



RECORD OF MEETING

SRF Project No. 19344

Project/Meeting Name: Dakota County Mississippi River Landing Use and Access Core Open House

Date: September 30, 2025

Location: Schaars Bluff Visitor Center

Attendees: *Dakota County:* Yao Xiao, Jay Biedny, and Niki Geisler
SRF: Shaunna Newton and Stewart Crosby

Prepared by: SRF

Summary of Meeting

- There were approximately 25-30 people that attended the meeting. Eleven people signed the sign-in sheet when they entered the room.

Summary of comments spoken to staff and consultants

- How will the landing and the park integrate and/or regulate E-Watercrafts? Confirm if these will be considered motorized?
- Due to the distance of the trails, recommendations for bikes, and/or E-scooters or other aided travel devices.
- Concern over trailer parking when there are kayak or canoe trailers, especially with larger groups. The preference is not to walk back from Fischer Avenue trailhead. Discussion of a potential pull off area on the one-way loop was a desirable solution.
- Discussion of gate at entrance and operation during park hours was desired
- Concern over duck hunting transition, however, many of the duck hunters and families that have hunted here the past 50 years are aging and have alternative locations they could go. They have history with this area and would like to have signage and/or viewing areas that represent the flyway and key species that gather here.
- Discussion on the need for flood resilient native plantings in this area.
- Great area for birdwatching, would like overlook areas/resting areas along the shoreline
- Kayak fishing is becoming a popular alternative
- Shoreline fishing is okay but a dock is desired because people like to get out deeper when possible

- Would like to have more interpretive signage of the history on the site, bison, birds, and river. Would also like to have more bison interpretation and signage near the paddock areas and/or along trails.
- Several questions on weather an overlook was going in near the bison paddocks, its difficult to see the entire paddocks and where the bison are. More signage with QR codes to link to maps that indicate where bison are located.
- Discussion on if duck hunting is not allowed here and non-motorized boats are not allowed, there will be more push from the DNR to improve the other landing access. The other landing has difficult entrance driveway conditions and a very shallow launch.
- Positive attitude towards desire to have portable restrooms at both the upper and lower areas of the park.
- Several comments were made about the initial concern for the project but after todays open house, all are leaving with an excitement and positive attitude towards the proposed work.
- Commissioner stated that what is being proposed is better than what was imagined during the master planning process. Strong suggestion that the paved access road is a priority. Perhaps if need be, the pavilion could be scaled back.

Summary of Comment Cards

- Most excited for access to the Mississippi River. Concern about safety with the barges. Need for more public education recreation such as canoe/kayaking but have safety warning signs. Interested in trips between Grey Cloud Island and Spring Lake Park Reserve. Could explore mapping, signage, and/or brochure for that route. Rental Kayak kiosk exists at Grey Cloud, would be nice to be able to go one way and drop the kayak or canoe off at either end. Would be nice to be able to take a brief swim or have signage for the water; how is the water? Years ago, I would get in and out of the water near the current access which was nice on a hot day.
- Most excited for access to the Mississippi River. My wife and I have a canoe and enjoy paddling. We have paddled the river starting in Inver Grove Heights and would definitely use this as an access point.
- Most excited for access to the Mississippi River. Glad to see a port-a-potty included in the plan. The DNR does not provide those at many of its launches. Please include bike racks. Looking forward to keeping updates on this plan process via the Dakota County website. Thanks for an informative open house! Will you have another one once the plans are finalized? We currently kayak from Hilary Path and are very excited for this project, which looks to provide more reliable and convenient access. We also hike and bike the trails in the park, it would be nice to have more connections and amenities. Thanks for opening up the carry-in access to others besides duck hunters. It's a beautiful area!
- Concern with the elimination of the motors (mud motors) from buds landing and what it causes. Dakota County residents use the landing for duck hunting presently and will be very unhappy.

- Most excited for access to the Mississippi River, more trail options, and learning more about the area through interpretive elements. No major concerns but be sure to incorporate native plant species and protect the existing forest on steep slopes as much as possible. I like what is being proposed.
- Most excited for access to the Mississippi River, more trail options, and learning more about the area through interpretive elements. Usable access to Spring Lake for motorized craft is important. The non-motorized feature with improved parking is great for paddlers. There is increased opportunity for recreation in Spring Lake and the park and trails. Overall this looks very positive and increases opportunities for activities in Spring Lake park. It will attract more visitors to an excellent park.
- Most excited for trail options in the park. Sufficient parking for the canoe/kayak access is important. Like the variety of uses planned into the space and attention to trail and road surfaces for grades and sustainability.
- Most excited for access to the Mississippi River. I think it sounds great, I'm excited for the kayak/canoe rental opportunities. Great job!
- The landing should have some parking for cars with boat trailers - even if its canoes/kayaks