



Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account

December 2011



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Background Summary

Stillwater Lift Bridge Management Plan

The Stillwater Lift Bridge management plan is a key stipulation in the 2006 amended Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement - Stipulation III - for the St. Croix River Crossing Project. In addition, the Stillwater Lift Bridge is one of 24 bridges identified by the Minnesota Department of Transportation for long-term preservation as part of the agency's statewide June 2006 Historic Bridges Management Plan and 2008 Historic Bridge Section 106 Programmatic Agreement.

The Stillwater Lift Bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is also a Section 4(f) resource under the USDOT Act of 1966. Its conversion to use as a bicycle/pedestrian crossing as part of the proposed loop trail has been documented during the St. Croix River Crossing Project in letters of agreement between MnDOT and the city of Stillwater and the 2006 Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement found at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix/docs/sfeis.html>.

The recommended landscaping and amenities for the St. Croix River Crossing Project are also documented in the Visual Quality Manual found at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix/vismanual.html>, including recommendations for the Stillwater Lift Bridge as a bicycle/pedestrian facility.

To complete stipulations agreed upon in these various agreements, MnDOT's Bridge Office, Cultural Resources Unit, Metro District, a consultant team and the Stillwater Lift Bridge Advisory Committee completed a condition assessment and a bridge operations and maintenance manual for the Stillwater Lift Bridge and its concourse. The approved operations and maintenance manual aided in the development of the Stillwater Lift Bridge management plan.

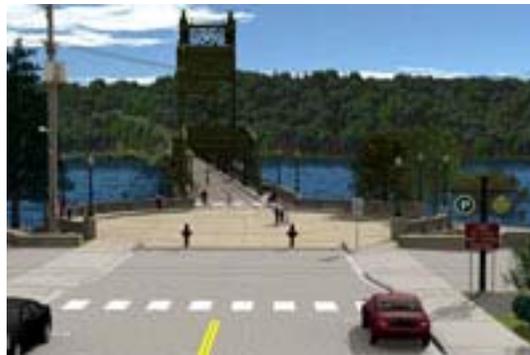
The Stillwater Lift Bridge management plan, completed in 2009, describes how the Stillwater Lift Bridge is to be managed during its interim vehicular use and after its conversion to bicycle/pedestrian use. It also establishes the priorities for a repair project in order to allow the Stillwater Lift Bridge to function with the proposed loop trail. The Stillwater Lift Bridge management plan can be found at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/liftbridge/>.

Timing of the Stillwater Lift Bridge Conversion Projects part of the MOA and Statewide Historic Bridge Management Plan, MnDOT commits to completing a conversion project for the Stillwater Lift Bridge within one year of opening the new bridge as described in the 2006 Supplemental Final EIS for the St. Croix River Crossing Project. MnDOT & Wisconsin DOT will cover the cost of lift bridge conversion up to \$7 million.



The Stillwater Lift Bridge

Past, present and planned future use as a bicycle/pedestrian facility



Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account

The MOA for the St. Croix River Crossing Project contained stipulations related to the Stillwater Lift Bridge, including establishing a \$3 million endowment account by MnDOT and Wisconsin Department of Transportation to cover the routine operations and maintenance costs after the Stillwater Lift Bridge is converted to a bicycle/pedestrian facility following construction of the new river crossing.

In order to establish a Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account, in 2009 the Minnesota legislature passed, and the governor signed into law, House File 1309, which established the Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account as Minn. Stat. 165.15.

Recent Related Activities

Since passage of this legislation in 2009, MnDOT has implemented planning activities based on recommendations in the Stillwater Lift Bridge management plan. Work includes developing environmental documents for two upcoming Lift Bridge projects; a stabilization (maintenance) project scheduled for fall 2012 and a conversion project to follow the completion of the St. Croix River Crossing Project.

The National Park Service issued a new Wild and Scenic Rivers Act evaluation and determination on Oct. 15, 2010. That evaluation and determination indicated that the National Park Service does not approve the St. Croix River Crossing Project and that other federal agencies cannot assist in the



project. However, Congress could authorize the project if it chooses to do so under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Congressional actions have been occurring with House Bill HR 850 and Senate Bill S 1134 to authorize the St. Croix River Crossing Project. As of November 2011, both bills have passed subcommittees and full committees and are awaiting House and Senate floor action.

For a complete status of the St. Croix River Crossing Project, visit the project website at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix/>.

As a result of the October 2010 National Park Service determination, certain activities for the St. Croix River Crossing Project are suspended while others nearing completion will be finalized. Pending a Congressional act, funding for the Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account is suspended, as is work on the environmental document for the Stillwater Lift Bridge Conversion Project.

No revenues have been deposited into the Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account by MnDOT or Wisconsin DOT, and detailed revenue and expenditure information on the account does not yet exist.

The Stillwater Lift Bridge stabilization (maintenance) project is planned for a May 2012 letting. This stabilization project is necessary to safely maintain vehicular traffic on the lift bridge and will include steel and concrete repairs, electrical systems updates and mechanical repairs. The environmental document for the stabilization project has been finalized. A detour of traffic and closure to navigation is being planned during fall 2012 from mid-September thru December. For details on the Stillwater Lift Bridge stabilization project, visit <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/liftbridge/>.

