

August 18, 2006

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to announce the release of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the disposition of the former Bureau of Mines Twin Cities Research Center Main Campus (Center), Hennepin County Minnesota. The National Park Service (NPS) invites public comments on the draft EIS. During the open public comment period, university and government entities may submit written proposals for acquisition of the Center. Written proposals from university and government entities must address the criteria listed in the Federal Register Notice of Availability (NOA). The NOA and criteria can be accessed on the websites listed below.

Enclosed with this letter is a compact disc containing the draft EIS, including the appendices and maps, and additional background studies. Comments on the draft EIS and proposals for acquisition of the Center must be postmarked by **October 24, 2006**. Verbal proposals for acquisition of the Center will not be considered.

An open house to receive comments and answer questions on the draft EIS will be held on Monday, September 25 and Tuesday, September 26, 2006, times: 1-4pm, and 6-9pm each day, location:

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center
3815 American Blvd. East
Bloomington, MN 55425
Telephone for directions: (651) 290-4160

The draft EIS does not identify a potential future owner or how that owner would use the Center; instead the draft EIS analyzes the environmental impacts of three different future land use scenarios and how they may or would impact natural, cultural, and historic resources. The NPS has not identified a preferred alternative at this time, but intends to review the public comments received in response to the draft EIS, revise the document as necessary, and identify a preferred alternative in the final EIS.

Congress in 1996 in Public Law 104-134 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to convey the Center to a government or university entity. Additionally, Public Law 106-113 allows the Secretary to accept financial remuneration for the Center and distribute the funds to the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) and the National Wildlife Refuge System for the benefit of their programs in Minnesota.

The draft EIS and the criteria for submitting written proposals from university and government entities can be accessed at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/> and select the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area from the drop-down park list, or go to www.nps.gov/miss/bom and follow the links. Paper copies of the draft EIS are also available for review at the Nokomis Branch of the Minneapolis Library System located at 5100 34th Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minnesota, telephone: (612) 630-6700, and the neighborhood association offices of Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA), Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood Association (SENA) and Longfellow Neighborhood Association. If you do not have a computer or Internet access, a limited number of print copies are available by calling the National Park Service office at (651) 290-4160 to request a copy.

Written proposals received by the NPS will accompany the final EIS to assist the Secretary of the Interior in making a decision on disposition of the Center.

Your interest and involvement have been and continue to be important in this planning process. We appreciate your interest in the National Park Service and the Center planning process and look forward to your continued participation in the development of the final EIS.

Sincerely,

JoAnn M. Kyril
Superintendent

Enclosure