the Advisory Committee for the trail
- A consultant has been hired to do the trail master plan (Jeff Schoenbauer)
- Washington County (Peter Mott) submitted a grant to MnDOT/FHWA but it was not funded
 - Need to contact Peter to get more information about why the grant was not funded and how the County is planning to proceed. Will they go ahead with other funding? How can the Confluence Partners help?

- Background on the trail: Washington County owns the old railroad corridor and trail planning has been in the works for a number of years. The issues are with connectivity at the west and east ends of the trail (Hastings at Hwy 61 and Prescott at Point Douglas Park)
- The discussion raised questions about identifying trail gaps in the Confluence area and how the Partners can work to move projects forward.
 - Trails might be a topic for the fall symposium: focus on bicycles (engaging advocacy groups such as Bikes Belong, MN Bicycle Alliance) and trail development – advocacy and planning for a regional system in the Confluence area
- Randy Thoreson mentioned the upcoming statewide bicycle conference that will be held on November 3rd (location still to be determined – either St. Cloud or Red Wing)
- Randy suggested that the Partners walk the trail corridor sometime – possibly at the next meeting?

2. Report on the eagle camera project

- Jim Shiely described the recent excursion with Bill Route (NPS) on Prescott Island to take blood and feather samples from eaglets to determine the impact of contaminants.
 - Jim Spickler (climber) assessed the nest for eagle cam suitability. There are a number of locations that would work, with one branch in particularly good position.
- A microwave transmitter would send the signal to the GRRVLC (visible from the nest)
- The signal could possibly also be sent to the Carpenter Nature Center, St. Croix NPS Visitor Center (SACN), and Miss. NPS (MNRRA) Visitor Center
- A permit would need to be obtained from the requisite federal agencies (U.S. Army Corps and U.S. Fish and Wildlife?)
- Island nest equipment may cost \$5,000
- A funding plan needs to be developed by all of the potential partners. Consideration can be given to potential future advertising revenue arrangements (based on Decorah, IA model)
- Depending on what type of educational programming is desired in conjunction with the Eagle Cam, there might be a possibility of competing for funding through an NPS grant program (for example, Parks as Classroom or Youth Partnership Program funding). Julie is willing to work with Friends of Freedom Park, Bill Route and others to explore that option. The first step would be figuring out the type of educational programming desired
- In response to Jim Shiely's comment that Bill Route thought he might have some funding available to help with equipment, Julie suggested that the list of needed equipment be prepared before August 1 because of NPS fiscal year deadlines. The list should probably also go to Chris Stein at SACN and Paul Labovitz at MISS, although Julie did not know if they would have any funding available for this effort.

- Jim Shiely, Jim Fitzpatrick, Julie, Char, and Randy will attend the next Eagle Cam planning meeting (date TBD)

3. St Croix 100 yr anniversary paddle and the Kinship of Rivers project

- A celebration will be held in Prescott at the conclusion of the paddle on Friday, July 22nd “Celebrate the Rivers!”
 - The two NPS Superintendents will meet in boats at the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers as the paddlers approach Mercord Mill Park (around 3:00pm)
 - Boaters will take out at the boat launch just downriver from Mercord Mill Park
 - The Kinship of Rivers ceremony will begin at 3:30pm (flag exchange, tea ceremony, music)
 - The St. Croix River Association program will begin at 4:30pm and include several speakers (Walter Mondale is invited)
 - Music and food will be available from 5:30 – 8:00pm in the park
- A volunteer is needed to contact boaters at the Prescott marinas to organize a possible flotilla (Mark Holmquist is the contact at MissCroix Marina – may have email addresses for boaters) – information should include a start time and flotilla route
- The SCRA website can list area attractions and lodging for paddlers who want to stay in the area for the weekend (someone needs to contact Hastings and Prescott Chambers to figure out details of what to include and pass the information on to Dan)
- Jim Shiely mentioned he would be interested in paddling from the Kinnickinnic River to Prescott (joining the SCRA paddlers at Carpenter Nature Center?)

4. Corcovado Sister Park agreement

- Corcovado is a National Park in Costa Rica – there is a connection with MN/WI parks for neotropical migratory birds (winter in Costa Rica; summer in MN/WI)
- The WI DNR has been partnering with Corcovado for a number of years (along with the Natural Resource Foundation of Wisconsin and Friends of the Osa)
- Chris Stein (NPS SACN) has been working on drafting a sister park agreement. It is now being reviewed by attorneys and federal agencies (the US and Costa Rican governments may need to have some official agreement before the sister park relationship can be established)
- Confluence Partners need to think about how they might want to become involved (need a focus/goal)
 - There are possible opportunities with restoration projects in the Confluence area (improving habitat) and/or educational programming (the GRRVLC is showing a movie about the migratory connection) and/or advocacy (protecting land in Costa Rica/Central America; reducing bird mortality via architectural improvements to buildings)
 - Is there an opportunity to get area organizations together to work on a project (such as Rotary International, Audubon Society)
- The next meeting is June 27th at 3:00pm at the GRRVLC

5. Next Confluence Symposium ideas

- This morning's discussions have brought up a couple of stakeholder groups that may be interested in the symposium – birders and bikers
- Randy Thoreson and Mark Huber suggested focusing on existing assets in the Confluence Area – draw attention to the great things that are already here that area residents may not even be aware of. Possible themes/ working titles:
 - “Embracing What We Have”
 - “Enjoying What We Have”
 - “Enjoying and Enhancing What We Have”
- Maybe do a morning session with everyone highlighting existing assets in the region; afternoon can break into groups focusing on ways to enhance/improve/expand on assets (trail development/ recreational infrastructure improvements; habitat restoration/environmental improvements; tourism “packages”)
- The Symposium Subcommittee will meet on June 27th at 1:15pm at the GRRVLC

6. Grant possibilities

- The Parkway Commission has submitted three proposals for National Scenic Byway Grants:
 - International marketing (Japan and Germany): \$80K
 - Gathering Stories: \$70K
 - USFWS Trail System: \$200K

7. Follow up on the April 7th Watchable Wildlife Workshop

- **Discuss area brand (not discussed)**
- **Collection/identification of area tourist sites**
- **Site evaluation process**
- Emily created a form that may be used to gather basic information about key sites in the Confluence area; top 30 sites could also do the site assessment (back side of form)
- Emily will contact Ian Meuhlenhaus at UWRF to find out what sites/information he and Zach Bodenner already have for the Map
 - Map subcommittee can review the existing data and identify what are priority sites, what sites are missing (or need more information)
 - After inventory is collected, Emily can follow up and gather more information about the top 30 priority sites – this information can be used/presented at the fall symposium (“Enjoying What We Have”) – and possibly further discussed for potential improvements (following from the site assessment “Enhancing/Expanding What We Have”)

8. Other business

- Julie passed around new St. Croix (SACN) maps and noted that the GRRVLC is now on the map.
- NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, August 2nd 9 a.m. at the St. Croix Visitor Center, St. Croix Falls, WI**