

# Parks and Trails Legacy Partner Agency Update

Senate Committee on Environment, Climate and Legacy • March 11, 2025



**Greater Minnesota Regional  
Parks and Trails Commission**



**Metropolitan Council  
Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails**



**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

# Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy



***Legacy Amendment  
revenue is distributed into  
four funds.***

Minnesota voters passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution in 2008. The Legacy Amendment is funded from a three-eighths of one percent increase to the state sales tax with revenue dedicated to:

1. protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, groundwater from degradation, and to protect drinking water sources;
2. restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forest and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife;
3. support arts, arts education and arts access, and to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage;
4. **support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance.**

# Minnesota 25-Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan

**VISION:** *In 2035, our world-class parks and trails connect everyone to the outdoors...*

- *Every Minnesotan has a strong connection to natural resource-based parks and trails throughout the state.*
- *Young people, families, and seniors are active outdoors and as a result are healthy.*
- *Minnesotans who have traditionally not participated as much at parks and trails are active outdoors and feel welcome.*





# Minnesotans Engage in Outdoor Recreation

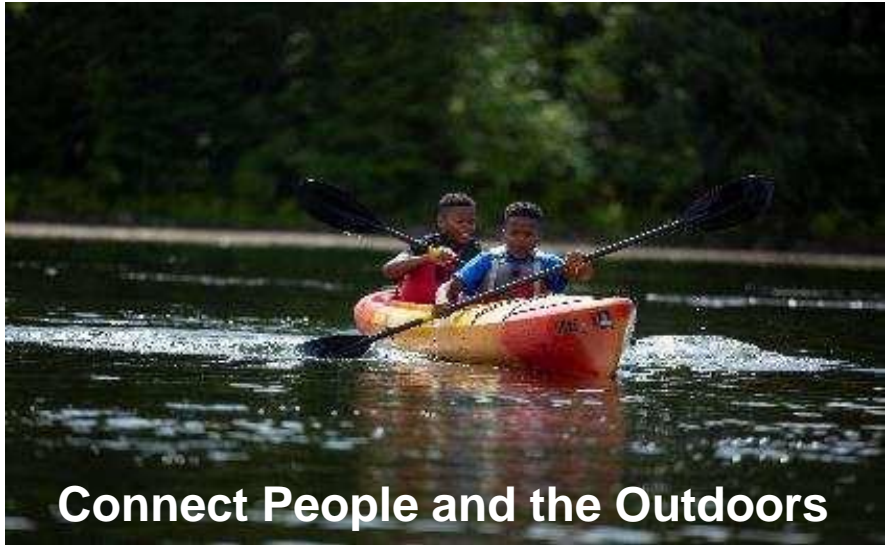
- **Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee**
- **Advance joint projects with partners (user-friendly websites, trail projects, cooperative research, etc.)**
- **Minnesota Parks Artist-in-Residence program**
- **Welcoming and accessible parks and trails**





# Minnesota 25-Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan

**PILLARS:** Strategic Priorities for the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund...





Metropolitan Council

# Metropolitan Regional Park System

LisaBeth Barajas  
Executive Director  
Community Development

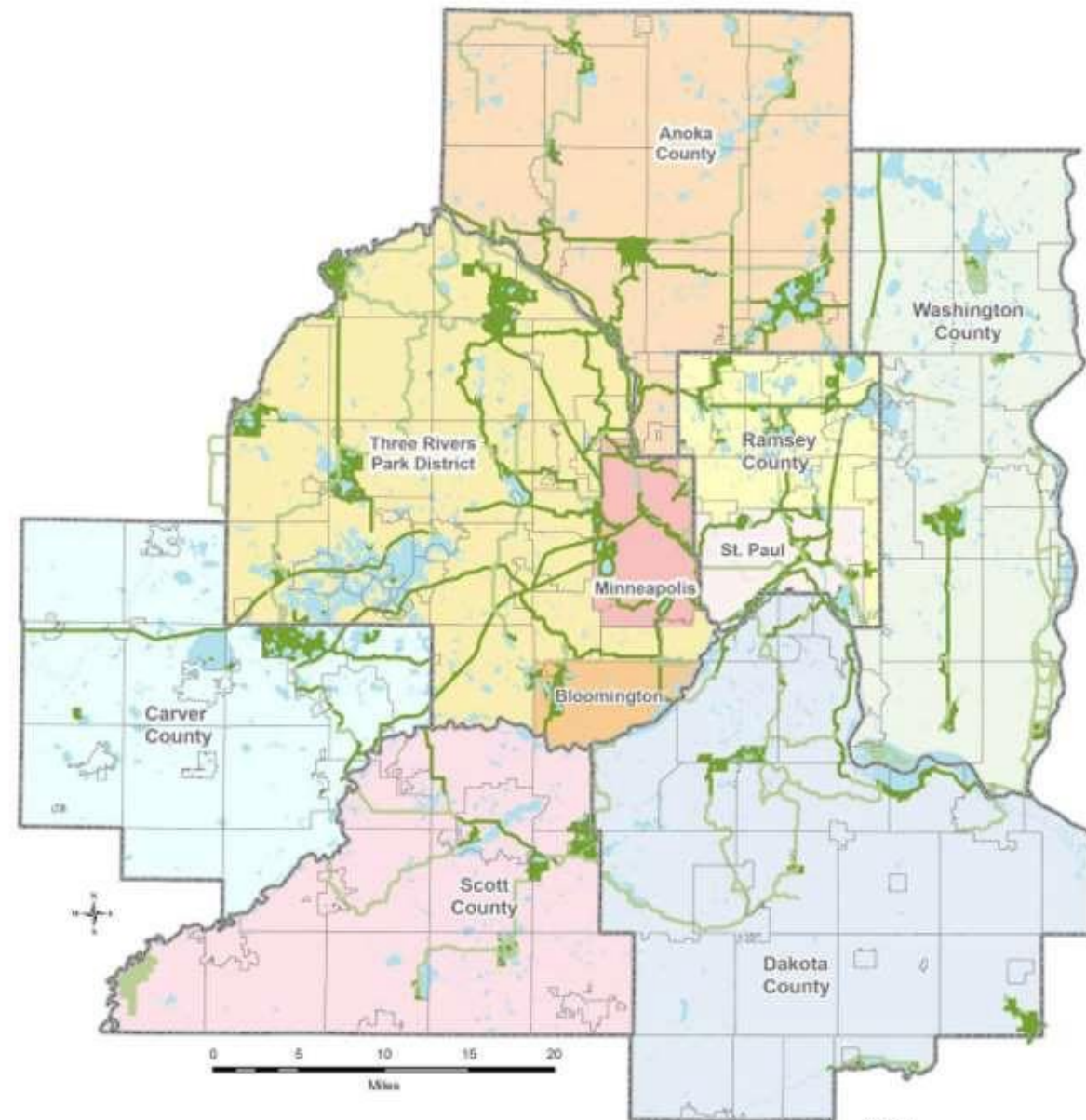
Battle Creek Regional Park



# Collaboration and cooperation

## 10 Regional Parks implementing agencies

- Anoka County
- Carver County
- Dakota County
- Ramsey County
- Scott County
- Washington County
- Bloomington
- Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
- Saint Paul
- Three Rivers Park District



Jan. 2024

- Regional Trail (Open to the Public)
- Planned Regional Trail (Not Open to the Public)
- Regional Park (Open to the Public)
- Planned Regional Park (Not Open to the Public)
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- Lakes and Rivers



# Regional park system



**NATURE-BASED**  
SYSTEM PROVIDES  
SIGNIFICANT  
GREENSPACE AND  
WILDLIFE HABITAT



**8 SPECIAL**  
RECREATION  
FEATURES (LIKE COMO  
PARK ZOO AND CONSERVATORY  
AND GALE WOODS FARM)



**58 REGIONAL**  
PARKS AND PARK  
RESERVES



**NEARLY 500 MILES**  
OF INTERCONNECTED  
REGIONAL TRAILS



**OVER 69 MILLION**  
VISITS  
IN 2023



**OVER 65,000**  
ACRES OF  
LAND PROTECTED



# Parks & Trails Fund - Minnesota's Legacy

## Metro region Legacy distribution

State statute allocates funding for metropolitan regional park implementing agencies.

- 90% distributed non-competitively by legislative formula
- 10% dedicated for land acquisition, distributed on a first-come-first-served basis.
  - Met Council matches acquisition funds \$2 for every \$3

Lake Waconia Regional Park, Carver County



# Parks & Trails Fund - Minnesota's Legacy



## Metro region project selection process

- Projects selected by each of the 10 locally elected boards or commissions
- Projects reviewed by Met Council
  - Consistency with park and trail plans
  - Consistency with all state guidelines and requirements

Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail, Bridge Refurbishment Project



# Parks & Trails Fund - Minnesota's Legacy



## 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Imagine 2050 aligns with and supports the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, A 25-year long-range plan for Minnesota

- Legacy funding is critical to advancing our shared work:
  - Connecting people and the Outdoors
  - Acquiring Land and Creating Opportunities
  - Taking Care of What we Have
  - Coordinating Among Partners

# Parks & Trails Fund - Minnesota's Legacy

## Critical Investments, Big Impacts



Baker Park Reserve Restroom Project,  
Three Rivers Park District



Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Acquisition  
Scott County



Minnesota River Greenway Regional  
Trail Development, Dakota County





## Parks and Trails Legacy Fund: Minnesota DNR Overview

Laura Preus | Minnesota DNR, Division of Parks and Trails

# State Parks and Trails System

## State Parks and Recreation Areas

- 73 State Parks and Recreation Areas
- 5,000 camping and lodging units
- 240,000 acres of land managed, including critical habitat for the state's threatened/endangered species and cultural resources of statewide significance.

## State and Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Trails

- 25 state trails
- 1,500 miles of developed state trails  
2,700 are designated
- 24,600 miles of Grant-in-aid trails

## State Forest Recreation Areas

- 43 state forest campgrounds
- 12 state forest horse campgrounds
- 29 forest day-use areas

## Water Recreation

- 35 state water trails
- 1,700 public water accesses
- 390 fishing piers





# State Parks and Trails

## Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Biennial Priorities

### Connect People to the Outdoors

**Outcome:** Everyone invited and welcomed to build skills and experience outdoor recreation in Minnesota.

### Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

**Outcome:** New and expanded park and trail opportunities serve current users and create outdoor recreation opportunities for new and future users.

### Take Care of What We Have

**Outcome:** Parks and trails meet current needs and provide high-quality recreation opportunities for a variety of users with diverse interests, needs and abilities.

### Coordinate with Partners

**Outcome:** Parks and trails of state and regional significance welcome all Minnesotans to a seamless and integrated network of outdoor recreation opportunities throughout Minnesota



# State Parks and Trails

## Connect People and the Outdoors

### *I Can!... Programs*





# State Parks and Trails

## Connect People and the Outdoors

### Library Pass Program



### Junior Ranger Program





# State Parks and Trails

## Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

A Parks and Trails Legacy investment has gone towards adding a new trail segment dedicated for bicyclists in **Itasca State Park**. This provides safer recreational transportation opportunities for visitors and eliminate a 3-mile shared use segment on Wilderness Drive.





# State Parks and Trails

## Acquire Land, Create Opportunities



The Parks and Trails Legacy Fund provided \$8 million dollars to develop Shipwreck Creek Campground to meet camping demands in the popular area.

Prior to this project, the only camping offered at **Split Rock Lighthouse State Park** were limited cart-in or walk-in camping opportunities



# State Parks and Trails

## Take Care of What We Have



Vault toilets at **Sibley State Park's** Lakeview Campground provide family-friendly year-round facilities to the public.

Nearby is the historic Veteran's Conservation Corps building, renovated to be used as a shower building.





# Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Renee Mattson  
Executive Director



# About the Commission

**6** Districts across 80-counties

**13** Commissioners Appointed by the Governor 2 in each District and 1 At-Large

**80** Designated Facilities

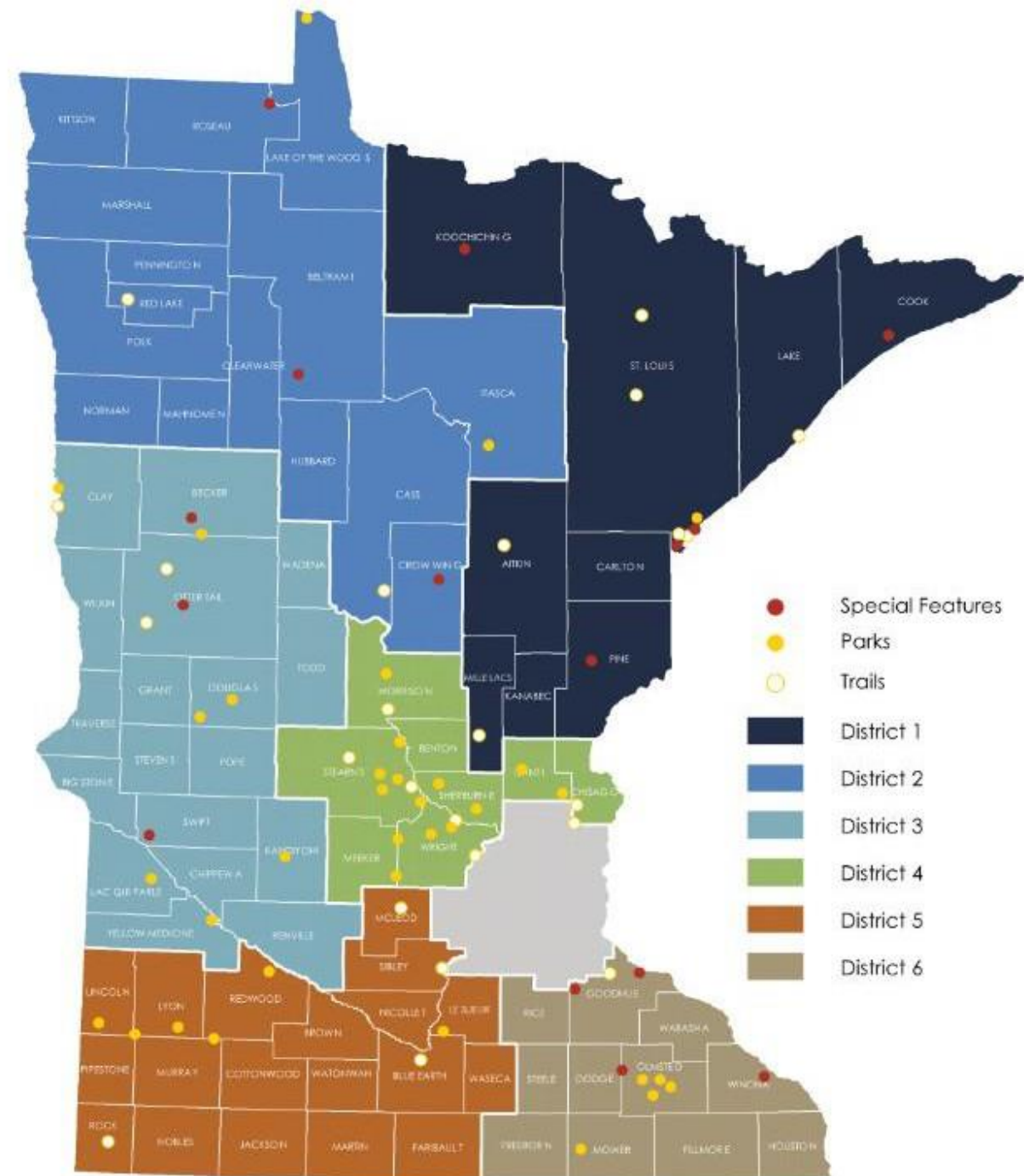
37 Natural Resource Based Parks

25 Regional Trails

17 Special Features

1 Supportive Partnership

**17** Designation Eligible Facilities





# How to Achieve Regionally Significant Designation



- Application reviewed by 5-member Evaluation Team and ranked High, Medium or Low. High ranked applications are invited to submit a qualified Master Plan
- Staff review plan for completeness and eligibility and conduct a site visit of the facility. Evaluation Team review of the Master Plan and criteria scoring. Commissioners review and deliberation for regional designation.
- Annual funding applications are submitted for regionally impactful components as described in the Master Plan. Staff conduct site visits and score applications based on established criteria. Commissioners review, comment and determine priority list.



# Classifications

## Natural Resource Based Parks

Provide a high quality outdoor recreational opportunities in a natural and scenic setting.





# Classifications

## Trails

Provide high quality recreational trail experiences that are readily accessible from an already populated or growing regional center or tourism destination.

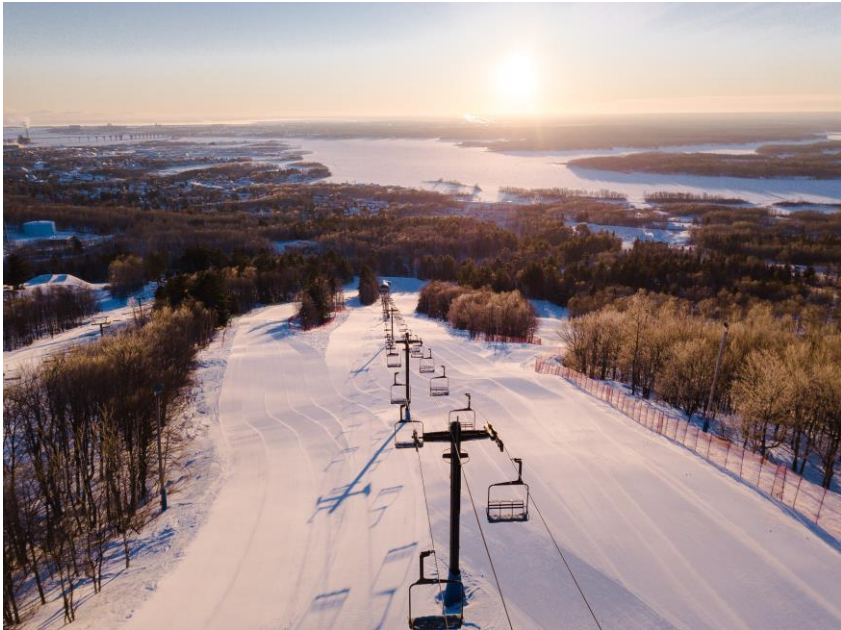




# Classifications

## Special Features

Relates to new, unique or innovative “special feature” outdoor recreational facilities of regional significance.





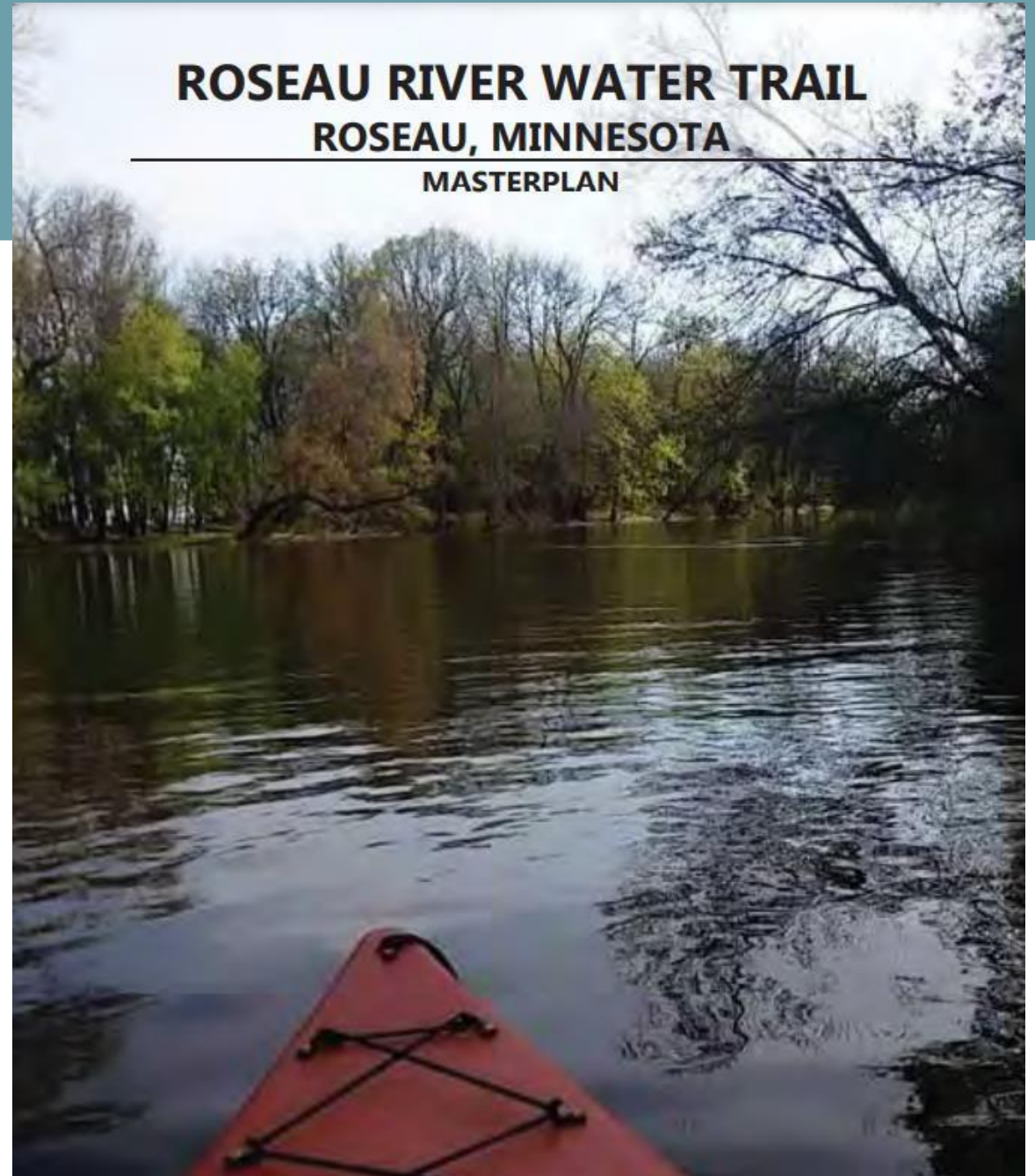
# Classifications

## Supportive Partnership - New

Regional quality city and county facilities that support large, diverse key recreation resources that are owned or controlled by non-eligible entities or units of government, such as federal, state, or non-profit organizations.



## ROSEAU RIVER WATER TRAIL ROSEAU, MINNESOTA MASTERPLAN





# Thank You

