

# *Enjoying and Protecting Our Land & Water*

**Minnesota's 2003–2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**



## Funding Support and Acknowledgements

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# An Overview of Minnesota's 2003–2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

**The 2003–2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is Minnesota's outdoor recreation policy plan.**

***SCORP's key uses are:***

- To establish outdoor recreation priorities for Minnesota that will help outdoor recreation and natural resource managers, the state legislature, and the executive branch make decisions about the state's outdoor recreation system.
- To set out criteria to allocate the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund investment consistent with the state's outdoor recreation priorities identified in this plan.

Seven priorities for Minnesota outdoor recreation were developed by Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors, a 29-member group of outdoor recreation and natural resource leaders.

- 1. Protect and restore the natural resource base on which outdoor recreation depends—Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, grasslands and forests**

Minnesota's natural resource base is at risk from human activities. Identifying important areas to protect and restore is essential to maintaining a healthy outdoor recreation system.

- 2. Sustain Minnesota's existing outdoor recreation facilities for future generations**

Heavy use and inadequate maintenance are taking their toll on our outdoor recreation system. We need to take better care of existing facilities.

- 3. In areas of rapid population growth, reserve prime recreation lands—such as shoreland and significant natural areas—ahead of development and provide recreation facilities such as parks, trails, and water accesses.**

As an area's population increases, the demand for recreation facilities grows—but the land to provide those opportunities may not be available. Reserving land before development provides the foundation for outdoor recreation facilities and is typically less expensive than acquiring it later.

# An Overview of Minnesota's 2003–2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

## 4. Respond to the demands of Minnesota's changing population

Our population is aging and, at the same time, the state's racial, ethnic and cultural diversity is growing. Both of these demographic trends may require changes in how we provide outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities.

## 5. Expand nature-based outdoor recreation experiences for youth living in urban areas through "close-by" access to natural areas

For children living in urban areas, the outdoors may be more theory than a real part of their daily lives. We need to create unstructured opportunities for these children to experience the natural world first-hand, near to where they live.

## 6. Improve coordination of the recreation-related activities of governmental and non-governmental providers

Our recreation system results from the efforts of a variety of organizations, both public and private. Coordination and integration among these organizations allow us to better plan and maintain a full range of recreation opportunities.

## 7. Understand the capacity of Minnesota's natural resources to support satisfying outdoor recreation opportunities

Growing population, competition for land, and diversifying outdoor recreation activities put pressure on the state's natural resources. We must understand these pressures—and the limits of our natural resources.

### These priorities are based on two guiding principles:

- Encouraging a better, highly integrated outdoor system that balances recreation and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Strengthening the awareness of the connection between outdoor recreation and good health.

These seven priorities create a framework for balancing outdoor recreation and the preservation of natural resources at every level in the state. While this comprehensive outdoor recreation plan does not dictate action, it does offer help and guidance to individual communities, so they can better understand the challenges and opportunities in front of them.



# *Introduction to Minnesota's 2003–2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*

## Introduction

This 2003–2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is Minnesota's outdoor recreation policy plan. It's a forward-thinking, directional document designed to guide outdoor recreation decision-makers and managers on policy and funding issues.

The power of this plan is the power of influence. It provides decision-makers and outdoor recreation managers a thoughtful analysis of the most significant outdoor recreation issues facing Minnesota today and suggests actions to address these issues during the next five years. Managers can review this information, think critically about it, and then apply it to their individual situations.

The plan is required by the National Park Service to maintain Minnesota's eligibility to participate in the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program. Since 1965, this federal program has provided Minnesota with more than \$60 million for outdoor recreation land acquisition and facility development.

When a local community identifies a priority in common with SCORP, there may be an opportunity to apply for Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund funding. The program is intensely competitive; projects that directly address SCORP priorities are more likely to get funding.

### *The purposes of SCORP:*

- To establish outdoor recreation priorities for Minnesota that will help outdoor recreation managers at the local and state level, the Legislature, and the Executive Branch, as they make decisions about outdoor recreation and natural resource issues.
- To guide Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund investment by explicitly tying SCORP's priorities to the funding criteria. These criteria are used to evaluate project proposals and to make investment recommendations to the Legislature for final decisions. This process is known as the Open Project Selection Process.
- To provide outdoor recreation managers with a framework to use for more specific recreation planning, such as city park planning, Wildlife Management Area planning, or U.S. Forest Service planning.

## Introduction

### *Elements of SCORP*

The plan has four parts:

- The guiding principles that underlie the outdoor recreation priorities.
- Seven outdoor recreation priorities, including recommendations.
- A description of the Open Project Selection Process.
- A brief evaluation of what is needed to identify outdoor recreation shortages in Minnesota.

This 2003–2008 SCORP is not the data-intensive, survey-driven document that state outdoor recreation plans were before 1990. Instead it sets broad policy direction for 2003–2008, based on the professional opinions of a group of outdoor recreation and natural resource leaders. It is an issue-based approach that is relevant, flexible and accessible to Minnesota’s decision-makers.

The plan provides leadership and policy direction; it leaves decision-making to the individuals closest to the outdoor recreation resources.

Readers interested in specific information and data about outdoor recreation should look at William Gartner and David Lime’s book, *Trends in Outdoor Recreation, Leisure and Tourism*, CABI Publishing, New York, New York; Ken Cordell’s book, *Outdoor Recreation in American Life: A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends*, Sagamore Publishing, Champaign, Il; and the accompanying bibliography.

### *Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors*

The 2003–2008 SCORP was developed under the guidance of a 29-member advisory committee of outdoor recreation and natural resource leaders from local, state, and federal government, non-governmental organizations, the recreation industry, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

Participants were selected to represent a broad spectrum of outdoor recreation and natural resource perspectives. Although they might have different opinions on specific issues, they share a broad view of outdoor recreation and the ability to discuss outdoor recreation issues at a strategic level. Their thoughtful approach to this policy plan is its greatest strength.

## Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors, MORPA

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*Midwest Mountaineering*

**Steve Hobbs**

*Rice Creek Watershed District*

**David Kelliher**

*Minnesota Historical Society*

**Tom Landwehr**

*Ducks Unlimited, Inc.*



The advisory group met seven times between September 2001 and September 2002 to nominate, discuss, analyze, conduct outreach on, and then prioritize Minnesota's outdoor recreation issues.

Once completed, the plan was reviewed and approved by the National Park Service, extending Minnesota's eligibility to participate in the benefits of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program for another five years.

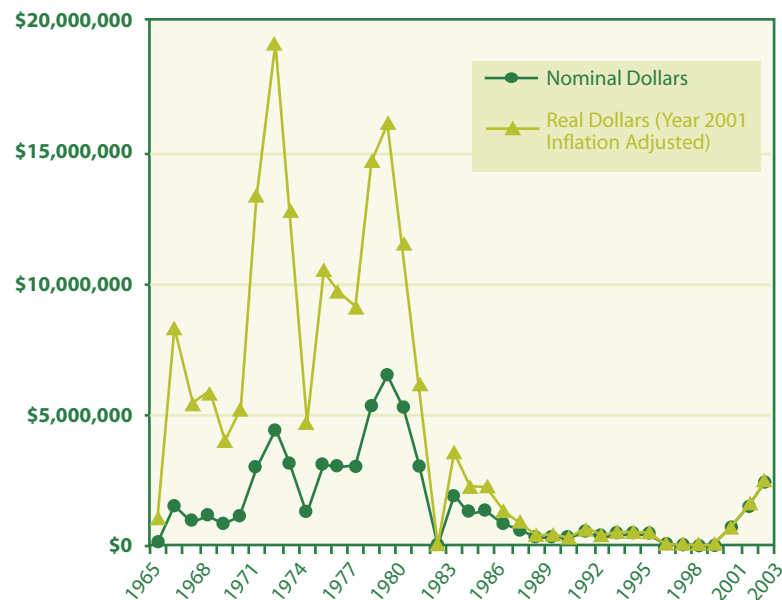
***The Land and Water Conservation Fund***

Created in 1964 by Congress, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has an important place in the history of the United States' outdoor recreation and conservation funding efforts. Since it began, this program has been responsible for the acquisition of nearly seven million acres of parkland as well as more than 37,000 state and local recreation and open space projects nationwide.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is funded primarily by offshore oil and gas receipts. Since offshore drilling for oil and gas depletes a valuable natural resource, Congress determined that it was appropriate to invest the proceeds from these offshore leases to protect

America's natural resources and encourage outdoor recreation experiences.

**LWCF Apportionments to Minnesota**



We expect the 2003 appropriation to be approximately \$2.6 million.

<p><b>Greg Mack</b> <i>Ramsey County Parks and Recreation</i></p> <p><b>Dolf Moon</b> <i>City of Hutchinson Parks, Recreation and Community Education</i></p> <p><b>Bill Morrissey</b> <i>DNR Parks and Recreation</i></p> <p><b>Steve Nelson</b> <i>Isanti County Parks and Recreation</i></p>	<p><b>Mike Passo</b> <i>Wilderness Inquiry</i></p> <p><b>Ron Payer</b> <i>DNR Fisheries</i></p> <p><b>Lee Pfannmuller</b> <i>DNR Ecological Services</i></p> <p><b>Mike Prouty</b> <i>United States Forest Service</i></p>	<p><b>Susan Schmidt</b> <i>Trust for Public Land</i></p> <p><b>Ingrid Schneider</b> <i>University of Minnesota</i></p> <p><b>John Schneider</b> <i>Metropolitan State University</i></p> <p><b>Jane Starz</b> <i>Minnesota Sportfishing Foundation</i></p> <p><b>Jane Starz</b> <i>Brown County</i></p>	<p><b>Arne Stefferud</b> <i>Metropolitan Council</i></p> <p><b>Randy Thoreson</b> <i>Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Asst Pgm</i></p> <p><b>Colleen Tollefson</b> <i>National Park Service, Minnesota Office</i></p> <p><b>Ken Vraa</b> <i>City of Eagan Parks and Recreation</i></p>
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## Introduction

Since 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund program in Minnesota has invested more than \$60 million in the state's outdoor recreation system. Almost every State Park has received funds from the program, as have numerous other state units, and thousands of local park and recreation projects.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund in Minnesota supports both a state and a local program, each receiving 50 percent of the federal appropriation. The state program supports the acquisition and development of the state outdoor recreation system. The local program, called Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation Grant Program, provides matching funds to local units of government—including recognized tribal governments—for outdoor recreation projects.

Both programs use SCORP priorities to guide project selection, through the Open Project Selection process.

- For the state program, the Department of Natural Resources convenes a committee to evaluate and select state projects.
- For the local program, Department of Natural Resources staff administers the program and evaluates project proposals based on objective criteria.

Both state and local Land and Water Conservation Fund programs concentrate fairly narrowly on land acquisition, facility rehabilitation, and development projects. SCORP addresses these topics, as well as a broad range of other issues facing Minnesota's outdoor recreation system.

## Who's Eligible to Participate?

### *State Land and Water Conservation Fund Program*

1. State Aquatic Management Areas
2. State Forests
3. State Historic Sites
4. State Parks
5. State Recreation Areas
6. State Rest Areas
7. State Scientific and Natural Areas
8. State Trails
9. State Water Access Sites
10. State Wilderness Areas
11. State Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers
12. State Wildlife Management Areas
13. Other units identified in the Outdoor Recreation Chapter (M.S. 86A) of the Minnesota State Statutes.

### *Local Outdoor Recreation Program*

1. Cities
2. Counties
3. Townships
4. Recognized Indian Tribal Governments

## Examples of Acquisition and Development Projects that May be Funded

Boating and fishing facilities

Campgrounds

Hunting areas

Natural areas

Picnic areas

Sports and playfields

Swimming facilities

Trails

Visitor information and interpretive facilities

Select support facilities

# Section 1

## Guiding Principles

The Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors identified two guiding principles for Minnesota's outdoor recreation leaders and managers to consider as they build a vision for their communities' outdoor recreation systems. These principles underlie the seven SCORP priorities:

- Encouraging a better, highly integrated outdoor system that balances recreation and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Strengthening awareness and understanding of the connection between outdoor recreation and good health.

### Encouraging an integrated and balanced outdoor system

Outdoor recreation leaders, managers and decision-makers at multiple levels of government, as well as in the private and non-profit sectors, need to work together to create and maintain an outdoor system that balances recreation and the protection of the state's natural and cultural resources. The seven SCORP priorities offer a common framework for these managers throughout the outdoor recreation system to create a more integrated, successful system.

*On the federal level*, there are a number of programs that provide outdoor recreation funding to Minnesota in addition to the Land and Water Conservation Fund program. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, for example, leverages state and local funding for recreational trails and natural and cultural resource enhancement projects across Minnesota. In Minnesota, this program is administered by the Department of Transportation.

*At the state level*, the Governor makes recommendations to the State Legislature on capital budget priorities for recreation-related land acquisition and facility development. The Legislature considers these proposals and ultimately decides how to appropriate funding each year to enhance Minnesota's outdoor recreation system.

The Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, a twenty-member bipartisan group that oversees Minnesota's Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, has responsibility for making funding recommendations to the full Legislature on how to allocate the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Future Resources Fund. Its ability to affect change in Minnesota's outdoor recreation system is significant; integrating the SCORP priorities into its decision-making is critical.

State agencies administer numerous programs that enhance Minnesota's outdoor recreation system.

*At the local level*, cities, towns and counties acquire, develop, and maintain outdoor recreation lands, sometimes with financial support from the state and federal government. In the Twin Cities seven-county metro area, the Metropolitan Council administers a regional recreation and open space system owned and operated by ten implementing agencies.

*Beyond intergovernmental coordination*, there is citizen, non-profit and private sector involvement in Minnesota's outdoor recreation system. Efforts include building support for land and cultural resource protection, conservation, recreation facility development and operation.

### Ideas for connecting outdoor recreation to better health

- Engage the media. Be proactive with community members and leaders.
- Encourage people, especially children, to get outside and walk, bike or play for an hour a day.
- Create park, trail and recreation opportunities near where people live and work.
- Ensure access to recreation facilities for schools.
- Promote opportunities for people to be physically active at work.
- Provide community facilities that encourage physical activity for all people and make sure they are open during hours when people can use them.

## Connecting Good Health and Outdoor Recreation

The majority of Minnesotans and Americans are not becoming healthier. The National Center for Health Statistics reported in 2002 that seven in ten adults do not exercise regularly and nearly four in ten are not physically active at all. Some 300,000 Americans die each year from diseases and health conditions related to an inactive lifestyle.

In Minnesota alone, an estimated \$495 million was spent during 2000 treating diseases and conditions that could be avoided if all Minnesotans were physically active.

Diseases caused by inactivity and poor nutrition are starting to affect children as well. Type two diabetes, once reserved for adults 40 and over, is now found in children as young as eight, and is growing at epidemic proportions. This sad fact can be linked to our children's more sedentary lifestyles. Over the past two decades, the number of children overweight has tripled.

Most Minnesotans understand that getting outside and being active is good for your health — and that it feels good, too. But too often we treat fitness as a fad, rather than as a way of life. When we want to lose weight, we start a diet. When we want to get in shape, we join a gym. These approaches often are hard to keep up because they don't easily fit into busy lifestyles.

Minnesota's outdoor recreation managers have a role in turning troubling health trends around, and in helping all of us incorporate healthy activities into our lives. By creating a high quality, convenient outdoor recreation system statewide that meets community needs and encourages active lifestyles, Minnesota will be an even better place to live.

## Section 2

### Priority 1

# *The Seven Outdoor Recreation Priorities & Implementation*

*Protect and restore the natural resource base on which outdoor recreation depends—  
Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands,  
grasslands and forests*

## **Background**

Over the last 200 years, the Minnesota landscape has been substantially altered. Increased agricultural activity in the 1800s meant the loss of vast tracts of native prairie, hardwood forests and wetlands. On the heels of farmers came loggers, who cut most of the northern forestland of the state by the early 1900s. During this period, there was rapid population growth and major shifts in the settlement pattern from rural locations to urban centers.



*Minnesota has a tremendous natural resource base that provides a variety of first class outdoor recreation experiences, such as canoeing on the Rum River. This base is at risk from the cumulative effects of human activities.*

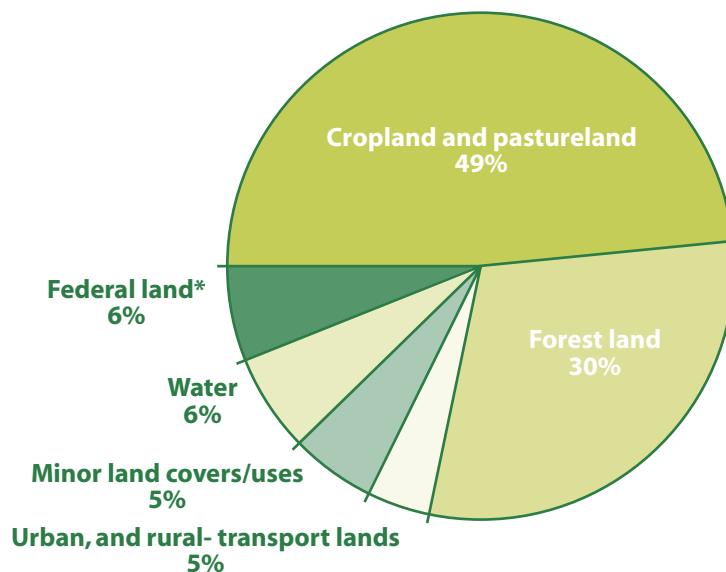
**Priority 1**

Human activities, in a very short time, dramatically changed the landscape of Minnesota. Although a number of recent conservation and restoration activities have been successful—some lakes and rivers are becoming healthier, some forests and prairies are returning to a natural state—the cumulative effects of population growth and change continue to pose a serious threat to the health of Minnesota’s land and water outdoor recreation resources.

In the northern part of the state, forestry practices have a significant impact on the landscape. Forestland acreage has increased recently as marginal agricultural land has been converted back into forests. The public, through federal, state and local governments, owns a significant share of the forest and will have a major say in the future of forest-related recreation resources.

Today, about half of Minnesota’s land is actively used for agricultural production. In the southern and western parts of the state, agricultural practices have had, and will continue to have, major influences on recreation resources. The increasing intensity of agricultural practices eliminates many of the natural resources in this part of the state, which diminishes the potential for outdoor recreation activities such as hunting. Because the agricultural region is primarily privately owned, outdoor recreation opportunities are further limited.

**Broad land use/land cover distribution in Minnesota, 1997**  
(Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Resources Inventory)

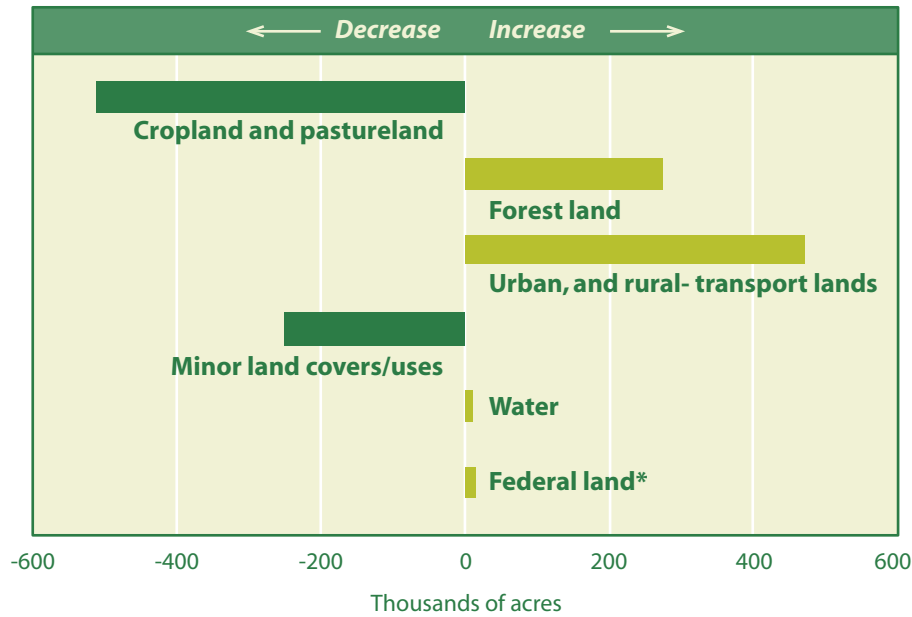


\*"Federal land" includes all types of federal ownership, some 80 percent of which is administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

**Priority 1**

**Change in broad land use/land cover distribution in Minnesota, 1982 to 1997**

(Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Resources Inventory)



\*\*Federal land" includes all types of federal ownership, some 80 percent of which is administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

Minnesota’s urban areas, although a relatively small part of the state’s land, are also placing stress on our natural resources. Urban lands and inter-urban transportation facilities are expanding rapidly. This pace of urban expansion is caused both by population growth and by the way urban lands are developing—with lower density per acre, which takes up more land overall. Growth in urban uses also is occurring in areas rich with outdoor amenities—particularly those with shorelands—impacting nearby recreation resources such as lakes and streams.

Today, Minnesota’s natural resource base is at risk. Every day, Minnesotans choose to fill wetlands, develop shoreland, cultivate floodplains, and destroy native aquatic and terrestrial vegetation. Across the landscape and over time, the effects of these individual acts are compounded, resulting in impaired ecosystems. Poor water quality, undesirable fish communities, and a diminished aesthetic are among the results.

In some areas these pressures have diminished the quality of outdoor recreation experiences—swimming is no longer an option; hunting access has been closed; and lands open for hiking and observing wildlife are lost.

These pressures on Minnesota’s natural resources continue, in part, because there is no scientific certainty of just how much use is overuse. These pressures are scattered across the state; their cumulative impact is often not well understood. Determining the delicate balance among economic, social and environmental values is an uncertain and important task.



## Challenges

Minnesota will continue to change. It isn't possible—or desirable—to stop development until all its impacts are perfectly understood, but it is critical that communities take time to consider what they want to leave for their children and grandchildren, and to collectively identify important natural and cultural resources for protection,

restoration and enjoyment.

In cases where outdoor recreation or other activities are degrading a natural resource, communities must address these problems together so that solutions will be successful and sustainable.

## Recommendations

- 1 Reserve high quality natural resources of local, regional or statewide significance.
- 2 Rehabilitate existing recreation facilities to address situations where current use poses a threat to natural resources.
- 3 Restore degraded natural areas to enhance ecological sustainability and recreational use, i.e., restoration of shoreland, wetland, river, floodplain, prairie and forest areas as well as brownfields, rail corridors, and landfills.
- 4 Encourage effective land management and recreational development that protects resource quality and uses current best management practices.
- 5 Use existing scientific knowledge to guide natural resource management decisions and develop broad public understanding.
- 6 Define and implement desirable levels of use for recreational activities based on their impacts to natural resources and recreational experiences.

### Examples

#### *illustrating these recommendations*

- A community along the Mississippi River purchases neighboring bluffslands to protect them from development.
- A farmer in Southwestern Minnesota restores an upland area to prairie to improve pheasant habitat.
- A lakeshore homeowner fixes a failing septic system to protect the adjacent lake.
- Community members and governmental agencies work cooperatively to control invasive exotic species at a local park.

## Priority 2

### *Sustain Minnesota's existing outdoor recreation facilities for future generations.*

#### Background

Minnesota's outdoor recreation system has grown substantially over the past 35 years. Today we have local, regional, state and national parks, trails, and open spaces.

Minnesota's State Park system, for example, is only a small part of the state's entire outdoor recreation system, yet it is made up of 81 authorized units with more than 1,600 buildings, 23 visitor centers, 332 miles of roads, and 72 bridges. Keeping these facilities in good operating condition is an ongoing and costly challenge.

Our outdoor recreation system, which includes cultural resources, is deteriorating because of heavy use and inadequate rehabilitation maintenance. It is at risk of slipping into greater disrepair unless we take steps to maintain the basic infrastructure.

- Funding needs for capital improvements such as replacement of major building components (roofs, furnaces, water heaters, etc.) exceed the capacity of most annual operating budgets. Critical rehabilitation efforts are often deferred, resulting in premature deterioration of outdoor recreation infrastructure.



*Cross-county skiing at Gooseberry Falls State Park on the North Shore of Lake Superior is a popular winter activity. Preserving outdoor experiences like these requires regular investment in existing facilities to keep them in good shape throughout their useful lives.*

- New developments or major redevelopments are more visible to constituents than rehabilitation efforts. The appeal of these new projects can overshadow rehabilitation needs.
- Rehabilitation maintenance projects can end up on the back burner because it seems viable to put them off for another year. At some point, continued deferral will result in irreparable harm to the facility.

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## Challenges

Outdoor recreation managers need to establish life-cycle maintenance schedules that identify rehabilitation needs and the funds necessary to maintain areas and facilities throughout their useful lives.

With these reinvestment cycles, managers should use current best management practices and standards for maintenance.

Outdoor recreation managers who use a systematic approach create an environment of accountability, which, in turn gives credibility when explaining funding needs to decision makers and the public.

Preventive maintenance of existing facilities is cost-effective. Securing a funding source dedicated to maintenance guards investment in facilities into the future.

## Recommendations

- 1 Rehabilitate existing facilities to maintain the current levels of use and the quality of visitor experiences.
- 2 Rehabilitate existing facilities to expand current uses or add additional ones.
- 3 Replace existing obsolete and outdated facilities with improved ones, while protecting important historic structures.
- 4 Encourage sustainable design principles that reduce long-term operating expenses.
- 5 Apply life-cycle budgeting principles.
- 6 Communicate benefits of outdoor recreation experiences to Minnesotans and cultivate grass-roots support to care for facilities.
- 7 Create incentives for communities to establish endowments for facility maintenance.

### Examples

#### *illustrating these recommendations*

- A community rehabilitates a bathhouse in a campground to meet health requirements and expand capacity.
- A town replaces unsafe playground equipment.
- A state park restores an historic Civilian Conservation Corps-era structure for enhanced public access.
- A county develops a reinvestment schedule to maintain and update aging facilities.
- A city upgrades a park facility to improve the energy efficiency of the mechanical equipment and reduce the long-term operating expenses.

## Priority 3

*In areas of rapid population growth, reserve prime recreation lands, such as shoreland and significant natural areas, ahead of development and provide recreation facilities such as parks, trails, and water accesses.*

### Background

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that most of the last decade's growth occurred in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area, in regional centers like New Ulm and Rochester, and around desirable natural places, such as the Brainerd and Grand Rapids lake areas. Growth was especially pronounced in the Twin Cities collar counties, where the average population increase from 1990 to 2000 was more than 35 percent.

In rapidly growing areas, prime recreation lands must be preserved before development occurs in order to establish an outdoor recreation foundation. Planning and inventory work is essential to creating a successful system.

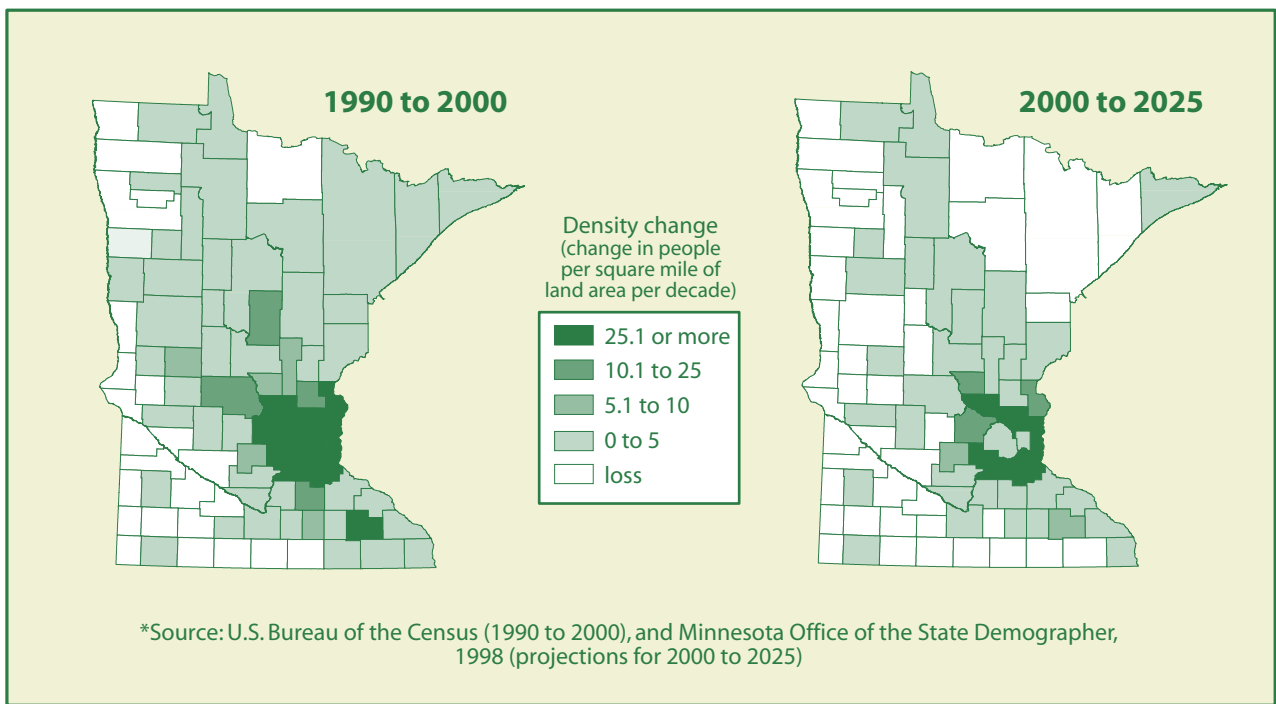


*During the 1990s Minnesota grew rapidly, especially around desirable natural places like lakes. In order to establish an outdoor recreation foundation, prime recreation and conservation lands must be preserved before development occurs.*

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### Population change in Minnesota: recent history (1990 to 2000) and projections (2000 to 2025)\*

Priority 3



While the capacity of Minnesota’s communities to do this work varies greatly, there are resources that can help. Connecting communities to these resources is an important step to meeting growing demand for outdoor recreation facilities.

Once land is reserved, facilities such as parks, trails and water accesses can be developed. Again there are resources available to help communities with this work, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund program, state agencies and their programs, numerous nongovernmental organizations, and the business community.

## Priority 3

### Challenges

The chance to conserve open-space for outdoor recreation in a growing urban area is often lost to residential, commercial and industrial development. The greatest opportunities for the state's outdoor recreation system lie in our decision-makers' abilities to create a shared vision with citizens long before land is developed or water access is blocked. To meet growing needs and ensure satisfying, convenient outdoor recreation experiences, community leaders must act before land prices skyrocket beyond the limited reach of taxpayers.

In already developed growing communities, outdoor recreation leaders should identify industrial, residential or public lands that are being converted to new uses (e.g., abandoned school yards). These transitions offer once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to recapture developed lands and restore them to open space that can become part of the outdoor recreation network. River and rail corridors often have tremendous potential to provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, including connecting communities to desirable places.

### Recommendations

- 1 Conduct outdoor recreation planning at the local level.
- 2 Identify significant natural and cultural resource areas expected to have rapid population growth. Add variables to the inventory process to include "disturbed" lands.
- 3 Acquire open space and recreation lands in areas of rapid population growth.
- 4 Redevelop/renovate post-industrial areas to recreational and openspace uses, while preserving significant historic and cultural resources.
- 5 Rehabilitate existing facilities to meet the needs in areas of rapid population growth.
- 6 Develop new recreational facilities in areas of rapid population growth.
- 7 Create an "opportunity fund" to address outdoor recreation acquisition needs in areas of rapid population growth.
- 8 Expand financial partnerships among public, private and non-profit organizations to reserve open space and recreation land. Consider creating a corporate outdoor recreation council.

## Examples

*illustrating these recommendations*

- A growing community on the outskirts of the seven-county metro area inventories its lands to determine what needs protection and/or incorporation into its outdoor recreation system.
- A park manager rehabilitates an existing bike trail to accommodate two-way traffic.
- A rapidly growing community establishes a park dedication ordinance to support growing recreational needs.
- An historic preservation organization purchases a tract of farmland next to an important state historic site to preserve views to and from the site.
- A city buys out a floodplain development and restores it to open space and low-impact recreation opportunities.

## Priority 4

*Respond to the demands of Minnesota's changing population.*

## Background

Minnesota is becoming more racially and culturally diverse—although still much less so than our nation as a whole. The percent of Minnesotans of color increased from 6.3 percent in 1990 to 11.8 percent in 2000. The State Demographic Center projects this will increase to about 17 percent by 2025. These changes are occurring in suburbs, regional centers outside the Twin Cities and many rural areas, as well as in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The Baby Boom generation is getting older—and Minnesotans are living longer. The median age—the midpoint of the age distribution—increased three years between 1990 and 2000, from 32.4 to 35.4. The State Demographer projects that more than half of Minnesotans will be over age 40 by 2025.

Nowhere in Minnesota is aging as pronounced as it is in rural areas. While 30 percent of the state's population lives in rural Minnesota, 41 percent of those 65 and older live there.

Many seniors also are retiring earlier, with more time to devote to outdoor recreational activities.

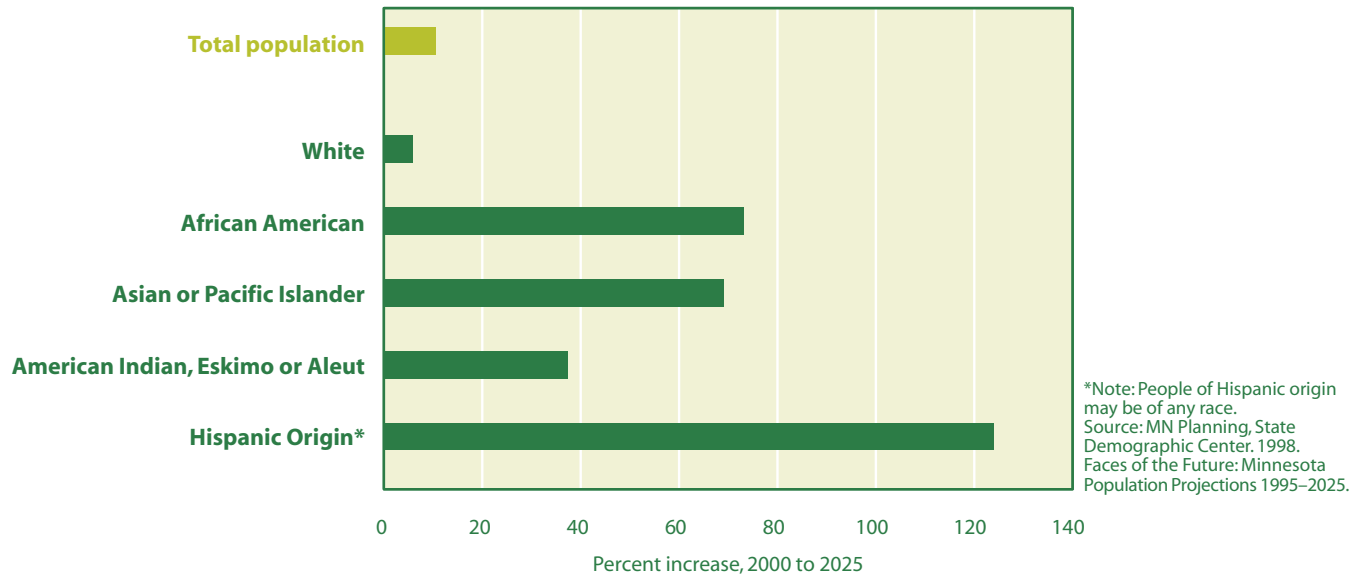


Photo courtesy of the Star Tribune

*Invented 50 years ago, kato is an Asian sport that looks like a mix of soccer and volleyball. Minnesota's outdoor recreation and natural resource managers must better understand the changing populations so we are better able to respond to new and growing demands to outdoor recreation.*



**Projected percent increase in Minnesota population by race and Hispanic origin, 2000 to 2025**

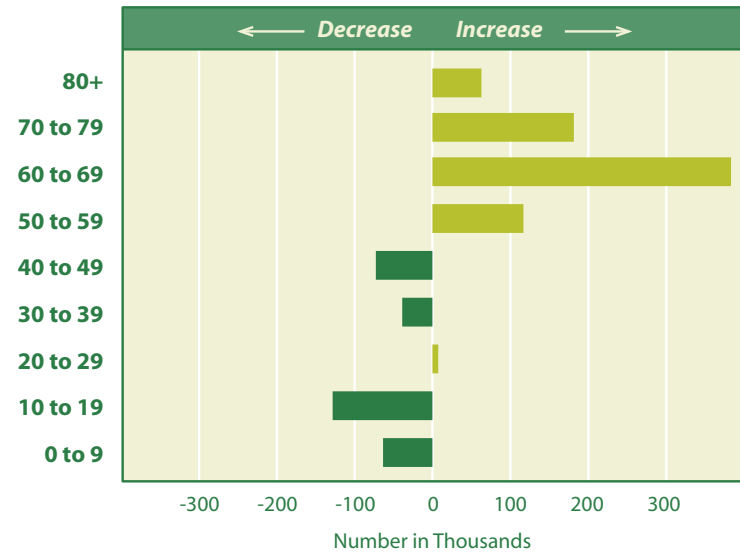


**Minnesota population by age and sex, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Projected change in Minnesota population by age, 2000 to 2025**



Source: MN Planning, State Demographic Center, 1998. Faces of the Future: Minnesota Population Projections 1995-2025

## Priority 4

### Challenges

We must understand our communities' changing populations so that we are better able to respond to new and growing demands for outdoor recreation.

Creating an open environment that encourages dialogue between citizens and recreation providers is a good first step. In some instances however, it is not enough. The outdoor recreation community should proactively engage communities, using innovative outreach techniques, to better understand recreation needs, so that all Minnesotans have a hand in shaping our state's outdoor recreation system.

We need up-to-date information on Minnesotans' outdoor recreation preferences and expectations. Conducting a survey of outdoor recreation needs in partnership with the business and tourism community and advocacy groups would help us understand and be more responsive to a broader group of Minnesotans.

In keeping with Minnesota's goal of becoming a model state for integrated outdoor recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities, the elderly, and other citizens, all public and private outdoor recreation service providers should fully accept and support\*:

- Americans with Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines, for new structures such as shelters, bathrooms, and drinking fountains.
- Americans with Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, for play areas.
- Final Report on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, for non-structural facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas, trails, and beaches.
- Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines for Recreation Facilities, for boating facilities, fishing piers, golf courses, swimming pools, and other facilities.

\* For a copy of any of the above reports, visit the U.S. Access Board website at [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov) or call 202-272-5434.

## Recommendations

- 1 Design facilities to serve broad ranges of people and their outdoor recreation activities.
- 2 Develop facilities to address the outdoor recreation needs of Minnesota's new immigrant communities.
- 3 Rehabilitate existing facilities using universal design principles.
- 4 Conduct a comprehensive statewide survey of outdoor recreation demands in Minnesota. Partner with the recreation industry and other interested parties.
- 5 Determine where there are shortages of outdoor recreation opportunities among specific populations.
- 6 Develop and use innovative outreach approaches to better understand the needs of new immigrant and minority groups.
- 7 Create a Minnesota outdoor recreation training collaborative to explore inclusiveness, race, health, and access in our recreation system and offer education and awareness training opportunities.
- 8 Create incentives to help outdoor recreation managers meet these changes.
- 9 Promote the health benefits of outdoor recreation.

### Examples

*illustrating these recommendations*

- An outdoor recreation manager having a difficult time attracting a particular group to a public meeting goes directly to the group to learn its needs.
- In order to accommodate large family groups, a city expands its picnic shelters.
- A small town experiencing a significant increase of new immigrants converts an existing park into a soccer facility.

**Priority 4**

## Priority 5

*Expand nature-based outdoor recreation experiences for youth living in urban areas through “near-by” access to the natural world that allows for frequent and unstructured play and exploration.*

## Background

An interest in conservation often begins with childhood experiences in the outdoors, such as fishing with the family, or exploring a small wooded lot near home with neighborhood friends.

Today, getting children outside for unstructured exploration of the natural world can be challenging, especially in highly developed urban areas where green spaces are fewer and smaller. Some children do not have regular opportunities available to them; others are busy with highly structured lives.

Combined with the dramatic growth of Minnesota’s urban population, this could signal future trouble for Minnesota’s natural resources, because healthy ecosystems depend on an engaged and informed citizenry. If future generations of Minnesotans have not developed an appreciation of nature as children, will they choose to protect and enhance our natural resources as adults?



MNDNR

*Children living in urban areas need opportunities to experience nature firsthand. We need to rethink how natural areas fit into urban settings, and then deliberately plan to include nature as an essential and regular part of children’s lives.*

## Challenges

Urban children can develop an appreciation of the natural world through:

- An experience outside the city, whether it is a trip to an environmental learning center, a camp or a family cabin. These important experiences are not available to all urban children.
- Environmental education in classrooms and community nature centers. Schoolteachers and environmental educators create wonderful learning opportunities using available resources such as nearby ponds or wooded lots for study and exploration. Schools may not offer these opportunities frequently, and the experiences can be highly structured.

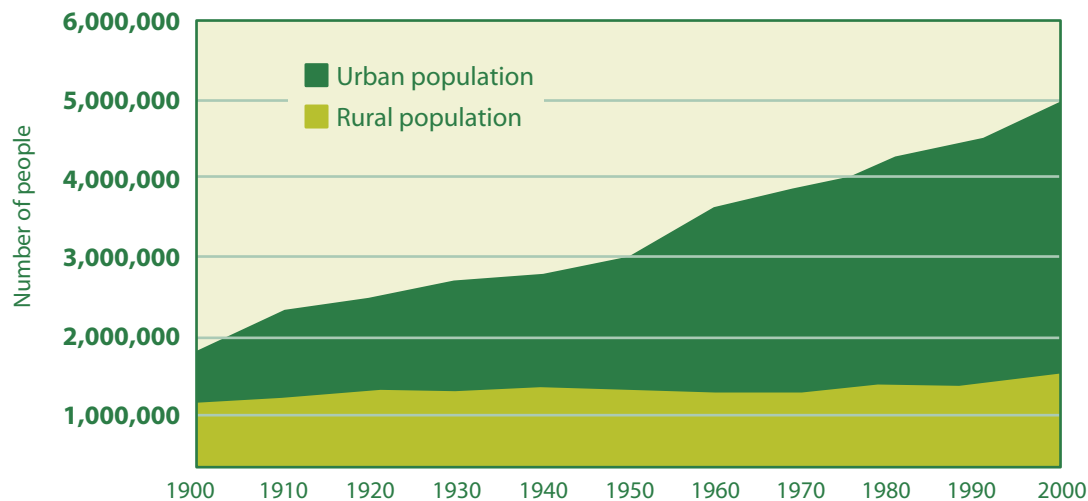
Both of these approaches play an important role in building young conservationists, but they can be limited by their episodic, infrequent occurrence, and may inadvertently give children a sense of nature as a special “destination,” rather than as a regular and important part of their daily lives.

A complementary way to cultivate appreciation of the natural world in children is to ensure they have access to natural areas near where they

live, for fun and unstructured exploration. This suggests development of small-scale, urban, natural parks — ones that may have only ten to twenty acres of ponds, marshes, gardens, and woods, but that are numerous and accessible to even the most developed urban neighborhood.

How children develop an appreciation of the natural world is a topic worthy of further study, including a longitudinal approach tracking the effects environmental education and experiences have on youth. Insights from such a study could guide parents, communities, schools, and conservation organizations in their efforts to instill an appreciation of nature in all youth. Broad participation from schools, the environmental community, government and business would be essential.

Urban and rural population changes in Minnesota since 1900\*



\*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1900 to 2000).

## Priority 5

### Recommendations

- 1 Provide accessible, nature-based recreation opportunities to urban youth.
- 2 Establish numerous neighborhood-scale natural areas for unstructured exploration and play.
- 3 Better understand the long-term effects of environmental education on youth.  
Develop and implement nature programming that stresses frequent, informal activities in urban neighborhoods using local parks, playgrounds, and natural resources
- 4 Develop nature-focused pre-schools or magnet schools that promote frequent, positive experiences in natural areas
- 5 Develop fundamental principles for this issue, i.e., Theodore Wirth's principle that every residence in a city should be no further than a six-block walk to a park.

### Examples

#### *illustrating these recommendations*

- A city incorporates a small-scale, natural park into an existing urban playground.
- An urban school district creates after-school programming focused on getting kids outdoors into nature.
- A nonprofit organization convenes a diverse group of educators, outdoor recreation managers, and city administrators to develop principles and fundamentals for urban natural parks.



*Indian Mounds Park, the site of 2,000 year-old burial mounds for the ancient Hopewell Indians, offers beautiful views of the Mississippi River and downtown St. Paul. The city-owned park is part of the Battle Creek Regional Park and is one of the many parks that lie within the 72-mile Mississippi National River & Recreation Area. This area is a unit of the National Park System that works with over 100 public and private partner organizations. The relationships among these partners is a good example of a cooperative effort geared to balancing the provision of high-quality outdoor recreation experiences and conservation of land and water.*

## ***Improve coordination of the recreation-related activities of governmental and non-governmental providers***

**Priority  
6**

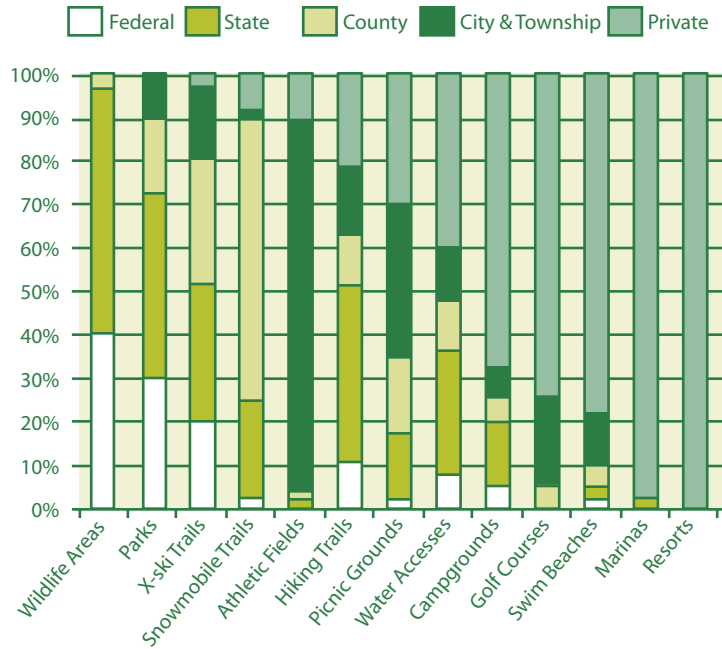
### **Background**

A wide variety of governmental, non-profit and private organizations make up Minnesota's outdoor recreation system. In general, these entities have unique roles throughout the system, although there is some overlap.

- Federal providers include the US Fish and Wildlife Service (e.g., Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge), the National Park Service (e.g., Voyageurs National Park), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (e.g., Mississippi River lock and dam system), and the U.S. Forest Service (e.g., the Chippewa National Forest).
- State providers include the Department of Natural Resources (e.g., State Parks and Forests), the Department of Transportation (e.g. State Rest Areas), and the Minnesota Historical Society (e.g. State Historic Sites). These three agencies are charged with administering the state's outdoor recreation system, as described in Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation Act.

## Priority 6

### Providers of Minnesota's Recreation Facilities\*



Source: MN DNR and MN DTED, Minnesota's Outdoor Legacy: Strategies for the 90's. SCORP for 1990-1994.

\* The above chart shows the mix of outdoor recreation providers in Minnesota. The units of measure vary by facility. For example, Wildlife Management Areas and Parks are measured by area in public ownership; Trails are measured by mileage; Water Access is measured by number of parking spaces; and campgrounds are measured by number of campsites.

- Local providers, including counties, cities and towns, offer two distinct types of outdoor recreation facilities:
  - Local facilities that focus on activities geared to population centers such as playgrounds, trails, athletic fields, picnic areas and skate parks.
  - Regional facilities that offer natural resource-based activities and significant acreage and that draw from large population areas.
- Private for-profit providers focus in niche areas, such as campgrounds, marinas, resorts, golf courses, and swimming beaches. The role of the private sector typically has been to provide opportunities where there is potential to generate a profit.
- Private non-profit organizations such as The Nature Conservancy or YMCA Camp Widjiwagen provide significant outdoor recreation resources through privately owned and operated conservation lands, nature centers, residential environmental learning centers, youth camps and similar efforts. In addition, some of these organizations acquire land and donate it to governmental agencies for long-term recreation and open space purposes.



## Challenges

We need stronger lines of communication between outdoor recreation providers and Minnesota citizens to improve coordination and delivery of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system. We can create a constructive and responsive environment by encouraging simple and direct exchanges of ideas and concerns. The result will be a better outdoor recreation system for Minnesota.

SCORP lays out outdoor recreation priorities from the state level, but there also are other ways to communicate issues and share information, everything from joint publication of maps and guides to development of shared outdoor recreation facilities and equipment.

Improving the way technical and financial information is shared could lead to better delivery of outdoor recreation opportunities. This information, if it is to be useful, must help outdoor recreation managers make better facility and land management decisions. For example, improved communication of universal design principles at the site level would lead to more accessible facilities.

Increased understanding of mutual goals and responsibilities leads to more cooperative, uniform efforts to minimize overlap of services and impacts to natural resources. It may also lead to a better understanding of the private sector role in providing parts of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system.

Pursuing common goals—rather than overlapping or even conflicting ones—at the State Legislature should lead to better outcomes for common interests and concerns.

## Recommendations

- 1 Coordinate outdoor recreation services and systems among levels of government and private providers.
- 2 Balance facility development and resource impacts by coordinating project implementation with interested groups and individuals.
- 3 Promote and implement SCORP priorities with the State Legislature, the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, state and local level programs, decision-makers, and the public.  
  
Develop an interdisciplinary, intergovernmental outdoor recreation coordinating council that includes the private sector to share information, build legislative initiatives, define research needs, and promote grant stewardship.
- 4 Develop a group similar to the Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors to oversee SCORP implementation and share information.
- 5 Create an outdoor recreation website for Minnesota that includes technical, financial and scientific information, as well as links to other relevant information.

Priority 6

## Priority 6

### Examples

*illustrating these recommendations*

- A group of four local governments create a partnership to provide shared recreational facilities, such as parks and trails.
- A regional development commission jointly promotes regional outdoor recreation opportunities such as biking, golfing, or birdwatching.
- Two adjacent communities construct, manage, and program a new water park.

*Understand the capacity of Minnesota's natural resources to support satisfying outdoor recreation opportunities*

**Background**

The essential responsibility of outdoor recreation managers is to provide outdoor facilities for recreation—at the same time conserving natural resources for future generations. To maintain a quality outdoor recreation system, we must determine what impacts from recreational activities are acceptable and then develop appropriate management actions to enhance or maintain those acceptable limits.

Ultimately, this leads to a healthier and more stable outdoor recreation system. This kind of assessment will guide investment decisions and shorten the response time required to recognize and address capacity problems.

Currently, there is not much Minnesota-specific information on the outdoor recreation system's capacity to support satisfying recreation opportunities. The magnitude of excess use and dissatisfaction is often



MNDNR

*Shovel Point at Tettegouche State Park is a major attraction for walkers and climbers. Many years of use have degraded the hillside above the towering cliffs of Lake Superior. Here a crew from the Minnesota Conservation Corps is planting native grass and wildflower seedlings to restore and stabilize the area.*

## Priority 7

not well understood and is insufficient for sound management decisions.

### Challenges

We must first understand the current status of the recreation resources and then devise an approach to enhance or maintain acceptable recreation resource conditions, adjusting use accordingly and implementing other management changes when possible.

Our challenge is to know where the line is between sensible use and overuse of Minnesota's outdoor recreation resources. When we understand that, we can better manage the increasing pressures on our natural resources and create a healthier and more stable outdoor recreation system.

### Examples

#### *illustrating these recommendations*

- A federal agency limits group sizes in wilderness areas to mitigate overcrowding.
- A city redesigns adult softball facilities to accommodate more participants and enhance safety.
- Forest managers require that off-highway vehicles stay on designated trails to avoid soil compaction

### Recommendations

- 1 Better understand the physical and social capacity of outdoor recreation resources to accommodate recreation use.
- 2 Help outdoor recreation managers understand impacts on resources and visitor experiences and apply management approaches to alleviate problems.
- 3 Better understand and support the role of the private sector (both for-profit and non-profit) to provide for parts of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system.
- 4 Better understand the potential use of impact fees to mitigate the effects a particular activity has on recreation resources.
- 5 Disperse use across recreation areas to alleviate pressures on heavily used areas.
- 6 Acquire, develop, rehabilitate, or replace existing facilities to reduce recreation use conflicts by separating or redesigning facilities.
- 7 Acquire, develop, rehabilitate, or replace existing facilities to ease pressure on near-by, high-use recreation facilities that cannot sustain current use levels.

## Examples of Resource and Visitor Experience Impacts

Overuse or inappropriate use of recreation areas can have negative impacts on the resources themselves and on the experiences of visitors to the area. The examples listed here are from *Maintaining the Quality of Park Resources and Visitor Experiences: A Handbook for Managers* by Anderson, Lime and Wang, 1998.

### Negative impacts on resources

- Trail deterioration, trail erosion, excessive trail muddiness, excessive trail width, excessive trail depth/development of tread ruts or grooves; development of social trails.
- Campsite deterioration, excessive campsite size, loss of vegetation, erosion of campsite soils, proliferation of tent sites, depletion of dead and downed wood for campfires, proliferation of fire rings; proliferation of campsites.
- Cultural resource deterioration, defacement of cultural resources, theft of cultural resources.
- Improper disposal of human body waste, unacceptable amounts of human body waste at site.
- Water pollution, contamination of water body with fecal material, soap residue, chemical substances, or food and animal remains.
- Unacceptable levels or types of litter, improper disposal of garbage, unacceptable evidence of humans (e.g., trail markers, cairns).
- Trampling of vegetation, loss of herbaceous vegetation or seedlings, change in species composition, introduction of exotic species, improper collection of specimens, deterioration of grazing areas, trampling of tree roots, nails in trees, peeling of bark, carving initials/words into bark, felling of live trees.
- Soil compaction, erosion of organic litter and soil, excessive muddiness, disturbance of cryptobiotic crust.
- Wildlife and fishery impacts, destruction or loss of habitat, change in species composition, introduction of exotic fauna, harassment or disturbance of wildlife, competition for food sources, attraction of wildlife, illegal hunting or fishing.

### Negative impacts on visitor experiences

- Quality of visitor experience affected by trail or campsite deterioration.
- Unacceptable levels of crowding at attraction sites; unacceptable number of encounters at trailheads, in visitor centers, on trails, or at campsites; congestion, unacceptable traffic conditions on park roads, lack of available parking spaces.
- Visitor conflicts due to incompatible uses, encounters with large groups or parties dissimilar to one's own, rowdiness by itself or in combination with excessive consumption of alcohol.
- Noncompliant behavior, vandalism, resource destructive behavior.
- Inadequate or inappropriate levels of access to facilities, natural areas, or cultural resources; facility design that fails to accommodate the needs of the broadest possible spectrum of people, including persons with disabilities.
- Threats to visitor safety, behavior that jeopardizes the safety of the individual or of other visitors, failure to maintain a safe environment through facility design, maintenance, or other means.

# Section 3

## *The Open Project Selection Process*

### **Purpose**

The Open Project Selection Process is a systematic approach for administering the Land and Water Conservation Fund financial assistance programs. It ensures equal opportunity for all eligible projects by establishing public notification, application assistance, and an objective review system.

The criteria and standards for selecting projects are based on the seven priorities in this document.

State and local Land and Water Conservation Fund programs have a recurring funding cycle.

- For the state-level program, projects are solicited every two years from the managers of the state outdoor recreation system.
- For the local outdoor recreation program, projects are solicited annually from cities, counties, townships and recognized tribal governments. The Department of Natural Resources local grants staff asks potential grantees to submit application request forms before January 31 of each year; project applications are due on or before March 31.

### **Steps in Minnesota's Open Project Selection Process**

#### **1. Public Notification**

- For the state-level program, all potential grantees are contacted and made aware of the availability of funding (Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation, and the Minnesota Historical Society).
- For the local outdoor recreation program, Department of Natural Resources local grants staff informs all potential project sponsors each year in November about the availability of program funding. At this time, potential project sponsors can request application materials that include Minnesota's overall objectives for using the funding, the types of areas and facilities eligible for funding, and an explanation of how the open project selection process works. Potential applicants also may obtain application materials by visiting the DNR website at [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us), or calling 1-888-646-6367 or 651-296-6157.

## 2. Program Assistance

For the local outdoor recreation program, DNR local grants staff assists potential applicants with the preparation of their project proposals, including prerequisite requirements such as the need to hold a public meeting before submitting the proposal and the necessity of having matching funds.

## 3. The Priority Rating and Project Selection System

Minnesota has an objective, two-step process to evaluate and select state and local projects for Land and Water Conservation Fund monies.

- The first step is explicitly based on the seven SCORP priorities. These priorities have an array of related criteria that are based on recommendations from Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors. Only those projects closely meeting the SCORP priorities will move forward to the second evaluation step.
- In the second step, project proposals are evaluated on site-level design criteria, including accessibility, quality of design, and safety. This step ensures that projects selected for funding are viable, well designed, and in conformance with current laws and standards.

*There are separate selection processes for the state and local programs:*

- On the state level, DNR staff convenes a review committee that evaluates all state outdoor recreation proposals and recommends top proposals for funding to the State Legislature for final approval.
- On the local level, DNR staff evaluates project proposals according to established criteria approved by the National Park Service, and selects top proposals for funding.



## State and Local Land and Water Conservation Fund Selection Guidelines

The state and local Land and Water Conservation Fund programs use the following selection guidelines to evaluate project proposals. These guidelines are based on the seven priorities in this document.

### SCORP Priorities

#### Priority 1

*Protect and restore the natural resource base on which outdoor recreation depends—Minnesota’s lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, grasslands, and forests.*

- A. Would the proposed project reserve high-quality natural resources, such as wetlands, shore lands, native prairie, woodlands, bluff lands, etc.
- B. Would the proposed project rehabilitate existing facilities to address situations where current use poses a threat to natural resources (i.e., parking lot draining to a lake, redirecting intensive recreational uses etc.)?
- C. Would the proposed project restore degraded natural areas to enhance ecological sustainability and recreational use (e.g., shore land and prairie restoration, reforestation, etc.)?

#### Priority 2

*Sustain Minnesota’s existing outdoor recreation facilities for future generations.*

- A. Would the proposed project replace existing obsolete and outdated facilities with new ones?
- B. Would the proposed project rehabilitate existing facilities to maintain or expand levels of use and activities?
- C. Would the design and materials used for the proposed project result in greater durability, resistance to vandalism, and lower long-term operation and maintenance costs?
- D. Would the design and materials used for the proposed project result in reduced energy use, reduced water use, use of recycled and recyclable materials, and similar measures to reduce environmental impacts?

#### Priority 3

*In areas of rapid population growth, reserve prime recreation lands—such as shore land and significant natural areas—ahead of development and provide recreational facilities such as parks, trails, and water accesses.*

- A. Would the proposed project result in the acquisition, redevelopment, renovation, rehabilitation or development of open space and recreation lands to meet the needs in areas of rapid population growth?



#### **Priority 4**

*Respond to demands of Minnesota's changing population.*

- A. Would the proposed project result in the development of facilities that serve broad ranges of people and their outdoor recreation activities, such as parks and trails?
- B. Would the proposed project result in the significant rehabilitation of existing facilities using universal design principles?
- C. Would the proposed project result in the redevelopment or renovation of post-industrial areas to recreational uses (e.g., river and trail corridors)?

#### **Priority 5**

*Expand nature-based outdoor recreation experiences for youth living in urban areas through "nearby" access to the natural world.*

- A. Would the proposed project provide nature-based recreation activities that are accessible to urban youth through a neighborhood-scale natural area for unstructured exploration and play?

#### **Priority 6**

*Improve coordination of the recreation-related activities of governmental and non-governmental providers.*

- A. Would the proposed project demonstrate coordination and integration of outdoor recreation services and systems?

#### **Priority 7**

*Understand the capacity of Minnesota's natural resources to support satisfying outdoor recreation opportunities.*

- A. Would the proposed project result in acquisition, development, rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities to ease pressure on near-by, high use recreation facilities that cannot sustain current use levels?
- B. Would the proposed project result in acquisition, development, rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities to reduce recreation use conflicts or to relieve pressure on heavily used areas by separating or redesigning facilities?

## Additional Selection Guidelines for the Local Outdoor Recreation Program

In addition to the seven SCORP priorities, the local outdoor recreation program uses the following criteria to evaluate local project proposals.

### Application Prerequisites

*In order to be considered for funding, the applicant must meet the following prerequisites:*

- Addresses at least one priority identified in the SCORP
- Previous Outdoor Recreation Grant awards to the applicant have been or are being satisfactorily closed and properly managed.
- Existing park facilities administered by the applicant appear to be adequately maintained.
- Complete application has been submitted by the application deadline.
- The proposed project includes at least one of the facilities from the Eligible Recreation Facilities list in the Program manual.

## Other Criteria

### Commitment to Project

- A. Does the applicant have an active parks and recreation organization?
- B. Has the applicant committed to providing at least 20% of the total project cost from its own resources?
- C. Has the application been completed in accordance with instructions provided?
- D. Will the proposed project add to or complete a larger recreation project that has already been initiated by the applicant without state assistance in the last year?
- E. Has the applicant resubmitted a previous application after making recommended changes and improvements?

### Legislative /Equity Concerns

- A. Is the proposed project a significant, first of a kind facility for the local government?
- B. Would this be the first Outdoor Recreation Grant awarded to this applicant?
- C. Would this be the first Outdoor Recreation Grant awarded to this applicant within the last 10 years?
- D. Will the project provide playground and/or athletic facilities open for use by pre-school and/or school age children?

### **General Priorities**

- A. Would the proposed project involve significant rehabilitation or renovation of facilities that do not meet current design standards (other than accessibility) or that improve safety and reduce liability risk?
- B. Would the proposed project involve acquisition of high priority in-holdings or additions crucial to the use of and/or access to recreation facilities?

### **Design Considerations**

- A. Would the proposed use and design of the facilities be compatible with the physical characteristics of the site? (Topography, slope, wetlands, drainage, vegetation, etc.)
- B. Does the design make good use of available space without crowding?
- C. Are the proposed facilities located so as to complement, rather than conflict, with each other?
- D. Does the design minimize conflicts with adjacent land uses?
- E. Are there environmental intrusions on the site that could limit recreation development or use and/or diminish aesthetic values of the area?
- F. Does the design minimize potential risk to health and safety of users?

- G. Are all components of the proposed park accessible as defined by the application guidelines for accessibility?
- H. Are facilities designed consistent with generally accepted engineering and architectural design standards?



# *Discovering Outdoor Recreation Shortages in Minnesota*

Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors identified the following four areas of opportunity for determining outdoor recreation shortages.

1. Inventory and conserve outdoor recreation opportunities in areas experiencing rapid population growth in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area and in regional centers like New Ulm and Rochester. These areas may include significant natural resources, including lands that are not pristine. See Priority 3.
2. Determine where there are shortages of outdoor recreation opportunities among specific populations of Minnesotans, including new immigrant and minority groups, as well as the senior population. See Priority 4.
3. Identify shortages of near-by open spaces for children to play in and explore in developed urban areas. See Priority 5.
4. Conduct more outdoor recreation demand research during the SCORP implementation period to help target facility investment decisions. Wherever possible, this work should encourage participation from other agencies, non-profit organizations, and industry.

## 4 Section



# Appendices

## The Essential SCORP Glossary

### **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**

Implementing agency for Minnesota's Land and Water Conservation Fund Program.

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program**

Established by Congress in 1964 to create parks and open space for outdoor recreation and conservation efforts nationwide.

### **Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR)**

A twenty-member, bipartisan group that oversees Minnesota's Land and Water Conservation Fund program, funds administrative support, and SCORP planning. Its primary responsibility is to make funding recommendations to the full Legislature on how to allocate the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Future Resources Fund.

### **Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors (MORPA)**

A 29 person advisory committee responsible for developing Minnesota's outdoor recreation priorities for 2003–2008.

### **National Park Service**

Administers Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program and provides final SCORP approval.

### **State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)**

Required by the federal government to establish state outdoor recreation priorities for participation in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program.

## The 10 Steps of the SCORP Process

### Step 1

**September–October 2001**

#### Meeting 1

Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Policy Advisors (MORPA) orientation to the LWCF program and the SCORP process. Begin issue identification.

### Step 2

**October 2001**

#### Meeting 2

MORPA reviews first cut of issues, and identifies groups to be involved with issue development.

### Step 3

**November 2001–**

#### January 2002

MORPA/staff expand issue identification beyond group.

### Step 4

**January 2002**

#### Meeting 3

MORPA reviews expanded group information and prioritizes leading outdoor recreation issues. Begin strategy development.

### Step 5

**January 2001–March 2002**

Staff conducts literature search and research to better understand leading issues.

### Step 6

**March 2002**

#### Meeting 4 & 5

MORPA reviews literature/research information and completes strategies to address priority issues. Begin OPSP development.

### Step 7

**May 2002**

Share MORPA's outdoor recreation priorities with LCMR to aid in their grant making decisions

### Step 8

**Products: Open Project Selection Process & Draft SCORP**

**June 2002**

#### Meeting 6

For those issues relevant to LWCF, complete criteria to guide LWCF investment decisions through local and state OPSP's. Complete draft SCORP, which identifies leading issues and strategies.

### Step 9

**Product: Eligibility**

**September 2002**

#### Meeting 7

Submit SCORP to the National Park Service for approval

### Step 10

**SCORP Implementation**

**2003–2008**



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