

2019 Regional Parks System Annual Use Estimate

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Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

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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

Includes data from 113 regional parks, trails, park reserves and special recreation features

Demonstrate the value of the Regional Park System.

- Other important values include climate mitigation benefits and public health contributions

Covid-19 Effects

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

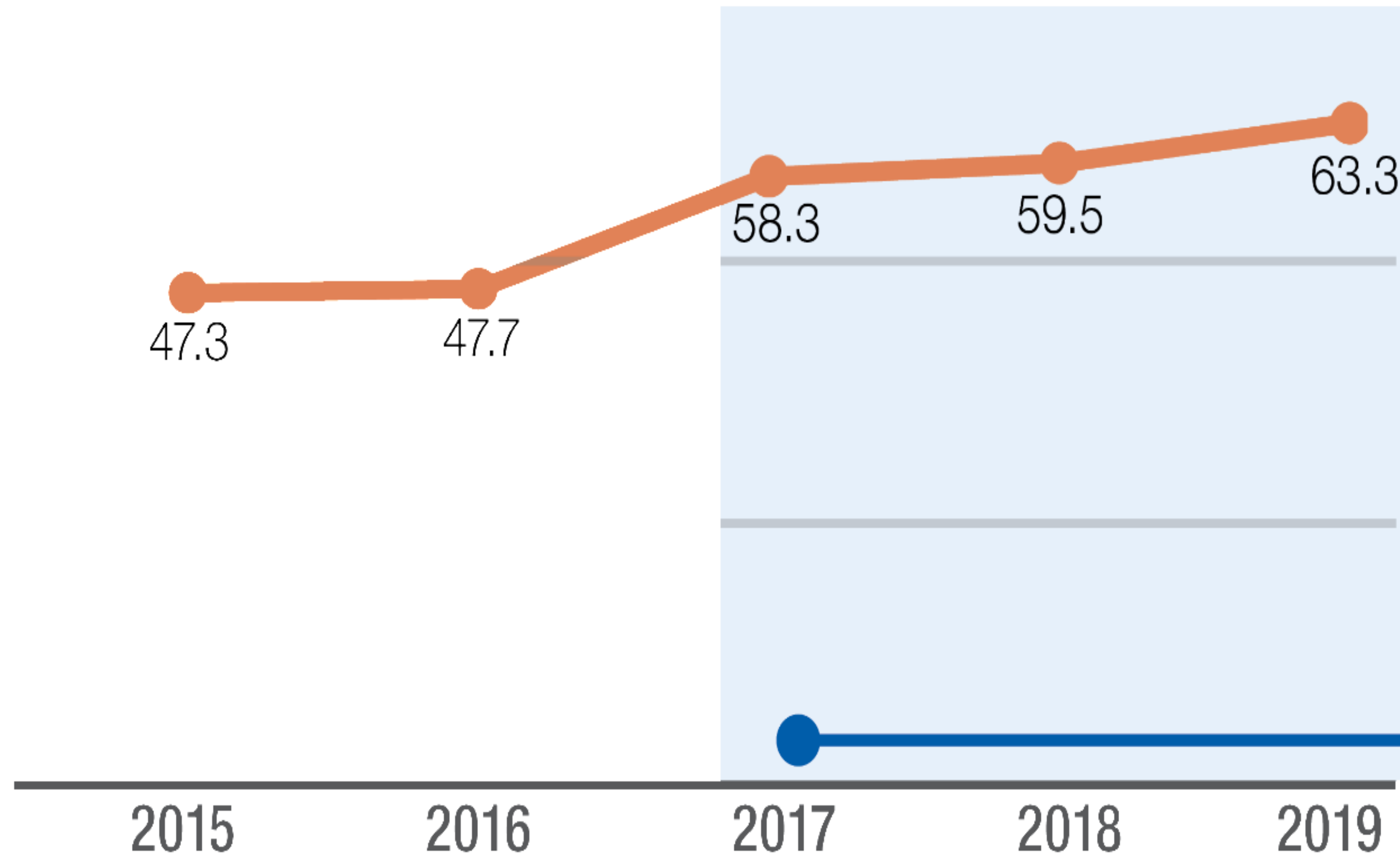
Counts are “expanded” to apply to all days and entrances.

Special Events / Camping

Agency-submitted special event, camping use is added in

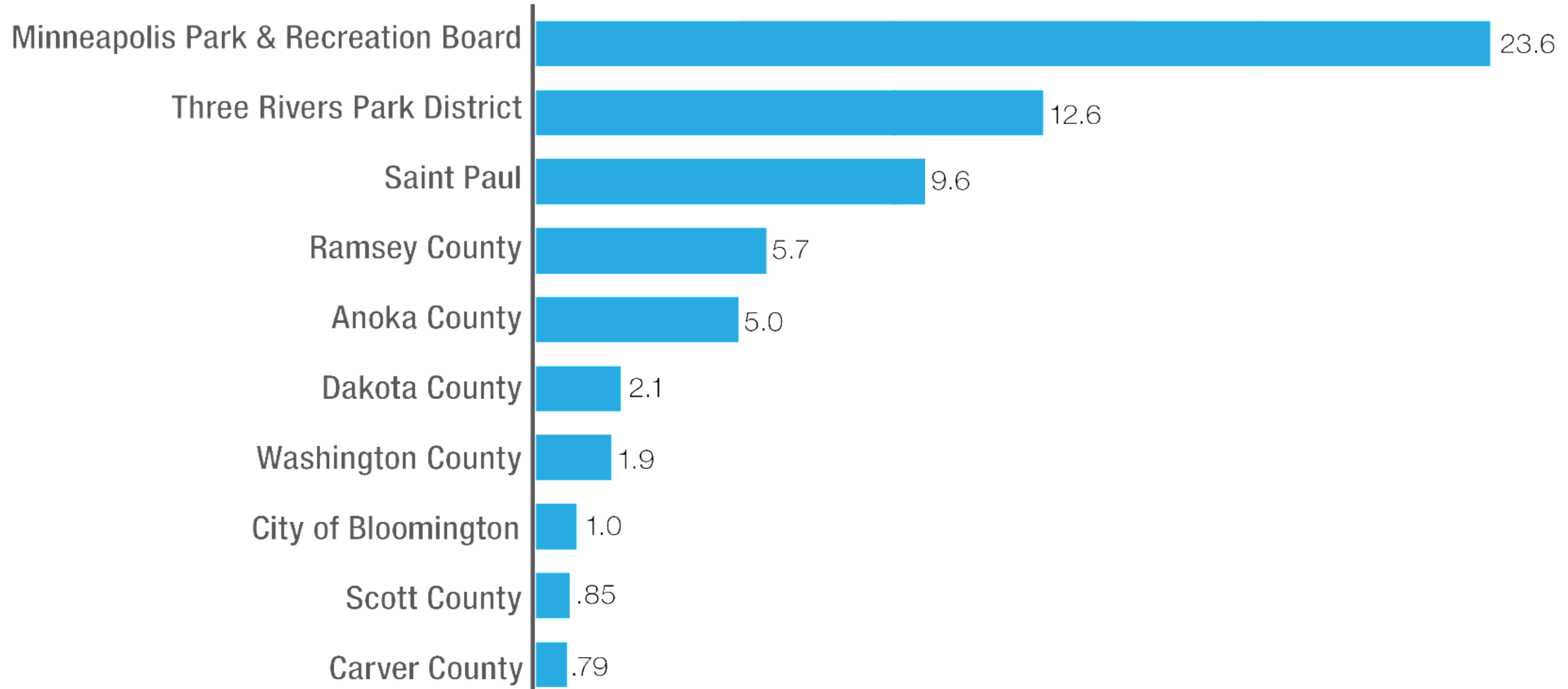
Estimated non-summer use based on 2016 Visitor Study multipliers

Regional Parks System Annual Visits



Between 2008 and 2016, annual use estimates were informed by the *2008 Visitors Study*. Starting with 2017 estimates, we began using the *2016 Visitors Study*. Direct comparisons between these two periods should be interpreted with caution.

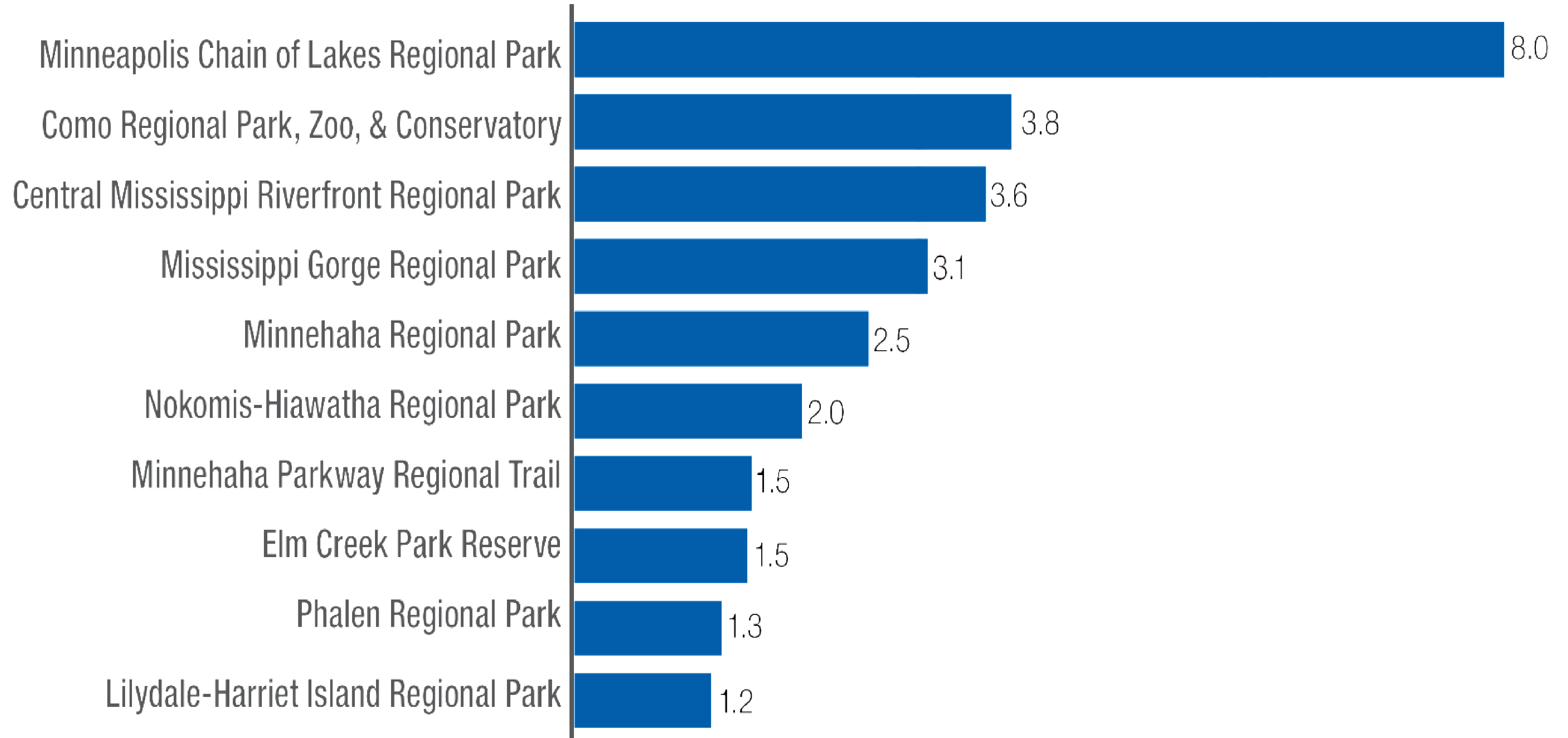
Visits by Agency (in millions)



Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimates



Highest Visitation Parks (in millions)



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

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