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Updated strategic plan now available to guide future development of Greater Minnesota's regional parks and trails

(May 13, 2021 – DULUTH, Minn.) – An updated strategic plan for guiding future development of Greater Minnesota's regional parks and trails, including ensuring those areas are inviting and accessible to underserved communities, is now available to the public from the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC).

Established in 2013, the Commission identifies regionally significant parks and trails in Minnesota's 80 counties outside the seven-county metropolitan area and provides grant recommendations to the State Legislature. Funding comes from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, part of the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment approved by state voters in 2008.

"Many people have worked hard to build a system of regional parks and trails that all Minnesotans can be proud of," said GMRPTC Board Chair Thomas Ryan, adding that to date the organization has designated 64 parks and trails as regionally significant. "This updated strategic plan ensures we have consistent, detailed criteria for creating a seamless outdoor recreation system that integrates with those of our partners at the Department of Natural Resources and Metropolitan Council Regional Parks."

This 86-page plan, filled with photos, maps and graphs, is designed to help local parks and trails agencies around Greater Minnesota develop effective proposals for regional designation and funding. As more agencies prepare their initial or updated Master Plans, they can look to this strategic plan for clearer standards and tools that will help tell their regional story. The plan includes criteria for making parks and trails inviting and accessible to underserved communities and people with mobility or other challenges, identifies new ways of monitoring and measuring success, and more.

The entire strategic plan may be found at www.gmrptcommission.org. Citizens may also ask to have a printed version mailed to them by contacting GMRPTC Executive Director Renee Mattson at renee.mattson@gmrptcommission.org.

"Achieving designation requires an applicant to work through a detailed process that ensures each park or trail is of the quality Minnesotans and visitors expect when enjoying regionally significant facilities. The strategic plan provides guidance to help applicants think broadly and boldly about not only what the facility is now, but what it could be," said Mattson.

She added that the GMRPTC will hold a series of online workshops in June to help agencies understand the new plan's contents. Information about workshop times and dates is at www.gmrptcommission.org.

Since its inception, the GMRPTC has awarded more than \$52 million in grants to regional parks and trails across Greater Minnesota. Combined with \$20 million in community investments, grants are used to fund infrastructure improvements, land acquisitions, new facilities, trail rehabilitation and more.

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Greater Minnesota's designated regional parks and trails, listed alphabetically, follow. (N) = Natural Resource-Based Park Classification; (S) = Special Feature Classification; (T) = Regional Trail Classification.

Aitkin County Northwoods ATV Trail (T)
Austin Jay C. Hormel Nature Center (N)
Beltrami County Northland Regional Sports Park (S)
Big Falls Campground and Horse Camp (S)
Cannon Valley Trail (T)

Chisago County Sunrise Prairie Trail (T)
Chisago County Swedish Immigrant Trail (T)
Cohasset Tioga Recreation Area (N)
Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System (S)
Crow Wing County Milford Mine Memorial Park (S)

Detroit Lakes Detroit Mountain (S)
Douglas County Lake Brophy Park (N)
Douglas County Kensington Park (N)
Duluth Hartley Park (N)
Duluth Spirit Mountain Recreation Area (S)

Duluth Traverse (S)
Elk River Woodland Trails Park (N)
Fergus Falls Glacial Edge Trail (T)
Goodhue County Byllesby Park (S)
Granite Falls Memorial Park (N)

Hermantown/Proctor Munger Trail Spur (T)
Isanti County Irving & John Anderson Park (N)
Lac qui Parle County Park (N)
Lake County Mountain Bike Trails (T)
Lake Shore Gull Lake Trail (T)

Lake Vermilion Trail (T)
Le Sueur County Lake Washington Park (N)
Lincoln County Hole In the Mountain Park (N)
Luverne Loop & Blue Mounds Trail (T)
Lyon County Garvin Park (N)

Lyon County Twin Lakes Park (N)
McLeod County Dakota Rail Trail (T)
Mesabi Trail (T)
Mille Lacs County Plains to Port Trail (T)
Moorhead MB Johnson Park (N)

Moorhead River Corridor Trail (T)
Morrison County Belle Prairie Park (N)
Morrison County Soo Line Trail (T)
Olmsted County Chester Woods Park (N)
Olmsted County Oxbow Park/Zollman Zoo (S)

Otter Tail County Perham to Pelican Rapids Trail (T)
Red Lake River Corridor (T)
Red Wing He Mni Can-Barn Bluff Park (S)
Redwood County Plum Creek Park (N)
Redwood Falls Ramsey Park (N)

Rochester Cascade Lake Park (N)
Rochester Gamehaven Park (N)
Rochester Quarry Hill Park (N)
Sandstone Robinson Park (S)
St. Cloud Beaver Island Trail (T)

Stearns County Kraemer Lake Park (N)
Stearns County/Benton County Great River Park Complex (N)
Stearns County Lake Wobegon Trail (T)
Stearns County Rockville Park (N)
Stearns County Quarry Park (N)

Stearns County Warner Lake Park (N)
Willmar Robbins Island Park (N)
Winona Bluffs Traverse (S)
Wright County Bertram Park (N)
Wright County Collinwood Park (N)

Wright County Crow River Trail (T)
Wright County Great River Trail (T)
Wright County Robert Ney Park (N)
Wright County Stanley Eddy Park Reserve (N)

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