2013

PROJECTS

- Improve access to the water with the creation of portages and accessible landings, water restoration projects and signage
- Develop website Trip and Itinerary Builder
- Restore the Lock Tender House at Little Chute
- Create additional opportunities for authentic historic experiences

SUPPORT

- Maintain and build municipal, historic site and corporate partnerships
- Encourage individual memberships and volunteerism

FUNDING

- Launch capital campaign to fully fund all projects

2013 goals

THE FOX–WISCONSIN HERITAGE PARKWAY IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF, IMPROVING ACCESS TO, AND PRESERVING THE FUTURE OF THE FOX AND WISCONSIN RIVERS CORRIDOR.
MISSION STATEMENT

The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway celebrates its rivers and their history.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision vibrant riverfront communities, connected to each other and their rivers through the rich natural and cultural heritage they share, invested in stewardship, and sustained for future generations.

From the President

2012 was a year of intense planning - the Interpretive Master Plan, the Economic Impact Plan, and the Strategic Operations Plan. We took the year to focus on how best to move forward to insure success. Through that planning, we worked with great consultants and were gifted with the shared time and toil of many individuals, spread along the Parkway. Thank you to all who gave input, insight, and editorial assistance.

Another gift we received last year was a loyal opposition. While frustrating at times, the group that came forward and falsely proposed that we are a land-grab organization helped us in many ways. They spread the word of our organization; they helped us hone our message, to be precise about who we are and what we do. They brought to our attention local concern about National Park Service involvement. Those concerns are to be taken seriously and we respect them.

At the very end of the year, we received a formal rejection letter from the National Park Service. In response to our request for National Heritage Area status, they stated that our study did not meet evaluation criteria to include: National Importance, Extensive Resource Inventory, and Boundary Definition. The determination was unexpected, and we highly disagree with their determination. However, when paired with the local concern, this decision can only be seen as a gift as well. Many municipalities and individuals have expressed their relief that we are going forward without the Park Service.

And we are going forward! Our project and programs are strong; our organization has grown to this point with only local and state involvement. We are 99% volunteer, and are grant and donation funded. We are making it on our own, and will continue to flourish in this manner.

Need will continue to be our navigational aid. Is our organization needed? Do we provide a service that is valued in the communities that follow the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers? Our partners have told us that we are. They need us to look at connecting the collective needs of the historic sites. To bring economies of scale to the stories of our past to ensure we continue to tell them to our children. They need us to pull together the individual locations and sites, and connect them as a travel worthy destination. They need us to look regionally at the great river system we have to see how to connect use with conservation for the benefit of industry and recreation alike.

This is the work the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway will be continuing in 2013:

We thank you for your interest, your involvement, and your trust as we celebrate the Fox and Wisconsin rivers – the great rivers connecting us all.

Candice Mortara
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
milestones

1990
HERITAGE CORRIDOR BECOMES ONE OF FOUR PILOT PROJECTS IN WISCONSIN SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN A NATIONAL HERITAGE TOURISM INITIATIVE TO SHOWCASE THE RICH HERITAGE OF THE MIDWEST.

1997
THE EAST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION CREATED THE FOX RIVER HERITAGE STATE PARKWAY CONCEPT PLAN.

2009
FRIENDS OF THE FOX AND THE EAST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION SUBMIT A FEASIBILITY STUDY SEEKING A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA DESIGNATION TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVES SERVING IN CONGRESS.

2010
• NON-PROFIT 501(C)(3) EXEMPTION IS APPROVED BY IRS
• NHA LEGISLATION IS SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS
• FWHP NON-PROFIT BOARD IS CREATED
• THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GIVES A FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION FOR FOX-WISCONSIN HERITAGE PARKWAY TO RECEIVE NHA DESIGNATION

2011
• INTERPRETIVE MASTER AND ECONOMIC IMPACT PLAN BEGUN
• MAJOR PUBLIC INPUT SESSIONS HELD
• MUNICIPAL AND HISTORIC SITE MEMBERSHIP DRIVE
• ADOPT-A-RIVER MILE LAUNCHED

goals
Enhance and promote regional heritage, while vitalizing local identities
Connect historic, natural and recreational resources along the Lower and Upper Fox rivers and the Lower Wisconsin River
Establish land trails that expose users to the resources and themes of the Parkway
Create a multi-use, nationally recognized water trail
Promote hiking and biking
Facilitate historic interpretation of the themes of national significance
Increase our quality of life and pride of place
Develop tourism and other economic opportunities while preserving cultural and natural assets
This was the year that the Interpretive Master Plan (IMP) came together. The 30-member Core Planning Team conferred extensively with members of the public and partner organizations and worked long and hard with planning consultants from Interpretive Solutions, Inc., to define the significance of the Parkway and to identify its essential stories. Those stories are probably infinite in number. Each fits into one of three broad themes.

1 | People of the River

The stories of the explorers, natives, immigrants, locktenders, leaders and artists connect us to each other and this place we call home.

2 | The River as a Resource

For thousands of years, we have been dependent on our rivers. People have used the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers for sustenance and survival, harvesting its riches, harnessing power, transporting goods and recreation.

3 | River Legacy

Changing perceptions of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers shape decisions – past, present, and future – made by people, industries, and organizations regarding the role of the rivers in our lives. We continue to engage in – and encourage dialogue regarding – the ongoing struggle for balance between present use, and conservation for future generations.
Once the stories had been identified, it was time to begin to determine the best ways they could be told. The team reviewed and assessed a wide variety of media, programs and interpretive services to come up with those that would be most effective.

Seven public meetings revealed great enthusiasm and excitement about the Parkway. The planning team learned a great deal, connected with important communities, and met potential partners.

The planning team completed assessments of 15 outstanding or under-utilized heritage assets within the Parkway. The resulting recommendations met with enthusiastic responses from partner organizations like Portage's Historic Indian Agency House.

The Interpretive Master Plan team worked closely with Economic Development Associates so that the Economic Development Plan and IMP would complement each other. While each of the plans had a different, specific focus, they dovetailed nicely when addressing the visitor experience of the Parkway. The result was a set of itineraries that will allow visitors to the Parkway’s website to plan custom experiences based on their own interests, time available, etc.

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Data collection involved seven public meetings held throughout the Parkway with more than over 112 people in attendance from the Prairie du Chien, Arena/Spring Green, Merrimac, Montello, Fond du Lac, Oshkosh and Green Bay communities. Over 1,200 outdoor recreation and paddling enthusiasts were also surveyed through mail, event and online surveys.

EDP developed outdoor recreation enthusiasts, heritage and cultural visitor spending profiles for two visitor segments: local residents traveling the parkway, and visitors from outside the local area.

Survey respondents were found to be:
• Well educated (89% had some post-secondary education)
• Economically stable (60% with incomes of at least $50,000 or more)

Projected economic impact (jobs and labor income):
• 746 full time equivalent jobs, primarily in the tourism industry
• An annually estimated labor income of $20,088,858
• $61,620,504 in direct, indirect and induced sales from visitors to the Parkway region

Strategic recommendations as a result of the study:
1. Advance and increase opportunities for interpretation of the Parkway’s stories and assets
2. Advance economic and tourism growth opportunities within the Parkway
3. Advance public health and environmental stewardship of the water and land through research, innovation and education
4. Build brand, identity and sense of community by implementing the FWHP brand to create a stronger, more unified Parkway identity
5. Leverage location, collaboration and sustainability across the Parkway

This study was done in collaboration with the Interpretive Master Plan (IMP) to insure a comprehensive and collaborative approach.
The process of writing the Parkway’s Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) began with discussions regarding the Mission and Values of the organization. From that foundation, measurements were established to identify success as an organization and for the SOP itself.

The SOP introduces the concept of operating the Parkway as any other business. A non-for profit designation is a tax status only. To be sustainable over time, the organization must establish “best business practices” for the Parkway.

**Major Recommendations**

- Invest in a general marketing plan
- Within website upgrade, include a retail function and Spanish and Hmong translation
- Hire a Head of Public Programs and Community Engagement
- Create development generators along with revenue generators
- Fill out staffing when sustainable

Full plan is available on our website under the “planning” tab. A thank you must go out to Guident Business Solutions for not only working with us to create the plan, but for continued consultation to coach us on walking the walk of a self-sustaining organization.

In 2012, more people than ever connected with us online and through social media. We continued to build upon the content and functionality of our new website (launched in 2011) and reached out to new audiences interactively through social media.

- Our HeritageParkway.org website received more than 12,000 visits and over 40,000 page views, offering a variety of content including updates and articles on our blog and Currents section of our website, trail and partner information, maps, videos, photos and more.
- We expanded our followers on our social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter, reaching a record number of supporters with news, information, and multimedia content every week.
- Our quarterly e-newsletter reached nearly 15,000 active readers with news and information about the Parkway and offered information about our partners, the master planning process, events, Parkway culture, recreation and more.
Along with continuing efforts to promote the rich history of the river corridor, we are also working to increase recreational opportunities on the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. To that end, we are pleased to announce the completion of an extensive application process for nomination as a nationally-recognized recreation trail through the National Park Service.

The water trail will provide visitors and citizens an opportunity to experience the environmental and historic resources of the Heritage Parkway using non-motorized watercrafts. The intent of the water trail is to create a non-contiguous, lineal trail stretching the entire 280-mile length of the corridor, from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien.

We hope you join us in celebrating the creation of the National Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Recreation Trail and hope to see you on the water!

**Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Paddles get people on the rivers**

The second weekend paddle opportunity was titled “Eco-Heritage” and featured a Wisconsin River trip to Aldo Leopold’s shack for a reading and tour before ending in Portage with a nourishing and entertaining après paddle meal at the Corner Pocket. The second half of the Eco-Heritage trip featured a trip through the areas John Muir lived in during his Wisconsin years. (27 and 25 paddlers)

A favorite weekend series on the Upper Fox followed, launching from the White River Dam to enjoy a scenic stretch of the Fox River into the City of Berlin for another great evening of fun, food and fellowship camping in Berlin’s Riverside Park. Those who stayed enjoyed pulled pork sandwiches and great music from a local church festival before drifting off to sleep in an urban wilderness. The second half of this series explored another river section, ending in Omro. (38 and 29 paddlers)

As July rolled around we enjoyed another exciting Park-to-Park Paddle, with over 230 participants from Neenah to Appleton. With great weather and calm waters, this year’s event was one of the most enjoyable for all.

Easily the most challenging paddle event in the 2012 series was the Moonlight Paddle in August from Bomier Park in De Pere, to an intended takeout at the mouth of the Fox River. However, unusually strong headwinds blowing up the Fox River from Green Bay created very challenging waves and paddle conditions for many of the participants. The trip was shortened substantially to end at a private landing owned by Zellers Ski and Sports boat launch, but took just about as long as previous paddles during normal paddle conditions. (89 paddlers)

The 2012 season finale turned out to be outstanding in every way - awesome weather, great fall colors and over 180 happy paddlers enjoying a wonderful day on the water from Appleton’s Lutz Park to Sunset Point Park in Kimberly. It was a great start to a day that continued for many at Appleton’s awesome Octoberfest celebration!
The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway would like to recognize the following individuals and organizations for their generous support in 2012:

### Revenues

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual gifts</td>
<td>$28,880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate gifts</td>
<td>23,630</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation and trust gifts</td>
<td>53,077</td>
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<td>Partner gifts</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
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### Expenses

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretive master plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic impact plan</td>
<td>44,500</td>
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<td>Wages and contract services</td>
<td>16,822</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other administrative expenses</td>
<td>7,419</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>178,671</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Expenses over revenues** (-53,249)

Net assets - beginning of the year: 85,596

Net assets - end of the year: $32,347
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CONNECTING US ALL