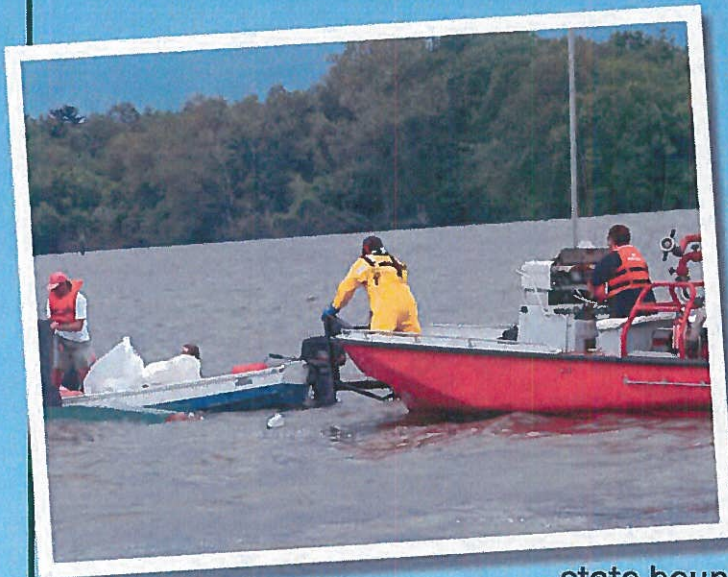


# WISCONSIN HAS A "LOST" WESTERN BOUNDARY!

The exact location of our western boundary with Minnesota is uncertain. It lies somewhere within the shorelines of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers, but neither state knows exactly where.

## WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?



**Emergencies** occur frequently on rivers. Dispatchers need to know which municipal emergency response units to contact. Seconds count! Uncertainty can cause delays and even loss of life.

**Regulations** for boating, fishing and hunting differ between these two states. Citizens and enforcement agencies need to know the exact location of the state boundary to apply regulations fairly.

**Infrastructure** like roads and bridges connects the two states. An accurate state boundary is needed to determine how much federal funding each state will receive, how to apply prevailing wage rates for construction, and who is responsible for maintenance.

**Ownership disputes** can occur if both states claim the same piece of land. This situation has implications for property taxation, law enforcement, and building and environmental regulations.

***Our western boundary with Minnesota can be accurately defined. Information is available to solve this problem. Working together, we can find the line again!***



# WHY IS THERE UNCERTAINTY IN THE LOCATION OF OUR WESTERN BOUNDARY WITH MINNESOTA?

Wisconsin became the 30<sup>th</sup> state admitted to the Union on May 29, 1848, establishing the majority of its western boundary as the main channels of the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers.

Minnesota became the 32<sup>nd</sup> state admitted to the Union on May 11, 1858, establishing as one of its eastern boundaries the main channels of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers.

While the common state line between Wisconsin and Minnesota was established by the constitutions of each state, it was never accurately surveyed. The original government surveyors (1832-1866) made no attempt to determine an accurate location for the main channel of either river, nor was that ever a part of their task.

The main channels of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers have been altered dramatically by human activity over the past 170+ years. Finding the main channel of either river as it existed at statehood in 1848 or 1858 is not possible.



## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

**Boundary Line Agreement.** Establishing a fixed Wisconsin-Minnesota boundary line can be accomplished with a boundary line agreement. The first step is to determine the location of the centerline of the main channels of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers today, using modern surveying methods. Following a review and negotiation period, an agreement for the updated state line would be submitted by each state legislature to Congress for approval.

**Involvement.** In order to accomplish this goal, a coordinated effort will be needed from the following partners: the Attorney General's Office; the State Cartographer's Office; the State Geographic Information Office; the Department of Transportation; the Department of Natural Resources; the Wisconsin County Surveyors Association; the Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors; the United States Fish and Wildlife service; United States Army Corps of Engineers; others.

**Timeframe.** There will be challenges involved in this initiative, but a resolution is well worth the effort. Wisconsin citizens will be celebrating the 160th anniversary of the completion of the Public Land Survey System in 2026. We should strive to resolve the state boundary issue by the end of 2026.

## CONTACT US!

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***Let's work together to resolve this issue!***