
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

Robinson Park

District

1

Location Description

Robinson Park is, a 65 acre long and narrow park nestled between the Kettle River and the old sandstone quarry bluffs in the city of Sandstone in Pine County.

It is connected to Banning State Park both at the southern end and at the northern by a primitive trail the runs the 3500+foot length of the park.

Within the Park are elements of The Kettle River Sandstone Company Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places #91000877.

In addition to the historic district this park contains a number of different plant communities: floodplain, northern hardwood forest, fern/moss community, rock plant community, open grass area, wetland, shallow marsh and moss lichen community.

The park provides an accessible recreation and education experience for a variety of users in a primitive setting natural setting with minimal development. Its compact nature makes most of the features easily visible to users of all ages make it a great place for children and older people who feel safer in this more confined environment.

It provides some unique recreation opportunities drawing people from outside the region with both the shear bluff walls that provide unique opportunities for ice climbing in the winter, wall climbing and bouldering in the summer, and white water rapids in the spring. It serves an educational function as fairly accessible site to introduce bouldering to students.

It also provides scenic and easy access to a variety of mini environments in the summer. This is a park ideally suited to introduce children the variety in nature and keep older people connected to nature in an easily accessed environment.

The Park provides a critical link connecting the north and the south halves of Banning State Park on the west side of the Kettle River and serves as an access and egress point for a state designated water trail.

Through Robinson Park the Kettle River is designated a wild river.

Park/Trail Address

City

Park/Trail State

Zip

Latitude

46.13131502

Longitude

-92.85713196

Map of Park/Trail

Facility Website

Organization

City of Sandstone, Minnesota

Lead Contact Person

Sam Griffity

Title

Mailing Address

City of Sandstone 119 4th St PO Box 641

City

Sandstone

State

Minnesota

Zip

55072

Phone

(320)245-5241

Email

samg@sandstonemn.com

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

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Total Acreage or Mileage

Acquisition and Development Status

All acquired.

100%

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
- Non-electric campsites
- Tent only sites

Other camping-related facilities

Canoe or kayak primitive campsites.

- Picnicking and picnic shelters

Proposed Facilities

-
- Hiking Trails (natural)
 - Cross-country Skiing Trails
 - Canoeing Facilities
 - Nature Center/Interpretation Trails
 - Climbing (natural/man-made)
 - Restrooms/sanitation building
 - Roads and Parking Areas

Existing Facilities Other Information

Historic features and interpretation map. Ice climbing with farmed ice. Natural Amphitheater - primitive seating. Group campfire areas.

General Site Characteristics

Master Plan

Additional Supportive Information:

Classification Details

Special Recreational Feature Park Classification

Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience

Robinson Park provides some of the more unique recreational components in the State of Minnesota and is home to three festivals run by outside organizations that either headquarter at the park or use Robinson Park as a critical part of the festivities.

Save Sandstone Rally: Robinson has long been a destination for climbers, and climbing classes. The Minnesota Climbers Association has taken a stewardship role in maintaining the park. They describe the park this way on their website: ??... known for its Ice and Mixed climbing, but there were also a handful of top rope and lead rock routes...(also) a few dozen bolted sport routes... that include the classics of Nexus and Sigma." Source: <http://www.mnclimbers.org/access/> During the 2013 The Minnesota climbing community raised over \$30,000 to contribute to MN. Parks & Trails Council of MN to purchase the land and is holding to eventually sell to DNR, to incorporate it into Banning State Park.

Ice climbing: Another side of rock climbing is ice climbing and for the last ten years the Park has been the site of the Sandstone Ice Fest. In addition to climbing and clinics it also includes the great chili cook

off and plenty of winter camping. Information can be found here: <http://www.sandstoneicefest.com/>
The number of routes for climbing are identified here on the mountain climbing web site: <http://www.mountainproject.com/v/robinson-park/105812719>

White Water Canoeing and Rafting: While the Kettle River is a very placid canoe/kayak route most of the year however in the spring it turns into one of the four white water rapids in the state. Source: Minnesota DNR <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/trips.html>
Every year the park river permitting hosts the Kettle River Paddle Fest:
<http://www.kettlerriverpaddlefest.com/index.htm>
featuring a number of activities.

There is also the interpretation of the historic site that includes both active volunteer led and passive self guided tours.

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

At 65 acres in size Robinson Park would appear small. However the park's footprint and topography creates many separate areas nature exploration. There are a sufficient number of areas separated by the parks physical features that allow users to have a quality experience in an uncrowded environment.

The variety of the habitats as identified in the master plan, XXXXXXXX keep visitors exploring different parts of the park. This not a hiking park unless you continue onto the Banning State Park using unofficial trails this is a walking park. In less than mile you can explore many scenic and historic features. It is perfect for what the state DNR has identified as an underserved population ?? the elderly and children in addition to the enthusiastic climbers and water trail users.

While the stated purpose of the park is to provide a natural resource setting for enhancement and interpretation of the historic setting and environmental education. Recreation has been mostly passive and past investments have been made to enhance or improve the historic or environmental setting while keeping development to the minimum for visitor comfort and community uses: dirt walking paths along the river and near the historic features, comfort facilities, a boat ramp for canoes, kayaks and rafts, small fishing clearings, a picnic shelter often used for family and class reunions, historic signage, and invasive weed control (and educational signage) and restoration of native plantings, and three primitive

camp sites.

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

Robinson Park is located just approximately 1.8 miles north east of I 35 exit 191. Interstate 35 northbound out of the Twin Cities is one of the most well traveled tourist corridors in the state with Sandstone being approximately half way or approximately one hour away from both the Twin Cities Metropolitan area and Duluth.

> It is connected to Banning State Park by the Kettle River State Water Trail and an unofficial hiking trail that runs along the river.

> It is within 6 miles of the Audubon Center of the North Woods <http://audubon-center.org/>

> It is within 13 miles of Grand Casino Hinckley and their RV park ?? which includes in their 271 full RV sites and 50

chalets rated one of the two best RV parks in Minnesota and the only RV park in Minnesota to get rated as a best family park in 2014 Good Sam Travel Guide.

<http://blog.goodsamcamping.com/2014/07/top-family-rv-parks/>

> It is within a thirty minute drive of St. Croix State Park and State Forest and the Willard Munger trail for those more interested in traditional large park activities.

> The Sandstone Junction Trail which connects Banning State Park and the City of Sandstone to the Willard Munger Trail

Using standard statistical methodology on data collected during the summer of 2013 using the data collection developed by the Metropolitan Council but not their analysis methodology it is estimated that Robinson Park has an annual visitation of 47,500. Summary information on Summer and Winter visitors is shown in Attachment 5. Based on that estimates from the survey it has more visitors than 17 state parks.

Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region

Robinson Park fills two significant gaps in the parks experience in Minnesota. It offers a more manageable park for both young people and older adults with limited mobility; one can drive the road paths past several historic and interesting physical features. It also offers a venue that is unique enough that nonprofit organizations are willing to invest volunteer time and money in the park on a relatively long term

ongoing basis.

Because the City has been flexible in making arrangements with the climbing community and its key location near the freeway has resulted in the park has become popular destination for climbers and climbing classes. Winter climbing with farmed ice has further enhanced it as a destination. The organizations representing climbing have raised money and donated time to maintain not only their facility within the park but the whole park. In 2013 they raised money and partnered with the Minnesota Parks and Trails Council to purchase land adjacent to Robinson Park and add to Banning State Park. After the land was acquired the climbing groups successfully lobbied to amend the Banning master plan to allow changes in use to allow climbing. The flexibility shown by the City at Robinson Park has stimulated additional investment and development of other public resources in the area.

Also as stated in Criteria 1 there are limited opportunities for white water experiences in Minnesota. The Kettle River is one of the 4 white water resources in the state and Robinson Park provides a key access and exit point for the experience. In the winter of 2014 Checkpoint Minnesota selected Sandstone as one of the ten locations for the state scavenger hunt.

Attachments

Doc Name	Description	Url
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