

Invest in Local Parks & Trails

Support SF 688/HF 1276



Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails (GMPT) seeks funding for two long-time statewide grant programs that provide matching funds and a tremendous benefit to Minnesota communities:

- **Outdoor Recreation Grant Program** (for acquisition, development and/or redevelopment of local parks and recreation areas)
- **Local Trail Connections Program** (for relatively short trail connections between where people live and desirable locations)

Legacy funding doesn't cover Minnesota's needs!

Although many people assume that Legacy funds address most of our state's parks and trails needs, in actuality many important projects do not qualify for funding under the Legacy Amendment.

- Unless they meet the high bar to qualify for Legacy funding, many parks and trails projects can only look to these grant programs for funding.
- Funding for the grant programs has dried up. They have received money from a variety of sources in the past, including bonding, but funding has dwindled in recent years while interest in the programs remains high. Applications for grants far exceed the amount available.

Local parks & trails are vital to Minnesota's economy and quality of life!

- For most Minnesotans, local parks and trails are the nearest, most accessible—and in some cases *only*—opportunity for outdoor recreation.
- Local parks and trails are the foundation for Minnesota's entire park system and the "gateway" to the beginning of a lifelong interest in parks participation.
- Access to parks and trails builds healthy communities by providing venues for physical activity and play.
- Local parks and trails play a key role in attracting younger workers and families and retaining active retirees.
- Recreation spending is a major contributor to local economies.
- Recreational opportunities draw in tourists from around the state, region and nation.

Appropriate \$1M to the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program and \$1M to the Local Trail Connections Program to strengthen Minnesota's parks and trails system and benefit communities throughout the entire state.

Restore funding to these programs!
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More funding is needed to help meet the high demand for the Local Trail Connections and the Outdoor Recreation grant programs. In 2017, only a small fraction of the projects that applied for funding received grants. Many more cities and counties don't even apply because so little funding is available.

Local Trail Connections Program - 2017

- **Less than 14%** of the project requests received funding (\$2.6 million in requests versus only \$361,532 in funding).
- Out of 25 applicants, **only four projects received grants.**
- **Cities that received grants:** Breckenridge, Owatonna, Annandale and Blackduck.
- **Cities and counties that applied but did not receive grants:** Champlin, Rochester, Winona, White Bear Lake, Staples, Battle Lake, New Brighton, Byron, Goodview, Waseca, Perham, Ramsey, Faribault, Hampton, Duluth, Pipestone, New York Mills and Itasca County.

Outdoor Recreation Grant Program - 2017

- Only **26%** of the project requests received grant funding (\$2.2 million in requests versus only \$580,875 in funding).
- Out of 34 applicants, **only nine projects received grants.**
- **Cities, counties and townships that received grants:** Bemidji, Cottage Grove, Hendricks, Lambertson, Mazeppa, St. Paul Park, Blue Earth County, Itasca County and Stillwater Township.
- **Cities and townships that applied but did not receive grants:** Annandale, Byron, Chandler, Chisago City, Duluth, Eden Valley, Elgin, Ely, Gilman, Grand Rapids, Hoffman, Jackson, Jordan, Karlstad, Littlefork, Madison Lake, Mayer, Monticello, Oronoco, Owatonna, Roseau, Shakopee, Wabasha and Gnesen Township.

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