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\$12.2 million in Legacy Fund grants to enhance 20 regional parks and trails in Greater Minnesota and increase opportunities for underserved communities

(December 8, 2021 – DULUTH, Minn.) People who enjoy outdoor recreation across Minnesota will soon have their experiences enhanced, once recommendations are approved to fund a record \$12.2 million in improvements at 20 regional parks and trails across Greater Minnesota.

The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) just completed its application review process and will now ask the Minnesota Legislature to approve the recommendations through the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, one of four funds created by the 2008 Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. The Legislature has annually approved GMRPTC requests, since Legacy Funds are already dedicated and may only be spent to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance.

“The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission received 20 eligible applications for grants during the 2023 fiscal year, and we’re pleased to recommend funding, in part or in whole, for their excellent approaches to improving parks and trails for users,” said GMRPTC Executive Director Renee Mattson. “We are also able to allocate \$212,053 of that amount to create new opportunities for underserved communities.”

Mattson said the Commission is establishing a Connecting People with the Outdoors Small Grant fund, which will be available to all 67 designated parks and trails in Greater Minnesota. Emphasis for grant criteria will be placed on increasing access for underserved and communities of color, enhancing handicap accessibility, transportation and programming. Grant fund applications will be available in early 2022.

The 20 parks and trails recommended for funding are below. District numbers in the grid refer to these geographic areas of Minnesota: 1-Northeast; 2-Northwest; 3-West Central; 4-East Central; 5-Southwest; 6-Southeast.

Grant Recipient	Award	District
Duluth Traverse	\$167,783.00	1
Duluth Spirit Mountain Recreation Area	\$1,254,471.00	1
Big Falls Campground and Horse Camp	\$1,043,115.00	1
Gull Lake Trail - Cass County Fairview Township	\$167,280.00	2
Red Lake River Corridor - East Grand Forks	\$851,768.00	2
Granite Falls Memorial Park	\$569,973.00	3
Isanti County Irving & John Anderson Park	\$780,225.00	4
Sherburne County Big Elk Lake Park	\$1,250,000.00	4
Wright County Robert Ney Park	\$75,000.00	4
Stearns County Beaver Island Trail	\$1,129,850.00	4
Wright County Stanley Eddy Park Reserve	\$32,200.00	4
Redwood Falls Ramsey Park	\$137,500.00	5
Lyon County Garvin Park	\$1,109,350.00	5
Lincoln County Hole in the Mountain Park	\$1,026,698.00	5
Rochester Cascade Lake Park	\$379,000.00	6
Red Wing He Mni Can/Barn Bluff Park	\$527,145.00	6
Cannon Valley Trail	\$490,463.00	6
Austin Jay C. Hormel Nature Center	\$255,552.00	6
Olmsted County Chester Woods Park	\$338,800.00	6
Winona Bluffs Traverse	\$403,320.00	6
Connecting People With the Outdoors Small Grants Fund	\$212,053.00	All
Total	\$12,201,546.00	

“Legacy Funding is an amazing and far-reaching gift that Minnesotans chose to make happen by voting to tax themselves,” added Mattson. “Without Legacy dollars, many of these projects simply would not happen or would take many years before coming to fruition.”

The GMRPTC provides recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature for grants to parks and trails of regional significance in the 80 counties outside the seven-county metropolitan area. Since 2014 the GMRPTC has awarded more than \$52 million in grants to over 50 regional parks and trails. Combined with \$20 million in community matches, grants are used to fund infrastructure improvements, land acquisitions, new facilities, trail rehabilitation and more. Additional information may be found at gmrptcommission.org.

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