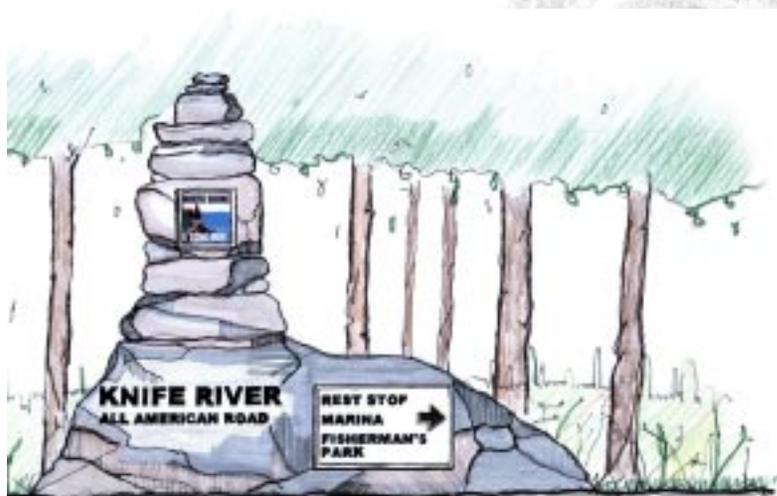


THE NORTH SHORE SCENIC DRIVE

Knife River Village



November, 29, 2003



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was produced and completed by the Center for Changing Landscapes through the following individuals:

Roger Martin, Senior Research Fellow

Mary Vogel, Senior Research Fellow

Carlos J Fernandez, Research Fellow

Doug VanValkenburg, Research Specialist

Jason P Aune, Research Specialist

Aaron A Mikonowicz, Research Specialist

This project was completed with the help and resourcefulness of the following individuals and organizations:

The Northeast Sustainable Development Partnership

The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION
II.	PROJECT SCOPE
III.	PROJECT ANALYSIS
IV.	PRELIMINARY DESIGN
V.	FINAL DESIGN PROPOSAL



INTRODUCTION

Project Importance & Definitions

WHAT DOES IT MEAN

In order to design a place or space that resides within a scenic byway, it is helpful to understand what a scenic byway really is. The following information was quoted and paraphrased from the following web sites: www.byways.org/learn, www.bywaysonline.org/nominations/docs

A BRIEF HISTORY

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. Since 1992, the National Scenic Byways Program has provided funding for almost 1500 state and nationally designated byway projects in 48 states. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways based on one or more of its archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. The National Scenic Byways Program was created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 (ISTEA) to promote the message that "an outstanding collection of nationally acclaimed and designated roads exist in America." To earn their designation, roads must be certified as possessing one or more of the following six intrinsic qualities:

Natural Quality

applies to those features in the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state. These features predate the arrival of human populations and may include geological formations, fossils, landform, water bodies, vegetation, and wildlife. There may be evidence of human activity, but the natural features reveal minimal disturbances.

Scenic Quality

is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and manmade elements in the visual environment of the scenic byway corridor. The characteristics of the landscape are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and memorable visual experience. All elements of the landscape— landform, water, vegetation, and manmade development contribute to the quality of the corridor's visual environment. Everything present is in harmony and shares in the intrinsic qualities.



Historic Quality

encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or manmade, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past. The historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity. Historic features can be inventoried, mapped, and interpreted. They possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Cultural Quality

is evidence and expressions of the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people. Cultural features including, but not limited to, crafts, music, dance, rituals, festivals, speech, food, special events, vernacular architecture, etc., are currently practiced. The cultural qualities of the corridor could highlight one or more significant communities and/or ethnic traditions.

Recreational Quality

involves outdoor recreational activities directly in association with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the corridor's landscape. The recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive recreational experiences. They include, but are not limited to, downhill skiing, rafting, boating, fishing, and hiking. Driving the road itself may qualify as a pleasurable recreational experience. The recreational activities may be seasonal, but the quality and importance of the recreational activities as seasonal operations must be well recognized.

Archeological Quality

involves those characteristics of the scenic byways corridor that are physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activity that are visible and capable of being inventoried and interpreted. The scenic byway corridor's archeological interest, as identified through ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence have scientific significance that educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past.

TWO TIERS OF DESIGNATION:

National Scenic Byways

Are considered to be regionally significant, contain at least one outstanding intrinsic quality, and are generally a means to a travelers predetermined end.

All American Roads

Are considered to be nationally significant, contain at least two outstanding intrinsic qualities, are called the "best of the best", and are destinations unto themselves.

WHY SCENIC

Our definition of "scenic" reaches beyond breathtaking vistas. All of America's Byways™ are "scenic", representing the depth and breadth of scenery in America—natural and man-made panoramas; electrifying neon landscapes; ancient and modern history coming alive; native arts and culture; and scenes of friends, families and strangers sharing their stories.



INTRODUCTION

Knife River Village

As a destination along the North Shore Scenic Byway, Knife River is unique and filled with colorful history. Few settlements can claim a past that is intertwined with so many different aspects of commerce and life. Knife River's pioneering settlers were made up of fishermen, lumbermen, and railroad men that all had a lasting impact upon the growth and development of this village.

It is thought that the name Knife River may have come from the Ojibway Native Americans that lived there long ago. Their folklore credits the name Knife River as originating with the Native American name "Mokomana-Zibi" or "River of sharp stones." This has been partially verified by the many stone arrow heads found around the area.

Partially paraphrased from the local publication *Memoirs of Knife River*.

Knife River Interpretive Resources

Analysis of the Knife River Village included a detailed research on history and culture. Mike Kennedy conducted most of his research through meetings, interviews with long time locals and the Historical Society. He composed a paper which highlighted some of Knife Rivers remaining resources and made suggestions as to what could be used in interpretive design.

Knife River Interpretive Opportunities: By Mike Kennedy

The central theme for the North Shore Scenic Drive All-American Road (NSSDAAR) is: "The convergence of land and water weave tapestries of natural and human history along Minnesota's North Shore." Supporting themes have also been developed and linked specifically to resources and can be a focus for telling the stories of those resources at appropriate sites. The supporting themes for the NSSDAAR include:

- 1) The climate where the Lake meets the land, along with natural features, provide for distinctive forests, and wildlife.
- 2) Why are people drawn to the North Shore?
- 3) Transportation options have changed throughout history.

With these themes and supporting themes, I believe interpretation topics for Knife River opportunities, based on the two focus groups of local citizens, can be broken down to two major topics: Railroading, and Fishing. With a minor topic of logging interpreted through a self-guided trail. Other interpretive opportunities can be tied to the themes at sites spread out around town. It is my belief that these topics can be interpreted best in four different sites, at this time. Those sites are the river mouth, the depot area, the trail system, and in the town itself.

Future endeavors at the Knife River location could include a Knife River Heritage Interpretation Center. If a center were to develop, it is envisioned that these sites could continue to act as "stand alone non-personal interpretive opportunities" and complement the personal interpretation that staff and volunteers could provide through a formal interpretive center and program.

In addition to the interpretive opportunities I feel there is a need for an "orienting kiosk," centrally located in Knife River to "steer" visitors and locals to further opportunities to learn about the community. This kiosk would be an introduction to the learning opportunities in the community, an orienting map to the community, and contain ties to the All-American Road marketing effort. Perhaps bathrooms and comment box, or some sort of feedback opportunity to enhance the interpretive effort.

Orienting Kiosk

I feel the orienting kiosk would work best at the parking lot on the North side of the road (see figure 1), adjacent to Knife River. I feel this

PROJECT SCOPE



kiosk can have four panels; 1) overall orientation to the All-American Road/Scenic Byway program and NSSDAAR, 2) general interpretation of the village of Knife River as a whole, 3) Orienting Map of Knife River highlighting the other interpretive opportunities in the area such as the fishing pier, RR Depot, trails, copper mine sites, historic buildings, etc..., 4) a community bulletin board to announce local events

Panel #1 can be an overall map of the All-American Road. Showing all the interpretive stops, food, shelter, services, etc... Take away maps/guides can be provided here for travelers and locals to take from the site to help them continue to navigate the road. I am thinking of a macro to micro approach here with a brief description of what All-American Roads and Scenic Byways are and why they are special, moving into an overview of the 156 mile route of "our" road. Companion pieces would be developed to give away. Perhaps a guide book/map with advertising from North Shore establishments to pay for it. A new one could be made each year.

Panel #2 would be an overview of the rich history of Knife River. I feel this could be akin to a "historical marker" type interpretive effort, complete with photos of the community, possibly historic maps, etc.... This type of sign could be "enough" of a learning opportunity for some and they would move on to the next stop if you will. It also can be a teaser of sorts to "persuade" folks to park and hike a trail, take a trip to the fishing pier/interpretive spot, see the RR Depot area, or engage in other opportunities in the community. There may be an option here, depending on funds, to produce a built-in touch screen computer system. This may highlight several aspect of the community through photos, storytelling, first person narratives, maps through time, etc.. (I estimate this would cost approx. \$10,000 – \$20,000, both for putting together the interpretation as well as equipment. The type of kiosk for this would need to be considered in terms of protecting the equipment invested, weather, vandalism, etc...)

Panel #3 would simply be an overview of the village. Where can one access the beach? Where can we learn about historical houses in town? Where can we see the old copper mines? Where can we fish? Where could we learn about the rail operations in town at the turn of the century? Potential for highlighting local businesses in terms of services to travelers could be done here as well.

Panel #4 would be simply an opportunity to post church dinner announcements, Knife River Recreation Council meeting notices, other community events that would notify both residents and travelers of the opportunity to participate in current Knife River activity.

Rail Depot Kiosk

A Focus on sub-theme #2, Why are people drawn to the North Shore,? Would be the purpose of the interpretation of the RR Depot area. From this area it is an excellent spot to speak about the vast forests that surrounded the community at the turn of the century, and how Knife River was positioned to move the logs from these forests by rail and water to mills. This could also lead to a discussion about how these transportation modes (boat and rail) moved folks up and down the shore and spurred commerce in the community, much like today, only they come by car!

I also envision a four panel kiosk at this location. Panel topics would be as follows: Panel # 1 and # 2 - Alger Smith company and their influence in Knife River and logging trains, Panel # 3 and # 4 - Passenger trains and growth in commerce due to trains.

Interpretation on panels # 1 and # 2 would include an overview of the Alger Smith company and its work in and around Knife River, historical train photos hauling logs, historical maps of the RR tracks in the area, text to speak of the power of these trains to work the Clover Valley cuts and beyond, some statistics as to how much timber could be brought out of the woods with the trains vs. horse/oxen, possibly a case with artifacts from the rail era (receipts from the company store, RR tokens, RR signs, etc....)

Interpretation on panels # 3 and # 4 would include text and photos of the Depot and commerce in the vicinity, photos of passengers, commerce establishments (hotels, saloons, etc...), speak to the movement of people up and down the shore via rail, layout of the depot and similar structures.

I think this kiosk could have a replica train whistle built into it where one could pull a chain and get a train whistle. Possible a sign with different types of signals that folks could try and replicate!

Future opportunities for this area would include a replica of the depot building. Perhaps an un-staffed non-personal interpretation site. Artifacts and replicas from the depot era could be displayed in a manner that would enable learning to take place in the absence of a person. Could



evolve into a site for first person interpretation with partnership of community members and the Scenic Railway group. Maybe the train could stop at the depot and a person dressed in costume of period clothing could board the train and offer a 5-minute vignette about the community??

Fishing Pier and Kiosk

The public meetings held in Knife River elicited many ideas and revealed a rich past of commercial and recreational fishing. Ideas to restore the old coal dock (also called America Dock) into a public fishing pier to resurrect fishing opportunities in the community today were also discussed by some. I think this is a fine idea to tie together past with present.

My belief is that the community should try to attract financial assistance to re-build the coal dock into a public fishing pier and docking space for excursion/sightseeing boats. Perhaps interpretive signs could be developed for placement along the dock as to the common fishes of the area, their habitat, and life history.

In addition to the dock restoration, I feel another four-sided kiosk would be a good approach to interpreting the fishing heritage of the community. Again, I envision a four paneled type kiosk with the following topics: commercial fishing, recreational fishing, story of exotics species and the sea lamprey, Knife River fishing techniques (jigger for setting nets under the ice, Coolidge planer, others...). Panel # 1 would focus on the commercial fishing that took place in Knife River. From the early days of herring and whitefish netting to the post-WWII commercial trout and salmon fishing. Addressing the smelt boom of the 60's should be included, as well as a look at commercial fishing today and possibly bios on local fisherman today and what they fish for, etc.. Old photos, descriptive text, artifacts could be displayed. I feel very strongly that the story of the Knife River Marina as a project driven by and for commercial fisherman should be told. I think this panel on the kiosk can mention the marina/safe harbor and point folks to that area to learn more about this community endeavor. Again, the interpretation about the marina should be at the marina, but this panel should "tease" folks to further explore this aspect of Knife River's past. Perhaps a small map showing folks how to get to the marina from this kiosk would be the best fit for the topic, accompanied by a short two sentence intro to the marina and the story of it.

Recreational fishing would be the topic of panel #2. Starting with the "adjustment of Knife River falls" to allow for migrating fish, to the introduction of exotic species to attract recreational fisherman, to smelting, to the fish trap and current work of the DNR, Steelhead Assoc., and other groups to restore recreational fishing in the area. Local techniques for catching steelhead and trout could also be discussed and shown via illustrations. A small promo for the charters out of the current marina could be inserted in the panel as well. Many photos exist today and should be included in the interpretive effort.

Panel # 3 would focus on exotic species, with a major focus on the sea lamprey story. Text, photos, and illustrations to speak about native fisheries vs. exotic fisheries, shipping and its affect on exotics (including what is being done to eliminate the spread of exotics by shipping industry), why exotics are a concern, possibly a take off on the FBI's most wanted list by a listing of the "Ten Most Wanted Exotics in Lake Superior." A large portion of the panel could be dedicated to the successful story of the sea lamprey and its elimination/severe reduction in Superior. I like this story because it is an environmental problem with a positive ending that is related to fisheries in Knife River.

Panel # 4 would be about local "garage logic and engineering." There are a couple of local inventions and methods related to both commercial fishing (jigger for setting nets under the ice) and recreational fishing (Coolidge planer and drift fishing for steelhead and a fly-fishing salmon egg pattern) that could be described, shown in use, and spoken about through text, illustrations, photos, and possibly artifacts.

Future endeavors here are many. Excursion/sightseeing boats, commercial fishing educational tours (take 10 – 15 folks out at a time on a replica commercial fishing boat, show them how to set nets, set them, take one out that was set the day before, interpret the catch etc..) Restoration of passenger boat service from Fond du Lac, Duluth, Knife River, Two Harbors, Grand Marais, could be done in the summer. I think keeping private boats at the marina is a direction that should be maintained, but enterprise opportunities for commercial tourism could exist here.

Interpretation Along the Knife River Trails and in the Community Itself

Many local trails exist in Knife River, from the Superior Hiking Trail spur which leads to "downtown" from the ridge area, to the cross



country ski trails, to the informal trails along the West side of the river mouth. All of these offer opportunities for interpretation about past mining and logging heritage. This can be done via signs about topics congruent with the theme, to self-guided trails.

It is my belief that a self-guided trail could be developed along the trails in the current cross-country trail system or on the Superior Hiking Trail adjacent to the upper falls area. The focus of the interpretation in either area would be logging. The self-guided trail would have a brochure available at the orienting kiosk that would be approx. 10 stops along a ½ to ¾ mile loop. The interpretation could align with sub-theme # 1 (The climate where the Lake meets the land, along with natural features, provide for distinctive forests, and wildlife) and # 2 (Why are people drawn to the North Shore?). Past practices and techniques, impact on the landscape (ice roads, railroads, etc.), type of trees logged, uses of the types of trees, today's logging and its differences. All would be included in the interpretation with photos in black and white (color if money permits), illustrations, and descriptions through text.

An opportunity exists for interpretive signs along trails and community streets as well. It is my thought that several signs could be placed along trails at locations with evidence of past activity. For instance, the copper mine locations along the trail near the upper falls could be a location for a sign about the copper pits. Other signs could be erected and written for Capt. Anderson's saloon, the community church, shipwrecks of the Knife River area, the stage road, 1939 christening of the Crusader fishing boat by Crown Prince of Norway, and possibly others. I envision each of these to be roughly 36" X 24" full color with illustrations/photos and text. Standard bases should be used throughout the community, as well as the entire NSSDAAR.

Community Amphitheater

The only other component that I feel would be a benefit for the community and their interpretive efforts would be a gathering place (since an actual building may be out of the picture for a bit of time). I think a community amphitheater would be a great gathering spot for programming efforts, music, campfire programs, community groups, and families. There are a myriad of design options for this type of facility. My belief that it can be done for approx. \$5000 or less in supplies and the labor could be donated or done by community members, potentially more if audio visual technologies were incorporated. This would provide a gathering place for heritage programs about the community in good weather and the recreation center could provide this need in the event of bad weather. Even if a building were to be developed in the future, this facility would still be a valuable asset for the community. Perhaps on the soccer field/ice rink next to the Community Center?

Conclusions

Knife River has a long and storied past, a past that many communities should be envious towards. In today's ever competitive economy many communities struggle to find a unique angle to attract commerce. It is my belief that Knife River has many pieces of the past still in tact that can be capitalized on to attract business to the community without altering the community landscape beyond recognition. If Knife River does not embrace these opportunities and guide development and tourism in a manner that sustains the "feel" of the current community, it will be lost forever. Perhaps generations in the future will search for these very angles and lost opportunities we are dabbling in today. Perhaps generations in the future will look to our efforts and be thankful that the community had the foresight to share with others its rich heritage and remind residents of their roots.