

A National River and Recreation Area Extends Through the Twin Cities

Can the National Park Service work with 70 other governing bodies to protect natural areas and 'celebrate the working river' at the same time?

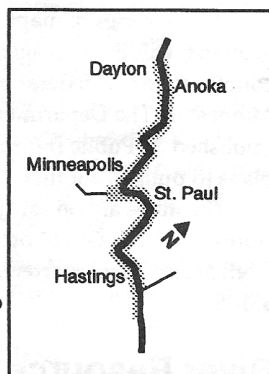
By Bill McAuliffe

For thousands of years the Mississippi River was both a highway through the wilderness and a place where people gathered to trade, build villages and bury their dead. More recently, as the river became a place of industry, pollution and poverty, many towns turned their backs to it.

But now we are turning back to the river. A 72-mile stretch has been designated the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), beginning a few miles upstream from Dayton and extending through the Twin Cities to the Goodhue County line, a few miles below Hastings. Citizens are currently defining just what the MNRRA will be.

Congress established the MNRRA in 1988 to protect and enhance the recreational, historic, cultural, natural, scenic, scientific and economic attributes of the metro Mississippi. Rep. Bruce Vento, D-Minn., and Sen. Dave Durenberger, R-Minn., championed the legislation.

It is the only segment of the Mississippi to be included as a unit in the National Park System, and may be unique for several reasons: The National Park Service, which will manage the MNRRA, owns only 43 of the 54,000 acres within the corridor. Also, while other national recreation units include urban land, such as the recently established Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, in California, and the Illinois-Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, no others rest in the heart of one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas.



"It's not like Yellowstone or Voyageurs or Gettysburg," said Mike Madell, chief of planning and resource management for the MNRRA. "There's no great feature. But in the 72 miles there's an incredibly rich diversity of resources. There are almost 200 sites on the National Register of Historic Places. The upper eight miles has state 'wild and scenic' designation. There's the heron rookery at Pig's Eye Lake. The gorge area between the two cities is very beautiful. There's the head of navigation, and its historic role. It's a different animal."

The Process

So will MNRRA be a park, with forests, campgrounds, wood signs, rustic trails, shy wildlife and outhouses? The short answer is that MNRRA will attempt to celebrate the Twin Cities Mississippi River corridor as it exists now — as a "working river," featuring barge traffic and skyscrapers amid parks and bass bays.

There are plans to establish a main interpretive center on Harriet Island in downtown St. Paul, with auxiliary posts upstream and downstream. But with control of only a tiny fraction of land within MNRRA, the Park Service presence will be minimal. It will have to manage MNRRA in cooperation with the more than 70 local governments and

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Coming in March:

- Nuclear Waste Storage on Prairie Island

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Current Events

Eagle Eyes

Many eyes are on the bald eagles of the upper Mississippi River this winter. An aerial survey of the river valley between the Twin Cities and the Iowa border counted 358 eagles, nearly twice the usual count of 200, according to a press release from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

"Some of the eagles are natives that nest along the river and stay all year, but most are migrants who have come south from Canada for the winter in search of open water where they can fish or catch waterfowl," explained Joan Galli, MDNR nongame wildlife specialist.

"In recent years, resident and migrant eagle populations have risen dramatically in Minnesota, and the Mississippi River corridor is one of the premier places in the upper Midwest to watch the bird that is our national symbol."

An article in the *La Crosse Tribune* (1-10-93) recounted the survey and added that sightings of active eagle nests in Wisconsin jumped from 207 in 1982 to 424 in 1992.

Galli wrote an article, "Great Places to Watch Eagles," in the Jan.-Feb. 1993 issue of *The Minnesota Volunteer*, which says Minnesota has nearly 500 pairs of breeding bald eagles, second only to Florida in the lower 48 states.

The eagle population along the river soars during migrations. Winona will host an Eagle Watch Weekend, March 6 & 7, call (507) 452-2272 or 800-657-4972. In Wabasha, Soar with the Eagles is scheduled for March 14, call (612) 565-4158, ext. 3.

Sharing the Missouri

The Army Corps of Engineers faces tough decisions on managing the the Missouri River, according to an Associated Press story in the (Dubuque) *Telegraph Herald* (1-4-93).

States in the upper basin want to retain water to ease the suffering caused by a drought that has lasted since 1987, but downstream states need sufficient water to maintain barge traffic, drinking water supplies and cooling water for 11 power plants.

Water levels in three reservoirs in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota dropped by as much as 17 feet in 1987 and 1988.

Preparing for an Oil Spill

The Upper Mississippi River Basin Association is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on plans for responding to an oil spill in the upper Mississippi, according to the Dec. 1992 issue of *the River Register*, which is published by UMRBA.

The plan will include resources for responding to a spill, the locations of areas most vulnerable to spill damage and possible sources of oil spills. Sensitive areas will probably

include wildlife refuges, major migratory waterfowl staging areas, public drinking water supplies and power plants.

The UMRBA office, (612) 224-2880, can provide details about the process.

Are They Game?

Snakes, songbirds, turtles, herons, frogs and other nongame species will be the center of attention at a get together this fall. Mississippi River biologists are being invited to submit papers for a symposium on nongame species scheduled for the Radisson Hotel in La Crosse, Sept. 8-10, 1993.

This is the first nongame symposium in some time, according to a notice in the Nov./Dec. 1992 issue of the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee newsletter.

Craig Thompson, of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource's La Crosse office, chairs the symposium planning committee.

Northern Prairie to Great Lakes

The work area of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, in La Crosse, has been expanded to include Great Lakes states, according to the Nov./Dec. 1992 issue of the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee newsletter.

The lab's new address reflects this change: Section of Lake States Ecology, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, P.O. Box 2226, La Crosse, WI 54601.

Minnesota Maps Outdoor Recreation Facilities

A new series of maps lists public boat launches, campgrounds, wildlife management areas, canoe routes and other county, state and federal outdoor recreation facilities in Minnesota. The Department of Natural Resources has published 38 Public Information Recreation Maps so far, and plans to publish another 13, covering the entire state.

The maps are on sale for \$3.95 each at sporting goods stores; the DNR Gift Shop, 500 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul; and the DNR Metro Headquarters, 1200 Warner Rd., St. Paul, MN 55106.

River Resource Guide and Directory

A new guide and directory, "Protecting the Mississippi River," lists information and resources in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. The Minnesota Project published it with support from the McKnight Foundation, according to the Dec. 1992 issue of *the River Register*.

"Protecting the Mississippi River" costs \$8, from The Minnesota Project, 1885 University Ave. West #315, St. Paul, MN 55104. ♦

Send press releases, news clippings and meeting notices to *Big River*, PO Box 741, Winona, MN 55987.

River Calendar

FEBRUARY

- 1-2 Mississippi River Corridor Study Commission meeting**, Harry S. Truman State Office Bldg., Jefferson City, Mo. Call David N. Given, National Park Service, (402) 221-3082.
- 1-3 Mississippi River Parkway Commission midwinter meeting**, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City, Mo. Call John Edman, executive director, (612) 224-9903.
- 5-6 National Mississippi River and Recreation Area, Coordinating Commission meeting**, Spring Hill Conference Center, 725 County Rd., Wayzata, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. This working meeting is open to the public and may include an opportunity for public comment from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. Call (612) 290-4160.
- 6 Downriver Alliance monthly meeting**, Boatworks Restaurant, Wabasha, 11 a.m.
- 8 St. Croix Valley Sierra Club, Executive Committee Meeting**, Stillwater Library, 223 N. Fourth St., Stillwater, Minn., 6:30 p.m. All members and interested persons are welcome.
- 8-10 The Ever Changing Mississippi** — a workshop on its quality, use and perceptions, Civic Center Inn, St. Paul. Call Ron Erickson or Ann Sornecki, (612) 290-4160.
- 10-14 Greater NW Vacation Show**, Mpls. Convention Center.
- 11 Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission meeting**, Prescott, Wis., City Hall, 10 a.m. (tentative). Agenda items include zebra mussels, Stillwater bridge and 1993 boating study. For information call (612) 436-7131 or (715) 386-9444.
- 11-13 Minniqua Ice Fishing Clinics**, Maplewood, Minn., Nature Center. For children and parents. To register call (612) 783-9383. For information call Linda Eastwood, MDNR Minniqua coordinator, (612) 296-3325.
- 13 Mississippi River Revival Winter Celebration**, Latsch Island, Winona, skating and other outside activities, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.; potluck 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., Winona Arts Center, Fifth & Franklin, followed by a meeting, slide show and live music. Call Mary Coughlin, (507) 452-9323.
- 15 Bluff Land Environmental Watch**, Winona Senior Friendship Center, Fifth & Main, 6 p.m. The group will discuss plans for a vigil to draw attention to possible nuclear waste storage at Prairie Island.
- 21 Prairie Island Coalition Against Nuclear Storage**, Prairie Island Tribal Center (across the road from Treasure Island Casino), noon. The meeting will include a presentation on nonviolent direct action.
- 23 Environment Management Program Coordinating Committee Meeting**, Upper Mississippi River Basin Association, Hyatt Regency, St. Louis, Mo., (612) 224-2880.
- 23-26 Third International Zebra Mussel Conference**, Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, Toronto, Ontario. Call Chris Brousseau, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, (416) 832-7113.

- 24 Upper Mississippi River Basin Association 12th Annual Meeting**, Hyatt Regency, St. Louis, Mo. Call (612) 224-2880.
- 27 Woodland Owners and Users Conference**, Brainerd (Minn.) High School, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Topics include shoreline management; forest stewardship; timber harvesting and marketing; Wetlands Act; and wolves. Fee \$12.50, after Feb. 17, \$17.50, covers lunch and materials. Send to Crow Wing County Ext. Service, County Service Bldg., 322 Laurel St., Brainerd, MN 56401. For more information contact local MDNR forester.
- 28 Fish houses in Minn.** must be off the ice at night (south of highways 2 & 200).

MARCH

- 9-11 Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee 49th Annual Meeting**, Chesnut Mountain Ski Lodge, Galena, Ill. Call Dan at (309) 582-5611.
- Zebra mussel threat to the Lower St. Croix**, informational meetings, open to the public. Call John Daugherty, National Park Service, (715) 483-3284.
- Feb. 6:** Earl Browne Center, UM-St. Paul, 9:30 to 11 a.m.
- Mar. 4:** Red Wing Public Library, 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- Mar. 6:** American Legion Hall, Hastings, 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Stewardship of the Lower St. Croix**, public workshops include presentations on zebra mussels and the perception of land use. Drafts of *The Riverkeepers Guides* will be reviewed and discussed. Sponsored by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission. To register, call (612) 436-7131 or (715) 386-9444.
- Feb. 11:** Prescott, Wis., City Hall, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- Feb. 13:** Phipps Center, Hudson, Wis., 9 p.m. to noon.
- Feb. 18:** Stillwater, Minn., City Hall, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- Feb. 20:** Afton, Minn., City Hall, 9 p.m. to noon.
- Feb. 25:** Marine-on-St. Croix, Minn., Town Hall, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- Feb. 27:** Community Education Center, St. Croix Falls, Wis., 9 p.m. to noon.
- History Beneath the Waves: The Archaeology of Pike's Fort**, is a new display that tells the story of the U.S. Army expedition led by Lieutenant Pike from St. Louis to the headwaters of the Mississippi River in 1805-1806. Exhibit includes the video, "Archaeology Beyond the Walls: Tracing Zebulon Pike's Travels in the Mississippi Headwaters." Dec. 1, 1992, to May 15, 1993, Fort Snelling State Park, Pike Island Interpretive Center, St. Paul, (612) 725-2389.

Big River is published monthly by Big River, PO Box 741, Winona, MN 55987, (507) 454-6758. Subscriptions are \$18 for one year, \$35 for two years or \$2 per single issue.

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MNRRRA, from page 1

political agencies that govern parts of the river, its banks and its uses.

A method for doing that is currently being designed and debated in public hearings. Last year the Park Service drew

"From our perspective, it's weighted against the 'working river.'"

up a preliminary proposal for a 10-year management plan. Formal public review is scheduled to continue this spring. A final plan, with approval of the 22-member MNRRRA commission and Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson, is to be submitted to the U.S. Interior Secretary by fall.

Will It Hamper Business?

Meanwhile, business interests, led by the Metro East Development Partnership, an arm of the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce, have carried out several well organized sorties against the proposed management plan.

They say the plan is vague, at best. They also express fears of further government restrictions on business — on everything from land use, to building height and setbacks, to regulated activities. Executives at 3M's Chemolite plant in Cottage Grove, which employs 950 people, have expressed fears that this could hamper current operations and future expansions.

Business folks cite four points they find troubling in the preliminary MNRRRA plan:

- Five kinds of land use would be "discouraged" in the MNRRRA: general industry and warehousing; general commercial services; parking lots not related to the primary land use; outdoor storage; and offices.
- Commercial activities unrelated to the river would be gradually eliminated.
- The plan has "a general goal of providing a continuous linear open space in the corridor" and
- would grant eminent domain powers to the MNRRRA commission.

"From our perspective, it's weighted against the 'working river,'" said Tim Rogers, executive director of Metro East, citing the keystone term of the early MNRRRA planning. "Most of the corporations along the river are in favor of a better river. We see a lot of pointed concerns that could jeopardize a lot of business and the property tax that goes with it."

Madell acknowledged that preliminary MNRRRA plans have "a significantly green tinge to them." But the hearing process hopes to bring about consensus.

"We recognize that this is not a 'wild and scenic' river — it's a 'working river,'" Madell said. "We know business is as important as the herons."

Madell said the MNRRRA commission will encourage uniform land use ordinances along the corridor. But while it may advocate more restrictive setbacks, for instance, local communities will still prevail. A natural shoreline may never be achieved, but the Park Service hopes to get money from Congress to match funds for private and public restoration projects in the corridor, he said.

Will It Protect the Environment?

Some environmental groups, while favoring federal designation of the river corridor, believe the Park Service has gone too far to mollify business interests in its latest proposals.

"Our major point is that we don't think the term 'working river' is a good overall theme for the national park," said Kara Beauchamp, conservation chair for the Minneapolis group of the Sierra Club. "We think there should be more emphasis on the natural resources of the area."

The club generally advocates continuous open space along the corridor, while recognizing that it may not be attainable in the short run. The North Star (Minnesota) Chapter of the Sierra Club sent a letter to the Park Service late last year urging that the MNRRRA restore and protect shore-

"We think there should be more emphasis on the natural resources of the area."

lines, bluffs, wetlands and wildlife habitat, and "minimize the cumulative impacts on natural resources that result from many individual projects."

Meanwhile, local governments might also find some potential difficulties in the MNRRRA plans. Suggestions that storm water runoff be treated or retained could be costly. And Park Service review of federally-funded projects in the corridor could add controversy to proposals such as replacement of the Wabasha Street bridge in St. Paul.

Sen. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), a member of the MNRRRA commission, said she believes there is broad middle ground for the MNRRRA between business and environmental advocates, and a potential boost for local communities, if tourism and recreation are seen as economic opportunities.

"We've often turned our backs on the river," Pappas added. "But this can help us appreciate it again. Other people in the world learn about the Mississippi in school and come here to take pictures of it. We can make it a more rewarding experience for our visitors, so they don't just come and stand outside the (Ramsey County) jail and take pictures of it."

Madell agreed that the point of the MNRRRA is to build a relationship between the river and people.

"If we sat down 20 years from now and asked what our successes were," he said, "I'd hope we can say we got people to come back to the river." ♦

Bill McAuliffe is a staff writer for the (Minneapolis) Star Tribune.

River History

The End of the Black Hawk War: A Battle or a Massacre?

by Reggie McLeod

Beneath the damp earth of Black Hawk Park, south of Victory, Wis., between Battle Hollow and Battle Island, rests the site of the last battle of the last Indian war in the Midwest, east of the Mississippi. The military place names tell only one side of the story of the pursuit across Wisconsin and the slaughter of Indian people on the banks of the Mississippi in the summer of 1832.

The conflict began in April, when Black Hawk led a party of about 2,000 Sauk and Fox men, women and children across the Mississippi River from Iowa to Rock Island. They believed the U.S. government had taken their land illegally. Outnumbered troops watched from Fort Armstrong as the band moved up the Rock River.

A month later, 1,700 mounted militia arrived and they pursued the band up the river. Black Hawk, who could not find the support he expected from other tribes, soon realized his cause was lost. He tried to surrender several times during the chase up the Rock River to Madison, Wis., and back to the Mississippi, but soldiers fired on each truce party.

Even at the time many people recognized the Black Hawk War as a brutal affair. A. L. Haven, a surveyor mapping the Mississippi shoreline 11 years later, wrote:

"The west part of this line passed the famous Badaxe Battle ground, where Gen. Dodge with a body of militia (after pursuing the celebrated Chief Black Hawk with a number of Indian Squaws & Papposes, over the mountainous Kickapoo country) overtook them in a starving condition while endeavouring to cross the Mississippi, and the militia murdered some of them while in this defenseless condition."

Ernie Boszhardt, regional archaeologist with the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center, at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, and his associates used the entry in Haven's notes to search for the site of the "battle." They have not been able to pinpoint it, however.

Black Hawk's band of Sauk and Fox arrived at the river late in the day on August 1, 1832, with the militia and army in close pursuit. The steamboat Warrior, which was patrolling the river to cut off their retreat, discovered the band and fired on them until it ran out of fuel and had to return to Prairie du Chien. The Indians camped near the shore that night.

"One of the prisoners taken later said 23 people were killed the first night," Boszhardt said.

The next morning the army engaged and pursued Black Hawk and a group of Indians up the Bad Axe River Valley, a short distance to the north. Meanwhile, General Dodge's militia, on the south flank, found and attacked the camp.

Indians fled into the river, hid in reeds and climbed trees. The Warrior returned and joined the massacre. A band of Sioux in Iowa killed or captured the Sauk and Fox who crossed the river. By the end of the day 27 soldiers and more than 150 Sauk and Fox were dead, not including Indians lost in the river or killed by the Sioux.

A small group including Black Hawk was later captured near the La Crosse River. Boszhardt thinks Black Hawk

The steamboat Warrior, which was patrolling the river to cut off their retreat, discovered the band and fired on them until it ran out of fuel and had to return to Prairie du Chien. The Indians camped near the shore that night.

attempted to draw the soldiers northeast, away from the main body of his band, so it could escape across the Mississippi.

"I think that also led to it becoming a massacre, because they (the militia) weren't as well trained as the army," he explained.

Today, Black Hawk Park, about 20 miles downriver from La Crosse, is owned and managed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Nearby land is owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Grants from the Corps of Engineers, the WDNR and the Burlington Northern Foundation funded Boszhardt's search.

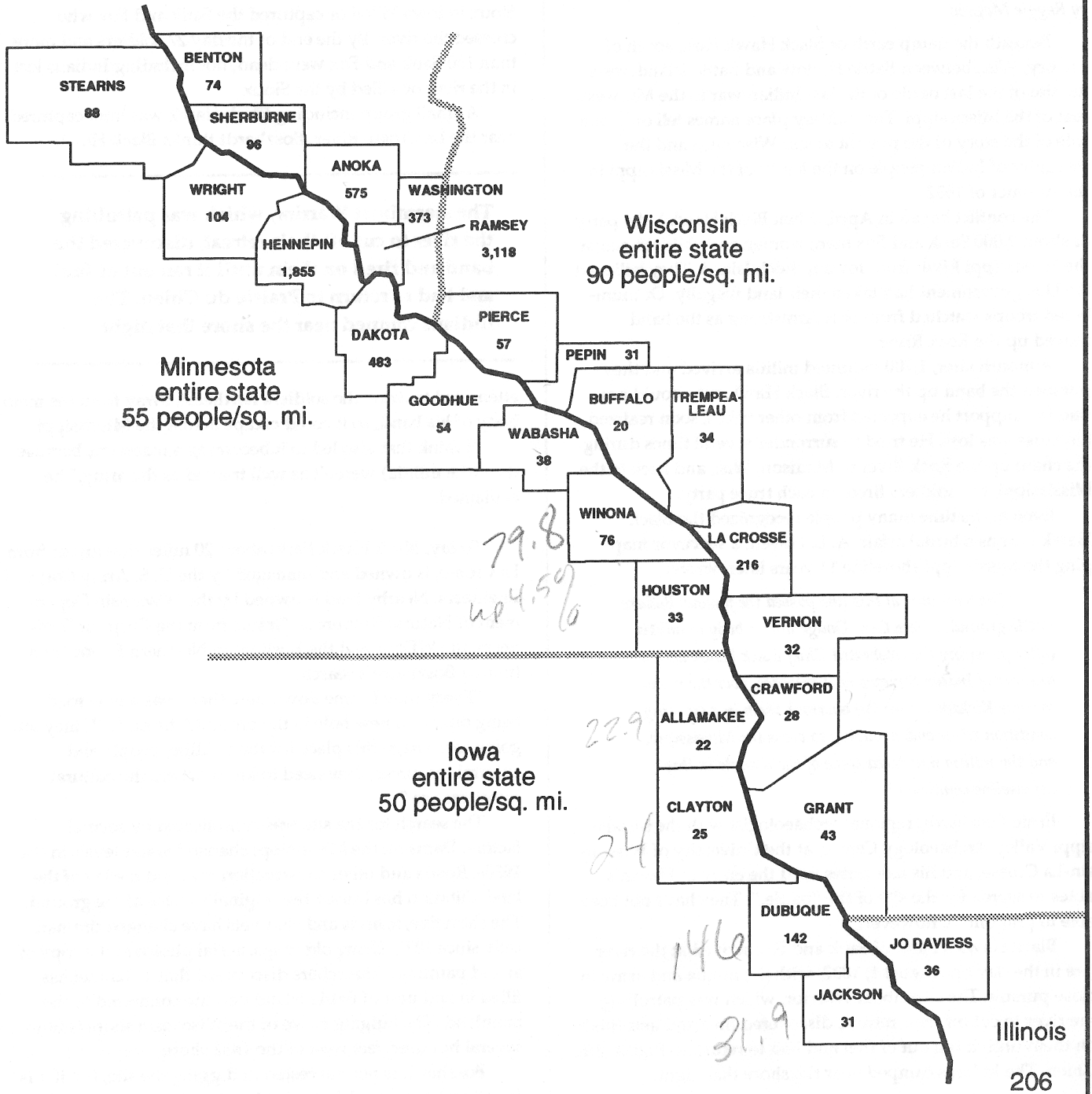
"Every time I came down here there was a new road being built or a new hole in the ground," he said. "If they are going to manage this place for the wildlife, people and cultural resources, they need to know where the cultural resources are."

The search for the site was complicated by several factors: Dams on the Mississippi changed water levels in the 1930s. Roads and other construction changed the lay of the land. Siltation has buried the original surface of the ground. The shoreline, islands and channels have changed dramatically since 1832. Using old maps, aerial photos and a copy of an old painting, researchers discovered that a channel has filled in and part of Battle Island became connected to the mainland. The bulging curve of the Wisconsin shore is now several hundred feet west of the 1832 shore.

Boszhardt is not interested in digging the site, but if it is found and preserved, battlefield archaeologists may study it someday. ♦

Elbow Room in the River Counties

people per square mile in 1990



Figures taken from the 1990 U.S. Census