
General

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

Last Update

17 Apr 2017 07:27:16

Park or Trail Name

Plum Creek Park

District

5

Location Description

Plum Creek Park is resides approximately 5 miles southwest of Walnut Grove, MN which is located in Redwood County MN. The physical address is 14160 Co. Hwy 5, Walnut Grove, MN 56180. Attached are the location map and topographical map that clearly identifies the Plum Creek Park Complex.

Park/Trail Address

City

Park/Trail State

Zip

Latitude

44.21051086

Longitude

-95.49385071

Map of Park/Trail

Facility Website

Organization

Redwood County

Lead Contact Person

Vicki Knobloch

Title

Mailing Address

PO Box 130

City

Redwood Falls

State

Minnesota

Zip

56283

Phone

Email

Joint Applicants

Joint Applicant #1

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

Classification

Special Recreational Feature Park

Overview/Description of Park or Trail

Located at 14160 County Hwy 5, Walnut Grove Minnesota, Plum Creek Park recreational area is the second largest and only county park in the southwestern corner of Redwood County that offers public facilities for camping, picnicking, hiking and fishing recreational activities.

Named after the Plum Creek in which County Commissioners and Soil and Water conservation people were studying for a watershed program, including impoundment of creek water and creation of a recreational area, a new star arose over the rolling wooded prairie near Walnut Grove Minnesota in the early 1970's.

Beginning in 1969 through 2002, the county purchased 205 acres with County and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation funding for the development of playgrounds, picnic areas, roads, restrooms, shower buildings, and campsites. Beginning in 1970, and by May, 1973, local citizens, 4-H clubs, and school students planted over 30,000 seedlings of ponderosa pines, black walnut and pine. In 1977, an earth fill dam was constructed creating Lake Laura.

The park is located five miles southwest of Walnut Grove and was designed in two sections, Upper and Lower. The Upper Park boasts Lake Laura, including a swimming beach, bathhouse, concessions building, walking trails, playground, campground and a 9-hole Frisbee Disc course. Throughout the upper campground, wifi internet is available to its 70 campsites. The Lower Park includes a shelter house, picnic tables, a softball park, volleyball court, and trails for hiking, and skiing. Of special recognition is the effort of former local Walnut Grove School teacher Burton W. Tellefsen for his love of the environment. Over the years, he dedicated hundreds of hours to planting non-native trees and prairie plants at Plum Creek Park. To continue his legacy, "When the Prairie Whispers", a walking tour of Lower Plum Creek Park was created to highlight his work. This tour is based upon Tellefsen's recounting of local history, flora and fauna during many extended walks through the park. As told by the locals, when breezes would sweep across the tall grasses and through the trees, Burt would often remark, "When the prairie whispers, it's a soothing sound."

Plum Creek Park provides lake activities to a region with no close lake access. Camping draws visitors from

across the United States and over 30 foreign countries to partake of Laura Ingalls Wilder pageant which is within walking distance of the campsites.

Future park plans include acquiring additional land to expand the camping sites; paved walking trails, canoe launches and an hiking/biking trail to connect Plum Creek Park to the City of Walnut Grove targeting bicyclists, walkers and hikers. The DNR is also planning the Casey Jones Trail along Plum Creek from Walnut Grove to Redwood Falls. This multi-use trail would offer residents and visitors the opportunity to explore Redwood County in a way few experience it today. Great potential exists to capitalize on this and other trail corridors to expand the economic benefit of recreation and tourism.

Total Acreage or Mileage

Acquisition and Development Status

205 acres purchased, approximately 25 more for expansion
90

Development status

Facility Listing

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

Existing Facilities

- Camping-cross-section of camper types
- Electric/water/sewer RV sites
- Electric/water campsites
- Electric campsites
- Non-electric campsites
- Tent only sites

- Picnicking and picnic shelters
- Hiking Trails (natural)
- Mountain Biking Trails (natural)
- Swimming
- Canoeing Facilities
- Fishing Piers
- Visitor Center
- Play areas, with an outdoor theme
- Restrooms/sanitation building
- Roads and Parking Areas

Proposed Facilities

- Camping-cross-section of camper types
- Electric/water/sewer RV sites
- Camper Cabins

- Walking Trails (paved)
- Biking Trails (paved)
- Canoeing Facilities
- Nature Center/Interpretation Trails
- Play areas, with an outdoor theme

General Site Characteristics

Master Plan

Additional Supportive Information:

Classification Details

Special Recreational Feature Park Classification

Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience

Plum Creek Park serves as a destination place for the 15,000 annual visitors that make the pilgrimage to experience nature and the prairie while they participate in the outdoor Wilder Pageant. Without a doubt, this is the most famous activity that attracts visitors from around the world wishing to see the real-life inspiration for Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House stories, and the TV show inspired by them. The pageant is performed on the banks of Plum Creek in a natural amphitheater which is within walking distance from Plum Creek Park. This quality experience draws visitors back time and again. and while waiting for the performance, visitors enjoy an enhanced view of Lake Laura on the observation deck overlooking the lake and beach area. The park offers 48 sites with water/electricity; 17 electric only and 5 offer the camper a rustic experience with non-electric tent sites. Activities include When the Prairie Whispers walking trail is a self-guided walking/hiking tour of the many varieties of native trees; a unique professionally developed Frisbee Golf course is available; water activities at Lake Laura such as swimming, canoeing, kayaking, and fishing, playgrounds for children; and shelters with a large fireplace for picnicking in the peaceful areas of the park. In 2012, Plum Creek Park was named one of the "Best Campgrounds in Minnesota" by CBS Minnesota. "If you are looking for a little history lesson in addition to your scenery when you go camping, look no further than Walnut Grove's Plum Creek Park. This is definitely a family oriented camping area, but well worth the extra drive for anyone who ever enjoyed reading (or watching) "Little House on the Prairie". "

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

Plum Creek Park, a true gem of the prairie, consists of the Upper and Lower Park. The natural beauty of this area, with its rolling hills and groves of walnut, maple, oak and pine trees offer a compelling sense of uniqueness as one enjoys the scenic overlook to Lake Laura in the upper park and walking bridge to stop and listen to the gentle and peaceful sounds of Plum Creek in the lower park. Currently there are only two lakes in Redwood County, and both are man-made. Lake Laura, located in the Upper Park, was developed in a

natural area of the park as a water reservoir under the Minnesota River Basin Area II guidance. The lake has a depth of 21 feet with a shoreline length of 1/8 mile. Lake Laura has shoreline access through the park and non-gas powered boat access is by portage only. The lake is managed for largemouth bass, black crappie and yellow perch. Park visitors are naturally drawn to the stately gazebo overlooking the beautiful view of the lake and can take in the breath-taking scenery of the prairie grasses and flowers swaying in the gentle breeze, gaze up into the sky at the graceful soaring eagles and enjoy the delightful laughter of children as they frolic on the shoreline beach and swim in the lake. Agricultural lands within the park have been restored with native grasses, flowers and trees offering educational experiences related to the plant and animal life, glacial history and the environment.

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

Plum Creek Park is located on Redwood County Highway 5 in the southwestern portion of Redwood County. A major tourist attraction to the area is the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant. Plum Creek Park serves Walnut Grove and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant summer venue by providing tourists from around the world a place to stay and camp at Plum Creek Park. The campground is within walking distance to the outdoor amphitheater and is at capacity July. The Pageant draws in excess of 5,000 patrons annually and the area swells to over 15,000 patrons visiting the park, Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum, and those attending the pageant. Plum Creek Park attendants estimate over 5,000 patrons visit the park annually. In early 1999, there was an interest expressed by several counties and the Southwest Economic Development Professional in trails planning as an opportunity to enhance tourism and economic development in Southwest Minnesota. The Southwest Regional Development Commission developed The Regional Trailhead and Potential Corridor Map through a public process. Potential Corridors for Pedestrian/Bicycle or multi-use trails/routes identified in the planning process included Plum Creek Park to the City of Walnut Grove and to develop additional trails within the Plum Creek Park. Plan included a paved trail, 3 miles in length with termini at Plum Creek Park and the museum in Walnut Grove, targeting bicyclists, walkers and hikers. Potential attractions is nature and would connect the current walking trail within the Park. This plan would eventually lead to access of the State Authorized Casey Jones Trail, Chief Sleepy Eye Trail and the Minnesota River Trail. The vision for the future shows

Plum Creek Park as destination hub to access three State Trail systems fortifying its rank as a regional park.

Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region

Since Plum Creek Park is home to only one of two lakes within Redwood County, the park serves the region with water activities such as swimming, canoeing, kayaking, and fishing that are otherwise only available by driving a considerable distance. There are many opportunities for watching birds and other wildlife, nature trails for hiking, fields for baseball and sand volleyball and a 9-hole Disc Golf Course designed by the Professional Disc Golf Association's veteran Chuck Kennedy. With nine holes and an overall length of about 2,000 feet on the park's rolling prairie, Kennedy said the course will integrate two sets of tee boxes in order to facilitate both picnic Frisbee players as well as disc players. The Plum Creek Park Disc Golf Course is listed on the PDGA's website at www.pdga.com. In conjunction with the Wilder Pageant, Black Powder enthusiasts are able to participate in the Plum Creek Rendezvous with a black powder shoot. Plum Creek Park fills a large gap of providing amenities expected to be found in the State Park system without daily use fees. The nearest state/regional parks in the area are Fort Ridgley State Park (60 miles) and Alexander Ramsey Park, Redwood Falls (45 miles).

Attachments

Doc Name	Description	Url
Location Map	Location map added from general tab	1435673535591-PlumCreekParkLocatorMap.pdf
Location Map	Location map added from general tab	1435673589889-PlumCreekParkMap.pdf
Other	Frisbee/Disc Golf Course Article	1435677070505-FrisbeeGolf.pdf
Other	Links to websites in support of Plum Creek Park activities	1435677117652-Links.docx
Other	Article on Best Campgrounds in Minnesota	1435677180496-Best Campgrounds in MN.pdf
Other	Wilder Pageant information	1435677488145-WilderPageant.pdf
Photo	Plum Creek Park entrance sign	1435677521107-DSCN0358.JPG
Photo	Lake Laura Gazebo/overlook	1435677554655-DSCN0365.JPG
Photo	Fishing at Lake Laura	1435677581067-DSCN0371.JPG

Photo	Campers at upper Plum Creek Park campground	1435677623128-DSCN0382.JPG
Photo	Bridge at Lower Plum Creek Park/entrance to walking trail	1435677674475-DSCN0402.JPG
Photo	Canoeing on Lake Laura	1435677707393-DSCN0424.JPG
Feature Uploader 46	Redwood County Trail Sign	1462910026073-redwood trail.png
Feature Uploader 47	Example Floating Pier	1462910043791-Floating pier.jpg
Feature Uploader 49	Example of Primitive Campsite	1462910077752-primitive campsite.jpg
Feature Uploader 51	Example Paddle Port	1462910129869-Paddle Port.JPG
Feature Uploader 52	Example Accessibility	1462910147952-ramp.jpg
Feature Uploader 53	Example fitness course	1462910159164-fitness course.jpg
Feature Uploader 54	Existing Course	1462911324186-DSCN0361.JPG
Feature Uploader 55	Example Camper Cabins	1462911384456-camper cabins.jpg
Feature Uploader 56	Example of new vault	1462911555905-new vault.jpg
Feature Uploader 58	Lower park gazebo roof	1462911753992-IMG_2945.jpg
Feature Uploader 63	Example Playground	1462911779909-playground.jpg
Feature Uploader 64	Example course	1462911828997-bicycle course.jpg
Feature Uploader 65	Example skate park	1462911838169-skate park.jpg
Feature Uploader 66	Example zip line	1462911846395-zip line.jpg
Regional Demographic Photos	Population by age	1463681927827-Population by age.jpg
Regional Demographic Photos	Income	1463681979354-Income.jpg
Regional Demographic Photos	Population trends	1463681997481-Population Trends .jpg
Regional Demographic Photos	Population by race	1463682008128-Population by race.jpg
Criteria 1 Photos	Lake Laura	1463760325812-DSCN0362.JPG
Criteria 2 Photos	Plum Creek	1463760383019-DSCN0405.JPG
Criteria 3 Photos	Locator Map	1463760469682-PlumCreekParkCountyLocatorMap.pdf
Criteria 4 Photos	Boating	1463760850605-Kayakers.JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Bathhouse	1463761029553-Bathroom.JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Main Office	1463761044909-Park office.JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Upper Shelter	1463761064521-Shelter UP.JPG

Site Characteristic Images	Campground entrance	1463761146984-Campground.JPG
Public Health Photos	Disc Golf	1463761230651-Disc Golf.JPG
Public Health Photos	Fishing	1463761258022-Fishing.JPG
Economic Development Photos	Pageant	1463761409511-pageant.jpg
Public Involvement Photos	Flyer	1463761784594-Master Plan Public Meeting.pdf
Public Involvement Photos	Questions	1463761866494-Public meeting questions 2.pdf
Outreach Marketing Photos	Park Brochure	1463762081195-Brochure.pdf
Programming Support Material	Walking tour excerpt	1463762341781-When the prairie whispers.pdf
Regional Map	Regional map	1463762516419-PlumCreekPark.pdf
Regional Map	State trails map	1463762692368-State trails map.jpg
Site Map Uploads 2	Park Map	1463762949421-PlumCreekParkUpdated.pdf
Site Map Uploads 2	Campground aerial	1463763287245-Aerial of campground and Lake Laura.jpg
Site Map Uploads 2	Lower Park Aerial	1463763300492-Aerial of lower park.jpg
Ad Phasing Plan Photos	Phases	1463771716078-Improvement Plan.jpg
Acquisition Plan Overview Uploads	Land purchased in 2015	1463772203748-Plum Creek Park Campground Addition.pdf
Feature Uploader 44	Trail connecting parks	1463774908242-New pathway.jpg
Feature Uploader 45	Basketball Court	1463775020069-Basketball Court.jpg
Feature Uploader 43	Bathhouse	1463775146926-Bathhouse (2).jpg
Feature Uploader 48	Penguins Ice Fishing	1463775167453-ice fishing.jpg
Feature Uploader 50	New expansion area	1463775196858-Plum Creek Park Campground Addition.pdf
Feature Uploader 51	Example Paddle Port 2	1463775240746-Paddle Port 2.JPG
Feature Uploader 53	Example fitness course 2	1463775341242-Fitness trail.JPG
Feature Uploader 55	Example Camper Cabins 2	1463775465032-Camper Cabin 2.JPG
Ad Cost Projections Photos	Improvement Plan	1463775588546-Improvement

		Plan.jpg
Ecological Land Resources Photos	Fish sampling report	1463775641666-lake laura.pdf
Ecological Land Resources Photos	Biological Survey	1463775831123-MN Biological Survey.pdf
Feature Uploader 61	Example of bathhouse	1463776470559-bathhouse.jpg
Feature Uploader 57	Example Volleyball Court	1463776517846-Volleyball.jpg
Feature Uploader 42	Example 50 Amp service	1463776549464-50_amp.jpg
Criteria 2 Photos	Plum Creek 2	1463776870287-DSCN0402.JPG
Criteria 1 Photos	Aerial of Lake Laura	1463776914918-Aerial of campground and Lake Laura.jpg
Criteria 3 Photos	Other parks in the area map.	1463776968731-PlumCreekPark.pdf
Criteria 4 Photos	Fishing	1463777045474-DSCN0377.JPG
Recreational Trends Photos	2015 Outdoor Recreation Study	1463777276350-ResearchParticipation2015Topline.pdf
Site Map Uploads 2	Topology Map	1464103257393-PlumCreekParkTopologyMap.pdf
Development Plan Overview Uploads	Development Plan	1464103309526-PlumCreekParkDevelopmentPlan.pdf
Development Plan Overview Uploads	Current Developed Features	1464103383458-PlumCreekParkUpdated.pdf
Outreach Marketing Photos	County Newsletter Insert	1464104844814-Newsletter flyer.pdf
Feature Uploader 59	Relationship of Park to City	1464107316855-PlumCreekParkNeighboring City.pdf