

Minutes - FOMNRR Board Meeting
22 September 2025 from 10:30 AM to 12 PM
NPS Conference Room or by Teams Connection

Interim Chair Lepisto called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

BOD Members Present: Harry Freeman, Bob Foley, Paul Lepisto, Don Nelson, David Swanson
MNRR Staff Present: Tom Downs, Harrison Freund, David Thomson

The minutes of the 25 August 2025 meeting were approved

Financial report – Bob Foley gave the financial report. We currently have \$6,630.42 in the checking account, with a couple of upcoming bills still to pay.

MNRR updates – David Thomson

1. James River Island –The acquisition of the purchase of this property (676 acres) is moving forward. Should the purchase go through, an interim management plan is already in place, with a long-term management plan to be developed for the site.
2. Niobrara River – No real recent progress on the legislative proposals to shift the responsibility of managing the Niobrara Scenic River to the State of Nebraska instead of the National Park Service.

Update on past events – Tom Downs

- a. The NPS Volunteers Appreciation Picnic took place on 9/12/25 at Riverside Park in Yankton and had a good turnout, so the event went well. Caroline VerMulm did a great job organizing this event.
- b. Missouri River Outdoor Expo at Ponca State Park – This event also went very well and allowed the MNRR staff to reach a lot of visitors.

National Park Foundation Grant application updates – Paul Lepisto

- c. National Park Foundation Capacity Building Grant awarded (\$90,000). Of the grant funds, the salary for a ¾-time position of Executive Director is \$55,000. Other costs in the budget include benefits, consultant services, a laptop and other materials support, travel expenses, and, potentially, additional administrative costs.
 - i. Requested information has been submitted to the NPF to accept the grant funding. Interim Chair Lepisto will check on the progress of obtaining the grant funds from the NPF.
 - ii. A subcommittee of the BOD, working with MNRR staff, will finalize the Executive Director job description and work to advertise the job position and timelines. Tentatively, this position will be advertised both in the local area and nationally during October 2025. Some discussion ensued for how to do payroll and benefits for the position, as well as to fund the position into the future beyond the year of salary funding in the grant.

2026 FOMNRR Work Plan development. The working group met on 9/17/2025. Tom Downs is modifying the work plan to circulate to the BOD soon for approval before the 9/30/2025 deadline.

FOMNRR bylaw review & revisions – The suggested revisions are circulating among the BOD. No action was taken at this meeting.

Interim Treasurer Foley asked about renewing our membership in the SESD Tourism group, which is now past due. The FOMNRR Website bi-annual payment is also due. Discussion followed. Consensus was to pay for both website renewal and membership in the SESD Tourism group, as these will likely benefit the function and activities of the incoming Executive Director.

The next meeting date will likely be in November to give time for the Executive Director search to get off the ground.

David Thomson mentioned that he has ideas for logos and forging connections with hook & bullet organizations as targets for upcoming FOMNRR development.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.