

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Director's Report for December 2022**

Partner Meetings

- GMPT Communications Committee
- PTLAC Liaison's Calls
- Parks and Trails Legacy Committee Meeting, December 8 Bunker Hills Regional Park

Stakeholder Meetings/Outreach

- Spirit Mountain call on project scope
- Warroad, call with new director of the Community Development Corporation to understand the funding application process
- Gull Lake Trail, funding shortfall and project scope changes
- Sandstone, possible extension for the grant

2022 Policy and Planning Report

The report is written, Evolve Creative has been great to work with. Joe's eagle eyes were incredibly helpful and it's off my desk and at the printer. I anticipate delivery on January 3 so I can hand them out to the Legacy Committees at the legislature on January 4 and 5.

Mountain Bike Survey and Trail Count 2022

The summer 2022 Mountain Bike Survey and Trail Count has been condensed, printed and contained in one large 3-ring binder. I'll be sharing copies of the report with the participating trail facilities and copies will be available at the January Commission meeting. Karen has posted the information on the website as well as the summer camping survey reports.

Mountain Bike Trail Development Guidelines

Writing continued into December and in mid-December the copy editor hired by IMBA came on board. Her name is Lisa Jung and she has a wealth of experience in editing. She is also an avid mountain biker and her husband has previously worked at IMBA, so she has the credentials we need to be a good voice in this process.

GMRPTC
System Plan Coordinators Report
November/December 2022

Reviews and Technical Assistance

We have received one new Master Plan, for Deep Lake Park in Hubbard County. The Designation Application for this facility was reviewed and ranked high just this year. We expect to have the review for the plan, including wintertime site visit and ETeam scoring, completed in time for the February meeting.

I had conversations with a few communities regarding their plans and applications. In particular, we had great Zoom calls with the cities of Benson, Frazee, and Nisswa. A few other communities, both in our system (East Grand Forks, North Country Trail, Winona, Luverne, Cloquet) or just reaching out for the first time (New Prague, Prairie Woods ELC, Chisholm), contacted me via email for more information about a program or to get feedback on a development idea. We had a great 2022 for this kind of contact with our regional partners, and we plan to continue to cultivate those relationships in 2023.

Funding

Between the two of us, all Legacy grant applicants have been personally called with the results you determined at the October meeting. Renee followed up with an official letter and other information. We made a lot of applicants very happy, and for those couple we weren't able to fund, they continue to make progress on their projects!

Three applications were received for the Tracked Wheelchair Grant. Lyon County, Wright County, and the City of Duluth have all submitted applications. Renee and I will review the applications, clarify any questions, and present you with a recommendation at the January meeting. This is a great opportunity, and while the number of applications is limited, we heard from enough other partners that I think it will be a catalyst for more agencies to move in this direction.

District and Partner Outreach

Renee, Chair Anderson and I met with our DNR project manager contacts in Sartell as a part of workflow planning and communication. We are very pleased to have the DNR partners we do. Having this meeting on an annual basis helps us both to understand expectations, improve both of our understandings of each other's processes, and smooth out process and language for future grants and contracts.

I also attended a trails meeting with the DNR and MnDOT. This meeting, called by MnDOT, was to help them understand ours and the DNR's trails programs and funding opportunities. MnDOT has programs that are currently helping several Greater Minnesota communities create walkability plans, as well as their own trails programs. We had a great discussion about planning, how our various programs complement each other, and just how communities take advantage of the various opportunities. We agreed to stay in touch and refer our community clients to appropriate programs as warranted.

Related to the above, I met with one of my Regional Development Commission contacts and had a great conversation about the RDC role in Walkable Community planning and Safe Routes to School planning. Each RDC has its own role to play, but they are definitely key partners when it comes to knowing what is going on at a local level. The challenge is to keep on top of changes in RDC staffing!

Consultant Projects

Renee and I continue to meet with Full Circle Group on this next phase of Data Management System development. While they make progress on a number of different activities, it has become clear that the first step needs to be completion of the Customer Relation Management module of the system. From

there, we will have a better handle on how to structure some of the new interface upgrade opportunities and other features in development.

As the Mountain Bike and Campground surveys wrap up, we've had a lot of information coming in for review and updates. We are looking forward to reviewing this information with you at the January meeting. It will be important to also think about how we want to approach data collection projects like this for 2023. Consistent efforts in this area are starting to pay off.

I sat in on a Streetlight Webex meeting for Renee when she was out of town. It was great to get to see how that project is progressing, get a firmer understanding of how the technology works and who the players are, and think about the future of that data project. The most exciting, and still challenging, part of the project is keeping all three partners on the same page as to data standards and measurement methodologies. If our goal is to show a level playing field as to statewide outdoor recreation use statistics, consistent application of this data is the first time it's really been possible. Our system use stacks up very well against the state system, and while we will never have the population numbers that drive Metro park usage, our regional partners are doing a great job for their communities and users.