



Greater Minnesota

REGIONAL PARKS & TRAILS COMMISSION



Policy & Planning
Report for 2021





1 2

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Friends,

One year ago when writing this letter, times were still uncertain, but beginning to hold promise of a COVID-19 vaccine coming out in record time, thanks to years of science previous to this pandemic. Now, we have begun to gather again with family and friends, enjoy sporting and entertainment events, and feel cautious optimism about a return to normal.

Throughout COVID we have experienced significant increases in visits to parks and trails, across Minnesota and across the country. People sought and found refuge in our open spaces and with nature. Happily, that trend has continued, with visitation numbers remaining high and new visitors enjoying all that Minnesota has to offer.

The past year has been a busy one for the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. An update to the Strategic Plan has been completed and is available on our website, or in hard copy if requested. This plan provides the criteria essential for ranking and scoring to determine if a park or trail meets the definition of "regionally significant". Like all the work of the Commission, the Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document and updated as necessary to best meet the needs of Greater Minnesota.

We have also completed trail counts and user surveys for three of our designated mountain bike trails in Northern Minnesota. Results of the survey will be posted on the Commission website as soon as the research is complete. This project is just the first step in our long range plan to conduct visitor intercepts and counts across our system over time.

The Greater Minnesota system grew by three facilities in 2021 and we now have 67 designated parks and trails in the 80 counties outside the seven county metropolitan area.

We offer thanks and appreciation to our colleagues and partners and invite you to explore the amazing resources we're so fortunate to have in this great State of Minnesota

Sincerely,
Thomas Ryan, Chair

- 1 - Sherburne County Big Elk Lake Park
- 2 - Cohasset Tioga Recreation Area

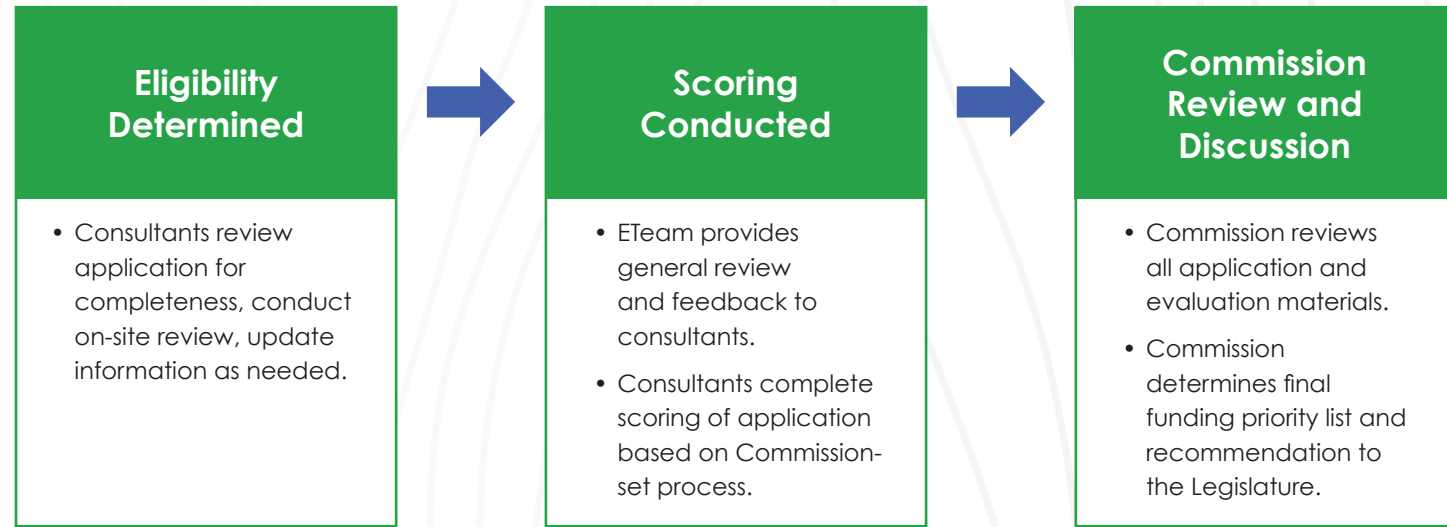
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District Commissioners

District 1		Tim Engrav, Britt Executive Committee At-Large	District 4		Barry Wendorf, Zimmerman
		Beth Pierce, Hibbing			Jonathan Wolf, St. Cloud
District 2		Bryan Pike, Brainerd Executive Committee Secretary/Treasurer	District 5		Rick Anderson, Balaton Executive Committee Vice Chair
		Matthew Hill, Breezy Point			Ted Suss, Lucan
District 3		Peg Furshong, Sacred Heart	District 6		Thomas Ryan, Byron Executive Committee Chair
		Brad Bonk, Alexandria			Tom Stoa, Winona
At-Large		Jen Foley, St. Cloud	<p>Executive Director: Renee Mattson, Duluth System Plan Coordinator: Joe Czapiewski, Bemidji Administrative Assistant: Tess Dandrea</p>		

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 for the district.	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. Take into consideration the differences between districts.	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.

FY23 LEGACY FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

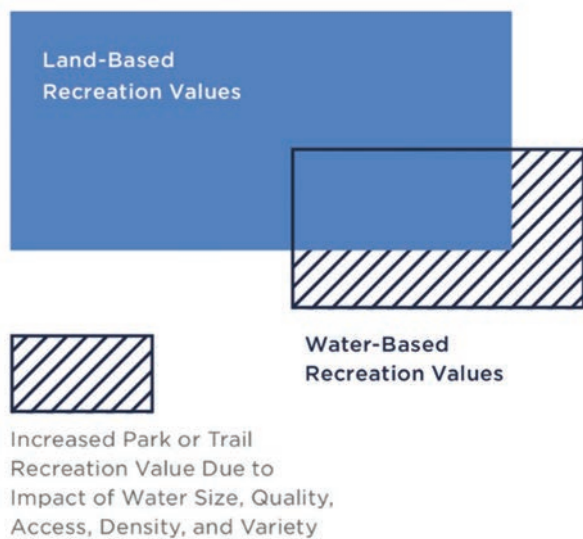
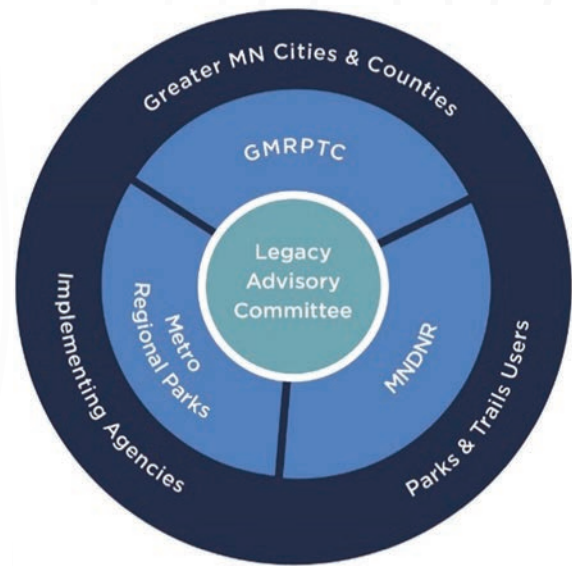
PROJECT	AWARD	DIST.
Duluth Traverse	\$167,783	1
Duluth Spirit Mountain Recreation Area	\$1,254,471	1
Big Falls Campground and Horse Camp	\$1,043,115	1
Gull Lake Trail - Cass County Fairview Township	\$167,280	2
Red Lake River Corridor - East Grand Forks	\$851,768	2
Granite Falls Memorial Park	\$569,973	3
Isanti County Irving & John Anderson Park	\$780,225	4
Sherburne County Big Elk Lake Park	\$1,250,000	4
Wright County Robert Ney Park	\$75,000	4
Stearns County Beaver Island Trail	\$1,129,850	4
Wright County Stanley Eddy Park Reserve	\$32,200	4
Redwood Falls Ramsey Park	\$137,500	5
Lyon County Garvin Park	\$1,109,350	5
Lincoln County Hole in the Mountain Park	\$1,026,698	5
Rochester Cascade Lake Park	\$379,000	6
Red Wing He Mni Can/Barn Bluff Park	\$527,145	6
Cannon Valley Trail	\$490,463	6
Austin Jay C. Hormel Nature Center	\$255,552	6
Olmsted County Chester Woods Park	\$338,800	6
Winona Bluffs Traverse	\$403,320	6
Connecting People With the Outdoors Small Grants Fund	\$212,053	All
TOTAL	\$12,201,546	

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission completed a Strategic Plan update in 2021. This is a dynamic update to the previous 2015 plan, developed internally by the Commission and staff with extensive engagement by its Evaluation Team, district committees, local, regional and state partners, and the public.

WHAT DOES THE PLAN DO?

- Helps applicants tell their "Regional" story
- Lays out the purpose and vision of the Regional System for each region
- Affirms Regional Designation as the only path toward receiving Greater Minnesota Legacy funding
- Continues to evaluate facilities based on their future concept, not what they are now



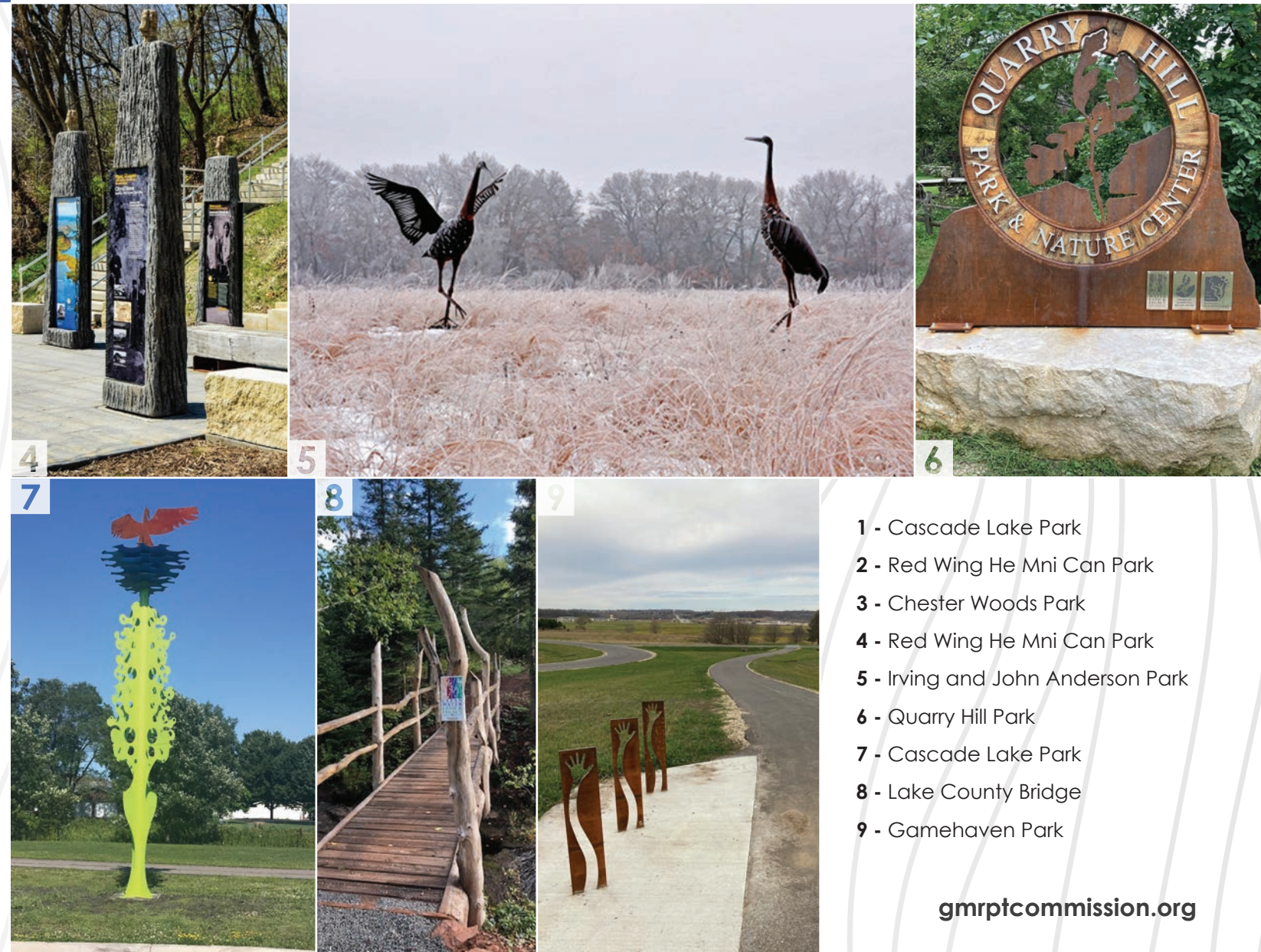
NOTABLE CHANGES:

- Creates a new class of facility called "Supportive Partnerships" that expands opportunities for new, creative, multi-jurisdictional solutions
- Simplifies and clarifies the criteria for designation
- Upgrades requirements for maintenance and operations planning in facility master plans
- Creates a tool to evaluate the value of water-based recreation connected to a park or trail (see graphic)
- Improves the definition and evaluation of facilities as "Regionally Significant" by using their regional context
- Significantly updates the content standards and evaluation process for all master plan components



BEAUTIFUL ART MAY BE FOUND THROUGHOUT GREATER MINNESOTA PARKS AND TRAILS.

From simple rock paintings to statuesque crane statues to Fairy Villages, art abounds and is found in many forms.



- 1 - Cascade Lake Park
- 2 - Red Wing He Mni Can Park
- 3 - Chester Woods Park
- 4 - Red Wing He Mni Can Park
- 5 - Irving and John Anderson Park
- 6 - Quarry Hill Park
- 7 - Cascade Lake Park
- 8 - Lake County Bridge
- 9 - Gamehaven Park



DISTRICT 1

Connect People and the Outdoors

Duluth Traverse

The Duluth Traverse is a bike-optimized multi-use natural trail system that, when fully built out, will boast 115 miles of interconnected trails passing through 22 neighborhood parks. Short connectors link Duluth's neighborhoods to the Traverse system and focus on underserved communities. The Traverse provides a high-quality trail experience for cyclists from novice to expert and accommodates a number of other outdoor recreation uses: hiking, showshoeing, winter fat biking and trail running. When complete, the average distance from any home in Duluth to the system will be less than a mile. Programming and outreach are significant factors in the work done to ensure that youth and families have access to reduced rate or free equipment to learn a new outdoor skill. The Duluth Traverse will realize Duluth's longstanding dream of connecting neighborhoods and residents and encouraging improved physical and mental health for all who use it. The building process has fostered collaboration between diverse sectors and resulted in a resource that will live in perpetuity for future generations to enjoy.

Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

Big Falls Campground and Horse Camp

Acquisition of a 9.8 acre parcel of pristine, scenic riverfront land along the Big Fork River enabled the city of Big Falls to add 15 new campsites to the existing campground and build a new ADA compliant restroom and shower building. The project upgraded the municipal sanitary system to the campground and ensured the Big Fork River would be further protected from run off. The park serves a regional audience, as well as being a popular spot for Big Falls residents. The acquisition will enable the city to provide increased access to the river and over time, develop programming and additional features that will draw more visitors and residents alike. The campground is often at capacity, so adding additional sites will increase users as well as revenue for the city. A unique aspect of the campground is the horse camp and the connected trail system is easily accessible from the horse campsites.

- 1 - Duluth Traverse - DWP Tunnel
- 2 - Big Falls Campground
- 3 - Duluth Hartley Nature Center



	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	Hermantown/Proctor Munger Trail Spur	T
8	Lake County Mountain Bike Trails	T
9	Lake Vermilion Trail	T
10	Mesabi Trail	T
11	Mille Lacs County Plains to Port Trail	T
12	Sandstone Robinson Park	S

N=Natural Resource Based Park | S=Special Features | T=Trails

TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED TO DISTRICT 1 (FY16-FY22)

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

12 Projects Funded
24 Applications

\$9,692,857 Awarded
\$2,162,533 Community Match



DISTRICT 2

Coordinate Among Partners

Gull Lake Trail

The Gull Lake Trail is a 21-mile paved trail linking the communities of East Gull Lake, Fairview Township, Lake Shore and Nisswa as it wraps around Gull Lake. The nearly complete trail is possible through the collaboration and work of several entities, all of whom shared a vision of a beautifully sited trail that would complement the scenic views and the tree canopy. Gull Lake is in the heart of the Brainerd Lakes area and welcomes a large influx of seasonal residents and visitors. The paved trail provides a safe route around the lake and is highly trafficked by both residents and visitors to the area. The trail also fills a gap in recreation as most of the communities around the lake do not offer sidewalks for pedestrian use. The Gull Lake Trail also offers access to the Paul Bunyan Trail and connections to forests, parks and area golf courses. This trail is a prime example of the success achieved when communities work together for a common goal.



1

Take Care of What We Have

Crow Wing County Milford Mine Memorial Park

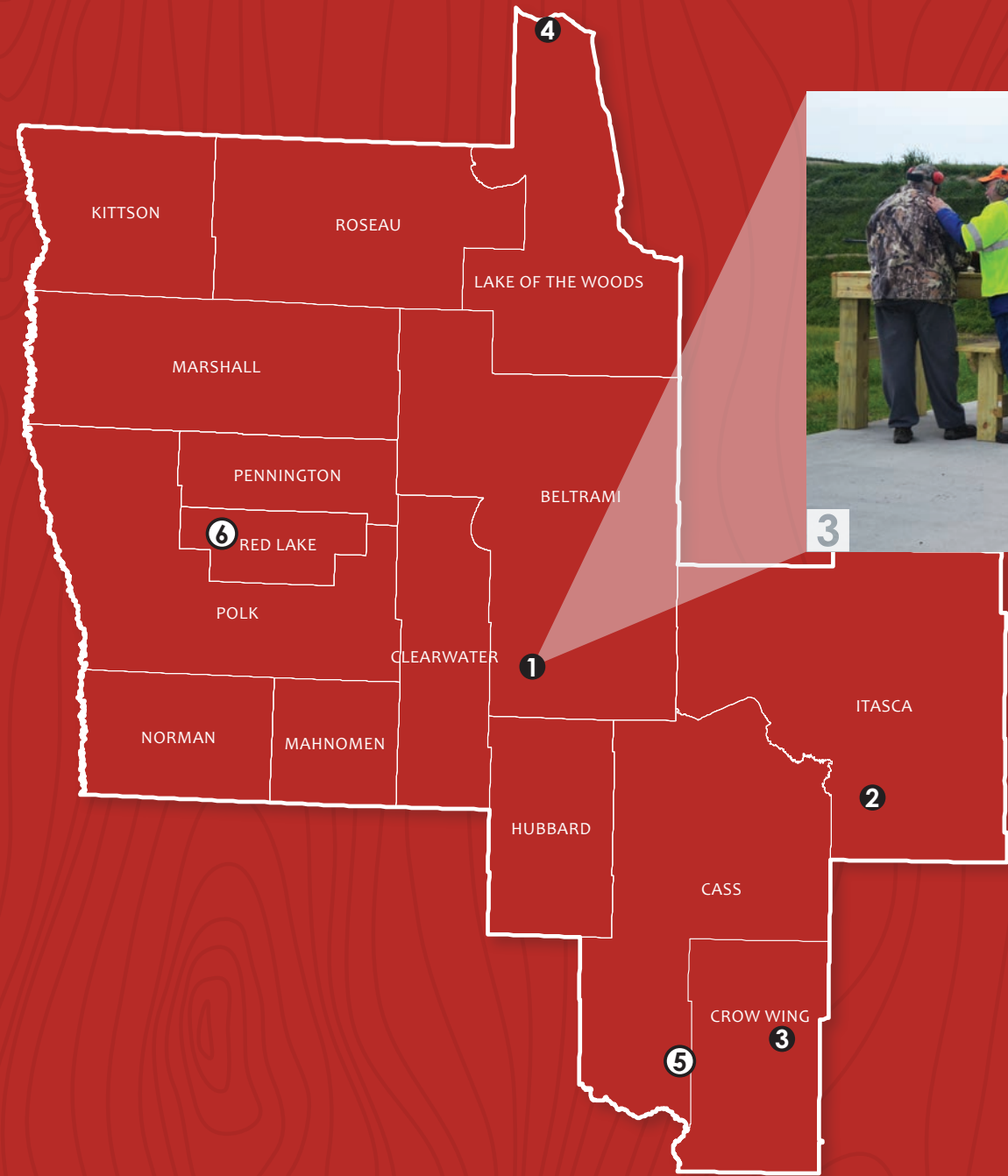
Milford Mine was the site of the worst mining accident in Minnesota history. On February 5, 1924, a mine shaft collapsed and flooded, claiming the lives of 41 men working in the mine that day. Milford Mine Memorial Park honors the memory of those who lost their lives that day and tells the rich story of these men, their families and the history of mining on the Cuyuna Range. Taking the site from abandoned mine to a park took years of work and thoughtful planning to preserve, honor and tell the story of that fateful day. Beginning with a 450 foot long, over-the-water boardwalk, the park was started. Additional phases included trails, interpretive signs, a memorial wall, picnic shelter and a fishing platform, all done with an eye to preserving the site while sharing the rich history. Today the park is complete and welcomes visitors to learn about mining, explore the past and know about the lives of those lost in the accident.



2

- 1 - Cohasset Tioga Recreation Area
- 2 - Millford Mine Memorial Park Boardwalk
- 3 - Beltrami County Northland Sports Park

- Designated Parks
- Designated Trails



3

TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED TO DISTRICT 2 (FY16-FY22)

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

9 Projects Funded
14 Applications

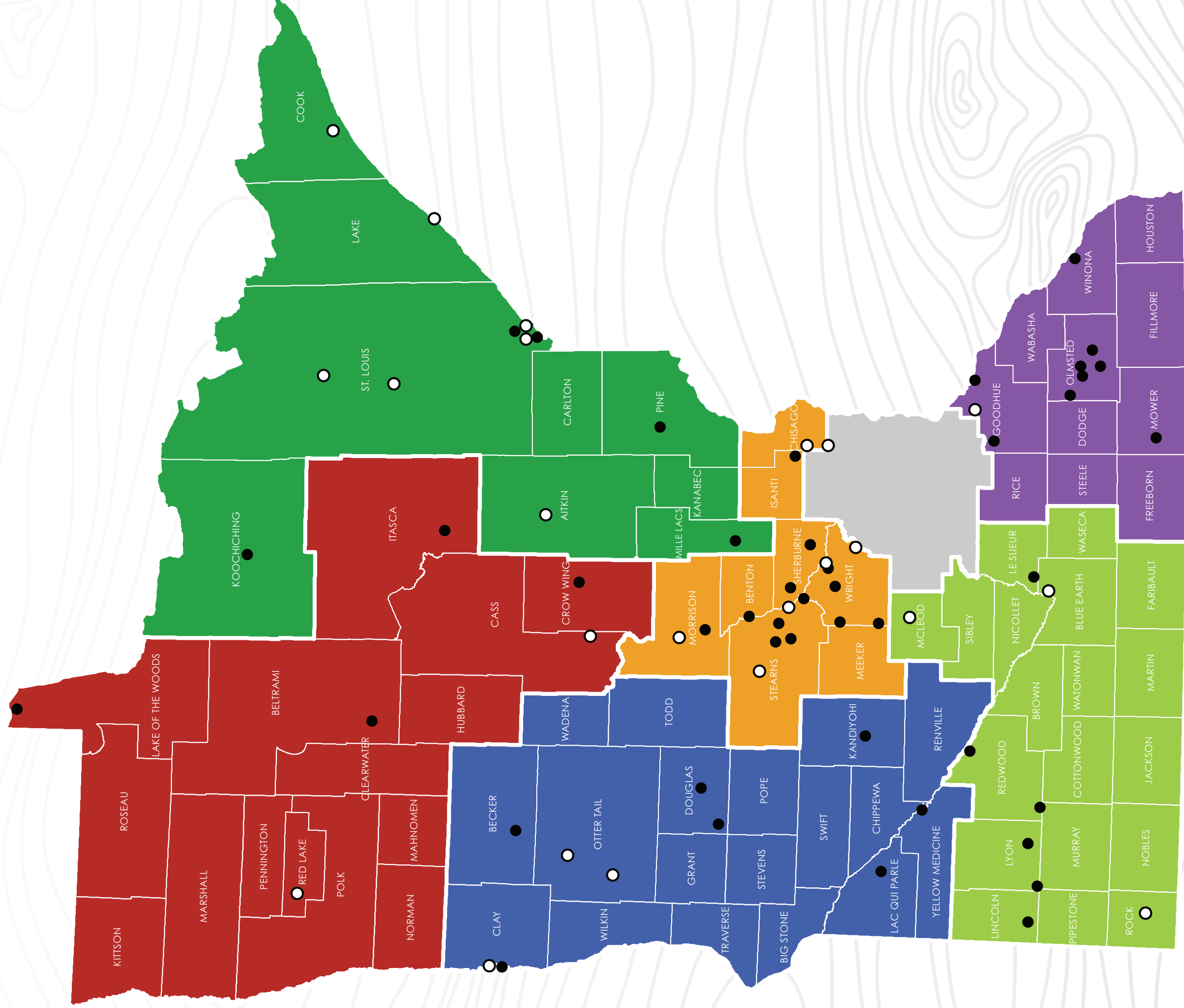
\$6,891,856 Awarded
\$2,190,917 Community Match

	DESIGNATED PARK/TRAIL	CLASSIFICATION
1	Beltrami County Northland 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

N=Natural Resource Based Park | S=Special Features | T=Trails

DESIGNATED REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT PARKS & TRAILS

(AS OF 12/31/21)



KEY

- Designated Parks
- Designated Trails

DISTRICT 1 (dark red)

DISTRICT 2 (red)

DISTRICT 3 (blue)

DISTRICT 4 (orange)

DISTRICT 5 (green)

DISTRICT 6 (purple)



DISTRICT 3

Connect People and the Outdoors

Otter Tail County Perham to Pelican Rapids Trail

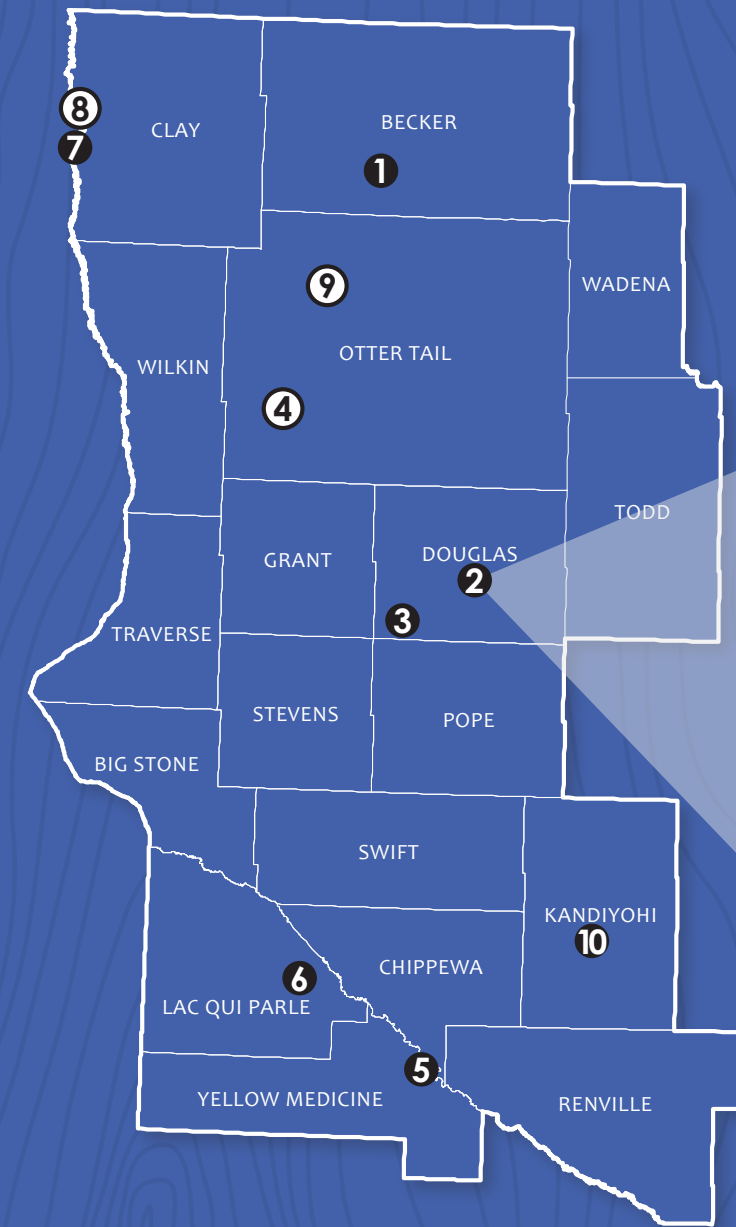
Located in the rolling hills and farmland of northcentral Otter Tail County, the Perham to Pelican Rapids Trail links the cities with a midway connection through Maplewood State Park. When complete the trail will be more than 27 miles in length and offer a recreation opportunity in a popular tourist area. The trail will also provide a safe way for bike or foot travel between Perham, Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State Park. Enhanced connections between communities are critical for providing people with the ability to exercise, commute and recreate in a safe way. The trail is non-motorized during the spring, summer and fall and open to snowmobiles in some parts of the trail to connect with the vast existing network of trails during the winter months.

Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

Moorhead MB Johnson Park

MB Johnson Park is located in Moorhead and serves as a regional park destination for a variety of outdoor recreation activities not offered at other parks in the Fargo-Moorhead area. With 110 acres of mixed steep wooded slopes and flat, grassy open spaces along the Red River, the park has preserved the natural and historic landscape. MB Johnson Park is a destination for single track mountain biking, cross country skiing and fishing. Legacy investments in the park have included trail improvements, with interpretative and educational signage, an accessible fish cleaning station, paved walking and biking trails, a repurposed pedestrian bridge crossing Snaky Creek, which opened up 12 acres that were previously inaccessible and a new restroom facility. Events hosted at the park attract local and regional visitors for bicycle races, cross country running and cat fishing. Connections to the river, nature and neighborhoods make MB Johnson Park an important community resource enjoyed by residents and visitors to the area.

- 1 - Lac qui Parle County Park
- 2 - Granite Falls Memorial Park
- 3 - Douglas County Lake Brophy Park



- Designated Parks
- Designated Trails

	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	Granite Falls Memorial Park	N
6	Lac qui Parle County Park	N
7	Moorhead MB Johnson Park	N
8	Moorhead River Corridor Trail	T
9	Otter Tail County Perham to Pelican Rapids Trail	T
10	Willmar Robbins Island Park	N

N=Natural Resource Based Park | S=Special Features | T=Trails

TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED TO DISTRICT 3 (FY16-FY22)

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

15 Projects Funded
28 Applications

\$11,399,645 Awarded
\$4,662,290 Community Match



DISTRICT 4

Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

Isanti County Irving & John Anderson Park

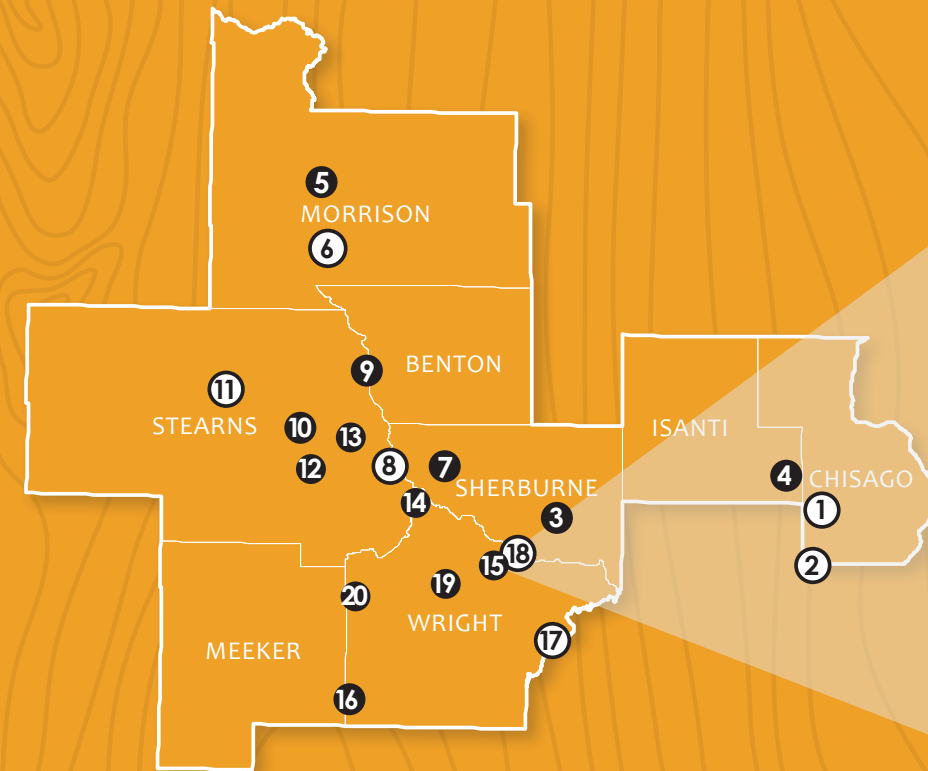
Legacy funded acquisitions for Isanti County's Irving and John Anderson Park have been crucial to the creation of this unique park in Isanti County. More than 229 acres of the 404 acre park have been acquired with Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Legacy funding. The park typifies the Anoka Sand Plain region, consisting of northern hardwood forests, prairie habitats, wetlands and lakes. Additionally, the park protects 1.75 miles of undeveloped shoreline along Horseleg and Horseshoe Lakes. The diverse environment draws amazing numbers of migratory birds, sandhill cranes among them. Boardwalks and three viewing platforms within the park are popular with birders all year long. Multi-use trails welcome hikers, bikers, horseback riding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiers.

Coordinate Among Partners

Great River Park Complex

The Great River Park Complex is comprised of Bend in the River Regional Park located in Benton County and Mississippi River County Park located in Stearns County. The parks are connected by the Mississippi River. The park is one of few public spaces in the region that offers undeveloped Mississippi River frontage with high river bluff views. The park's emphasis on nature and low intensity development means park users can enjoy an escape from their urban environments into a place that truly offers peace and serenity. Trails in the park intertwine between lowland river wetlands, mixed forests and restored oak savanna. While a unique concept of a park complex separated by the Mississippi River, the park is an elegant example of what can happen when partners work together to create a whole out of two separate halves.

- 1 - Stearns County Kraemer Lake Park
- 2 - Sherburne County Big Elk Lake Park
- 3 - Wright County Bertram Chain of Lakes Park



- Designated Parks
- Designated Trails



	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 and John Anderson Park	N
5	Morrison County Belle Prairie Park	N
6	Morrison County Soo Line Trail	T
7	Sherburne County Big Elk Lake Park	N
8	St. Cloud Beaver Island Trail	T
9	Stearns County/Benton County Great River Park Complex	N
10	Stearns County Kraemer Lake Park	N
11	Stearns County Lake Wobegon Trail	T
12	Stearns County Rockville Park	N
13	Stearns County Quarry Park	N
14	Stearns County Warner Lake Park	N
15	Wright County Bertram Chain of Lakes Park	N
16	Wright County Collinwood Park	N
17	Wright County Crow River Trail	T
18	Wright County Great River Trail	T
19	Wright County Robert Ney Park	N
20	Wright County Stanley Eddy Park Reserve	N

N=Natural Resource Based Park | S=Special Features | T=Trails

TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED TO DISTRICT 4 (FY16-FY22)

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

20 Projects Funded
28 Applications

\$14,446,630 Awarded
\$3,800,719 Community Match



DISTRICT 5

Take Care of What We Have

Lyon County Garvin Park

Created in the 1930's using the vision of local residents and the Garvin Community Club, Garvin Park began as a 27-acre tract of woodland along the Cottonwood River. However, while popular and much visited, the park was destroyed by spring flooding some years later. With few funds for repair, the park soon reverted to a wild state. In 1967 a levy match for state and federal grants not only repaired the original acreage but enlarged the park to 490 acres and developed recreational facilities. Now, years later, the park is still much loved, highly visited and is a total of 748 acres. Garvin Park stands tall among the prairies of Southwestern Minnesota. A large stand of bur oak along the river is a majestic sight in an area of corn and beans. The deep ravine and the Cottonwood River bottoms provide people with an escape from the relentless flat land of the surrounding area. A unique feature of the park is the horse camping area as well as the nine miles of horse trails within the park. Garvin Park attracts a wide regional draw for its special geography and features.

Connect People and the Outdoors

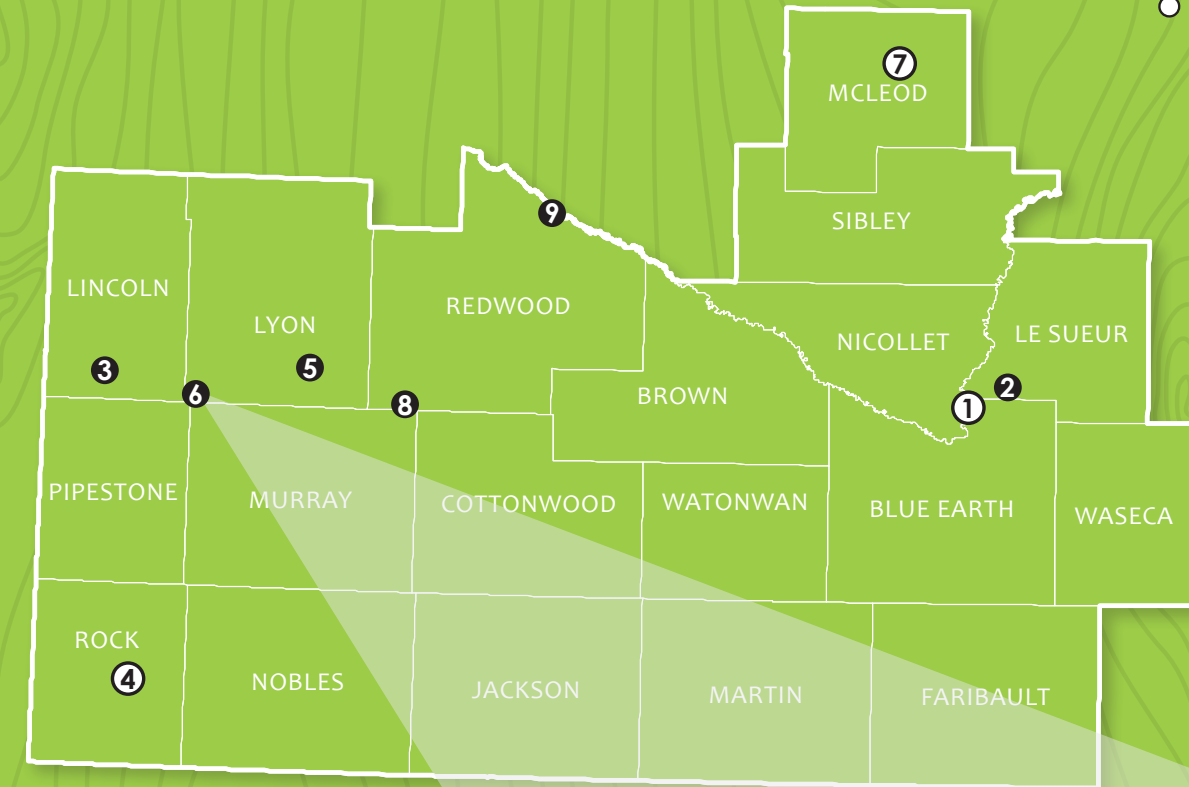
Dakota Rail Trail

The Dakota Rail Trail is located on what was once the Dakota Railroad line between Hutchinson and Wayzata, built by railroad baron James J. Hill. Today, the abandoned rail corridor is a popular trail running from Wayzata to Lester Prairie and serves as an important 28.1 mile connection between the Twin Cities metro and Greater Minnesota. The flat, scenic trail is an easy ride for all levels of bike enthusiasts, particularly for cyclists with children. Riding along you'll experience spectacular views of prairies, wetlands and forests, enough scenery changes to appeal to everyone in a group. The trail connects many towns along the corridor and provides residents and visitors an easy way to access the outdoors and run, walk, or bike.

- 1 - Lyon County Garvin Park
- 2 - Redwood County Plum Creek Park
- 3 - Lyon County Twin Lakes Park



- Designated Parks
- Designated Trails



TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED TO DISTRICT 5 (FY16-FY22)

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

9 Projects Funded
13 Applications

\$4,108,565 Awarded
\$806,591 Community Match

	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 Trail	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

N=Natural Resource Based Park | S=Special Features | T=Trails



DISTRICT 6

Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

Olmsted County Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo

Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo in Olmsted County is a gem in the Olmsted County Park's system and has been much loved over the years. Increasing interest and participation in the naturalist programs and an overall increase in visitors to the park has created a need for an expansion of the nature center. In the past years, events and public programming have increased 25-30% each year and the naturalist led classes and zoo visits have increased as much as 20% per year over the last 10 years. Clearly the nature center and zoo are a regional draw for residents of the area and visitors. A Legacy grant has enabled Olmsted County to build a new, larger nature center, with flexible classroom space to accommodate the huge increase in numbers, as well as building new exhibits, better signage and interpretation and a new entrance plaza. The close proximity to Rochester's Mayo Clinic means visitors from all over the world come to spend time at the park while visiting for appointments and care.

Take Care of What We Have

Winona Bluffs Traverse

The Bluffs Traverse in Winona is comprised of three parks; Bluffside Park, Garvin Heights Park and Sugar Loaf Park, all of which are destination parks and unique in their own way. Trails through, and connecting to the parks, required restoration and preservation and a Legacy grant was instrumental in ensuring the trail work was done. The restoration work was crucial to protecting the fragile bluffland from overuse and misuse, while simultaneously building a sustainable trail network across the bluffs. Two new trails were designed to provide missing elements in the system. One is a beginner, multi-use trail that allows users to access the existing trails at the top of the bluff and the other is a bike-optimized intermediate flow trail that brings a rider from the top of the bluff to the bottom. Winona is a popular destination and the Bluffs Traverse is growing in its own popularity from a wide spectrum of user groups.



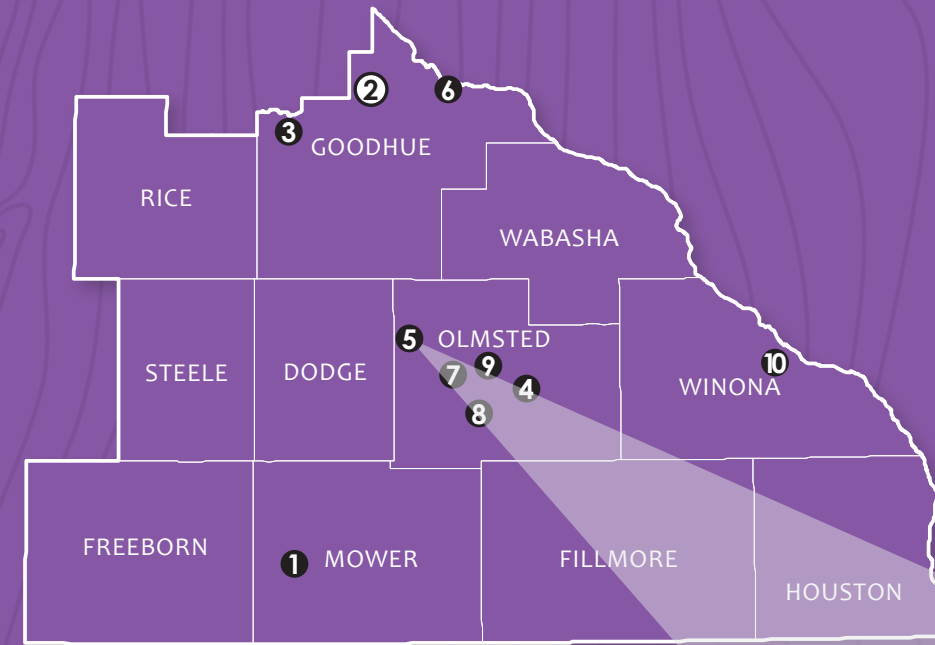
- 1 - Olmsted County Chester Woods Park
- 2 - Rochester Quarry Hill Park
- 3 - Olmsted County Oxbow Park/Zollman Zoo

TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED TO DISTRICT 6 (FY16-FY22)

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

17 Projects Funded
24 Applications

\$13,315,689 Awarded
\$8,621,566 Community Match



- Designated Parks
- Designated Trails



	DESIGNATED PARK/TRAIL	CLASSIFICATION
1	Austin Jay C. Hormel Nature Center	N
2	Cannon Valley Trail	T
3	Goodhue County Bylesby 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=Trails

PILLARS OF THE PARKS AND TRAILS 25-YEAR LEGACY PLAN



1

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. The plan describes seven key strategies to engage new users and maintain the interest and enthusiasm of existing users of our parks and trails.

- A welcoming environment
- Access for all
- Marketing
- Quality
- Programming and special events
- Partnerships
- Infrastructure and amenities

Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

Minnesotans are by nature avid outdoor recreators. 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 Legacy 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 Legacy 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.

2021 MILESTONES

New Strategic Plan

The GMRPTC completed a Strategic Plan update after a two-year development process that included extensive, thoughtful engagement with Commission committees, partner agencies, and the public. The result is a policy plan that builds Commission capabilities and opportunities for our city and county partners to create top notch regional parks and trails. A series of statewide virtual workshops was held to introduce the plan and prepare our partners for the next stage of implementation.

System Growth and Development

Three new facilities were added to the Greater Minnesota Regional System in 2021 – the Greater Mankato River Valley Trail System, Sherburne County's Big Elk Lake Park, and Lake of the Woods Northerly Park. All three facilities met the Commission's criteria for system designation through a qualified Master Plan that described their vision and implementation plans.

Connecting People with the Outdoors Success

For Fiscal year 2023, The GMRPTC allocated and awarded \$750,000 for Connecting People to the Outdoors programming and accessibility projects. The successful allocation of this funding is a milestone in the Commission's efforts to encourage equitable access, effective programming and thoughtful recreation planning for all Minnesota residents.

"Mask Out" Public Awareness Campaign

A successful "Mask Out, Minnesota!" public awareness campaign encouraged people to visit the state's many parks and trails during the winter of 2020/2021. The campaign achieved statewide publicity in its efforts to get people outside during COVID-19 restrictions, which has proven to be a high point in outdoor recreation use for Greater Minnesota.

Mountain Bike Trail Count

Three regional mountain bike facilities (Detroit Mountain, Duluth Traverse, and the Cook County Mountain Bike System) participated in a Commission-led and funded quantitative and qualitative survey of their users. The data will help inform planning and marketing efforts by the GMRPTC and its collaborative partners. Similar research will be conducted in other GMRPTC partner parks and trails annually on a rotating basis.

Data Management System Upgrades

The Commission's online Data Management System serves as the backbone of the Commission's information system statewide. Realignment and updates ensure that this system not only keeps up with Information Technology best practices, but also aligns applications and evaluation with the GMRPTC's new Strategic Plan.



2



3

- 1 - Rochester Gamehaven Park
- 2 - Red Wing He Mni Can – Barn Bluff Park
- 3 - Mask Out Public Awareness Campaign



gmrptcommission.org

@gmrptc  

@greaterminnesota 

Cover Photo:

Lyon County Garvin Park Snow Trillium