

Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System

Parks and Trails Legacy Fund

Dear Honorable Legislators:

On behalf of the 10 implementing agencies that make up the Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System, **we are writing to request your support for SF1447 | H1370**. This continues the tradition of allocating 40% of the Parks and Trail Legacy Fund for metropolitan regional parks, 40% to the Department of Natural Resources for state parks, and 20% to the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission for Greater Minnesota parks.

The structure, visitation, and funding of the regional parks and trails makes this a system of regional and statewide significance. The Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System was established by the Legislature in 1974 to preserve and protect the last great places for outdoor recreation in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Because 93% of state parks and recreation areas are located outside of the Twin Cities, the regional parks function as the state parks of the Metro Area by providing comparable natural settings and recreational opportunities.

Our visitation is also far greater than that of the state park system. More than 69 million visits were made to the system in 2023, and the number continues to grow annually. The need for investment has never been greater, as our parks and trails are being “loved to death.”

With 46 regional parks, 12 park reserves, 8 special recreation features, and over 500 miles of regional trails, it takes more than \$133 million each year to keep the whole system in good order. Funding covers the expansion of programming and engagement to attract new visitors and increase use of parks and trails; the development of new and rehabilitation of existing regional parks and trails infrastructures and amenities; acquisition of land, and protection and restoration of natural resources; and the ability to provide nature-based outdoor recreation and skill building.

When the state includes funding for metropolitan regional parks and trails, it’s investing in the people who call this region home – creating high-quality spaces to connect in the outdoors, places that build health, and assets that drive our economy.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System

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Jeff Perry
Parks Director
Anoka County



Mark McCabe
Director of Parks and Recreation
Ramsey County



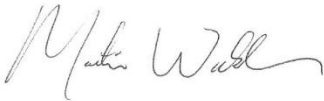
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City of Bloomington



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