

2019 Regional Parks System Annual Use Estimate

Darcie Vandegrift, PhD, Principal Researcher

Community Development Committee

July 6, 2020



Use Estimate Background

- Produced annually since 1995
- Used in formulas to calculate each implementing agency's share of Regional Parks System grant program dollars
- Allows for monitoring trends over time
- One of two ongoing research responsibilities: Other is Visitor Study, approximately every 5 years

2019 Annual Use Estimate



Baylor Regional Park. Photo credit: Carver County

The estimate includes data from 113 regional parks, trails, park reserves and special recreation features.

Annual estimated visitation is one way to demonstrate the value of the Regional Park System. Other important values include climate mitigation benefits and public health contributions.

Covid-19 Effects

- 2019 estimate will be used for two years of funding formulas. 2020 use estimate was canceled
- 2016 Visitor Study multipliers will be used an additional year. Visitor Study will be postponed until 2021.



Photo credit: Organization of Liberians in Minnesota youth photo challenge at Elm Creek Regional Park, youth and parks collaboration research.

Calculating the Annual Use Estimate

Raw Counts

Parks staff count all people entering all parks and trails at designated locations.

Schedule has randomized times, days, and entrances, Memorial Day to Labor Day

Expansion

Averaged with previous three years to account for weather, flooding

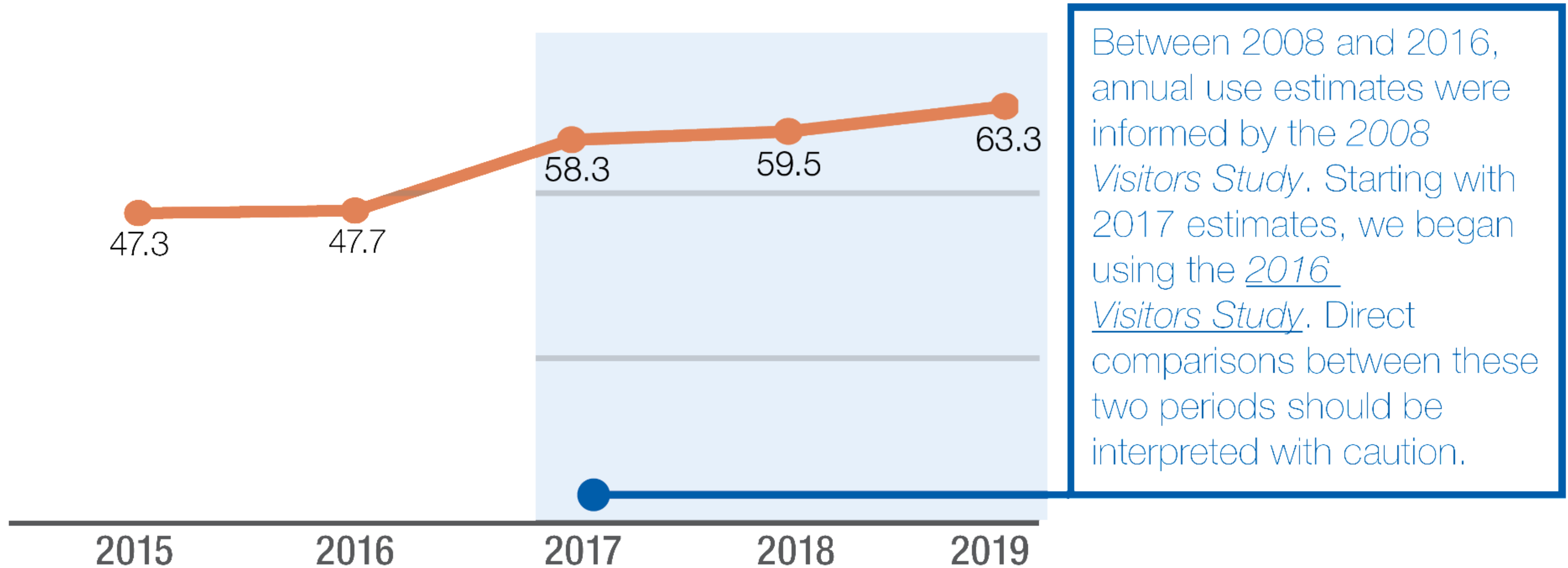
Counts are “expanded” to apply to all days and entrances.

Special Events/ Camping

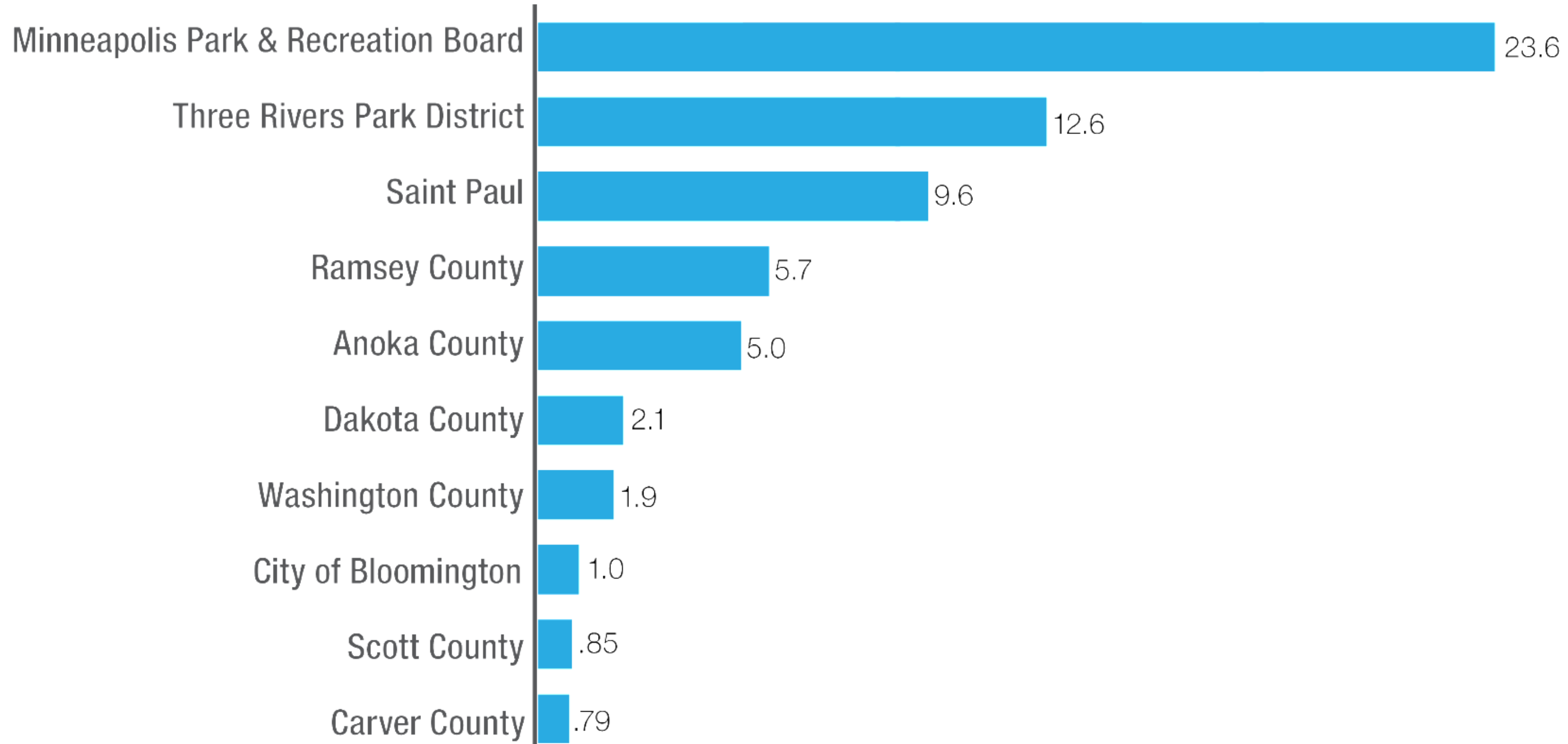
Agency-submitted special event, camping use is added in

Estimated non-summer use based on 2016 Visitor Study multipliers

Regional Parks System Annual Visits



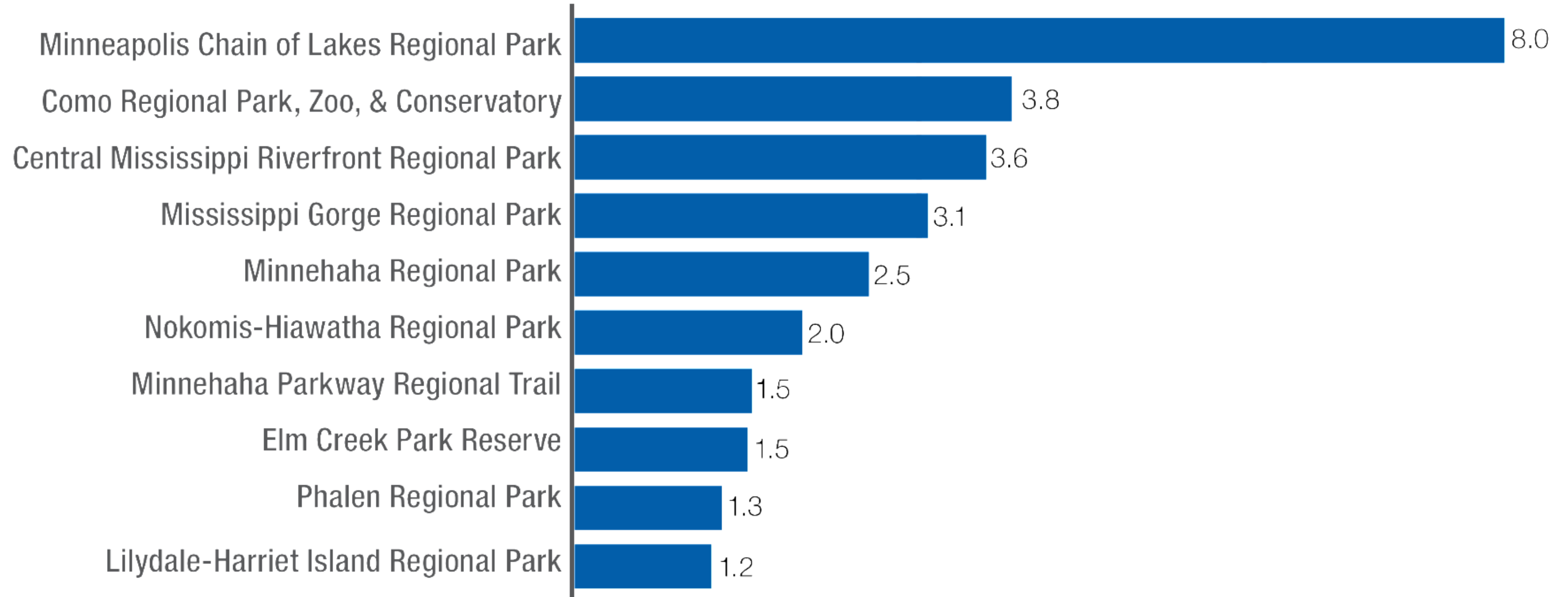
Visits by Agency



Millions of visits. Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimates



Highest Visitation Parks



Millions of visits



2020-2021 Parks Research Underway



Photo credit: Organization of Liberians in Minnesota youth photo challenge at Elm Creek Regional Park, youth and parks collaboration research.

- 2021 Visitor Study – a survey to ask visitors about park experience, set funding formula multipliers, learn more about visitor demographics, and Streetlight verification
- Optimistic that 2021 use estimate will happen as normal
- Youth & Parks data collection complete; final sharing through a report, activity book, and tool kit.
- Mapping carbon sequestration on Regional Park land

Questions / discussion

Darcie Vandegrift, PhD, Principal Researcher

651.602.1669

darcie.vandegrift@metc.state.mn.us

July 6, 2020

