

GREATER MINNESOTA REGIONAL PARKS & TRAILS COMMISSION

# POLICY & PLANNING REPORT FOR 2022



CLEAN  
WATER  
LAND &  
LEGACY  
AMENDMENT



# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Friends,

It is with great optimism that I pen this letter on behalf of the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. Looking back on the past 12-months and the return to normalcy post pandemic, it's gratifying to know that our beautiful Minnesota parks and trails provided solace and comfort during a very difficult time. The work of the Commission was never put on hold during the pandemic and the past year has been as busy and exciting as any time in our short, but storied history.

This summer we continued a project with The Parks and Trails Council to perform trail counts and user surveys at three of our designated mountain bike systems. This work adds to our knowledge base and builds on the three surveys done in summer 2021 and is part of our long range research plan. We also embarked on a campground visitor satisfaction and occupancy survey at seven campgrounds in southern Minnesota, six in District 5 and one in District 3. This work was done by the Southwest Regional Development Commission and will be helpful to not only the Commission, but the seven participating campgrounds as well.

In 2019 the Commission identified the need for a Mountain Bike Trail Development Guidelines manual that would enable park and land managers to build sustainable mountain bike trails themselves, while using the most up to date and highest design principles. We were pleased to engage Rock Solid Trail Contracting to create this guide. A committee was formed to review and comment on the content, and we got off to a productive start. Unfortunately, COVID intervened and slowed the process, as did a series of challenges. However, over that time the project became more informative, added more chapters and became much more robust than originally envisioned. We also welcomed partners in the project, reflecting the importance of what was being created. Rock Solid Trail Contracting moved from vendor to partner, and the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) came aboard as well, to review, comment, vet and provide the copy editing. This comprehensive development guidelines manual is the first significant update for the industry since 2017! The guide is available at no cost on Commission and IMBA websites. Hard copies are available for a modest cost to cover the printing and shipping. This guide will have wide recognition and distribution through our high profile project partners and serve as the industry gold standard for years to come.

Rounding out our work, we added seven new facilities to our system, for a total of 74 regionally designed parks and trails across the 80 counties in Greater Minnesota.

As always, we offer our sincere thanks and appreciation to our colleagues and partners. We invite you to explore the amazing resources we are so fortunate to have in the great State of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

**Rick Anderson, Chair**

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# DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

## DISTRICT 1

Executive Committee Vice Chair



**Tim Engrav**  
*Britt*



**Beth Pierce**  
*Hibbing*

## DISTRICT 2

Executive Committee Secretary/Treasurer



**Bryan Pike**  
*Brainerd*



**Reid Huttunen**  
*East Grand Forks*

## DISTRICT 3

Executive Committee At-Large



**Peg Furshong**  
*Sacred Heart*



**Brad Bonk**  
*Alexandria*

## DISTRICT 4



**Barry Wendorf**  
*Zimmerman*



**Jonathan Wolf**  
*St. Cloud*


## DISTRICT 5

Executive Committee Chair



**Rick Anderson**  
*Balaton*

## DISTRICT 6



**Thomas Ryan**  
*Byron*



**Tom Stoa**  
*Winona*

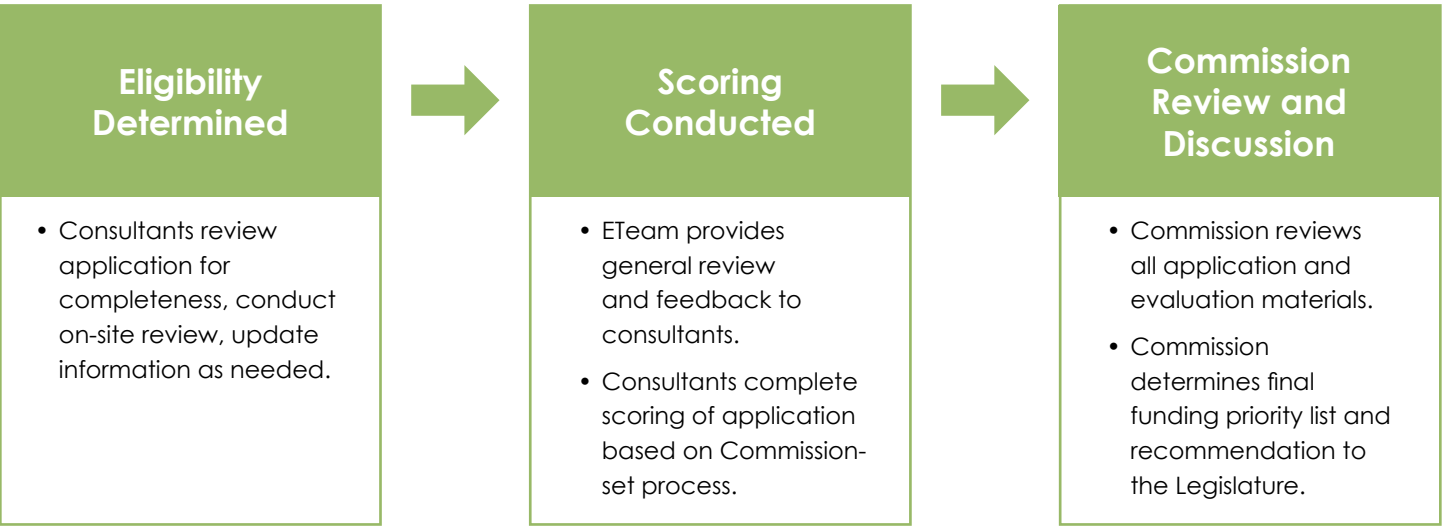
## AT-LARGE



**Jen Foley**  
*St. Cloud*

Executive Director: **Renee Mattson**, Duluth  
System Plan Coordinator: **Joe Czapiewski**, Bemidji  
Administrative Assistant: **Tess Dandrea**, Hermantown  
Special Projects Coordinator: **Karen Umphress**, Jordan

# FUNDING RECOMMENDATION SELECTION PROCESS



## SCORING CRITERIA

Park Criteria	Trail Criteria	Connecting People to the Outdoors Criteria
Completes a regionally substantial component in the applicants Master Plan.	Completes a regionally substantial component in the applicants Master Plan.	Supports the programming and marketing components in the applicants Master Plan.
Fills a gap and provides an outdoor recreation benefit of regional significance for that district.	Fills a gap and provides connectivity to users. Could also provide connectivity to a larger trail system to create a recreation benefit of regional significance.	Fills a gap and provides a proven outdoor recreation benefit of regional significance for that district.
Is significantly linked to one or more of the four pillars in the 25-Year Legacy Plan.	Is significantly linked to one or more of the four pillars in the 25-Year Legacy Plan.	Is significantly linked to the Connecting People to the Outdoors pillar objectives as well as additional pillars in the 25-Year Legacy Plan.
Project is a critical acquisition or critical rehabilitation and repair of a park facility or feature.	Project is a critical acquisition or critical rehabilitation and repair of a trail, trailhead facility or trail feature.	Provides significant and locally sustainable recruitment, retention or reactivation of outdoor recreation participation.
Provides access to quality natural and cultural resources within the district.	Provides access to quality natural and cultural resources within the district.	Provides access for underserved populations to quality natural and cultural resources within the district.
Has a financial match. A higher match will receive greater point awards.	Has a financial match. A higher match will receive greater point awards.	Has a financial match. A higher match will receive greater point awards.
Includes a fully detailed budget, implementation, and sustainability plan.	Includes a fully detailed budget, implementation, and sustainability plan.	Includes a fully detailed budget, implementation, and sustainability plan.



# FY24 LEGACY FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

PROJECT	AWARD	DIST.
<b>Duluth Waabizheshikana/The Marten Trail</b> A ten mile trail tracing the shoreline of the St. Louis River Estuary, recently restored from a highly degraded state.	\$1,493,434	1
<b>Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System</b> Development of a bicycle skills park at the Cook County Community Center and the rehabilitation of 4.9 miles of the High Climber mountain bike trail.	\$400,000	1
<b>Mesabi Trail</b> Construction of the FINAL 2.4 miles of trail from the West Two River to connect to the existing Mesabi Trail in Tower.	\$750,000	1
<b>Northerly Park - Northwest Angle</b> Master Plan Update	\$70,000	2
<b>Detroit Mountain Recreation Area</b> Land acquisition for an accessible trail loop, sculptures, additional single track biking trail and a natural play area Tree House element.	\$1,325,941	3
<b>Offer Tail County Phelps Mill County Park</b> 1,400 feet of wetland boardwalks and viewing platforms within a restored wetlands area.	\$366,000	3
<b>Benton County Great River Park Complex</b> Large picnic shelter and overflow parking, canoe landing improvements, nature play area relocation, additional natural surface trails, wayfinding and interpretive signage.	\$797,555	4
<b>Isanti County Springvale Park</b> Accessible nature play area, a three mile single track mountain bike expansion, repaving and enlarging the main parking area, a vault toilet and trailhead and wayfinding signage throughout the park.	\$336,800	4
<b>Stearns County Kraemer Lake - Wildwood County Park</b> Enhanced park entry road, parking lot, picnic areas and picnic shelters, restrooms, fishing pier, nature based playground, non-motorized boat launch and paved trail access to amenities.	\$1,175,846	4
<b>Stearns County Quarry Park &amp; Nature Preserve</b> Erosion control at Quarry 2.	\$170,250	4
<b>Redwood County Plum Creek Park</b> Improved parking lot, beach enhancement through new retaining walls and natural playground near the beach. Also included is a new bathroom and changing room and a new ADA sidewalk.	\$818,539	5
<b>Sibley County Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail</b> Hummingbird Regional Trail construction done concurrently with the reconstruction of CSAH 6 between Henderson and Blakeley.	\$1,394,400	5
<b>Austin Jay C. Hormel Nature Center</b> Replacement bridges identified as Bridge 9 and Bridge 6.	\$250,000	6
<b>Olmsted County Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo</b> Moving the existing campground from a flood zone to a safer location on higher ground. The project will increase the capacity from 30 to 42 sites, including three ADA accessible sites. Additionally four fully equipped camper cabins will be added along with upgraded electric and water hook ups.	\$2,050,000	6
TOTAL	\$11,398,765	

# MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

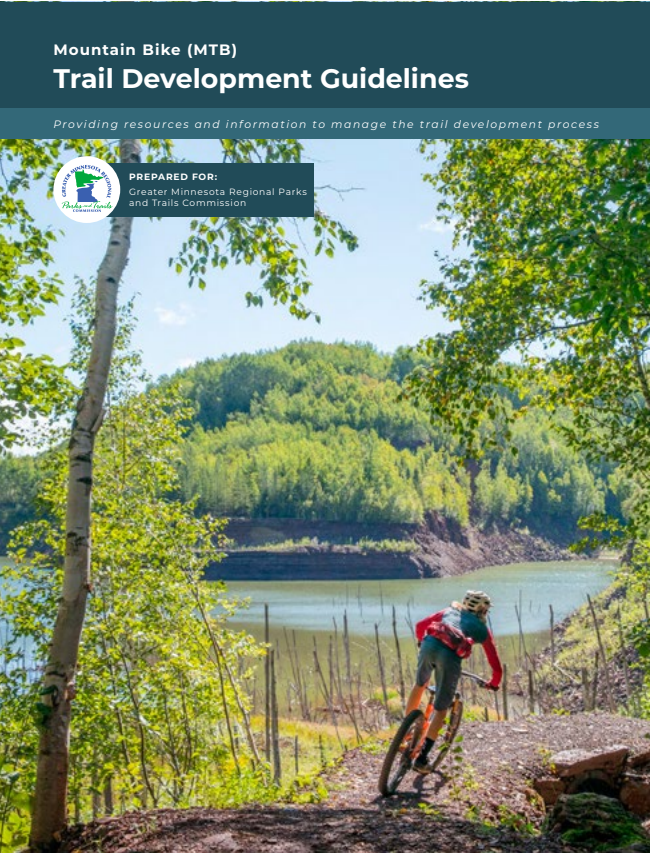
The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission recognized the need to create a resource for mountain bike trail construction that would assist land and park managers seeking to build sustainable mountain bike trails. The Commission partnered with Rock Solid Trail Contracting to create a comprehensive “how to” that breaks the building process down from start to finish, beginning with Assessing and ending with Maintenance of the newly built trails.



As the project evolved, the scope expanded to include more detailed descriptions of construction techniques, greater photographic representations of design standards and build cost options to provide more flexibility in budgets.

The partner team has also expanded to include the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), a well-established and respected organization that has the ability to make the Development Guidelines manual widely available through their website. The guidelines will be available as a downloadable document on the Commission website: [www.gmrptcommission.org](http://www.gmrptcommission.org) at no cost, as well as on the IMBA website and hard copies may be purchased through IMBA at a nominal charge that covers printing and shipping.

The Mountain Bike Trail Development Guidelines embody the Legacy Pillar of Coordinate Among Partners and would not be possible without funding through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. Additionally, this manual is the first comprehensive mountain bike design document published since 2017.





# CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THE OUTDOORS GALLERY

The Parks and Trails 25-Year Legacy Plan leads with the Connect People and the Outdoors pillar. The plan notes that people are more likely to take part in outdoor recreation if they feel welcome, can get to outdoor areas easily, know what's available and have good experiences. To help achieve the goal of getting more people outdoors there are seven key strategies identified:

- 1. Welcoming environment
- 2. Access
- 3. Marketing
- 4. Quality
- 5. Programming and special events
- 6. Partnerships
- 7. Infrastructure

The Commission has worked hard to encourage more grants specific to the connecting pillar, while recognizing that facility managers often have urgent needs to rehabilitate well used, aging facilities and meet requirements for new trails or buildings to support increased interest.

In 2022 a special Connect People and the Outdoors (CPO) small grant fund was established with the intent to encourage facility managers to think creatively about ways in which to better engage with the public. The CPO grants awarded will provide equipment for use at no charge, enhance accessibility, create better interpretive displays and add a new boat dock.

For CPO in 2023 the Commission is working with a partner to bring track wheelchairs to facilities in Greater Minnesota. The chairs will assist those with mobility issues and allow them to experience the beautiful parks and trails in ways they may not be able to without these specialized chairs.



Example of a tracked wheelchair in use.

This trail at Lyon County Garvin Park will be paved for ADA access.



## Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails Summer Meeting

Group ride on the Stearns County Lake Wobegon Trail with the historic Holdingford Covered Bridge as the backdrop.





# DISTRICT 1

## Coordinate Among Partners

### Lake County Mountain Bike Trails - Split Rock Wilds

Split Rock Wilds Mountain Bike Trails offer a unique backcountry feel, with rocky terrain and beautiful views of Lake Superior. The new Split Rock State Park Campground addition is on the southern end of the trail and provides an easy access route to the trails. The newly built loop is less technical and an easier ride than some of the other trails in the system, making it a perfect introduction for beginner mountain bike enthusiasts. The easy trail access from the campground provides an amenity for the campground, without the State Park having to manage or maintain the trails. In the first summer of being open, the trail has had an abundance of riders, of all skill levels, and user surveys have noted the easy connection between trails and the new campground. Exactly as envisioned when the system was planned!

## Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

### Hermantown/Proctor Munger Trail Spur

An ambitious project, when complete the Hermantown/Proctor Munger Trail Spur will be a 16-mile paved trail linking the communities of Hermantown and Proctor with the Munger State Trail and the city of Duluth's extensive trail system. All systems need a beginning point, and with significant funding through Greater Minnesota's Legacy grant, Hermantown kicked off the start with a 2.63 mile segment from Keene Creek Park to Stebner Field Park. The new trail segment opened in 2021 and has been popular and very well used by residents and visitors alike. The trail is a high quality recreational experience, that while in a populated urban area, offers a natural experience that leads the user to believe they're in a rural setting. Future segments will be more challenging to achieve the goal of ultimately connecting to the Munger State Trail, but the enthusiasm and use of the first segment will be helpful to pushing this impressive project to completion.

# Total Funding Awarded

## DISTRICT 1 (FY16-FY23)

This notes the total number of applications and the total amount of grants made to this district over time.

16 Projects Funded

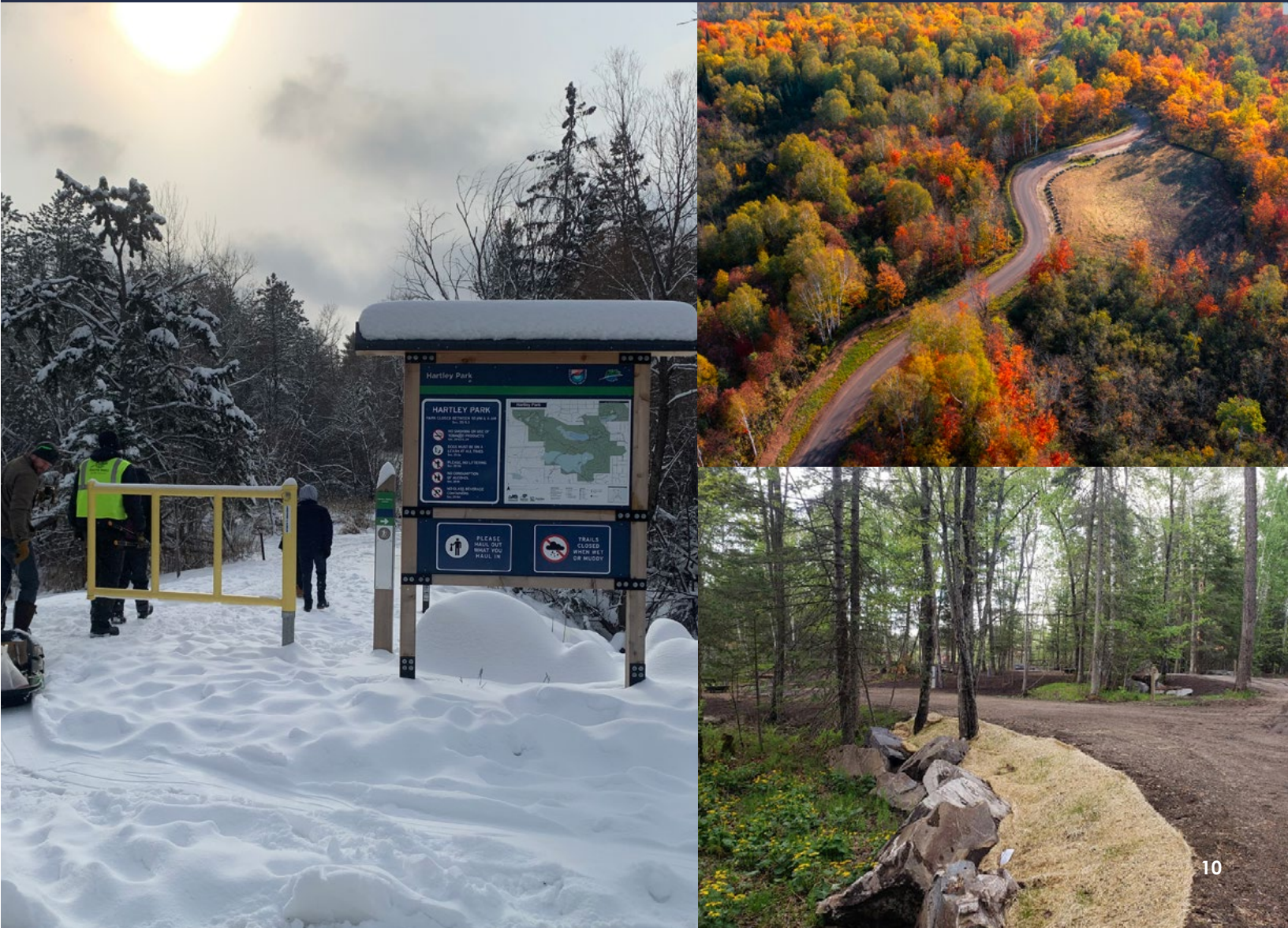
28 Applications

\$12,166,226 Awarded

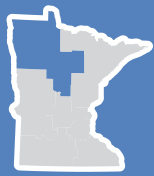
\$2,690,908 Community Investment

DESIGNATED PARK/TRAIL		CLASSIFICATION
1	Aitkin County Northwoods ATV Trail	T
2	Big Falls Campground and Horse Camp	S
3	Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System	S
4	Duluth Hartley Park	N
5	Duluth Spirit Mountain Recreation Area	S
6	Duluth Traverse	S
7	Duluth Waabizheshikana/The Marten Trail	T
8	Hermantown/Proctor Munger Trial Spur	T
9	Lake County Mountain Bike Trails	T
10	Lake Vermilion Trail	T
11	Mesabi Trail	T
12	Mille Lacs County Plains to Port Trail	T
13	Sandstone Robinson Quarry Park	S

N = Natural Resource Based Park  
S = Special Features  
T = Trail







# DISTRICT 2

## Take Care of What We Have

### Warroad Point Park

One of the newest regionally designated parks in Greater Minnesota is Warroad Point Park on beautiful Lake of the Woods. Warroad is the only American port on Lake of the Woods and is the primary destination for lake related natural outdoor recreation experiences in Northwest Minnesota, with visitors from across the Midwest and Canada. Warroad Point Park is a 161-acre park right on the lake and much used for fishing and camping. Over the course of three years, residents worked hard to develop a Master Plan that would enhance the popular park and make it an even more popular destination for residents and visitors to enjoy. The new plan envisions components that complement the existing elements and addresses issues that benefit from relocation or renovation. The plan is ambitious and designed to be completed in phases over time. The end result will be a park that can be enjoyed by all and encompasses the vision and dreams developed in a thoughtful master planning process.

## Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

### Lake of the Woods County Northerly Park

Northerly Park is a unique Greater Minnesota designated park, accessible only by boat or by land via Canada, and is the northernmost park in the contiguous United States. Northwest Angle is rich with history and a popular fishing destination. In its current state, the park is raw land, and the first place you come to upon arrival by road through Canada. Visitors to the Angle arrive at the US/Canada Customs Reporting Station, aka Jim's Corner, 50-feet from which will be the park Welcome Center and the place to start your park and Angle experience. The plan for the park when complete will see construction of a Welcome Center that will also house information about the rich history of the Angle, and a boardwalk through the wetlands to an observation tower with views of Angle Inlet, Ontario, Manitoba and Minnesota.

# Total Funding Awarded

## DISTRICT 2 (FY16-FY23)

This notes the total number of applications and the total amount of grants made to this district over time.

11 Projects Funded

16 Applications

\$7,929,716 Awarded

\$2,481,111 Community Investment

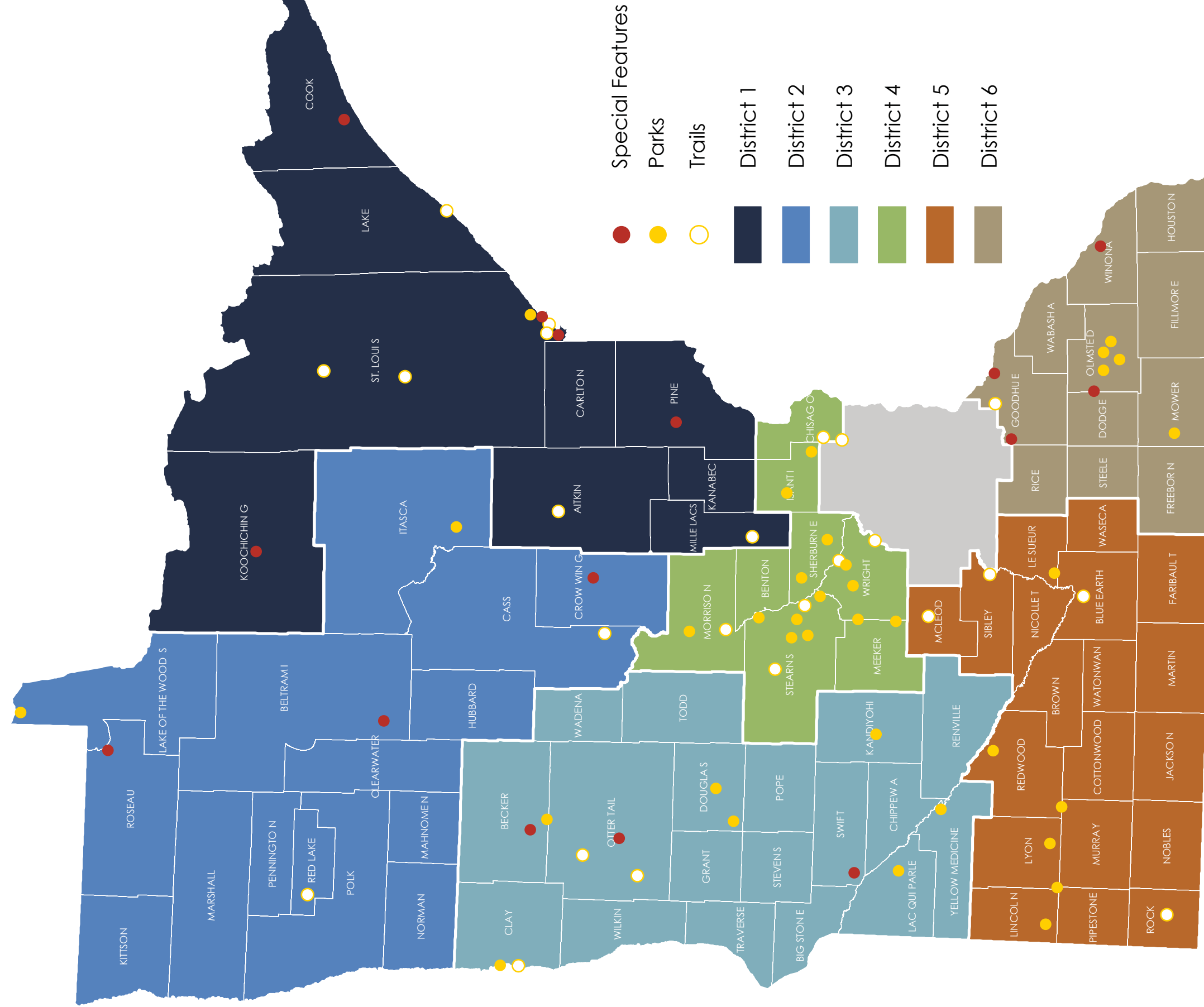
DESIGNATED PARK/TRAIL		CLASSIFICATION
1	Beltrami County Northland Regional Sports Park	S
2	Cohasset Tioga Recreation Area	N
3	Crow Wing County Milford Mine Memorial Park	S
4	Lake of the Woods County Northerly Park	N
5	Lake Shore Gull Lake Trail	T
6	Red Lake River Corridor	T
7	Warroad Point Park	S

N = Natural Resource Based Park  
S = Special Features  
T = Trail



# DESIGNATED REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT PARKS & TRAILS

(AS OF 12/31/22)







# DISTRICT 3

## Take Care of What We Have

### Granite Falls Memorial Park

Lovely Memorial Park in Granite Falls has been steadily working away at the elements in their master plan over the last several years. Successful Legacy funding applications have borne fruit with exciting results for residents and visitors. Some of the park improvements are important but not necessarily obvious to visitors and others are big strides forward and very noticeable projects like the new nature based playground that replaces an old, outdated playground, a new shower building, better wayfinding, repair and restoration of the main picnic shelter pavilion and the historic park entrance piers and a relocated and improved campground. Memorial Park is a great example of how important it is to update master plans over time to reflect changes in what park users want and expect. The Memorial Park master plan update was one of the first GMRPTC funded, but not the last. The Commission believes that assisting with planning updates is a good investment and will yield important results.

## Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

### Douglas County Kensington Rune Stone Park

This unique, regionally designated park tells the story of Olaf Ohman and his discovery of the Kensington Rune Stone. The artifact was discovered on Olaf's farm under the roots of an aspen tree in 1898. Over the years, the Rune Stone has brought legions of researchers from around the world to try to answer the question of how a runic artifact, dated 1362, could possibly show up in North America. Legacy funding through Greater Minnesota helped build the beautiful new visitor and interpretive center at the park. Douglas County was sensitive to the Rune Stone story and worked closely with the Minnesota Historical Society and Upsalla University in Norway to set the stage for the discovery of the stone and interpretation of the story behind the discovery. Beyond the Rune Stone, the park is 304 acres that hosts hiking, mountain bike and cross-country ski trails.

# Total Funding Awarded

**DISTRICT 3** (FY16-FY23)

This notes the total number of applications and the total amount of grants made to this district over time.

18 Projects Funded

31 Applications

\$12,036,583 Awarded

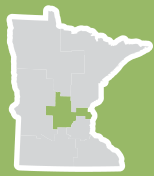
\$4,757,120 Community Investment

	DESIGNATED PARK/TRAIL	CLASSIFICATION
1	Detroit Lakes Detroit Mountain Recreation Area	S
2	Douglas County Lake Brophy Park	N
3	Douglas County Kensington Park	N
4	Fergus Falls Glacial Edge Trail	T
5	Frazee Wannigan Park	N
6	Granite Falls Memorial Park	N
7	Lac qui Parle County Park	N
8	Moorhead MB Johnson Park	N
9	Moorhead River Corridor Trail	T
10	Otter Tail County Heart of the Lakes Trail	T
11	Otter Tail County Phelps Mill County Park	S
12	Swift County Appleton OHV Park	S
13	Willmar Robbins Island Park	N

N = Natural Resource Based Park  
S = Special Features  
T = Trail







# DISTRICT 4

## Connect People and the Outdoors

### Elk River Woodland Trails Park

The city of Elk River is home to the natural resource based, 427-acre Woodland Trails Park. The parks is dominated by oak woodland, wetlands and restored native prairie habitats. There are nearly eight miles of bituminous trails and more than seven miles of natural surface mowed trails and a biathlon range. Elk River successfully applied for and was awarded a Legacy grant through Greater Minnesota for several projects in the park, among them two that specifically address connecting people with the outdoors; a naturescape play area and wayfinding. The nature play area is an amazing place, with water features, climbing structures and many other natural materials found on site. When COVID struck, the park's maintenance staff spent even more time on the play area, greatly expanding the original scope and size of the original plan. The wayfinding signage is an important element of any park or trail and the kiosk with summer and winter recreational trail maps of the park, interpretive signage and other park related information will be greatly welcomed by park visitors.

## Acquire Land, Create Opportunities and Take Care of What We Have

### Chisago County Sunrise Prairie Trail

Over the course of several grant cycles, Chisago County has successfully gained Legacy grants through Greater Minnesota for new miles of Sunrise Prairie Trail as well as a rehabilitation of an older segment of trail. Sunrise Prairie is an important trail, linking the communities of Forest Lake north through Wyoming, Stacy and North Branch and with a new section of trail to be built, to Harris. The trail will eventually run all the way from the Twin Cities (via metro trail links) to Duluth (via the Munger State Trail). In addition to biking, the trail is popular with hikers and skaters and used for bird watching, geocaching and just socializing. The trail traverses a variety of landscapes including farmland, hardwood forests and deep marsh wetlands. The importance of trails like the Sunrise Prairie are immense in creating a sense of connection with nature and providing health and wellness benefits to users.

DESIGNATED PARK/TRAIL		CLASSIFICATION
1	Chisago County Sunrise Prairie Trail	T
2	Chisago County Swedish Immigrant Trail	T
3	Elk River Woodland Trails Park	N
4	Isanti County Irving & John Anderson Park	N
5	Isanti County Springvale Park	N
6	Morrison County Belle Prairie Park	N
7	Morrison County Soo Line Trail	T
8	Sherburne County Big Elk Lake Park	N
9	St. Cloud Beaver Island Trail	T
10	Stearns County Kraemer Lake Park	N
11	Stearns County/Benton County Great River Park Complex	N
12	Stearns County Lake Wobegon Trail	T
13	Stearns County Rockville Park	N
14	Stearns County Quarry Park	N
15	Stearns County Warner Lake Park	N
16	Wright County Bertram Chain of Lakes Park	N
17	Wright County Collinwood Park	N
18	Wright County Crow River Trail	T
19	Wright County Great River Trail	T
20	Wright County Robert Ney Park	N
21	Wright County Stanley Eddy Park Reserve	N

N = Natural Resource Based Park  
S = Special Features  
T = Trail

# Total Funding Awarded

## DISTRICT 4 (FY16-FY23)

This notes the total number of applications and the total amount of grants made to this district over time.

26 Projects Funded

34 Applications

\$17,750,905 Awarded

\$5,083,625 Community Investment







# DISTRICT 5

## Take Care of What We Have

### Redwood Falls Ramsey Park

Built as a State Park in 1911 and later transferred back to the city of Redwood Falls, Ramsey Park is 219 acres of beautiful parkland filled with trees, trails, rivers, streams and a signature waterfall. The park was enhanced in the 1930's by Civilian Conservation Corps shelters and bridges and the Zeb Gray Shelter is a truly unique piece of architecture. The park master plan highlighted priority renovations and rehabilitation projects within the park, addressing areas of high use and needed upgrades. A Legacy grant from Greater Minnesota helped achieve a significant step forward in the rehabilitation of the facilities. A renovated restroom at the falls as well as a new restroom at the southern entrance provide a much better visitor experience. Another renovation project included 3.52 miles of concrete paved trails, which were constructed by park staff and will have a much greater lifespan. The park is much loved and well used and the continued improvements and enhancements add to the experience.

## Coordinate Among Partners

### Greater Mankato River Valley Trail System

Just over an hour southwest of the Twin Cities, the Greater Mankato River Valley Trail is a 22-mile, non-motorized, paved trail network with connections to downtown Mankato, local parks and trails and includes a route from Minneopa State Park to the Sakatah State Trail. One might be surprised to learn that Blue Earth County, where the trail is located, has more river miles than any other county in Minnesota, making the trail experience one of spectacular views of the river valley ravines, waterways, wildlife and open countryside. All existing infrastructure and facilities of the trail are owned by the city of Mankato and Blue Earth County, a great example of a coordinated effort among partners.

# Total Funding Awarded

**DISTRICT 5** (FY16-FY23)

This notes the total number of applications and the total amount of grants made to this district over time.

**14 Projects Funded**

**18 Applications**

**\$6,429,439** Awarded

**\$1,002,902** Community Investment

DESIGNATED PARK/TRAIL		CLASSIFICATION
1	Greater Mankato River Valley Trail System	T
2	Le Sueur County Lake Washington Park	N
3	Lincoln County Hole in the Mountain Park	N
4	Luverne Loop & Blue Mounds Trails	T
5	Lyon County Garvin Park	N
6	Lyon County Twin Lakes Park	N
7	McLeod County Dakota Rail Trail	T
8	Redwood County Plum Creek Park	N
9	Redwood Falls Ramsey Park	N
10	Sibley County Henderson Scenic Byway Trail	T

**N = Natural Resource Based Park**  
**S = Special Features**  
**T = Trail**







# DISTRICT 6

## Connect People and the Outdoors

### Rochester Gamehaven Park

Located just east of Rochester, Gamehaven Park is 364-acres of rolling hills, open prairie and wooded areas adjoining a 265-acre Boy Scout Camp. The property was originally 230-acres acquired for the purpose of constructing a flood control reservoir to benefit the city of Rochester. Over time additional land acquisitions brought the acreage to the current size. A park master plan guiding principle stated the need to improve recreational opportunities accessible to all, and over the past several years, the Rochester Parks Department achieved that goal. With help from Greater Minnesota Legacy grants, the park developed a rich variety of features and programs to engage users, provide new skills and provide opportunities for enhanced health benefits. Mountain bike trails, cross country skiing, nature based play area and disc golf offer year round uses for the park. For users seeking the enjoyment of simply walking in nature, the park has plenty of prairie and hills that offer that experience.

## Coordinate Among Partners

### Goodhue County Byllesby Park

Lake Byllesby is a reservoir formed by damming the Cannon River. Byllesby Park has two access points to the park, one on the Goodhue County side located off County Highway 19 and one in Dakota County accessed off County Road 88. In 2017 Goodhue County developed a master plan update for Byllesby Park in partnership with Dakota County. Both counties hired the same consultant and held joint planning and public meetings with the goal of creating a untied image of one large regional park. The planning process highlighted the need for improvements to attract and retain more users and to achieve the vision of the park as an important place to gather, play outdoors and participate in educational activities. Goodhue County was successful in achieving a Legacy Grant from Greater Minnesota to add electric service to existing picnic shelters, building a modern restroom facility and constructing a community pavilion. These components will be both appreciated and well used by park visitors.

# Total Funding Awarded

DISTRICT 6 (FY16-FY23)

This notes the total number of applications and the total amount of grants made to this district over time.

24 Projects Funded

31 Applications

\$15,729,639 Awarded

\$9,622,882 Community Investment

DESIGNATED PARK/TRAIL		CLASSIFICATION
1	Austin Jay C. Hormel Nature Center	N
2	Cannon Valley Trail	T
3	Goodhue County Byllesby Park	S
4	Olmsted County Chester Woods Park	N
5	Olmsted County Oxbow Park/Zollman Zoo	S
6	Red Wing He Mni Can - Barn Bluff Park	S
7	Rochester Cascade Lake Park	N
8	Rochester Gamehaven Park	N
9	Rochester Quarry Hill Park	N
10	Winona Bluffs Traverse	S

N = Natural Resource Based Park  
S = Special Features  
T = Trail





# PARKS AND TRAILS 25-YEAR LEGACY PLAN

In 2008, Minnesotans passed the Clean Water Land and Legacy Act, commonly referred to as the “Legacy Amendment”. The amendment is funded by a 3/8 percent increase in the state sales tax. State and regional parks and trails of regional significance receive 14.25% of the funds generated by the tax. As a condition of the new Amendment, the Minnesota State Legislature mandated that the Department of Natural Resources, in collaboration with other park and trail providers and user organizations, develop a 25-year, long-range plan to help guide and inform how the Legacy Funds should be spent. Over 18-months, an extensive public outreach effort was conducted throughout the state. The 25-Year Legacy Plan was developed as a result of the public engagement by teams of recreation and conservation professionals.

The future direction of this thoughtful 25-year plan is distilled down from the input and engagement of the Minnesotans who contributed their voices to shape the plan.

The strategy is based on four pillars that describe the priorities:

## Connect People and the Outdoors

Participants in the Legacy Plan Public Engagement Workshops emphasized the importance of building Minnesota’s next generation of stewards for the state’s natural areas. One of the most effective ways to do that is by increasing outdoor recreation participation. Building new opportunities for recreation is one step, connecting people with the outdoors and building a lifelong habit of recreating in our natural environment is the most important step.



## Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

Minnesotans are by nature avid outdoor enthusiasts. While there are many rich opportunities to enjoy and recreate in parks and trails throughout Minnesota, new and expanded opportunities are needed to satisfy current users as well as to create opportunities for new users. This pillar speaks to the need to acquire land to meet nature-based outdoor activities and to create opportunities through new trails and park facilities.



## Take Care of What We Have

The 25-year plan addresses the need to invest in the aging infrastructure across Minnesota’s well used and loved parks and trails system. This pillar does not address the routine maintenance of parks and trails, which should be part of ongoing maintenance operations, but promotes investment in the protection of assets through preservation, rehabilitation and renewal.



## Coordinate Among Partners

Coordination across systems is essential to achieve the vision encapsulated in the 25-year plan. It is universally understood that users want and expect quality parks and trails and may not know, or care, what agency is responsible for the management of the resource. It is incumbent upon the outdoor recreation providers to communicate with each other and work to provide a quality experience.



## Legacy Investment

Over time, the Legacy investment in Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails totals more than \$72 million dollars with community investments of almost \$26 million dollars.





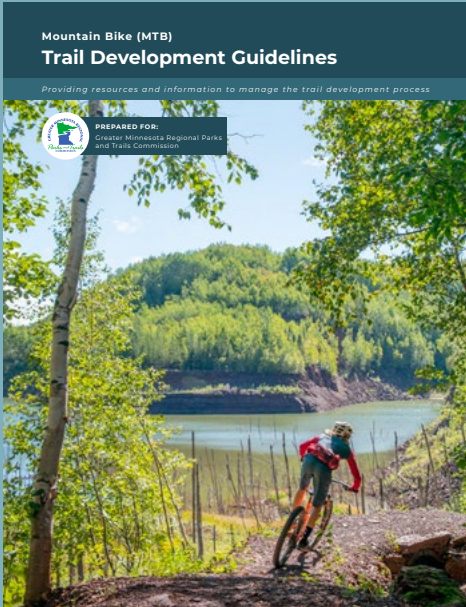
# 2022 MILESTONES

## Mountain Bike Trail Development Guidelines

The GMRPTC recognized the need to create a resource for mountain bike trail construction that would assist land and park managers seeking to build sustainable trails. The result of this years long effort is the Mountain Bike Trail Development Guidelines manual, a comprehensive “how to” that breaks the process down from start to finish beginning with Assessing and ending with Maintenance of the newly built trails. GMRPTC partnered with Rock Solid Trail Contracting and the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) to undertake the massive project.

The guide is available at no cost to all at the Commission website: [gmrptcommission.org](http://gmrptcommission.org) as well as the IMBA website: [imba.com](http://imba.com). Hard copies are available for purchase at a minimal cost at the IMBA site as well. The development guidelines is the first comprehensive update for mountain bike design since 2017.

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## Campground Occupancy and Visitor Satisfaction Survey

The focus on research continued in 2022 with a new subject, campground occupancy and visitor satisfaction at seven campgrounds in Districts 5 and 3 in southwest Minnesota. From Memorial Day to Labor Day surveys were conducted both on site and electronically to gauge guest satisfaction with their camping experience. The data collected will help guide and inform the host facilities that may be considering expansions or greater marketing reach.

## System Growth and Development

2022 has been a big year of system growth, with seven new facilities achieving regional designation within the Greater Minnesota system:

Duluth Waabizheshikana/The Marten Trail, Frazee Wannigan Regional Park, Isanti County Springvale Park, Otter Tail County Phelps Mill County Park, Sibley County Henderson Scenic Byway Trail, Swift County Appleton OHV Park and Warroad Point Park.

These facilities met the Commission’s criteria for system designation with a qualified Master Plan that thoroughly laid out their vision and implementation plans. With these seven new designations, the system is now comprised of 74 parks, trails and special feature facilities across the 80-counties in Greater Minnesota.

## Mountain Bike System Trail Count Phase II

Three more regional mountain bike systems, Cohasset Tioga Recreation Area, Lake County Mountain Bike System and Winona Bluffs Traverse were included in the 2022 trail count and user survey. Like the 2021 count, the data and surveys will be helpful for making decisions about future expansions as well as helping guide GMRPTC and our collaborative partners with marketing efforts and outreach.

## Connecting People and the Outdoors Small Grant Awards

A second round of grants, specifically for projects identified as Connecting People and the Outdoors, made an impact in seven designated facilities. The grants ranged from \$8,000 to \$50,000 and were creative examples of ways to make better opportunities for people to connect to the outdoors. One grant awarded was a partnership of three counties in District 4, Isanti, Stearns and Sherburne. The grant will purchase equipment for cross country skiing and snowshoeing, along with a trailer to transport the equipment among the partners. This award will provide programming events free to the public and will encourage new users, families, schools and those who are underserved throughout District 4 to participate in winter activities.

## Data Management System Upgrades

The Commission's online Data Management System serves as the backbone of the Commission's information system for our statewide partners. The annual upgrades tackle different areas of the system each year, with 2022 focusing on better reporting and communications related to the administration portal of the system.

## Summary

Parks and trails in the State, Metropolitan and Greater Minnesota systems are all incredible assets, and places where one can enjoy quiet, calm and peace, or entertainment, adventure and exploration. We are fortunate to live in a state that places high value on building and maintaining our beautiful park and trail systems for the enjoyment of all.





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Cover Photo:

Granite Falls Memorial Park Pond