



# Friends of the Mississippi River

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*Working to protect the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities Area.*

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May 5, 2008

Mayor Diana Longrie  
1830 County Road B East  
Maplewood, MN 55109

Mayor Longrie,

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a local non-profit citizen-based organization that works to protect and enhance the natural and cultural assets of the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities. We have 1,500 active members, and 3,000 volunteers who care deeply about the river's unique resources.

We have been closely following the City's consideration of Copar's development proposal for the Fish Creek site.

As you are aware, the Fish Creek site is within the boundaries of the Mississippi River Critical Area and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). The land surrounding the proposed development includes some of the highest-quality natural areas in Ramsey County. Many of these high-quality natural areas are already owned by the County, yet there is an opportunity to enhance the Fish Creek area by protecting some or all of the southern portion of land proposed for residential development as additional open space. Permanent protection of land at this site would preserve unique vistas, provide critical wildlife habitat, and further weave land around Fish Creek into a seamless corridor of open space.

We recognize there have been offers from the developer to delay developing the southern portion of their property until 2009, so as to provide an opportunity for the City to raise funds for the purchase of some or all of that property. Representatives of Copar told the Maplewood Planning Commission that they would be willing to entertain a variety of proposals for land purchase, depending on the City's priorities and ability to raise funds.

Regardless of how decisions about development at the Fish Creek site are resolved, the Friends of the Mississippi River would like to extend our assistance as a partner with the City and area stakeholders in helping to protect the land around Fish Creek as a natural and open space. We bring many years of experience working on other major land conservation and stewardship projects, in partnership with local cities, private landowners, corridor business and active community members.

We look forward to being a strong partner for any community engagement aimed to expand open space in Maplewood's portion of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Please feel free to contact us if we can be of further help in this matter.

Best regards,

Whitney L. Clark  
Executive Director

cc: City Council