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## General

This section provides the basic information about the park or trail and the organizations responsible for it.

### Last Update

06 May 2021 10:07:53

### Park or Trail Name

Phelps Mill County Park

### District

3

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### Location Description

Phelps Mill County Park is located in Maine Township, in central Otter Tail County, approximately eight miles northwest of the City of Battle Lake. County Road 45 runs along the southeast edge of the park. The Otter Tail River flows along the western edge of the park. Phelps Mill County Park is situated in the middle of Otter Tail County and is eight miles from Glendalough State Park to the southeast and ten miles from Maplewood State Park to the northwest.

### Park/Trail Address

29035 County Highway 45

### City

Underwood

### Park/Trail State

Minnesota

### Zip

56586

### Latitude

46.381588

### Longitude

-95.816474

### Map of Park/Trail

Description: Aerial Image of Park

[13058PhelpsMillAerialUpdate\\_39dbd1.png](#)

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### Facility Website

<https://ottertailcountymn.us/building/phelps-mill/>

### Organization

Otter Tail County

### Lead Contact Person

Charles Grotte

### Title

County Engineer

### Mailing Address

505 South Court Street, Suite 1

### City

Fergus Falls

### State

### Zip

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Minnesota

56537-2757

**Phone**

218-998-8475

**Email**

CGrotte@co.ottertail.mn.us

**Joint Applicants**

**Joint Applicant #1**

Otter Tail County

**Upload Resolution**

[Phelps Mill Application for Regional Designation Resolution 3bc11c.pdf](#)

**Joint Applicant #2**

**Joint Applicant #3**

**Joint Applicant #4**

**Other project supporters**

## Description

This section provides the basic information about the park or trail and the organizations responsible for it.

**Regional Significance Statement**

Phelps Mill County Park provides incredible outdoor recreation experiences with frontage on the Otter Tail River and rolling hills and fields of central Minnesota, and it has a regionally and nationally significant historic site that includes the Phelps Mill, dam and several preserved buildings including a General Store.

**Classification**

Special Recreational Feature Park

**Overview/Description of Park or Trail**

Otter Tail County acquired 55 acres and the facilities of Phelps Mill County Park in 1965 to create a recreation site and to protect an important element of the areas local history. The park includes Phelps Mill Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2019, Otter Tail County purchased 72 acres of land on the parks northern boundary as well as the General Store which will more than double the size of the county park.

**Total Acreage or Mileage**

127

**Acquisition and Development Status**

Existing Park or Trail

Additional Land Acquired

57 acres in 2019

**Development status**

Some development, but more proposed

## Facility Listing

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This section provides an overview of existing and proposed site facilities and general site characteristics .

### Existing Facilities

- Picnicking and picnic shelters
- Canoeing Facilities
- Fishing Piers
- Play areas, with an outdoor theme
- Restrooms/sanitation building
- Roads and Parking Areas

### Proposed Facilities

- Camping-cross-section of camper types
- Non-electric campsites
- Tent only sites
  
- Picnicking and picnic shelters
- Walking Trails (paved)
- Hiking Trails (natural)
- Biking Trails (paved)
- Cross-country Skiing Trails
- Canoeing Facilities
- Fishing Piers
- Play areas, with an outdoor theme
- Restrooms/sanitation building
- Roads and Parking Areas

### Existing Facilities Other Information

Historic buildings

### Proposed Facilities Other Information

Festival/large gathering facilities

Improved historic buildings

Native landscape restoration

storm water bmps

### General Site Characteristics

Phelps Mill County Park is situated in Central Otter Tail County, Minnesota, an area full of lakes, wetlands and rolling hills, indicative of a landscaped shaped by glaciers. The otter tail river is a key feature of the area and forms the western boundary of the park. The river provides opportunities for fishing and non-motorized boating within the park. The river is classified as a State Water Trail due to its slow moving current and meandering, making it ideal for canoeing and kayaking. Five wetlands are within Phelps Mill County Park and range from .25 acres to 9.5 acres. While these wetlands provide habitat and scenery, they also show evidence of invasive species and nutrient loading.

The park supports a variety of existing infrastructure that is utilized by many different park users. Several standard park amenities are provided at Phelps Mill County Park such as playground areas, picnic tables, picnic shelters, no-water restrooms, and parking. There are two developed areas of the park that include the Historic Mill District and Farmstead. The mill district includes several historic structures which include the Phelps Mill, Phelps Mill Dam, General Store, Phelps Mill Bridge, Thomas House, and Phelps House. Approximately mile northeast of the historic district along County Road 45 is the Farmstead which includes a farmhouse, small barn, metal storage shed and several outbuildings.

### Site characteristics upload

Description: Historic Bridge

[20210525154912\\_0c34fa.jpg](#)

### Site characteristics upload

Description: Existing Mill

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[DSCN0136\\_543ea7.JPG](#)

**Site characteristics upload**

Description: Existing Landscape

[DSCN0130\\_cec253.JPG](#)

**Site characteristics upload**

Description: Existing Mill

[DSCN0077\\_861581.JPG](#)

**Site characteristics upload**

Description: Existing Picnic Facility

[20210525153833\\_c52554.jpg](#)

**Site characteristics upload**

Description: Existing Playground and Parking

[20210525153829\\_d82ff5.jpg](#)

**Site characteristics upload**

Description: Existing River Access

[20210525154220\\_392cbe.jpg](#)

**Site characteristics upload**

Description: Interior Mill Image

[20210525154356\\_3dd4b2.jpg](#)

**Site characteristics upload**

Description: Historic Mill Front Side

[20210525154850\\_81cb9d.jpg](#)

**Site characteristics upload**

Description: Field Landscape Image

[20210525155407\\_3f679a.jpg](#)

## Master Plan

**Master Plan Status:**

Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available

**Upload Existing Master Plan**

Master Plan

[13058\\_MasterPlan\\_210420\\_195083.pdf](#)

**Additional Supportive Information:**

In 1984, the Phelps Mill Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

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Phelps Mill and the other contributing structures are protected as a symbol of the rural life in Otter Tail County in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Phelps Mill was a flour mill that was built in 1888-1889 by William E. Thomas, a local entrepreneur who owned businesses in Fergus Falls. His mill was powered by a wooden dam and was designed to produce up to 75 barrels of flour each day. A General Store was opened across the street. The Historic District includes several structures in addition to the mill, dam and store. These include the Phelps Mill Bridge, Thomas House and the Phelps House. The facilities create a great opportunity to provide interpretation of the way flour and other grains were milled before the railroads, electricity and highways were in use. In order to maintain a high-quality experience at the park, maintaining the structures, operations and retail sales will be important to the success of the park. To gain a better sense of the level of effort needed to manage the natural resources amenities on site, additional field work will need to be conducted. The vision of Phelps Mill County Park that is outlined in the master plan is extensive and will need to happen over a period. Phasing improvements over time and as funding is acquired will be necessary to fully develop the park. The master plan outlines at least 4 phases to realize the overall vision. It is anticipated that additional public involvement will be needed to implement many of the initiatives identified in the master plan.

### **Additional Supportive Documents:**

Phasing plan

[13058\\_Phelps Mill Park Master Plan Phasing\\_3d61cd.pdf](#)

## **Classification Details**

### **Special Recreational Feature Park Classification**

#### **Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience**

Several elements have been identified through the master planning process that will increase opportunities for public use of the entire park and provide interpretation of the parks unique attributes. The primary elements include: Enhanced water access on the Otter Tail River for canoes, kayaks and fishing, improved picnic and restroom facilities with parking, expanded natural play area, large gathering area, camping facilities, ecological restoration.

#### **Criteria #1 Images**

Phelps Mill Park Plan

[5\\_phelps mill county park site plan\\_no leaders-REV\\_1c4197.jpg](#)

#### **Provides a Natural and Scenic Setting Offering a Compelling Sense of Place**

Phelps Mill County Park, at 127 acres in size, is situated in central Otter Tail County, just west of Otter Tail Lake in a part of Minnesota that has hundreds of lakes, wetlands and rolling hills, indicative of a landscape shaped by glaciers. A key natural feature of the area is the Otter Tail River, which flows northwest from Otter Tail Lake and forms the western boundary of the park.

#### **Criteria #2 Images**

Existing Site Ecologies

[6\\_existing land cover map\\_6e8ad6.pdf](#)

The Otter Tail River is Minnesotas eighth longest river and was named after the lake just upstream from the

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park. The river originates in Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and winds through southern Becker County and Otter Tail County before depositing in the Red River of the North at Breckenridge, Minnesota. Early French explorers, called it the Lake of the Otters Tail. The river borders the park for of a mile on its western boundary. The dam at Phelps Mill creates a physical barrier but also a unique scenic feature of the river and there are several ways to view the dam and mill components. The Phelps Mill Bridge is closed to vehicle traffic but offers views of the upstream side of the dam and below the dam, the shoreline is gentle and provides views of the dam, the mill, and the river downstream.

**Well-located to Serve a Regional Need and/or Tourist Destination**

Established in 1965, Phelps Mill County Park is located in Maine Township, in central Otter Tail County, approximately eight miles northwest of the City of Battle Lake. County Road 45 runs along the southeast edge of the park. The Otter Tail River flows along the western edge of the park. Phelps Mill County Park is situated in the middle of Otter Tail County and is eight miles from Glendalough State Park to the southeast and ten miles from Maplewood State Park to the northwest. The Central Lakes State Trail is located 15 miles south of the park. The unique historic features of Phelps Mill County Park make the site a nice compliment to other state parks and trails in the County.

**Criteria #3 Images**

Otter Tail County Parks Map

[1\\_Otter Tail County parks and trails map-REV\\_471cfd.pdf](#)

**Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region**

The proposed camping, picnicking and river activities and the large group gathering area will fill a gap in an underserved area of the County.

Regionally, Phelps Mill County Park serves several important roles. The Parks preserved and historic mill, bridge, General Store, and period homes provide unique opportunities for visitors to experience history in a natural setting. Additionally, Phelps Mill County Park provides direct access to the Otter Tail River, has the potential to provide camping, boat rentals and a unique setting for the Phelps Mill Festival, an annual celebration of local art, food and entertainment. As such, Phelps Mill County Park provides unique opportunities that are not available at other parks in the region.

**Criteria #4 Images**

Regional Location

[2\\_park location map\\_6fba6d.pdf](#)

## Attachments

<b>Doc Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Url</b>
Additional Attachment	Commissioners Letter	<a href="#">GMRPTC Phelps Mill OTC Board of Commissioners Letter 307f03.pdf</a>
Additional Attachment	App A: Arch History Report	<a href="#">Appendix A (Architecture-History Report by Sue Granger and Scott Kelly of Gemini Research)_ef7ee6.pdf</a>
Additional Attachment	App C: Historic Building Assessment - Mill	<a href="#">Appendix C (Historic Building Conditions Assessment - Phelps Mill)_81ce2a.pdf</a>
Additional Attachment	App D: Historic Building Assessment - General Store	<a href="#">Appendix D (Historic Building Conditions Assessment – General Store)_01cbca.pdf</a>
Park Trail Map	Aerial Image of Park	<a href="#">13058PhelpsMillAerialUpdate_39dbd1.png</a>
Additional Attachment	App B: County Strategic Plan	<a href="#">Appendix B (Otter Tail County Strategic Plan)_430ce2.pdf</a>
Additional Information Upload	Phasing plan	<a href="#">13058_Phelps Mill Park Master Plan Phasing_3d61cd.pdf</a>
Spcl Recreational Ftr2 Upload	Existing Site Ecologies	<a href="#">6_existing land cover map_6e8ad6.pdf</a>
Spcl Recreational Ftr3 Upload	Otter Tail County Parks Map	<a href="#">1_Otter Tail County parks and trails map-REV_471cfd.pdf</a>
Spcl Recreational Ftr4 Upload	Regional Location	<a href="#">2_park location map_6fba6d.pdf</a>
Spcl Recreational Ftr1 Upload	Phelps Mill Park Plan	<a href="#">5_phelps mill county park site plan_no leaders-REV_1c4197.jpg</a>
Regional Map Uploads	Regional Map	<a href="#">2_park location map_1bc235.pdf</a>
Site Characteristics Upload	Historic Bridge	<a href="#">20210525154912_0c34fa.jpg</a>
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Economic Development Tourism Upload	Water Lab at Mill City Museum, Mpls, MN	<a href="#">waterlabmillcitymuseum1280x960_0e1662.jpg</a>
Site Characteristics Upload	Existing Mill	<a href="#">DSCN0136_543ea7.JPG</a>
Site Characteristics Upload	Existing Landscape	<a href="#">DSCN0130_cec253.JPG</a>
Site Characteristics Upload	Existing Mill	<a href="#">DSCN0077_861581.JPG</a>
Site Characteristics Upload	Existing Picnic Facility	<a href="#">20210525153833_c52554.jpg</a>
Site Map Upload	Existing Conditions	<a href="#">7_existing conditions map_e1e3c8.pdf</a>
Public Involvement Summ Upload	Public Engagement Survey_01	<a href="#">4_Otter Tail County Phelps Mill County Park Survey</a>

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		<a href="#">Summary_200622_5076cc.pdf</a>
Public Involvement Summ Upload	Public Engagement Survey_02	<a href="#">5_Otter Tail County Phelps Mill County Park Second Survey Summary_220127_1c2b8f.pdf</a>
Development Acquisition Plan Upload	Phelps Mill Master Plan Concept with Labels	<a href="#">labeled_masterplan_9a8813.pdf</a>
Ecological Land ResPlan Upload	Existing Land Cover	<a href="#">6_existing land cover map_629428.jpg</a>
Ad Phasing Plan Upload	Phasing plans	<a href="#">13058_Phelps Mill Park Master Plan Phasing_6b5779.pdf</a>
Maintenance Operations Plan Upload	Projected Operational and Management Expenses	<a href="#">Projected Operational and Management Expenses_f5c252.pdf</a>
Existing Master Plan	Master Plan	<a href="#">13058_MasterPlan_210420_195083.pdf</a>
Regional Map Uploads	Nearby Regional and State Parks	<a href="#">nearby_parks_map_bf9910.pdf</a>
Regional Map Uploads	Nearby Parks Activity Matrix	<a href="#">nearby_parks_matrix_65d13c.pdf</a>
Site Characteristics Upload	Existing Playground and Parking	<a href="#">20210525153829_d82ff5.jpg</a>
Site Characteristics Upload	Existing River Access	<a href="#">20210525154220_392cbe.jpg</a>
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Site Characteristics Upload	Historic Mill Front Side	<a href="#">20210525154850_81cb9d.jpg</a>
Site Characteristics Upload	Field Landscape Image	<a href="#">20210525155407_3f679a.jpg</a>
Economic Development Tourism Upload	Phelps Mill website	<a href="#">Phelps Mill website_grab_2a552c.pdf</a>
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Development Feature Upload		<a href="#">typical_trail_sectionindependent_7710cb.pdf</a>
Development Feature Upload		<a href="#">unnamed_fe5809.png</a>
AcqDev Cost Projections Upload	Cost estimate summary and phases	<a href="#">13058_Phelps_Mill_MP_Estimates210408_ccf4fc.pdf</a>
Maintenance Operations Plan Upload	2021 park operations budget	<a href="#">Phelps_Mill_Park_2021_Operational_Budget_e6ea3d.pdf</a>
Additional Attachment	App E: Park Master Plan Phased Budget	<a href="#">Appendix_E_(Phelps_Mill_Park_Master_Plan_Phased_Budget)_980427.pdf</a>
Maintenance Operations Budget Upload	App E: Master Plan Phased Budget	<a href="#">Appendix_E_(Phelps_Mill_Park_Master_Plan_Phased_Budget)_137134.pdf</a>