



Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission Meeting

St. Cloud Holiday Inn and Suites
75 37th Avenue South
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Minutes for January 28, 2026

APPROVED

Commissioners Present: Rick Anderson, Rob Mason, Jonathan Wolf, Jen Foley, Peg Furshong, Tim Engrav, Beth Pierce (virtual), Karlin Zeigler, Barry Wendorf, Tom Stoa and Brad Bonk

Commissioners Absent: Reid Huttunen and Tom Schmitz

Consultants Present: Renee Mattson-Executive Director, Joe Czapiewski-System Plan Coordinator, Tess Dandrea-Administrative Assistant (virtual)

- 1. Call to Order** – Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.
Meeting Goals are to work on Strategic Planning with Czapiewski
- 2. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance**
None
- 3. Approval of Agenda for January 28, 2026, Minutes from November 26, 2025, and Treasurer’s Report through November 2025**
Mattson added the funding application updates information into the agenda under "potential grant applications".
Motion by Engrav
Second by Bonk
Motion approved
- 4. Executive Director’s Report**
Mattson asked Commissioners review and sign the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure form which needs to be completed every January.
She also provided an update on the legislative agenda, highlighting the importance of extending grants for five projects and the need for lobbying efforts. Mattson has met with some legislators already and is planning for three days of meetings when session

opens on February 17 to secure signatures on the bills and drop them. This will be a fast session, with bills needing to move out of committees by March 27.

Due to a personal schedule conflict for the October 2026 meeting, Mattson asked for the possibility of a rescheduled October 2026 meeting date. After a discussion, the meeting was rescheduled to:

Friday, October 23rd, 2026, at 10:00am, in Isanti County with meeting location to be determined.

5. System Plan Coordinator's Report

Czapiewski reported on the Annual Grantee meeting to be held January 29th with about 50 people expected to attend. The meeting has a new format featuring partner stories. Czapiewski also updated about the ongoing technical work on the GIS/DMS project application and data exchange portal.

6. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission

Pierce - no

Wolf - no

Engrav-no

Furshong-no

Bonk - attended a ski race on Detroit Mountain and said the recently completed playhouse looks great. He also reported the Minnesota Cycling Association's high school races, highlighting the economic benefits and the need to encourage facilities to host these races, which require a 5K loop and the capacity to accommodate 6,000 people.

Zeigler - no

Mason – no but will provide progress report on the Gull Lake Trail, Lake Shore segment master planning update in March.

Stoa – no

Wendorf – CPO grant for skis and snowshoes with Isanti, Sherburne and Wright counties is being utilized well this winter, the trailer is out and about and the equipment is being used.

Anderson – he and Mattson met with DNR to discuss admin fees. He and Mattson will continue to work on this issue with the new DNR contact. We are simply requesting a cost accounting process, but the DNR needs to figure how to implement one.

7. New Business:

7.1 Election of Officers

Going forward, the election of officers will be held every two years during the first meeting of the year, if the enabling legislation is updated as we're requesting in the legislative session. Elections took place with no nominations from the floor, all incumbents were nominated and approved. The 2026 elected slate of officers is as follows:

Chairman – Anderson

Vice-Chairman – Engrav

Secretary/Treasurer – Wendorf

At-Large - Furshong

Motion by Mason

Second by Wolf

Motion approved

7.2 Economic Impact Study for 2026

An economic impact study for day use visitors to parks, as well as overnight visitors was discussed. The work to collect surveys would be done by park staff with University of Minnesota Extension doing the compilation and report. The study will be compared with information from recently completed surveys at parks done by the Minnesota DNR. Stoa raised concerns about past studies by the University of Minnesota, which were addressed by noting the current team's good track record. The study aims to provide solid numbers for budget discussions and legacy reauthorization, focusing on campgrounds near population centers like Grand Marais, Warroad, Granite Falls, Bertram Park near Monticello, Plum Creek, and Chester Woods.

Motion by Engrav

Second by Bonk

Motion Approved

7.3 Strategic Priority Development

Czapiewski provided discussion documents to the Commissioners and they discussed and voted on the top three priorities for strategic development.

1. Provide applicants more specialty consulting support, including master plan assistance
2. Organizational sustainability including succession for Executive Director, Commissioners, ETeam and staff capacity
3. Marketing, tell our story to more people using social media

Many of the other categories can tie into the top three. Commissioners felt positive about the direction and moving forward with these initiatives.

7.4 Sherburne County Request for Grant Amendment

Sherburne County spent \$60,000 in match prior to the DNR contract being completed. They are requesting that we reduce the match so as to not lose \$60,000 in grant funds. It appears to be a simple accounting mistake, but do we want to set precedent by reducing a match after the grant has been approved. Discussion ensued and staff offered an option that Sherburne County could do \$60,000 of additional work on the site to make it ready for use, moving the house, demolition of the foundation, and other related expenses. Commissioners found this to be a good solution and a motion by Wolf to amend the project scope to add another \$60,000 in match was made.

Motion by Wolf

Second by Foley

Motion Approved

7.5 Lincoln County Hole in the Mountain Park Project Scope Change

Lincoln County had a trail project in a sensitive area and with SHPO recommendations, they ended up not making the trail as extensive as planned. They would like to spend the unused \$113,852 and would amend the scope to include the following items:

Pump house cover

Four new bridges on the trail, materials only

Snow making equipment (snow gun)

Wayfinding and trail signage

Stop mats for the sledding hill

Trailhead shelter

Fencing for rope tow bullwheel

Composite picnic tables

A motion was made to approve the scope change.

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Bonk

Motion Approved note Commissioner Furshong was out of the room

7.6 Grant Application and Funding

Czapiewski led the discussion and thanked the committee for their help.

Changes included:

1. Requirement the local match must be secured at time of application. Letters and future campaigns do not qualify.
2. Match requirement for Environmental and Archaeological Grants is no longer required but is still encouraged
3. Non allowable expenses previously included non-permanent skateboard ramps and equipment. They are now allowed.

A motion was made to accept the changes in the application guidelines, content and budget and resolution templates.

Motion by Zeigler

Second by Engrav

Motion Approved

8. Old Business

8.1 Dodge County Designation Application 25-004D

We have received notice that Dodge County wants to withdraw their designation application. A discussion followed as to what happened and how we could improve our process.

9. Approval of December 2025 and January 2026 Expenses

December 2025

Consultants	\$ 26,584.48
Commissioners	\$ <u>780.00</u>
Total	\$ 27,364.48

January 2026

Consultants \$ 35,316.62

Commissioners \$ 1,816.40

Total \$ 37,133.02

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Mason

Motion Approved

10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

No Meeting in February

Next meeting is at Lyon County Administration Building on March 25.

Meeting adjourned 2:30