



**CARVER
COUNTY
PARKS**

Baylor Park Long Range Plan Update

Metropolitan Parks & Open Space Commission: August 7, 2025

Consultant Introductions



Candace Amberg, PLA

Principal & Project Manager



Kassidy Przymus

Landscape Architecture

Met Council 2050 Park Policy Plan

PLAN REQUIREMENTS:

- Demand Forecast
- Public Awareness
- Public & Partner Engagement
- Equity Analysis
- Boundaries / Boundary Adjustment
- Acquisition Costs
- Development Concept
- Accessibility
- Operations
- Public Services



Regional Goals

Our region is equitable and inclusive

Racial inequities and injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities have been eliminated, and all people feel welcome, included, and empowered.

Our communities are healthy and safe

All our region's residents live healthy and rewarding lives with a sense of dignity and well-being.

Our region is dynamic and resilient

Our region meets the opportunities and challenges faced by our communities and economy including issues of choice, access, and affordability.

We lead on addressing climate change

We have mitigated greenhouse gas emissions and have adapted to ensure our communities and systems are resilient to climate impacts.

We protect and restore natural systems

We protect, integrate, and restore natural systems to protect habitat and ensure a high quality of life for the people of our region.



2025

- ~~January: Kick-Off~~
- ~~Feb-March 2025: Data Collection~~
- ~~March-April 2025: Project Analysis~~
- *May-Aug 2025: Primary Community Outreach*
- Aug-Sept: Planning & Design
- Oct-Dec.: Development of Draft Plan

2026

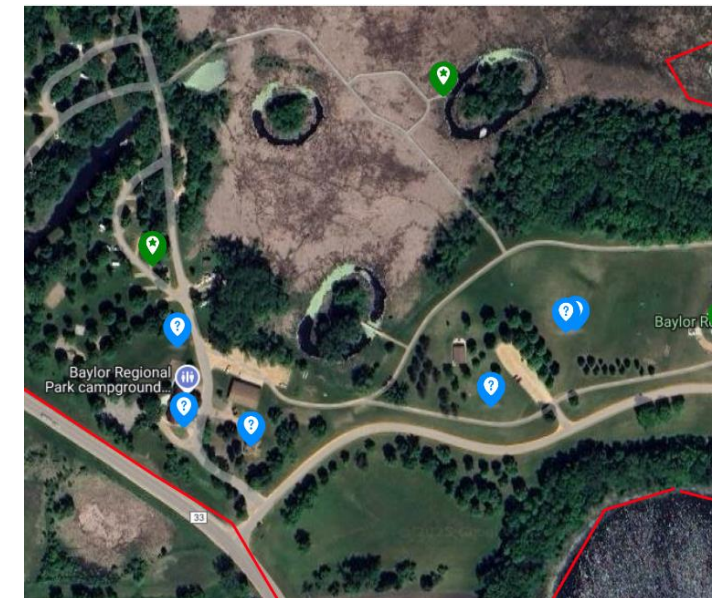
- Jan. – March: Plan Review, Finalization, Approval(s)

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Engagements & Outreach

- Meetings with LGUs
- Technical advisory committee (TAC)
- Project website / interactive map
- Community Pop-up events
- 1-on-1 stakeholder interviews



Engagements & Outreach

Engagement & Meeting Opportunities

Day	Time	Event	Location	Event Type
22 February 2025	5-*,30	<i>Illumination Walk (CC staff)</i>	<i>Baylor Park</i>	<i>County</i>
04 March 2025	6-7	<i>Community Mtg #1</i>	<i>Baylor Park</i>	<i>Public Meeting</i>
12 March 2025	6-7:30	<i>Park Commission Mtg #1</i>	<i>Baylor Park</i>	<i>Govt Meeting</i>
22 March 2025	10 - 1	<i>Maple Syrup Festival Event #1</i>	<i>Baylor Park</i>	<i>Pop-Up</i>
04 April 2025	12-2	<i>Winsted Holy Trinity Group</i>	<i>Baylor Park</i>	<i>County</i>
26 April 2025	4-8 pm	<i>Waconia Lions Wild Game Feed</i>	<i>Carver County Fairgrounds</i>	<i>Pop-Up</i>
15 July 2025	9-2	Baylor Adventure Camp (15-17)	Baylor Park	County
12 July 2025	9-2	Mayer Car Show & Festival	Mayer	Pop-Up
19 July 2025	9-1	Lester Prairie Days Music	Lester Prairie	Pop-Up
01 August 2025	7 pm	Camping Under The Stars (or Sat)	Baylor Park	Pop-Up
22 August 2025	5-8 pm	Stiftungfest	NYA	Pop-Up
06 September 2025		Steamboat Days	Carver	Pop-Up
13 September 2025	5-9 pm	Latin Music & Food Fest	Chaska	Pop-Up
01 August 2025		Softball Tournament & Events	New Germany	
	5-8	Car Show - every Thursday	New Germany	County
06 August 2025		Carver County Fair (6-10)	County Wide	County
Friday July 25, Sat. 26		Luce Line Rails to Trails	Watertown	

SCOT Analysis

“Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats”

SCOT analysis to-date:

- Staff/Design team in January
- Park “Neighbors” meeting in March
- Park Commission meeting in March
- Technical Advisory Committee in May



Camping
Trails
Observatory
Barn & Rural Feel

Sugar Maples
Disc Golf
Birding & Fishing
Rec Programs



Circulation / Safety
Water Quality / Geese
Outdated Amenities

Environmental Factors
Staffing
Distance to Amenities



Improved Camping
Expanded Park Area
Expanded Recreation

Private-Public Opps
Wildlife Viewing
Regional Connectivity



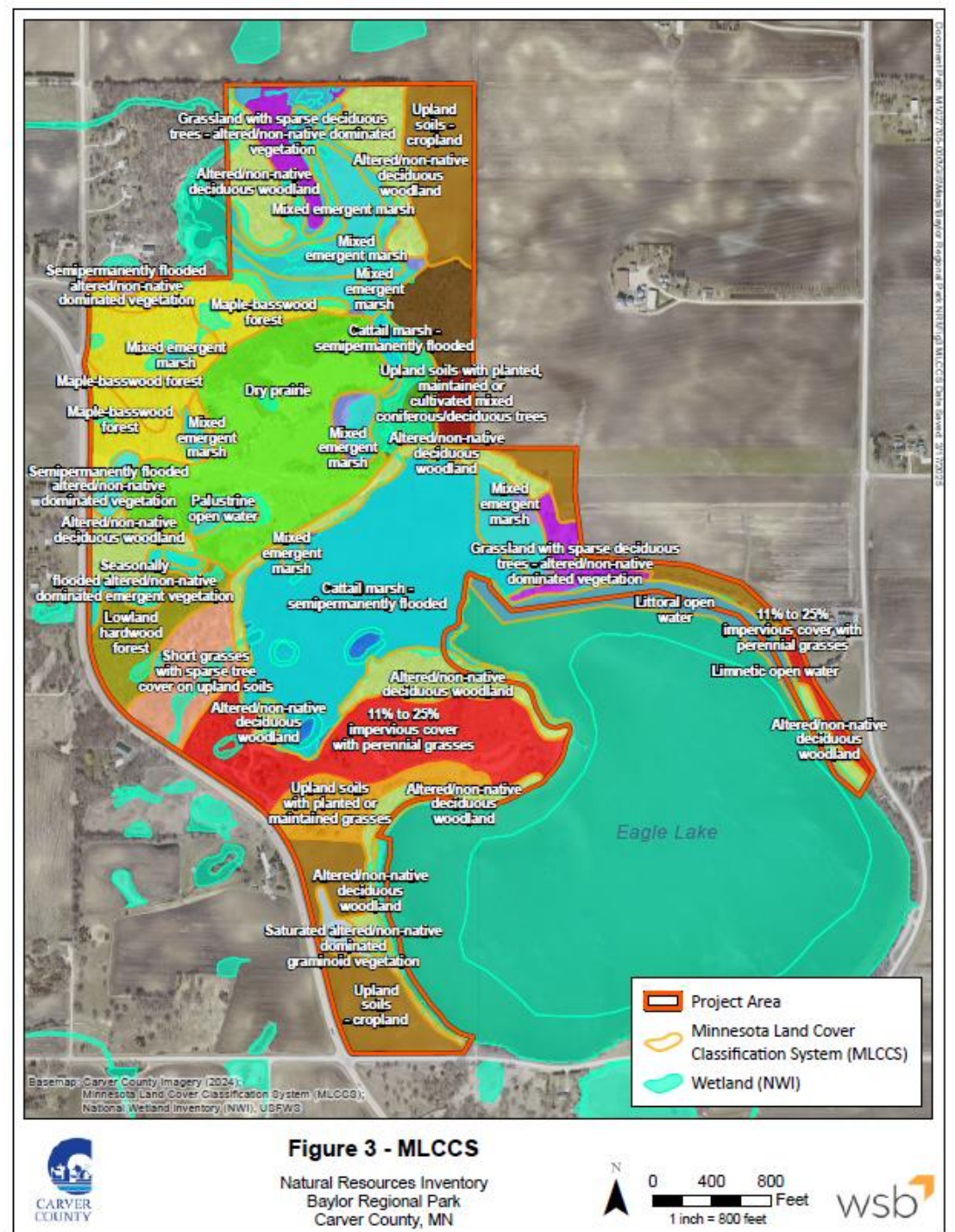
Development
Light Pollution
Environmental

Disrespectful Use
Funding

Analysis

Natural Resources

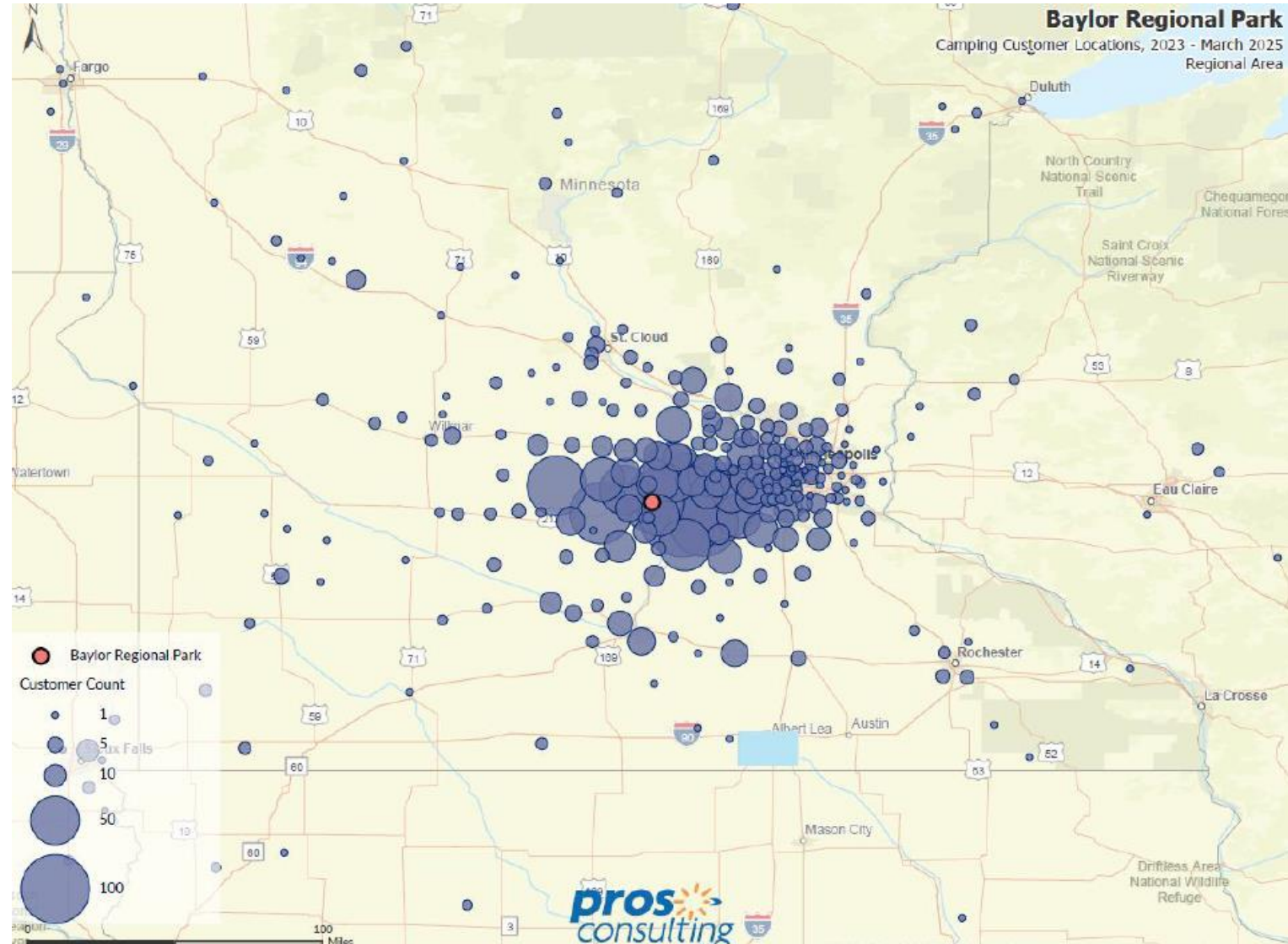
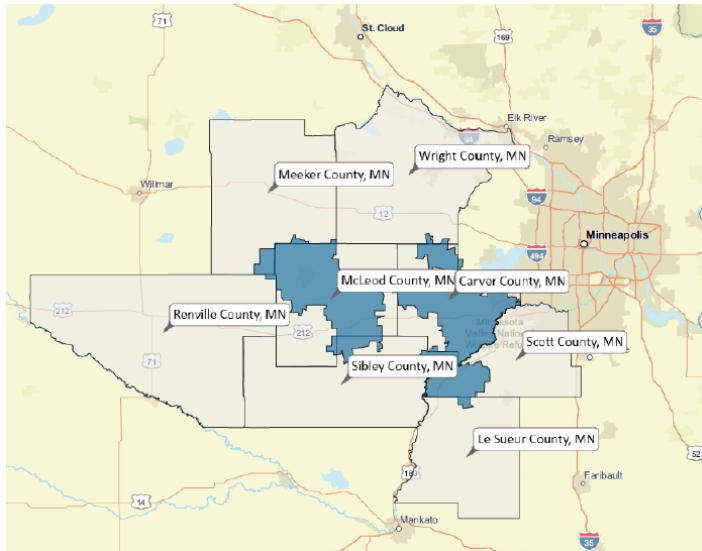
- Land Cover (MLCCS): vast mixture of natural resource areas (marsh, prairie, Maple-Basswood forest, non-native woodlands)
- Geology / Soils (St. Lawrence along western edge transitioning to Lone Rock sandstone with shale)
- Slope Analysis
- Biological Resources (below biodiversity)



Analysis

Campground Service Area Analysis

- Hyper-local Primary Service Area: Carver & McLeod Counties
- Secondary Service Area: Mpls/St Paul/Metro



Recreation Trends Analysis

Recreation Preferences – Primary Service Area (Carver/ McLeod)

- Generally at or above averages for spending on entertainment and recreation.
- Many active families that like outdoor experiences.
- Camping rated at top.
- Education programming/courses ranked lowest.

Recreation Preferences – Secondary Service Area (Mpls/ St. Paul/ Metro)

- Generally below averages for spending on entertainment and recreation.
- Art galleries, museums & culture rated high.
- Education programming/courses ranked higher.
- Camping ranked lowest.

Demographics Analysis

Primary Service Area: Carver & McLeod Counties

- Less diverse, higher median age, higher income; becoming more diverse with growth
 - ~1.4% growth over past 5 years

Secondary Service Area: Mpls / St. Paul/ Metro

- More diverse, lower median age, lower income
 - ~0.14% growth over past 5 years

PRIMARY SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW 2024 ESTIMATES

Carver & McLeod



2024 Total Population
106,717



2024 Total Households
40,106



2024 Median Age
39 years



2024 Median Household Income
\$99,765



2024 Race
86% White 2% Black Alone
2% Asian Alone
6.6% Hispanic Origin

SECONDARY SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW 2024 ESTIMATES

Mpls/St. Paul



2024 Total Population
745,557



2024 Total Households
312,753



2024 Median Age
34.7 years



2024 Median Household Income
\$85,429








2024 Race
54.3% White 18.7% Black Alone
11.8% Asian Alone
10.5% Hispanic Origin

Recreational Trends

National Trends (Sports & Fitness Industry Association)

- 2023 & 2024 showed continued increases in outdoor recreation
- 2023 & 2024 saw more diverse users across all metrics (age, race, education, gender)
- Youth Opportunities (popular activities for kids with parents) backpacking, snowshoeing, canoeing, climbing, and off-road triathlons



					
	Hiking (Day)	Bicycling (Road)	Fishing (Freshwater)	Camping (<¼mi. of Car/Home)	Camping (Recreational Vehicle)
2023	57.8 million	44.5 million	42.6 million	36.1 million	17.8 million
2024	Day Hiking 64.3 million	Bicycling 62.4 million	Fishing 43.1 million	Camping 40.2 million	RV Camping (-0.2%) 2023-2024 (+6.7% 5-year)
	Wildlife Viewing 21.8 million				

Recreation Trends Analysis

Recreation Preferences

- What would improve the overall experience to existing users?
- What would attract users from beyond the primary service area?
- What gaps in recreation could be filled?

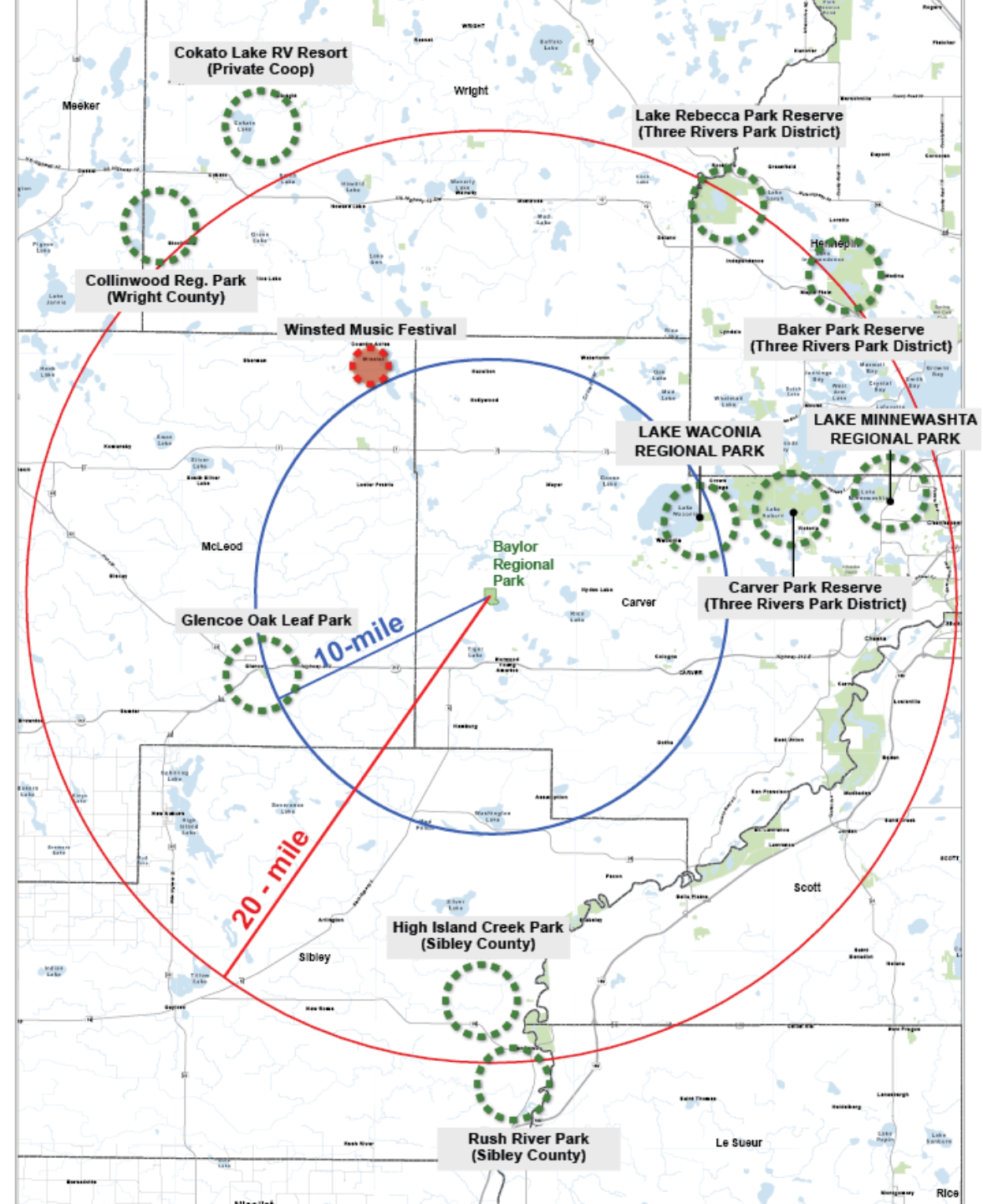


Photo Source: Baystatebanner.com

Regional Context - Camping

- Camping is a top attraction at Baylor
- Additional campgrounds within Carver County include Carver Park Reserve (Three Rivers Park District) all primitive but many support amenities
- Campground sites at or just outside of a 20-mile radius from Baylor include

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- The map illustrates the distribution of parks and recreation facilities in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Two concentric circles represent distances from the city center: a red circle for 20 miles and a blue circle for 10 miles. Various parks are marked with green dashed circles and labeled, including Cokato Lake RV Resort (Private Coop), Collinwood Reg. Park (Wright County), Winsted Music Festival, Lake Rebecca Park Reserve (Three Rivers Park District), Baker Park Reserve (Three Rivers Park District), LAKE WACONIA REGIONAL PARK, Carver Park Reserve (Three Rivers Park District), Glencoe Oak Leaf Park, Baylor Regional Park, High Island Creek Park (Sibley County), and Rush River Park (Sibley County). The map also shows county boundaries for Wright, Sibley, and Scott counties, as well as major roads and water bodies.





Analysis

Benchmark to Comparable Out of State Parks

- A stronger focus on RV sites with better amperage may increase use
- WiFi could be upgraded and is important to campers and visitors
- Cabins and improved accommodations are increasingly desired
- More activities and opportunities for campers are important features
- Bathrooms and playgrounds are critical to upgrade



Analysis

- **Regional Context – Minn. Astronomical Society**
- The observatory is a top attraction with users from a larger service area and includes campground users
- Likely to remain unique
- Light dome impacts are a threat; initiatives to control light impacts highly desired

Analysis

- **Regional Context – Trails**

- The trails are a top attraction, specifically the boardwalk which is valued by campers as well as day users
- The trails are used for cross-country track (natural trail surfaces necessary)
- Natural surfaced trails also desired by those running or training for events
- Winter cross-country ski trails and events can be very popular w/good conditions
- Site is lacking in regional trail connectivity
- Loop around Eagle Lake is desired





Analysis

- **Regional Context – Outdoor Education**
- The maple syrup edu. programming are popular
- XC ski events and rentals have demand with suitable conditions
- Inadequate facilities for Edu. Programming growth
- Potential revenue generation opportunity



Analysis

- **Regional Context – Disc Golf**
- The disc golf course is a top attraction; non-local users specifically come to the park for this amenity
- Requests for facility improvements: tee pads, waste stations, revamped course

Draft Baylor Park Plan Goals

Short-Term (5-10 Yrs)

- Understand & align with current public desires
- Address water recreation opportunities
- Natural Resource management
- Improve user safety & circulation
- Modernize facilities (playgrounds, utilities, camping)
- Identify potential revenue generation / partnerships / enterprise opportunities
- Consider additional lakeshore property preservation
- Increased use & awareness

Mid to Long-Term (10+ Yrs)

- Loop trail around Eagle Lake
- Address regional connectivity deficiencies
- Future land acquisitions & development



User Interests

- Reliable water recreation opportunities
- Creative play experiences & facilities
- Modernize campground facilities
 - Modernize restroom / shower facilities
 - Pull-thru campsites
 - Upgraded electrical capabilities
 - Add full-service sites
 - Consider seasonal sites
 - Add varying camping experiences (camper cabins, yurts, glamping)
- Consider farmhouse as a VRBO / AirBNB
- Improve barn for venue meeting ADA
- Pickleball courts



Park User Interests

What Visitors Have Said...

Tech & Utilities

Park wide Wi-Fi
Better hookups for Camping
Septic fields updated
Upgrade campsites
Security cameras

Natural Systems Threats

Flooding in campground areas
Geese
Lake health
Trees
Turf mowing regimes

Observatory

Very popular
3 buildings and expanding

Park Design

Circulation: trails and driving
Signage: Sense of entrance, wayfinding
Trail connections within and off site
Overflow parking: grass pavers?
Trail use conflicts: X-country skiing and hikers/walkers

People

Staffing – especially weekends
Volunteers
Park Ranger is needed
Friends of the Park

Programming Preferences

Day camps
School programs
Camping with the stars
Maple syrup making

Improvements

Cabins
ADA accessibility
Adaptive reuse of house
Playgrounds
Camp/nature store
Dog park
Archery
Bathroom/bathhouse improvements and
Family bathrooms
Water recreation



Questions & Discussion...