

## **PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT SUMMARY**

### **Bureau of Mines Twin Cities Research Center Disposition Environmental Impact Statement**

*Prepared for:*

**National Park Service  
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area  
(MNRRA)**

*Prepared by:*



**engineering-environmental Management, Inc.**

**July 2005**

## I. Introduction

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) has been designated by Congress to lead the public planning process to address the disposition of the federal property known as the Bureau of Mines, Twin Cities Research Center Main Campus (Center) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Additional background information on the planning process and Center can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/miss/bom>. Congress closed the Center in 1996. The Center occupies federal land located in Hennepin County, Minnesota, and is within the boundary of MNRRA, a unit of the national park system. The National Park Service (NPS) is the lead agency for the environmental impact statement (EIS) planning process and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has responsibility for managing the daily operations at the Center.

The NEPA process is explained and described in the regulations by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) published at 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 1500–1508. The planning process will address the disposition of the Center in an EIS. The National Park Service has contracted with engineering-environmental Management, Inc. (e<sup>2</sup>M) to prepare the EIS.

Scoping provides an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in an EIS. Scope consists of the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be considered in an EIS. To determine the scope of an EIS, the agency shall consider three types of actions, three types of alternatives, and three types of impacts. They include:

(a) Actions (other than unconnected single actions), which may be:

1. Connected actions, which means that they are closely related and therefore should be discussed in the same impact statement. Actions are connected if they:
  - (i) automatically trigger other actions which may require an EIS
  - (ii) cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously
  - (iii) are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification
2. Cumulative actions, which when viewed with other proposed actions have cumulatively significant impacts and should therefore be discussed in the same EIS.
3. Similar actions, which when viewed with other reasonably foreseeable or proposed agency actions, have similarities that provide a basis for evaluating their environmental consequences together, such as common timing or geography. An agency may wish to analyze these actions in the same EIS. It should do so when the best way to assess adequately the combined impacts of similar actions or reasonable alternatives to such actions is to treat them in a single EIS.

(b) Alternatives, which include:

1. no action alternative
2. other reasonable courses of action
3. mitigation measures (not in the proposed action)

(c) Impacts, which may be: (1) direct, (2) indirect, and (3) cumulative.

As part of the scoping process, the National Park Service invited the participation of affected federal, state, and local agencies, Indian tribes, and other interested persons. Interested parties were invited to comment via e-mail, post, and/or fax. Public meetings were held by the National Park Service at the end of March 2005 to invite further participation in the scoping process.

This report summarizes the results of the initial scoping period for the Center EIS and includes comments received from January 2005, when the Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS was published in the *Federal Register* (01/28/05), until June 30, 2005.

The comments have been categorized into several broad categories based on the similar nature of the comments received.

## **II. Public Outreach**

### **Public Notices and Scoping Newsletter**

The Web page for the Center EIS was launched on MNRRA's Web site on January 18, 2005 (<http://www.nps.gov/miss/bom>). The *Federal Register* Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS was published on January 28, 2005. The National Park Service issued two news releases and a newsletter to a mailing list of over 500 individuals, organizations, agencies, Indian tribes, and media outlets. Of that total, 20 copies were sent to federally recognized Indian tribes; 12 copies were sent to colleges and universities in the Twin Cities area; copies were faxed to the two Minnesota U.S. Senators: Mark Dayton and Norm Coleman, and to Minnesota U.S. Representatives Martin Olav Sabo and Betty McCollum; 12 copies were sent to various National Park Service offices and to the General Services Administration; and 35 copies were sent to other federal agency offices. The newsletter was also posted on MNRRA's Web page ([www.nps.gov/miss](http://www.nps.gov/miss)), distributed upon request, and made available at public meetings.

News releases were distributed on January 31, 2005 and March 28, 2005, and a scoping newsletter was distributed on March 11, 2005, inviting public participation in the scoping process for the Center EIS. The newsletter provided background on the planning process; the dates, locations, and time of the public scoping meetings; and included an opportunity to provide comment via a self-addressed comment card. Legal notices announcing the start of the public scoping meetings were printed in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* on March 21, 2005.

## **Scoping Public Meetings**

Open public scoping meetings provided information on the Center EIS planning process. A total of four separate public scoping meetings were held on March 30 and 31, 2005, from 1:00 P.M. until 3:00 P.M. and from 6:00 P.M. until 9:00 P.M. each day at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in St. Paul, Minnesota. The public scoping meetings were set up in an open house format. Four different information stations provided background and information on NEPA and the planning process, details of the Center, MNRRA and the National Park Service, and cultural and historic resources. Handouts and maps were available at each station.

Agency personnel and EIS contractor representatives participating in the open house meetings included:

- JoAnn Kyril, Superintendent, MNRRA/NPS
- Kim Berns, Project Manager, MNRRA/NPS
- John Anfinson, Ph.D., Cultural Historian, MNRRA/NPS
- Steve Johnson, Manager, Stewardship and Community Assistance, MNRRA/NPS
- Jim Von Haden, Development Review, MNRRA/NPS
- Andrew J. McDermott III, Architect/Engineer, USFWS
- Jeffrey C. Gosse, Ph.D., Regional NEPA Specialist, USFWS
- Bob Hansen, Associate Regional Director, Special Projects, USFWS
- Anne Baldrige, Project Manager, e<sup>2</sup>M
- Schelle Frye, Planning Specialist, e<sup>2</sup>M

The public scoping meetings were attended by federal agency officials, local government representatives, neighborhood organization representatives, elected officials, organizations, tribal members, developers, and the general public. A total of 70 people attended the public scoping meetings over the two-day period.

## **MNRRA Meetings with Interested Parties**

MNRRA staff contacted and conducted numerous meetings with potentially interested federal, state, and local government entities, as well as other interested parties. These contacts and meetings included the following:

### *Contacts with Federal, State, and Local Government Entities and Officials*

- telephone briefing: Sharon M. Wagener, office of Minnesota U.S. Representative Martin Olav Sabo (02/01/05)
- process initiation letter: Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (02/17/05)
- meeting: Minnesota State Representative Dan Larson (Minnesota State Legislative District 63) (03/10/05)
- meeting: Office of Minnesota State Senator Jane Ranum (03/14/05)
- meeting: Minnesota U.S. Representative Martin Olav Sabo and staff, Minneapolis (03/11/05)
- meeting: Minneapolis City Council member, Sandy Colvin Roy (03/23/05)

- meeting: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners monthly meeting (04/06/05)
- meeting: Veterans Administration (04/11/05)
- meeting: Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN (04/19/05)
- meeting: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District (04/20/05)
- Center visit and meeting: Hennepin County staff (04/20/05)
- telephone briefing: staff of Minnesota U.S. Senator Mark Dayton (04/20/05)
- letters: 34 federal agencies in the metropolitan area inquiring about their interest in the property (04/24/05)
- meeting: Minnesota State Senator Satveer Chaudhary (05/3/05), along with other state agencies and interested parties
- meeting: Metropolitan Council, council chair and staff (05/17/05)
- telephone briefings: staff of Minnesota U.S. Representative Betty McCollum (05/24/05, 05/25/05)
- Center visit and meeting: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration (05/26/05)
- meeting: Minnesota Department of Transportation (05/26/05)

*Contacts made with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes*

A total of 20 federally recognized Indian tribes have been contacted as part of the Center EIS scoping process.

- letter: four federally recognized Dakota Tribes (Upper Sioux, Lower Sioux, Prairie Island, and Shakopee) and the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma inviting participation in the Center EIS planning process (02/18/05)
- letter: National Park Service scoping newsletter/comment card faxed and mailed to above tribes (03/15/05)
- letter: 11 federally recognized tribes inviting participation in the Center EIS/Section 106 process (04/06/05)
- meeting: Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (04/26/05)
- Center visit and meeting: member of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (04/29/05)
- letters: 16 federally recognized tribes inviting participation in the ethnographic study (including traditional cultural property and sacred site analysis) (04/11/05)—contacts included: Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, Ho-Chunk Nation, Bois Forte Reservation, Fond du Lac Reservation, Grand Portage Reservation, Leech Lake Reservation, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Red Lake Band of Chippewa, White Earth Reservation, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma, Lower Sioux Indian Community, Lac Courte Oreilles Community, Prairie Island Indian Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, and Upper Sioux Indian Community
- letters: Sioux Tribes outside Minnesota inviting participation in the Center EIS process (Santee, Spirit Lake, Flandreau, and Crow Creek) (05/18/05)
- Center visit and meeting: members of three federally recognized Dakota Tribes and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (05/05/05)

### *Contacts with Other Organizations*

- Center visit and meeting: Friends of the Mississippi River (04/15/05)
- meeting: Friends of Coldwater and Preserve Camp Coldwater Coalition organizations (05/10/05) and (05/26/05)

### *Contacts with Universities and Colleges*

- letters: 12 universities and colleges in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area inquiring about interest in the Center (04/15/05)
- Center visit and meeting: Minneapolis Colleges and Universities Vice President (04/25/05)
- meeting: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Real Estate Services (05/20/05)

### *Contacts with Neighborhood Associations*

- meeting: public meeting sponsored by the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association Annual Meeting to discuss the Center EIS process (04/21/05)
- Center visit and meeting: local resident (04/28/05)
- informational table: Minneapolis farmers market, “Midtown Public Market,” serving six different neighborhood associations near the Center (05/07/05)

### *Media Contacts and Publications*

- legal notices: announcement of public scoping meetings published in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (03/21/05)
- news releases: two new releases issued, “Public Planning Process Begins for Future of Former Bureau of Mines Property” (01/31/05) and “Public Invited to Scoping Meetings on the Future of the Former Bureau of Mines Property” (03/28/05) (to television stations, radio stations, and newspapers in the Twin Cities metropolitan area)
- letter: Scoping Newsletter and Comment Card – (03/11/05)
- article: included in Upper Mississippi Waterway Association publication, “NPS Looks for Input on Historic Property” (February)
- article: Southside Pride local newspaper – Nokomis Edition, “Coldwater to Change Hands” (April Edition)
- articles: two articles in *Minneapolis Star Tribune*: “Park Service Seeks Advice on Closed Research Center” (02/16/05) and “U.S. to Seek Public’s Ideas for Bureau of Mines Land” (03/29/05)
- article: the *Highland Villager* “New Uses Sought for Old Bureau of Mines Site” (04/13/05)

### III. Written Comments Received

Comments on the Center EIS planning process were received by e-mail, fax, and post. The majority of comments were received on the comment card provided with the March 2005 scoping newsletter. Written comments were also accepted at the public scoping meetings held on March 30 and 31, 2005.

A total of 107 written comments were received. The number of comments received by type is as follows:

- comment card: 46
- e-mail: 37
- letter: 24

The state of residence for each respondent was recorded when indicated. All those who commented and indicated the state they were from, were from Minnesota.

Respondents were classified as:

- U.S. Government: 1
- unaffiliated individuals: 85
- civic groups: 2
- conservation/preservation organizations: 11
- tribal government: 1
- state government: 1
- town or city government: 2
- county government: 1
- businesses: 1
- recreation: 1
- university: 1

Government entities that submitted comments included:

- City of Minneapolis, Planning Division
- Metropolitan State University
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Metropolitan Council
- Hennepin County Department of Housing, Community Works & Transit
- Minneapolis Community and Technical College
- Minneapolis Police Department
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Organizations that submitted comments include:

- Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Community
- Indigenous Tourism Rights International

- Friends of the Mississippi River
- Joseph R. Brown Minnesota River Center
- Sacred Sites International Foundation
- Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County
- St. Louis Park Historic Society
- Nokomis East Neighborhood Association
- Friends of Coldwater
- Preserve Camp Coldwater Coalition

#### **IV. Summary of Responses to Comment Forms**

The comment card requested that respondents state the issues they wanted to see addressed in the EIS for the Center. Comments received ranged from one or two sentences, to complex comments that laid out comprehensive concepts of ownership, management, and use.

In general, comments received fell into three broad categories: ownership/stewardship, values, and amenities/uses. Many respondents suggested potential parties as owners or stewards of the Center as a part of their overall site concept. Values included aspects, features, or qualities of the Center that respondents indicated worthy of protection or restoration.

The following discussion is a compilation of comments received from the public and organizations by the National Park Service.

##### *Ownership/Stewardship*

Respondents indicated preference for ownership/stewardship in one of two ways. Respondents either specifically identified a party, or parties, they believe should be the owners/stewards of the property, or indicated a general category of owners/stewards they thought would be best for the Center and site.

Twelve respondents advocated tribal ownership/stewardship of the Center and site.

Continued federal ownership of the Center site was advocated by nine respondents; three respondents recommended state ownership; and two respondents recommended county or city ownership.

Seven respondents recommended National Park Service ownership/stewardship of the property, and four respondents recommended U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ownership/stewardship. Continued ownership by the Department of the Interior was opposed by three respondents.

Seven respondents recommended the Center site should be included as a part of Fort Snelling State Park, and three respondents recommended that the Center site become incorporated into the Minnehaha Regional Park system (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board).



Ownership/stewardship by specific entities such as the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board or the University of Minnesota was both recommended and not recommended. Six respondents indicated the Center site should be turned over to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Four respondents specifically indicated their disapproval of potential ownership/stewardship of the Center site by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The University of Minnesota was recommended as owner/steward of the Center site by four respondents, but specifically opposed by three respondents.

Ownership/stewardship of the Center site by the Metropolitan Airports Commission was opposed by two respondents.

Ownership/stewardship of the Center site by the Minnesota Historical Society was opposed by three respondents.

A partnership scenario of ownership/stewardship of the Center site was suggested by 18 respondents. Suggestions for potential partners/owners of the Center site included: the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, and The Nature Conservancy.

#### *Values*

Protecting the flow of Coldwater Spring and protection of historical and cultural values was suggested by 36 respondents, receiving the greatest support of all values stated by respondents. Value of American Indian culture was expressed by 30 respondents.

Commercial or residential development of the Center site was specifically opposed by 18 respondents. Eighteen respondents indicated support for valuing the Center site as “sacred.” Expanded access to the Center site, beyond the present open hours of 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, was requested by 13 respondents.

Restoration of the Center site to “prairie savannah” was recommended by 10 respondents. Ten respondents indicated the Center should be a park or provide a park-like setting. Five respondents indicated the Center site should be converted to green or open space. Wildlife and wildlife viewing were values indicated by four respondents.

#### *Amenities/Uses*

Recommendations on uses for the Center included museum, interpretive center, or an education center and have been categorized together for analysis purposes. Twenty-eight respondents suggested a museum-interpretive facility at the Center. Twenty-two respondents suggested that some or all of the buildings should be removed from the property, while seven respondents suggested reuse of some or all of the buildings.

A Green Museum concept for the Center was suggested by 22 respondents and identified as:

“ . . .preserving a living, changing piece of land. Instead of a building with artifacts inside frames and glass boxes, or a reenactment where history is fixed in time, a green museum would be a landscape where change could be observed.”

Use of the Center site for American Indian education was suggested by seven respondents. Six respondents suggested increased tourism as a possible positive outcome on use of the site, and one respondent specifically opposed using the site to increase tourism. Five respondents requested additional trails or paths be made available on the site. Two respondents advocated reducing or eliminating parking at the Center.

Other specific potential uses of the Center that were outlined in the responses included the following:

- AIDS/HIV quarantine facility
- hostel (suggested by two respondents)
- urban equestrian center
- light manufacturing creating job opportunities
- homeless shelter where veterans could work
- disc golf facility
- group campsite for urban camping
- community gardens
- building 1 (large main building) to be used to store artifacts from the site
- sky, water, and earth museum

#### *Other Specific Suggestions*

- increase trees and other vegetation
- expand the historic district
- the federal government should clean up the site
- establishment of “The Coldwater Foundation” to seek grant funding
- use development of part of the area to leverage preservation of other parts
- environmental contamination of the property needs to be cleaned up
- belief that previous archeological studies were flawed
- school children could take water quality samples at the spring

#### *Specific Quotes*

The following quotes capture ideas that could not be adequately represented in the statistics or bulleted statements above, and are included here in order to present the full range of ideas contained in the responses submitted.

- “There are solutions someplace . . .continue searching [for a solution/use/management alternative] until a good fit is found.”
- “A live [archeological] dig should always be on hand for locals, tourist, scholars, etc.”

- “The name Camp Coldwater literally invokes the image of Scout, family, or other groups camping out. What a fabulous venue for family values!”
- “There should be a Camp Coldwater/Spring ‘coordinating commission’ similar to the one laid out on p. 754 of Public Law 100-696 hand-out” (i.e., MNRRA legislation).
- “This area should be recommended as a World Heritage Site.”
- “With congressional discussions of a Department of Peace, Coldwater might be an ideal location for administrative offices in the 106,000-square-foot refurbished Bureau of Mines building.”
- “Consideration should be given to incorporating the Coldwater Springs area—which triangulates with the Fort Snelling and Sibley historic areas at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers—into a single historic district which could enhance the inter-connectedness of the regional and cultural history and add greater protection to the entire contiguous area.”

## **V Specific Proposals from Agencies and Organizations**

### *Hennepin County Department of Housing, Community Works and Transit*

Hennepin County – Department of Housing, Community Works and Transit submitted a letter as an indication of their interest in examining reuse of the Center as part of the Fort Snelling properties. Hennepin County requested time to complete an evaluation of reuse options and limitations of the Center.

### *Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Community (the proposal was labeled “Draft Proposal 2001”)*

“This proposal puts forth a planning agenda for a historical and spiritual interpretive center at Coldwater Springs. This would be located at Camp Coldwater, a historic sacred site that lies adjacent to Minnehaha Falls. This initiative advocates for preserving the site through methods that will enhance awareness of the significance of the site as a place of local culture, history, and natural heritage.”

### *Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Metropolitan State University*

Currently, Metropolitan State University and Minneapolis Community and Technical College have a capital request proposed for consideration during the 2006 legislative session. The request relates to building a new and permanent facility that would provide a range of classroom and technical skills training in law enforcement and criminal justice. Currently, both institutions house these programs in leased space in the midway area of St. Paul. The two institutions have collaborated to develop a regional center for law enforcement skills training as well as academic programs that range from certificate programs to a Master’s Degree.

Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Metropolitan State University would propose acquiring the Center and remodeling some of the existing buildings into office,

laboratory, and classroom use. While it would be desirable to have all of the acreage, these institutions believe that the northern-most half of the property is most desirable for meeting their needs, and could see the south end of the property used for other public purposes.

*Minneapolis Police Department*

“The long-range facilities plan for the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) outlines the need for a centralized public safety center to house nearly all functions exclusive of precinct stations. The MPD believes the Center land and buildings can be tailored to fit departmental space needs and improve the efficiency of MPD operations. Specifically and ideally, the MPD would like to use the site to house property and evidence, which is currently using three separate spaces for storage. Also, the MPD crime lab would be located next to property and evidence, due to proximity needs. The crime lab is also currently split into three separate sites due to a lack of one central facility. The Criminal Investigations Division of the MPD is comprised of approximately 80 staff members, and should be near the crime lab. Co-locating property and evidence with the crime lab would be the highest priority in the event the MPD isn’t given enough space for the other functions outlined in this proposal.”

Additionally, the following functions would be housed in the central facility:

- support services (criminal history, records, transcription)
- administrative services division (human resources, operations development, business technology unit)
- training unit
- licensing division

*Minnesota Department of Natural Resources*

“It is clear that the land is an excellent natural resources asset to the community. The Department of Natural Resources, however, has been facing a challenging budgetary climate which we anticipate will continue into the foreseeable future. As a consequence, the Department of Natural Resources would consider accepting the former Bureau of Mines property in Minneapolis for inclusion in Fort Snelling State Park under the following conditions:

1. The property transfer from the U.S. Department of the Interior to the state of Minnesota is at no cost to the state.
2. All existing buildings must be removed from the site and building sites filled and graded to allow planting required for restoration to natural conditions.
3. Phase I and II environmental site assessments should be completed for the property and all hazardous materials removed or remediated.
4. An assessment of cultural resources should be completed for the site and any cultural resource management activities required after property transfer should be identified. This step should include consultation with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and any interested tribes.

5. The Department of the Interior and other interested agencies and groups should understand that if the property becomes part of Fort Snelling State Park, the intent of the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation would be to possibly manage natural and cultural resources and not to develop new facilities on the property. If vehicle access by the public is a condition of the property transfer, state park vehicle permits would be required to drive into the area.”

**No Interest At This Point In Time:**

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board determined they were not interested in ownership/ stewardship of the property at a public meeting held on April 6, 2005.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Minneapolis Field Office, is not interested in acquiring land for the agency’s use at this time.

In a letter dated April 26, 2005, the Minnesota Historical Society stated: “The Bureau of Mines Twin Cities Research Center is a valuable resource for the right owner. The Historical Society is in no position to acquire, develop, operate, or manage this resource. Our hope is that you are able to find an eventual owner able to make the best possible re-use of this asset.”