

2018
Legislative Session

Continuing Success for Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails



Increased Funding for Local Parks & Trails Leads to Tangible Results for GMPT Members

Over the last two years, the Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails (GMPT) organization has focused on increasing the dollars available for the DNR's local parks and trails grant programs. In 2018, we sought funding through every vehicle, both the bonding bill and the LCCMR bill. We are pleased to report we successfully secured \$2 million through the LCCMR bill.

Due to our successful efforts to secure \$2 million in 2018 and \$1 million from the general fund in 2017, many more cities and counties will receive grants through these programs, including several GMPT members. Becker County, Wright County, Mankato and Zumbrota received grants to develop trails and walkways, install fishing piers, improve park landscaping, acquire land, and undertake other important improvements.

Protected Greater Minnesota's Legacy Funding

The GMPT worked with legislators to successfully push back against efforts to that aimed to bypass the competitive grant process for funding parks and trails. If the legislation had passed, it would have removed funding available under the established competitive grant process and earmarked those funds for specific pet projects.

Prevented Restrictions on Parks & Trails Development

GMPT fought to ensure that the Legislature did not pass any bills that restrict the ability to develop parks and trails, such as restrictions on acquisitions and limitations on the price for which property can be acquired.

Members Take Action

GMPT members convened in St. Paul for a "Legislative Action Day" to push for expanded funding for parks and trails. Members met with legislators from across the state, including key leaders with influence over parks and trails spending. A highlight of the day was presenting Sen. Carrie Ruud with the GMPT's "Legislator of the Year" award for her extraordinary efforts on behalf of parks and trails during the preceding session.

Membership Continues to Grow

Thanks to our membership committee, board and volunteers, the GMPT has grown to an all-time high of 123 members! This year we also created a new category for business members, which welcomed eight new members to our organization.

Preparing for Future Legacy Funding Battles

Seven years ago, leaders from the GMPT, metropolitan parks and state parks reached an agreement to divide Legacy funding for parks and trails with 40% to metro regional parks, 40% to state parks and 20% to regional parks in Greater Minnesota. This agreement was set to sunset after the 2018 legislative session.

Because the agreement has ended, GMPT is now preparing for how the division of funds will be handled in the future. We are meeting with key legislators, gathering input from our board and members, and engaging the Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails Commission in strategy discussion.