

District Planning Committee August Meetings

Criteria Discussion Results

Between August 20 and 29, 2014, each of the six District Planning Committees (DPC) of the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission met. Those meetings had a few purposes:

- To build rapport and a working relationship among the Committees
- To identify regional priorities for outdoor recreation development
- To rank and set weights for the criteria in each classification, by District

The information contained in this document is divided into two sections.

The first section, Classification Overview, outlines the discussion trends that were identified across the Districts for each of the three Parks and Trails Classifications. A chart shows the rank and weight given to each criteria by each DPC for that classification.



The second section provides a one page outline for each DPC. Basic information about each DPC, such as its membership, geography, and basic demographics are given at the top of each page. The bottom of each page lists the Parks and Trails priorities and trends of importance to that DPC. A chart also shows how the DPC ranked and weighted each criteria for all three classifications.

Please note that the information reflected for each DPC is the result of a one-time snapshot of each DPC's consensus. That consensus can and likely will change as the information they have to work with matures. Still, the strength of some discussion trends across multiple districts made it worthwhile to put this document together and share it for review.

Regional Trail Classification

- The DPCs fairly consistently ranked “Connectivity” criteria as a high priority.
- They also gave high ranking to the “Well Located” criteria.
- All DPC’s had conversations about long trail connectivity in modes other than paved bike paths. For example:
 - Nearly all groups discussed a need for improved facilities to access stream and river recreation routes.
 - Long distance hiking trails, such as the Superior Hiking Trail, may provide additional opportunities.
 - Off road motorized trails are a very high priority in Northern Minnesota. Regional funding may help small, tax-poor communities to meet match requirements for other sources of dedicated funding.
 - New forms of recreation, such as gravel trail or fat tire bicycling, are continually evolving and gaining popularity, requiring new types of facilities.
- Trails were the highest priority classification in many districts, based on discussions within DPCs about perceived priorities.
- Acquisition of trail easements is a challenge in all districts, but particularly in the southern or more developed areas.
- How local trails or marked surface street routes connect neighborhoods and users to regional trails and parks is going to be a critical factor in their success.

The following chart details the rank and weight set by each DPC for this classification.

	D1 Ran	D1 Wei	D2 Ran	D2 Wei	D3 Ran	D3 Wei	D4 Ran	D4 Wei	D5 Ran	D5 Wei	D6 Ran	D6 Wei
Trails												
#1 – High-Quality “Destination” Trail Experience	3	25	1	36	3	19	4	14	4	17	2	26
#2 – Well-Located to Serve Regional Population	2	26	3	20	4	19	1	37	1	35	2	24
#3 – Enhances Connectivity	1	30	2	29	1	34	2	26	2	25	4	18
#4 – Fills a Gap	4	19	4	15	2	28	2	23	3	23	1	32

Natural Resource-based Regional Park Classification

- Providing a high quality facility was the top criteria in almost all districts.
- DPCs recognized that large, flexible facilities will be needed to meet changing recreational uses and populations.
- The aging of the user population was recognized. However, some districts see increased use by young families as providing new constituencies.
- Most DPCs had a fairly sophisticated (but varied) approach to either 1) creating high quality parks that may or may not be near population centers, versus 2) placing accessible parks near population centers, even if the park may not be of the highest quality. The discussions highlighted regional perceptions about the quantity of large, high-quality holdings in or near developed areas and the willingness of locals to travel various distances.
- Across all districts DPCs felt that increasing the number of young park and trail users was as much a function of programming (facilitating the introduction to outdoor activities) as it is the facilities themselves.
- However, quality facilities would dictate whether new users would return or not.
- Developing Park Master Plans as a part of the application process was alternatively identified either as critical for success or as a major barrier for smaller jurisdictions.

The following chart details the rank and weight set by each DPC for this classification.

	D1 Ran	D1 Wei	D2 Ran	D2 Wei	D3 Ran	D3 Wei	D4 Ran	D4 Wei	D5 Ran	D5 Wei	D6 Ran	D6 Wei
Natural Resource Park												
#1 – High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience	1	34	2	30	1	30	1	36	4	17	1	33
#2 – Preserves a Regionally-Significant Landscape	4	18	1	38	1	31	2	28	2	28	2	30
#3 – Well-located and Connected	3	21	3	20	4	18	3	18	1	32	3	20
#4 – Fills a Gap	2	27	4	12	3	21	3	18	3	23	4	17

Special Recreational Feature Regional Park Classification

- There was a surprising consensus across nearly all DPCs on their ranking of criteria for this classification.
- Having a Special High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience ranked highest for most because they look at this classification as encompassing special or one of a kind features.
- Filling a Gap was typically viewed as least important because this type of facility is going to happen where landscape features or activity design needs dictate, not necessarily proximity to population centers.
- Most DPCs viewed this classification as a higher priority than Natural Resource Parks, due to the scarcity of their resources and features.
- DPCs also viewed this classification as best able to meet the needs of niche user groups. This was very attractive from a tourism development standpoint.

The following chart details the rank and weight set by each DPC for this classification.

	D1 Ran	D1 Wei	D2 Ran	D2 Wei	D3 Ran	D3 Wei	D4 Ran	D4 Wei	D5 Ran	D5 Wei	D6 Ran	D6 Wei
Special Use Park												
#1 – Special High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Exp	1	35	2	28	1	34	1	36	1	35	2	25
#2 – Provides a Natural and Scenic Setting	3	21	1	35	2	29	2	29	2	31	2	25
#3 – Well-located to Serve a Regional Need	2	26	3	22	3	20	3	22	3	19	4	21
#4 – Fills a Gap	4	18	4	15	4	17	4	13	4	15	1	29

Overview



Membership
LuAnn Wilcox, Commissioner <i>Finlayson</i>
Keith Nelson, Commissioner <i>Eveleth</i>
Richard Baker <i>Princeton</i>
Greg Bernu <i>Carlton</i>
Patrick Christopherson <i>Mora</i>
Nate Eide <i>Two Harbors</i>
Nathan Johnson <i>Pine City</i>
Bob Manzoline <i>Eveleth</i>
Joe Alberio, DNR Liaison <i>Moose Lake</i>

Regional Demographics

Northeast Region

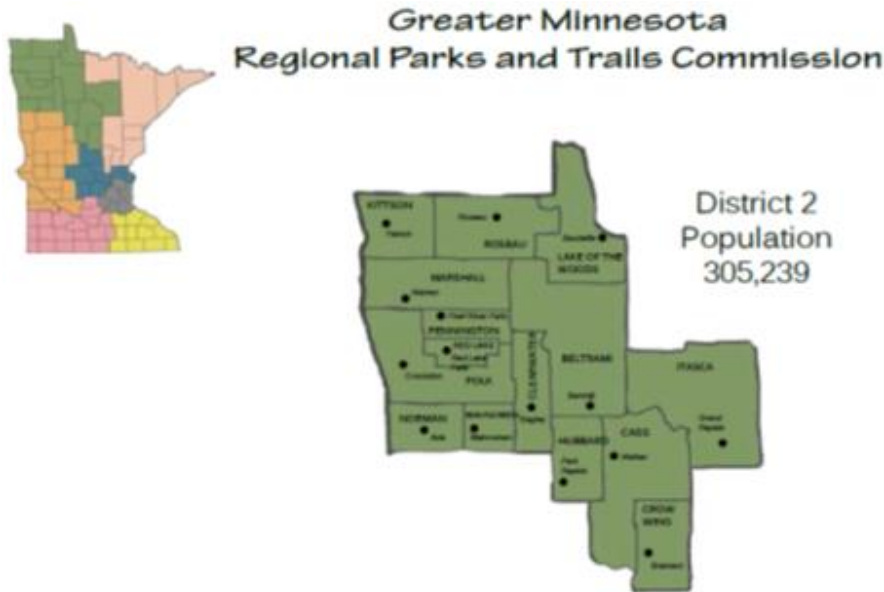
The population is concentrated in the Greater Duluth area, in the southern regional centers, and on the Iron Range in a line along the Laurentian Divide. Smaller communities are strung along the North Shore. The region’s predicted growth average is 12.7% by 2035.

District Priorities

- Trails are most important because of the connectivity challenge, with special feature parks as the next priority. Multiple types of parks are needed across the District.
- The south end looks to recreation for tourism and population/economic development growth, while the north is more for tourism development.
- Multiuser trails (motorized/non-motorized) are important for long distance destination trail classes.
- Specialty trails are an important niche for special use parks.
- Our large natural resource base makes us a “destination,” and facilities should reflect that (quality).
- Facilities need to be accessible for an aging population and user friendly for all populations.

Criteria	Rank	Weight
<i>Trails</i>		
#1	3	25
#2	2	26
#3	1	30
#4	4	19
<i>N.R. Park</i>		
#1	1	34
#2	4	18
#3	3	21
#4	2	27
<i>S.U. Park</i>		
#1	1	35
#2	3	21
#3	2	26
#4	4	18

Overview



Membership
Rita Albrecht, Commissioner <i>Bemidji</i>
Bryan Pike, Commissioner <i>Brainerd</i>
Myles Hogenson <i>Roosevelt</i>
Charles Parson <i>Puposky</i>
Susan Bruns <i>Bemidji</i>
Erick Hedren <i>Hackensack</i>
Steven Bommersbach <i>Twin Valley</i>
Mark Kavanaugh <i>Brainerd</i>
Les Ollila <i>Grand Rapids</i>
Troy Schroeder <i>Warren</i>
Roger Landers <i>Nisswa</i>
Lyle Grindy <i>Roseau</i>
Sam Christenson <i>Blackduck</i>
Phil Leversedge (DNR) <i>Bemidji</i>
Lance Crandall DNR Liaison <i>Park Rapids</i>

Regional Demographics

Northwest Region

The population is concentrated in the southern half of the region, in the Bemidji area, and in a few communities in the northwest.

Populations in the region's 15 counties are predicted to show both growth and decline. Beltrami (33.6%), Cass (25.4%), and the Brainerd Lakes area are predicted to grow, while Kittson (-25.1%) is predicted to lose population. The region is predicted to grow by 16.5% by 2035.

District Priorities

- Need more trail connections, i.e. spurs and branches.
- We are challenged to get 20- and 30-year-olds involved (partner with other programs).
- Rehabilitation and maintenance of facilities is important in poor tax base areas.
- More local access points are important to an aging population.
- An opportunity for wildlife watching facilities up north is needed.
- Multiuse (motorized and non-motorized) trails need to work together.
- Trails is the key classification/top priority. Although there was a debate on which parks classification is more important, the Committee leaned toward special use parks.

Criteria	Rank	Weight
<i>Trails</i>		
#1	1	36
#2	3	20
#3	2	29
#4	4	15
<i>N.R. Park</i>		
#1	2	30
#2	1	38
#3	3	20
#4	4	12
<i>S.U. Park</i>		
#1	2	28
#2	1	35
#3	3	22
#4	4	15

Overview



Greater Minnesota
Regional Parks and Trails Commission



District 3
Population
363,585

Membership

- Mike Hulett, Commissioner
Moorhead
- Al Liefert, Commissioner
Alexandria
- Brad Bonk
Willmar
- John Young, Jr.
Hawley
- Gary E. Swenson
Starbuck
- Steve Plaza
Fergus Falls
- Jason Artley
Moorhead
- Lindsey Knutson
Appleton
- Kim Schroeder
Parkers Prairie
- Bruce Imholte
Detroit Lakes
- Don Rasmussen
Long Prairie
- Melody Webb, DNR Liaison
Fergus Falls

Regional Demographics

West Central Region

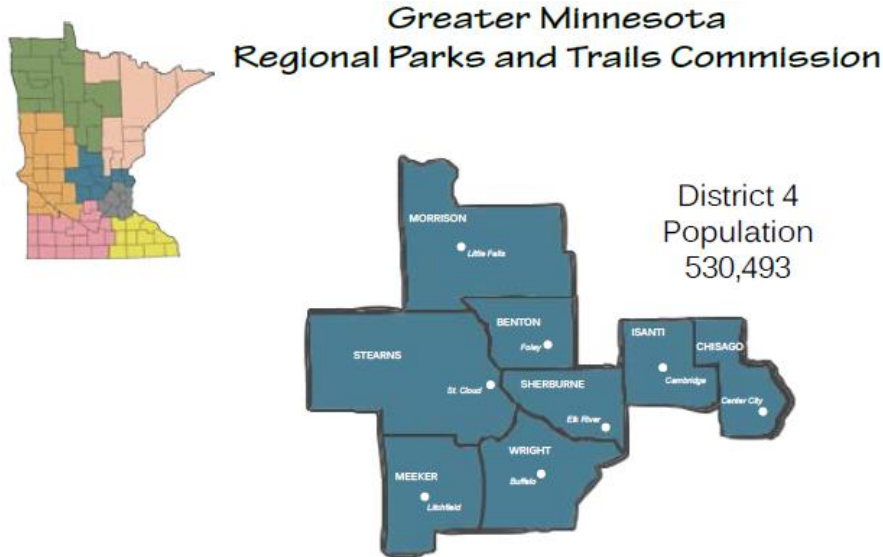
The population is concentrated in Moorhead, along the I94-US10 corridor, and in the County seats. Populations in the region’s 19 counties are predicted to show both growth and decline. Douglas (32.3%), Becker (26.7%), and Clay (25.4%) are predicted to grow, while Traverse (-24%) and Wilkin (-6.0%) are predicted to lose population. The region is predicted to grow by approximately 16% by 2035.

District Priorities

- Connectivity between trails, facilities, and population centers is particularly important in District 3.
- Preservation of the places that people want to go to is important.
- Active non-motorized recreation is where people are going for use.
- Make it safe and easy to access.
- Pay attention to year-round usage.
- A variety of activities in a facility is a higher priority.
- There needs to be versatility in land use for changing activities.
- Water is one of our most important resources, both on and adjacent to that water.
- We need better facilities – safe, efficient, attractive, welcoming, high quality buildings that have multiple use roles.
- Provide facilities that attract younger and minority users in addition to access for all.
- Encourage interpretation of the area’s features.

Criteria	Rank	Weight
<i>Trails</i>		
#1	3	19
#2	4	19
#3	1	34
#4	2	28
<i>N.R. Park</i>		
#1	1	30
#2	1	31
#3	4	18
#4	3	21
<i>S.U. Park</i>		
#1	1	34
#2	2	29
#3	3	20
#4	4	17

Overview



Membership
Marc Mattice, Commissioner <i>Eden Valley</i>
Barry Wendorf, Commissioner <i>Zimmerman</i>
Karen Fuglie <i>Sartell</i>
Ben Montzka <i>Wyoming</i>
Maurice Anderson <i>Stacy</i>
Tom Johnson <i>Buffalo</i>
Chris Kudrna <i>St. Cloud</i>
Kurt Franke <i>St. Cloud</i>
Jeff Bertram <i>Paynesville</i>
Tim Edgeton, DNR Liaison <i>Sauk Rapids</i>

Regional Demographics

Central Region

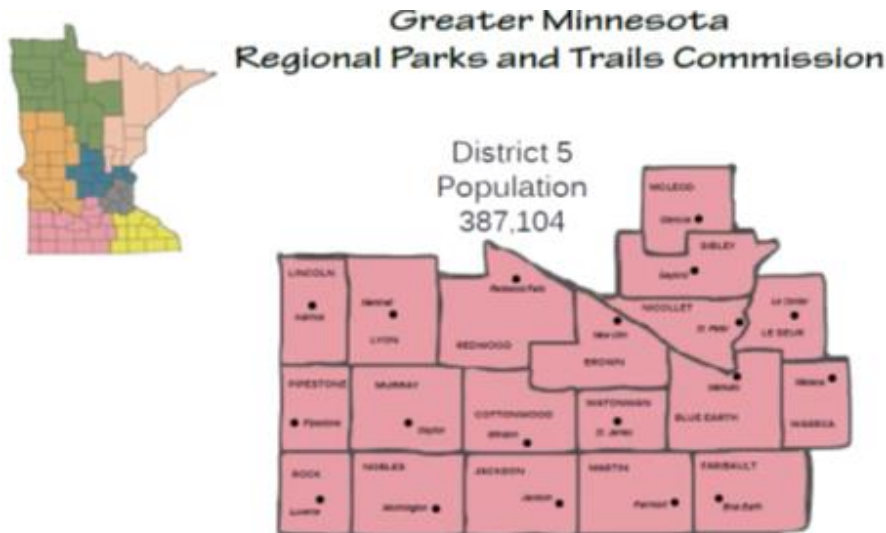
Predicted to experience the greatest population growth, averaging 74.4% by 2035 for the counties closest to the Metro Region, substantially higher than the statewide growth. This region will account for 15% of the State’s population in 2035, up from 10% in 2005.

District Priorities

- Youth need activity-based amenities.
- Population is going to grow faster than any other area.
- This District will need larger facilities that can hold a lot of amenities.
- The land available for facilities will decline.
- Current facilities need to be expanded and/or developed.
- Master plans and implantation schedules will be needed to determine which are the highest priority facilities.
- Geographic distribution of facilities is the key, particularly proximity to population centers.
- A priority may be on large, quality facilities even if they are a little farther from population.

Criteria	Rank	Weight
<i>Trails</i>		
#1	4	14
#2	1	37
#3	2	26
#4	2	23
<i>N.R. Park</i>		
#1	1	36
#2	2	28
#3	3	18
#4	3	18
<i>S.U. Park</i>		
#1	1	36
#2	2	29
#3	3	22
#4	4	13

Overview



Membership
Rick Anderson, Commissioner <i>Balaton</i>
Tom Schmitz, Commissioner <i>New Ulm</i>
Annette Bair <i>Slayton</i>
Drew Campbell <i>Mankato</i>
Rob Anderson <i>Mountain Lake</i>
Byron Jost <i>Mankato</i>
Tom Engstrom <i>Mankato</i>
Deb Nelson <i>Pipestone</i>
Paul Hansen, DNR Liaison <i>New Ulm</i>

Regional Demographics

Southwest Region

The population is concentrated in Mankato, smaller regional centers, and in county seats. The region is predicted to grow by approximately 15% by 2035. Most of the regional population is in the east, which is expected to grow significantly.

District Priorities

- Address the aging population, but “brain gain” young families (those that grew up in a rural area, moved away for school, but are returning to raise their families) are bringing their own expectations.
- How do we provide services for minority populations? We need to promote healthy lifestyles and easier access and incentives.
- Active, healthy living is becoming important, as noted by the increasing number of fitness centers.
- Access and availability of group events (mud runs, etc.) is an economic development tool.
- The eastern portion of the District has more developed recreation opportunities than the west.
- Access and connectivity between population areas and recreation areas is very important.
- The population is growing, particularly in some of the larger towns, such as Marshall, Worthington, Waseca, St. Peter, Fairmont, Jackson, Lakeville, etc. These towns have a shortage of affordable housing, and it seems to be tied to higher education.

Criteria	Rank	Weight
<i>Trails</i>		
#1	4	17
#2	1	35
#3	2	25
#4	3	23
<i>N.R. Park</i>		
#1	4	17
#2	2	28
#3	1	32
#4	3	23
<i>S.U. Park</i>		
#1	1	35
#2	2	31
#3	3	19
#4	4	15

Overview



Membership
Tom Ryan, Commissioner <i>Byron</i>
Bill Bruins, Commissioner <i>Rochester</i>
Theresa Coleman <i>Lanesboro</i>
Greg Isakson <i>Red Wing</i>
Sue Howe <i>La Crescent</i>
Andru Peters <i>Lake City</i>
Roberta Kurth <i>Elgin</i>
Carlos Espinosa <i>Winona</i>
Tim Madigan <i>Faribault</i>
E. Jeff Robertson <i>Rochester</i>
Aaron Wunrow, DNR Liaison <i>Rochester</i>

Regional Demographics

Southeast Region

The population is concentrated in the Rochester and Winona areas, along the I-35 corridor, and in county seats. The region is predicted to grow 15.0% by 2035. Most of the regional population is in the east, which is expected to grow significantly.

District Priorities

- Water recreation uses are underserved.
- The Rochester Metro/DMC is going to drive population growth.
- Connectivity to existing population centers is important (not necessarily the long market trails), especially regional centers.
- Convenience (access and time) is important – make it easy.
- Spillover use from the Twin Cities is significant in northern District 6 (and access along I-35).
- Nontraditional recreational uses are growing faster than we can keep up.
- It is an open market that is available for private rental of equipment that users may want within our facilities.
- Acquisition of property is critical.
- Need easy access to facilities for all visits, including those in the area for business, medical, tourism, etc.
- Need to meet changing special use activities through special use or natural resource parks.

Criteria	Rank	Weight
<i>Trails</i>		
#1	2	26
#2	2	24
#3	4	18
#4	1	32
<i>N.R. Park</i>		
#1	1	33
#2	2	30
#3	3	20
#4	4	17
<i>S.U. Park</i>		
#1	2	25
#2	2	25
#3	4	21
#4	1	29