



GREATER MN PARKS & TRAILS – Legislative Update

2016 Legislative Session In Review

Work begins in October – Adoption of Legislative Policies and Agenda

Offense – Seek bonding money for parks and trails

Defense - Protect the funding for Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails

- Guard against restrictions on funding, such as limiting eminent domain or requiring permission
- Respond to the unknown

Bonding Request Activity

- Draft legislation and secure authors seeking bonding money for Local Connections and Outdoor Recreation Grant Program
- Letters from president to Governor, DNR, and bonding chairs
- Pre-session meetings:
 - Governor Dayton's Capital Investment staff
 - Commissioner Landwehr and key staff
 - Key legislators and potential authors
- Session activity:
 - Lobbying –Wefel and members met with Senate and House capital investment chairs and members, members of House Mining and Outdoor Recreation Members, member-legislators
 - Wefel met with authors, Legislative Chairs and minority leads, and committee administrators
 - Resolutions – multiple cities and counties passed resolutions of support
 - Hearings –
 - Senate Capital Investment – One of select few invited to present
 - House Capital Investment – Included as part of presentation on Greater MN Capital Investment goals (courtesy of Coalition of Greater MN Cities)
 - House Mining and Outdoor Recreation
 - Special thanks to Laird Mork, Tom Schmitz, & Jolene Foss for testifying and Wayne Sames for advice and lobbying!
 - Action alerts – members reached out to targeted
- Results
 - Activity drew significant attention and interest to programs
 - Not included in bonding bill, but activity laid groundwork. It can take more than one session to gain traction.
 - Challenge: House not very interested in funding any park and trails. Senate asked for top 1-2 priorities from legislators. Most legislators nominate specific projects from District as top priority, not a grant program that may or may not benefit district.



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- Next Steps:
 - If membership wants to continue pursuing, lay ground work early and consider an “odd-year” bonding request.
 - Members engage their own legislators and local officials! Most important step.
 - More advocacy at DNR leadership level
 - Seek support from related groups.

DEFENSE

- Relatively quiet on legacy funding, though Representative Kahn questioned evaluation process.
- Bills restricting use of funding introduced but did not progress.
 - Questions raised during hearings signaled continued concerns about property rights vs. trails. Issue will likely appear again.
- Legislation requiring burdensome information regarding all past-financial sources for a trail introduced. Wefel testified regarding concerns and negotiated language so that information provided during Commission designation process would suffice.

OTHER LEG UPDATES

- Rep. Phyllis Kahn loses primary battle

- SPECIAL SESSION