

MYTHS ABOUT THE ST. CROIX RIVER CROSSING PROJECT:

Myth: The Sierra Club's lawsuit is putting people's safety at risk....

Fact: Sierra Club cares about the safety of all individuals, and works tirelessly to protect us from environmental harm. The Stillwater Lift Bridge has been inspected by MnDOT, and deemed safe with no danger of collapse. In addition, it received \$5 million in structure upgrades and repair in 2007.

Myth: The delay of building a new bridge increases pollution because of congestion.

Fact: Air quality and traffic impacts are real concerns. However, MnDOT's own reports project increased traffic over time in downtown Stillwater after the proposed bridge is constructed. Congestion is an issue that will not be solved by the proposed bridge.

Myth: First responders are not able to deliver Wisconsin residents to medical facilities when the bridge is inaccessible.

Fact: Major hospitals with emergency care facilities are available in Hudson and New Richmond to serve Western Wisconsin.

Myth: The Sierra Club's lawsuit is delaying the bridge.

Fact: The proposed bridge is not scheduled to begin construction until 2013, according to recent estimates by MnDOT.



Recreation opportunities in the St. Croix are easily accessible to the Twin Cities' population of 3 million

You can help preserve the St. Croix! Let your community know that you want to see the St. Croix protected.

- Write your local newspaper
- Contact your public officials
- Call the office to get involved!



Sierra Club North Star Chapter
2327 E. Franklin Ave. #1
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Phone: 612-659-9124

Email: north.star.chapter@sierraclub.org

More information on our website:

<http://northstar.sierraclub.org>

<http://northstar.sierraclub.org/about/groups/st-croix/>



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Preserving and Protecting the St. Croix Riverway

FACTS ON THE PROPOSED NEW ST. CROIX RIVER CROSSING

Advocating responsible, balanced designs to preserve nature while serving the needs of citizens

The Sierra Club -- 30,000+ of your friends and neighbors in Minnesota and Wisconsin



A unique natural asset for the citizens of Minnesota and Wisconsin... and the nation

For decades, Minnesota and Wisconsin residents have been able to enjoy the relatively unspoiled beauty of the St. Croix River and the surrounding valley. This is only possible today because of the leadership of those who have come before us, who recognized that this great area should be preserved and protected for generations to come.

In 1972, the Lower St. Croix was designated as a National Scenic Riverway. Today, thousands of people enjoy the river each week. Whether for boating, fishing, swimming or just getting away, the St. Croix river is unique as one of the few Scenic Riverways in close proximity to a large Metropolitan area – accessible to be enjoyed by all.

Without the protections established 40 years ago, where would the river be today?

Saving a protected area...

The Sierra Club has actively participated in all of the stakeholder processes involving potential new connections across the St. Croix. Unfortunately, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has, over a period of decades, ignored or rejected viable alternatives. Instead, it has repeatedly proposed a very large, blufftop-to-blufftop, freeway-style bridge at Oak Park Heights that would unavoidably compromise the scenic and environmental values for which Congress established the St. Croix National Scenic and Recreational Riverway.

Would you support building an interstate highway through Yellowstone National Park, or building a bridge across the Grand Canyon? It is possible to preserve the irreplaceable natural beauty and environmental quality of the Lower St. Croix *and* at the same time meet the transportation needs of the region -- but not with MnDOT's proposed Oak Park Heights bridge.

The economic and environmental impact of the proposed bridge design...

It is important to consider the true costs of the current bridge proposal -- not only in terms of construction costs, but also other impacts to the surrounding areas.

- The current estimate for building a new bridge will be over \$500 million dollars.
- The bridge will encourage greater urban sprawl with greater gas consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks.
- Increased development on and near the river is one of the greatest sources of water pollution to the Lower St. Croix, which was recently listed as “impaired” because of excess nutrient runoff.
- Increased high speed traffic will create significant noise pollution, which MnDOT admits cannot be mitigated.
- The proposed bridge will cause unprecedented scenic degradation in the St. Croix River Valley.

The Sierra Club and others have proposed numerous alternatives...

Over the years, the Sierra Club has promoted, and continues to advocate for, responsible and more economically viable alternatives which protect the quality of the Riverway while serving the needs of our area's growing population -- the best of both worlds! Many of these solutions could provide immediate relief in just one to two years -- not five to 10 years for a new bridge -- without encouraging increased traffic and sprawl. Among the alternatives to a highway-style bridge are the following:

- Build a new bridge at Stillwater that blends with the existing bridge and surrounding landscape
- Improve high speed access from MN Hwy 36 to I-94, and from I-94 to WI Hwy 35, to promote the I-94 bridge as the principal Twin Cities link to Wisconsin.
- Restrict and reroute large truck traffic from the current bridge to the I-94 bridge.
- Increase transit options, such as express bus lines that cross the river on I-94 & the lift bridge, and future commuter and intercity rail service using the North Hudson Rail Bridge, as a WI group has proposed.
- Reconfigure traffic signals in Stillwater to speed flow of traffic
- Optimize lift schedules for existing bridge
- Add signage to inform approaching drivers of lift schedules and warn of possible congestion for rerouting

Images

Front cover: St. Croix River below Hwy 70, Wikimedia
Inside top: St. Croix River above Stillwater, Wikimedia
Back: Bathing in the St. Croix River, James Rickard
Outside below: Freeway crossing gone wild