



People Saving Special Places



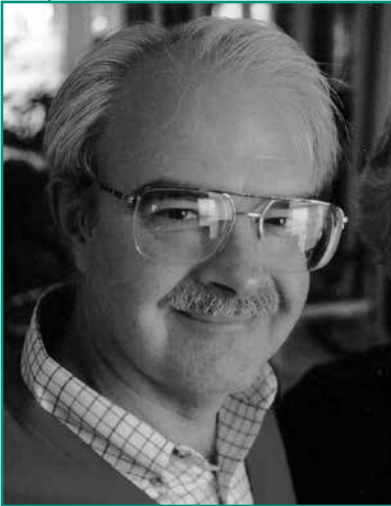
Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota



Annual Report 2008

Our Mission:

The Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota exists to acquire, protect and enhance critical lands for the public's enjoyment now and in the future.



Tim Farrell



Beth Coleman

For more than half a century, the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota has been the pioneering voice for and philanthropic guardian of Minnesota's world-class system of trails and parklands. Whether it is the high-profile purchase and preservation of ecological and cultural treasures like Gold Rock Point on the scenic North Shore, or mobilizing grassroots supporters from around the state to secure record capital investments in our state's parks and trails, we've been right smack in the middle of it all – keeping our great parks and trails legacy alive for present and future generations. As a partner in this noble crusade, you know how important our work is – and more importantly – you know how critical your membership support is in making it all possible.

The pages of this annual report demonstrate how we have stayed true to our mission of expanding, protecting and enhancing Minnesota's most special outdoor places. Just look at what we accomplished in 2008:

- We kicked off the year by announcing that we had secured 272 acres of land central to the state's newest recreation area at Greenleaf Lake, including some of its shoreline — protecting this prairie pothole lake and the surrounding oak savanna.
- We led a coalition of grassroots groups and local governments from around the state that helped secure nearly \$73 million in capital investments for Minnesota's parks and trails, including funding for a potential new park on Lake Vermilion.
- We saved one of the few remaining privately owned and undeveloped properties within the boundaries of Tettegouche State Park. The 57.5-acre parcel is adjacent to Illgen Falls and includes more than one-half mile of stunning Baptism River shoreline.
- We were part of a broad coalition that campaigned on behalf of the single largest conservation finance measure to pass in United States history. The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, which passed overwhelmingly, will provide significant long-term funding for Minnesota's parks and trails.

Our commitment to educating and energizing our action team and general membership once again took many forms and paid substantial dividends in 2008. Our Annual Parks & Trails Day on the Hill and Bike Minnesota with Parks & Trails events and our participation at numerous workshops and expos made us a more visible, effective and efficient organization.

We appreciate your continued support and look forward to accomplishing even bigger things in 2009.

Sincerely,



Tim Farrell, President



Beth Coleman, Executive Director

Government Relations

ability to effectively communicate the needs of the state's park and trail systems and its users to legislators and government officials has made it the preeminent voice for parks and trails throughout Minnesota and at the Capitol. Always determined and forward-thinking, the Parks & Trails Council

Big victories for parks and trails in 2008

By Judy Erickson, government relations director

2008 marked the 20th legislative session where I represented the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota. It has been a remarkably rewarding and sometimes remarkably disappointing experience. Grand Portage State Park, which was established in 1989, was the first state park we helped create during my tenure. Soon after that came the creation of the Paul Bunyan State Trail.

Nearly 20 years later, in 2008, the Parks & Trails Council played a key role at a critical juncture of the legislative session to help establish and provide acquisition funding for the state's newest park at Lake Vermilion. The appropriation for the park occurred just as Minnesota began our sesquicentennial celebration with fireworks booming over the state Capitol in May. What a moment!

In 1990 and again in 1998, we supported a constitutional amendment to establish and reauthorize the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. In 2008, we once again played a key role in passing legislation that helped place the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment on the ballot. Passage of the Legacy Amendment on Nov. 4 brought to a close a decade-long effort that today provides a historic opportunity to dramatically enhance and support the state's park and trail systems. As soon as the amendment passed we immediately switched gears and began helping to develop funding strategies aimed at demonstrating to Minnesotans the benefits of the new Legacy funding, especially for our wonderful state park and trail system.

Over the years we have focused efforts on maintaining the operating budget for Minnesota's state parks and trails as well as playing a significant role in encouraging capital investments in our state parks and trails. In 2004, we began developing Trails Initiatives and in 2008 our work resulted in the largest bonding appropriation for state trails in Minnesota history – \$15.32 million! In fact, 2008 produced more capital investments to improve Minnesota's parks and trails than any time in our history, with investments totaling nearly \$73 million.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my work is getting to know and work with many men and women from across Minnesota who devote countless hours and years in making their dreams come true. Partnering and encouraging others is a cornerstone of Parks & Trails' success. They say patience is a virtue, and with the legislative process it is true. But as we have worked together in the past, our partnering and patience has been and will be rewarded. There is much to be proud of in 2008, but there is much left to do.

Ready to act!

Advocacy plays an integral role in the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota's work to fulfill our mission. The Parks & Trails Action Team is made up of dedicated people who actively work on behalf of our state's interconnected systems of parks and trails. Our influential Action Team presence is felt at the Capitol and in cities and local communities throughout the state.



From left: Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) and Sen. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) testified alongside Parks & Trails Council Government Relations Director Judy Erickson at a Senate Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources Finance Division hearing on Feb. 8, 2008.



Representatives of the Dodge County Trails Association were among the many Parks & Trails Council Action Team members who met with legislators during Parks & Trails Day on the Hill on Feb. 28, 2008. From left: Historic Mantorville Mayor Tom Gall, Sen. Keith Langseth (DFL-Glyndon), Sen. David Senjem (R-Rochester) and Lori Kryzer. Photo courtesy of Sonja Miedtke.

Land Acquisition

works to acquire, protect and enhance land that is critical to our state's park and recreational trail systems so that Minnesota's scenic, ecological and cultural character can be preserved for the public's enjoyment now and in the future. Since 1954, we have been instrumental in adding nearly 10,000 acres valued at \$29 million to key areas within the state's vast network of parks and trails.

Land acquisitions in 2008

True to our mission, the Parks & Trails Council continued to strategically add critical new lands to our public parks and trails. Here is a brief summary of some of the things we accomplished in 2008.

Gateway State Trail

The Parks & Trails Council purchased three parcels totaling 14 acres to extend the Gateway State Trail from Pine Point Park toward Marine on St. Croix and William O'Brien State Park and further to Scandia. We are now in the process of transferring these important segments to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for incorporation into the state trail system. We are also working to acquire additional parcels to complete these trail links.

Frontenac State Park

In March, we purchased a 101-acre privately owned property with development potential so we could protect a vital trail connection, endangered wetlands and Mississippi River and Lake Pepin shoreline within the statutory boundaries of the park. The property was quickly transferred to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and is now officially part of the park.

Tettegouche State Park

Also in March we saved one of the few remaining privately owned and undeveloped properties within the boundaries of Tettegouche State Park. The 57.5-acre parcel is adjacent to Illgen Falls and includes more than one-half mile of spectacular Baptism River shoreline.

Crow Wing State Park

In April, we saved a privately owned and undeveloped lot that could have potentially been subdivided and sold as three home sites on the peninsula at the confluence of the Crow Wing and Mississippi rivers in Crow Wing State Park. The 5.1-acre property has historical significance, including visual evidence of where the Red River Ox Cart Trail once crossed the property.

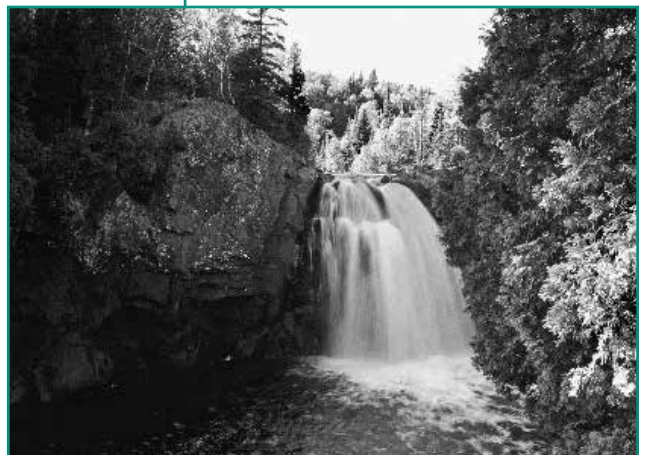
In March 2008, the Parks & Trails Council saved one of the few remaining privately owned and undeveloped properties within the boundaries of Tettegouche State Park. Illgen Falls photo courtesy of Rudi Hargesheimer, North Shore Photo Art.

Greenleaf Lake State Recreation Area

The state's newest recreation area at Greenleaf Lake halfway between Litchfield and Hutchinson is one step closer to reality thanks to the Parks & Trails Council. In May, as part of our ongoing effort to establish the recreation area, we completed the deal that resulted in the acquisition of the recreation area's first 272 acres. We will continue to work with the DNR and willing sellers to expand the recreation area's holdings in the future. The land contains some of the shoreline along the two lakes within the authorized Greenleaf Lake State Recreation Area boundaries.

William O'Brien State Park

When William O'Brien State Park was expanded westward and southward in the 1970s, an 80-acre section in the middle owned by people who were opposed to the expansion was omitted from the statutory park boundary. In May, 35 years after that significant expansion, the Parks & Trails Council was able to protect 48 additional acres in that area and transfer ownership to the DNR, which will soon begin native prairie restoration on that parcel.



The Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund

Samuel Huntington Morgan (1911-2000) was a tireless advocate for public parks and trails. He dedicated nearly 40 years of service to the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota and its predecessors, the Minnesota Council of Parks and the Minnesota Parks Foundation. He was the longest-serving president in the Parks & Trails Council's history and had served in various capacities on the board from 1962 until his death in 2000. Shortly after his passing, the Parks & Trails Council established the Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund to honor his extraordinary vision and leadership in helping to create Minnesota's world-class metropolitan and state park and trail systems.

With so many urgent park and trail projects to complete, the Parks & Trails Council must be strategic in getting the biggest benefit for each dollar contributed to the Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund. Essentially, the fund functions as a revolving account that gets spent many times over. This is possible because most of the time when we transfer land we own to a public agency, it is sold at the purchase cost so that funds can be returned to the account where they are used to purchase the next critical parcel. The public agency pays only the direct expense and principal balance while the Parks & Trails Council absorbs related costs and makes an occasional donation of land when it can be used for leveraging additional funds or when it is necessary for completing a transaction.

To make a donation to the Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund, use the enclosed envelope or donate online at www.parksandtrails.org.

Land Holdings 2008

Park/Trail	Cost/Value	Acres	Notes
Crosby-Manitou State Park	\$346,000	360	Land exchange with Lake County Sold to DNR in 2008
Crow Wing State Park	\$275,000	28	Sold to DNR in 2008
Crow Wing State Park	\$360,000	17	Critical habitat at confluence of Crow Wing and Mississippi rivers
Crow Wing State Park	\$151,000	5.1	Critical habitat
Cuyuna Lakes State Trail	\$ 75,000	5	Connects trail to recreation area
Frontenac State Park	\$392,000	101	Sold to DNR in 2008
Gateway State Trail	\$ 83,347	4.9	Trail extension
Gateway State Trail	\$ 92,000	4.5	Easement for trail extension
Gateway State Trail	\$ 12,500	4.6	Sold to DNR in 2008
Grand Portage State Park	\$210,000	8	Sold to DNR in 2008
Greenleaf Lake State Rec. Area	\$880,000	108	Sold to DNR in 2008
Greenleaf Lake State Rec. Area	\$1,413,348	164	Remainder of first purchase for state's newest recreation area
Grey Cloud Island	\$ 5,400	10	Long-term holding
Paul Bunyan State Trail	\$ 60,000	5	Connection at Crow Wing State Park
Superior Hiking Trail	\$ 28,000	40	Long-term holding of Devil's Track
Tettegouche State Park	\$380,000	57.5	1/2 mile of Baptism River shoreline
Tettegouche State Park	\$ 5,000	18.5	Right of first refusal
Voyageurs National Park	\$303,600	5.7	One of 55 remaining inholdings
Whitewater State Park	\$340,000	17	Key parcel at park entrance
William O'Brien State Park	\$630,000	48	Sold to the DNR in 2008
	\$3,223,000	1,633	Total at start of 2008
	\$2,972,347	242.5	Total added in 2008
	\$2,745,500	663.5	Total sold to the DNR in 2008
	\$3,449,847	1,212	Total holdings at end of 2008

Special thanks to the volunteer attorneys who assisted with land transaction in 2008

In 2008, the Parks & Trails Council saved critical trail and parklands valued at nearly \$3 million while transferring ownership of land valued at \$2.7 million to public park and trail agencies. Because the Parks & Trails Council has no attorney on staff, much of the legal work involved in these transactions is handled by generous attorneys who donate their time on behalf of Minnesota's parks and trails. We especially thank the attorneys and law firms who showed their commitment in 2008 by contributing pro-bono legal expertise. Many thanks are due to: Jeff Benson of the firm Fredrikson & Byron; Steve Hettig of Kraft, Walser, Hettig and Honsey; Andrew Jacobson of Maslon Edelman Borman & Brand, LLP; Brianna Ahern; Bill Buell; Kathleen Connelly; Deborah Erwin; Timothy Eschweiler; and Thomas A. Gump.

Membership and Development

over 55 years has enabled the Parks & Trails Council to acquire and protect nearly 10,000 acres for public parkland and trails. Thanks to this steadfast support, Minnesotans today and tomorrow will enjoy pristine rivers and creeks, quiet stands of oaks, shorelines teeming with wildlife — as well as naturalist-led learning opportunities, sturdy camper cabins and clean campsites for families to gather, and well-maintained trails for hikes and rides. These special places are preserved

People making parks and trails

The support of our newest friends and renewing members alike is a sustaining force in the well-being of Minnesota's parkland and trails. The dedication of 3,400 members statewide inspires the Parks & Trails Council to advocate for protected natural spaces. Members offer gifts of money, time, testimony and action. Whether volunteering at educational workshops and events in every corner of the state or rallying their neighbors and fellow residents to contact their legislators, our members are out making parks and trails happen! Their willingness to give freely for the well-being of all Minnesotans is truly astonishing, and we are grateful.

Ball of the Wild draws 360

Despite torrential rain, a whopping 360 intrepid parks and trails buffs filled the Nicollet Island Pavilion on Thursday, April 24, to celebrate Minnesota's Great Outdoors and the people who keep it special. Amid a display of Erik's Bike Shop's most impressive bicycles, a live bald eagle and great horned owl from the Raptor Center, and climbers from Vertical Endeavors rappelling from the rafters, guests mingled with the evening's honorees. After a delicious dinner, former WCCO-TV news anchor Cindy Hillger presided over the presentation of the awards. Perhaps as a form of congratulations, the rain finally ceased and gave way to a glorious post-storm sunset. After dinner, guests indulged their inner sweet-toothed camper with toasted marshmallows and s'mores on the patio beside the Mighty Mississippi.



S'mores were a big hit at the Ball of the Wild.



In 2008, Magney Circle membership reached 82

Magney Circle: Leading others to give

Late in 2004, the Parks & Trails Council launched a new program named in honor of the organization's founder and Minnesota State Parks champion Judge Clarence Magney. Now all Parks & Trails Council members can step up in support of parks and trails in the tradition of Judge Magney by making an annual contribution of \$500 or more.

The Magney Circle, whose members have made substantial unrestricted gifts to the general operating funds of our organization, continues to offer a great base of support! In addition to providing funds that we can use where most urgently needed, donations from Magney Circle members also inspire others to give. We are thrilled to list 82 members or households as Magney contributors in 2008. To them, a special thank you.

Minnesota Court of Appeals Judge David Minge, Former United States Sen. David Durenberger and Twins Sports President Jerry Bell were among the 360 guests who attended the Parks & Trails Council's Ball of the Wild April 24, 2008.

Parks & Trails TV hits airwaves statewide in 2008



Can't get enough parks and trails in your life? Neither can we! That's why we began producing our very own cable television show aptly called *Parks & Trails T.V.* The first episode hit the public airwaves statewide in July 2008. Hosted by former Minnesota Attorney General Skip Humphrey, *Parks & Trails T.V.* focuses on the people and places that make Minnesota's park and trail systems the envy of the nation. The 28-minute, documentary-style program is produced three times annually thanks to a McKnight Foundation grant and production help from our friends at the Minneapolis Television Network (MTN). Because channels and show-times vary depending on your cable market, we are also streaming the show online 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on the Parks & Trails Web site at www.parksandtrails.org. Check out our debut show and see how the Parks & Trails Council's grassroots legislative program helped secure record funding for Minnesota's parks and trails in 2008, learn about an exciting new project to turn the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area into a mountain biking paradise, and get a front row seat at our *Ball of the Wild* where we celebrate the extraordinary people and organizations behind our most special outdoor places.

has long valued the creative ideas and energy that individual members and local groups bring to park and trail efforts. A statewide organization, the Parks & Trails Council serves as a hub for all of this energy. We are the coordinator that links individual efforts together and the conduit that brings knowledge gained on a project in one region to a developing idea in another one. The Parks & Trails Council attends local planning meetings in communities throughout the state and hosts workshops and a Labor Day bike and camping adventure. In 2008, we continued to strengthen this vital network we call the Community Partners

Fourth Annual Bike Minnesota with Parks & Trails

For the fourth consecutive year, Parks & Trails Council Board Member and Minnesota Court of Appeals Judge David Minge led 60 adventure-seeking bicyclists on the *Bike Minnesota with Parks & Trails* ride over the Labor Day weekend.

Hosted in 2008 by our good friends at Prairie Visions, a fabulous group of volunteers who have worked tirelessly to promote the Shooting Star State Trail, the multi-day event showcased southeastern Minnesota and its many natural and cultural resources. Based out of Lake Louise State Park's group campground

just north of LeRoy, MN, the event consisted of three daily loop trips that took participants on the Shooting Star State Trail, parts of the Shooting Star Wildflower and Historic Route, and country roads through the rich farmlands in Minnesota's South Oak Barrens where they saw remnants of the tall grass prairie and a scenic, bluff-land river valley. Tour stops included Historic Forestville in Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park, the Rose Pedlar Log Cabin, Garwin McNelius' wind farm, an Amish farm and the Wapsi-Great Western Line Trail across the border in Iowa.

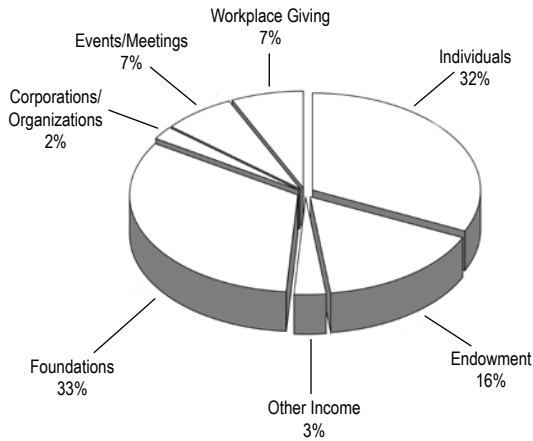


Bike Minnesota with Parks & Trails event participants learned about the history, the landscapes and the communities of southeastern Minnesota during a four-day Labor Day weekend adventure. The group is shown here in Historic Forestville in Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park in Wykoff, Minn.

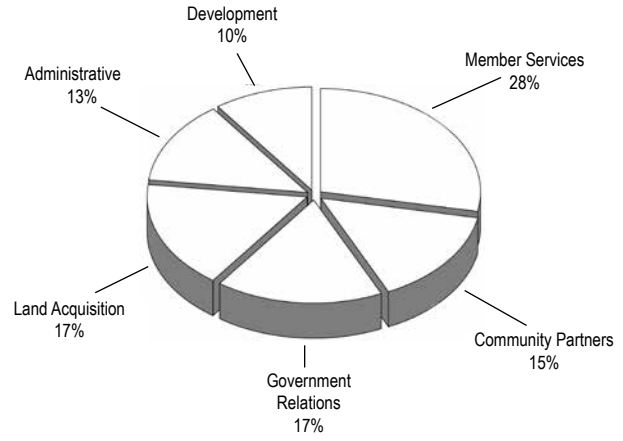
Statement of Financial Position

General Operating Fund

Income 2008

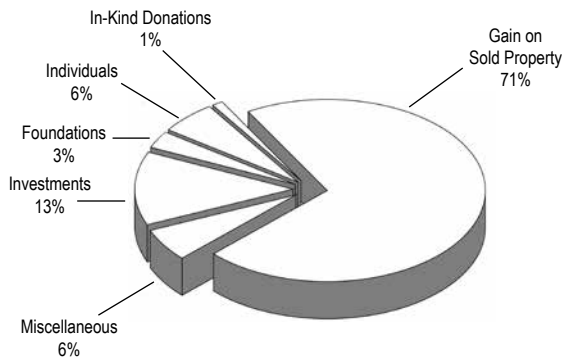


Expenses 2008

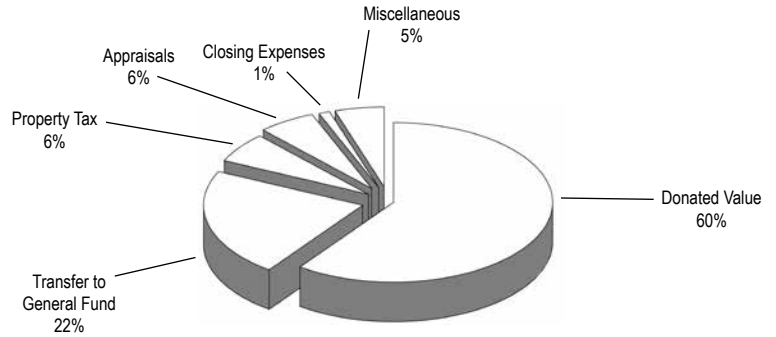


Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund

Income 2008



Expenses 2008



Fund Balances

	2008	2007
General Fund	\$367,359	\$323,281
Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund	\$5,328,484	\$5,074,441
Reuel Harmon Endowment Fund	\$1,411,575	\$1,906,976
TOTAL	\$7,107,418	\$7,304,698

To obtain a more complete 2008 Financial Report, please contact the Parks & Trails Council office at (651) 726-2457 or (800) 944-0707 (outstate) or by e-mail at info@parksandtrails.org. **Note** – This is not an audited report.

With Special Thanks

THE PARKS & TRAILS COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA is supported solely by private donations and is grateful to all the individuals, community organizations, corporations and foundations that provided financial support in 2008. We would like to thank the following donors who have made gifts of \$100 or more in 2008. If you believe your name should be on this list, please contact the

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(Recognizing individuals who made an outright gift of \$500 or more to general operating funds in 2008)

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