

FOMNRR BOD Minutes
Wednesday, 28 September, 2016 – 11:00 AM
Niobrara State Park – Niobrara, NE

The meeting convened at 11:04 am with introductions. Ten BOD members were present. BOD attendees included Shane Bertsch, Tim Cowman, Bob Foley, Pat James, Terry Julesgard, Todd Larson, Paul Lepisto, Dave Swanson, Randy Teboe, and Barbara Yelverton. Rick Clark, Teresa Mentzer and Daniel Peterson attended as National Park Service representatives from the MNRR. Other visitors included Randy Dockendorf (*Yankton Press & Dakotan*), Mark Rettig, Superintendent – Niobrara State Park, and Sandy Stockholm.

Superintendent Mark Rettig provided an overview of Niobrara State Park and its activities for the group.

Superintendent Rick Clark provided an overview of the Missouri National Recreational River and its mission, followed by an overview of the FOMNRR and its role, by FOMNRR Chair Paul Lepisto. Teresa Mentzer then provided a summary of the ROSCOE program, noting that school programs for the fall had started and that five new schools had been added to the presentation schedule.

Sierra Club Trip Review – Barbara Yelverton commented on the national Sierra Club paddle trip, with the participants visiting her property on the 39-mile reach of the MNRR over Labor Day weekend. The participants donated \$400 to the FOMNRR and there is potential for a repeat trip, again sponsored by the Sierra Club, next year.

FOMNRR-NPS Policy Agreement – Dan Peterson announced that this document, which formalizes interactions between the FOMNRR and the NPS-MNRR, is now complete. The next step is approval at the regional NPS office. A motion (Foley/Larson) to move forward with approval for the document passed unanimously.

Finances & Membership – Todd Larson provided an update on FOMNRR finances. The FOMNRR balance on 31 August 2016 was \$4,173.22, plus a \$500 check from Missouri River Relief, with another \$500 expected from MR Relief at the end of October 2016. This total does not include the \$400 donation from the Sierra Club paddle trip participants.

FOMNRR Laptop – Tim Cowman showed the board the new laptop computer purchased for maintaining membership and financial data. Once the accounting software has been loaded onto the computer, it will be kept in the possession of the FOMNRR Treasurer. The specifics of the membership and financial reports design still needs to be determined, but discussions are in progress.

Missouri River Institute Updates – David Swanson (MRI Director) mentioned that faculty associated with the MRI at USD had recently been awarded two large grants from the National Science Foundation. One grant will support 10 undergraduate students per year for 3 years, beginning in the summer of 2017, on summer research fellowships to conduct work related to the natural and cultural history of the Missouri River. The other grant is a collaborative 4-year project, beginning 1 January 2017, between USD, Montana State University and the University of Wyoming. This project will focus on modeling the impacts of land-use change in the Upper Missouri River Basin on economic and ecosystem services if the region moved toward a biofuels-oriented economy. The project also builds research infrastructure in

this area at USD by providing funds to hire two new faculty members in Biology and to develop a Ph.D. program in Sustainability, with stipends for 3 new Ph.D. students.

David Swanson and Rick Clark also announced the expansion of the MRI-MNRR Internship program, initiated in 2016, to include 4 undergraduate student interns for the summer of 2017. These interns will work jointly between the MRI, participating in faculty research projects, and the NPS, participating in various inventory, instruction, and interpretation roles, among other tasks.

Mulberry Bend Corridor Project – Tim Cowman mentioned that work is in progress to develop a specific design for the trail, which will then be submitted to SDGFP for approval. This coming fall and winter, trail and signage design will be completed, so that trail work and sign installation can then begin through the Frost GPA area in April 2017.

Updates on Recent Events – Tim Cowman reported that MNRR Water Trail Interpretive paddles were held on August 13 and September 10, with about 40 people total between the two events. The NPS-MNRR loaned kayaks and canoes for these trips, so participants didn't have to bring their own watercraft. This allowed the events to reach additional participants.

- Daniel Peterson attended the Vermillion Ribs, Rods, Rock & Roll event on 9-10 September, staffing a National Park Service/FOMNRR booth. About 180 people visited the booth and Dan handed out lots of membership brochures.
- The Outdoor Expo at Ponca State Park occurred on 17-18 September and the NPS and Isaak Walton League had booths at this event where the FOMNRR received some exposure. Hosting our own booth at this event next year will likely greatly increase FOMNRR exposure, as several thousand visitors attend the Outdoor Expo.
- Shane Bertsch participated in the Fall in the Park event on 17-18 September at Lewis & Clark State Recreation Area. About 1400 visitors attended this event, so this could be another profitable venue for FOMNRR exposure in the coming years.

Winter Speaker Program – Daniel Peterson mentioned that the idea for this event is to host speakers on relevant Missouri River topics for about a 45-50 min presentation, 2-3 times over the winter at Yankton, Vermillion, and at least one other town along the MNRR. The plan is for these presentations to be free events. The timing for the Winter Speaker Program is still to be determined.

Water Trail App – Tim Cowman reported that the mobile app for the MNRR Water Trail is up and running, with 27 interpretive points along the MNRR included in the app.

Event Database – Bob Foley circulated several documents dealing with the database highlighting Missouri River activities. The plan is to develop an online data entry form so that organizations can quickly and easily enter events and information into the database. The idea for this database is that it would facilitate reporting, recruiting and grant-writing efforts for the FOMNRR.

Potential Future Events – Bob Foley mentioned several future events for which the FOMNRR might want to be involved. These included additional interpretive paddle trips, particularly in the 39-mile reach of the MNRR, a potential youth outing for the Denver Sierra Club, and an Ecotourism Conference hosted by the University of Nebraska in December 2016 in Chadron, NE.

Membership Brochures – The new printing of membership brochures is down to about 100. Daniel Peterson will circulate the current brochure to the board for minor edits or updates. Once edits and uptake are complete, the consensus plan was to print another 500 brochures.

MNRR Youth Film Funding Request – A short NPS film focusing on the MNRR and directed at youth is in the planning stage. The current idea is to involve area kids in the development of the video as part of a day-long filming effort. Daniel Peterson mentioned that funding for lunch and refreshments for about 30 kids and the adult supervisors would be helpful to facilitate this event. A motion (Cowman/Larson) to approve up to \$500 for this purpose passed unanimously.

National Park Foundation Newsletters – Rick Clark mentioned that an opportunity for FOMNRR board members to be included in the recipient list for this quarterly newsletter is available. The newsletter provides a broad overview of the views and initiatives of the National Park Service at a national scale. Consensus was to include the FOMNRR board members on the recipient list.

FOMNRR Website/Social Media – Tim Cowman mentioned that the FOMNRR website received 700 page views in September 2016. The most downloaded file was the events database. The next most downloaded file was the membership brochure and the most visited page on the site was the membership page. However, memberships in FOMNRR did not increase much as a result of these visits. Membership sustainability is an ongoing concern for FOMNRR, so this will be a topic of discussion at future meetings.

- Mark Rettig, Superintendent of Niobrara State Park, offered a free, two-night stay in the park cabins, as an enticement for Platinum Corporate Members. The FOMNRR will likely approach Ponca State Park and Lewis & Clark State Recreation Area to determine if similar agreements could be established for top membership categories.

November Meeting – Paul Lepisto will circulate a Doodle Poll to determine the date for the November meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.