



**National Park Service
U.S. Department
of the Interior**

St. Croix National
Scenic Riverway
Wisconsin/Minnesota 54024

401 Hamilton
St. Croix Falls, WI
www.nps.gov/sacn

715-483-2274 phone
715-483-3288 fax

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway News Release

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Contact: Chris Stein, (715) 483-2290

National Park Service Issues Decision on Stillwater Bridge Project Evaluation Finds Serious Adverse Impacts

St. Croix Falls – The National Park Service (NPS) has determined that the proposed St. Croix River Crossing Project would have direct and adverse effects that cannot be avoided or eliminated.

In a letter from NPS Midwest Regional Director Ernest Quintana to Derrell Turner at the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service reported its conclusion that constructing the bridge – where there was not one previously – would fundamentally change the scenic qualities that existed when the St. Croix was designated a national wild and scenic river in 1972 for its outstanding scenic, recreational, and geologic values. Under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the NPS cannot approve a project if its direct and adverse effects cannot be avoided or eliminated.

The NPS determination is a result of a new evaluation requested by the Federal Highway Administration following the March 11 ruling by the U.S. District Court of Minnesota that the 2005 NPS positive evaluation was arbitrary and capricious because it did not explain the change in position from the negative evaluation made in 1996 for a similar bridge.

In accordance with the court ruling, the new evaluation (under Section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act) acknowledges past evaluations. It includes a new visual analysis and provides language from the act and federal guidance that shows that direct and adverse effects to Riverway values must be eliminated for the NPS to consent to the project.

The letter, evaluation, and related materials are available at: www.nps.gov/sacn

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