

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Designation Application

General Section

Designation Application #: 14-007D Date Submitted: 07/30/2015

Park or Trail Name: Quarry Park

District #: 4 Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 45.5263 Longitude: -94.2402

Location Description:

Quarry Park and Nature Preserve is located in the City of Waite Park, which is in Stearns County. The address is: 1802 County Road 137 Waite Park, MN 56387 Quarry Park is located 1 hour and 15 minutes from the Twin Cities

Lead Applicant Organization: Stearns County

Lead Contact First Name: Ben Last Name: Anderson

Mailing Address: 1802 County Road 137

City: Waite Park State: MN Zip: 56387

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Joint Applicant #1 Organization:

Joint Applicant #2 Organization:

Joint Applicant #3 Organization:

Joint Applicant #4 Organization:

Describe other project supporters:

Description Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park

Total proposed acreage:

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

Quarry Park is located at a site that was once a former granite quarry industrial site. It was acquired by Stearns County in 1992 and opened to the public in 1998. This park has been acquired and developed for multiple uses such as rock climbing, scuba diving, swimming, nature trails, picnic areas, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, biking, group camping and environmental education. After 1998, the park expanded 400 acres to its present size of 684 acres. A portion of Quarry Park and Nature Preserve, 323 acres, is also one of seven Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA's) located in Stearns County. As of now

there has not been a set number of acres proposed for Quarry Park and Nature Preserve. Rather, adjacent properties are evaluated as they become available. Currently Quarry Park provides a picnic shelter and multiple benches for visitors throughout the park. Also, two permanent bathrooms and an additional picnic shelter are funded and will be ready to use in the spring of 2015. It is planned to someday provide an interpretive center/trail head building, an amphitheater and to expand other offered activities such as fishing, picnicking, and group camping facilities. Cost estimates for Quarry Park include:

Acquisition: unknown, consider adjacent land as available

Development - Roughly \$2,705,000 left to develop from the 1995 master plan

Operations - Roughly \$115,000

Maintenance - Roughly \$115,000

Programming - Roughly \$10,000

What is the Acquisition and Development Status?

- New Park or Trail (no land acquired or developed)
- Existing Park or Trail
- Land Acquisition
 - Status: As it becomes available
 - Percentage of Land Acquired:
 - Development Status
 - No Development
 - Some Development, but more Proposed
 - New Facilities Proposed
 - Existing Facilities to be Upgraded
 - Fully Developed

Facility Listing Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
Group campsites, Must be a non-profit youth group, Picknicking and picnic shelters, Hiking Trails (natural), Mountain Biking Trails (natural), Cross-country Skiing Trails, Swimming, Climbing (natural/man-made), Restrooms/sanitation building, Roads and Parking Areas, Scuba Diving, Observation Deck	Fishing Piers, Nature Center/Interpretation Trails, Outdoor Amphitheater

Master Plan Status Section

Master Plan Status: Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available

Describe Other Supportive Information:

A master plan meeting the requirements of the strategic plan is available but we do not have an electronic version at this time. A hard copy may be requested if needed.

Classification Details Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience: Quarry Park offers amenities that are relevant to existing/common user groups and also serves to broaden the appeal of outdoor recreation to new and expanded populations. Quarry Park does this by providing a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile hike to the featured swimming quarry. Visitors must traverse the trails through prairie, woodlands and wetlands in order to swim. Quarry Park also serves as a destination unto itself by attracting regional and national userâ¶s. Quarry Park accomplishes this because of its unique heritage as a granite quarry. Past land disturbance throughout the park has created historic rock grout piles that show the remnants of the past. A recent survey showed that during July 2014 Quarry Park had visitors from 58 Minnesota Counties, with the top five being Stearns (25%), Hennepin (18%), Wright (7%), Swift (7%), Anoka (7%) and 4% of the users being from out of state.

Criteria #2 Perserves a Regionally-Significant and Diverse Natural or Historic Landscape: Quarry Park offers unique land features which include restored prairie, rock out crops featuring Minnesotaâ¶s Brittle Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia fragilis*), and historic granite quarryâ¶s. The granite quarries are remnants of the past livelihood for many of the local families and they serve as the main attraction for the majority of the park visitors. Overtime, the quarries have filled with water and now provide swimming, scuba diving and fishing opportunities. Also, quarries that do not hold water are used for rock climbing. Currently, no hunting or gathering is allowed within Quarry Park and therefore it serves as a sanctuary for plants and animals. It is not uncommon to see deer, waterfowl, red fox, bats and many other species while hiking, cross country skiing or snow shoeing on the miles of trails. Quarry Park also features a Scientific/Natural Area which has the largest population of the truberclae rein orchids (*Platanthera flava* var. *herbiola*) in the state. Other park uses include but are not limited to mountain biking and a scenic overlook.

Criteria #3 Well-located and Connected to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: Quarry Park is located in the City of Waite Park, about 10 minutes from downtown St Cloud. The overall population of the greater St. Cloud area is 100,000 people and it is continuing to grow. Also, Quarry Park is located about 1 hour and 15 minutes northwest of the Twin Cities, just minutes off of Interstate 94. The expansion of the Twin Cities up the Interstate 94 corridor is only going to increase the popularity and the importance of Quarry Park in the near future.

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region: Quarry Park offers many unique amenities that are not found within the immediate area such as fishing, swimming and diving in historic granite quarries. Also, there are only five public swimming beaches found in Stearns County so Quarry

Park adds an additional swimming option. Quarry Park is also one of the few places in central Minnesota where you have to take a half mile hike through the woods, prairie and wetlands of Minnesota just to get to the swimming hole. Therefore, it voluntarily forces people into exercising, viewing and appreciating some of the many natural features Minnesota has to offer. It is important to note that there are no State Parks found in Stearns County and therefore one of the goals of Quarry Park is to fill some of the missing amenities that they typically offer.

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)