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Park Partners Feasibility Study

(Formerly called Adopt-a-Park)

March 1992

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Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Recreation

Pursuant to 1991 Laws, Chapter 242
Section 2

THANK YOU

This research committee thanks the Minnesota Legislature for the opportunity to study the feasibility of implementing an Adopt-a-Park program.

Research was conducted and analyzed over a four month period whereby park users, park staff members, corporate CEOs, civic group leaders, and businesses were surveyed about their opinions concerning such a program. We submit our report to the Legislature for consideration. The recommendations were a melding of the committee and the Division of Parks and Recreation.

The name of the program, Adopt-a-Park has been changed to Park Partners (based on the research). Throughout the report, the program name will be Park Partners.

Respectfully submitted,

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OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

Adopt-a-Park legislation was passed in 1991. The legislation required the DNR, Division of Parks and Recreation to study the feasibility of implementing an Adopt-a-Park program (Chapter 242-S.F. No. 1027). Note: the program name, "Adopt-a-Park" was changed (based on research) to Park Partners, and will be referenced as Park Partners throughout this report.

LEGISLATION

The legislation states:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. [85.045] ADOPT-A-PARK PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. CREATION. The Minnesota adopt-a-park program is established. The commissioner shall coordinate the program through the regional offices of the department of natural resources.

Subd. 2. PURPOSE. The purpose of the program is to encourage business and civic groups or individuals to assist, on a volunteer basis, in improving and maintaining state parks, monuments, historic sites, and trails.

Subd. 3. AGREEMENTS. (a) The commissioner shall enter into informal agreements with business and civic groups or individuals for volunteer services to maintain and make improvements to real and personal property in state parks, monuments, historic sites, and trails in accordance with plans devised by the commissioner after consultation with the groups.

(b) The commissioner may erect appropriate signs to recognize and express appreciation to groups and individuals providing volunteer services under the adopt-a-park program.

(c) The commissioner may provide assistance to enhance the comfort and safety of volunteers and to facilitate the implementation and administration of the adopt-a-park program.

(d) This section is not subject to chapter 14.

Subd. 4 WORKER DISPLACEMENT PROHIBITED. The commissioner may not enter into any agreement that has the purpose of, or results in the displacement of, public employees by volunteers participating in the adopt-a-park program under this section. The commissioner must certify to the appropriate bargaining agent that the work performed by the volunteer will not result in the

displacement of currently employed employees or workers on seasonal layoff or layoff from a substantially equivalent position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours of non-overtime work, wages, or other employee benefits."

Sec. 2 STUDY AND REPORT.

The department of natural resources shall study and report to the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives by March 1, 1992, on the implementation of the program established in section 1. The study must focus on major elements of the program, including liability for personal injury or property damage, the relationship between program participants and departmental employees, project selection, program costs, support services for program volunteers, and recognition of accomplishments. The report must be accompanied by recommended legislation for improving the program.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

A feasibility study was conducted from November, 1991 through February, 1992. The initial research compiled opinions from park staff members about the legislation, park needs, and their concerns about such a program. In December, 1991, five focus groups were held with park users, some civic group members, and business people. With this input, a Park Partners concept was developed for testing by civic groups, corporate CEOs, and park staff members.

In 1992, a fundraising consultant conducted a study to determine potential corporate and business participation in the program. Forty-five corporate CEOs, legislators, and leaders of associations were interviewed confidentially to determine their acceptance of the concept. In February, five focus groups of civic organizations were held to gather their opinions about the concept.

PARK PARTNERS PROGRAM

The Park Partners program was developed from the initial focus groups of park users, and park staff members. The Park Partners program would invite corporate employees, civic groups, and the private sector to give volunteer time, cash and in-kind donations to complete state park projects in resource management, carpentry, and environmental education.

This program would be unlike the Adopt-a-Highway or Adopt-a-River programs, in three significant ways:

- 1) Park Partner projects will not be focus on litter pick-up. The litter problem is not as serious in state parks as along state highways and roadsides.

- 2) Park Partner projects will require volunteers to be trained and supervised because of the complexity of the projects in resource management, environmental education and carpentry. The Adopt program don't require training of volunteers and little, if any, supervision by MNDOT.
- 3) Large signs with the volunteer groups' names will not be part of this program for several reasons. First, the focus group participants were satisfied with their group name appearing on a smaller sign in the state park office. Second, park users didn't want to see a large sign with business/group names at the entrance of the state park because signs would effect the natural beauty and environment.

RESPONSE TO PROGRAM

Civic groups and park users were receptive to the program if the projects were short-term, and well defined in terms of time commitment, expertise, training and skills needed, supervision and equipment provided. Some civic groups would provide volunteers; others would provide funds or materials.

The private sector may give donations to a working fund for Park Partner projects, if their employees, or local civic groups provide the volunteers to complete projects. Some corporations would take a "wait and see" attitude, wanting to know if the program would be successful, before donating money.

Both groups would participate in the program as long as there were guarantees that the program would not:

- 1) Reduce the shrinking operations and maintenance dollars in state parks. In 1991, 57 employees were laid off, and 470 employees experienced reduced hours. Further staff reductions are anticipated in 1992 because of the state's \$569 million deficit.
- 2) Displace current park workers, or those in lay-off or reduced-hour status.

Park employees reported that volunteerism and donations have been given to state parks for a long time. In FY 1991, over 31,000 volunteer hours were clocked for Minnesota State Parks. The successful "Campground Host" program gives volunteers an opportunity to help in the campground area and answer campers questions, in return for free camping. In the past, parks have received many gifts of significant monetary value, such as playground equipment, building renovation and construction.

Generally, park staff felt the concept had merit, however, it wasn't the right time to introduce a new statewide program, when

staff and basic state park programs were being cut, and the ability to handle new projects was severely limited.

Park managers were asked if they wanted the program in their park. (This was not a commitment; just a survey to determine interest). Of the 62 parks surveyed (4 parks don't have staff during the winter months), the results showed:

- 1) Forty percent of the parks (25 parks) said they wanted to participate in the entire Park Partners program (getting volunteers and funds).
- 2) Fifty-six percent of the parks (35 parks) indicated they would participate in the volunteer component.
- 3) Fifty-eight percent of the parks (36 parks) said they would participate in the getting funds/donations component.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

All groups interviewed think Park Partners has merit. There are also issues to resolve among groups before a program should be started. There was concern by all groups, including the unions, that Park Partners would be a diversion effort whereby state parks would be run by volunteers, with funding from the private sector. They do not want this program to be a substitute for adequate state funding, or adequate staffing for state parks. Specifically, concerns included:

- 1) Some corporations will have to be "sold" on why they should participate in such a program. To gain private sector support, Park Partners will need to recruit corporate employees to participate in the program. Then, the money or materials "will follow."

Developing a pilot program, with a proven track record, will provide evidence to the private sector to participate. In soliciting corporations for funding, they will have to be assured that Park Partners is not a substitute for adequate funding by the state for parks.

- 2) The unions have expressed concerns that the projects will displace staff on reduced hours, or in lay-off status. These concerns were also expressed by civic leaders and park staff members. These concerns need to be addressed and resolved by the union and management working together.
- 3) Some civic groups expressed concerns that before participating in the program, they would need to have a clear job description, and a list of responsibilities.

In addition, they want projects of a short duration, and ones that contain an educational component.

- 4) Park staff members are leery of the program. With reduced park staff, and the same workload, employees reported they would not be able to do an effective job with a new program. In addition, further budget cuts and reduced staff members will create further challenges and hardships on remaining staff.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS TAKES TWO STEPS

STEP ONE - A PILOT TEST

Recognizing these challenges, the Division suggests a two-step approach to success: 1) Start Park Partners on a pilot basis at Glendalough and two other parks, 2) If the pilot shows the benefits exceed the cost for the program, implement it at selected parks. The cost for the pilot would be estimated at \$17,500 for engineering costs for building projects, staff time, office expenses, and materials. Little or no promotion would occur during the pilot. These costs need to be covered by a special allocation from the Legislature, over and above the current operations and maintenance budget.

The pilot program will help develop credibility among the various audiences, and during that time, the cost/benefit of the program would be evaluated. Union representatives would be involved in the pilot projects. Doing a pilot is critical to ensure that the program is a worthwhile expenditure of state and corporate funds, and to gain credibility by park staff members, corporations, unions and civic groups.

STEP TWO - IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM

After the pilot is completed, a cost-benefit analysis would be determined, along with projections for expanding the program, if appropriate. These findings would be submitted to the Legislature for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Park Partner recommendations have been developed, based on the research from focus groups, mail questionnaires, and personal interviews.

MARKETING ISSUES

1. The name, Adopt-a-Park should be changed to Park Partners.

The name, Adopt-a-Park was confusing to the public because they thought it implied a litter clean-up, and would permit large recognition signs at park entrances. The program will not be litter clean-up because state parks generally don't have a litter problem.

Six names were presented to civic groups. The name, Park Partners was the preferred name. Therefore, the name, Adopt-a-Park, has changed to Park Partners.

2. The DNR Volunteer Program is working well in parks, especially those near the Twin Cities market where most individual volunteers are recruited. In FY 1991, over 31,000 individual volunteer hours were logged. However, for the most part, groups are not being recruited. Therefore, Park Partners would target groups - corporate, civic, environmental and user groups - to participate in the program. This would enhance the volunteer effort in three major ways: recruit volunteer groups in greater Minnesota; recruit groups instead of individuals so more work can be accomplished; and select projects which will free park staff members up to accomplish higher priority projects.

PILOT TEST

3. The Park Partners program concept does have merit and should be started on a pilot test basis. A pilot is critical to gain the trust and credibility of park employees, union, civic groups and corporations. A pilot test will also determine if this program is a worthwhile expenditure of state and corporate funds. Several projects would be selected and tested. The primary initial emphasis of the program should be upon citizen involvement in specific park projects. It will be very important, however, to avoid giving the impression that the project is an attempt to ease budget reduction pressures. Little if any publicity or promotion should be given to the pilot phase of the project. Groups not selected for the pilot projects should be directed to the DNR Volunteer program.

4. To conduct a pilot program, an estimated \$17,500 will be needed for engineering costs for building projects, staff time, office expenses and materials. We request that the costs be covered by a special allocation from the Legislature, over and above the current operations and maintenance budget.
5. Work with the union on projects. The legislation prohibits displacement of staff. Staff will work with union representatives to keep them involved in the project selection at participating parks. This is critical because some civic group leaders will not consider participating in Park Partners unless this program is supported by unions.
6. A final report, assessing the cost-benefit of this program, would be written. The report would determine if the program would be expanded based on the benefits vs. the cost for the program.

IF THE PROGRAM IS EXPANDED, INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

7. Identify corporations, civic groups and parks who want to be involved in Park Partners. For this program to be successful, volunteer groups will need to be recruited in communities surrounding or located near a state park.

The best prospects for initial financial support are firms most directly related to the state park mission - forest products industries, local firms benefitting economically, recreational products, and natural environment products industry.

8. Establish a working fund for the private sector to donate to Park Partners. A case should be prepared and solicitation sought from corporate and foundation sources to establish a fund, perhaps \$100,000 to \$200,000, to enable groups to undertake park enhancement projects.
9. Establish "systems" to make it easy for corporations and civic groups to participate in the program. Currently, "informal agreements" (stated in the legislation) do not exist, as well as job descriptions (which civic group members requested). These need to be developed so it's easy for groups to sign up for the program, and know what their responsibilities are with the program.
10. Projects need to be short-term, and well defined in terms of time commitment, expertise, training and skills needed, supervision and equipment provided. Clear job descriptions need to be provided to groups so they know their responsibilities.

11. **Implement the program through individual park promotions.** Implementation of Park Partners must rest primarily at the local level, with the park manager. The park manager would approach local area groups to be involved in the program.
12. **Establish a system-wide coordinator.** However, promotion of the concept, coordination of fundraising efforts and marketing must be on a statewide basis and thus assigned as a system-wide responsibility. A system-wide coordinator for the program is recommended.
13. **This program will increase the number of volunteers working in parks, and as a result, has the potential of increasing workers compensation and liability claims.** Since these claims come directly out of the Division's operating budget, a contingency fund should be established (if the program is expanded) to cover future liability and workers compensation claims so these claims aren't deducted from the shrinking operations and maintenance budget.
14. **Park Partner participants will receive group acknowledgement.** A news release and photo in the local paper; a thank you letter from the park manager or director; a Park Partners sticker for their car (recognition and advertising), and recognition in the office were acceptable and desired by civic group leaders.

TO RAISE FUNDS FOR LONG-TERM CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND LAND ACQUISITION

15. **A long-term view is needed.** It's very doubtful that significant accomplishment can be realized in this area through a short-term promotional campaign. Too much attitudinal change is needed about the appropriateness of private sector support for what is perceived as a state responsibility.
16. **It can't be done within the DNR/Park System structure.** Major support for these purposes is possible, but for it to be done within the structure of the DNR/State Park System is problematic.

Needed is the establishment of a structure and approach which has both a credibility of fundraising ability and the capability of long-term planning removed from the perceived fluctuating objectives defined by short-term elected legislatures and administration.

17. **It might be possible to use existing voluntary structures.** One possibility would be to contract this fundraising task to an established organization which has an established and well-regarded credibility.

18. It would be better to establish an "outside" parks structure. If the decision is to seek major capital support from the private sector for park system enhancement, the recommendation is to establish an independent giving structure for that purpose; perhaps a separate parks foundation ultimately to become self-sufficient as well as fundraising productive.

Achieving this to a point of significant fundraising capability could be a five to ten year process involving careful case development, prospect identification and individual prospect cultivation.

Establishment and implementation of such an approach would require investment money; perhaps \$100,000 to \$150,000 a year until the structure's self-sufficiency could be achieved. It's possible that non-corporate foundation funds could be secured for such an investment although some level of state funding commitment would be essential to begin the process.

The structure's staff, using volunteer leadership and working within needs guidelines established by DNR and Park System administration, would be responsible for identifying, cultivating and soliciting corporate, foundation and major individual prospects for major capital purposes, land acquisitions and specific support agreements with contributors were appropriate.

THE STUDY PROCESS

The Park Partners study included three phases:

PHASE I. PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

During this phase, staff researched other "Adopt" programs to determine the focus, components, liability, and overall response of the program from the public. In addition, regional meetings were held across the state where park managers and park staff were asked to identify their concerns about, and needs for Park Partners program. Park managers and staff were also asked to complete a questionnaire to determine what focus/results they would like the Adopt-a-Park program to pursue.

As a final step in this preliminary research phase, park managers completed two surveys, a volunteer survey, and an advisory board survey, to assess the current status of volunteerism in Minnesota State Parks. The data served as the foundation so that Park Partners wouldn't duplicate current, and successful volunteer efforts, already going on in state parks.

PHASE II. CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Based on the preliminary research, park employees were open to identifying if corporations in Minnesota would help donate dollars, materials or "loaned staff" for specific park projects. A fundraising consultant was hired to conduct a corporate fundraising feasibility study to determine if companies would give to state parks.

In addition, five focus groups were held in the Twin Cities with park users. These users were given the legislation, and it's purpose:

"The purpose of the program is to encourage business and civic groups or individuals to assist, on a volunteer basis, in improving and maintaining state parks..." They were then asked for suggestions on the components for the program.

In addition, they were given three concepts and asked their opinions. The three concepts included:

- 1) Direct mail solicitation to raise money for state parks.
- 2) A volunteer effort, directed to volunteer groups, to enhance state parks.

appear on the sign as it would appear in a phone book. There are no messages, advertisements, addresses or phone numbers allowed on the signs. MNDOT reserves the right to edit names or create acronyms in the case of controversial groups.

As with any program, there are challenges. MNDOT has received complaints about too many signs along the roads. Maintenance workers were upset. The union questioned whether the program would eliminate jobs. MNDOT agreed with the union that volunteers would be limited to trash pick-up only. If someone wanted to do something else, ie. plant trees, it has to be done outside of the Adopt-A-Highway program. Because of this agreement, the union agreed to support the program.

The Adopt-A-Highway program works well because of some very basic guidelines. These include:

- 1) There is only one project to be assigned to volunteers: litter clean-up.
- 2) The clean-up has a well-defined beginning and ending.
- 3) No training is needed to get the volunteers going.
- 4) Groups are given recognition, with highly visible blue and white signs.
- 5) The unions are kept informed about the program, and good communication continues.

Adopt-A-River

The Minnesota Clean Rivers Project is another program that works well. There are two aspects to the Clean Rivers Project, one is a designated day to clean-up a section of the river; the second is Adopt-A-River, which works much like Adopt-A-Highway where a group of volunteers selects a portion of a river for at least two years. If they choose to "adopt", they help with litter pickup, and can assist in building a hiking trail or picnic area, planting flowers, trees and shrubs, or maintaining a boat access.

Volunteers can receive a video about the importance of river clean-up for motivating volunteers, custom art work for a poster or brochure to help advertise the event, free recycled plastic bags, financial help in disposing of tires, and for groups who "adopt" an official DNR Clean Rivers, a sign with the organization's name on it and/or personalized certificates of commendation.

In 1989 there were 109 registered projects, with fifty-six communities participating, removing 404 tons of trash from 257 miles of shoreline through the contribution of 13,868 volunteer hours.

Other Programs

There are several other "adopt" programs throughout the country:

In Clallam County, Washington the County Park and Recreation Board made a plea for groups to **Adopt-a-Park**. The program asks individuals, community organizations, and businesses to adopt one of seven small parks. Responsibilities are not great and can be managed in 2 to 4 hours per week. Duties of "park parents" include grass and brush cutting, vandalism deterrence, new development, and rest room maintenance. The Park Board hopes the adoption program will give nearby communities a feeling of ownership of the parks, and allow them to determine the kinds of uses in the park. In addition, they hope the presence of "park parents" cuts down vandalism.

The North American Wildlife Foundation (NAWF) announced the **Adopt-a-Pothole** program, and the first farmer's pothole was adopted by NAWF supporters. The program is designed to increase duck populations by preserving potholes and nesting cover on private farmlands across the prairie breeding grounds. A one-acre pothole can be adopted for \$100 annually. The pothole and surrounding nesting cover is expected to produce 10 mallard ducklings and a number of other duck species. Two-acre potholes can be adopted for \$200 or pothole complexes for \$500. Adoptees receive a participation certificate and picture of the pothole.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources enacted an **Adopt-a-Trail** program. This program provides local user groups, clubs, or civic organizations the opportunity to assume some or all of the maintenance responsibilities associated with a designated public trail. All volunteering individuals are covered by workers compensation while on the job. They have had very good success with the program in some instances, but long term, multi-year commitments have been difficult to maintain. To be successful volunteer agreements have been on a year-to-year basis and require close coordination.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks created and implemented its **Adopt-a-Public Land** program in 1990. The program was implemented in order to encourage volunteers to join efforts to address chronic litter problems. These litter problems occur on all public land: parks, wildlife areas and fishing lakes. A one-year, renewable agreement is signed by the participants. The Department provides maps of the area, litter bags and a refuse deposit zone for volunteers. The litter collected is sorted into recyclable and disposed of by the Department employees. The program met with great success.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources attempted an **Adopt-a-Park** program with minimal success. Even though they did have some clean-up days, work weekends, and in some cases financial assistance, the long-term commitments did not materialize. Most of the groups that they worked with were small and had minimal financial capabilities as well as their own pet projects that took much of their time.

SECTION 2. REGIONAL MEETINGS WITH PARK STAFF

Regional meetings were held across the state in November, 1991 with park employees. They were asked to identify their concerns about, and needs for Park Partners, after reviewing the legislation. The majority of park staff didn't want Park Partners to be a litter clean-up program.

Basically, their concerns were condensed into six major issues, including:

1. Park Partners must not displace current employees. There's no substitute for adequate funding, and adequate staff to meet the public, and provide services to the public.
2. The quality of work from volunteers may not meet the standards required in state parks. This was also a concern mentioned by the civic groups.
3. Managing a volunteer program takes a lot of time. This wasn't the right time to introduce a new program when basic state park programs were being cut. In 1991, 57 state park employees were laid off permanently, and another 470 state park employees were laid off early in the season due to the budget. Consistently, park staff members questioned who would train and supervise volunteers with these staff shortages and cuts.
4. Other responsibilities and duties given to park managers and park staff will have to be eliminated to run Park Partners. For this program to be successful, the workload of park staff shouldn't increase, while park staff is reduced.
5. The public may perceive the program as a substitute to the budget problems in state parks. Volunteers can't take the place of staffing the park adequately.
6. If the Division decides to try corporate fundraising, guidelines need to be established concerning the benefits derived for state parks and the corporations. The funds raised from corporations shouldn't be used to supplant future funding by state government.

Park employees were also asked to complete a questionnaire to determine what focus/results they would like the Park Partners program to accomplish.

Over 53% of the respondents placed a high priority on finding alternative/additional sources of funding. To secure additional funds, 64% of the respondents placed a high priority on corporate fund raising; 57% placed a high priority on matching funds from the Legislature. Based on this research, a consultant conducted a fundraising feasibility study to determine corporate giving to state parks.

Almost half of the respondents want the Adopt program to build a stronger group of park supporters, and gain community support for state parks. Some ideas which received a medium or low priority included updating/promoting the state park gift catalogue; developing a litter clean-up program; an event to raise funds; and a campaign to sell more park permits.

For a complete summary of the "Regional Meetings with Park Staff" research findings, please refer to Appendix A.

SECTION 3. VOLUNTEER SURVEY RESULTS

A survey was sent to all state park managers to determine the current volunteer efforts in state parks. Sixty-two surveys were completed for 100% return rate. (Grand Portage, Glendalough, Franz Jevne and Monson Lake didn't have park managers when the surveyed was mailed). In 1991, over 31,000 volunteer hours were reported in state parks.

The survey findings included:

- 1) Currently, 68% of the state parks actively use the DNR Volunteer program to recruit volunteers. Generally, 1-5 volunteers/per park are recruited in this fashion. The state parks also look to the DNR Volunteer program for recognition items (38%); applications (29%); and for obtaining volunteer leads (19%).
- 2) State parks recruit volunteer groups (68%) such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, JC's, Lutheran Brotherhood, Rotary Club, School groups.
- 3) State parks (58%) also recruit volunteers from other organizations, in their local communities. Generally, these are larger groups (10 or more) people (39%).
- 4) Slightly less than 50% of the parks have had a volunteer program for more than 6 years. Another 24% have started a volunteer effort in the last 5 years.
- 5) Sixty-nine percent of the parks obtain volunteers with special skills - photography, teaching, woodworking, welding, building, and natural resources.
- 6) Typically, volunteers help on special events (20%); maintenance (18%); public relations (12%); and resource management (12%).
- 7) Volunteers are recognized in a variety of ways for their work. These include: giving DNR volunteer caps, pins, etc. (38%); plaques (25%); news releases in local papers (23%); and dinners (4%).
- 8) Eighty-seven percent of the respondents think it is worth their time to work with volunteers. Slightly more than 1/3 of the respondents spend 1-5 hours a month with volunteers; another 26% spend 8-15 hours a month with volunteers; another 12% spend more than 15 hours a month with volunteers. Thirty-two percent didn't respond to this question.

- 9) Sixteen percent of respondents have faced liability or union issues because of the volunteer effort.
- 10) Forty-two percent of the parks recruit volunteers from the same area, thus competing with other state parks.
- 11) Nearly 75 percent of the respondents would consider a "Spruce up the Parks" day in the spring and fall when volunteers could come and work on projects.

The committee concluded from this data that the current DNR Volunteer program is working well in some parks. The volunteer effort could be enhanced in three major ways: recruit volunteer groups in greater Minnesota; recruit groups so more work can be accomplished; and select projects which will free park staff up to accomplish higher priority projects. For this reason, Park Partners will be targeted to the following groups: corporate employees, civic, environmental, and youth.

For a complete summary of the "Volunteer Survey" research findings, please refer to Appendix B.

SECTION 4. ADVISORY BOARD SURVEY RESULTS

A survey was sent to all state park managers to determine the current status of support groups, also called advisory boards, associations, and friends groups of state park. Sixty-two surveys were completed for a 100% return rate. (Grand Portage, Glendalough, Franz Jevne and Monson Lake don't have park managers at this time).

- 1) Currently, 36% of the state parks have an active support group. Of the active groups, 8% are incorporated. Of the 54% of parks who have no active group, 14% are in the process of forming one.
- 2) State parks (36%) support group sizes vary greatly, with 27% having 26 to 50 members, 18% having 7 to 12, 18% 13 to 25, 10% having 1 to 6 and 10% 51+ members. Fifty-five percent of state parks have had an active group for over five years and 14% for 1 to 5 years. Group members typically have no limit (23%) on how long they serve with the group. (67% didn't respond to this question).
- 3) Groups usually meet quarterly (28%) or when there is an issue to be resolved (24%). Typically members provide input on special events (20%), lobbying (18%), park improvements (13%) and fund raising (13%). The members work on special events (17%), lobbying (17%), park improvements (13%) and fund raising (13%).
- 4) Thirty-eight percent of state parks recruit members for their group with 44% getting members from 2 to 5 (66%) communities. The most common methods of recruitment are word of mouth, articles in local papers and personal contact.
- 5) Fifty-three percent of state parks think it is worth their staff time to have a group. Many state parks feel that the groups gain political support for the park, get others interested in what is happening at the parks, improve community relations, and provide good communications within the community. Twenty-one percent of state parks have done some type of fund raising or partnerships for projects. (47% didn't respond to this question).
- 6) Typically state parks recognize the efforts of members with verbal or written appreciation, or some type of recognition item.
- 7) State park staff felt the Central Office could help the effort by giving them guidelines on how to start a group, attend meetings, and give assistance on incorporating support groups.

- 8) State parks felt the projects best suited for groups would involve planning and assisting with special events and legislative lobbying efforts.

From this data, the committee concluded that many parks need help in starting a support group, and assistance in utilizing the expertise of the group in improving the park. Because of potential liability issues, park managers need assistance in incorporating the group. The committee suggests guidelines be compiled from parks that have an active and successful support group to assist those parks who wish to form and incorporate a group but don't know the procedures.

For a complete summary of the "Advisory Board Survey" research findings, please refer to Appendix C.

SECTION 5. PARK USERS FOCUS GROUPS RESULTS

New ideas often are created by park users. With this in mind, park users were invited to attend focus groups to expand on the program purpose. Five focus groups were held in the Twin Cities during the first week of December. Park users, who were employed in various professions, were presented with information about the budget situation in parks, and the legislative purpose.

These participants were then asked to give suggestions to park management concerning a new program to assist parks. Their ideas were fresh and creative, some of which are contained in Appendix C. The focus group members were given three concepts and asked their opinion of each. The three concepts included:

- 1) Direct mail solicitation to raise money for state parks.
- 2) A volunteer effort, directed to civic groups, to enhance state parks.
- 3) State park classes (like those offered at the Science Museum) to raise awareness among people about park issues, and also raise funds for state parks.

Concept 1 was considered "overused" by the group and would not be successful because of fierce competition. However, several groups independently came up with a new park permit concept. Park users could purchase the standard sticker, or an "upgrade" with Park Supporter printed on the bottom of the sticker at a higher price. The additional funds for the park supporter sticker would be a dedicated fund for state parks.

Concept 2 and 3 were very well received by all groups. These participants want to help parks through physical volunteer projects and resource related tasks. Focus group members were not willing to take on long-term projects.

Some businesses were interested in the volunteer effort, however, they felt that they deserved visible recognition, like the "blue and white" sign used by the Adopt-a-Highway program. Other focus group members didn't have a need for the sign.

In addition, participants felt that special events designed to raise money for state parks would be well received by groups and park users, and go a long way to publicize the realities faced by state parks. For a complete summary of the "Park Users Focus Group research findings, please refer to Appendix D.

SECTION 6. CORPORATE/BUSINESS SECTOR REACTIONS TO PARK PARTNERS

The park staff expressed an interest in identifying additional sources of funding. Over 64% of the respondents placed a high priority on corporate fundraising as a possible avenue for additional funding for state park projects.

A fundraising consultant conducted a feasibility study to determine attitudes of CEO's, legislators, and selected park staff toward giving dollars, in-kind contributions or time to state parks for four critical areas: general program funding, capital improvement projects (CIP), land acquisition, and a working fund for Park Partners. Forty five business/corporate/foundation CEO's were interviewed personally, using the same survey instrument. In addition, 7 DNR management and park staff, and 5 legislators were interviewed to determine attitudes toward this corporate/state partnership.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to determine corporate, business, and foundation perceptions of state parks; their receptivity to giving financial/participatory support to state parks in four critical areas: general program funding; capital improvement projects (CIP), land acquisition, and a working fund for Park Partners; defining the nature of the support; identifying potential prospects and volunteer leaders; and developing a general plan for implementing a program.

CONCLUSIONS

The research revealed the interviewees perceptions of state parks: most respondents have more than a cursory personal experience with Minnesota State Parks. Preservation of natural resources is perceived as the greatest value of state parks, followed by individual/family recreation. Environmental education is rated highly, but there is significant feeling that this function is somewhat ancillary and not well defined.

A relatively high value is placed upon tourism attraction and economic impact, particularly among those with greater familiarity with parks. There is strong awareness of potential economic impact upon areas adjacent to specific parks and a feeling this can be substantially enhanced with greater citizen involvement and promotion.

Among these respondents, there is not a general awareness of group recreation as an important state park function, and cultural/heritage education is generally thought of only in relation to specific parks.

In general, there is a feeling that the park system has not a well defined mission, particularly in relation to finding an appropriate balance between the preservation of resources and providing public accessibility to those resources.

Concerning corporate/business/foundation funding of state parks, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) There is a strong dichotomy of feeling about the value and importance of state parks in relation to other ~~state~~ supported responsibilities. Universally, other ~~needs~~, particularly of the human service nature, are considered far more pressing and important, but there is strong recognition that adequate support of the park system is important to maintaining the "quality of life" to which Minnesota tradition is dedicated.
- 2) In general, the park system's ability to raise significant amounts of money from the private sector ~~for~~ major capital improvements is considered highly doubtful without long-term attitudinal and prospect cultivation; for land acquisition only slightly less so. Problems most generally cited are: the higher priority on human services by business; the feeling that the appeal would be a "easy way out" avoidance of state responsibility; strong cynicism regarding the ability of park employees to implement an effective fundraising campaign; the perceived absence of a clear sense of a mission with a long-term plan.
- 3) Interviewees were significantly divided as to the appropriateness of seeking private sector support for the improvement and enhancement of the state park system. There is almost universal agreement among private sector respondents that such appropriateness beyond state responsibility is appropriate only if essential.
- 4) Nearly all respondents would find support of projects compatible with corporate/business objectives, although with many, potential support would have to be tailored somewhat to specific objectives. There is limited interest for in-kind giving of products or materials, and in financial sponsorship or endorsement of programs or special events. Park staff also expressed considerable reservations about legality and/or implied product endorsement resulting from such giving.
- 5) Generally, the "Park Partners" concept of seeking direct citizen involvement in the improvement and enhancement of state parks is much more favorably

regarded and a significant number of business/corporate resources would be willing to take an active role. It's generally felt, however, that such interest must effectively come from a "grassroots" nature rather than, with few exceptions, promoted from the top.

While response is generally positive to this concept, there is a significant need to be assured that the concept will result in significant accomplishments.

Simply stated, that which the state park system needs - unrestricted financial support - is least likely to be achieved by the private sector. That which the private sector is most willing to provide - direct citizen involvement in the improvement and enhancement of facilities - is problematic for park system personnel and practices.

In spite of these reservations, the report recommends that Park Partners should be pursued on a pilot test basis.

For a complete summary of the "Corporate/Business Sector Reactions to Park Partners," please refer to Appendix E.

SECTION 7. BUSINESS AND CIVIC FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The final concept was presented to business and civic group leaders in Duluth, Detroit Lakes, Marshall, Rochester and the Twin Cities to assess interest in, and buy-in into the program.

The focus group moderator asked members how their organizations heard about volunteer projects, and what criteria they used to select projects. Members were then given a summary statement of the budget situation in parks, and then told the purpose of the legislation.

The Park Partners concept was then explained to participants, and they were asked to tell what projects, and recognition items they would be interested in. In addition, they were given a list of program names and asked to score their name preference.

Generally, most focus group participants were positive about this program if:

- 1) The quality standards already established in state parks was maintained.
- 2) Volunteers wouldn't displace current staff.
- 3) The program wouldn't threaten funding for operations and maintenance.

Here are a summary of the findings:

- 1) Organizations discovered volunteer projects in a variety of ways, listed by frequency: word of mouth, direct solicitation, newspaper/newsletter, and presentations.
- 2) Organizations used various criteria to select projects (for volunteer help or money). Focus group members said they would consider such a project if it was local, if their organizations' goals were connected to natural resource issues, and if the work they did, or the money they raised would be directed to meaningful projects.
- 3) Ownership in the project was very important to these groups. They want to return the next year with their family and show them what they did.
- 4) The actual projects weren't discussed in great length. However, most members felt that the volunteer jobs must be well defined, and responsibilities clearly defined for members and for state park employees.

- 5) Groups liked certain types of recognition:
news release with photo, brass placque in the
park office, a thank you letter, and a hat or
t-shirt (for individual recognition).
- 6) Members were asked to vote on the name. The
votes included:

25	Park Partners
10	People for Parks
9	Adopt a Park
7	VIP
2	Friends of MN State Parks
1	Go for Parks; Park Pride

For a complete summary of the "Business and Civic Focus
Groups" research findings, please refer to Appendix F.

SECTION 8. PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE BY PARK STAFF

The final Adopt-a-Park volunteer/fundraising concept was sent to park staff to determine their interest level in participating in the program. A "yes" didn't mean a commitment at this time, only that they were interested.

The findings included:

- 1) Forty percent of the parks (25 parks) said they wanted to participate in both the fundraising and volunteer component of the program.
- 2) Fifty-six percent of the parks (35 parks) indicated they were interested in participating in the volunteer component of the program.
- 3) Fifty-eight percent of the parks (36 parks) said they were interested in participating in the fundraising component of the program.

Overall, park staff were cautious about implementing the program in the park. Consecutively, park staff mentioned that with budget and staff reductions, their staff wouldn't do an adequate job of recruiting, training and supervising volunteers.

They were also concerned about the perception of the Park Partners program. There's a danger that this program could supplant current staff, and current funding for operations and maintenance. These concerns were also expressed by business and civic group leaders. All groups interviewed had a concern that Park Partners would create a perception and expectation that state parks could be run on volunteers, with dollars provided by the private sector.

Some selected comments include:

"Until the displacement issue is clarified and resolved I am not sure what projects will qualify.

Overall, the region had several concerns: volunteers could displace current employees; this program may dilute maintenance and operation budgets; this program may duplicate the current DNR volunteer program; and will require much staff time to implement it correctly. Help in the form of money would be the easiest to deal with.

The volunteer component could be one of the functions of the park advisory or "friends" group when our planning effort is complete.

This volunteer program will depend on funding at the park. We may be unable to spend sufficient time for training and supervision at present funding and staffing levels.

Rather than duplicate an effort that already exists, we will continue to seek volunteers locally and through the DNR volunteer program. The procedure for the volunteer program is exactly like we already do.

The existing volunteer program is adequate.

Will other responsibilities be eliminated if we choose to participate. It appears that most of the projects will occur in the summer when we don't have a lot of extra time.

I am extremely concerned that each new program we add will only dilute our dwindling operations and maintenance program. Perhaps it's not understood that volunteers are not a free ride but require many hours of quality supervision.

We have discussed this program and will take a wait and see approach. Park partnering has been discussed with some members of our citizens group and there is a strong concern that this will erode our maintenance and operations financial budget base.

As excellent as the program appears it will be, we must decline from participation at this time due the existing budget reductions, staff shortages, workloads, and future projections."

PARK PARTNERS CONCEPT

Minnesota State Parks offer the public a unique product: some of the best natural, cultural and historical landmarks in the state. Market research conducted in 1986 indicated that park visitors come to state parks because of the natural and cultural environment. But many of these resources are showing their age, because of natural and human impacts. Trees need to be planted, prairie seeds need to be collected, trails need to be upgraded, and in some cases, buildings need to be rehabilitated or built anew.

The Park Partners concept was developed based on the research summarized in section 1 through section 8 of this report. There will be two integral components to the program:

- 1) Securing materials, supplies and cash donations to complete projects in the park (fundraising).
- 2) Seeking groups to volunteer to work on the projects (volunteering).

This program will invite groups to become "park partners" of state parks. Corporations/civic groups/employee groups will be able to volunteer to care for the park resources in three major ways:

- 1) By cash donations.
- 2) By in-kind contributions (materials, supplies, equipment).
- 3) By volunteer labor, as long as the projects DO NOT displace staff.

PROGRAM PROJECTS

The projects for Park Partners will focus on a broad definition of stewardship: caring for, and enhancing the resources in state parks. The committee defined the projects in three broad categories, based on the questions asked of each park manager: "What five projects would you like Park Partners to assist you on?". The projects include:

- 1) Resource management projects.
- 2) Environmental education.
- 3) Special projects with an emphasis on rehabilitation and construction.

These categories were selected for the following reasons:

- 1) Park managers have definite projects that need to be completed in these categories.
- 2) **None of the projects are intended to displace park staff members.**

- 3) Based on the focus groups of park users, they want to volunteer on short-term projects where they feel like they are helping the environment, the community, and doing meaningful, not makeshift work.

THE REALITIES OF WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Managing volunteers is a time-consuming process. Park managers who currently have active volunteer programs report that it takes up to 15 hours a month to recruit volunteers, to match volunteers' interests with work that needs to be done in parks, to train, supervise, and acknowledge volunteers. These hours are difficult to allocate with reduced budgets and staff.

A survey sent to all park managers in November, 1991 reported that 85 percent of the park managers believe working with volunteers is worth their time. The remaining 15 percent reported working with volunteers was not worth their time. Thus, the park manager will decide if he/she wants to participate in the volunteer component of the Park Partners program.

TARGET AUDIENCE FOR PARK PARTNERS

A volunteer effort is not new to parks. In FY 1991, over 31,000 hours were logged thanks to the work of volunteers. Many of these volunteers are dedicated and wanted to support state parks.

To maximize the volunteer effort, the committee recommended to target the Park Partners program to an audience that typically hasn't been recruited by the DNR Volunteer program. These are groups whose strength comes in numbers, and who are available to work on community volunteer projects, or who will raise funds for community improvement projects. The five groups we will target for this program include:

- 1) Corporations/businesses who want their employees to be involved in community service projects.
- 2) Corporations/businesses who give their employees paid-time to volunteer on community service projects.
- 3) Civic/volunteer groups who have chapters throughout the state, such as the Jaycees, Lions, Lutheran Brotherhood, VFW, American Legion, Rotary, Women of Today, Knights of Columbus, Kiwanis, Boy Scouts (target Eagle Scouts), Girl Scouts (target advanced Girl Scouts), Minnesota Snowmobilers Association, to mention a few.
- 4) Groups who have the skills to complete the resource management, special woodworking and interpretive

projects, such as college voc-tech woodworking classes, Garden Clubs in Minnesota, etc.

- 5) Environmental and recreation groups, such as the Sierra Club, Minnesota Horse Association, North Star Ski Club, National Hikers and Campers Associations, Trail Clubs, the Rovers, etc.

The fundraising feasibility study indicated that if employees of corporations volunteer for projects, then the donations (in-kind or cash donations) will follow.

USE OF VOLUNTEERS - DISPLACEMENT

The Adopt-a-Park legislation, which was signed on May 26, 1991, addresses the issue of displacement of public employees:

"The commissioner may not enter into any agreement that has the purpose of, or results in the displacement of, public employees by volunteers participating in the Adopt-a-Park program under this section. The commissioner must certify to the appropriate bargaining agent that the work performed by the volunteer will not result in the displacement of currently employed employees or workers on seasonal layoff or layoff from a substantially equivalent position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours of non-overtime work, wages, or other employee benefits."

In accordance with this law, it shall be the policy of the Division of Parks & Recreation to operate the Adopt-a-Park/Park Partners program in such a manner that park employees are not displaced.

- 1) Participants may perform any type of non-restricted work, provided it is work which supplements--not supplants--paid staff, and which

would not get done because of funding or personnel limitations or

frees paid employees to do work which would not get done because of funding or personnel limitations.
- 2) Paid employees will not be displaced, laid off, prevented from recall from layoff, nor be assigned decreased work hours due to work performed by program participants.
- 3) The Park Partners Program will avoid routine operational tasks that are performed regularly by park employees. This is typically in the area of maintenance and operations.

- 4) Projects for the Park Partners Program need to be selected on a park by park basis.
- 5) Park Partners projects must be tasks which are in accordance with state park policies and procedures. If a park manager has any questions on the appropriateness of a specific project, they should request approval from their regional staff.

A project list will be developed and discussed with the unions. They equate this program with Greenview and STS, and are concerned that volunteers will displace staff.

PROJECT FLOW

The committee discussed the most effective way for the Park Partner projects to be managed. The committee concurred that the DNR Volunteer project flow was currently working in parks, and not to reinvent the wheel. Thus, projects will be generated from participating park managers as follows:

- 1) Participating parks identify appropriate projects, based on current staffing. A brief job description is written.
- 2) Park management contacts groups who have expressed an interest in volunteering and/or advertises these projects in local newspapers. In addition, park management may contact groups whose state organization has approved the projects on a statewide basis. Park staff may also send a copy of the Volunteer Project Job Description to Renee Vail in the DNR Volunteer program office in St. Paul. Vail will advertise these opportunities through the Community Voluntary Action Centers, RSVP, and other groups in the areas near the requesting park.
- 3) Park management screens and selects appropriate groups to match the projects.
- 4) Park management provides DNR Group Volunteer Registration and Report form to volunteer group leader to sign up all interested members.
- 5) Park management provides an orientation to the volunteer group on why their work is important to the park. Training for project tasks is provided by knowledgeable staff person or volunteer (see "Training of Volunteers" on next page).
- 6) Volunteer group leader verifies which members participated in the project each time and the number of

hours worked. The leader records this information on the Group Volunteer form and gives it to the park manager when the project is completed. A new form should be used each day of work if members change.

- 7) Park management keeps a personal file of both the Volunteer Job Description and Group Volunteer Registration and Report form(s) when projects are completed. Information on Park Partner activities will then be sent in semi-annually for reporting purposes. Information will include: Name and type of project ~~me~~ and type of volunteer group, number of volunteers involved, total number of volunteer hours spent on the project, equipment or dollars contributed to the project, etc.
- 8) Park management provides acknowledgement for the work completed. This may be a simple thank you, a thank you letter, a news release in the newspaper, or an annual picnic. In addition, individual recognition items are available through the DNR Volunteer program.

TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

Some of the listed volunteer projects will require training before work can begin on a project. Who will conduct this training with staff shortages, and staff already being overworked? Some park managers on the committee said they would make the time to train volunteers, if the volunteers already have the basic skills to do the job. The committee also recognized that some park managers and park staff don't have the time, and in these cases, proposed the following training sources:

- 1) Appropriate DNR retirees who would train the volunteers and be reimbursed for their gas, mileage and meals from a Park Partners budget.
- 2) Professors whose students are looking for experiences to put on their resumes.
- 3) Any qualified individual as approved by park management.
- 4) "Friends of" members with expertise to train volunteers on projects.

LIABILITY ISSUE

Persons accepted as volunteers for the DNR are treated as employees for workers compensation purposes. Additionally, the state assumes the same responsibility for the negligent acts of such volunteers as it does for its employees.

Some civic groups have their own liability insurance which will cover accidents, once the group officially accepts the project.

If there is a claim, the money to pay such claims comes from the state park budget. The liability claims take 2-3 years to settle and will impact future park budgets. In 1991, liability claims amounted to \$110,000. We recommend that a contingency fund be established to cover future liability claims so these claims aren't deducted from the already-dwindling operations and maintenance budget.

Some of the projects listed require the use of equipment. The following equipment guidelines need be followed to minimize liability and workers compensation claims:

- a. State equipment be used, if available.
- b. If the state park doesn't have the necessary equipment, personal equipment can be used. In these cases, the equipment must meet safety requirements. In addition, equipment will be used by the owner at his/her own risk.
- c. Volunteers using equipment must comply with state law and wear/use required safety gear at all times. The safety gear doesn't need to be supplied by the state.
- d. Another option is the civic group can fund the program, and hire a state employee and/or contractor to do the project. The contractor selected needs to have the licenses required by state law and DNR policy (bonding, liability insurance, and auto insurance), and the final projects must be inspected by DNR engineering staff.

GROUP RECOGNITION

The legislation requires the Division to identify the recognition for groups who have completed Park Partner projects. Civic group leaders, corporations and individuals were asked to select the recognition items they want to receive for their work. Based on their input, we are recommending the following:

- 1) All volunteers can receive a "work permit" to enter the park.
- 2) Thank you letter generated by the park manager or the director of state parks.
- 3) A news release about the work the volunteer groups have accomplished. A photo is also recommended if the local newspaper can take it.
- 4) A brass plate (3" x 4") with the group's name inscribed on it, displayed on a recognition board in the park office. These may be changed every year.

- 5) Individuals may receive individual recognition items - caps, hats, pens, etc. - which is currently available through the DNR Volunteer program.
- 6) Individuals will receive a Park Partners window sticker for their car, to advertise this program. This should not be confused with the park permit.

**BUDGET FOR
PILOT PROGRAM**

STAFF POSITIONS FOR PARK PARTNERS

1	Coordinator	
	1/4 FTE, one year, includes benefits	\$ 9,000
	Office expenses (furniture, North Star Network; auto/fleet/mileage; travel (meals/lodging); computer; office supplies/postage)	\$ 4,000
	Engineering expenses for three major building projects @\$10,000	\$ 4,500
	TOTAL	\$17,500

**BUDGET FOR
FULLY FUNDED PROGRAM**

STAFF POSITIONS FOR PARK PARTNERS

1	Fundraiser	\$50,000*
1	Volunteer Coordinator officed in north region of the state	\$25,000*
1	Volunteer Coordinator officed in southern region of the state	\$25,000*

* These salaries include benefits.

EXPENSES FOR THE FUNDRAISER

Office space (DNR Building - St. Paul) (includes local phone service)	\$ 4,000
North Star Network (long distance)	\$ 960
Auto/fleet/mileage	\$ 2,000
Travel - Meals/lodging (4 days a month @ \$75/day)	\$ 3,600
Secretarial support (supplied by current staff in St. Paul)	
Computer	\$ 3,000
Furniture	\$ 1,500
Office supplies and postage	\$ 2,000

EXPENSES FOR THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS

These expenses involve two volunteer coordinators.

Office space @ \$3,500/year (includes phone service)	\$ 7,000
North Star Network (long distance) (\$480/year x 2)	\$ 960
Auto/fleet/mileage (3,232/year x 2)	\$ 6,464
Travel - Meals/lodging	\$ 3,000

(2 nights/week during peak
season: May - September)
(\$75/day x 20 weeks x 2)

Secretarial staff - 1/2 time \$28,036
(\$14,018 x 2)

Computer (2 machines) \$ 6,000

Furniture \$ 1,500

Office supply and postage

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

20,000 Park Partners brochure \$10,000

5,000 Park Partners group \$ 1,500
applications

20,000 Park Partners stickers \$ 4,000

Video and slide presentation \$ 7,000
on Park Partners

65 recognition boards \$ 1,000

1,000 brass plates for wood \$ 1,800
board @ \$1.80
3" x 4"

Inscription of brass plates
.25 a letter (no more than
25 letters) \$ 6,250

TOTAL \$201,570

APPENDIX A

REGIONAL MEETINGS WITH PARK STAFF

STATEWIDE RESULTS OF ADOPT A PARK SURVEY
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 96 people

1. What focus would you like Adopt-a-Park program to include?

PRIORITIES	High (1-2)	Medium (3-4)	Low (5-7)	No Response
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS				
Build a stronger group of park supporters	45	41	6	4
Gain community support	45	44	2	5
Update gift catalog	10	17	62	7
Recruit volunteers	31	38	22	5
Find alternative sources of funding	51	30	10	5
Develop a litter clean-up program	0	5	62	29*

* The initial survey given to Region 3 and 6 didn't have the "develop a litter clean-up program" as an option.

OTHER:

Donate dollars
 Corporate sponsorship
 Big time corporate sponsors
 Consolidate existing volunteer programs within the Division and Department (gift catalog, MCC, volunteer services, etc)
 Along with smaller type gifts, money for land acquisition and buildings
 Find a source of funds for picnic tables, special resource projects, and building repair
 Money for project specific efforts
 Specific projects with specific time duration
 Cooperative environmental education program with schools (fund field trips, education packets, self guided brochures, etc)
 Finding supplemental sources of funding
 Build a generalists group able to harness any resource deemed necessary
 List of Adopt a projects for long term care
 Become advocate to other government levels for the park

STATEWIDE RESULTS OF ADOPT A PARK SURVEY
PAGE 2

2. Do you want the Adopt program to get alternative sources of funding?

Yes 70

Comments:

Maybe only temporary, then what?
Corporate donation or lottery
Additional, yes; alternative, no.
For specific projects

No 7 (One person checked both yes and no)

Comments:

If it shortchanges existing budgets
State parks should be financed by the state
to perform the functions required by the
legislature
We have to be careful to keep this as "the
icing on the cake" and not something we
come to depend on. Like most new things,
it will be very well accepted at first, but
may wear out.
Alternative sounds like we are giving up what we
have.
We can't depend on soft money but still try to
get funds because of our needs.
It is not consistent from park to park and becomes
more political than it already is.

No Response 20 (Region 3 and 6 didn't have this
as a question)

3. What alternative sources of funding do you prefer?

PRIORITIES	High (1-2)	Medium (3-4)	Low (5-7)	No Response
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NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

Rainy Day Fund	14	35	34	13
Annual permit campaign	8	23	50	15
Corporate fund raising	61	16	13	6
Match funds from legislature	55	17	17	7
Update parks gift catalogue	9	21	55	11
Event to raise funds	8	29	48	11
Pull tabs	22	24	38	12

STATEWIDE RESULTS OF ADOPT A PARK SURVEY
PAGE 3

OTHER ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FUNDING GIVEN BY RESPONDENTS:

Specific project or program	Private funding
Tax check-off	Lottery
Funding received according to park needs	Trust Fund

Matching fund comment: No-no-no
I've asked for donation boxes and been told NO.
Volunteer pool to draw from
Any that work may change over time and in different parks
Donations from pull-tabs: Never
Rainy Day Fund comment: This would be an absolute disaster causing bad PR that could haunt us for years.
Annual Permit Campaign comment: Include departments Division employees as well as the public.

4. Do you want Adopt to recruit volunteers?

Yes 58

Comments:

Yes, but we need to recruit also
Yes, if it doesn't threaten jobs

No 18

Comments:

Volunteers dry up real quick	I want to help
Should recruit at park level	Union issues
Loss of control over what is happening in the park	
Volunteers are not a dependable source	
Duplication of existing programs	
Administration of many volunteer programs require more work by us than what is done by volunteers	
I have no problem recruiting volunteers myself	
I would rather do it ourselves locally as the need arises	
Need \$ for projects, labor easy to find through volunteers	
Administrative work with support group cuts down Administration	
The individual park must be in control of his own specific projects.	
Too limiting	
Problem with supervision and quality	
Just the park managers	

No Response 20 (Region 3 and 6 didn't have this as a question)

STATEWIDE RESULTS OF ADOPT A PARK SURVEY
PAGE 4

5. What type of volunteer would you like recruited for your park?

PRIORITIES	High (1-2)	Medium (3-4)	Low (5+)	No Response
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS				

Professional staff	42	28	11	15
Trades people	47	12	5	32*
General volunteers	11	26	25	34*
College students	20	44	17	15
Volunteers to lobby	44	30	9	13

* These two types of volunteers didn't appear on the surveys given to Region 3 and 6.

OTHER:

Specific park projects
Computer programmers
Local folks
College students: not needed; we already have this
Professional staff: architects -OK; fundraisers - absolutely not; special events - with extreme caution
Hopefully these groups overlap
Also, put them to work on painting stair work; trail work
STS/Welfare
Interest groups - bicycle club, Hiking Club
Fundraising
Union issues

The following comments have been compiled from discussions at regional meetings about Adopt-a-Park. The "X" indicates that more than one region expressed the same concern.

VOLUNTEER ISSUES

Volunteers may displace current employees	X	
Timing of Adopt is poor with current layoffs	X	
Volunteers aren't dependable	X	
Quality of the work by volunteers	X	
Volunteer selection - who does it/what criteria set (Parks should have a voice in this process)	X	
Volunteers may ask for special favors	X	
Volunteers become possessive of their projects and feel like they "own" the park	X	
Volunteers have dreams about the park - may be disappointed if those don't materialize		
Volunteers represent the DNR - this may hurt our image		
We already have a volunteer program (DNR, STS)	X	
Centralize the application procedures	X	
Volunteer training - who will do it		
Volunteer programs take a lot of time and we don't have that time with our other obligations		X
Volunteers can't do work that is unionized	X	
Current park volunteers must be incorporated into any volunteer program	X	
One group may want exclusivity on entire park	X	
Impact on staff laid off negative if volunteers take their work	X	
Need guarantees/assurances that volunteers will do the job and finish it	X	
Does the amount of work justify the expense	X	

LEGAL ISSUES

Liability issues	X
Union issues and support of this program	X
Workers compensation eligibility for volunteers	X

STAFFING ISSUES

Staff time to implement a new program	X
If we are given this assignment, eliminate others so we can do an effective job	X
We don't have staff to implement this program	X

FUNDRAISING ISSUES

Funds raised aren't dependable, year after year- this program could be another CEDA	X
We need to spell out what fundraiser gets; what we get	X
Fundraising should be done out of the Central Office	X

FUNDRAISING (continued)

Don't want state parks competing with other organizations for pull tab funds or other community funds - we need to be funded by the state legislature	X
Don't hire a professional fundraiser on a retainer basis - it could be another Mistix	X
Establish a screening process for who is allowed to give funds	X
Area fundraising may work if we can match dollars	X

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Projects should be:	
Preapproved and well defined so groups know their options	X
A short duration	X
Decided by C.O., Regional, and Parks	X
Tailored to each park	X
Tied to the mission of state parks	X
Need to sell this program to employees	X
If more than one group wants to sponsor a project, how will they be selected	X
How do we say "no" to some ideas	X
Cost for the program	X
Should not be a litter clean up program	
Conflict of interest potential between groups and DNR	

MARKETING/IMAGING

Change the name - Adopt implies litter clean up	X
Input from communities needed	
Can't be viewed as an advertising ploy for some corporations	

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Legislature may perceive this program as the answer to funding, public support	X
--	---

TRAINING

Adopt training will be needed by the field X

RECOGNITION ISSUES

Signage for participants (where will it be, how big, how long will signs be up) X

Parks may sell out to big corporations in this program X

How much money will be donated before donor recognized X

Where will funds come from for signs/recognition X

Many concerned about parks having signs throughout the park X

Use current DNR volunteer perks for our program X

MISCELLANEOUS

Parks has started other programs (Gift catalogue, campground host) and they haven't gotten off the ground
Good way to get people involved in parks

WHAT DO YOU WANT ADOPT TO DO FOR YOU?

Become a 501C3 organization

Provide matching dollars for projects X

Provide funds for building materials we can't afford X

Want corporate adoption of my park

Reduce responsibilities in other areas for this program X

Trail crew Carpenter team

Local/regional buy-in by citizens X

Adoption of specific projects (trail rehab, maintenance, lumber donations) X

Well defined process with unions

Focus needs to be on stewardship

Collect prairie seeds

Funds for maintenance, staff X

Building maintenance and repair X

Collect baseline data for resource management X

Education on why parks are important to Minnesota

Help cultivate relationships with existing sports clubs X

Promote pride/visibility of state parks

Make the program easy to administer X

Selection of a few projects as a pilot program

Volunteers to help with the recycling effort

Volunteers to construct contact station

Ski patrol

Adopt a plot for prairie restoration

Help on resource management and inventory

Allow a donation box at the contact station

APPENDIX B

VOLUNTEER SURVEY RESULTS

1. Have DNR registered volunteers (like Volunteers in Park-VIP or Campground Host) worked in you park in 1991?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	42	67.74%
No	20	32.26%
Total	62	100.00%

If yes, how many volunteers?

Response	Number	% of Total
1 to 5	28	66.67%
6 to 10	6	14.29%
11 to 25	7	16.67%
26 to 50	1	2.38%
51 to 100	0	0.00%
100 plus	0	0.00%
Total	42	100.00%

2. Have other volunteers (not registered by the DNR volunteer program) worked at you park during 1991?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	42	67.74%
No	20	32.26%
Total	62	100.00%

If yes, how many volunteers?

Response	Number	% of Total
1 to 5	19	45.24%
6 to 10	2	4.76%
11 to 25	7	16.67%
26 to 50	9	21.43%
51 to 100	0	0.00%
100 plus	5	11.90%
Total	42	100.00%

3. Have any volunteer groups (ie Boy Scouts, Lions Clubs, etc...) worked at your park during 1991?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	42	67.74%
No	20	32.26%
Total	62	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

- Groups:**
- 4H Club *
 - American Dairy Association
 - Boy Scouts *
 - Camping Club
 - County Historical Society
 - Cub Scouts
 - Heron Lake Snowdrifters
 - Jackson County Bird Club
 - Jewish Community Center
 - Kiwanis
 - Lions Club
 - Macalaster College
 - Master Gardners
 - MSU Regional Science Center
 - Nature Conservancy
 - Park Association *
 - Pheasant Forever
 - REI Coop
 - Rotary Club
 - Saddle Club *
 - School Groups *
 - Silver Bay Garden Club
 - Summer Youth Green Thumb
 - Valley Riders Horse Group
 - Windstar
 - Women of Today
 - 5th and 6th Crow Wing Lakes Association
 - Argyle Fire Fighters•Audobon Society
 - Campfire Program
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Cross Roads Campers
 - Girl Scouts *
 - Hosanna Lutheran
 - JC's
 - Juvenile STS
 - Little Marais Community Club
 - Lutheran Brotherhood *
 - Mantrap Valley Conservation Association
 - Minnesota Search and Rescue
 - National Campers and Hikers Association
 - New Folden Homemaker
 - Park Employees
 - Public School *
 - Rochester Garden Club
 - RSVP
 - St. Thomas College
 - Sierra Club
 - Sportsman's Club
 - Trout Unlimited
 - Volunteer Naturalist *
 - Winona Senior High Conservation Club
 - Women's Civic Group

4. How many years has your park had an active volunteer program?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
1 year	2	3.23%	4.55%
2-3 years	8	12.90%	18.18%
4-5 years	5	8.06%	11.36%
6-10 years	14	22.58%	31.82%
10 years plus	15	24.19%	34.09%
No Response	18	29.03%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

5. Do you have any volunteers with special skill or education (college degrees, fund-raising, construction, etc...)?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	38	61.29%	69.09%
No	17	27.42%	30.91%
No Response	7	11.29%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

- Examples:**
- Anthropology
 - Community Education Coordinator
 - Construction skills *
 - Electrician
 - Graphic Artist
 - Lawyer
 - Mayor
 - Park Administration
 - Photographer *
 - Public Relations
 - Research skills *
 - Retired miners
 - Ski Instructor
 - Teacher *
 - Welder *
 - Writing skills
 - College intern majoring in recreation
 - Computer programming *
 - Drafting
 - Experienced millers
 - Horticulture
 - Maintenance *
 - Natural Resource background *
 - Park naturalist doing volunteer work during lay-off
 - Politics
 - Public Speaking
 - Restaurant Owner
 - School Principal
 - Surveying Skills
 - Technical Skills
 - Woodworking

6. Are any of you current volunteers influential leaders in the local community?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	17	27.42%	34.00%
No	33	53.23%	66.00%
No Response	12	19.35%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

7. What do volunteers most often do in your park?

Type	1-5pts	#2-4pts	#3-3pts	#4-2pts	#5-1pt	Type Total	% of Total
Maintenance	55	28	18	8	2	111	18.47%
Clerical	0	0	0	4	0	4	0.67%
Development	20	4	6	2	2	34	5.66%
Computer Programming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Meeting the Public	25	24	18	0	3	70	11.65%
Public Relations	10	8	15	6	0	39	6.49%
Special Events	45	48	15	10	0	118	19.63%
Assisting Naturalists	10	20	18	0	1	49	8.15%
Interpretation	30	4	15	10	3	62	10.32%
Fund Raising	0	4	3	2	1	10	1.66%
Administration	0	0	0	2	1	3	0.50%
Resource Management	15	28	6	16	5	70	11.65%
Other	20	0	6	4	1	31	5.16%
Total	230	168	120	64	19	601	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

Volunteer project examples:

Maintenance:

- beach maintenance
- burn brush
- checking toilet paper, etc...
- construct and install trail benches
- extra help
- mowing
- put in docks
- snow removal

- build bridges
- campground host *
- cleaning *
- cut firewood
- litter pick-up *
- painting *
- roads *
- trails *

Clerical:

- stamping envelopes
- update filing system

- pick up mail when staff is off duty

Development:

- landscaping for wildlife pond
- fishing piers
- display panels
- playground

- baseball backstop
- erosion control steps
- campground improvements
- expand electric sites

Computer programming:

Meeting the public:

- informing the public about the park *
- staffing booths at special shows *
- answering questions about their lives as miners and the mining process
- trail host
- campground host *
- open house: handed out cake, coffee, information *

Public relations:

- campground host
- photographer takes slides/photos for park slide program
- host a spring potluck

Special events:

- AIM Pow Wow
- beach party
- Bluebell Festival
- Co-sponser special events
- food booth
- operating the mill
- program assistance *
- Take a Kid Fishing
- watch display items
- assistance with Open House
- Bird of Prey Release
- Centennial *
- Earth Day activities
- help clean and set up for Miners Day
- planning and organizing
- ski night: serve cider, luminaries (candles)
- Volksmarch *
- assistance with ski race

Assisting naturalists:

- gathering and presenting information`
- researching
- staffing visitor center
- helping naturalists with programs
- snowshoeing

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

Interpretation:

- bird walks
- guest speaking *
- lead hikes
- phonology calendar for public information
- present programs *
- trout fishing demonstrations
- wildlife art displays

- geology interpretation
- helping out the tour guides
- maple syruping
- planning
- trail guide
- Voyageur demonstrations

Fund raising:

- for special events
- raise money for park support group

- raise money for park advertising and promotion

Administration:

- attendance at legislative hearings

- planning

Resource Management

- assistance with deer hunt
- bluebird houses *
- cave restoration
- cutting unwanted tree species
- flood clean-up
- monitor bluebird trail bird feeders *
- plant trees
- removal of exotic plant species*
- transplanting
- tree planting
- wild flower photos

- bat houses
- bluebird trail
- cut buchthorn
- feeding the buffalo when management is gone
- inventory
- non native plant control
- prairie burns *
- seed gathering *
- tree clean-up
- weed control
- wood duck houses

Other:

- snow removal
- repair inner tubes
- campground host
- litter pick up

- build bird feeders
- flooding ice rink
- historical research
- bluebird project

8. Does you park recruit volunteers?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	36	58.06%
No	26	41.94%
Total	62	100.00%

If yes, how many have been recruited?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
None	0	0.00%	0.00%
1 to 3	10	27.78%	33.33%
4 to 5	3	8.33%	10.00%
6 to 10	3	8.33%	10.00%
10 plus	14	38.89%	46.67%
No Response	6	16.67%	
Total	36	100.00%	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

Most successful methods for recruiting:

- asking for their help
- career day at local college
- informing people after they ask questions
- personal contact *
- personnel
- volunteer evening for information *
- walk-ins: meet them at the counter *
- invite them out for coffee and explain how they can help the park
- letting visitors know they can play a role in protecting the parks
- call up individually and ask for a specific project
- get a group committed for a special project *
- local colleges
- posting the information in the park kiosks and office
- PR Bulletins for volunteers in local newspaper *
- volunteer publications at visitor center
- word of mouth *

9. Does your park staff get volunteers from surrounding communities?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	47	75.81%
No	15	24.19%
Total	62	100.00%

10. Do you work with the DNR volunteer program?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	43	69.35%
No	19	30.65%
Total	62	100.00%

If yes, how?

	Number	% of Total
Request specific types of volunteers.	10	9.90%
Get leads on volunteers.	19	18.81%
Use the DNR volunteer recognition program.	38	37.62%
Receive DNR volunteer office training.	3	2.97%
Use the DNR volunteer applications.	29	28.71%
Other	2	1.98%
Total	101	100.00%

Other:

- Inform the volunteer office when we use a volunteers *

11. What types of recognition do you provide for volunteers?

DNR Volunteer recognition items.	43	38.39%
Recognition dinner.	5	4.46%
Plaques.	28	25.00%
News release in local newspaper.	26	23.21%
Other	10	8.93%
Total	112	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

Other:

- Volunteer recognition board near the trail center where all of the general public can see. We usually have a name and a picture of the individual or group with their particular project.
- park picnic
- take campground hosts out for coffee and present a plaque
- letter of recommendation
- invite them to have coffee with the staff
- personal thanks
- expenses for projects
- letter from the governor
- great big thank you

12. How can the DNR volunteer office help with volunteer programs?

- clarify procedures
- continue to provide recognition items
- develop a promotion kit to be used by the parks
- develop guidelines and directions during budget shortfalls
- don't allow or encourage volunteers to take over park classified positions
- find people who are willing to do specific jobs
- get more on the list for out-state area *
- guidelines for handling more extensive programs
- handle all the necessary paper work
- keep doing what they are doing
- keep providing recognition items *
- leave as is
- let the local area public know about the park and the activities available for volunteers.
- locate qualified person to volunteer to do slide shows and interpretive hikes on Saturdays from mid June to August
- more information on seniors and how important their skills and knowledge is
- more recruitment
- news release in local papers requesting volunteers
- no need to send lists of Metro area volunteers to out-state parks
- Provide a volunteer coordinator at the regional level to coordinate, recruit, supervise and administer volunteer projects on weekends in the parks when staff is far too busy with other duties.
- provide regional listings *
- research volunteers for fund-raising
- supply on-site recruiter-coordinator
- training on how to request volunteer help and promote volunteerism in the park

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

13. How can the central office parks staff help with volunteer programs?

- advertising for volunteers in local communities *
- by providing guidelines*
- coordination of special events
- definition of what jobs volunteers can do*
- get more on the list for out-state area *
- Good question, time to do it.
- handle all the necessary paperwork *
- Is it OK to use work-time to attend Lions, 4H, etc.. functions to promote volunteers? Standards for this?
- Let the local area public know about the park and the activities available for volunteers.
- locate campground host for July and August
- Provide recognition for volunteers in the form of thank you letters in addition to those generated by the park staff.
- provide funding for special projects*
- recognize the time and skill involved to manage a volunteer program
- send out requested information
- streamline paperwork
- support park partnerships
- Work with I & E to give further recognition in the media to deserving volunteers.

14. Is it worth your time/your staff time to work with volunteers?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	54	87.10%
No	8	12.90%
Total	62	100.00%

15. How many hours do you spend on a monthly basis with volunteers?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
None	3	4.84%	7.14%
1 to 5	16	25.81%	38.10%
5 to 7	7	11.29%	16.67%
8 to 15	11	17.74%	26.19%
15 plus	5	8.06%	11.90%
No Response	20	32.26%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

16. How much time are you willing to spend on a monthly basis with volunteers?

Response	Number	% of Total
None	1	1.61%
1 to 5	11	17.74%
5 to 7	3	4.84%
8 to 15	16	25.81%
15 plus	9	14.52%
No Response	22	35.48%
Total	62	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

17. Have you faced any liability or union issues with the projects done by volunteers?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	10	16.13%
No	52	83.87%
Total	62	100.00%

Examples:

- volunteers doing AFSCME work
- a volunteer was injured at the park from a fall, we provided medical payment for cuts & bruises treated at a local hospital
- any projects outside of the normal duties of a campground host
- union was reluctant to grant permission for use of volunteers
- Several years ago I had to terminate 2 handicapped individuals working a CETA program because it was believed that they were doing work that would have been done by a park employee on seasonal lay-off collecting unemployment.
- union officials want to be notified before we use them
- have not used volunteers to do regular staff tasks*
- I had one or two projects submitted for the STS program rejected by the union and they didn't get done.
- park staff wants volunteer work to follow STS guidelines, above and beyond standards

18. Do you have another park near you that draws volunteers from the same resources?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	26	41.94%
No	36	58.06%
Total	62	100.00%

If yes, which ones?

- Temperance River, Cascade River, Judge Magney
- Sibley, Monson Lake
- Lake Shetek, Upper Sioux Agency, Camden
- Scenic, Hill Annex Mine
- Fort Snelling, William O'Brien
- Lake Bronson, Old Mill
- Whitewater, O.L. Kipp, Carley
- Charles Lindbergh, Crow Wing
- Mille Lacs Kathio, Father Hennepin
- Wild River, Wisconsin Interstate, Interstate
- Nersrand-Big Woods, Sakatah Lake
- Split Rock Lighthouse, Tettegouche, Gooseberry Falls
- Fort Ridgely, Flandrau
- Itasca, Lake Bemidji
- County and City Parks

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

19. Would you consider an annual "Spruce up the Parks" day in the spring and fall when volunteers work on projects?

	Number	% of Total
Yes	45	72.58%
No	17	27.42%
Total	62	100.00%

If no, why?

- crosses over in AFSCME work responsibilities
- it would displace regular park employees
- this is the work that would normally be done by returning seasonal employees *
- local STS crew does litter clean-up along roadsides
- volunteers not needed for this, paid staff is able to get park ready for fall and spring
- no time for administration or staff to handle
- present staff does the job more efficiently
- we already have a group doing this
- I think this is regular maintenance and thus would be considered "displacement" of regular employees
- sounds like "litter pickup", kind of dirty work, no glamor and glitz
- park is too spread out

20. Some volunteer programs have volunteers who coordinate the work of other volunteers. Do you think your volunteer program warrants such a program?

Response	Number	% of Total
Yes	16	25.81%
No	46	74.19%
Total	62	100.00%

21. Do you use staff from:

Program	Number	% of Total
MCC	38	37.25%
STS	41	40.20%
Other	23	22.55%
Total	102	100.00%

Other:

- restitution workers from County Court Services *
- County Youth Development
- Sheriff's Youth Program
- Summer Youth Green Thumb
- Greenvview *
- Summer Youth Employment Program
- Outward Bound
- MCC only wants high visibility projects
- anything I can get
- students
- Camp Sunrise Community Service Workers

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

APPENDIX C

ADVISORY BOARD SURVEY RESULTS

1. Does your park have an active advisory board/association/friends group?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	22	35.48%	39.29%
No	34	54.84%	60.71%
No Response	6	9.68%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

If yes, is the group incorporated?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	8	36.36%	38.10%
No	13	59.09%	61.90%
No Response	1	4.55%	
Total	22	100.00%	100.00%

If no, are you in the process of forming one?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	5	14.71%	16.13%
No	26	76.47%	83.87%
No Response	3	8.82%	
Total	34	100.00%	100.00%

2. How many members do you have?

Members	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
1 to 6	2	9.09%	11.11%
7 to 12	4	18.18%	22.22%
13 to 25	4	18.18%	22.22%
26 to 50	6	27.27%	33.33%
51 plus	2	9.09%	11.11%
No Response	4	18.18%	
Total	22	100.00%	100.00%

3. How many years has your park had an active group?

	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
6 months	2	9.09%	10.53%
6m - 1 year	2	9.09%	10.53%
1 - 5 years	3	13.64%	15.79%
5 years plus	12	54.55%	63.16%
No Response	3	13.64%	
Total	22	100.00%	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

4. How often does your advisory board/association/friends group meet? (more than one possible answer)

	Number	% of Total
Monthly	4	13.79%
Quarterly	8	27.59%
Yearly	4	13.79%
When there is an issue.	13	44.83%
Other	0	0.00%
Total	29	100.00%

5. What input do members typically provide? (please prioritize you top 5 issues)

Input	#1-5pts	#2-4pts	#3-3pts	#4-2pts	#5-1pt	Type Total	% of Total
Park Improvements	5	12	3	2	1	23	12.92%
Planning	5	0	0	2	1	8	4.49%
Land Acquisition	0	4	3	4	0	11	6.18%
Maintenance	0	0	6	0	1	7	3.93%
Development	5	4	0	2	1	12	6.74%
Lobbying	25	4	0	0	3	32	17.98%
Special Events	20	8	6	0	1	35	19.66%
Interpretation	0	0	6	2	1	9	5.06%
Environmental Education	0	4	0	2	0	6	3.37%
Fund Raising	0	4	9	8	1	22	12.36%
Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Resource Management	0	0	3	0	1	4	2.25%
Management Plan	5	4	0	0	0	9	5.06%
Other	15	8	0	0	0	23	12.92%
Total	65	44	36	22	11	178	100.00%

Examples:

Park Improvements

- provide ideas and suggestions
- picnic shelter
- park facilities
- worked with county commissions to cost/share entrance road improvements

Planning

- planning and organizing special events
- goals

Land Acquisition

- strategies to accomplish park objectives

Maintenance

- annual spring clean up day
- trails

Development

- new campground and horse trail
- picnic and other small shelters

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

Lobbying

- write letters to state politicians asking for financial support *
- budget concerns

Special Events

- assist with open house & centennial events
- photo contest
- planning and organizing
- canoe days

Interpretation

- interpretation facility and additional staff
- visitor center
- Beaulieu House-park history

Environmental Education

Fund Raising

- raise money for park advertising and promotion
- provide assistance with various civic groups in obtaining donations
- Beaulieu House

Administration

Resource Management

- vegetation burning to improve blueberry status
- cultural resources

Management Plan

Other

- let neighbors know issues: hunting, land acquisition, etc...
- give park management team lots of advice on how to run park
- publicity in their publication (Edge of the Wilderness Newspaper)

6. What projects do members typically work on? (please prioritize you top 5 issues)

Work On	#1-5pts	#2-4pts	#3-3pts	#4-2pts	#5-1pt	Type Total	% of Total
Park Improvements	10	8	3	0	1	22	12.64%
Planning	0	0	0	2	1	3	1.72%
Land Acquisition	0	0	3	2	0	5	2.87%
Maintenance	0	0	6	2	0	8	4.60%
Development	5	8	0	2	0	15	8.62%
Lobbying	20	8	0	0	2	30	17.24%
Special Events	20	4	3	2	1	30	17.24%
Interpretation	5	0	9	2	1	17	9.77%
Environmental Education	0	4	0	2	0	6	3.45%
Fund Raising	0	8	6	4	2	20	11.49%
Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Resource Management	0	8	0	2	0	10	5.75%
Management Plan	0	0	3	0	0	3	1.72%
Other	5	0	0	0	0	5	2.87%
Doesn't work on projects	20					20	11.49%
Total	65	48	33	20	8	174	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

Examples:

Park Improvements

- assist in obtaining local support for projects
- Beaulieu House improvements
- help clean up
- picnic shelter
- electric sites
- benches

Planning

- planning and organizing special events
- support new building projects

Land Acquisition

- seek financial support from legislators
- talk to land owners *

Maintenance

- annual spring clean up day
- trails

Development

- horse trail
- modern campground
- swimming pool

Lobbying

- write letters of support for park programs *
- when park is proposed for closure
- students of political science class lobby for entire park system
- park funds

Special Events

- assist with open house: give tours, park cars, provide lunch *
- planning and organizing
- beach party
- organize Art in the Park
- canoe days
- operate booths at park

Interpretation

- border around rock garden
- park history
- work as volunteers on interpretive programs
- wants to get naturalist for park

Environmental Education

Fund Raising

- assist park staff solicit fund from pull tab operations
- playground equipment
- raffle paintings
- swimming pool,
- electric sites
- wood carvings

Administration

Resource Management

- transplanting trees
- blueberry improvement through use of local fire departments

Management Plan

- group wants to be involved *

Other

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

7. Do you recruit members for you advisory board/association/friends group?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	24	38.71%	55.81%
No	19	30.65%	44.19%
No Response	19	30.65%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

If yes, how?

- word of mouth *
- add/article in paper *
- send mailing to all neighbors
- personal contact *
- contacting local sports and tourism groups
- interpretive programs
- people who have in interest in the park are asked to be members
- try to pick leaders/representatives from a cross section of the community for nucleus
- phone calls
- we have a brochure that explains its purpose
- recommended to park board if citizen shows concern
- meeting notice in local paper *
- special events
- ask people if they will serve

8. How many years do members serve?

Members	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
1 year	3	4.84%	15.00%
2 to 3 years	2	3.23%	10.00%
4 to 5 years	1	1.61%	5.00%
5 years plus	0	0.00%	0.00%
No Limit	14	22.58%	70.00%
No Response	42	67.74%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

9. Do you get members from more than one community?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	27	43.55%	81.82%
No	6	9.68%	18.18%
No Response	29	46.77%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

If yes, how many?

Cities	Number	% of Total
1	1	3.70%
2 to 3	9	33.33%
4 to 5	9	33.33%
5 plus	5	18.52%
Unknown	3	11.11%
Total	27	100.00%

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

10. Is it worth your time/your staff time to have an advisory board/association/friends group?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	33	53.23%	91.67%
No	3	4.84%	8.33%
No Response	26	41.94%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

Why?

- creates a direct means of public input
- get others interested *
- opinions from outside DNR are also valuable
- to promote good community relations *
- they are our most active and effective group in support of the park system
- they are very interested in the economic impact of the park on their local community
- they are very supportive of the park in many areas such as, lobbying, special events, raising funds for park advertising and promotion, annual spring clean up day, operating booths at special shows, etc...
- to assist in efforts to keep the park moving ahead in development and funding
- to help with identified parks goals and projects in a legislative format
- takes time, but pays dividends far beyond the time commitment
- more clout
- gains political support *
- only for special projects
- provides good communication: open door policy *
- you need their support *

Why not?

- those who would join are already active in chamber and other committees
- only if it is an active group and not self serving
- we are already involved in several associations for the area
- with four parks in Cook County, I think it would have to be one group for all of us

11. How do you recognize the efforts of your members?

- verbal or written appreciation *
- recognition items: plaques, news releases *
- summer picnic
- Christmas cards
- meetings, dinners
- public thank you in newspaper

12. How can the central office park staff help you in your work with and advisory board/association/friends group for your park?

- guidelines: how to start a board, what works, etc... *
- recognize their efforts more formally
- provide some training on how to do fund raising
- ways to recruit younger members
- news releases
- be willing to attend and participate in key meetings *
 - clarify difficult park issues *
 - let them know they are greatly appreciated
 - come to some of the special events they sponsor
- provide a registry for interested people with a newsletter and a method to contact the central office directly
- allow the groups to function as "citizen" groups, and not try to formalize the process to the point where they become extensions of division policy makers
- providing information that the park or advisory group needs *
- budget concerns for materials
- assist in recognizing efforts
- allow more time in my PD to do so
- provide recognition materials *
- provide funding for lost administrative hours

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

13. Has your group done and fund raising or partnerships for projects?

Response	Number	% of Total	% of Resp.
Yes	13	20.97%	39.39%
No	20	32.26%	60.61%
No Response	29	46.77%	
Total	62	100.00%	100.00%

If yes, explain the project, how much money was raised and who contributed to the campaign.

- acquired a five acre parcel for the park
- button sales
- \$50,000 for a visitor center
- \$4500 for playground equipment
- \$4000 for playground equipment
- several hundred dollars per year by selling food and beverages at special events which is used for park promotion
- \$2000 for playground equipment: American Legion, Lutheran Brotherhood, Private Donors
- \$450 for VCC plaque recognizing Veterans Conservation Corp who built Sibley's historic buildings
- centennial butterfly garden: Lutheran Brotherhood
- raised funds for land acquisition back in the 60's
- \$110,000 for swimming pool
- \$8000 for electric sites
- boats, buildings, trails

14. What types of projects do you find best suited for advisory board/association/friends groups at your park?

- as a means of sharing information
- assist with special events *
- cultural resource projects
- facility projects
- high priority needs for the public
- legislative lobby efforts *
- planning
- projects our staff cannot get done
- special event planning *
- community liaison between park and community, legislature, St. Paul
- cooperative involvement to benefit the community and the park through mutual funding
- assist in controversial issues with local government
- contacting local legislators for support
- development
- fund raising for CIP
- improvement
- liaison with business community
- policy development and support
- short term, special projects
- tourism related projects

* identifies items indicated by more than one park

APPENDIX D

PARK USERS FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Submitted by:
DNR Marketing Staff
Information & Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Focus group participants revealed a strong interest in helping Parks through physical labor projects such as building and grounds maintenance and resource related tasks. By focusing on this aspect of volunteering, the Parks Partner Involvement Concept would have the best chance of successfully meeting its goal of citizen stewardship. With the development of specific criteria for project selection, local community involvement, and an efficient communications network, this type of volunteer program can meet the needs of both Parks and those wishing to volunteer.

Physical labor projects are better suited to civic and special interest groups as opposed to individuals and corporate groups for several reasons. One reason is that the factors that motivate civic and special interest groups to volunteer are more easily met. Another reason has to do with the type of recognition they require. The types of recognition desired by civic and special interest groups are more tangible in nature and more easily attainable than those of business groups. Civic and interest groups prefer T-shirts, caps and merit patches while business groups demand recognition in the form of publicity. Mileage and meal reimbursement did not interest participants because this type of incentive is not compatible with their motivation for volunteering.

Corporate motivation for volunteering is based on image/awareness building and community support. To address these recognition requirements a program which allows corporations exclusive, on-going responsibilities at a specific park, would foster a successful program. The advantages and disadvantages of an exclusive program should be looked into further.

Creating special events as a method of raising funds was enthusiastically accepted by the focus groups. Special events not only can raise funds, but also increase and encourage support for the cause, in this case State Parks. Events such as bike-a-thons, marathons etc. allow you to target special interest groups therefore providing a greater chance of success.

Several other concepts were derived from the focus groups which could be beneficial to Parks. These concepts need further research to determine how they can best be utilized and which function of Parks they are most suited. Ideas such as donor level park stickers to increase funding, creating an independent board of directors to solicit funds and developing a program of special interest tours and classes, all have potential to be successful components of MN State Parks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A volunteer physical work program to aid Parks in maintenance, restoration and resource related projects, should be the major component of the Parks Partner Community Involvement program. All focus group participants felt this concept met some element of volunteering that they would be interested in. Two key elements, that of a strong communications network to match projects with volunteers and local community involvement would enhance the success of this concept. Criteria for suitable projects would need to be developed as well as administrative functions and forms of volunteer recognition determined.
2. Representatives of the business community showed a strong interest in a program which would be very similar to the Adopt-A-Highway concept. From their response, it is recommended that Parks develop some type of corporate sponsored program which would offer companies the opportunity to exclusively adopt-a-park for clean up and restoration projects. This program would need to provide recognition in the form of publicity such a sign similar to those used in the Adopt-A-Highway program.
3. Special events such as bike-a-thons, marathons etc. should be looked at as ways to raise additional funds as well as support for parks. Because of the high level of interest by focus group participants, special events would seem to have a high potential for success if targeted to the right audiences.
4. The four factors of motivation defined in the focus groups should be taken into consideration any time a project is developed. The factors include the benefit involved for those participating, the volunteer's level of interest in the cause, the "good feeling" aspect and the opportunity to socialize.
5. The direct mail concept should not be pursued as a fundraising portion of this program because of current competition for donation dollars and the economic conditions that exist at the present time. However, the concept of having an independant, non-profit board of directors who's mission is to solicit funds on the behalf of Parks, is worth further research as a possible alternative to direct mail fundraising.
6. The suggestion to have different donor level stickers to increase funding should be looked at as a marketing opportunity for the merchandising program. Additional research would be needed to assess the feasibility of administrating this concept as well as determining donor levels and incentives.
7. The Park Pleasure Tours concept was very well liked by all the focus groups. Because the major emphasis of this concept is educational, rather than fundraising or volunteering, it would seem better placed in another facet of Parks.

METHODOLOGY

Four focus groups were held in December 1991 to gather public input in developing the framework for the Parks Partner Community Involvement concept.

The focus group participants consisted of representatives from civic, school and business groups interested in the Adopt-A-Highway campaign and individual and civic group representatives that are park users.

The four groups were asked the same set of questions. The responses to these questions are summarized on the following pages.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The concept of a direct mail campaign was not well accepted. Some benefits may exist for businesses but for smaller groups and individuals, without large sources of revenue, this concept does not offer a viable way to support parks. Some derivatives of this concept such as donor level park stickers or special events, like bike-a-thons, could be fundraising alternatives.
2. The concept of volunteering time for physical labor projects seemed to be the idea liked most by the focus groups. Most participants (individuals as well as those representing business and civic groups) had this idea well formed in their minds as the framework for "Parks Partners" prior to the focus groups.
3. The Park Pleasure Tours concept was liked by most participants especially those who are currently park users. Focus group participants were very enthused about the opportunity to become better acquainted with, and more knowledgeable about, the natural environment within State Parks. Targeting tours or classes to special interest groups is a very positive feature of this concept.
4. Two factors the participants felt would help make the program a success were local commitment from the community surrounding the park and having a well organized communications network. This network would match the right volunteers to the right projects in order to maximize the experience for both the park and the volunteers.
5. All groups felt some type of recognition was important. Individuals and civic groups wanted more tangible items such as caps, T-shirts etc. while businesses preferred image building tactics such as signage. All groups seemed favorable to local press releases.

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS
PARK PARTNERS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT CONCEPT

Participant profile: Focus group participants included park users as well as civic group and business representatives interested in the Adopt-A-Highway program.

1. Group members participate in a wide range of outdoor activities from nature walking to four wheel riding. Other activities mentioned include: camping, skiing, boating, hiking, jet skiing, biking, snowmobiling, bird watching, canoeing and photography.

2. If you have volunteered in the past or have considered volunteering, what was your motivation?

Four factors of motivation were clearly defined.

* People volunteer because they have an established, passionate interest in the cause.

* People volunteer to gain some type of personal benefit. For civic and business groups the aspect of improving their image and gaining free publicity are two motivating factors. Businesses encourage employees to participate in volunteer projects to build community support for their company and increase teamwork among workers. Some individuals want to experience volunteering to enhance their resume or working profile.

* Volunteering offers groups (families, organizations etc.) the opportunity to work together as a way of socializing.

* Volunteering offers the chance to help make the world a better place, now and in the future. This is the "good feeling" aspect of volunteering.

3. As you think about helping and supporting MN State Parks what comes to mind? What kinds of projects might you be interested in supporting or participating in?

Three components, time, energy and money, were cited as the make up of volunteer programs. The focus group participants discussed the following as possible ways to support MN State Parks.

Physical labor: (Time & Energy)

- * Four wheel drive groups want to clear forest roads.
- * Trash clean up projects
- * Adopt-a-trail
- * River clean up projects
- * Twice-a-year park clean up projects

Educational: (Time & Energy)

- * Work in interpretive center
- * Park tours - community education/target groups
- * Learning exchange
- * Link w/science museum, Dept. of Education

Business Partnerships: (Money, time & energy)

- * Approach manufacturer's of sporting goods etc. for grant program/matching funds (snowmobile co. grant for cleaning up trails or provide equipment).
- * Local civic groups donate money for community children to experience the outdoors. Half of the money goes to the program, half goes to support parks.
- * Business groups want awareness building from volunteering.

Other ideas:

- * Become a lifetime member of State Parks
- * Have an annual fee structure for all park activities so public doesn't feel like they are being nickel and dimed to death.
- * Projects should have some environmental slant or impact.

4. What is your first reaction to this concept of "Parks Partners"?

- * Excellent idea
- * Time together with friends, co-workers and family
- * Provides a tax shelter if donating money
- * Want publicity and awareness building in return for volunteering

5. What are some of your ideas for developing a "Park Partners" program to help and support MN State Parks?

- * Greet visitors to the park
- * Clean up the park
- * Restoration projects (painting etc.)
- * School projects, internships
- * Club activity: 4H, Big Brothers etc.
- * National Guard has the manpower, equipment etc.
- * Special day or annual kick off for State Park clean up
- * Have a pick up/drop off spot along trails so those using them can help out along the way.

6. The focus groups were asked to react to the following concepts.

A. Friends of MN State Parks (Direct mail campaign)

Positive remarks included:

- * Give people the choice to decide how their money will be spent
- * Look at the arts community & how they raise funds
- * Check off on tax returns
- * It's O.K. for businesses but not individuals
- * Have different donor levels for park stickers
- * Have an annual Bike-a-thon, walk, run etc.
- * Local celebrity promote fundraiser
- * Have a donation box on the way out of the park
- * Have park users buy something such as a "bench" or "picnic table."

Negative remarks:

- * This isn't for individuals because they already pay taxes to fund State Parks, they are constantly asked for money.
- * Individuals won't contribute if they are not already a big park supporter.
- * Junk mail aspect, hate direct mail
- * Why give money to state agencies?
- * Civic groups would rather give time than money.
- * Taxes should cover park costs, use our time not our money.

B. Volunteer program (physical involvement)

- * This would be a chance for groups to work together.
- * Something tangible is accomplished, "look at what I did"
- * Must be well organized, establish a communications network to match abilities and interests.
- * Sell program to the local community/target locals looking at the adopt-a-highway program. They want a big sign for publicity and to improve their image with the community.
- * It's a chance for co-workers to get together outside of the office.
- * Use the passport club idea for volunteers who complete a project or so many hours of work.

Types of recognition wanted include: free camping, community news releases, T-shirts, caps, badges, certificates, merit patches. Mileage and meal reimbursement were not attractive incentives.

C. Park Pleasure Tours (Education/class concept)

- * Easy to select target audiences (seniors, schools etc.).
- * Seasonal programs can be established
- * Work with outdoor groups providing tours specific to their interests.
- * Biking or hiking tours

7. Of all the projects we've talked about today, what stands out in your mind as something you might like to be involved in and why? Or, if your not interested in any of these programs, tell us why not.

The concept of volunteering time for physical labor projects, seemed to be the type of volunteering desired most by the focus groups. Most participants (individuals as well as those representing businesses) had this idea formed in their minds as the framework for "Parks Partners" prior to the focus groups. It fits well with participants motivation for volunteering as well as their desired form of recognition.

8. A discussion of the name for a parks volunteer program was included in the final comments. "Parks Partners" and "V.I.P." (Volunteers In Parks) were liked best for the overall campaign. Most participants felt a name like "Adopt-A-Park" would fit well if the program was a clean up program. The acroynom PHP was not liked by many because of the image already attached to it.

APPENDIX E

CORPORATE/BUSINESS SECTOR REACTIONS TO PARK PARTNERS

Prepared by:
H. Charles Diestler
February 25, 1992

A fundraising consultant conducted a feasibility study to determine attitudes of CEO's, legislators, and selected park staff toward giving dollars, in-kind contributions or time to state parks for four critical areas: general program funding, capital improvement projects (CIP), land acquisition, and a working fund for Park Partners. Forty five business/corporate/foundation CEO's were interviewed personally, using the same survey instrument. In addition, 7 DNR management and park staff, and 5 legislators were interviewed to determine attitudes toward this corporate/state partnership.

The objectives of the study were to determine corporate, business, and foundation perceptions of state parks; their receptivity to giving financial/participatory support to state parks in four critical areas: general program funding; capital improvement projects (CIP), land acquisition, and a working fund for Park Partners; defining the nature of the support; identifying potential prospects and volunteer leaders; and developing a general plan for implementing a program.

The research revealed the interviewees perceptions of state parks: most respondents have more than a cursory personal experience with Minnesota State Parks. Preservation of natural resources is perceived as the greatest value of state parks, followed by individual/family recreation. Environmental education is rated highly, but there is significant feeling that this function is somewhat ancillary and not well defined.

A relatively high value is placed upon tourism attraction and economic impact, particularly among those with greater familiarity with parks. There is strong awareness of potential economic impact upon areas adjacent to specific parks and a feeling this can be substantially enhanced with greater citizen involvement and promotion.

Among these respondents, there is not a general awareness of group recreation as an important state park function, and cultural/heritage education is generally thought of only in relation to specific parks.

In general, there is a feeling that the park system has not a well defined mission, particularly in relation to finding an appropriate balance between the preservation of resources and providing public accessibility to those resources.

Concerning corporate/business/foundation funding of state parks, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) There is a strong dichotomy of feeling about the value and importance of state parks in relation to other state supported responsibilities. Universally, other needs, particularly of the human service nature, are considered far more pressing and important, but there is strong recognition that adequate support of the park

system is important to maintaining the "quality of life" to which Minnesota tradition is dedicated.

- 2) In general, the park system's ability to raise significant amounts of money from the private sector for **major capital improvements** is considered highly doubtful without long-term attitudinal and prospect cultivation; for land acquisition only slightly less so. Problems most generally cited are: the higher priority on human services by business; the feeling that the appeal would be a "easy way out" avoidance of state responsibility; strong cynicism regarding the ability of park employees to implement an effective fundraising campaign; the perceived absence of a clear sense of a mission with a long-term plan.
- 3) Interviewees were significantly divided as to the appropriateness of seeking private sector support for the improvement and enhancement of the state park system. There is almost universal agreement among private sector respondents that such appropriateness beyond state responsibility is appropriate only if essential.
- 4) Nearly all respondents would find support of projects compatible with corporate/business objectives, although with many, potential support would have to be tailored somewhat to specific objectives. There is limited interest for in-kind giving of products or materials, and in financial sponsorship or endorsement of programs or special events. Park staff also expressed considerable reservations about legality and/or implied product endorsement resulting from such giving.
- 5) Generally, the "Park Partners" concept of seeking direct citizen involvement in the improvement and enhancement of state parks is much more favorably regarded and a significant number of business/corporate resources would be willing to take an active role. It's generally felt, however, that such interest must effectively come from a "grassroots" nature rather than, with few exceptions, promoted from the top. While response is generally positive to this concept, there is a significant need to be assured that the concept will result in significant accomplishments.

Simply stated, that which the state park system needs - unrestricted financial support - is least likely to be achieved by the private sector. That which the private sector is most willing to provide - direct citizen involvement in the improvement and enhancement of facilities - is problematic for park system personnel. In spite of these reservations, the report recommends that Park Partners be pursued on a pilot test basis. In spite of these reservations, the report recommends that Park Partners should be pursued on a pilot test basis.

APPENDIX F
BUSINESS AND CIVIC FOCUS GROUPS RESULTS

Submitted by:
DNR Marketing Staff
Information & Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The "Parks Partner" program has the opportunity for success if it remains close to its mission of inviting citizens to become stewards of state parks by volunteering to care for park resources by cash donations, in-kind contributions and by volunteer labor. A clear understanding of the program mission needs to be the building block of each project from logistics to benefits, from beginning to end. The major benefit of this program should be improved public relations with the local community. Along with this comes a new appreciation and partnership for managing our natural resources.

While some volunteer organizations may wish to participate in physical activity, others would rather help raise funds, give funds or supply in-kind services. Each organization needs to be looked at individually to determine how we can best work together. "Ownership" of a particular park and project is very important. The incentive to help in a project is enhanced when the ownership of the project can be given back to the community. By allowing the benefits (dollars/end products) to remain in the community, it serves as an incentive to participate. Following this, focus group participants felt that revenue generated at a particular park should remain at that park. A mechanism to dedicate donated funds to a particular park will need to be established.

The task of arranging and structuring these projects will have to be done either regionally or directly at the park. Organizations will have to be identified that not only have a vested interest in parks or natural resources but also are compatible (size of manpower, age etc.) to a particular project. Once identified, the volunteer help or funds will need to be solicited. In many cases, this solicitation will come in the form of a personal presentation to the organization by park staff.

As the logistics must be carefully designed in lining up the right volunteers for the right project, this also applies to the finest detail of the actual volunteer day(s). This includes everything from transportation to equipment, supervision, training and recognition. Because these components will need to be handled at the park level and the complexity of the details involved, it is anticipated that only a handful, if that, of projects per park would be completed in any given year.

The types of projects suggested for this program took on various forms of debate. In Duluth and Detroit Lakes, union members representing DNR employees attended the focus groups to demonstrate their concern that the Parks Partner program would displace employees. This program must be sensitive to this legitimate concern. All focus groups clearly stated that they did not want this program to be a substitute for park funding from the state. If there is no threat of displacing park workers or reducing state park budgets, volunteer would be willing to help.

A system to evaluate the success of the program will need to be developed. As each project is completed, a cost/benefit analysis should be done to monitor the success, failures and possible improvements to the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The "Parks Partner" program should be developed for public involvement to improve community and local support with Minnesota State Parks. Focus group participants expressed a strong concern that this program not be a substitute for state funding or state employees. Projects under this program would be those that state employees could not otherwise accomplish,

2. The "Parks Partner" program must reflect the high quality standards already established in other park initiatives. A well organized system must be developed to avoid miscommunications in the structure and implementation of the volunteer projects. Also, a network and criteria to match volunteer groups to volunteer projects should be established. It is imperative to the success of this program that the volunteer's experience in this program is satisfying to participants.

3. The individual projects must be well defined in terms of time commitment, expertise, training and skills needed, supervision and equipment provided. The planning that will go into a project will determine its success. Along with this, it is critical that the process of matching groups with projects is carefully designed.

4. Acknowledgment rather than recognition seemed to be what volunteers were looking for. Many felt that a simple thank you from the park manager was sufficient. Also, the sentiment existed that spending money on recognition items defeated the purpose of the program. A plaque in the park office listing groups who volunteer in the park would be appropriate. A token gift (t-shirt or cap, lunch etc.) would help make the volunteer day a special event.

METHODOLOGY

In January and February, 1992 five focus groups were held with business and civic groups to help define and target the Parks Partner concept. The focus groups were held in Duluth, Detroit Lakes, Rochester, Marshall and the Twin Cities.

The focus group participants consisted of representatives from organizations who offer volunteer services, who use volunteers to accomplish tasks and who donated funds to volunteer projects. Organizations included local chambers, rotary clubs, Lions club, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 3M and IBM retirees, VFW, Luthern Brotherhood, Jaycees, Minnesota Snowmobile Association and many others.

Each focus group was asked the same set of questions. Representative samples of the answers to these questions are summarized on the following pages.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The focus group participants included a representative sample of civic and business groups expected to be the target audience for this program. The need to distinguish groups by their source of giving (ie. funding or volunteers) is necessary prior to each project's implementation. Some groups give funding support, others in-kind services and others volunteers to accomplish specific tasks.

2. Organizations become aware of volunteer projects through several sources. Word of mouth is probably the most common way organizations find out about needs. Newsletters (employee, membership) and local news releases are also used to communicate volunteer opportunities. Direct solicitation to organizations for volunteer help can take the form of a presentation, a letter or in some cases, a phone call can initiate action. Some groups actually create the need for a volunteer project by designing a project which will be advantageous to their interests.

3. The pool of volunteers interested and available for this program is substantial. The one criteria that must exist for groups to want to participate in this type of a program is to have a vested interest in natural resources, state parks, or the immediate community. When this relationship is present the enthusiasm to help parks is great. The element of a vested

interest also extends to the ownership of these projects. Volunteers want to look back and say "I did this" which is a positive reflection on themselves and also it helps build visibility of the program. Volunteers expect their experience with state parks to be meaningful, rewarding and in many cases a learning experience. They will not accept "make-do" work. Along with this, the projects themselves must be well defined and meet the needs of the volunteers.

4. In order for groups to consider volunteering for State Parks they need to have an established interest in the environment, parks and/or the local community. Ownership of the project is of the utmost importance. Groups want to identify with the project, know they have done something meaningful and that the project is congruent to their organizational mission. Factors that must be considered with each project are: geographic location and size of the project and age, skills and limitations of the volunteers. Projects must be well defined including time commitment, safety guidelines and standards as well as required special skills and training.

5. In most of the focus groups the list of projects presented were not discussed in great length. Participants felt the most important factors were the expertise and skills needed to complete any project be well defined, the use of volunteers did not replace state funding or employees and the quality reputation of Parks not be jeopardized. When soliciting funds, do so early in the year when organizations are appropriating donation dollars.

6. A news release with photo, hat or T-shirt, a thank you from the park manager and a plaque in the park office listing supportive volunteer organizations, were the forms of acknowledgement desired by the focus group participants. Other options on the recognition list did not interest the participants because these options weren't in line with the goals of their organization or were limited to large organizations because of the criteria.

7. In conclusion, most focus group participants were eager to see this program initiated as long as it maintained the high quality standards already established in State Parks. There was concern in every group that this program not substitute state funding and that it be established as a public support/community partnership program.

8. The program name liked best by participants was "Park Partners" followed by "People for Parks" and "Adopt-A-Park".

**Focus Groups Questions
Business and Civic Groups
Park Partners**

1. The participants of these focus groups represented four main types of interest groups:

- * Those that volunteer their time and effort to accomplish projects (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, IBM Retirees, Northwood's Greens etc.).
- * Those that use volunteers to accomplish tasks (business associations, Moorhead State University, Adopt-A-Highway).
- * Those who help in communicating and networking volunteer requests and also participate in volunteer activity (Lions club, Rotary club, Chambers of Commerce, Luthern Brotherhood, VFW).
- * Those who have a direct affiliation to State Park activities (Itasca Wagon Train, CSMP, Parks and Trail Council).

2. In the past, when your group has participated in projects (volunteering or funding), how did you go about finding a project?

- * Word of mouth, through the grapevine, check out if it sounds good.
- * News releases
- * Direct solicitation by mail or a phone call
- * Employee newsletters
- * Chambers of Commerce act as community liaisons. Chamber of Commerce publicizes volunteer opportunities in their publication. Members can follow up on those that catch their interest.
- * Girl and Boy Scouts hear about projects from or through their membership. Direct contact with the organization also works.
- * Some groups create the need - identify projects their group would be interested in; others identify skills needed for a project and then look for volunteers that have those skills. Some volunteers identify a time they can work & you must be flexible.
- * Some groups hear about the need at club meeting from a speaker. A speaker's bureau is a good vehicle to use to inform and approach groups. A personal meeting (presentation) is much more effective than a phone call or letter. Questions can be asked and information is clearer.
- * For State Parks post volunteer opportunities in visitor center, or talk with the park manager.
- * Reach interested groups at the State Fair, sportshows etc.

3. What are the priorities that help your group decide which projects (volunteering or funding) to consider? Training needed, recognition, type of project etc.

- * Our board or committee decides on all projects for the year. Usually the same projects are funded year after year. Requests for help from civic groups should be made early in the year.
- * The project must match the goals of the organization.
- * Current, visible issues
- * Organizations either give money or they provide labor, they don't usually switch back and forth.
- * Look for visibility, historic value, and ownership.
- * Corporations are more willing to give in-kind services than cash. Groups can approach corporations but should have a well defined need and project list for them to review and select from.
- * The project must be a good match with the groups interests.
- * Volunteer group must believe the project will be successful and meaningful.
- * Want to get as much as they can for their dollar, reach as many people as they can.
- * We want to keep our money in the community. Stress the importance of the park's economic impact to the local community. This will generate local business support.
- * Proximity to the organization is a priority, can't be too far away.
- * Look at history of the organization, what are their concerns, identify and match.
- * Consider all factors: Geographic region, age of volunteers, skills, limitations, size of the project.
- * We look for projects anyone can do, they are not skill sensitive and can be done at the groups leisure.
- * For children participants there should be an educational element, they like to learn as they volunteer and see tangible results.
- * Must meet safety guidelines and standards
- * Volunteers are willing to be trained. Many want to learn something from their experience and will be more likely to volunteer if they feel they will get something out of it. Train volunteer captains who can organize training for new volunteers.

4. The following are projects MN Parks needs volunteer help to complete. Are these projects that your group would be interested in? Which projects, (or other projects) specifically, would your group be interested in? See Attachment A in this section for the project handout.

- * Park users will be the ones to volunteer. Others may not even know where their local park is located. We should target our efforts to park users.
- * Boy Scouts look for service projects
- * What about one organization adopting a specific park. This would exclude too many volunteer groups.
- * Need defined criteria and standards
- * Many organizations would rather raise the funds to accomplish tasks.
- * Don't mix professional duties and amateurs
- * Use volunteers for prairie planting, interpretation etc. Environmental education, firearms safety, orientation in the woods have all been forgotten. We would like to contribute (money or time) for teaching.
- * The projects listed are in danger of compromising quality of park programs and resources. Many of the listed projects require considerable management, skills and expertise for volunteers.
- * Some of the projects listed should only be done by park workers.

5. The following are types of recognition planned for the volunteers of this program. What is your reaction? See Attachment B in this section for the recognition handout.

- * Sign at park with all the names of those that help or contribute
- * T-shirts and caps - groups really like them, cheap publicity, attachment to project. Gives your program visibility whenever/wherever the volunteer wears the item.
- * No blue signs (Adopt-A-Highway)
- * No fixed hours or dollars (some groups could never compete) Loses mission of program
- * Acknowledgement is needed not recognition. These groups want to give something back to parks.
- * Local news release with photos, employee news letters
- * Just say thank you in the mail or phone call
- * Remember everyone, don't accidentally exclude anyone, a simple pat on the back works, pay attention to them.
- * No recognition is needed, groups do these projects because they have an interest in them, they want to do them.
- * Plaques presented at a regional, chapter meeting
- * Look into corporate release time where employees are released from work and paid for their time by their employer.
- * Hold a special event, picnic etc. to thank all volunteers at one time.
- * Recognition should be minimal - giving gifts defeats the purpose.
- * Some recognition will come from the organization (Boy scouts, snowmobilers).

6. How well do you think this program will be received and supported in your local community? What do you think would improve its chance of success?

- * Move slowly and carefully ahead with this program. You are in danger of compromising the quality of park programs and resources.
- * Don't expect this program to be in lieu of tax dollars. Take this program forward from a public relations standpoint and capitalize on interest and support already developed for parks. This is not a cure for financing.
- * Keep high standards and quality that parks currently maintains. Take citizen input seriously.
- * Look at this as a P.R. program to build partnerships with parks and the community. Don't go from a negative view of no \$, make this a positive program.
- * The state can't do everything. Use volunteers to fill gaps. Our senior population is an increasing resource of volunteers. Give them something meaningful to do with their time.
- * Parks should be funded by government not the private sector. Will Parks receive less money from the state if it gets money from Civic groups? None of us wants to see that happen.
- * Parks should take a business approach and become more self-sustaining.
- * Biggest asset of this program is to link with local communities - it's a two-way street.
- * For some organizations success depends on how many of their members are park users.
- * This will work well, groups are very interested in helping parks.
- * There should be more ownership to local parks. Parks bring money into the community. If money raised would stay in the particular park it would be an incentive for the community to become involved.

7. The following have been chosen as a possible name for this program. Please prioritize the following list and choose your favorite or if you have a suggestion put it down!

Number of participants that rate the following as their first choice:

- 25 Park Partners
- 10 People for Parks
- 9 Adopt a Park
- 7 V.I.P. (Volunteering In Parks)
- 2 Friends of MN State Parks
- 1 Go-For-Parks
- 1 Park Pride
- 0 Conservation Rangers

APPENDIX G
PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE BY PARK STAFF

PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE BY PARK STAFF

In February, 1992, park staff were given a detailed description of the Park Partners program concept. They were asked if they would participate in the fundraising and/or volunteer component of the program, knowing it would require a commitment of time and staff. A "yes" response meant they were interested in participating; it wasn't a final commitment.

Forty percent of the parks would participate in both the volunteer and fundraising component. Fifty-eight percent of the parks would participate in the fundraising effort; 56% would only participate in the volunteer effort.

Some of the responses (both yes and no) were qualified. Some park managers are taking a "wait and see" attitude before making a commitment in the program. Anticipated staff cuts which may occur because of the \$569 million deficit may reduce the number of "yesses." Here is a summary of their written comments:

"The volunteer component could be one of the functions of the park advisory or "friends" group when our planning effort is complete.

We will participate in the volunteer program when the park is fully funded according to standards. The park will continue to use a limited volunteer program as we are doing at the present time.

Time demand does not allow much time to be spent on training numerous volunteers or groups that may want to be "partners." Early fall is best time of year!

On page 1, it states "other responsibilities may be eliminated from my position." I would like clarification and specifics on what responsibilities those would be. Remember, in the small parks, the Lone Ranger does all through a good portion of the year.

Participation in this aspect of the program will be dependent on time and priorities at the point of implementation.

Until the displacement issue is clarified and resolved I am not sure what projects will qualify. At this time I will redo the list of projects that need money or volunteer labor.

This volunteer program will depend on funding at the park. We may be unable to spend sufficient time for training and supervision at present funding and staffing levels.

Overall, the region had several concerns: volunteers could displace current employees; this program may dilute maintenance and operation budgets; this program may duplicate the current DNR volunteer program; and will require much staff time to implement it correctly.

Help in the form of money would be the easiest to deal with.

Very concerned about displacing employees!

Rather than duplicate an effort that already exists, we will continue to seek volunteers locally and through the DNR volunteer program. The procedure for the volunteer program is exactly like we already do.

This (fundraising effort) should be accomplished through the Central Office if the corporate feasibility study supports this direction.

Existing volunteer program is adequate.

With a new assistant manager to train and depending on when position gets filled, I can not give any time to new programs. Hopefully, next year!

Will other responsibilities be eliminated if we choose to participate. It appears that most of the projects will occur in the summer when we don't have a lot of extra time. I would like to see this concept developed in its entirety before I show a strong interest.

In regards to the fundraising component, I would be interested in cash donations and in-kind contributions (materials, supplies, and equipment) but not volunteer help.

I am extremely concerned that each new program we add will only dilute our dwindling operations and maintenance program. Perhaps it's not understood that volunteers are not a free ride but require many hours of quality supervision.

We have identified five volunteer component concepts (as listed on page 10 under Region 4 projects). The fundraising projects include: funds and research for interpretive displays, funds for various special purchases, (i.e. equipment such as 4-wheel ATVs), funds for lifeguards, dredging projects, special presentations (such as Lifetimes and Landscapes), and lifeguards.

We are currently using the Blue Earth County STC program, the Mankato Retired Senior Volunteer Program, we have a Mankato State University student doing an internship under the VIP program. We just can't handle any more.

We have a camping club which had adopted our park for four years now.

Although projects are not supposed to displace work normally done by state employees, many of these projects could be completed by state employees on lay-off, collecting unemployment. Some hours for the projects are included in the parks standards.

The volunteer hours under this program are additional hours and should only be done after, and if state employees are funded first.

We have discussed this program and will take a wait and see approach. Park partnering has been discussed with some members of our citizens group and there is a strong concern that this will erode our maintenance and operations financial budget base. With this in mind maybe an approach similar to the STS policy is an idea. No projects will be approved if it is something that usually is done by regular or seasonal employees. Also, whether employees are on layoff would be a factor. John Latsch Park would be a prime place to run some test programs for park partners. We currently have no staff there and it doesn't appear we'll get any.

I would like to be involved in some way, however, I am uncertain as to how much time I will have available for working with volunteers, considering reduced staffing and budget concerns.

We lack the staff to oversee volunteers.

As excellent as the program appears it will be, we must decline from participation at this time due the existing budget reductions, staff shortages, workloads, and future projections.

We have found the goose that lays golden eggs, so we are somewhat reluctant to go to the well too many times, or have others go to the same well.

