



*Welcome!*

# Legislative Action Day

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GREATER MINNESOTA  
PARKS & TRAILS

MARCH 4, 2026

# WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

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Joe Tart, GMPT Chair

- In-person introductions
- On-line

# AGENDA OVERVIEW

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- Legislative Action – Update from Elizabeth
- Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
  - Discussion has become a committee hearing!
- Strategies for Protecting Minnesota’s Lands
- Parks & Trails Funding – Constitutional Amendments and the New Community Grant Programs
- Networking Lunch + Commission Update



# Legislative Advocacy & Strategy

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ELIZABETH WEFEL

FLAHERTY & HOOD

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# SESSION DYNAMICS

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- Bipartisanship lasted a day
- Bonding/Policy year
- Election year
- Growing number of retirements
  - 14 Senate, 7 House
  - 7 house members seeking an upgrade
  - 2 Senate, 9 House seeking upgrade



# DYNAMICS OF UPCOMING SESSION

- Safety/Security concerns coupled with construction make access even more difficult
- State budget better than expected, but federal pressures could be challenging
- Every election year is dramatic, but 2026 may be extra
  - Every legislative seat plus statewide offices up for election
  - Speaker of the House (plus 2 other state reps) challenging Gov. Walz
  - Two state representatives seeking to become auditor
- Gridlock may worsen
  - No one wants to give other side a win
  - Fears of primary challenges may hamper compromise
  - At least one greater MN primary fight
- Focus on fraud could result in overcorrections and/or lack of focus on other items

# SHORTER SESSION & TIGHTER TIMELINES

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## CALENDAR

- March 27 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee deadline
- Easter/Passover break – March 27 at 5 PM – April 7 8:00 AM
- April 17 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee deadline
- May 18 Legislature must adjourn

## PRACTICAL IMPACT

- Fewer hearings. Each House co-chair has 6 hearings before deadline
- Less time to get work done
- Less time for shenanigans

## YET

- Hearings cancelled in Senate
- Slow start in many other committees



# GMPT GOALS:

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- Commission updates and legacy extension
- More money for local parks and trails
  - Bonding
  - LCCMR
- Stop bad ideas
- Support good ideas

**WATCH FOR LEGISLATIVE ALERTS AND UPDATES**



# COMMISSION REQUEST (LEGACY)

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Update Commission language to reflect actual practice



Extend funding availability for member projects



Authored by Sen. Hauschild and Rep. Skraba (S.F. 3799/H.F. 3564)



Hearing today in House. Waiting on Senate hearing.



Not seeking to allocate additional funds this year



# BONDING

- Bill to be introduced seeking \$4 million for local parks and trails grants (Hauschild/Skraba)
- Governor's recommendations included \$1 million
- Why important?
  - Not all projects qualify for legacy
  - These grant programs fund important close to home projects

# ENRTF FUNDING - LCCMR

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H.F. 3426 / S.F. 3857

- ENRTF appropriation
- Includes appropriation for DNR Local Parks & Trails Grants
- Multiple member projects funded
- \$18 million Appropriation for Community Grants included
- Senate hearing tomorrow
- House hearing yesterday
- Community Grants program could be the holdup



# BILLS WE ARE WATCHING . . . SO FAR

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- Requirement for commissioner approval of certain land acquisitions repealed H.F. 3428 / S.F. 3999
  - Repeals requirement that DNR commissioner sign off on land acquisitions funded through ENRTF
  - Monitoring for now. May support.
- Motorize trails receiving grants-in-aid closed to nonmotorized use unless designated H.F. 3677
  - Problematic but House only so far
  - Watching closely. May meet with author



# MESSAGE FOR LEGISLATORS

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- Introduce yourself and your organization
- Talk about recent projects and how they benefit your community as well as upcoming projects
- Discuss need for local park and trail grant funding in bonding bill
  - Infrastructure that benefits everyone
  - Only grant program for many in Greater Minnesota
  - Metro receives funding from bonding bill – important to fund this program too!





# MESSAGE FOR LEGISLATORS

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- Remind them we need to get the Legacy and LCCMR bills passed!
  - Legacy includes important extensions as well as modernization of the Commission
  - LCCMR money contains funding for a variety of important projects. Like Legacy – this money has to be allocated! Let's get it out there.

# WHAT TO DO TODAY

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## **GOAL:**

- Connect with your legislator
- Ask your legislator to support our legislation. Ask House members to sign on.

## **Tactics:**

- Attend your appointments
- Drop-by Senators
- Plan a follow up
- What else?



# HOW CAN YOU HELP AND STAY INVOLVED?

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- Participate in our upcoming legislative forums
- Watch for updates and respond to action alerts
- Talk to your city/county staff and electeds, ask for their help!





# QUESTIONS?

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