

# Celebrating 6 years of Legacy Parks & Trails Success! fiscal years 2010-2015



**connect...** A Legacy-funded marketing campaign helped increase state park visits and permit sales.



**develop...** Bikers enjoy the Dakota Rail Regional Trail, Carver County.



**take care...** Visitors interact and learn at the Eastman Nature Center – Three Rivers Park District.



**connect...** The DNR's I Can Climb! takes a family up a cliff with a real rock-climbing experience.



**develop...** Enjoy the new purpose-built Duluth Traverse mountain bike trail in Mission Creek, City of Duluth.



**acquire...** Land acquired for the Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve, Scott County.



**acquire...** The Central Lakes State Trail bisects this 140-acre Legacy project – Lake Brophy Park, Douglas County.



**connect...** Dogsledding in Robert Ney Park, Wright County.

**3.6%** average annual increase in visits to Metro Regional Parks and Trails Systems over 6 years.

more than **8.8m** additional visits!

**37%** increase in State Park interpretive program participation since 2008



Tamarack Nature Center, Bald Eagle Otter Lake Regional Park

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"I Can Camp!" skill building program



Bertram Chain of Lakes acquisition



Tettegouche Visitor Center



Como Regional Park Lily Pond



Citizen-county design committee

**Get Involved, Learn More, or Spread the Word, Visit:** <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/ptlac>  
Metropolitan Area: [www.Metrocouncil.org/parks/publications-resources.aspx](http://www.Metrocouncil.org/parks/publications-resources.aspx)  
Greater Minnesota: [www.Legacy.leg.mn/gmrptc](http://www.Legacy.leg.mn/gmrptc)  
Department of Natural Resources: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/legacy/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/legacy/index.html)

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Greater Minnesota  
Regional Parks and Trails  
Commission

Prepared by the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee



## Minnesota State Parks & Trails

The Minnesota state parks and trails system is comprised of 66 state parks, 9 state recreation areas, and 8 state waysides. The state trail system comprises 25 state trails with 620 paved and hardened miles and 818 natural surface trail miles.

The Parks and Trails Fund appropriated a total of \$92,520,000 to the DNR's Parks and Trails Division on a biennial basis (FY2010-11, 2012-13 and 2014-15) to implement the strategic directions of the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan.

### Allocation of Legacy funds to implement 25 Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan:

**Connect People to the Outdoors: 17%.** People who engage with nature are more likely to have an appreciation of the natural world and to want to support and maintain it for future generations. The DNR is therefore working to attract young families with Legacy-funded skill-building programs such as "I Can Camp!" and with expanded programming made possible through the Minnesota Naturalist Corps. Interactive touch-screen displays and new social and digital media are also helping the DNR increase awareness about Minnesota state parks and trails among the tech-savvy next generation. Since 2008, annual permit sales have increased 18 percent, daily permit sales have increased 16 percent, overnight stays have increased 9 percent and program participation has increased 37 percent, indicating that Legacy dollars are having real impact.

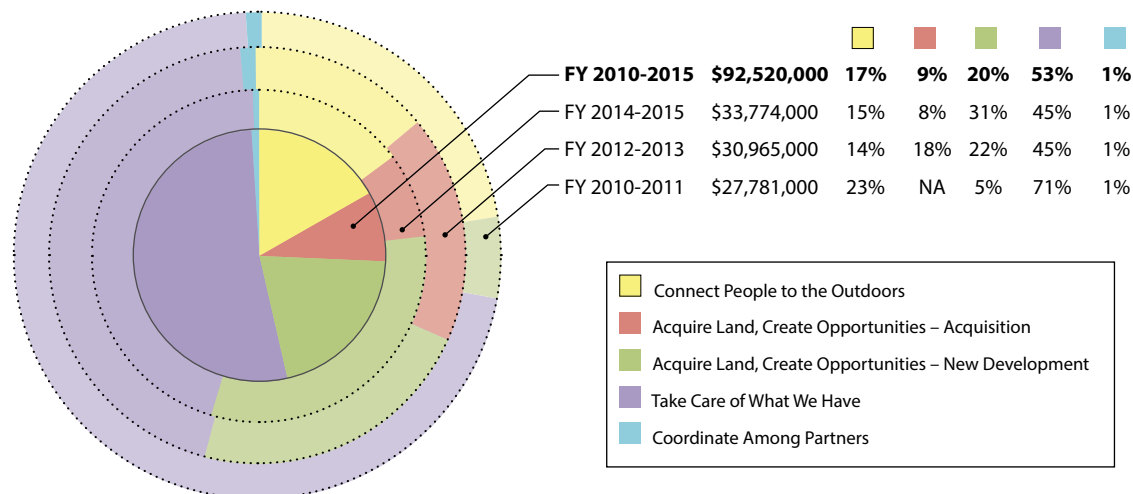
**Acquire Land and Create Opportunities – Acquisition: 9%.** The DNR is acquiring high-priority state park in-holdings and new segments of state trails, filling critical gaps in the statewide system.

**Acquire Land and Create Opportunities – New Development: 20%.** Just over half of Minnesotans visit parks near their homes each year, and just over two-thirds use paved trails. Yet those who use these parks and trails often say they have too few options available to them near their homes. Because of Legacy funds, Minnesotans are getting brand new places to recreate, such as the Brown's Creek segment of the Gateway State Trail, La Salle Lake State Recreation Area, and Lake Vermilion State Park. Legacy funds are also being used to develop camper cabins and improve campgrounds to meet the needs of the next generation.

**Take Care of What We Have: 53%.** Regular investment is needed to ensure safe, high-quality experiences for current and future visitors. Over the years, a lack of funding, aging infrastructure, and intensive use have led to a backlog of rehabilitation and renewal work. With Legacy funding, the DNR is making old trails and buildings "like new" again, installing solar panels and other energy-saving features, and making public gathering places as inviting as they should be. A priority of the Legacy Amendment is to accelerate natural resource management work at state parks and trails. Since the initiation of Legacy funding, the pace of native plant restoration has increased 59 percent, prescribed burning has increased 34 percent, and control of invasive plants has increased by more than 90 percent.

**Coordinate With Partners: 1%.** The DNR takes a leadership role to coordinate among partners, currently convening the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee. This committee is made up of representatives from across the state who have a stake in each component of our state and regional park and trail system. Guided by the 25-Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, the work accomplished by this group will help ensure that the goals the public developed for the use of Legacy funds are achieved.

State Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Allocations



## Metro Regional Parks & Trails

The Metropolitan Regional Parks System is comprised of 41 regional parks, 12 park reserves, 8 special recreation features (e.g., Como Zoo, Como Conservatory, Gale Woods Farm), and 341 miles of linking regional trails that encompass a total of 54,286 acres. Ten regional park implementing agencies own and manage a portion of the park system within their jurisdiction.

Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations to the Metropolitan Regional Parks System are disbursed to the regional park implementing agencies by the Metropolitan Council under a formula in Minnesota Statute 85.53, Subd. 3. The chart below illustrates how a total of \$93,459,000 has been allocated since 2010.

### Allocation of Legacy funds to implement 25 Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan:

**Connect People to the Outdoors: 3%.** Through environmental education programs, increased use of volunteer resources, and enhanced access and information about parks and the natural environment, people are connected to regional parks and trails. For example, Anoka County, Ramsey County, and the City of Saint Paul hired environmental education coordinators and volunteer coordinators. From 2010 to 2012, a total of 3,114 volunteers contributed 34,514 hours of nature education programming and natural resource management activities for those agencies.

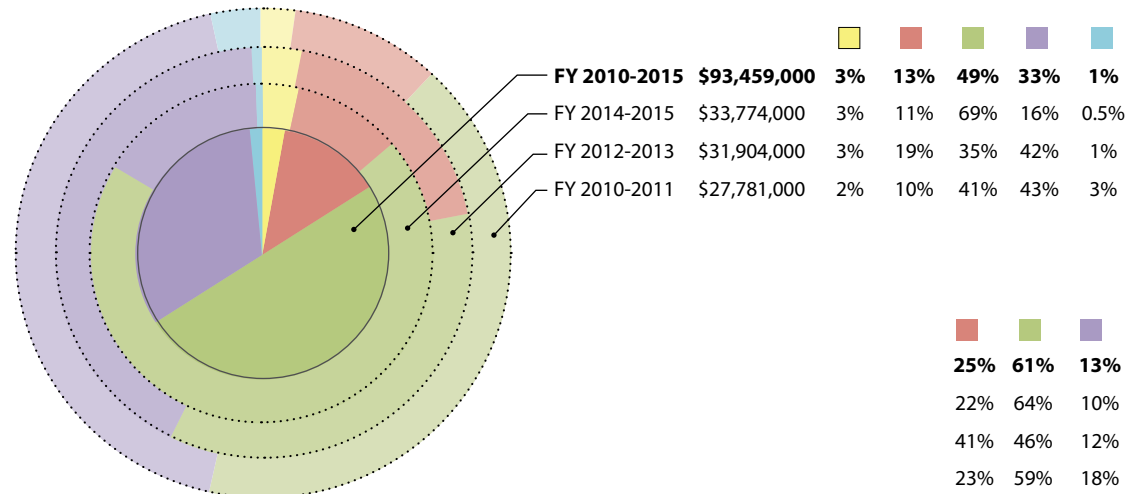
**Acquire Land and Create Opportunities—Acquisition: 13%.** To date, 857 acres encompassing 44 properties for 19 parks or trails has been acquired.

**Acquire Land and Create Opportunities—New Development: 49%.** New recreational facilities have been developed—primarily for trail construction projects that extend trail mileage, create grade-separate crossings of busy highways, or provide trailhead access. Examples include extending the Dakota Rail Regional Trail 12 miles through Carver County, and constructing a winter recreation area visitor center and lighted hiking/cross-country ski trails at Lake Elmo Park Reserve in Washington County.

**Take Care of What We Have: 33%.** Natural resource restoration and replacement of park and trail visitor infrastructure have been completed by Conservation Corps of Minnesota crews at regional parks and trails in Anoka County, Ramsey County, and Dakota County; for projects including renovation of the historic Lily Pond at Como Regional Park in Saint Paul; reconstruction of paved trails and parking lots at Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve in Bloomington; renovation and improvements to Wirth Lake Beach at Theodore Wirth Regional Park (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board); and renovation/expansion of the Eastman Nature Center at Elm Creek Park Reserve (Three Rivers Park District).

**Coordinate with Partners: 1%.** Funds have been allocated for preparing updated or new master plans for a number of parks. Examples include a master plan update for Phalen-Keller Regional Park in Ramsey County/City of Saint Paul, and new master plans for Spring Lake Regional Park, Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve, Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park, and Cedar Lake Farms Regional Park in Scott County.

Metro Regional Parks & Trails Legacy Fund Allocations



## Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails

This investment is focused on parks and trails of statewide or regional significance in the 80 counties outside the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council. These political subdivisions cover 96.8% of Minnesota's geographic area, more than 500 cities and over 2.4 million residents. Ninety-four grants have been awarded to 22 parks and 28 trails in the first five years of the Fund.

### Allocation of Legacy funds to implement 25 Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan:

**Connect People to the Outdoors: 0%.** This category has not been an authorized use for these agencies during the first three cycles of Legacy. Consequently, no allocations for this appear in the chart for Greater Minnesota.

**Acquire Land and Create Opportunities – Acquisition: 25%.** Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park in Wright County will include 4 undeveloped lakes with 6 miles of shoreline and 1.5 miles of stream when complete. Other projects include 35 acres for River Bluffs Regional Park in St Cloud, 53 acres for Sucker Creek Preserve in Detroit Lakes, and 84 acres for Kensington Rune Stone Park in Douglas County. Freeborn County will acquire 13 miles of abandoned railway connecting to the Blazing Star State Trail.

**Acquire Land and Create Opportunities – New Development: 61%.** Quarry Park and Nature Preserve in Stearns County was able to add a second swimming area to its hugely popular facility located in Waite Park. Another grant allowed Marshall County to develop shelters and shower facilities along with Americans with Disabilities Act compliant access improvements at County Park near Stephen, MN.

**Take Care of What We Have: 13%.** Local governments still bear the 'lion's share' of maintenance costs throughout the Greater Minnesota network of parks and trails however, grants have advanced rehabilitation of several trails including the Soo Line Trail in Pine County and the Mesabi Vtasca Trail. Several parks have also benefited including Alexander Ramsey Park in Redwood Falls and Memorial Park in Red Wing.

**Coordinate with Partners: 1%.** The establishment of the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission "created to undertake system planning and provide recommendations to the legislature for grants funded by the parks and trails fund to counties and cities outside of the seven-county metropolitan area" (Minnesota Statute 85.536) is ground-breaking legislation enabling statewide regional parks and trails planning for the first time in the history of our state.

Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails Legacy Fund Allocations

