

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Designation Application

General Section

Designation Application #: 14-015D Date Submitted: 08/31/2015

Park or Trail Name: Alexander Ramsey Park

District #: 5 Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 44.5510 Longitude: -95.1246

Location Description:

Alexander Ramsey Park has two entrances. Camping Access, Zoo and Large Shelter: From TH 19/US 71 turn North on N. Lincoln Street and turn West on Oak street and proceed to the Park. For Zeb Gray Shelter, Trails and Ramsey Falls Overlook: From TH 19 turn North on N. Grove Street and follow the signs into the park. The road continues and connects both entrances. Physical Address: 99 East Oak Street Redwood Falls, MN 56283

Lead Applicant Organization: City of Redwood Falls

Lead Contact First Name: James Last Name: Doering

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 526

City: Redwood Falls State: MN Zip: 56283

Phone: 507-637-5755 Email: jdoering@ci.redwood-falls.mn.us

Joint Applicant #1 Organization:

Joint Applicant #2 Organization:

Joint Applicant #3 Organization:

Joint Applicant #4 Organization:

Describe other project supporters:

Friends of the Park: C/O Minnwest Bank PO Box 436 Redwood Falls, MN 56283 507-637-4340 Friends of the Park is a grass roots 501c3 group who raises funding and donations for Park projects to be used as match for grant applications.

Description Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park

Total proposed acreage:

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

Alexander Ramsey Park resides within the corporate limits of the City of Redwood Falls which is located in Redwood County Minnesota. Attached are the location maps and topographical map that clearly

identifies the Alexander Ramsey Park Complex. With current additions to the original 217 acres transferred by the State of Minnesota in July 1957, Alexander Ramsey Park encompasses 256.23 publicly owned acres up to Lake Redwood. The entrance of Alexander Ramsey Park starts at Lake Redwood that provides boating access, fishing, swimming, playgrounds and exhibits a decommissioned Sherman Tank commemorating the sacrifices men and women of Redwood Falls played in World War II insuring liberties such as having parks are forever preserved. Alexander Ramsey Park itself has 3.5 miles of hiking trails which are currently paved; there are seven walking bridges in the park traversing the Ramsey Creek and the Redwood River. As listed above there are 31 improved (level) electrical sites for RVs/ campers and 15 rustic non-electrical tent sites for uses on a first come first served basis. Campers also enjoy two bathroom facilities including the original WPA hand cut granite bathroom and a 2005 modern ADA shower/bathroom facility. a. Alexander Ramsey Park has five picnic areas with shelters which have been set in the park's natural woodlands. Three shelters can be reserved: b. The Lower Shelter: The park's original and largest passive recreation area features the 1930's W.P.A. Vintage Lower Shelter with its massive timber and granite construction. Nearby activities include a playground structure, ball field, Ramsey Park Zoo and campground/restroom facilities. c. Ramsey Falls Shelter: One of the park's most popular attractions is the Ramsey Falls' observation area, which utilizes rather unique bridges and pathways to access many varied scenic vistas of Ramsey Falls and Ramsey Creek. The Falls' area also provides ample picnic space with an open shelter, 1930's WPA hand cut Morton Gneiss, block restroom building, and access to some of the park's most scenic hiking trails. A new playground feature was added in 2012 next to the shelter to bolster use and meet user requests. d. Zeb Gray Overlook Shelter: This portion of the park features the unique Zeb Gray Shelter with scenic overlook of the Redwood River and the park's hogback peninsula. This area also offers a playground structure and access to the mill site waterfall which bears the City's name. The Falls is spanned by a pedestrian bridge providing a striking view of the Redwood River gorge In Alexander Ramsey Park, near the campground is a zoo which features animals such as buffalo, elk, deer, prairie dogs, and numerous species of upland game and waterfowl. The zoo is always a popular park destination for visitors!

What is the Acquisition and Development Status?

- New Park or Trail (no land acquired or developed)
- Existing Park or Trail
 - Land Acquisition
 - Status: Planning Stage
 - Percentage of Land Acquired: 99%
 - Development Status
 - No Development
 - Some Development, but more Proposed
 - New Facilities Proposed
 - Existing Facilities to be Upgraded
 - Fully Development

Facility Listing Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
Camping-cross-section of camper types, Electric campsites, Non-electric campsites, Tent only sites, Picknicking and picnic shelters, Walking Trails (paved), Hiking Trails (natural), Cross-country Skiing Trails, Swimming, Lake Access for power boats, Fishing Piers, Nature Center/Interpretation Trails, Play areas, Climbing (natural/man-made), Restrooms/sanitation building, Roads and Parking Areas	Camping-cross-section of camper types, Electric/water campsites, See Master Plan, Walking Trails (paved), Biking trails (paved), Swimming, Fishing Piers, Visitor Center, Play Areas, with an outdoor theme, Restrooms/sanitation building, Way finding signage; trail head kiosks; remove invasive species; improve trail connections; address erosion issues, mini splash pad; improve lighting etc. See Master Plan

Master Plan Status Section

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

Describe Other Supportive Information:

Master Plan is attached.

Classification Details Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience: With current additions to the original 217 acres transferred by the State of Minnesota in July 1957, Alexander Ramsey Park encompasses 256.23 publicly owned acres up to Lake Redwood. The entrance of Alexander Ramsey Park starts at Lake Redwood that provides boating access, fishing, swimming, playgrounds and exhibits a decommissioned Sherman Tank commemorating the sacrifices men and women of Redwood Falls played in World War II insuring liberties such as having parks are forever preserved. Alexander Ramsey Park itself has 3.5 miles of hiking trails which are currently paved; there are seven walking bridges in the park traversing the Ramsey Creek and the Redwood River. As listed above there are 31 improved (level) electrical sites for RVs/ campers and 15 rustic non-electrical tent sites for uses on a first come first served basis. Campers also enjoy two bathroom facilities including the original WPA hand cut granite bathroom and a 2005 modern ADA shower/bathroom facility. Alexander Ramsey Park has five picnic areas with shelters which have been set in the park's natural woodlands. Three of these shelters can be reserved with the online reservation system at www.ci.redwood-falls.mn.us In Alexander Ramsey Park, near the campground is a zoo which features animals such as buffalo, elk, deer, prairie dogs, and numerous species of upland game and waterfowl. The zoo is always a popular park destination for visitors! From 2009 through 2011 the Zoo has been recently renovated utilizing private donations and matching funds from grass root organizations such as Friends of the Park. The renovations have

improved exhibit appeal, enhanced ADA accessibility and reduced erosion to the Redwood River.

Criteria #2 Preserves a Regionally-Significant and Diverse Natural or Historic Landscape: Alexander Ramsey Park is the largest municipal park in Minnesota. Named after the first Territorial Governor when the territory was established in 1849 and Second Governor of the State of Minnesota from 1860-1863. Alexander Ramsey Park was founded as a State Park in 1911 next to Lake Redwood, a reservoir built in 1902 for hydroelectric production. The lake is one of two lakes in Redwood County, both man-made. The Park was dubbed the "The Little Yellowstone of Minnesota". A special anthem was written for the park in 1919- "The Ramsey Park March". Unique structures were also erected by the W.P. A.; the Lower Shelter and Restroom along with the Swayback Bridge (National Historic Register) all constructed out of local hand cut granite and remain prominent park structures to this day. The park continued to be managed by the State of Minnesota until July 1957 when the park was transferred to the City of Redwood Falls. The transfer document ends with a covenant stating "the City of Redwood Falls shall use the property above described solely for public park, recreational or other civic and cultural purposes and for no other." signed by Gorge A. Selke Commissioner of Conservation and stamped with the Official Seal of the State of Minnesota Department of Conservation. The City of Redwood Falls continues to maintain "The Little Yellowstone of Minnesota" which has a rich historical significance. In addition, the Park has a rich geologic history with a monument placed by the Minnesota Geological Survey referencing a kaolin clay bank along the Redwood River in the Park which is some of the oldest decayed granite material in the world. Numerous academic institutions come to Alexander Ramsey Park to study its unique geology.

Criteria #3 Well-located and Connected to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: Since 1957 the park has been free to the public so daily use is calculated utilizing MNDOT traffic counts of MSAS 118 that runs through the park. Average daily traffic counts through the park are 970 vehicles based on the MNDOT 2013 traffic volume survey. On average 500 camping stays are made from Mothers Day weekend thru September. Of these 500 overnight stays it is assumed 2 persons per stay or 1,000 patrons. An address review shows that 30% live less than 50 miles away, 60% are greater than 50 miles to 200 miles away, 10% live in excess of 200 miles from Alexander Ramsey Park. Of the 31 improved (level) electrical sites for RVs/ campers and 15 rustic non-electrical tent sites, the 500 reservations show that the park is primarily full 11 weekends out of the 20 available due to the high percentage use over the weekends. All camping reservations are done via our online system at www.ci.redwood-falls.mn.us. The Park is minutes away from fine dining, lodging, golfing, an outdoor water park, top rated casino, historic and cultural venues and access to the City's on an off road trail system providing 10 miles of biking and hiking. The trail system is in place to access the State Authorized Casey Jones Trail, Chief Sleepy Eye Trail and the Minnesota River Trail and have planning in place for trail hub locations. The vision for the future shows Alexander Ramsey Park as destination hub to access three State Trail systems fortifying its rank as a regional park.

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region: Alexander Ramsey Park provides zoo animal watching, fishing, tubing, hiking on improved trails, and public camping as previously listed. The real scarcities are the prominent feature of the zoo which attracts many visitors to the park, the geologic features as listed in above that can be observed all through the park, and the historical

economic contribution the Redwood River and its falls have played for milling lumber, grain and providing electrical power. Ultimately the features of the falls themselves, Scenic Ramsey Falls with overlook and the Redwood Falls with aerial walk bridge are the unique natural features that cannot be witnessed anywhere within a 2 hour drive. Alexander Ramsey Park fills a large gap of providing amenities expected to be found in the State Park system without daily use fees. Patrons can freely access the park and is supported by the 970 average daily traffic counts provided by MNDOT.

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)

Type	Description
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Other	Redwood Falls MN River Trail Plan
Other	Fall 2015 Programming Guide
Other	Redwood County Trail Plan
Master Plan	Master plan added from master plan tab
Other	Trail and Campground Map
Other	Camping Reservation Demographics
Other	Drop In Camping Demographics
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Other	Redwood Falls MN River Trail Plan