



A Corridor Management Plan  
for the  
Minnesota River Valley  
Scenic Byway

May 2018

# River of Stories



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## Federal Corridor Management Plan Requirements

We have designed this corridor management plan to both meet the requirements of the National Scenic Byways Program and to meet our own needs locally for easy use and interpretation of the plan. The following is a summary of the required 14 elements of a corridor management plan and where one will find that information within our plan.

<b>14 Elements of a Corridor Management Plan (original Plan location)</b>	<b>Located within Plan</b>
1. Corridor Map A map identifying the corridor boundaries, location of intrinsic qualities, and land uses in the corridor. <b>(Map Appendix)</b>	Appendix
2. Intrinsic Quality Assessment An assessment of the byway's intrinsic qualities and their context (the area surrounding them). The end product is typically a catalogue of the byway's scenic, historic, natural, archeological, cultural, and recreational qualities. <b>(Chapter 4)</b>	Chapter 2, Appendix discovery sites
3. Intrinsic Quality Management Strategy A strategy for maintaining and enhancing each of the byway's intrinsic qualities. Ask what you want the byway corridor to look like in 10-15 years and develop goals and strategies to help you get there. <b>(Chapter 5, 10)</b>	Chapter 3
4. Responsibility Schedule A list of agencies, groups, and individuals who are part of the team that will carry out the plan. Be sure to include a description of each individual's responsibilities and a schedule of when and how you will review their progress. <b>(Chapter 10, 11)</b>	Chapter 6 Chapter 7 Appendix discovery sites, work plan,
5. Development Plan A strategy for how existing development along the corridor might be enhanced and how to accommodate new development while preserving they byway's intrinsic qualities. <b>(Chapter 5, 10)</b>	Chapter 3 Appendix work plan
6. Public Participation Plan A plan for on-going public participation. <b>(Chapter 2, 3)</b>	Chapter 1 Chapter 6
7. General Review of Road (Safety) Narrative A general review of the road's safety record to locate hazards and poor design, and identify possible corrections. Identify ways to balance safety with context-sensitive highway design practices that accommodate safety needs while preserving the road's character. <b>(Chapter 6)</b>	Chapter 5
8. Commercial Traffic Plan A plan to accommodate commercial traffic while ensuring the safety of sightseers in smaller vehicles, as well as bicyclists, joggers, and pedestrians. <b>(Chapter 6)</b>	Chapter 5

9. Visitor Experience Plan A listing and discussion of efforts to minimize anomalous intrusions on the visitor's experience of the byway. <b>(Chapters 5, 7, 8, 10)</b>	Chapter 1 Chapter 4
10. Outdoor Advertising Control Compliance Documentation of compliance with all existing local, state, and federal laws about the control of outdoor advertising. Your CMP should also address the continuous designation of the road to ensure that billboard companies will not be able to find a loophole in your byway designation that would allow them to erect billboards along the corridor. <b>(Chapter 6)</b>	Chapter 5
11. Sign Plan A plan to make sure that the number and placement of highway signs will not get in the way of scenery, but still be sufficient to help tourists find their way. <b>(Chapter 6, 10)</b>	Chapter 4 Chapter 5 Chapter 7
12. Marketing Narrative Plans for how to market and publicize the byway. <b>(Chapter 7, 9, 10)</b>	Chapter 4 Marketing Plan
13. Highway Design & Maintenance Standards Any proposals for modifying the roadway, including an evaluation of design standards and how proposed changes may affect the byway's intrinsic qualities. <b>(Chapter 6)</b>	Chapter 5
14. Interpretation Plan A description of what you plan to do to explain and interpret your byway's significant resources to visitors. <b>(Chapter 8 and separate plan)</b>	Chapter 4 Chapter 7 Interpretation Plan

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways based on one or more archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities.

To be designated as a National Scenic Byway, a road must possess at least one of the six intrinsic qualities and be regionally significant. These roads are often the "roads less traveled."

The National Scenic Byways Program, established by Congress in 1991 and administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), was created to preserve and protect the nation's scenic byways and, at the same time, promote tourism and economic development. Participation in the program is voluntary and may encompass any public road or highway. The National Scenic Byways Program emphasizes local involvement.

Funding for the National Scenic Byways Program changed in 2012. The Byway Resource Center was closed and federal grants no longer allocated funding specifically for byways.

## What are America's Byways®?



## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway is a place of significant beauty, history and character. As such, the Minnesota River Valley can be one of a select number of driving and travel experiences in the United States representing authenticity and a connection to both the past and future of a place. Byways offer the visitor an experience that meshes the past with the present, and the natural with the human-made. The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway is a perfect example of that integration.

This corridor management plan is a blueprint to guide the organizing, marketing and interpretive development of the corridor. It defines the most important steps needed to protect the character and resources along the byway. It also recommends how to manage tourism to balance economic gain with the protection of community character. **The ultimate objective of this plan is to strengthen Minnesota River Valley communities through both economic means (i.e., more visitors and tourism and benefits to businesses) and through a closer connection to the river and Valley's exceptional history (i.e., through investments in recreational facilities and interpretive programs.)**

In the end, it is hoped that this plan will not only bring thousands of out-of-state visitors to our Valley, but also make residents of Minnesota more aware of this special part of the state. That awareness will naturally translate into more political support to solve the challenges we face as well as closer economic ties to urban economies of Minnesota. If we reach those objectives, the river and our local economies will all be healthier and more sustainable.

### Livability

The U.S. Department of Transportation describes livability as: "Tying the quality and location of transportation facilities to broader opportunities such as access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and safe streets." Livability takes into account everything that contributes to a community's quality of life—including the built and natural

environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.

The Byway's work overlaps with the concept of livability as it is also concerned with the broad definition of quality of life. As communities make planning decisions, the byway hopes that important resources and intrinsic qualities will be protected and valued.

The byway can address livability issues by doing the following:

- Continue strong collaboration with partners within the byway corridor.
- Focus on an integration of the byway experience with transportation and public service by moving people through the byway in a manner that creates connections with the local landscape and culture.
- Encourages integration with transportation planning, land use and conservation of open green space and natural resources.
- This effort will create new action plans for the corridor management plan and integrate with local community and economic development planning organizations to work to improve the quality of life and experience for people in byway communities.
- Promotion to encourage development of new value-added livability components such as local foods, trails and connection among communities.
- Address improvements to existing transportation choices along the byway and help create a framework in which to better connect the byway traveler with these options.

## Byway Corridor and Intrinsic Qualities Overview

The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway was designated in 1995 and extended in 1996 to form the current 287 mile route. (See maps in Appendix.) In 2002 after diligent work from volunteers and staff, the Minnesota River Valley was designated as a National Byway by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Under the National Scenic Byways Program, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognized the Minnesota River Valley for its historic intrinsic value.

The identified corridor **encompasses 10 miles on each side of the river**. The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway is a grass-roots driven project established by local citizens, elected officials, organizations and agencies interested in and concerned about the attributes of the Minnesota River Valley. The byway was designated as a Minnesota Scenic Byway in 1995 and 1996 by the Minnesota Scenic Byway Commission (an inter-agency committee between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Office of Tourism, and the Minnesota Historical Society) and was designated as a National Scenic Byway in 2002 by Congress and the Federal Highway Administration. The byway has a technical assistance contract under which the UMRDC provides fiscal and staff services

In 2013 categorical Federal transportation grants for scenic byways were eliminated by Congress, although

*"Intrinsic qualities" is the term used by the National Scenic Byways Program for the resources along a byway that provide inherent significance and value to the traveler. There are six intrinsic qualities: scenic, natural, recreational, historic, cultural and archeological. Demonstrating significance in any one category is a minimum requirement for National Scenic Byway designation.*

### **Federal Highway Administration Scenic Byways**

*Between 1992 – 2012 Minnesota developed a legacy of successful local, state and Federal projects utilizing Federal Highway Administration Scenic Byway discretionary grant funds totaling \$17,053,577 for 173 projects.*

*In 2013 categorical Federal transportation grants for scenic byways were eliminated by Congress, although the program and route designations remain in place. To sustain the program and continue to build on Minnesota's scenic byway program successes, between 2015 -2017 MnDOT managed three centralized grant solicitations for scenic byways only, yielding \$6,052,781 to help fund 15 projects.*

*In addition, between 2014-2017 Minnesota byways were encouraged to compete through the decentralized Area Transportation Partnership funding process securing \$4,865,763 in Alternative Transportation Program funds supporting 12 projects that benefit the byway experience and implement corridor management plans.*

the program and route designations remain in place.

This corridor has all of the intrinsic qualities identified by the National Scenic Byways Program: scenic, natural, cultural, historic, recreational and archeological.

As the river flows along its 335-mile course from the headwaters near the Minnesota/South Dakota state line, the designated 287 byway route travels along the valley's floor, revealing story after story of settlement patterns and lives of early traders and trappers, missionaries, settlers and the Dakota people. Along the route, travelers discover six state parks, one national wildlife refuge, five state historical society properties and many sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Together, this creates a highly well-preserved landscape of historic, cultural and natural resources that reveals its past and offers interpretive glimpses of its future.



History and natural history are the two predominant intrinsic qualities of regional and national significance that link together each and every mile of this Byway.

The Byway was marketed with three intrinsic themes guided the byway until 2014:

- Historical Theme: Struggles for a Home
- Cultural Theme: Food for a Nation
- Natural Theme: The Evolution of a River Valley

More information about these themes can be found in the 2001 *River Stories Corridor Management Plan*.

During the 2014 interpretative planning process, the byway simplified the intrinsic themes into two main national stories:

- Historical Theme: Struggles for a Home (Now changed to A Place to Call Home).
- Natural Theme: River's Legacy

## Themes and Messaging

### Overall Theme

The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway traverses the ancient remnants of what was once one of the largest rivers to ever exist. Along the way, it uncovers stories from the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 that left hundreds dead and exiled a nation. Today travelers wind their way through vibrant small towns, Dakota communities, historic sites and scenic overlooks.

### Historical Theme: A Place to Call Home

#### The U.S. – Dakota War of 1862.

The Minnesota River Valley played a crucial role in the conflicts that erupted between Euro-American settlers and the Dakota people as they struggled to call this land “home.” The U.S.–Dakota War of 1862 was a significant event for the region and for our nation—a tragic chapter that foreshadowed wars to come, and permanently shaped the cultural identity of the Minnesota River Valley.

More detail:

In 1862, the Minnesota River Valley region erupted in war when a contingent of Dakota *akicȳta* (warriors), frustrated by broken treaty promises, encroachment onto reservation lands and corruption that left them starving, attacked traders and government employees and a warehouse full of food at the Lower Sioux Agency. More were killed on all sides in the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 than Minnesota lost in combat deaths during the Civil War. As a result of the war, Governor Ramsey called for all Dakota people to be exterminated or driven from the state.

Thousands fled the state and those that did not were separated into two groups. Women, children and mostly older men were imprisoned at Fort Snelling before being removed from the state in May 1863. The *akicȳta* that were not executed at Mankato were imprisoned at Davenport Iowa. In March 1866 the surviving prisoners were released to join their families in exile.

Decades later small groups of Dakota eventually started to return to their homelands in the late 1800s, and lived in small communities near where the Upper and Lower Sioux Agencies had been. Nearly 50 years later these small groups were organized into what is now the Upper and Lower Sioux Dakota Communities.

### Natural Theme: A River's Legacy

#### The Formation of the Minnesota River Valley

The Minnesota River Valley has a national story to tell about some of the oldest exposed rock on the face of the earth. This region was carved from dramatic and massive floodwaters that resulted from the overflow of glacial Lake Agassiz scouring a jagged path across Minnesota and uncovering ancient bedrock outcrops.

More detail:

The Minnesota River travels through rich wetlands, prairies, granite outcroppings, wooded hills, farm fields, villages and small cities. Over millennia, the river valley's people, plants, and animals have

interacted in a complex and unique ecosystem. Throughout the valley, evidence of the interactions between these species can be seen. Today, the valley's natural features offer a fascinating number of interpretive opportunities.

## Byway Alliance

A critical element to ensure successful long-term support for development and management of a Byway is the presence of a strong community-based management group. This group should include leaders and representatives from local stakeholder groups and community-based organizations along its entire length as well as state-wide. Participation should reflect representatives from community leadership, civic organizations, special interest groups, interested residents, industry, and local, state and federal agencies, all of whom have a presence within the Byway corridor. For this byway, that organization is the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance. See Chapter 6 for the Byway's organization plan.

## Our Vision

The Minnesota River Valley has a concentration of historic, cultural and natural resources that make the byway a major destination within Minnesota and one of the highlighted driving experiences in the nation through the National Scenic Byways Program. Many visitors will travel the 287 miles from one end to the other in one trip, the compelling stories and interesting resources and experiences along the route will encourage return visits along different segments of the route.

### *Our vision is that....*

The result of increased tourism is stronger local economies, stronger municipal tax bases, a greater awareness of the region within the state and the nation with a resulting increase in general business development as the region's image and positive qualities are known by more people.

Visitors follow well-signed roadways, enjoy informative stops at visitor centers in each community, and enjoy a variety of interpretive sites. They will come for weekends to participate in organized events including guided tours, craft fairs, and community celebrations that include ethnic and homestyle cooking you can't find at the shopping malls or chain restaurants. Visitors will enjoy staying in the quaint bed and breakfasts, various motels and the wonderful campsites and cabins in the byway's many State Parks.

Communities along the Byway will witness travelers come from nearby metropolitan areas to participate in weekend events held year-round. Spring events like Syttende Mai, canoeing during high water spring run-off, birding festivals celebrating spring migration and opening of fishing season will fill motels and keep the downtowns bustling as guests shop for locally-made crafts.

Summers will provide a constant, but not overwhelming level of visitation as guests return for their annual trip to explore another segment of the Byway. Many guests will stay in one community and take day trips throughout the corridor, while others will return for annual family visits that coincide with annual festivals and community celebrations. More and more casino guests will come back to not only game, but also explore the other facets of the byway. The region will become more and more popular as a biking and horseback riding destination, providing extended trail rides and quiet, safe country roads for touring.

Each fall and winter, groups of hunting and snowmobiling enthusiasts will return to their favorite spots and trails to enjoy the serenity of the cooler seasons. Cross country ski groups will enjoy the quiet trails used by hikers and bikers in the summer. Out-of-town visitors from warmer climates will experience their first snowmobile trail ride and ice-fishing experience through packages offered by local chamber offices.

Marketing efforts will promote the Byway's outstanding historical and cultural resources,

including the dramatic events recorded by history of the relationships between the Dakota Indians and European settlers, as well as the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862 between the Dakota and the U.S. government.

The region's outstanding recreational and natural resources will provide a variety of opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. Bicycling, canoeing and bird-watching enthusiasts will begin to make the Byway an annual destination as more and more sites, trails and events will be developed to host these groups. The Minnesota River Trail will be completed, providing trail access all along the Minnesota River. The charm of small towns and hospitality of residents along the Byway will allow visitors to enjoy a slice of Minnesota.

The increased amount of tourism visitations will not destroy the quality of life, as visitors will be spread out along the byway's full 287 mile length. This cooperative effort among communities will improve the image of the region, enhance community pride, and provide new diversity to the local economies.

## Goals of the Plan

This corridor management plan is a community-based strategy for balancing the management and conservation of the Byway's intrinsic qualities with public use and enjoyment of those resources. Planning allows communities to identify and evaluate all the ways they want to use these resources, and more importantly, share these resources with the world. **The ultimate goal is to create a balance between preservation and promotion in a manner that maintains the integrity and value of the Byway's intrinsic qualities, and enhances the livability in the Minnesota River Communities.** This plan is a comprehensive outline of these intrinsic qualities which will help planning efforts preserve what is important in the valley.

This plan also assists with the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway's **mission: *To cooperatively enhance the Minnesota River Valley as a travel destination and raise awareness of its nationally important stories in order to provide economic benefits and preserve the intrinsic qualities of the byway.***

The goals for this community based-strategy are the following, all of which fit into livability principles:

### Conservation and Preservation:

1. Balance economic promotion and character protection throughout the corridor and in alignment with the desires of local communities.
2. Work to protect and improve the environmental health of the River and its Valley.

### Economic Development:

3. Strengthen the municipal finances of our communities through growing property values and more business development.
4. Support existing businesses and encourage new businesses that are complementary to the area.

### Interpretation and Education:

5. Market our region more assertively so that people in and out of the state know of the Valley as a good place to live, retire to, visit, operate a business, and manage a farm.
6. Develop interpretive strategies that benefit the traveler and increase our residents' understanding of local history and culture.

### Byway Facilities and Enhancement:

7. Improve the recreational facilities and amenities of the Valley.
8. Assure safe travel along the Byway route for the visiting public.

### Tourism:

9. Promote the Byway as a tool to create an exceptional visitor experience by coordinating the interpretation and education associated with the themes of the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway:
  - i. A Place to Call Home (The U.S.–Dakota War)
  - ii. River's Legacy (Natural History)

Through partnerships and participation in collaborative opportunities, the Byway will be promoted to visitors in order to extend and enhance the visitor experience, to increase

positive economic impact and to improve the quality of life within the region.

#### **Transportation:**

10. Promote the creation and maintenance of transportation systems that employ context sensitive design and protect efficient safe and enjoyable travel through the corridor for all modes of travel and types of users (while maintaining character defining features).

#### **Coordination and Management:**

11. Encourage community participation throughout the planning and implementation of this strategy.
12. Achieve a sustainable National Scenic Byway organization to help achieve the above goals.
13. Utilize the resources and capacity of the Byway Alliance to manage the Byway, assure that the Byway will be ready for visitors and assure that the Byway experience will be maintained at a high level.

The corridor management plan recognizes that we are in an era of changing programs because of budget and resource constraints. To continue to work towards the goals of the byway, the plan suggests the formation of a wide range of unique partnerships and collaborations as a way to overcome these constraints. These necessary partnerships will help create a sustainable organization to the byway which will ultimately bring more resources to help preserve, maintain and enhance our 287-mile corridor for tourism development.

### **Planning Process and context**

The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance has worked hard to develop an open public participation strategy since its inception in 1997. It holds at least monthly meetings, maintains a mailing list of over 80 partners, and is the leader for public participation efforts.

### **History of the Corridor Management Plan**

“RiverStories”, the first corridor management plan created in 2001, was the product of two planning

efforts. The first effort focused on the central portion of the byway; that planning work occurred during 1998 and 1999. The second planning process extended from early 2000 to early 2001, and concentrated on the western and eastern end of the byway. Those two efforts were woven into this comprehensive corridor management plan.

During the 1998-1999 planning work, there were two byway groups involved. The first was a Scenic Byway Partnership Group which focused on the preparation of the Phase 1 plan. The Alliance served in a broader advisory role during that effort. After the first phase of planning, the Alliance and Partnership merged to be the one Byway Alliance organization which guided the preparation of the Phase 2 plan.

### **Updated Corridor Management Plan**

In the past decade, the Alliance has worked to accomplish many of the goals and actions set forth in this plan. The Alliance updated the 2002 CMP plan in 2018. In addition, a new Interpretive Plan and Marketing Plan was added to the CMP. It is the intent of the Byway Alliance to use the CMP to create their work plan each year and to use and change the CMP as needed to create the work plan each year.

This updated CMP was developed under the guidance of the Alliance through numerous meetings. In addition, email updates were sent out to the database. This database includes:

- Alliance members
- Partners (people who have identified they want to be on email lists)
- State Agencies
  - MnDOT
  - MnHS
  - DNR
  - EMT
- From along the byway:
  - Chambers
  - Cities
  - Counties
  - Museums
  - EDA
  - Legislators
  - County Parks
  - County Engineers

- State Parks
- Tribes
- Organizations
- Businesses
- Residents

The highway safety section was sent to county engineers and MnDOT to review on 8-10-15.

## Future Participation

In moving forward with implementation, the Alliance envisions a variety of ways in which the public will be encouraged to participate. The inclusion of various partners and private sector entities will be important as well as periodic conferences that draw the byway together. The actions below indicate plans for future participation.

The following are recommended actions that summarize this chapter.

### Chapter 1 Actions

#### 1. Work with partners along the byway.

Continue strong collaboration with partners within the byway corridor.

#### 2. Work with transportation departments along the byway to focus on the byway traveler.

Address improvements to existing transportation choices along the byway and help create a framework in which to better connect the byway traveler with these options.

#### 3. Inventory value-added components that keep a community livable.

Inventory value-added livability components such as local foods, trails and connection in byway communities. Work with these businesses and communities to help them promote themselves on the Explore Minnesota Website and help them connect with each other to best serve the byway travelers.

## Chapter 2: Resource and Intrinsic Qualities Assessment

### Introduction

The Federal Highways Administration's National Scenic Byway Program identifies six intrinsic qualities for which byways may be designated: archeological, cultural, historic, natural, scenic, and recreational. It further defines intrinsic qualities as "features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of the area."

The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway possesses characteristics representing all of the six intrinsic qualities. Through the interpretive planning process in 2014, our consultant reviewed the inventory of resources, community meetings, and discussions with Alliance representatives. It was determined that the *historic* and *natural* intrinsic resources were the two strongest categories and thus would provide the most distinctive experience for visitors.

Together, history and nature tie the Byway together from end-to-end with resources of regional and national significance. Cultural, recreational and scenic intrinsic qualities are of very high quality as well, but are secondary to the above qualities. Archeological qualities are abundant, but are undeveloped and thus largely not accessible to the public.

Flowing from the major intrinsic quality categories are the two themes chosen to unite interpretative efforts: A Place to Call Home and River's Legacy.

*"The Minnesota River flows 335 miles from its source near Ortonville before emptying into the mighty Mississippi near in St. Paul. The Minnesota Valley Basin drains 16,700 square miles of lands, which includes all or parts of 37 counties in Minnesota. It is the largest tributary to the Mississippi River in Minnesota."*

*Corridor Partnership and Marketing Plan, Phase I Plan, March, 1999*

### Review of Intrinsic Qualities

The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway winds its way through hills, farmland and small towns sited along the valley floor. In many locations along the route, one can still see the breadth of the valley, miles apart from rim to rim. This valley was carved out over 12,000 years ago when the rising waters of a large, newly formed glacial lake, Lake Agassiz, destroyed a natural earth dam near what is now Browns Valley. The rushing waters and floods carved a valley, forming what became the ancient River Warren. Eventually the Minnesota River established itself, and populations of ancient and Native people established themselves within its valley.

Today, visitors experience this landscape as a gently flowing river running through a broad valley of rolling hillsides and long, even plains. Towns and farms are spaced evenly across this landscape. Anywhere one looks closely, the interaction and connections between people and the land are consistently evident and thus strongly shape each of the intrinsic qualities reviewed below.

The Byway maintains a detailed list of historic and natural history sites of the river valley. The list is comprehensive, but the Byway has identified sites that relate directly to one of the two main intrinsic themes and is visitor ready as "anchor sites" or Destination sites.

That material is contained in Appendix 2 Intrinsic Qualities by Segment. There is also a list of the discovery sites in Appendix 11.

### Historic Resources

The interpretive theme, *A Place to Call Home*, is a story-line that ties together many of the historic resources and events that have and continue to occur along the Scenic Byway. This title should be used sparingly.

There are **regional and local stories** to tell about the European settlement of the West as it relates to both



the native people and the immigrants seeking to either keep or win a place on this land, a home.

Evidence of early man, estimated to be living in this region as far back as 9,000 years ago, were discovered in the Valley near Browns Valley. The Dakota, Ojibwe and Ho Chunk once shared the land by hunting, fishing and gathering food, only to be replaced by the Germans, Norwegians and Swedish in their quests to create a new agricultural-based society in this territory.

Within the Valley, there are stories of Native American life, the concept of Manifest Destiny and the creation of one of the most productive agricultural cultures in the world.

The **national story of the byway** is the story about the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862. This powerful story within the theme *A Place to Call Home* is about the relationships between the Dakota and Euro-American settlers and the resulting U.S. – Dakota War of 1862. Following decades of relative peace, increasing land pressure, broken promises and antagonism from the U.S. government toward the Dakota lead to the events of 1862 and the Dakota War. This war was overshadowed by the national Civil War occurring at the same time, but remains a silent memory to many who still call this place home, including ancestors from both the Native American and Euro-American cultures.

By the mid-19th century people from the east were surging west into the area known as the Minnesota Territory. The bison and elk had long since left due to the depletion of the herds from overhunting associated with the fur trade. Settlers began building homes, clearing prairies for farmland and raising families.

In 1851 the United States signed the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux (along the banks of the Minnesota at St Peter -- a central point along the Byway) and the Treaty of Mendota. With these treaties, the U.S. government obtained almost 24 million acres of

Dakota lands. Thousands more immigrants began pouring into the region, and the Minnesota River became the highway for western settlement as it carried passengers and goods to the growing towns and cities of the west.

Life along the river began to change drastically after these events for both the Dakota and the Euro-American settlers. A reservation was established for the Dakota people, running 10 miles wide along the river from Browns Valley to near New Ulm -- an area that matches a good portion of the scenic byway's corridor. The system operated for almost a decade, but there were often delays by government officials in making treaty payments and delivering food. Resistance to the U.S. government's imposed culture (e.g., schooling systems and agriculture) generated a desire among many of the younger Dakota to defy the government.

The U.S. government's commitment to its treaty obligations deteriorated by 1862 to a point that Dakota families went with absolutely no supplies or food well into the summer. These mounting late payments of food and money from the U.S. government were major factors in the decision by some Dakota leaders to attempt to regain their former lands and traditional way of life. With most of the settlers off fighting the Southern secessionists, a rebellious act by several young Dakota resulted in the death of an immigrant family. From these events, the Dakota War erupted. By the end of 1862, between 500 and 1500 settlers and an unknown number of Dakota lost their lives. (Due to the Dakota's traditions of removing their dead from the battle fields, their losses were difficult to assess. It is estimated that the Dakota had similar or larger losses as a result of both the fighting and the trauma of relocation to the Dakota Territory.) Many settlers fled Minnesota forever, and thousands of Dakotas were imprisoned or fled into exile. At the end of the war, on the day after Christmas, under the order of President Lincoln, the largest mass execution ever held in American history took place with the hanging of 38 Dakota men in the town of Mankato, Minnesota.

As the largest and bloodiest “Indian War” in United States history, the U.S. –Dakota War of 1862 was overshadowed by the American Civil War, but nonetheless, it was truly one of the greatest struggles for a home ever seen in American history. This story of settlement affected the daily lives of all those who lived in the Minnesota River Valley. The battlefields, historic homesites and farms, early townsites, old fur trading posts, Indian agencies and reservation lands, military forts, steamboats, mills and hundreds of other points along the river all add to the outstanding historical resources of the Byway which, with proper guidance, can serve to tell this story in a compelling and important manner. The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway offers an exceptional opportunity to tell this important story across the landscape upon which it occurred.

## Cultural Resources

The “Place to Call Home” theme introduced above certainly centers around the historical incidents that caused the confrontation of 1862, but that story consists of much more than recitations of historical fact. The underlying reasons for the struggle lie in the clash of cultures that occurred throughout the Americas as Europeans sought to claim this country as their own and the Americans who preceded the Europeans sought to maintain their cultures. The Minnesota River Valley and its Byway offer exceptional opportunities to explore these historic and continuing cultural issues.

First, there is much history to be told of the River Valley and of the people who have lived here. Beginning with prehistoric cultures and moving to the present offers one consistent theme: people who live in this Valley have largely supported themselves from the land. This is not an urbanized landscape or a failed rural economy. The current modes of living from the land are highly developed and quite healthy in the Valley. A new form of living from the land has been created in this Valley over the last 100 years, but it bears many connections to the subsistence cultures that thrived here for thousands of years prior the first

white settler’s small farm. Those similarities and differences in that connection to the land offer many cultural intrinsic quality development opportunities.

Second, the Byway corridor’s ten-mile boundary coincides with the lands initially negotiated as belonging to the Dakota by the U.S. government and then subsequently largely taken away by the government. Quality interpretation will allow visitors to gain a better sense of what it would be like to live within the corridor prior to and then after Euro-American settlement. **The opportunities to see a riverside farm and then to learn about how the Dakota lived from the same riverbanks will be a rich educational experience.** The same is true for any number of cross-cultural issues that might be explored including community social and physical structures, family structures, educational systems, religious beliefs, recreation and on and on. Learning upon the very land that these two cultures each call home provides a connection to place that should be powerful for the visitor.

Third, Dakota people still reside within the Valley and their presence and participation in the byway program could provide for a level of current-day reality that is often missing from historic sites. In other words, one can learn about the 140-year consequences of the War of 1862 and attempt to understand how the Dakota people have subsequently found their own path into the 21st century.

Fourth, tribal communities in the Valley have continued to note that the U.S. – Dakota War was one event with the main fighting that occurred for six weeks. Although important and defining to historic outcomes, **the event itself does not define the Dakota people nor their entire history.** There were decades of peace between the European settlers and the Dakota people. The Dakota people had a way of life before European settlers. And, as noted before, Dakota people still live here in the Valley and should not be described only in the past tense.



Finally, along with Native American history, there are rich stories to be told of the European descendants that moved to the Valley in the 1800's and whose resulting culture characterizes the Valley today. The Minnesota River Valley has a regional, national and international story to tell of the growth and development of the American system of agriculture. This story is evident through a number of key characters and topics: the prairie soils, the Homestead Act, the opening of the prairie to farming, the impact on the land of the crops chosen by farmers, the development of agricultural and other cooperatives, the food processing companies and systems (including the Green Giant Company), and recent evolutions in farming and biotechnology.

## **Natural and Scenic Resources**

The landscape along the Minnesota River Valley is beautiful and characteristic of the prairie. It contains some of the largest undisturbed prairie grasslands areas in Minnesota and is part of the National Northern Tallgrass Prairie Historic Preservation Area. The Byway's winding route always brings the traveler back to the river's banks, but not before enjoying small detours through prairie and rivertowns, in and out of prairie woodlands and wetlands and across long unbroken fields of some of the finest farmland in America. Of particular interest and importance in the current landscape are efforts to convert marginal farmland back to a more natural state using native grasses and woody vegetation. Various state and federal conservation easement programs are supporting this work.

A wide variety of vegetation fringes the river. The tall grass prairies that still remain offer a tremendous diversity of wildlife. This ecosystem is home to over 40 percent of Minnesota's 287 state-listed rare plant and animal species. As visitors travel along the river, either by car or canoe, they will see the riverbanks lined with cottonwood, elm and soft maple. These often fall into the river, creating snags which provide habitat for fish populations. Where the river widens visitors can view sandbars, swampy areas and marshland, often filled with willows and reeds.

From Granite Falls to Redwood Falls, the Minnesota River flows through an area of granite outcrops. Some outcrops are the oldest exposed rocks discovered in the world, dating back more than three billion years. Away from the river the high granite domes are covered with cedar and oak.

Above the river valley exists a terrace of prairie, wet meadow, oak woodland and lowland hardwood plants. Shrubby patches of wild plum, wolfberry and narrow-leaved meadowsweet provide wonderful habitat for open country birds. Wildflowers range from pasque flowers and prairie violets in early spring, to summer's yellow stargrass, palespike lobelia and sunflowers. The fall's gentian and milkweed bring the blooming season to its end. The Scenic Byway's large, colorful hardwoods in the eastern section create a breathtaking drive during the changing of the seasons.

## **Recreational Resources**

The recreational resources along the Byway are of regional significance. The Corridor is home to six State Parks, one National Wildlife Refuge, a stretch of Minnesota Wild and Scenic River, Project River Bend and several of the largest and most diverse wildlife management areas in Minnesota. Several community and county parks represent some of the largest in land-size in Minnesota, including Alexander Ramsey Park in Redwood Falls.

Four of the major categories of recreational resources found along the byway are profiled below.

## **Parks and Trails**

The corridor has the highest density of state parks in the state, and its trail system is on the path to become significant as well. Most parks and recreational areas have picnic and warming shelters, camping sites, restrooms, interpretive trails and boat access. Hiking and biking trails, as well as horseback trails are available at many sites and continue to be expanded.

Visitors coming during the winter are enjoying these same trails for cross country skiing, snowmobiling and snowshoeing. Snowmobiling is a popular activity during the winter and a large trail system is available throughout most of the Byway corridor. Ice skating and sledding are also popular at nearby lakes and parks.

There is growing demand for more campgrounds that can accommodate horse trailers and camping opportunities. The Upper Sioux Agency State Park has campsites for horse camping as well as has the distinction of offering tipi rentals for a unique camping opportunity.

### Nature Tourism

The remaining northern tallgrass prairie has an abundance of outstanding watchable wildlife viewing opportunities. Many species of birds make this habitat their home, including songbirds, marsh and wading birds, waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and upland game birds. The exceptional ecosystems and bird habitats of the region play an important role in providing quality habitat for song birds and waterfowl populations important to the North American natural systems.

Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge has 11.5 miles of Minnesota River running through its boundaries. It consists of over 10,000 acres, of which 1,700 are native prairie. A combination of eastern and western waterfowl species migrate through the Minnesota River Valley, up the Central and Mississippi flyways.

Birdwatching opportunities continue to grow along the Byway and communities along the Byway are beginning to tap into the economic benefits of the growing “birding” market, with annual events near Ortonville and Madison. Marsh Lake, a man-made reservoir on the Minnesota River west of Appleton has one of only two nesting colonies of white pelicans in Minnesota. The bald eagle winter population continues to grow along stretches of the Minnesota near Montevideo and Granite Falls as well as Swan Lake by Nicollet, with hundreds of eagles drawing

people to the area for viewing. Lac qui Parle has over 27,000 acres of wetlands, brushlands, woodlands and native prairie that offer viewing of abundant wildlife almost any time of year. A new environmental learning center recently opened on Lac qui Parle.

### Hunting

Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management Area is best known for its goose hunting. In the fall as many as 150,000 Canada geese may land at Lac qui Parle at one time. Most are part of the Eastern Prairie Population which nests near the southwestern shore of Hudson Bay during the summer and winters in Missouri’s Swan Lake Refuge. Deer, duck, pheasant and turkey hunting are also popular hunting options along the Byway. Trapping of muskrat, mink, fox, raccoon and beaver are still allowed in some areas with proper permitting. Blackpowder hunting has grown in recent years as has bow hunting.

### Fishing

Area lakes and rivers provide some of the finest fishing in the Midwest. Through an aggressive stocking program by the Department of Natural Resources, Big Stone Lake has become the site for national walleye fishing contests held each year in Ortonville. Throughout the corridor anglers can enjoy a diversity of fishing for walleye, largemouth bass, crappies, northern pike, perch, blue gill, and catfish in the Byway’s water resources.

During the winter months, hundreds of ice fishing houses will pop up throughout the Byway corridor on nearby lakes. For the hearty souls, a simple hole in the ice and overturned bucket can provide an morning or afternoon fishing experience on the frozen waters of Minnesota.

## **Minnesota River Valley Merits National and Regional Significance Based on Historical and Natural Intrinsic Qualities**

### **Historic Intrinsic Qualities of Regional and National Significance**

A number of points demonstrate the national and regional significance of the historic intrinsic qualities of the Byway:

- 1) The US-Dakota War of 1862 is of national significance in that it was the deadliest armed Native American uprising against the colonization of North America. This is well documented by historians.
- 2) The War and its documentation provide a clear and geographically defined record of relations between the Dakota, the U.S. government and the forces driving Manifest Destiny. That record and its story offer important connections to the status of Native Americans in today's society and the ways in which Euro-Americans have structured their society. There are many positive as well as many negative stories to tell of how both cultures have fared over the last 140 years. The current-day presence of Dakota communities within the Valley is an element of the regional and national significance of this intrinsic quality as are the well-defined and historically intact Euro-American communities. Both offer a continuity to the original War that is significant.
- 3) The Minnesota River and the Valley played a particularly important role in Manifest Destiny as they offered a path for literally hundreds of thousands of individuals and families moving from east to west across the country. The historic sites and their relationship to this westward expansion is of regional significance to Minnesota as well as to the story of the development of the United States.

### **Natural Intrinsic Qualities of Regional and National Significance**

The geologic forces that shaped the river, the ancient rock outcroppings and many of the resulting ecosystems are of regional significance. Some of the largest remaining areas of undisturbed prairie landscape can be found along the Minnesota River Valley. The Corridor holds several Scientific and Natural Areas containing rare and sensitive species and important historic landscapes, including Bonanza Prairie, Plover Prairie, Yellow Bank Hills, Clinton Prairie, Kasota Prairie, the Gneiss Outcrops, Blue Devil Valley, and Chamberlain Woods. Most of the western end of the byway is part of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Protection Area, a national strategy to preserve prairie remnants of native tallgrass prairie to ensure protection of unique plant communities, native fish and wildlife, and historic and cultural sites.

The following are recommended actions that summarize this chapter.

## **Chapter 2 Actions**

### **4. Integrate an Environmental Stewardship Message within the Alliance's Image**

The public should be made more aware of the Valley's exceptional character -- historic, cultural and natural. Increased awareness will result in stronger financial and political support for needed changes and investments that will help the river recover. In addition, heightened awareness will ensure that the historical and cultural resources of the Minnesota River are protected and interpreted respectfully.

### **5. Work the Dakota tribes: Upper and Lower Sioux Communities**

Part of the intrinsic value is how the stories of the river valley are told. The Dakota tribes should be consulted on a variety of topics: how they want the stories to be told, how to share their entire history, and how they want to interact with the byway travelers.

### **6. Update the list of Discovery Sites.**

The list of discovery sites (and destinations) should be reviewed and the content should be updated on a regular basis.

## Chapter 3: Intrinsic Resources Management Strategy

### Introduction

A goal of the corridor management plan is to provide the proper balance between protecting the Byway's natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources for future generations while promoting economic development opportunities for the betterment of local government and local businesses. The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway has a diversity of historic, natural, recreation, cultural and scenic resources that contribute to its significance. These intrinsic qualities require thoughtful, long-term management strategies. While, generally speaking, the byway is not under great threat from change, there are still a variety of ways in which intrinsic qualities could erode. This chapter defines the potential threats and recommended strategies so that the Byway will maintain its inherent intrinsic quality.

*While change is coming slowly to the Valley, there are many sensitive landscapes important to the byway's character that could be lost if careful planning is not encouraged.*

### The Byway's Resource Management Partners

#### Local Historic Districts

The locally zoned districts include:

- Ortonville
- New Ulm
- Mankato
- St. Peter
- Ottawa
- Henderson

#### Municipal and County Zoning

Most communities and counties have some form of zoning and land use regulations. As byway projects proceed, cooperation with these regulatory agencies will be critical.

#### Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge

The area south of Ortonville has been preserved through a collaborative effort between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior.

#### Minnesota River State Trail Master Plan, 2007

This plan provides a framework for future trail development in the watershed and will be integral to many byway projects.

Also see Appendix 6: Partnerships.

### Issues and Challenges

It is always a challenge to manage growth while protecting intrinsic qualities. The corridor of the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway is long and diverse and growth varies along the route.

In general, growth along the corridor should consider the intrinsic values of the valley. Efforts should be made to encourage high quality site planning along this corridor so that it complements the byway.

While growth will bring benefits to the corridor, such growth should be managed to enhance, not deteriorate the byway. For example, development in long viewsheds should be sited carefully to avoid the total loss the view. In some areas, there may be viewsheds of importance to all residences and construction within these sight lines should be avoided whenever possible. In other cases, the issue for consideration may be access to resources or provisions for future trail development. If a project abuts a regional resource, then accommodations should be made to integrate the project with the future plans for the regional resource.

#### Gravel Pits and Extraction Activities

Of particular relevance are two locations along the byway. The first is near Ortonville where there is pressure to increase aggregate quarry projects. The second area is from Henderson to Mankato where

there is the increased amount of gravel and sand extraction occurring within the river valley. The Valley has rich deposits of these materials and property owners should be able to extract these resources if the sites meet environmental and zoning requirements. The issues of relevance to the byway are those of visibility, truck traffic, reclamation and interpretation. Screening should be encouraged if an extraction area will significantly impact a scenic area. Where relevant, guidelines for managing truck traffic, pedestrians and cyclists should be developed during the permitting process. All extraction projects should have enforceable reclamation plans. Finally, in some cases, a site may lend itself to geological interpretation. In such cases, pullout areas should be set aside, visual access guidelines developed and traffic safety plans prepared. In all cases, the overall objective should be ensuring safe co-existence for commercial operations and byway visitors, as well as taking advantage of opportunities to safely interpret interesting commercial activities for the visitor.

### Growth along Mankato's Urban Fringe

Mankato is the major urban center along the byway. While the byway, itself, may play a minor overall role in the future development of the city, the Byway Alliance and regional planners should highlight the byway for special treatment as urban growth continues in and around Mankato. Commercial strips west of the city and the byway's basic character are incongruent. Careful placement of signs and careful routing will be important so that visitors do not become disillusioned with the byway.

### Growth along New Ulm's Village Edge

New Ulm is the major known tourism destination along the byway. It offers a great historic downtown packaged within an appealing German theme. As development proceeds at the edges of the town, care should be taken to encourage high quality site planning so that there is some echoing of the town's chosen character and theme in all new development.

## The Commercial Gateway Challenge

In many areas along the byway -- as in many areas across the country -- commercial development at the outskirts of community centers is detracting from the uniqueness and charm of these rural downtowns. Generally speaking along this byway, this growth is not of the "big box" variety (e.g., Walmarts, Targets, Costco, etc.), but is rather local businesspeople developing smaller franchises or expanding their local businesses on larger lots at the edge of town. In other words, the development is incremental and of relatively small scale. (Development at the outskirts of Mankato tends to be larger and is the exception to this rule.) In addition to new commercial development, consideration should also be given to land uses that may be poorly sited given the byway's objectives of offering a pleasing landscape to the visitor. All land uses are serving a need, but in some cases there may be opportunities to re-site or screen uses that are visually inappropriate for the landscape.

The objective for the Alliance should be to encourage higher awareness among local planning commissions of the importance of setting high quality site standards in their commercial areas. Landscaping, lighting, service roads, site-to-site connecting drives, signage and building design can all be shaped without impositions on the property owners with the result being a more cohesive and pleasing entranceway into communities at a reasonable cost to the property owner.

### Changes in the Downtowns

Important buildings in several of the downtown areas, including Ortonville and Montevideo, are at risk due to neglect. Many historic buildings have been lost in recent years. Others are in somewhat better financial circumstances, but still face high vacancy rates from insufficient demand. The core problem is obviously due to the overall poor economic health of the downtowns, but it is likely that health will one day return to these places and caution is urged if attempts are made to destroy buildings with historic significance and character. **The Alliance should not take the role of historic preservation watchdog, but**



**it should take the role of educator.** Efforts should be made to make the connections clear between downtowns of uniqueness and character and those that have lost their character due to ill-conceived demolitions. The former are most appealing to visitors and new residents, and take longer, if ever, to revive.

## Roadway Construction and Improvements

The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway is fortunate that it has taken advantage of the state's Natural Preservation Route Program and standards. This state DOT program allows for the more careful management of routes deemed to have significant character and beauty. Roads under this designation are well protected. Of greater concern are highways not covered under the Natural Preservation Route standards and which will be subject to Federal Highway Administration funding improvement standards when modifications to layout and width are made. While in most places, such modifications will be welcome for safety reasons, it is critical to ensure that opportunities are not lost in areas where pullouts should be constructed, trailheads created, new signage erected or sensitive road edge landscapes maintained. For example, one of the issues that has emerged in recent years is the use of the Hydro-Axe roadside vegetation trimming equipment which leaves the vegetation mangled and unsightly for the season. The Alliance is working with MNDOT to decrease the use of this equipment along the byway.

## Loss of Farmland and Farms

The Valley supports one of the most productive farming systems in the world, but the global and national pricing markets do not always make farming particularly economically rewarding. As suburbanization moves outward from the cities and deeper into the Valley, there will be more of an economic incentive for farmers to sell their land, decrease their tilled acres and perhaps close their farms. While the dynamics that determine the future of farming are largely beyond the control of the Alliance, there is nonetheless a role for the Byway in

promoting a greater awareness of local agriculture. When possible, the tourism opportunities created by the byway may offer an alternative incentive for some farmers to diversify into tourism rather than residential development. The Alliance should actively work to encourage farmers and farmland owners to consider diversification that keeps land open rather than selling for residential development. Efforts should also be made to work with county planning agencies to encourage farmland development techniques that allow for gradual subdivision without the wholesale loss of vistas and farmscapes.

## Increase Environmental Awareness

The Minnesota River is undergoing a significant revitalization process due to the multiple actions of regional government, local sewer districts, homeowners, farmers, wildlife advocates and environmental cleanup groups. The Byway Alliance can serve an important role by making the *economic-environmental connection* for elected leaders and property owners: environmental health means a higher quality of life and a more viable tourism product.

## Loss of Rural Culture

The Alliance should seek ways to encourage and support rural culture whenever possible. Perhaps one of its greatest potential contributions will be strengthening the regional image and identity of the River Valley so that as new people come and as new developments occur, newcomers understand that they are becoming part of a place that has character, significance and qualities that must be managed with care.

The following are recommended actions that summarize this chapter.

## Chapter 3 Actions

### *Summary*

In all cases, the Alliance will serve in a facilitative, supportive and promotional role, not a regulatory role. Existing land-use, zoning, preservation, planning and design oversight agencies within the byway's twelve counties will continue to be the regulatory entities in the region. The Alliance's path in the years ahead should be one of helping all residents and elected officials to think regionally and think holistically about the connections between community character, environmental management and economic development.

#### **7. Develop and update a list of critical intrinsic resources**

The Alliance should develop a list of critical intrinsic resources that are currently threatened and develop short term strategies to encourage their protection in the most efficient, politically acceptable, and financially feasible manner. Sites may include threatened views, natural areas or historic sites or perhaps the need to make a greater effort to preserve the rural landscape along the Byway. Dakota communities should be consulted often.

#### **8. Work with MnDOT to encourage good design, additional trail projects, and infrastructure.**

The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Corridor is constantly changing. Work with MnDOT to stay up to date with current projects and find ways to collaborate between groups along the byway corridor for an overall good design. Bridge and infrastructure projects should consider areas that that this is part of the eventual Minnesota River State Trail. As such, any improvements should seek to enhance pedestrian/bike crossings as well as vehicle movement. A separate bike trail would be ideal. Consider interpretation, trail head area and any additional beautification with MnDOT projects. Improvements that celebrate history add to the intrinsic value of the area.

#### **9. Develop and Invest in Regional Recreation Amenities such a Regional Trail System**

Communities along the Byway should continue to advocate for and develop recreational facilities and opportunities, including a trail network along the Minnesota River in accordance with the Minnesota River State Trail Master Plan. Communities should advocate for resources at the local and state level to improve recreational opportunities along the riverway, including the linking of a river-long trail from community to community.



## Chapter 4: Visitor Experience and Management

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the byway is ready for visitors and that plans are in place to maintain that experience over time.

Already, visitors should be able to find and follow the Byway, find and follow the sites that tell the story of the Byway, and readily learn about the special qualities of the Byway while visiting the sites using existing and available itineraries. The travel route is relatively safe and intrusions along the roadway are minimized to create an exceptional travel experience.

### Finding and following the byway

Currently, visitors can find and follow the byway in the following ways:

#### Websites

The MRVNSB website provides information of what the byway is and how to travel the byway. It offered information on the destinations and discovery sites. It gives history and interpretation. It also gives itineraries to help the traveler.

The MRVNSB website works closely with the Explore Minnesota Website to compliment the information.

The Explore Minnesota Website also contains a section on Minnesota Byways and offers specific information about each byway.

#### Visitor Centers

The byway has identified the Destination sites to serve as visitors centers:

- Big Stone Lake State Park
- Lac qui Parle State Park
- Historic Chippewa City
- Upper Sioux Agency State Park
- Renville County Historical Museum
- Lower Sioux Agency

- Fort Ridgely State Park
- Flandrau State Park
- Brown County Historical Museum
- Minneopa State Park
- Blue Earth County Heritage Center
- Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota
- Treaty Site History Center
- Ney Nature Center
- Joseph R. Brown Heritage Society and Minnesota River Center

In addition, the following communities have visitor information centers that provide materials and staff to help byway travelers:

- Ortonville
- Montevideo
- Granite Falls
- Redwood Falls
- New Ulm
- Mankato
- St. Peter
- Le Sueur

### Byway signage

Byway signs and directional signage is currently located all along the byway to help the byway visitor. Updates and improvements on the signage is important and outlined in the Signage Guidelines, a separate document.

### Maps

Many of the counties along the byway produce a high quality, detailed map. Most of these maps note the byway route.

The byway also has mapping in GIS and has created many different maps for panels, the website and printed materials.

## Visitors Guide

The Visitors guide includes a byway map and list of the discovery sites. The guide is updated every 2-3 years.

## Minnesota Byways Commission

The four agencies that make up the Minnesota Byway Commission also play a role in helping people find and follow the byway:

### **The Minnesota Department of Transportation.**

Wayfinding, highway safety, infrastructure.

### **The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.**

Marketing, interpretation, wayfinding.

### **The Minnesota Historical Society.**

Interpretation, wayfinding, marketing

### **The Minnesota Office of Tourism**

Marketing, biking, mapping, wayfinding

- Self-guided (no staff, tour with brochure or audio)
- Hours and accessibility (open during all seasons)
- Level of visitor services: restrooms, information available on the area, etc.

From this assessment process, “anchor” sites were identified along the byway that help tell one or more of the many stories the region has to share. These are sites that currently offer a specific visitor experience that includes interpretation through exhibits, guided or self-guided tours, living history presentations, or special events and programs.

These sites are open to the public and have specified days/hours/months of operation.

There are many more “secondary” sites that offer limited interpretation or are self-guided and provide a wider range of visitor experiences, especially for those that are more interested in the process of discovery as part of the travel experience.

## Existing visitor attractions and interpretive resources: Discovery Sites

The Byway includes a number of existing visitor attractions, historic sites, and touring opportunities. These sites and attractions have been evaluated by the Alliance and interpretive consultant according to their readiness for visitors and their relationships to the themes of the Byway. (See Appendix 11 for full list of sites and Appendix 12 for their locations.)

Each site was reviewed using the following criteria:

- Relationship to one or more of the byway themes:
  - U.S. – Dakota War of 1862
  - Natural History
- National or state significance (National Register listing or state recognition)
- Level of interpretation:
  - Full service (guided tours by trained staff or volunteers)
  - Limited service (tours available at certain times, self-guided materials)

### **Terms used throughout the MRVSB plans:**

Destinations = Anchor sites

Historic Towns = Anchor sites/Historic district

Discovery sites = Secondary sites, Notable sites, and Other sites.

## Marketing

The byway has created a separate marketing plan to guide the byway’s action to increase the number of visitors to the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway.

Marketing research is located in both the Interpretive Plan (2014) and the Marketing Plan (2015).

## Existing Marketing Vehicles

### MRVNSB Website

The Byway updated their website in 2014. This new website is a wordpress site and capable of various content additions.

### Explore Minnesota Tourism

Website, partnerships, grants, coop marketing and resources.

### Visitors Guide

The visitors guide has been created in 2005, 2009, and 2013. Guides are typically reprinted every two to three years.

### Facebook page

The byway started a Facebook page with help from a volunteer in 2012. This volunteer shares multiple posts many times a day.

### Oral History of the U.S. – Dakota War

The Minnesota Historical Society created an Oral History Tour of the U.S.- Dakota War of 1862. This was originally created using a grant they received from the Federal Highway Administration. They use the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway logo on all of their marketing efforts.

### Various other collateral materials, advertisements and editorial

The byway has done a number of collateral items such as byway calendars, geocaching, temporary tattoos, pins, DVD, banners, brochures and rack cards. The byway has also advertised and received editorial coverage in many publications such as Minnesota Trails and Midwest Living.

## Interpretation

While marketing will help bring visitors to the byway corridor, it is the interpretive programming and facilities that will keep them coming back for more.

Interpretation, whether at an individual site or along an entire corridor has to have four basic components to be successful: First, it has to be **fun** in order to lure the visitor in to the story. Second, interpretation has to be relevant to each individual – making both an **emotional and intellectual connection** with the visitor. Third, the interpretation has to be **organized** – visitors need to be able to recognize the theme and the key point of the interpretive information immediately – attention spans are usually short whether one is on a school field trip or a vacation. Fourth, the interpretation has to have a theme that is **enduring and timeless**.

The best interpretive themes or central messages describe ideas that are **significant, unique, compelling, transformative (inspiring a new conceptual understanding), and marketable**. Beneath that, specific storylines or topics can help organize the message into more manageable pieces.

The Byway will be utilized as a mechanism to act as the “curator” of a museum – an outdoor museum that encompasses the entire byway corridor region. The entire story should be laid out for the visitor along this central spine and organized by themes, with “doors” into other rooms in the museum that encourage visitors to explore the two themes in more detail.

Interpretation will be organized around the MRVSB’s two established themes; A Place to Call Home: The U.S. –Dakota War of 1862 and A River’s Legacy: The Formation of the Minnesota River Valley. More detail about the Interpretive framework is located in the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Alliance Interpretive Plan

## Existing Interpretive Vehicles

### Minnesota Historical Society

The Minnesota Historical Society manages six historical sites along the byway.

- Lac qui Parle Mission

- Lower Sioux Agency
- Birch Coulee Battlefield
- Fort Ridgely
- Harkin Store
- W.W. Mayo House
- Traverse des Sioux

It also owns additional sites such as the Wood Lake Monument and provides services in a variety of ways. MNHS has different signs and plaques along the byway.

### **Oral History Tour through the Minnesota Historical Society**

MNHS created an Oral History tour of the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862

<http://www.usdakotawar.org/initiatives/oral-history-project>

### **Local Historical Societies and museums**

Our local champions of history are historical societies, who come together to create a legacy in our local museums.

### **Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Website**

The website includes interpretive information as well as a platform for additional information.

### **Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Visitors Guide**

The Visitors guide has information on the themes and stories along the byway.

### **Interpretive Panels created by the Byway**

The byway can go through two series of panel creation. The first was completed in 2009 and included 15 panels that worked to increase information available about the River's Legacy and the valley formation, agriculture, and Struggles for a Home. The second was completed in 2012 and included 10 panels that focused on the history of the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862.

Interpretive Panels are a way to get information onto the location without the need for technology or other resources. The byway has created Interpretive Panel Guidelines to help create future panels.

## **Multi-lingual Information Plan**

Currently, there is little printed bilingual information, orientation and interpretation along the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway. Visitors may have multi-cultural experiences if they attend community festivals that celebrate ethnic roots or at local cafe's, bakeries, or wherever senior citizen may congregate and still speak in their native language.

Creating interpretation in the Dakota language is an important consideration that does two things. First, it adds to revitalization of the Dakota language, and second, by adding a Native language, it adds a "sense of place" to documents about the Minnesota River Valley.

The following are recommended actions that summarize this chapter.

## **Chapter 4 Actions**

### **10. Update Byway website**

The byway website needs to be kept up to date as well as additional interpretative and wayfinding information added to it.

### **11. Review and update Byway Signage**

Byway signs and directional signs need to be replaced as needed. An inventory should be done by the Byway to find out if additional signs and directional signs need to be considered.

### **12. Work with Byway Commission**

Continue to work with the four state agencies to help market and help the byway visitor to all state and national byways in Minnesota.

### **13. Develop partners for marketing efforts**

As well as the four agencies, work with local chambers, libraries and other organizations for marketing efforts.

### **14. Review Marketing Work Plan**

Update the project list and wish list to market the byway and find partners and funding.

### **15. Update the “U.S.- Dakota War sites along the Byway” document**

The planning document done on the U.S.-Dakota War in 1862 was created in 2010 and updated in 2012. This document should be updated on a regular basis to identify how to proceed with interpretive projects based on this theme.

### **16. Review Interpretation Work Plan**

Update the project list and wish list for interpretation project along the byway and find partners and funding.

### **17. Develop Multi – lingual Interpretation, especially Dakota language**

Work with Dakota Wicohan to develop Dakota language in interpretive projects. Develop a simple rack cards or fact sheets for select interpretive sites along the Byway with multiple languages addressed. Involve foreign language students at Minnesota State and Gustavus Adolphus colleges to assist with translations.

# Chapter 5: Highway Safety and Signage Management

## Introduction

The Byway passes through thirteen counties, using portions of U.S. Highways, State Highways, County State Aid Highways (CSAH), County Roads and Township Roads. The designated route also has several official Alternative Routes, of which approximately 50 miles are graveled surfaces. These routes usually run near or parallel to the paved route, but offer access to some unique or distinctive characteristic along the River. Most often, the Byway winds along paved surfaces through farmland and rivertowns, posting an average speed limit of 55 M.P.H., except within town limits.

Most roadways can accommodate motorcoach traffic during spring and summer, having a 10-ton limit during these times. Safety concerns are generally around such issues as shoulder widths, high traffic counts, roadway conditions around bridges and trestles, and proposed traffic reconfigurations. New concerns include gravel safety, bike safety and making sure we have turn offs for our discovery sites.

The traffic counts vary tremendously along the 287-mile length of the byway and present problems only along sections of Highway 169 and in areas near Mankato. Generally speaking, volumes are low (i.e., <2000 ADT) along most of the byway, as would be expected for rural farm roads and small villages.

This chapter is intended to provide an overview of the highway safety and signage issues that should be addressed during implementation. The discussion is at a policy level and is not intended to delve into specific highway engineering issues. County Highway Safety reports can help with more detailed safety issues.

## Issues and Challenges

### Surface Conditions and Safety Concerns

The Byway incorporates national, state, and county roads which are paved, and limited gravel county and township roadways. There are approximately 50 miles of gravel-surfaced roadway regularly maintained year-round. These routes currently handle a combination of heavy commercial, agricultural and standard passenger vehicles and most could handle commercial motor coaches, although there are few wayside areas large enough at this time to accommodate motor coach parking. The roadways generally have paved or gravel shoulders ranging from 2 to 10 feet in width. As the Byway travels through urban areas, roadways are paved with curb and gutter along most downtown areas.

### County Highway Safety reports

The County Highway Safety reports should show the most current updated safety needs along the byway.

### Commercial and Farm Traffic

The byway provides segments that have little commercial traffic and segments that run directly on heavily used state and county highways. Of most importance for this byway is the need to alert and educate byway travelers to the presence of farm machinery. Visitors need to understand the importance of driving with courtesy along the back roads of the Minnesota Valley. Programs should be developed to encourage visitors to understand more about farming and avoid situations that cause hazard to visitors or irritation to farmers. With such a program, this byway will have few commercial traffic conflicts.

The other important commercial traffic concern is heavy machinery associated with sand and gravel extraction. Care should be taken to alert visitors to this traffic.

## Rail

The Minnesota Prairie Line is a short line railroad that started operations in 2002. It is a subsidiary of the Twin Cities & Western Rail Company (TC&W) and runs on track owned by the Minnesota Valley Regional Railroad Authority (MVRRA). The MVRRA is a unit of local government in Minnesota controlled by the counties (Carver, Sibley, Redwood, Renville and Yellow Medicine) in which its rail line is located. The rail line is 94 miles long, running generally westerly from Norwood-Young America to Hanley Falls, MN. The rail line connects with the privately-owned Twin Cities & Western Rail Company (TC&W) at its east end and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe on its west end.

## Group Tour Buses

As reviewed above, the majority of the byway is accessible for tour buses. There are a limited number of bridges and road segments that are not suitable due to seasonal or tonnage limitations. There are many towns and lodging facilities along the byway that already cater to the group market and therefore the byway is well positioned to take even greater advantage of this market.

## Maintain the Character of Rural Roads

The character of the rural roads along this byway is a function of both the abutting landscape and the roads' layout and alignment. Generally speaking, the gravel routes provide an unusual experience for most travelers. The question of whether gravel roads should be paved must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances along each section of the byway. The needs of residents and commercial traffic will largely determine this issue.

**With that said, it should also be stated that maintaining as much gravel road experience as possible is an important objective for this byway in order to maintain this aspect of the byway's character.**

## Bridges

Bridges are also important rural road features. Any improvements should seek to enhance

pedestrian/bike crossings as well as vehicle movement.

## Bicycling and Multi-Use Trails

Bicycling infrastructure is an important investment for residents and visitors. Many of the communities are working on off-road trails that might eventually be linked together to form a continuous network of trails from one end of the Valley to the other. This is a critical project in order to provide more ways for visitors to explore the back roads and countryside of the byway in a more intimate fashion.

Stretches of roadways have been widened specifically to better accommodate bicycle traffic. There are many miles of adjacent county and township roads that have little traffic and would make tremendous bicycling loop routes. Some of these are identified in the Minnesota Bicycle Map and the Have Fun Biking publications.

In order for a roadway to have a suitable bike lane, there needs to be a four-foot paved shoulder. A separate bike trail is ideal for safety.

Multi-use trail facilities should be developed along rural roads, including gravel, in a manner that protects the character of the road while providing for safe trail use. Consider recommendations from the Minnesota River State Trail Plan.

## Off-premise Signs and Outdoor Advertising

In compliance with ISTE, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU & MAP-21 billboard requirements, no billboards have been erected along Federal Aid Primary roads on the nominated route since its partial designations in 1995 and extension of designation in 1996. Billboards are more frequent along the eastern end of the Byway. There are several community gateways that have an abundance of billboard signs, all of which are in the commercially zoned districts.

Many of the tourism-related businesses located off the state highways participate in the Specific Service



Sign Program, provided by the Department of Transportation. With this program, service-oriented businesses can have a uniform, blue sign erected and maintained by MNDOT which identifies the businesses name and provides directional information and mileage at the appropriate intersection. This program is paid for by the individual business owners who enter into a ten-year contract.

The Byway will comply with the National Scenic Byway Program's billboard requirements. Communities will be encouraged to explore appropriate off-site signage regulations depending on their circumstances. Commercial and industrial zoning along the route exists in Ortonville, Montevideo, Granite Falls, Redwood Falls, New Ulm, Mankato, St. Peter, and Le Sueur and as such, modifications may need to be made in the formal byway designation to allow for appropriate signage.

There are a number of state and county-erected historical markers and monuments along the Byway. Few have adequate safety conditions to pull-off, park and read the signage.

### **Byway signage and wayfinding**

The Byway has created an attractive, easily recognizable logo with its bright pink background and distinctive flying eagle.

The byway follows many different roads along the 287 miles leading into many small towns and communities. Route signage competes with other route, attraction, town and business signage. Other signage issues include consistency, location, and frequency of signs for the route as well as attractions along the route.

Efforts should be made to ensure that byway signs are installed in a more comprehensive manner, with

replacement plans. Both advance warning signs with arrows and then "reassurance signs" are needed at each intersection to reassure the traveler that they are continuing along the appropriate route.

The byway completed a signage guidelines plan in 2006. The byway should work with road authorities to update their current byway signs and keep the directional signs working to help visitors along the byway. An updated signage plan is needed to assess additional signs.

### **Safety Recommendations**

The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway carries a mix of motorists, pedestrians, and bicycles, with the percentage of leisure travelers dependent on the location within the state. As with many other roads that carry motorists on leisure travel, the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway shares needs and opportunities for improvements in the following areas:

- Route marking, proper placement of traffic control devices, and other wayshowing components to allow for ease of wayfinding for travelers
- Provisions for pedestrian access and crossing of the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway, particularly near local attractions.
- Provisions for bicycle traffic (shared lane or separate path) along the entire length of the corridor, but, particularly areas identified in the Minnesota River State Trail Master Plan.
- Traffic calming procedures and improvements
- Safe pull-offs and parking areas for motorists to observe roadside attractions and discovery sites.



The following are recommended actions that summarize this chapter.

## **Chapter 5 Actions**

### **18. Partner with MnDOT on safety and signage management**

MnDOT already works on safety and signage management along the byway. Partner with MnDOT to increase pedestrian access and crossing, traffic calming, safe pull-offs and park areas for discovery sites, and provisions for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

### **19. Bring highway engineers into an active partnership with the byway.**

The Alliance should seek to more directly involve county and state engineers in byway planning so that roadside amenities, road improvements, and trail planning are coordinated along the byway.

### **20. Maintain the Character of Rural Roads**

Gravel roads along the byway may be part of the character of rural roads and should be considered as an asset for certain areas.

### **21. Increase bike and pedestrian trails**

The byway should encourage additional pedestrian and bike trails, and these trails should be considered when there are bridge and road improvements. Consider recommendations from the Minnesota River State Trail Master Plan.

### **22. Erect and Maintain More Byway Directional and Logo Signs**

The byway should work with MnDOT and local road authorities to update their current byway signs and keep the directional signs working to help visitors along the byway. An updated signage plan is needed to assess additional signs.

### **23. Erect Points-of-Interest Signs.**

As travelers enjoy driving the Byway, there are many historic, cultural, natural and scenic sites and attractions that they will appreciate. Proper signage is needed to announce these points-of-interest to travelers in a safe manner.

## Chapter 6: Byway Organizational Plan

### The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance

The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance is made up of 25 core members and a partnership membership of more than 80 members. The membership is made up of counties, cities, chambers of commerce, river valley residents, businesses, tourism organizations, and historic and preservation groups from throughout the valley as well as representatives from various state agencies and organizations. The Alliance meets monthly to discuss the Byway's general management including marketing, infrastructure and site development, and resource protection.

The **Mission** of the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance is:

*To cooperatively enhance the Minnesota River Valley as a travel destination and raise awareness of its nationally important stories to provide economic benefits and preserve the intrinsic qualities of the byway.*

The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway seeks to:

- Share nationally important stories
- Increase partnerships along the Minnesota River
- Link together the Minnesota River to promote as a tourism destination
- Help build a sustainable future
- Educate residents and visitors about the recreation, scenic, historical, cultural and archaeological characteristics of the river valley
- Increase economic vitality for the region.

- Promote, preserve and protect the intrinsic qualities of the River Valley
- Enhance the livability of the Minnesota River Communities

#### In doing so, the Alliance:

- Represents the interests of the people of the Minnesota River Valley who live, work and recreate along the river, provide the leadership necessary to ensure that the region retains its high quality of life and offers opportunities for ongoing involvement resulting in an increased level of community pride.
- Works to provide visitors seeking to enjoy the resources of the Byway with a safe, convenient and memorable experience. An important part of this effort is packaging the many and varied resources of this lengthy byway with high quality information.
- Works to promote economic development while

#### From 2014 Interpretive Plan:

In a simplified way, the Byway's overarching goals are:

- Attract more visitors to the Minnesota River Valley.
- Ensure that current visitors to the Minnesota River Valley enjoy a high-quality experience.
- Share the story of the Minnesota River Valley (Natural History and U.S.–Dakota War)

In pursuit of this objective, the Byway Alliance has assumed four general responsibilities:

- developing and distributing marketing materials;
- seeking-out partner organizations;
- educating visitors; and
- securing funding for byway projects.

enhancing, protecting and preserving the intrinsic qualities of the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway.

*"Ultimately our Scenic Byway is not about water quality issues - it's a tourism destination.*

*We care about clean water, but that is not our focus. Using the Minnesota River valley as the linking device to create a tourism destination is what we're really about."*

*-Terry Sveine, long time alliance member*

## A History of Accomplishment

The byway has many accomplishments since 1996. See Appendix 4, 5 and 10 for a comprehensive list of projects and byway achievements.

## Organizational Principles

As the Byway and the Alliance move forward, there are definite principles that will guide the organizational approach.

1. No new regional organizations are envisioned. Instead, this byway will move forward through the coordinative role of the Alliance and through the flexible and dynamic partnering of the Valley's many organizations and entities on an as-needed basis. Varying projects and varying needs will determine partnerships. Through it all, the Alliance will provide a consistent forum for communication and cooperation.
2. Partnerships will be critical to the success of the byway, and new partnerships are continually encouraged as the Alliance moves forward. The

Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance has a strong history of convening important stakeholders in an effort to keep this project locally-driven and the Alliance will continue to play that role.

3. Communities will define the priorities for their immediate areas along the byway. The Minnesota River Valley Byway is long and while the Alliance is devoted to guiding the overall shape of the byway, it will be up to communities and counties along the route to pursue the specific actions to be taken in their vicinities. In this way, each segment and subsegment along the route will develop in ways that meet the needs of residents with the Alliance and local tourism groups providing guidance on how to meet the needs of visitors.
4. Marketing should be carried out by in collaborative efforts with city and regional CVB/Chamber organizations, along the byway and with Explore Minnesota Tourism. Utilize regional tourism coalitions such as by the Western Minnesota Prairie Waters Tourism Coalition, Tatonka Bluffs and any other subregionally organized entities.
5. Funding can and will be sought by a variety of different partners but in a coordinated fashion. This should be a coordinated process through the Alliance.
6. Relationships should be sought with the four agencies of the Minnesota State Scenic Byway Commission:
  1. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
  2. Minnesota Historical Society
  3. Minnesota Department of Transportation
  4. Minnesota Office of Tourism

## Partnerships

Partnerships are important to the byway. There are multiple ways to collaborate as partnerships within

the our byway. It may depend on the project, geography and funding source available.

A comprehensive list of Partnerships is found in Appendix 6.

### **State Agencies:**

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Minnesota Historical Society  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Minnesota Office of Tourism

### **Regional Groups:**

Regional Development Commissions  
Western Minnesota Prairie Waters  
Takanka Bluffs  
Dakota Wicohan

### **Local groups**

Chambers/CVB/Tourism  
Museum/ Historical Societies  
City and County Government  
Arts Councils

### **Public Residents and Officials**

It is critical that the Alliance consistently conveys to the public and to officials how the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway attracts tourists and protect natural resources. This will benefit municipal coffers, attract new residents and retirees, attract new business investment and elevate the level of

public awareness of the River Valley in the minds of Minnesota politicians and residents.

### **Public Participation Plan**

There are multiple ways for the public to participate in the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance.

The following will serve as the public participation plan to keep the public aware of what the alliance is working on.

- 1) All Alliance meetings are open to the public. The alliance is not a board of directors. Anyone who attends meetings can offer input and vote.
- 2) The byway will keep a list of partners and alliance members to send periodic updates. The Annual Report will be sent electronically to this email list.
- 3) An Alliance survey that can be used annually or as needed is located in Appendix 7. These questions will help the byway keep up to date on issues, resources marketing and partnerships.
- 4) A Byway Awareness Campaign will reach out to the public through give-aways, brochures, and online information. A calendar has been sent out for many years, that includes the annual report. These efforts will depend on funding.

The following are recommended actions that summarize this chapter.

## Chapter 6 Actions

### **24. Participate in conferences, tours and seminars on topics of interest**

The Alliance will continue to participate and sponsor events that encourage education and awareness and keep the byway at the table.

### **25. Empower Alliance members to share information about the byway**

Materials should be created that will allow Alliance members to give presentations to the public, elected officials, schools and civic organizations. It should be simple and easy to give. A part of the presentation should be clear opportunities for the public to participate with the byway effort.

### **26. Use marketing methods to reach residents to keep them aware of the byway products.**

The byway has created a calendar since 2004 that includes the annual report, events along the byway and photos from the byway. This has been a great way to connect with cities, counties, chambers, CVB, elected official and other partners along the byway.

The byway keeps a list of partners interested in hearing about the work of the byway. Regular email blasts keeps this sector of the public involved in our work.

### **27. Build Alliance Participation and Recruitment**

Marketing and civic organizations change each year as technology and needs change. The Alliance is a partnership that should be valuable to its partners and participants. Gather feedback on a regular basis to make sure the Alliance is doing work that is valuable. This should encourage investment and participation from Alliance members.

### **28. Update public input**

Every 2-4 years, a survey should be done to get feedback from the public for the byway alliance and work plan efforts.

## Chapter 7: Implementation Plan

### Priority Projects and Programs

Appendix 10 lists a comprehensive list of proposed projects the byway should consider. Where possible, this list identifies potential partners that should be involved, and lists budgetary considerations and potential funding sources.

Individual communities may be pursuing enhancement grants simultaneously through Transportation Alternative Program (for trails or infrastructure, etc.). Other projects and programs should be implemented throughout the entire byway corridor (marketing and interpretive planning, for example).

Sections of this list should be reviewed and updated annually, while other sections can be updated every 3-5 years.

The following are criteria that can be used when determining the timing and funding mechanisms for projects along the byway:

1. Sites along the Byway that are related to one or more of the two themes and currently ready for visitors or with the grant or project funding in place would increase visitation to the Byway corridor.
2. Cooperative marketing and promotion activities involving multiple jurisdictions, agencies, organizations and/or states.
3. Projects that encourage coordination across multiple jurisdictions, sites, agencies, etc.
4. Priority should be given to individual projects that increase access and enhance visitor experience to discovery sites along the byway corridor.

5. Priority should be given to projects that enhance the visual and graphic identity of the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway by updating existing wayfinding, interpretation or educational materials to incorporate the themes and graphic identity.
6. Priority should be given to projects that conserve the quality and enhance the character of the Byway corridor.

### Funding Opportunities

Appendix 8 lists the strategies, potential partners, budgetary considerations and potential funding sources for the strategies listed in the plan.

Appendix 5 lists past funding sources and applications.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The Alliance will implement a monitoring and evaluation program as part of its ongoing management efforts. This continuous review will consist of the following:

#### Impact Assessment

Efforts will be made to work closely with the local, state and federal agencies that manage resources along the Byway to measure the impacts along the Byway. This will include:

- monitoring traffic changes, safety incidents, and usage,
- conducting research to determine economic impact of the Byway, and
- surveying visitors to identify user profiles, visitor satisfactions with attractions and services, and unmet needs

#### Road Management

Representatives from MnDOT, representatives from local government transportation and planning departments, and representatives from the Alliance

should meet to identify byway related issues and how they interface with the current roadway management decision-making process.

## **Signage Updates**

Signage updates should be carried out by Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Road Authorities including MnDOT planners, county engineers, county highway departments and city officials.

## **Annual Byway CMP Status**

The Alliance will provide an annual assessment on the progress of the Corridor Management Plan implementation and problems or issues that may be occurring along the Byway.

## **Ongoing Meetings of Alliance**

There are regularly scheduled ongoing meetings for members of the Alliance and interested public. At ongoing meetings (usually monthly), agenda items include the ongoing efforts for managing the Byway throughout the year.

## **Tourism Organizational and Marketing Review**

Every three years, the tourism organizations along the Byway should be asked to reconsider the Byway's marketing issues and the challenges and opportunities they face in marketing their tourism resources along the route.

## **Economic Impact Tool for Scenic Byways, 2012**

The America's Byways Resource Center created an Impact Tool to help byways answer the endless question about the worth of the byways. The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway has not used this tool, but it could be utilized in the future.



The following are recommended actions that summarize this chapter.

## **Chapter 7 Actions**

### **29. Maintain for UMRDC in the Staff Support Role to the Alliance**

Currently, under the leadership and technical assistance being provided by the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC) to the Alliance, an outstanding track record of activities and products developed has been developed and delivered on behalf of the Byway. Subcommittees, task forces and smaller working groups have been organized within the Alliance to complete many of these projects with the assistance of UMRDC. This relationship between UMRDC and the Alliance has been successful and should be continued.

### **30. Seek Commitments from Other Regional Entities to Devote Part-time Staff to Byway Efforts**

While informal coordination and cooperation has been occurring between county and regional planning organizations all along the byway, it should be an objective to seek more formal support from those organizations in the form of part-time devoted staff positions. The key to this action will be attaining support from each organization by presenting them with a clear set of actions that their organizations might be supporting and pursuing.

### **31. Coordinate funding strategies for the byway**

The Alliance should maintain a funding database/information resource from which it can alert partners to funding opportunities and help to ensure that timely, strong funding applications go forth from the Valley. Preparation of most grants should be left to local groups, but the Alliance/UMVRDC will be in a good position to easily provide necessary support documentation for grant applications.

### **32. Recommend or promote specific projects, or initiate projects where one or more local sponsors might step forward to sponsor, manage or fund projects on behalf of the Alliance**

Using the recommendations from this document, as well as new opportunities that arise, the Alliance should set a limited number of annual priorities for important projects and encourage those projects to move forward. The Alliance may take the lead on some projects while in other cases, local entities will need to be leaders.

### **33. Attend conferences for byway awareness**

Annual byway conferences should be held at which the accomplishments of the Alliance are promoted and the next year's priorities are discussed and accepted.

### **34. Secure funding to monitor impacts to the byway.**

Through surveys, planning updates, and meetings with alliance members, the byway should update issues and measure impacts to the byway.

### **35. Update the Corridor Management Plan and work plans**

The Corridor Management Plan was written to have sections of it updated regularly. The Alliance should update the strategic plan every year and update the Work Plan every three years.

## Appendix 1: Interpretive Plan

In 2013 – 2014, the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Alliance completed an Interpretive plan with Bluestem Consulting, Nancy O’Brian Wagner. The plan is included as an addendum to this CMP.

The Interpretive Plan was updated between 2014 - 2018. The updated version is included in the 2018 Corridor Management Plan.

In addition, the byway also has numerous interpretive topics and project concepts from the 2001 CMP. This information is located as a separate addendum.

In 2014, the top projects included:

### High Priorities

- Guidebook
- Upper or Lower Sioux–Partner Projects
- Expand the Mobile Tour
- Expand and Promote the Geocaching Program

The Interpretation Plan also includes a list of selected sites with detailed information for future projects.

## Interpretive needs of the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway.

### Interpretive needs by theme

*U.S. – Dakota War theme.*

They byway did an interpretive planning project in 2010 that catalog all the U.S. – Dakota War sites along the Minnesota River. This could be updated.

- Efforts need to be made to continue to utilize existing discovery sites.
- Panels and physical interpretation helps improve the site location, but additional types of interpretation should be considered.

*Natural History theme.*

This theme needs to be better defined. We should work with natural history experts to come up with the correct direction.

Formation of the valley. Look for locations where you can see the carving of the valley and add interpretive signage and information on our website.

Old rock. Many of our sites include

### Interpretive needs by site

#### *Establish gateway sites*

We need to work on destination sites to make them even stronger with the byway message and main themes.

#### *Existing discovery sites*

We need to look at each discovery site to identify needs. With so many discovery sites, this job is overwhelming. It would work best then to look at theme needs and then match with sites that can help tell the best story. Priority can be given to sites in need.

A list of site inventory is located in Appendix 11.

This is a working document and should be updated every year.

### Interpretive Panel Projects

Byway interpretive projects should proceed as follows:

1. Identify needs and sites
2. Make suggestions to sites that are owned by DNR, MHS, TNC to add interpretation needs.
3. The byway can work with the other sites that do not have the capacity to do interpretation projects.

#### ***From Interpretive plan, page 56, 63***

1. Site must have little or no existing interpretation, or outdated or inaccurate information.

2. Site must be directly adjacent to the byway route.
3. Sites must fill a gap in our themes and be easily integrated into our main byway themes.
4. Sites owners must be willing to have signs posted, or not be owned by MHS or municipalities.

Panel considerations:

**Visitor Ready:** Is the site visitor ready? Parking? Safety?

**Feasible:** Is the site directly adjacent to the byway route. Who owns the site? Can we put interpretation there? Can they do the interpretation themselves?

**Address Gaps:** Is there any other interpretation at this site? Will a project by us help make it a better discovery site? Will it make it into a destination?

(interp plan page 50)

Panels

1. More signage about the Dakota before and after 1862. There is little information about Dakota life and culture outside of the war (with the exception of Lower Sioux Agency). Topics for future signs could include:
  - a. Dakota Life during the Fur Trade
  - b. Dakota and the Missionaries
  - c. Treaties and Treaty Rights
  - d. Dakota Transportation in the Valley
  - e. Dakota Hunting and Agriculture in the Valley
  - f. Boarding Schools
  - g. Pow-Wows and Honoring Ancestors Today
  - h. Dakota Music and Art
  - i. Casinos
2. More signage about pre-historic life in the Minnesota River
  - a. Geology and climate
  - b. Animals and plants
  - c. Human settlements and lifestyles

3. More signage about hydrology (aquifers, water flow, watersheds, etc.)
4. More signage about human impacts on river (army corps of engineers, individuals, municipal efforts)
5. More signage about changes in climate, animal, and plant populations
6. More information about native and non-native and invasive species
7. More information on glacial era and connection to present geography and soil conditions.

### Interpretive Challenges and Issues

Seeking and obtaining funding for interpretation design and construction along the byway will be the critical challenge.

There is a need to create stronger interpretive connections between the byway, its immediate attractions and attractions that lie off the byway some distance.

Interpretation is needed to tie the various pieces of the byway into a more coherent travel experience.

## Appendix 2:

### Intrinsic Qualities by segment

Source: 2001 Corridor Management Plan

This section divides the byway into four segments:

- Browns Valley to Ortonville
- Ortonville to Granite Falls
- Granite Falls to Mankato
- Mankato to Belle Plaine

#### Browns Valley to Ortonville

##### Intrinsic qualities present

**Archeological:** Browns Valley Man (10,000 year old skeleton found) represents a significant archeological find and topic for interpretation.

**Cultural:** This area has been a regional tourism destination since the early 1900's, drawing annual visitors from throughout the Midwest to recreate at the lake.

**Historic:** Big Stone Lake has a rich history as an early 1900's tourism destination, with lakeside and island hotels, and steam boat transportation up and down the lake. The Brown family's role in early frontier settlement of this region is significant, including Samuel Brown's Ride.

**Natural:** Glacial activity formed Lake Agassiz, the ancient River Warren, and finally Big Stone Lake. One of the largest tracts of native prairie still exist in Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge. Migration of waterfowl make this area highly popular for hunting and wildlife viewing.

**Recreational:** Some of the most competitive fishing tournaments in the region are held on Big Stone Lake.

**Scenic:** The drive offers pleasing views of the lake and dramatic prairie landscapes.

##### Intrinsic qualities of regional significance

Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge (nationally recognized wildlife area and only pelican rookery in State).

Big Stone Lake State Park (state-designated park area).

Browns Valley Man (one of oldest skeleton remains in US)

Granite quarries near Ortonville (mahogany granite shipped worldwide).

Wadsworth Trail (ruts of this historic travel route still visible outside of town).

Samuel Brown's Cabin (restored cabin used as trading post).

#### Ortonville to Granite Falls

##### Intrinsic qualities present

**Cultural:** Communities of Appleton, Montevideo, Milan and Granite Falls.

**Cultural:** The Lac qui Parle Mission tells the story of early missionary work.

**Cultural:** Milan Village Arts School teaches traditional folk arts

**Historic:** The Swensson Farm Museum and Chippewa City are both active historical sites protecting aspects of late 19th and early 20th century life in the Valley.

**Natural:** Lac qui Parle National Wildlife Refuge and State Park and Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge

**Natural:** Restored prairie lands in Plover Prairie and Chippewa Prairie sites

**Recreational:** One of the largest sections of canoeable river and tributaries in the region exist here.

**Scenic:** The most dramatic part of the drive is along Lac qui Parle lake. The ability to see bald eagles in great numbers is a significant visual experience.

## Intrinsic qualities of regional significance

Lac qui Parle Mission and Ft. Renville (State Hist. Society Site)

Lac qui Parle State Park

Plover Prairie and Chippewa Prairie Preserve (protected prairie lands) and Nature Conservancy lands

Salt Lake Area Wildlife Management Area (important breeding and migration habitats for shorebirds and other species)

Milan Village Arts School (distinctive folk arts school)

## Granite Falls to Mankato

### Intrinsic qualities present

**Archeological:** Peterson Bison Kill site, near Granite Falls

**Cultural:** There are several major cultural qualities in this segment, including the Upper Sioux Agency State Park and community as well as the Lower Sioux Agency State Historic Site, Wood Lake Battlefield, Birch Coulee site and Lower Sioux Community. Both Granite Falls and Redwood Falls offer interesting small town architecture. New Ulm offers its German history and German tourism theming. Of particular interest in New Ulm is the August Schell Brewery a historic beer producer on a splendid historic property. Other sites of cultural value include the Gilfillen Estate and Farmfest Site, St. Cornelia's Church, the Minnesota Machinery Museum and the Enestvedt Seed Company facility.

**Historic:** The segment has important stories to convey regarding the U.S./Dakota Conflict relative to the attack on New Ulm, the Lower Sioux Agency Historic Site and community, and Mankato's role in the trial and execution of 39 Dakota men after the conflict -- the largest mass execution in U.S. history. Other historical resource sites include: Union Depot, Brown County Historical Museum, Blue Earth County Historical Society, Harkin Store, the Renville County Historical Museum, Redwood County Historical Museum, ruins of Joseph R. Brown's house, the

Morton Monuments, the Birch Coulee Battlefield State Historic Site, the Wood Lake Battlefield, the Depot Museum and Sleepy Eyes Monument and various historic homes in each of the communities.

**Natural:** The ancient rock outcroppings in Granite Falls, Alexander Ramsey Park in Redwood Falls, Upper Sioux Agency State Park, Lower Sioux Agency State Historic Site's scenic overlook, Flandrau State Park, Fort Ridgely State Park, Minneopa State Park, Lake Crystal, the double falls at Minneopa State Park, several state scientific and natural areas, the many county parks and the river are the dominant natural intrinsic qualities.

**Recreational:** All the state parks, Lower Sioux Agency Historic Site offer recreational facilities. In addition, the Renville County Parks system along the river offer exceptional opportunities to explore the river valley.

**Scenic:** The portion from Granite Falls to New Ulm is highly scenic, perhaps the most scenic segment of the entire byway.

## Intrinsic qualities of regional significance

Upper Sioux State Park

Ruins at the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Park

Lower Sioux Agency State Historic Site

City of New Ulm, the premier German-American community in America

Mankato Trial and Hanging Site

Wood Lake Battlefield and Birch Coulee state historic site

Harkin Store

Alexander Ramsey Park in Redwood Falls

The double falls at Minneopa State Park

## Mankato to Belle Plaine

### Intrinsic qualities present

**Cultural:** Norseland and Norseland general store operational since 1858; local ethnic and historic events and re-enactments held throughout year.

Historic: Traverse des Sioux Treat Site of 1851;  
Ottawa , St. Peter, and Henderson Historic Districts;  
W.W. Mayo House, Cox House

Natural: Kasota Prairie and Chamberlain Wood  
Scientific and Natural Area; Ottawa Bluffs Preserve;  
Ney Environmental Area

Recreational: Number of local and regional parks and  
natural areas.

Scenic: The drive from Belle Plaine to Kasota offers a  
memorable experience traveling through historic  
towns and villages that were established because of  
the Minnesota River.

### **Intrinsic qualities of regional significance**

Kasota Prairie and Chamberlain Wood Scientific and  
Natural Area; Ottawa Bluffs Preserve; Ney  
Environmental Area (state protected preserves,  
natural areas).

Ottawa , St. Peter, and Henderson Historic Districts  
(national register properties).

Historic: Traverse des Sioux Treat Site of 1851 (state  
historic site); Mayo House in LeSueur (first office in  
Minnesota for Dr. Mayo of the Mayo Clinic).

## Appendix 3: Themes and Messaging

The following text will be used on the website, in the visitors guide and in general marketing materials.

### Themes and Messaging

The following text will be used on the website, in the visitors guide and in general marketing materials.

### Messaging

You cannot understand American history without knowing about the Minnesota River Valley. The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway traverses the ancient remnants of what was once one of the largest rivers to ever exist. Along the way, it uncovers stories from the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 that left hundreds dead and exiled a nation. Today travelers wind their way through vibrant small towns, Dakota communities, historic sites and scenic overlooks.

### Historical Theme: A Place to Call Home

#### The U.S. – Dakota War of 1862.

The Minnesota River Valley played a crucial role in the conflicts that erupted between Euro-American settlers and the Dakota people as they struggled to call this land “home.” The U.S.–Dakota War of 1862 was a significant event for the region and for our nation—a tragic chapter that foreshadowed wars to come, and permanently shaped the cultural identity of the Minnesota River Valley.

#### More detail:

In 1862, the Minnesota River Valley region erupted in war when a contingent of Dakota akicȋta (warriors), frustrated by broken treaty promises, encroachment onto reservation lands and corruption that left them starving, attacked traders and government employees and a warehouse full of food at the Lower Sioux Agency. More were killed on all sides in the

U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 than Minnesota lost in combat deaths during the Civil War. As a result of the war, Governor Ramsey called for all Dakota people to be exterminated or driven from the state.

Thousands fled the state and those that did not were separated into two groups. Women, children and mostly older men were imprisoned at Fort Snelling before being removed from the state in May 1863. The akicȋta that were not executed at Mankato were imprisoned at Davenport Iowa. In March 1866 the surviving prisoners were released to join their families in exile.

Decades later small groups of Dakota eventually started to return to their homelands in the late 1800s, and lived in small communities near where the Upper and Lower Sioux Agencies had been. Nearly 50 years later these small groups were organized into what is now the Upper and Lower Sioux Dakota Communities.

### Natural Theme: A River’s Legacy

#### The Formation of the Minnesota River Valley

The Minnesota River Valley has a national story to tell about some of the oldest exposed rock on the face of the earth. This region was carved from dramatic and massive floodwaters that resulted from the overflow of glacial Lake Agassiz scouring a jagged path across Minnesota and uncovering ancient bedrock outcrops.

#### More detail:

The Minnesota River travels through rich wetlands, prairies, granite outcroppings, wooded hills, farm fields, villages and small cities. Over millennia, the river valley’s people, plants, and animals have interacted in a complex and unique ecosystem. Throughout the valley, evidence of the interactions between these species can be seen. Today, the valley’s natural features offer a fascinating number of interpretive opportunities.



## Appendix 4: A History of Accomplishments

The Alliance has been active since 1997 with Byway issues on behalf of the public, residents, businesses and stakeholders who call this corridor their home, workplace and playground.

The first FHWA “seed” grant was in 1998. Those seed grants helped shape the byways in Minnesota and throughout the nation. The River Stories Corridor Management Plan was completed in 2001. The following list is an attempt to catalog the Alliance’s many accomplishments:

Between 1996 and 2001:

- Conduct monthly (sometimes more often) meetings of the Alliance.
- Established a database for notification of partners on activities.
- Achieved Minnesota nonprofit status.
- Prepared application for National Scenic Byway designation and received designation in 2002.
- Provided speaker for first Minnesota Scenic Byways conference
- Nominated for FHWA Environmental Excellence Award by MNDOT
- Hired consultants to complete corridor management plan
- Attended state and national conferences

Marketing accomplishments

- Creation of three Byway Brochures, one for each segment.
- Hosted two seminars on marketing.
- Worked to add Byway to Minnesota Office of Tourism’s website.
- Created central calendar of community events along entire length of Byway.
- Secured rights to logo.
- Created and sold denim-logo shirts to raise funds.
- Developed displays and represented the Byway at Tourism and Trade Shows.

- Released byway-focused media announcement for National Tourism Week
- Created marketing poster with brochure rack for distribution of byway brochures.
- Hired consultants to develop promotional video and web site, new brochure and preliminary kiosk designs.
- Created Points-Of-Interest database and developed photo inventory of resources along length of Byway

- 1996 The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway was fully designated in 1996 by Minnesota State Scenic Byway Commission.
- 1996 Grand Opening celebrate the linking of the three segments
- 1997 The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance was formally organized as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation (according to Minnesota Statute Chapter 317A) in February 1997
- 1998 Developed byway bylaws, revised in 2003
- 1998 Developed large map brochure, reprinted in 2002 and 2004
- 1998 Develop a Byway Information Kiosks and Welcome Signs paper and designs
- 1998 Developed promotional videos
- 1998 Cosponsored Run, Ride and Row along Byway
- 2000 Byway VHS 6 minute video by Dahlquist
- 2001 Published in National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Stories Across America: Opportunities for Rural Tourism”
- 2001 Won a Travel Marketing Award at the Minnesota Governor’s Conference on Tourism
- 2001 Developed byway website (Voyageur Web), phase 2 in 2003, updated in 2006

2002	National Scenic Byway Designation	Distribution of Visitors Guides, including Mall of America
2002	Worked on a Media Marketing Program (FAM, etc), not successful in getting enough funding	2005 FAM tours: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010,
2002	Addition of Alternate Route between Judson and Mankato	2005 Byway bookmarks
2002	Fall Explorer ad	2007 Created monthly facts and sent out as press releases
2002	Hosted 2002 State Scenic Byway Conference in Mankato	2007 Worked on cabin community kiosks designs with MnDOT Environmental Services (not created)
2003 – 2015:	compiled a byway calendar with annual events.  This calendar featured photographs from the byway along with a calendar of events and were given away to all CVB and members along the byway.	2007 Advertised in Field Trips, MN
2003 – present:	Membership solicitation each year	2007 Editorial in AAA Mag, Explore Southern Minnesota, Minnesota Golfer, and Explorer newspaper.
2003	Grand Opening/Celebration of National Designation (See Americas Byway's by Trains, Planes, and Automobiles, Fairfax MN). Minnesota River Rumble (motorcycle) tour.	2008 Completion of 15 interpretive panels.
2003	MN Travel Guide Ad	2008 Advertised in Minnesota Moments and Field Trips Minnesota.
2003	Fall Explorer ad, Spring Explorer ad	2008 Byway DVD with photos
2004	Created Byway Book Marks	2008 Created Byway pins
2006	Southern Minnesota Byway s- postcard, multi-byway, direct mail	2008 Hosted the MN State Byway Conference in Montevideo
2006	Mn Trails ad	2008 Explored pursuing a National Heritage Area
2007	MN Trails ad	2008 Byway pins
2007	MN Moments ad	2008 Created a direct mail piece with Prairie Waters, sent to 11,000 households
2007	Field Trips MN ad	2009 Interpretive Panel dedication ceremony at Gilfillan Farm
Various articles in MN Trails Magazine, Southern MN guide, Field Trips MN,		2009 Byway temp tattoos created
2005	Visitors guide. Updated version in 2009, 2013	2009 Byway banners made
		2009 Brochure and business cards created for TRAM

2009 Updated the 6 minute video and added to website

2010 Star Tribune Email Blast

2010 Byway road signs replace by state grant

2010 Created plan and map of all U.S. Dakota sites along byway and marked if they have current interpretation. Updated in 2012

2011 Created 10 U.S –Dakota interpretive panels

2012 Geocaching the byway: Who’s who in 1862 (project through 2014) with the six state parks.

2012 Started Facebook page managed by volunteer

2012 Flyer for Interpretive panels created

2012 Assisted with the U.S.– Dakota War Bike Ride event

2012 Started a Byway long Garage Sale that ran the first weekend in May in 2012, 2013, 2014 & 2015

2013 MN Trails ad

2013 New updated Visitors Guide

2013 Minnesota Historical Society – U.S.- Dakota War of 1862 Oral history tour along our byway.

2014 Mn Trails ad

2014 Completed new Interpretive Plan (Bluestem Heritage)

2014 New Byway Website (Vivid Web Inc.)

2016 New Visitors Guide

2016 Created one 60 sec video and six 30 sec videos

2016 Created new window clings

2017 Developed partnerships that allowed us to create Dakota content for the website and Visitors Guide

2018 New Updated Visitors Guide

2018 Completed the new Corridor Management Plan and Marketing Plan

## Training and conferences:

Attended State Byway conference every year held: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015

Attended the Water Trails Summit: 2014

Attended National Byway Conference (2007 in Baltimore, Dawn, Terri and Beth Anderson), 2009 in Colorado (Jenifer Fadness), 2011 in Minneapolis (Kristi Fernholz)

2002: Byway Conference in Stevens Point, WI (Terri Dineson)

Feb 2010: Coping with cutbacks, National Byway Workshop (Kristi Fernholz)

October 2011: Marketing boot camp for Byways (Alyssa Adam)

## Interpretation:

Creation of 10 panels 2005 – 2008

Creation of US – Dakota War Planning Document: 2009

Creation of 10 panel re the US – Dakota War: 2010 – 2011

## Appendix 5: A History of Accomplishments - Funding

### Funding:

Applied and secured 8 consecutive federal scenic byway grants (FHWA):

1998: Brochure, Promotional Video, Web Site, Kiosk designs

1999: Corridor Management Plan

2000: Signage replacement plan, sign inventory with GPS, digital mapping, capacity

2003: Seed grant #1: develop content for interp panels, Interpretive Sign Panel Guidelines, cost share byway directional signs, phase 2 of website, develop multi-byway postcard, develop Byway Guide, America's byway conference.

2005: Seed grant #2: Training, Staff coordination and Marketing

2005: Interpretive Panels design and fabrication

2007: Seed grant #3: Training, Staff coordination and Marketing

2008: Seed grant #4: Training and Staff coordination

Applied but not funded:

- 2003 Byway-long Art Crawl
- 2008 Marketing grant
- 2009 Capacity building grant
- 2009 Marketing grant

Applied for LCMR dollars for comprehensive kiosk development project. (not secured)

Solicited funds from local government entities and organizations to support byway projects

Applied and secured MN Historical Society Legacy Funds:

- 2009 U.S. – Dakota War of 1862 Planning Document \$7000
- 2010 U.S. – Dakota War of 1862 Panels \$37,565
- 2012 Interpretive Consultant \$7000

2015: Heritage Partnership Grant (Not funded)

2014 MnDOT RDC Planning Grant: Investment Priorities Addendum

2015- 16: MnHS contract to promote the Mobile History Tour

2016: MnHS Heritage Partnership Grant through the city of Appleton funded to hire Dakota consultants to update language on the website

EMT grants: numerous

Private Foundations

Membership

UMVRDC matching dollars for FHWA grants staff time.

## Appendix 6: Partnerships

Partnerships are important to the byway. There are multiple ways to collaborate as partnerships within the our byway. It may depend on the project, geography and funding source available.

Partnerships in this section:

- General Partnerships
- The Byway's Resource Management Partners
- Funding Partners and Resources
- Byway Marketing Partnerships
- Private businesses/ organizations/events

### General Partnerships

#### Federal Partners:

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

- Big Stone Wildlife Refuge
- Minnesota Valley Refuge
- National Park Service / Minnesota National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA)

National Scenic Byways Program (non-profit)  
Federal Highway Administration

#### State Agencies:

##### Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

- State parks, Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Aquatic Management Areas (AMA)
- State Trail Plan: This plan provides a framework for future trail development in the watershed and will be integral to many byway projects.

##### Minnesota Historical Society

- State Historical Sites, Legacy grants

##### Minnesota Department of Transportation

- Office of Environmental Services

##### Minnesota Office of Tourism

- PedalMN

#### Regional Groups:

Regional Development Commissions:

- Upper Minnesota Regional Development Commission
- Mid Minnesota Development Commission
- Southwest Regional Development Commission
- Region Nine Development Commission

Western Minnesota Prairie Waters  
Tatanka Bluffs

Regional Arts Councils

- Southwest Minnesota Arts Council
- Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council

Dakota Wicohan  
Minnesota Valley History Learning Center.  
New Ulm Sport Fisherman  
Clean up our River Environment, CURE, Montevideo  
Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River (CCMR), New Ulm  
Friends of the Minnesota Valley  
Save The Kasota Prairie  
Friends of Minneopa State Park  
Minnesota River Valley Birding Trail  
Mankato Paddling and Outing Group  
Casinos

#### Statewide Groups:

The Nature Conservancy  
Minnesota Waters  
Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board  
Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa  
Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society  
Pheasants Forever Chapter  
Ducks Unlimited  
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association  
Statewide MRT and Bicycle Advocacy Groups  
Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota  
Park and Trails Council of Minnesota  
Adventure Cycling Association/USBRS  
League of American Bicyclists

#### Resources:

Minnesota Department of Health  
Minnesota State University at Mankato

University of Minnesota at Morris Center for Small Towns  
University of Minnesota Cooperative Extension  
Gustavus Adolphus

### Local groups

Chambers, Convention and Visitors Bureaus and other Tourism Entities  
Museums and Historical Societies  
City and County Government  
Tribes  
Arts Councils  
Art galleries and Art schools  
Libraries

- *Browns Valley Historical Society*
- *Big Stone County Historical Museum*
- *Le Sueur County Historical Society*
- *Nicollet County Historical Society*
- *Chippewa County Historical Society*
- *Lac qui Parle County Historical Society*
- *Joseph R. Brown Heritage Society*
- *Blue Earth County Historical Society*
- *Preserve Ottawa*

## The Byway's Resource Management Partners

### Local Historic Districts

The locally zoned districts include:

- Ortonville
- New Ulm
- Mankato
- St. Peter
- Ottawa
- Henderson

### Municipal and County Zoning

Most communities and counties have some form of zoning and land use regulations. As byway projects proceed, cooperation with these regulatory agencies will be critical.

### Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge

The area south of Ortonville has been preserved through a collaborative effort between the US Fish

and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior.

### Minnesota River State Trail Master Plan, 2007

This plan provides a framework for future trail development in the watershed and will be integral to many byway projects.

## Funding Partners and resources

### Legacy grants and opportunities:

- Libraries
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Minnesota Department of Resources
- Arts Councils

### Explore Minnesota Grant

### Minnesota Department of Transportation:

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

**Health grants:** As healthy initiatives take hold to increase livability, funding may be available for many byway projects.

**Placemaking grants:** Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. Grants are available for placemaking through the Bush Foundation, ArtPlace and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Grants.gov:** A variety of grants are available at:

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>

**Federal Lands Access Program:** Created by the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act" (MAP-21) to improve state and local transportation facilities that provide access to and through federal lands for visitors, recreationists and resource users. See <http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/> for more information.

**National Park Service Rivers, Trail, and Conservation Assistance program:** See <http://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/apply.htm>.

## **Byway Marketing Partnerships**

### **Western Minnesota Prairie Waters**

Prairie Waters is a regional tourism coalition promoting the region along the upper Minnesota River. It is designed to encourage cross promotion, partnerships and collaboration among communities, counties and businesses. Includes Swift, Lac qui Parle, Chippewa and Yellow Medicine Counties.

### **Big Stone Lake Area: Big Stone Lake Area Chamber of Commerce**

At the north end of this travel corridor Big Stone Lake Area Chamber of Commerce provides the most active tourism marketing efforts for the western portions of the Byway. The Chamber represents the towns of Ortonville, Minnesota, Big Stone City, South Dakota and all of the communities and resorts on both sides of Big Stone Lake.

### **Appleton: Appleton Area Chamber of Commerce**

Appleton's targets their marketing towards Off-Highway Vehicle enthusiasts.

### **Montevideo: Montevideo Chamber of Commerce and CVB**

Montevideo is the next marketing entity eastward on the Byway, with a combination Chamber and Convention & Visitors Bureau. This city is located along a major transportation corridor, at the intersection of MN Highway-7 and US-212. The area has a high density of historic sites/attractions and both the Chippewa and Minnesota River flow nearby.

Nearby Milan, with its folk art school, is also drawing heritage travelers to the area.

### **Granite Falls: Granite Falls Chamber of Commerce**

Granite Falls lies 12 miles east of Montevideo and offers a classic small downtown experience. It is also adjacent to the Upper Sioux Agency State Park and the Prairie's Edge Casino, both of which are the major

attractions in the area. Granite Falls lies on SH212 and SH23, two of the major feeder routes from the Twin Cities. The trip is approximately 100 miles from the western side of the Cities.

Upper Sioux Community: Prairie's Edge Casino  
Prairie's Edge Casino has a marketing department that works with many partner organizations.

### **Dakota Wicohan**

Dakota Wicohan is a cultural incubator that sustains, grows, and transmits Dakota cultural lifeways, arts, and language so that together we are better prepared to lead with wo'Dakota.

### **New Ulm: New Ulm Chamber and Visitors Bureau**

### **Redwood Falls: Redwood Area Chamber and Tourism**

Redwood Falls is the next major community that markets along the byway. Route 19 from the Twin Cities enters the town from the east and Highway 71 brings traffic from the south.

### **Lower Sioux Community: Jackpot Junction**

Jackpot Junction Casino has a marketing department that works with many partner organizations.

### **Tatanka Bluffs**

At Tatanka Bluffs Corridor, Inc., our organization was formed and operates for the benefit of the citizens of Redwood and Renville Counties and their future generations. Our mission is to create "A vibrant, prosperous corridor stretching along the Minnesota River and across Redwood and Renville Counties that teems with economic, cultural and recreational opportunities because citizens repeatedly join hands to strengthen and share its unique assets."

### **Minnesota Valley History Learning Center**

The Minnesota Valley History Learning Center teaches the natural and cultural heritage of the Minnesota River Valley and inspires people of all generations to understand, preserve, and learn from our shared history.

Moving south from Redwood Falls, the next community with significant amounts of tourism activity is New Ulm. Working from the city's German settlement and heritage, New Ulm has become an attractive destination and has developed a very



healthy tourism economy that sponsors German festivals, events and products. New Ulm can be classified as having a fully developed tourism sector.

### **Mankato: Visit Mankato**

Mankato represents the largest metropolitan area along the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway.

### **Le Sueur Chamber and Tourism**

#### **St. Peter: St. Peter Tourism and Visitors Bureau**

While St. Peter serves as the commercial hub for the eastern segment of the Byway, it does not promote a marketing theme or image as strong as New Ulm's nor does it have the size and resources of Mankato.

### **Minnesota Historical Society**

The Minnesota Historical Society has increased their marketing. The Oral History Tour was created with Federal Scenic Byway funds and collaborated with the byway for both the tour and marketing efforts.

#### **Minnesota State Historical Society Historic Sites**

*The Minnesota Historic Society has 26 historic sites, seven of which are in the Minnesota River Valley. Several sites are managed by local historic associations. All of these sites are discovery sites of the byway.*

1. Lac qui Parle Mission
2. Birch Coulee Battlefield
3. Lower Sioux Agency
4. Fort Ridgely
5. Harkin Store
6. Traverse des Sioux
7. W.W. Mayo House

### **Office of Tourism (MOT) / Explore Minnesota Tourism (EMT)**

EMT offers grants for marketing and advertising, with a percent needed to be out-state.

Southern MN Tourism Association (SMTA) includes our entire byway.

The Explore Minnesota website includes all the Minnesota State Byways to help the traveler find their way along the byway. There is potential to work with businesses and organizations along the byway to increase content of byway assets.

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

The DNR offers maps, information and a dynamic website for marketing the byway.

The DNR has Minnesota River Canoe Route Guides (4 sections) that provides information about canoeing the Minnesota River.

*The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources manages many of our natural sites including State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA).*

*There are six state parks along the Byway Corridor. They are all destination sites of the byway.*

- Big Stone Lake State Park
- Flandrau State Park
- Fort Ridgely State Park and History Center
- Lac qui Parle State Park
- Minneopa State Park
- Upper Sioux Agency State Park

There are numerous Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). The following are discovery sites for the byway:

- Lac qui Parle WMA
- Swan Lake Wildlife Management Area

There are nine Scientific and Natural Areas along the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway. The following three are byway discovery sites:

- Gneiss Outcrop SNA
- Blue Devil Valley SNA
- Kasota Prairie SNA

#### **Others**

- Bonanza Prairie SNA (adjacent to Big Stone State Park)
- Swedes Forest SNA
- Cedar Rock SNA
- Morton Outcrops SNA
- Cedar Mountain SNA
- Chamberlain Woods SNA

### **The Nature Conservancy:**

All three Nature Conservancy preserves are also discovery sites:

- Plover Prairie
- The Chippewa Prairie
- Ottawa Bluffs

### **US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

The following are National Wildlife Refuges that connect with the byway:

- Big Stone Wildlife Refuge
- Minnesota Valley Refuge

Wilderness Inquiry  
Milan Village Arts School  
Watson Hunting Camp  
Kerfoot Canopy Tour  
Lonely Planet  
Morgan Creek Winery  
Big Stone Apple Ranch  
Holmberg Orchard  
Ramsey Park Zoo  
Mount Kato Ski Area and mountain biking

## **Private businesses/organizations/events**

There are many private businesses that should partner with the byway. When brainstorming private business, consider these:

### **Agri-tourism**

Apple farms  
Farm stays  
B&B  
Wineries  
Art studios  
Casinos  
Wacipis  
Threshing shows  
Performing arts theatres

### **History**

Museums  
Historic trails  
events

### **Activities**

Golf courses  
Disc Golf  
Horseback Riding  
Recreational trails  
Hunting Camp  
OHV Park  
Tour operators  
Race organizers  
Group organizers

Examples of private businesses and organizations:

Wahoo Adventures, Kerri Kolstad  
Wild River Academy (urban rivers), Natalie Warren

## Appendix 7: Annual Survey

### Sample questions for Alliance, Partners, residents, & communities along the byway

1. What is your favorite part of being a part of the byway? What can the byway do to keep you involved?
2. What is your Vision for Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway? What do you hope for the future?
3. What is one thing you'd like to see the Byway Alliance do in the next year?
4. What are three marketing ideas you have for the byway?
5. What issues should we know about from your area/city/county/region?
6. What partnerships should we know about?
7. What are you willing to do to help develop partnerships, and the byway capacity to attract people to the Minnesota River Valley?
8. How often do you think the byway alliance should meet?
  - a. Monthly
  - b. Quarterly
  - c. Annually
9. How often would you like to hear from the byway alliance?
  - a. Monthly
  - b. Quarterly
  - c. Annually
10. Your name (optional)
11. The area you represent

## Transportation Alternative Program

This survey was used for the Byway Investment Priorities Addendum 2015 and could be used for future updates.



## Byway Investment Priorities 2015

The following are the types of projects you may have to enhance the byway experience:

1. **Construction projects** along the byway or in the byway corridor, esp those that would improve the byway visitor experience or increase the number of byway travelers. This could include construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas, and increased parking in designated areas.
2. **Trails projects** including pathways or trails along the byways or to connect to town amenities from the byway, cross-country ski trails, OHV trail development and maintenance, conversion of abandoned railroad corridors for trails
3. **Bicycle and Pedestrian infrastructure projects**, including signals.
4. **Safety improvement projects**. Examples include wider shoulders, ruble strips/stripes, chevrons, intersection lighting, and traffic calming techniques
5. **Americans with Disabilities Act** of 1990 transportation projects
6. **Vegetation management projects** (invasive species control, erosion control, etc) or projects that reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality.
7. Acquisition, development, improvement, and restoration of **park and trail facilities** of regional or statewide significance projects.
8. **Interpretation** projects
9. **Public art** projects
10. **Marketing** projects
11. Other projects

For each project identify:

1. Project name and Description.
2. Project location.
3. Who is the project manager?
4. What stage is this project at?
  - a. Only a concept
  - b. Planning stage
  - c. Design stage
  - d. Construction stage
5. Rank the project in importance. (High Priority or Low Priority).
6. Approximate cost (if known).

## Appendix 8: Funding Resources

Partnerships are important to the byway. There are multiple ways to collaborate as partnerships within the our byway. It may depend on the project, geography and funding source available.

### Funding Partners and resources

#### Legacy grants and opportunities:

- Libraries
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Minnesota Department of Resources
- Arts Councils

#### Explore Minnesota Grant

**Minnesota Department of Transportation:** Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

**Health grants:** As healthy initiatives take hold to increase livability, funding may be available for many byway projects.

**Placemaking grants:** Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. Grants are available for placemaking through the Bush Foundation, ArtPlace and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Grants.gov:** A variety of grants are available at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>

**Federal Lands Access Program:** Created by the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act" (MAP-21) to improve state and local transportation facilities that provide access to and through federal lands for visitors, recreationists and resource users. See <http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/> for more information.

**National Park Service Rivers, Trail, and Conservation Assistance program:** See <http://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/apply.htm>.

## Potential Scenic Byway Funding Sources

Funding Source	Responsible Entity	Infrastructure	Non-Infrastructure	Notes
Scenic Byway Solicitation	MnDOT	X		Final solicitation occurring in CY 2015
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	ATPs / MnDOT	X		<a href="http://www.dot.state.mn.us/map-21/tap.html">http://www.dot.state.mn.us/map-21/tap.html</a>
Regional Sustainable Development Partnership	U of M		X	<a href="http://www.extension.umn.edu/rsdp/">http://www.extension.umn.edu/rsdp/</a>
Community Development Funding	DEED	X		<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/community-funding/">http://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/community-funding/</a>
Greater Minnesota Public Infrastructure Program	DEED	X		<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/business-funding/infrastructure-grants.jsp">http://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/business-funding/infrastructure-grants.jsp</a>
Explore Minnesota Grant Program	Explore MN		X	<a href="http://www.exploreminnesota.com/industry-minnesota/ways-to-get-involved/grants/">http://www.exploreminnesota.com/industry-minnesota/ways-to-get-involved/grants/</a>
Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program	DNR	X		<a href="http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/pt_legacy.html">http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/pt_legacy.html</a>
Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	DNR	X		<a href="http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/outdoor_rec.html">http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/outdoor_rec.html</a>
Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Rail-Crossings	MnDOT	X		
General transportation programming	MnDOT; Counties; Cities	X		Share Byway needs with responsible roadway entities; some may be able to be accommodated through standard transportation programming processes.
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office	MnGeo		X	Not a funding source but may be used as an information resource <a href="http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/">http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/</a>
Minnesota State Demographic Center	Admin Minnesota		X	Not a funding source but may be used as an information resource <a href="http://mn.gov/admin/demography/">http://mn.gov/admin/demography/</a>
State Health Improvement Program (SHIP)	MDH	X	X	<a href="http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ship/">http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ship/</a>
County Fair Arts Access and Cultural Heritage Grants	MDA		X	<a href="http://www.mda.state.mn.us/en/grants/grants/countyfair.aspx">http://www.mda.state.mn.us/en/grants/grants/countyfair.aspx</a>
Recreational Trails Program	DNR	X		<a href="http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_federal.html">http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_federal.html</a>
Local Trail Connections Program	DNR			<a href="http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_local.html">http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_local.html</a>
Regional Trail Grant Program	DNR	X		<a href="http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_regional.html">http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_regional.html</a>

Other DNR Grants	DNR	X	Depending on the project, other DNR grants may be appropriate <a href="http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/index.html">http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/index.html</a>
Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants	MHS	X	<a href="http://legacy.mnhs.org/grants">http://legacy.mnhs.org/grants</a>
RDC Transportation Planning Grants	MnDOT / RDCs	X	
Private Foundation Grant Opportunities	Varies		<a href="http://www.lmc.org/page/1/private-grant-sources.jsp">http://www.lmc.org/page/1/private-grant-sources.jsp</a>
Chambers of Commerce	Varies	X	Local chambers may have funding available to assist with byway activities related to economic development
Byway Membership Fees	Byway groups	X	Consider charging a byway membership fee to accomplish small projects and/or provide match to other grant opportunities
Advertising Revenue	Byway groups	X	Sell advertising in byway publications to cover costs
Regional Arts Councils		X	<a href="http://www.arts.state.mn.us/racs/">http://www.arts.state.mn.us/racs/</a>
Hazard Mitigation Assistance	FEMA	X	<a href="https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance">https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance</a>
Federal Land Access Program (FLAP)	FHWA	X	<a href="http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/">http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/</a>
Minnesota Design Team	AIA Minnesota	X	<a href="http://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/committees/minnesota-design-team/">http://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/committees/minnesota-design-team/</a>
SHPO Grants	MHS	X	<a href="http://www.mnhs.org/shpo/grants/">http://www.mnhs.org/shpo/grants/</a>



## Appendix 9: Byway CMP work plan

The following is a work plan that should be reviewed and updated yearly. This work plan is based on the Corridor Management Plan.

### Chapter 1

1. Work with partners along the byway.
2. Work with transportation departments along the byway to focus on the byway traveler.
3. Inventory value-added components that keep a community livable.

### Chapter 2

4. Integrate an Environmental Stewardship Message within the Alliance's Image
5. Work the Upper and Lower Sioux Communities
6. Update the list of Discovery Sites.

### Chapter 3

7. Develop and update a list of critical intrinsic resources.
8. Work with MnDOT to encourage good design, additional trail projects, and infrastructure.
9. Develop and Invest in Regional Recreation Amenities such a Regional Trail System

### Chapter 4

10. Update Byway website
11. Review and update Byway Signage
12. Work with Byway Commission and the four state agencies
13. Develop partners for marketing efforts
14. Review Marketing Work Plan
15. Update the "U.S.- Dakota War sites along the Byway" document
16. Review Interpretation Work Plan
17. Develop Multi – lingual Interpretation, especially Dakota language

### Chapter 5

18. Partner with MnDOT on safety and signage management
19. Bring highway engineers into an active partnership with the byway.
20. Maintain the Character of Rural Roads
21. Increase bike and pedestrian trails
22. Erect and Maintain More Byway Directional and Logo Signs
23. Erect Points-of-Interest Signs.

### Chapter 6

24. Participate in conferences, tours and seminars on topics of interest
25. Empower Alliance members to share information about the byway
26. Use marketing methods to reach residents to keep them aware of the byway products.
27. Build Alliance Participation and Recruitment
28. Update public input

### Chapter 7

29. Maintain UMVRDC in the Staff Support Role to the Alliance
30. Seek Commitments from Other Regional Entities to Devote Part-time Staff to Byway Efforts
31. Coordinate funding strategies for the byway
32. Recommend or promote specific projects, or initiate projects where one or more local sponsors might step forward to sponsor, manage or fund projects on behalf of the Alliance
33. Attend conferences for byway awareness
34. Secure funding to monitor impacts to the byway.
35. Update the Corridor Management Plan and work plans

## Appendix 10: Project List

Type	<b>Comprehensive List of All Projects</b> <i>Past projects</i> <i>Projects listed in CMP, Marketing Plan, Interp plan</i> <i>Past brainstorming</i>	Date added to list	Has project been done before?	Priority 1-5: 5 -high 1 -low C - completed for now. R - remove	immediate, short term, long term	Who?	Cost, funding source
alliance ch 1	Work with transportation departments along the byway to focus on the byway traveler.	2015	ongoing	5			
alliance ch 1	Inventory value added assets along the byway (business and communities)			3			
alliance ch 2	Develop method for adding and reviewing discovery sites	2015		5			
alliance ch 2	Develop Partnership - Upper and Lower Sioux Communities	Interp plan		5			
alliance ch 3	Develop and update a list of critical intrinsic resources	2015		3			
alliance ch 3	Partner with MnDOT on good design, trail projects, and infrastructure.	2015		5			
alliance ch 3	Develop partnerships with environmental advocacy efforts and local culture			3			
alliance ch 4	Develop Partnership - DNR	Interp plan		5			
alliance ch 4	Develop Partnership - MNHS	Interp plan		5			
alliance ch 4	Develop Partnership: Have Byway Chambers include guides in new resident baskets, include byway in ads	2013		5			
alliance ch 4	Development Partnerships with EMT and local chambers	2009		5			
alliance ch 4	Partner with libraries on projects and events	2013		4			
alliance ch 4	Update Marketing plan every year.	2015		5			
alliance ch 4	Review and update byway directional signage	2001		5			
alliance ch 4	Update U.S. -Dakota War sites planning document	2015		3			
alliance ch 4	Update Interpretation Work Plan annually	2015		5			
alliance ch 5	Work with MnDOT planners and county highway engineers on safety and sign managers.	2001		4			
alliance ch 6	Participate in conferences	2001		4			
alliance ch 6	Create packet and information for Alliance members to share	2015		3			
alliance ch 6	Alliance board member recruitment	2009		5			
alliance ch 6	Byway Awareness campaign: residents and travelers	2009		5			

alliance ch 7	Seek Commitments from other organizations to devote time to Byway (chambers etc)	2001		4			
alliance ch 7	Collaborate with other organizations – colleges groups	2009		2			
alliance ch 7	Conduct a survey every 2 years to update this work plan	2015		3			
alliance ch 7	Corridor Management Plan update	2009	2015	5			
alliance ch 7	Engage Youth: boy scouts/girl scouts program packets	2009		2			
alliance ch 7	Find funding for coordination (UMVRDC Staff time)	2009		5			
alliance ch 7	General fundraising	2009		5			
alliance ch 7	Membership Drive	2009		5			
alliance ch 7	Outreach to residents - survey	2009		3			
alliance ch 7	Refer to monitoring and evaluation section in CMP for the TAP planning funding.	2015		4			
alliance ch 7	Utilize the Economic Impact Tool for scenic byways	2015		2			
alliance ch 7	Corridor Management Plan update sections every year.	2015		3			
alliance ch 7	Write Explore Minnesota Grant	2015		4			
content	Add multilingual when possible. Dakota language. Visitors Guide and website	2001					
content	Get Recreational venues, businesses and byway assets on EMT website	2015					
content	Map design for projects	pre 2001	1999				
content	Use Southern MN Tourism branding: Southern MN, Naturally Different	2014 Water Summit					
content	Calendar of Events: brochure, website, calendar	pre 2001	1998, calendar				
content	Oral History	2015					
content	Update and use list of byway campgrounds	2015					
marketing plan	Identify target markets: gamblers, hunters, birders, agri-tourists, art buffs, cyclists, paddlers, bikers, golfers, beer geeks, wine snobs, U.S. –Dakota-War buffs, music-lovers, rock hounds, and bibliophiles	2015					
project	Private businesses: Promote Recreational Venues and Businesses	Interp plan					
project	Private Businesses: Help more businesses to get started Tour Companies, B & B etc.	2009					

event	Annual Paddle events, races, monster floats	2014 Water Summit					
event	art event, art crawl	2009					
event	Birding festival						
event	Byway –long Garage Sale: Posters, press release, facebook and emails	2013	2013 to present				
event	Car & Motorcycle Event, "Minnesota River Rumble"	2009					
event	Celebration of byway accomplishments (designation, panels)	pre 2001	1996, 2003, 2009				
event	Dine Fresh/Dine Local	2009					
event	FAM Tours (combine with other events such as Woodlake Battlefield)	2013	2005 - 2010				
event	history re-enactment	2001					
event	Oral History night	2009					
event	PR event in spring/annual meeting	2015					
event	Run, Ride and Row event	pre 2001	1998				
event	Sponsor marketing workshops	pre 2001	1998				
marketing	Ads: Coffee sleeves – brite vision						
marketing	Ads: MN Trails, print sleeves, various	2009	various				Lots, matching EMT grant
marketing	Ads: filler ads for all newspapers and radio	2013					staff time
marketing	Collateral: Brochure of interp panels	2013	2010				
marketing	Collateral: Annual calendar with byway photos	2004	2004 to present				\$1000+
marketing	Collateral: Business cards and rack cards – in house	2009	2010				
marketing	Collateral: byway display and brochures	pre 2001	1998				
marketing	Collateral: Byway Poster with brochure pocket for distribution	pre 2001	1998				
marketing	Collateral: Byway-only brochure rack	2009					
marketing	Collateral: Direct mail piece/response piece. Consider partners (Prairie Waters)	2008	2008				
marketing	Collateral: Key chains	2009					
marketing	Collateral: Kids pack – letter boxing, geocaching	2009					
marketing	Collateral: Map: Large fold out	pre 2001	2001				
marketing	Collateral: Maps: easy, motorcycle, maybe more than one type	2009					
marketing	Collateral: Note cards/postcards: artists, casinos, byway birds	2009					
marketing	Collateral: Photo DVD, \$10/dvd, Ron Bolduan	2009					
marketing	Collateral: Playing cards	2009					
marketing	Collateral: posters	2009					Need funding

marketing	Collateral: Reusable bags	2009					
marketing	Collateral: Tear-off maps (determined not effective at this time)	Interp plan		no			
marketing	Collateral: Travelling Exhibit	Interp plan		Medium			
marketing	Collateral: Tshirts	2007	2007				
marketing	Collateral: Visitors Guide	2001	3rd version				Need funding
marketing	Collateral: Waterbottle	2009					
marketing	Collateral: Wildflower Seed ads	2009					
marketing	Distribution of Guides: Gorilla Drop off, Casinos	2009					
marketing	Distribution of Guides: Mall of America	2008					\$525
marketing	Editorial: Midwest Living Editorial	2012	Sept/Oct 2012, 2014				
marketing	Editorial: packets, articles	2009					
marketing	Partnership: Have Byway Chambers include guides in new resident baskets, include byway in ads	2013					
marketing	Press Releases: remember to send to EMT, National Tourism Week	pre 2001	1998				
marketing	Press Package: Byway Media Marketing Program	pre 2001	worked on in 2002, did not get funding.				
marketing	Promotional video	pre 2001	1998				
marketing	Social media: Facebook	2013	2013 to present				
marketing	Social Media: other	2013					
project	Infrastructure: Interpretive wayfinding projects	2009					
project	Infrastructure: Byway Road Directional Signage	2001, 2009, Interp Plan	2001				
project	Infrastructure: Establish Gateway Sites, signage and wayshowing	Interp plan					
project	Infrastructure: Bike/Trail Development	2009					
project	Infrastructure: Capital Improvements	2009					
project	Infrastructure: New Visitor Center	CMP, Interp plan		Low			
project	Infrastructure: Paved Byway Road	2009					
project	Infrastructure: Recreational Bridge in Morton, MN across the MN River	2009					
project	Infrastructure: Signage on bridges – byway logo – mile markers, anniversary or water trails, English and Dakota,	2013					
trails	Mobile Tours	Interp plan		High			
trails	National Trust Tours: <a href="http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-">http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-</a>	2015					

	and-sites/travel/tours/						
trails	Slow Food USA	2009					
trails	Trail brochures - history, wine trail	2009					
trails	Ox Cart signage and trail	2009					
tech	Create a byway app	2013					
tech	Web: Update and add events	2013		Doing			
tech	Web: Make website mobile friendly	2013		done			
tech	Web: Update and Clarify Website	2009, Interp plan	2014	High			
tech	Web: Allow users to upload photos onto website	2013					
tech	Web: Videos on website	2013					
tech	Web: ways for cities to do a walking tour on our website. Update themselves	2013					
tech	Web: work with EMT website	2015					
tech	Web: work with chambers websites	2013		done			
tech	Web: New discovery site photos for web	pre 2001	1998				
tech	Web: Itineraries – develop for web, make paper copies too	2009, Interp Plan, 2015					
tech	Web: Review Discovery sites – add/subtract, update content	2015					
tech	online tour						
program	Bikes for those canoeing	2009					
program	Heritage travel	2009					
program	Journal from explorers – take them on the path of past Voyager canoers	2001					
program	Kayak Fishing	2001					
program	Museums work together to help host canoe groups	2014 Water Summit					
program	National Heritage Area	2009					
program	Paddle multiple communities: outfitters need to work together	2014 Water Summit					
program	Voyager Canoe Tours	2009					
program	Scavenger Hunt along the byway						
program	Geocaching	2009	2012 – 2014	High			
Interp	Guidebook focused on specific topics	Interp plan		High			
Interp	Guidebook: “By Foot or Wheel: Hiking and Biking Trails in the Minnesota River Valley”	Interp plan					
Interp	Guidebook: “For the Birds: Birding Opportunities in the Minnesota River Valley”	Interp plan					
Interp	Guidebook: “Millions of Years in Hundred of	Interp plan					

	Miles: Uncovering the Natural History of the Minnesota River Valley”						
Interp	Guidebook: “Mnisota: Exploring Dakota History and Culture in the Minnesota River Valley”	Interp plan					
Interp	Booklet: Activity Booklet for Children Ages 2-7	Interp plan		Low			
Interp	Booklet: Passport Book for Children Ages 10-14	Interp plan		Medium			
Interp	Kiosk designs	pre 2001	2001				
Inter	Kiosks (orientation and interpretive)	CMP, Interp plan		Low			
Interp	Interpretive panels: U.S.-Dakota War of 1862	2009	2011 - 10 panels				
Interp	Interpretive panels	2009, Interp plan		Medium			



## Appendix 11: Discovery Sites

Updated list May 1, 2018

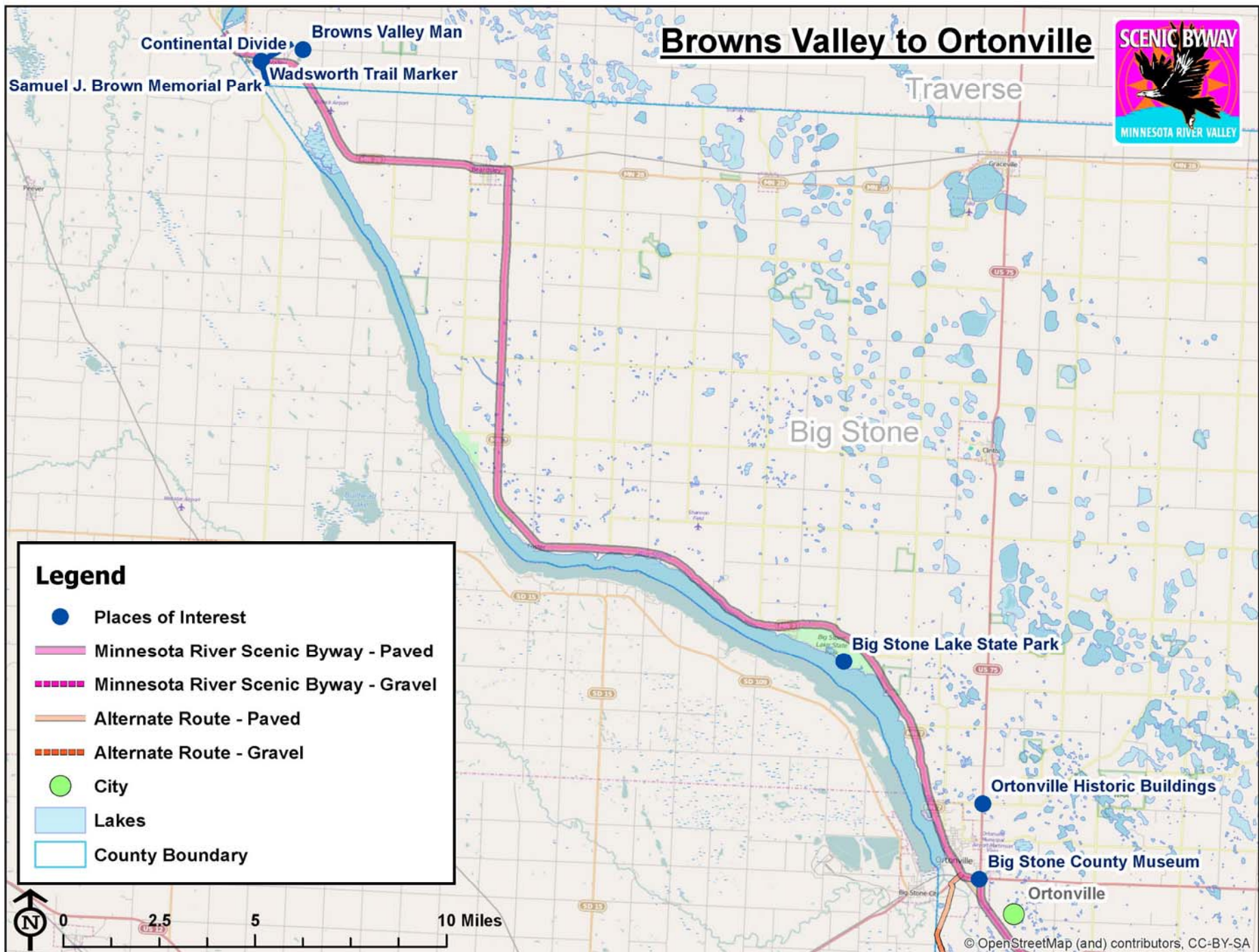
- 1 Continental Divide
- 2 Samuel J. Brown Memorial Park
- 3 Wadsworth Trail Marker
- 4 Browns Valley Man
- 5 Big Stone Lake State Park
- 6 Ortonville Historic Buildings
- 7 Big Stone County Museum
- 8 Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge
- 9 Plover Prairie Nature Conservancy Preserve
- 10 Marsh Lake
- 11 Chippewa Prairie Preserve
- 12 Arv Hus Museum
- 13 Norwegian Stabbur
- 14 Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management Area
- 15 Lac qui Parle State Park
- 16 Lac qui Parle Mission Site
- 17 Lac Qui Parle County History Center
- 18 Camp Release Memorial Monument
- 19 Historic Chippewa City
- 20 Montevideo Historic Buildings
- 21 Milwaukee Road Heritage Depot
- 22 Minnesota River Valley Trail - Montevideo to Wegdahl
- 23 Olof Swensson Farm Museum
- 24 Granite Falls Downtown District and River
- 25 Granite Falls Footbridge
- 26 Andrew J. Volstead House Museum
- 27 Yellow Medicine County Museum
- 28 Blue Devil Valley Scientific and Natural Area
- 29 Gneiss Outcrop Scientific and Natural Area
- 30 Fagen Fighters World War II Museum
- 31 Minnesota Machinery Museum
- 32 Upper Sioux Agency State Park
- 33 Upper Sioux Community and Prairie's Edge Casino and Hotel
- 34 Wood Lake Monument and Battlefield
- 35 Renville County Parks: Skalbekken
- 36 Sacred Heart Area Museum
- 37 Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest
- 38 Enestvedt Seed Corn Company
- 39 Rudi Memorial
- 40 Belview Depot and Museum
- 41 Renville County Parks: Vicksburg
- 42 Schwandt Memorial
- 43 Redwood Falls Historic Buildings
- 44 Minnesota Inventor Hall of Fame
- 45 Ramsey Park
- 46 Redwood County Historical Society (Poor Farm Museum)
- 47 Renville County Parks: Beaver Falls
- 48 Birch Coulee Battlefield State Historic Site
- 49 Renville County Parks: Birch Coulee
- 50 Renville County Historical Museum
- 51 Morton Monuments
- 52 Lower Sioux Community and Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel
- 53 Lower Sioux Agency
- 54 St. Cornelias Church
- 55 Gilfillan Estate
- 56 Renville County Parks: Anderson Lake
- 57 Renville County Parks: Mack Lake
- 58 Fort Ridgely State Park, Cemetery, Monuments and Historic Site
- 59 Sleepy Eye Historic Buildings
- 60 Harkin Store
- 61 Milford Monument
- 62 New Ulm Historic District
- 63 Hermann Monument
- 64 Wanda Gág House Interpretive Center and Museum
- 65 Glockenspiel
- 66 Brown County Historical Museum
- 67 The John Lind House
- 68 Minnesota Music Hall of Fame
- 69 Kiesling House
- 70 Riverside History and Nature Learning Center
- 71 Flandrau State Park
- 72 August Schell Brewery Museum, New Ulm
- 73 Evacuation of New Ulm to Mankato Route Marker
- 74 Swan Lake Wildlife Management Area
- 75 Minneopa State Park and Minneopa Falls
- 76 Minnemishinona Falls
- 77 Fort LeHillier Marker and Landing
- 78 Mankato Historic Districts
- 79 Sibley Park
- 80 Akota Wokiksuye Makoce (Land of Memories) Park, Mahkato Wacipi (Pow Wow)
- 81 Rasmussen Woods and Elk's Nature Center
- 82 Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota
- 83 Betsy-Tacy Houses Literary Landmarks
- 84 Blue Earth County History Center and Museum
- 85 R.D. Hubbard House Museum
- 86 CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour

- |    |   |     |   |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 87 | Carnegie Art Center, Mankato  | 96  | Treaty Site History Center and Nicollet County Museum, Traverse des Sioux Historic Site |
| 88 | Reconciliation Park   | 97  | Ottawa Bluffs Preserve  |
| 89 | Winter Warrior and Memorial Marker  | 98  | Ottawa Village Historic District  |
| 90 | Riverfront Park   | 99  | W.W. Mayo House   |
| 91 | Kasota Prairie Scientific & Natural Area and Kasota Prairie Conservation Area | 100 | Henderson Historic District   |
| 92 | St. Peter Regional Treatment Center Museum                                    | 101 | Sibley County Historical Museum   |
| 93 | Linnaeus Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College                               | 102 | Joseph R. Brown Heritage Society and Minnesota River Center                             |
| 94 | St. Peter Historic District   | 103 | Ney Nature Center   |
| 95 | E. St. Julien Cox House   | 104 | Belle Plaine Historic Buildings   |
|    |   | 105 | Minnesota River State Water Trail   |

## Appendix 12: Discovery Sites Maps 2015

The follow are the maps with Places of Interest that were created in 2015 after the Interpretive Plan was complete.

# Browns Valley to Ortonville



## Legend

- Places of Interest
- Minnesota River Scenic Byway - Paved
- - - - - Minnesota River Scenic Byway - Gravel
- Alternate Route - Paved
- - - - - Alternate Route - Gravel
- City
- Lakes
- County Boundary

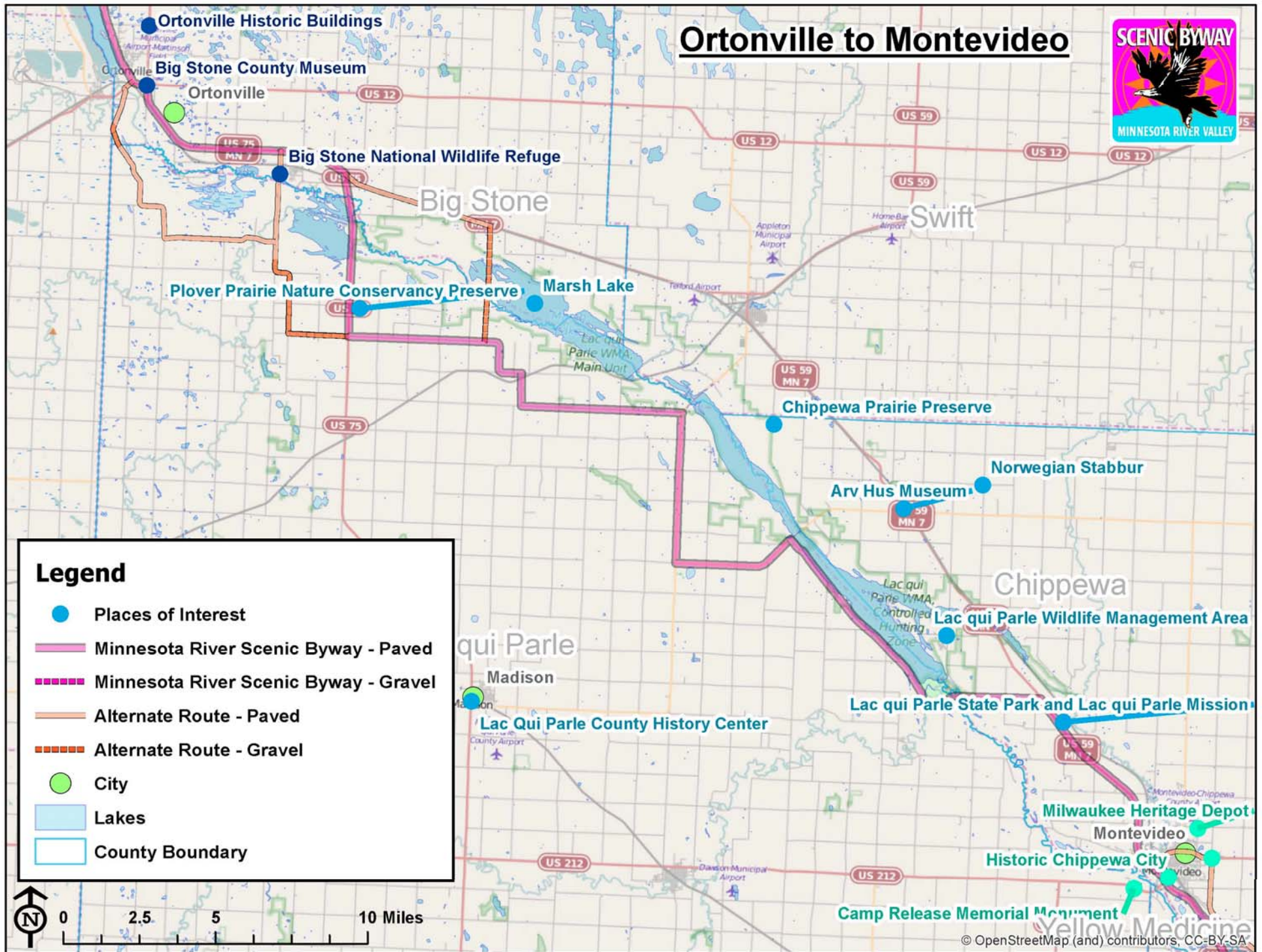


Data Source: ESRI, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Google Maps

Upper Minnesota Valley RDC 323 W. Schliemann Ave Appleton, MN 56208 (320)289-1981 [www.umvrhc.org](http://www.umvrhc.org)

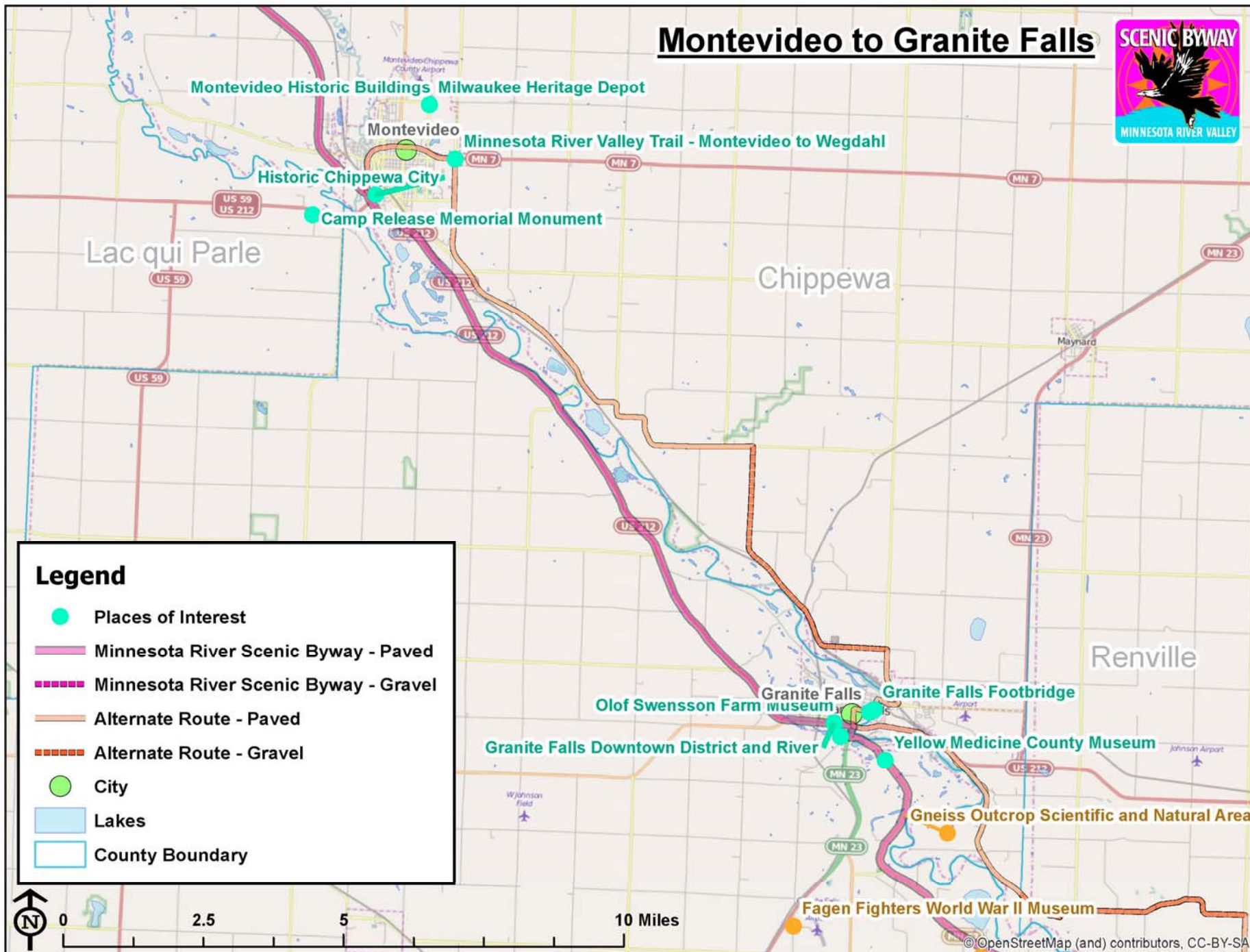


# Ortonville to Montevideo

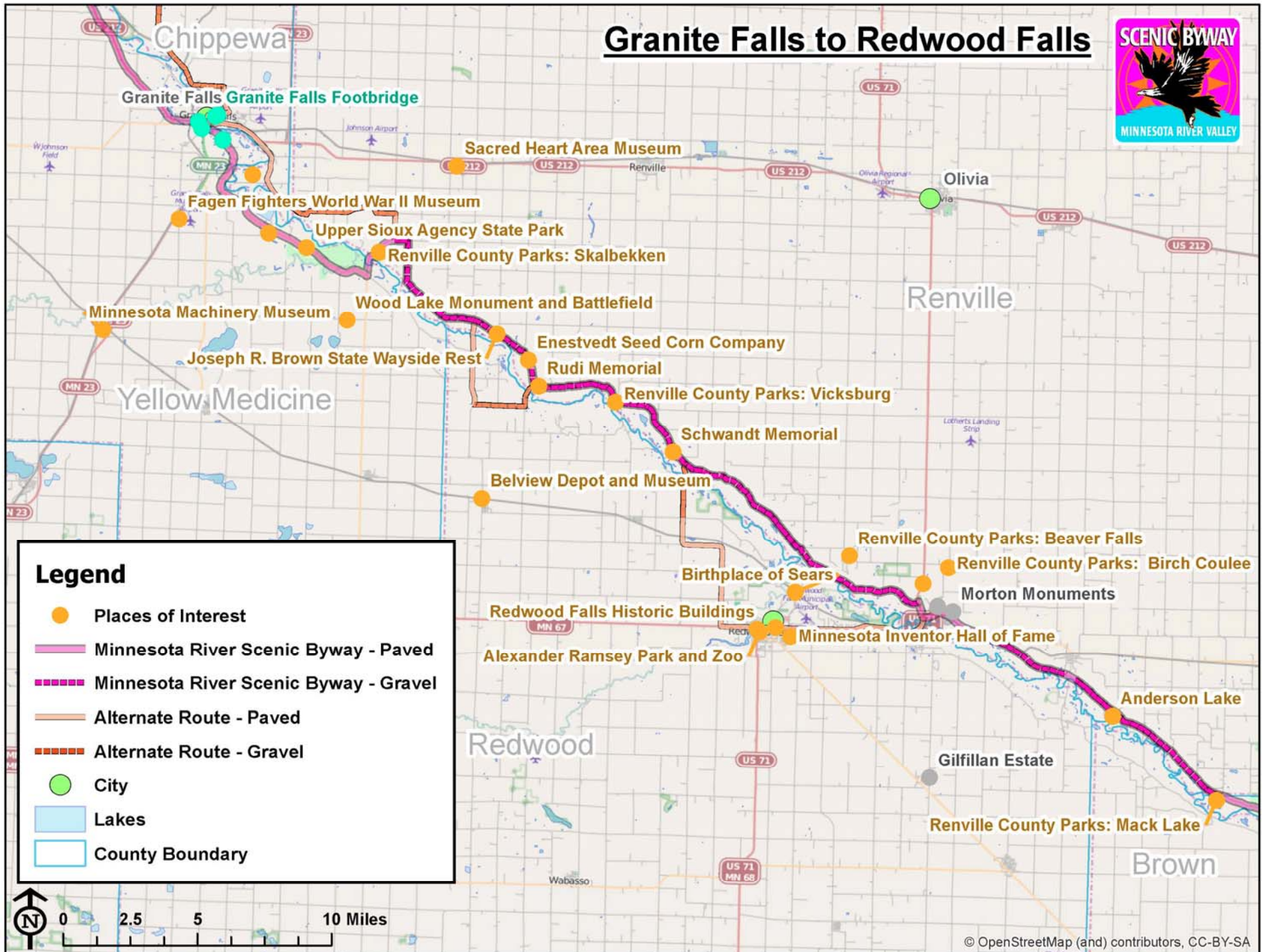




# Montevideo to Granite Falls

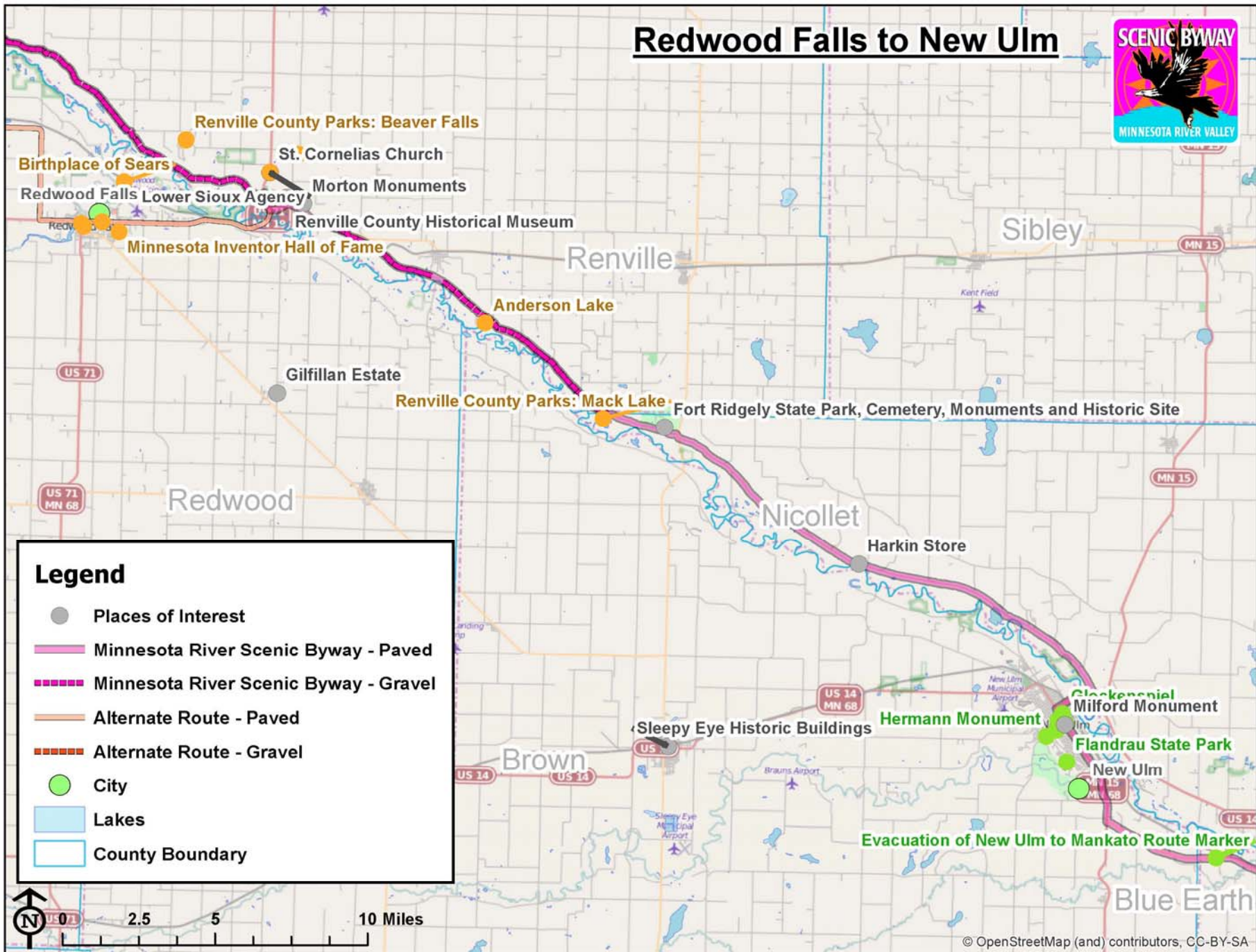


# Granite Falls to Redwood Falls





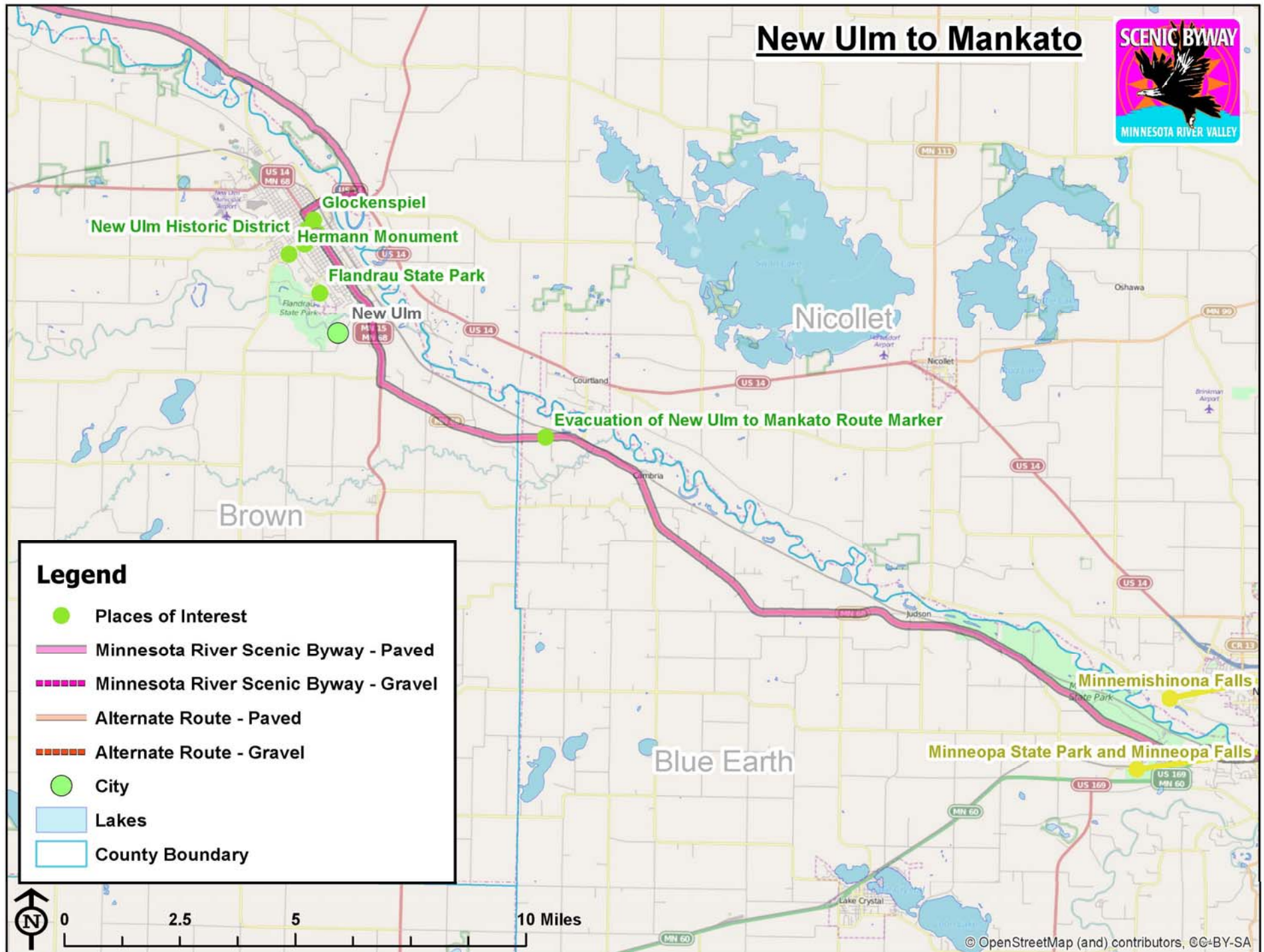
# Redwood Falls to New Ulm



Data Source: ESRI, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Google Maps

Upper Minnesota Valley RDC 323 W. Schliemann Ave Appleton, MN 56208 (320)289-1981 [www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org)

# New Ulm to Mankato



## Legend

- Places of Interest
- Minnesota River Scenic Byway - Paved
- - - Minnesota River Scenic Byway - Gravel
- Alternate Route - Paved
- - - Alternate Route - Gravel
- City
- Lakes
- County Boundary

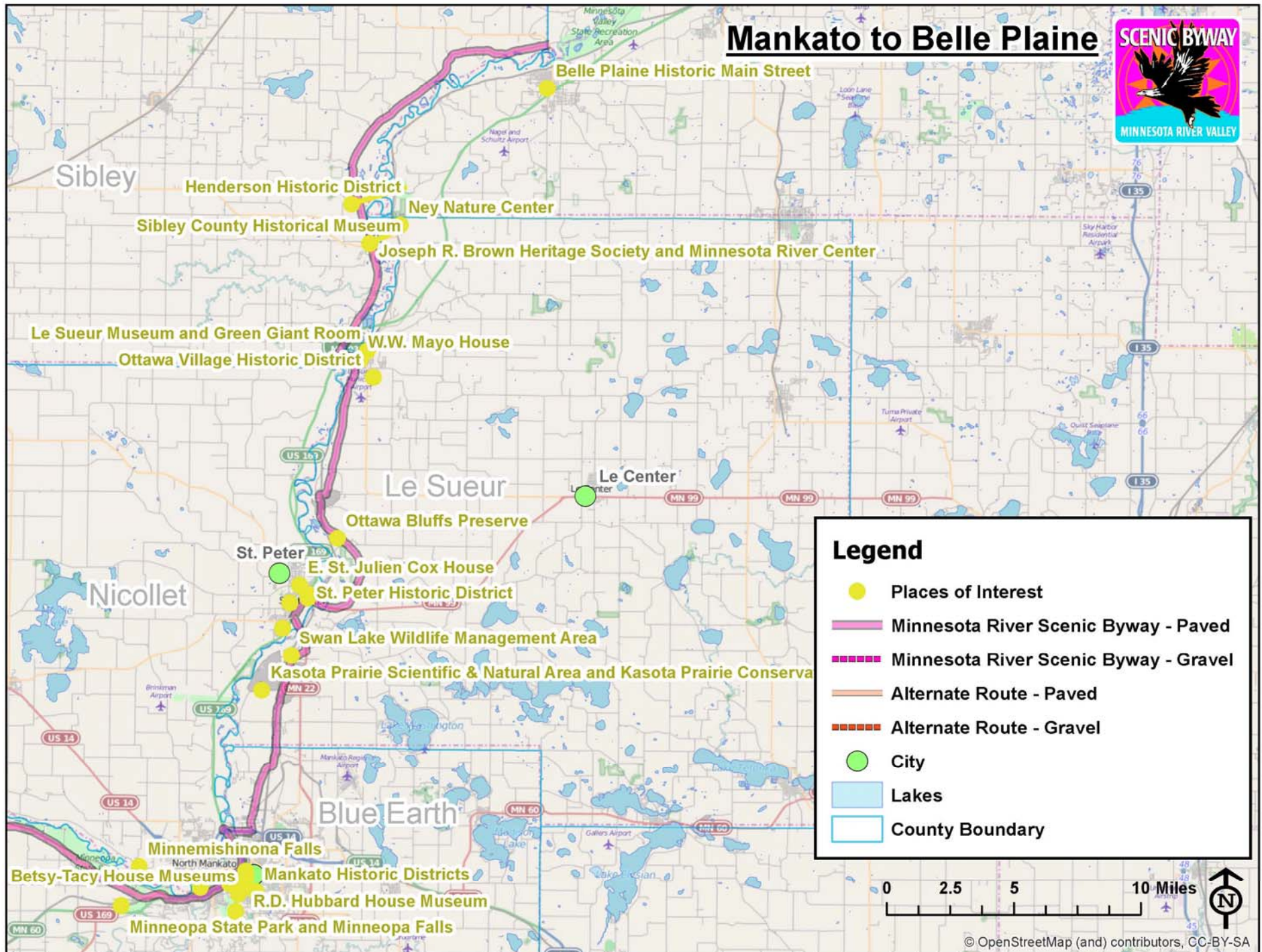


Data Source: ESRI, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Google Maps

Upper Minnesota Valley RDC 323 W. Schliemann Ave Appleton, MN 56208 (320)289-1981 [www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org)



# Mankato to Belle Plaine



### Legend

- Places of Interest
- Minnesota River Scenic Byway - Paved
- - - Minnesota River Scenic Byway - Gravel
- Alternate Route - Paved
- - - Alternate Route - Gravel
- City
- Lakes
- County Boundary

