You are receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in state rulemaking for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA). If you are no longer interested in receiving emails on this subject, please reply to this email with “unsubscribe” in the subject line.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today published rules for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA), an important milestone toward protecting the river’s 72-mile stretch through the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The corridor of land along this stretch of the river was designated a state critical area in 1976 to protect its scenic, environmental, and economic values. The Minnesota Legislature directed the DNR to conduct rulemaking to create new, updated districts and standards to replace those in the nearly 40-year old executive order that currently regulates development in the MRCCA.

The new rules contain setback provisions intended to keep buildings and development activity away from shoreline areas and areas prone to soil erosion and slope failure. Building height provisions are designed to preserve natural views within the corridor. And new vegetation and land alteration standards aim to retain and restore deep-rooted vegetation along the river’s edge and on steep slopes and to prevent erosion during development.

The rules are the result of extensive collaboration with local governments, business and environmental groups, and property owners to hear concerns, gather ideas, and balance interests for rules that:

- improve protections for water quality, habitat and scenic views;
- protect existing development and allow redevelopment while protecting key resources; and
- provide clear standards for landowners and simplify local government administration.

The rules will become effective January 4, 2017, five working days after their publication.

Existing local MRCCA plans and ordinances will remain in effect until local governments update them to comply with the rules. The DNR anticipates a minimum five-year process to implement the rules. The first step will be to work with local governments to update their MRCCA plans, which the DNR hopes to align with the Metropolitan Council’s December 2018 deadline for comprehensive plan updates.

Following MRCCA plan updates, work will begin on revisions to local MRCCA ordinances. This effort will be implemented over an estimated three-year period likely beginning in 2019 and extending through 2021 or beyond, depending on funding.
Building on the collaborative rulemaking effort, the DNR will continue to engage local governments and interest groups during the implementation process.

The rules and related information are available on the DNR’s program website.

Sincerely,
Dan Petrik, DNR MRCCA Rules Project Manager