



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
401 North Hamilton Street
Saint Croix Falls, WI 54024

In Reply, Refer To:
I.A.1. (SACN)

July 12, 2023

Karen Anderson, Clerk
Franconia Township
PO Box 175
Shafer, Minnesota 55074

RE: National Park Service Interests Within Your Jurisdiction

Dear Karen Anderson:

I wanted to take a moment to connect with you as a member of local government with jurisdiction and authority in part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Riverway). The Riverway is a unit of the National Park System and was established under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-542) to protect its water quality, free-flowing character, and outstanding aquatic, riparian, cultural/historic, recreation, geologic, scenic, and aesthetic values for the benefit and enjoyment of this and future generations. The National Park Service (NPS) manages the Riverway.

The Riverway includes the entire length of the Namekagon River and 130 miles of the St. Croix and crosses through 10 counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Lands within the Riverway boundary are characterized by multiple types of ownership including NPS, other federal agency, public land managed by state, county, or local government, privately owned with NPS-purchased scenic easements, and private ownership. Each local, county, and state unit of government has its own regulations. While the NPS does not have zoning regulations, we do own over 800 scenic (conservation) easements to ensure that the outstanding values of the Riverway are protected.

A scenic easement is a legal document giving the National Park Service the right to protect a property's scenic values, forever. It permanently limits uses of the land to protect its significant scenic values. The easement allows the landowner to retain ownership, use the land, and to sell it or pass it on to heirs within the restrictions set by the scenic easement. As a part of this agreement, proposed changes to the property must be reviewed and approved by the NPS.

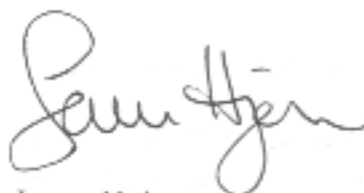
The responsibility of administering the scenic easement program falls under the Riverway's Lands Program. As the Lands Program Manager, I lead this effort with assistance from seasonal lands technicians, interns, and volunteers. Before making changes to the property, we ask landowners to contact me so that we can ensure the appropriate documentation and approvals are obtained prior to a project start. As a part of the scenic easement review process, we send courtesy copies of relevant approvals to the appropriate authorities in local government. We often will contact you with new project proposals and welcome joint site meetings with you and the landowners.

In an effort to maintain contact with all scenic easement landowners, we send an annual mailing which includes a publication titled "River Wild" which I have enclosed. In recent years, we have noticed that some landowners who are not aware of the scenic easement on their property may contact their local zoning authority, perhaps seeking a building or land use permit, but do not contact the NPS. To facilitate a cooperative approach in assisting these landowners, please give them my contact information and ask that they get in touch with me about their proposed projects.

How will you know whether there is a NPS scenic easement encumbering the property? We would be happy to share a map where the boundary of the Riverway overlaps your jurisdiction or provide you spatial data (ArcGIS, Google Earth) detailing the Riverway boundary. This may be a helpful tool for you to determine if a NPS scenic easement exists.

If you have any questions about the Riverway's land ownership, scenic easement interests, or to obtain spatial data, please contact me at 715-483-2261 or laura_hojem@nps.gov. Thank you for the very important role you play in helping to protect the St. Croix and Nameckagon Rivers. We value the communication, collaboration, and partnership and appreciate your work and support in preserving the Riverway's resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Hojem". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "H".

Laura Hojem
Lands Program Manager

Enclosure

JUNE 2023

RIVERWILD

A Special Publication for Scenic Easement Landowners
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

YOUR SCENIC EASEMENT: THE DESIGNATED LINE OF SITE (LOS) EXPLAINED

The line of sight determination is a unique feature of St Croix National Scenic Riverway scenic easements. They are areas of land that are inadequately screened from view from the river by the physical characteristics of the land. LOS determinations are different than setback requirements of other units of government with whom we share jurisdiction.

Scenic views are one reason the Riverway was established as a national park. One purpose of scenic easements is to preserve natural views FROM the river. The line of sight is a described measurable area on each scenic easement property. It can include the whole property, none of the property, or descriptions such as including the east 200 feet or excluding the north 100 feet.

The NPS LOS determination and description was made at the time of purchase of the scenic easement and remains with the property. Activities within the designated line of sight are more restricted as they are more easily viewed from the river.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BEGINS COMPREHENSIVE RIVER MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

The National Park Service (NPS) is beginning the process to develop a Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Riverway) to identify management strategies that protect and enhance river values while providing for public use and enjoyment of the Riverway.

Encompassing 230 miles of the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers, the purpose of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is to preserve, protect, and enhance the values of the rivers and their immediate environment for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Developing a CRMP will support fulfilling this purpose.

The CRMP planning process began in early 2023 and will continue through 2025. An interdisciplinary team of Riverway staff, the Midwest Regional Office, and the Denver Service Center Planning Division set the stage for the CRMP by identifying issues, the purpose and need for the plan, and future desired conditions for resource protection, visitor experience, and facilities and services.

The interdisciplinary planning process will incorporate public and stakeholder input in developing the CRMP, guiding park actions and decisions for the foreseeable future. The NPS will host listening sessions and public meetings throughout the plan development to engage with the public and stakeholders. Please contact Craig Hansen, Riverway superintendent, at 715-483-2270 or craig_hansen@nps.gov or Lisa Yager, chief of resource stewardship and education, at 715-483-2290 or lisa_yager@nps.gov with any questions about the process or how to participate.



ST CROIX NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAY: [NPS.GOV/SACN](https://www.nps.gov/sacn) OR [FACEBOOK.COM/STCROIXNSR](https://www.facebook.com/stcroixnsr)

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ABOUT VOLUNTEERING FOR THE RIVERWAY?

A NEED FOR COLLABORATION

The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway works closely with the Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix & Namekagon, the non-profit friends group of the park, for conducting education and public interpretive programs and natural resource research and monitoring programs. All these programs include working with volunteers. Volunteers play a critical but so far limited role in achieving the mission for Wild Rivers Conservancy and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Volunteers can provide support well beyond our staff capacity for land restoration, park maintenance, education programs, outdoor recreation, citizen science monitoring and more. To amplify our ability to engage volunteers, the park and the Conservancy have recently established a joint volunteer program, the Riverway Volunteer Program.

ABOUT THE RIVERWAY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Riverway Volunteer Program is co-managed by the Park and Wild Rivers Conservancy. This means that volunteers will support and be supported by both organizations together as they serve the Riverway. To provide meaningful experiences for volunteers, we now have dedicated staff to recruit, train, and match people to opportunities within the Riverway and its watershed.



The Volunteer Coordinator at the Conservancy and the Community Volunteer Ambassador at the Park work together to oversee this new program in its mission to provide meaningful experiences for people to actively conserve and enhance the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and to help others explore and discover this national park. To learn more about the volunteer program visit wildriversconservancy.org/get-involved/volunteer.

JOIN OUR TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS

Whether you are looking for an individual or group opportunity, or you are looking to help one time or on a regular schedule, we would love to welcome you to our volunteer team. To get started, call 715-483-3300, email volunteer@wildriversconservancy.org, or visit wildriversconservancy.org/get-involved/volunteer and fill out a volunteer interest form.



SAVE THE DATE! NAMEKAGON RIVER CLEANUP EVENT: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH

Photo credits: St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Wild Rivers Conservancy, & Craig Blacklock



**FOR QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR TO MAKE CHANGES
TO YOUR SCENIC EASEMENT PROPERTY:**

Contact the Riverway Lands Program Manager, Laura Hojem
715-483-2261 | Laura_hojem@nps.gov

VANDALISM, ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE, OR UNSAFE CONDITIONS?

CALL 1-800-PARKTIP

(1-800-727-5847)