



Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails

Legislative Policies 2023

1. A strong and vibrant regional parks and trails system plays a vital role in the continued health and economic growth of greater Minnesota. Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails (GMPT) supports a Legacy Amendment parks and trails funding formula that allocates at minimum 20% of the total funds to regional parks and trails of Greater Minnesota.
2. Local parks and trails are crucial resources that enhance the vitality of communities throughout the state, but communities often lack the money to invest in these resources. The Local Trails Connection Program, Outdoor Recreation Grant Program and Natural and Scenic Area Program provide communities with financial assistance, but these programs have been historically underfunded. The GMPT supports increasing the funding for these programs, from both state and federal sources, and any other programs that support local and regional parks in Minnesota.
3. The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission has engaged in a rigorous process to evaluate and designate regional parks and trails and to make recommendations for how the Legacy funds for Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails should be appropriated. The GMPT supports awarding the grants in accordance with these recommendations.
4. The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission plays a vital role in implementing a statewide system of regional parks and trails in Greater Minnesota. The GMPT supports finding a stable funding source for the Commission that does not reduce the Legacy funds available for Greater Minnesota parks and trails projects.
5. The GMPT urges the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission to continue its efforts to promote applications for designation of regional parks and trails and grant proposals to achieve an equitable statewide distribution.
6. Creating or upgrading parks or trails often requires a variety of tools for land and easement acquisition. The GMPT opposes efforts to restrict or remove the tools currently available to local governments for these purposes.
7. The GMPT supports changes to state agency rules and policies rules to allow small cities that have the capacity to manage parks, trails, and natural resources grants and projects to do so without the sponsorship of another city or county.
8. The GMPT supports an Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund (ENRTF) reauthorization amendment that would increase the funds available for local parks and trails grant programs and other recreation resources.



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9. Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails (GMPT) supports a Legacy Amendment parks and trails funding formula into statute that allocates at minimum 20% of the total funds to regional parks and trails of Greater Minnesota and will oppose any efforts to diminish Greater Minnesota's share. GMPT further supports allocating all funds above a threshold based on previous years' allocations equally between Greater Minnesota, Metropolitan Parks, and the Department of Natural Resources.
10. The GMPT supports a recommendation to use a general fund appropriation to pay for the operating costs of the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission.
11. The GMPT supports the passage of a Legislative-Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources bill that includes funding for the Local Trail Connections, Outdoor Recreation, and Natural and Scenic Area grant programs and for selected local and regional park and trail projects.
12. Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails (GMPT) supports a robust bonding bill that includes a bonding appropriation of at least \$4,000,000 to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to fund the local and regional grant programs under Minn. Stat. 85.019 and additional funding for local and regional parks and trails.