



2012 *Annual Report*



Our Mission

To acquire, protect and enhance critical land for the public's use and benefit.

Our Vision

We envision an interconnected system of parks, trails, waterways, natural areas and open spaces that provide all Minnesotans with outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities and that preserve the natural diversity of our state.

Dear Friends

With each new project that we undertake at the Parks & Trails Council, we get the opportunity to meet the people who care deeply for “their” special place on earth. Sometimes this is the park naturalist, who has vigilantly cataloged and researched every knoll and valley within a park. Other times it is a trail user, whose quality of life has been so deeply enriched with experiences of peddling among the trees that she has rallied a group of fellow conservationists together to protect it for the future.



Michael Tegeder, President

In 2012 we got to work very closely with the men and women who make up the Friends of the Mill Towns State Trail. It has been a real pleasure to work beside these individuals to ensure this trail becomes a reality. Blazing trails requires determination; already, 12 years have passed since the Mill Towns State Trail was authorized, and most of the trail remains as simply an idea on paper. There would likely be no segment of trail completed without the efforts of the Friends of Mill Towns State Trail. And their continued efforts will eventually see people experiencing the benefits of a connected system of trail spanning 85 miles through natural splendor starting in Red Wing, MN and ending in Mankato, MN. At the end of the year, we acquired an integral portion of the Mill Towns State Trail along the southern shore of the Cannon River that connects two regional parks to each other and further to the popular Cannon Valley Trail further downstream. We look forward to continuing to work with and support this Friends Group in the coming years.



Brett Feldman, Executive Director

Yet, even as we have tremendous successes with preserving places for people to experience the natural resources in our state, challenges persist. During 2012, state leaders felt pressure to slow their efforts in acquiring special places for people to enjoy. Dwindling budgets have kept the focus on simply taking care of what we have at the expense of having a vision for the future. We need to take care of our special places, which is why Parks & Trails Council passionately advocates for proper funding to ensure this happens. But our work of preserving land and creating opportunities to engage in the outdoors is not done.

Numerous acres of land within our state park and trail system remains vulnerable to development and in private ownership. Countless miles of trails connecting places and people has been envisioned and authorized in our state, yet a significant portion remains to be realized.

As a member-supporter of Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota, you help to ensure that this work continues, and that we don't drop the ball on critical places that need our help. As Minnesota's population continues to grow, increased development pressures means increased urgency in protecting the land and ensuring everyone has opportunities to enjoy and benefit from our state's special places.

Thank you for your support!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Tegeder". The script is fluid and cursive.

Michael Tegeder,
President,
of the Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett Feldman". The script is fluid and cursive.

Brett Feldman,
Executive Director

Land Protection

Special places preserved for future generations



Coon Lake at Scenic State Park in northern Minnesota
(photo by Gary Alan Nelson)



Overlooking the Mississippi River at Crow Wing State Park
(photo by Gary Alan Nelson)

Integral to the Parks & Trails Council's work is our ability to purchase land that is preserved in perpetuity as part of the park and trail system in Minnesota. Since 1954 these efforts have translated into over one hundred projects that have preserved more than 10,000 acres of land in Minnesota. In 2012 two important projects were successfully completed.

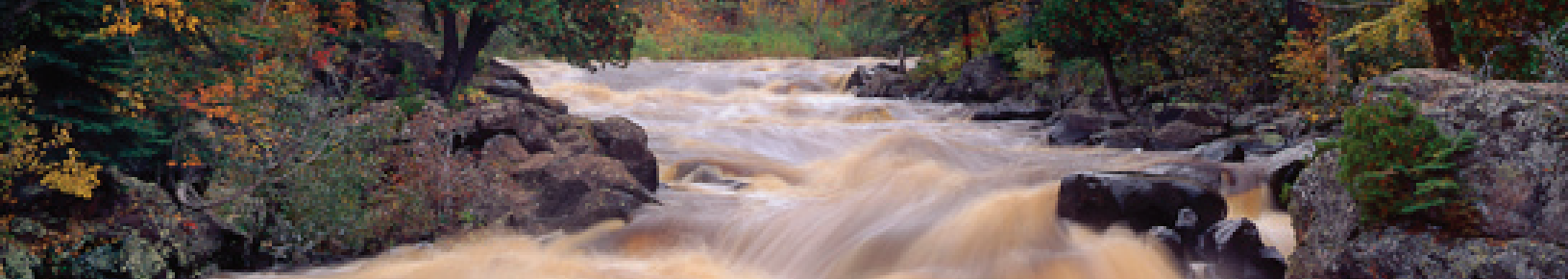
Scenic State Park

Scenic State Park, located in northern Minnesota, was established in 1921 to preserve the pristine natural beauty of old growth pines and clear lakes. Within the park, the entire shore lands of Coon and Sandwick Lakes have long found protection. Now, with the addition of 138 acres that Parks & Trails Council acquired and transferred to the park, the entire shore land along Lake of the Isles is also protected for everyone to enjoy. This acquisition also provides the only access for another lake, Issac Lake, which was previously outside the park's ownership. Now, nearly all land within Scenic State Park boundaries are protected and managed by the park.

Crow Wing State Park

The second project Parks & Trails completed in 2012 was at Crow Wing State Park. This park has a long history of involvement by the Parks & Trails Council. Starting in 1993, park staff and supporters enlisted the assistance of Parks & Trails to secure a vital peninsula at the confluence of the Mississippi and Crow Wing Rivers. At that time Parks & Trails Council was able to acquire more than half of the peninsula, yet the remaining lots were already sold to housing developers. Since then, some of the parcels were built upon, yet in 2012 the Parks & Trails Council was able to renegotiate a contract to acquire three of the remaining five private lots on the peninsula.

Parks & Trails works to protect natural places that have been undisturbed by development. Yet, when vital places such as this section of peninsula in Crow Wing State Park are presented for a second chance at becoming an integral part of the natural ecology of a place, the Council works diligently to acquire the land to make such restoration possible.



Baptism River at Tettegouche State Park (photo by Gary Alan Nelson)

Land held in trust by Parks & Trails Council at 2012 year end

| Location of Land | Acres | Land Value | Year of Acquisition | Description |
|--------------------------------------|-------|------------|---------------------|---|
| Crow Wing State Park (Parcels D - F) | 10.00 | \$ 600,000 | 2012 | On peninsula at convergence of Mississippi and Crow Wing Rivers |
| Cuyuna Lakes State Trail | 9.25 | \$ 19,260 | 2004 | Easement |
| Gateway State Trail | 0.80 | \$ 14,630 | 2002 | Easement |
| Mill Towns State Trail | 65.00 | \$ 635,000 | 2012 | Land will provide base for pedestrian bridge along trail |
| Superior Hiking Trail | 40.00 | \$ 28,000 | 1995 | Long-term holding. Trail use allowed. |
| Tettegouche State Park | 57.50 | \$ 380,000 | 2008 | Along the Baptism River |

Land transferred from Parks & Trails Council trust into public ownership in 2012

| Location of Land | Acres | Land Value | Year of Acquisition |
|--------------------------------------|--------|------------|---------------------|
| Crow Wing State Park (Parcels A - C) | 12.64 | \$ 485,000 | 2008 |
| Scenic State Park | 138.00 | \$ 316,500 | 2009 |

Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund

As the founders of the Parks & Trails Council bore witness to pristine lands being sold and torn up for development, they made a commitment to dedicate their resources to a strategically managed land fund. The Samuel H. Morgan Land Fund operates as a revolving account that gets spent many times over to ensure precious lands are acquired for protection and incorporation into Minnesota's park and trail system. Parks & Trails member-supporters have added to this fund over the years, making it a powerful force in the effort to preserve parks and trails.

When Parks & Trails Council transfers land to a public agency, it is sold at the current fair market value so that funds can be returned to the account, where they are used to purchase the next critical parcel. The public agency typically pays only the direct expense and principal balance while the Parks & Trails Council absorbs related costs. Volunteer attorneys and their firms from around the state generously donate all legal expenses.

Government Relations

The voice for parks and trails at the Capitol

Bonding

As part of our advocacy work during a traditional bonding year, the Parks & Trails Council's Legislative Committee presented a clear agenda of capital investment priorities to the 2012 Minnesota Legislature. Our list included land acquisition projects for nine state parks and 17 state trails, as well as several development projects identified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and five regional parks and trails projects. In total we were advocating for \$84.265 million in bonding funds for parks and trails in Minnesota.

To make the case for investing in our state's special places, Parks & Trails compiled powerful research fact sheets regarding the impact of parks and trails on: a) the economy, b) human health, and c) tourism. Armed with this data, Parks & Trails Council found legislators to author bills for our bonding requests in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Many other bills pertaining to parks and trails received bipartisan and geographically diverse support. However, some legislators felt that because there had been a bonding bill in 2011, which included \$35.8 million for parks and trails, there was no need for another bonding bill in 2012.

In the end, during the final week of the legislative session, legislators passed a modest bonding bill with about \$12.3 million for parks and trails that was signed into law by Gov. Mark Dayton. The bill included:

- \$4 million to the DNR for state parks and trails renewal and development
- \$2 million for development of Lake Vermilion State Park
- \$4.586 million to the Metropolitan Council for regional parks capital improvements
- \$1.75 million to Minneapolis Parks and Recreation for renovation of the Phillips Community Pool

Within this bonding bill, Parks & Trails Council successfully advocated to include a stipulation that extended the deadline for using 2008 bonding appropriations on several outstanding trail projects. Notably, this extension applied to a \$500,000 appropriation for trail development on the Mill Towns State Trail from Lake Byllesby Regional Park to the Cannon Valley Trail.

Legacy Amendment

Some legislators proposed paying the debt service on the 2012 bonding bill with money generated through the 2008 Legacy Amendment. Such use of Legacy Funds would have been contradictory to their specified use, which is stated in the Minnesota Constitution as follows: “The dedicated money under this section must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute” (MN Constitution, Article XI, Sec. 15, Adopted, November 4, 2008). This proposal was defeated in the House on a vote of 37-92 and was withdrawn from the Senate before a vote was taken.

Other legislation

Legislators passed a law (Minnesota Laws 2012 Chapter 272) requiring the Department of Natural Resources to assess potential new sources of funding to operate state parks and trails. The goal was to “reduce reliance on general fund appropriations.” The General Fund comes from various state taxes (e.g., including income, sales, corporate income, alcohol and tobacco) and is appropriated to state agencies by the legislature each biennium for operational expenses. Parks & Trails Council became dedicated to having a voice in the process and board member, Mark Larson, volunteered to serve on the task force that the DNR was coordinating. The task force later presented a mandated report to the legislature by January 15, 2013, however no action was taken to implement the recommendations as of Spring 2013.

Parks & Trails Council supported the Heartland State Trail with a couple actions during the session. We supported a bill that became Minnesota Laws 2012 Chapter 236, which allows for the establishment of segment of the trail that connects to Itasca State Park. We also mobilized Heartland State Trail supporters to defeat legislation, which would have stopped funding midstream on the development of a segment of the Heartland State Trail.

Day on the Hill 2012

The annual Parks & Trails Council’s “Day on the Hill” event was held on February 28 with 75 supporters. Park professionals from the three Minnesota park systems (e.g., state, metro, and greater Minnesota) provided an overview of their bonding requests. Their presentations made it clear that they are increasingly attempting to do more with less.

Several legislators from key committees addressed our group to offer their assessments on the legislative session. Following the program, participants had valuable, one-on-one meetings with legislators to urge them to support the funding requests for parks and trails.



Member & Community Engagement

Working together to protect & enhance special places



Mark and Joan Strobel: Leaving their mark by ensuring a protected landscape for all

Their passion for the outdoors propelled them into immersive experiences amidst Minnesota's most stunning landscapes. These places are today preserved and accessible for everyone to experience thanks to the dedication and ingenuity of Mark and Joan Strobel. The Strobels have worked closely with the Parks & Trails Council over the years. In one example of their commitment, they led efforts on behalf of the Council to coordinate a land exchange that added more than 2,400 acres to George Crosby Manitou State Park, including one of the most significant old growth hardwood forests in northeastern Minnesota.



During the 2012 Annual Dinner on March 20, Brett Feldman, executive director of Parks & Trails Council presented the Strobels with the prestigious Reuel Harmon Award. In his acceptance speech, Mark Strobel explained, "It's very difficult to directly influence the legislature or the DNR without the Parks & Trails Council; doing it as a member is more powerful. There's no other group that does what it does for state parks."

Member Appreciation Celebration

Hundreds of people helped celebrate the accomplishments of the Parks & Trails Council during our member appreciation event on August 11. The event, which took place along the Cannon Valley Trail, offered a glimpse at a nearby Parks & Trails' project to acquire land for a portion of the Mill Towns Trail connecting to the Cannon Valley Trail. Over one hundred people signed our petition to fund the Mill Towns State Trail.



Numerous volunteers pitched in to help cook and serve food and drinks. They also helped promote the land project and all the work of Parks & Trails Council. The band Pennyroyal played music and people took to their bikes to ride down the trail.



8th Annual Bike MN with Parks & Trails

Seventy-five Parks & Trails members participated in the annual labor-day weekend bike ride. Each year the ride is based out of a different state park. The 2012 ride was based at Maplewood State Park in western Minnesota, where the Friends of Maplewood welcomed riders and offered countless hours of support to make the ride a success.

Former congressman and judge, David Minge, led the riders on over 150 miles of roads that wound through the lake country surrounding the park. Riders learned about the unique character of the region through presentations by people versed in the local history, culture, and environment. Riders also heard from park professionals from the State Park and Trail system who shared about current management issues.

Magney Circle Tours

All members of Parks & Trails Council are important to ensuring special places are preserved. Some individuals go above and beyond the typical support and give a contribution of \$500 or more per year—these people are our Magney Circle members. With this commitment comes opportunities to gain in-depth knowledge of our work through tours, presentations and special events.

In 2012 Magney Circle members toured two Parks & Trails project sites. In May the group gathered at Lake Byllesby Regional Park to look out over the future site of the Mill Towns State Trail pedestrian bridge. The members then visited a winery in Cannon Falls for a presentation on the history of Mill Towns State Trail area followed by a wine tasting.

In October Magney Circle members toured two parks where Parks & Trails recently acquired land for preservation: Mille Lacs Kathio State Park and Crow Wing State Park. Members walked the trails with a park naturalist who shared an in-depth knowledge on the history of those places where a civilization once thrived 9,000 years before, leaving burial mounds and evidence of massive timber walls.



Parks & Trails Council is honored to be one of the 23 Minnesota-based environmental organizations that comprise the Minnesota Environmental Fund—a workplace giving program. If you would like more info on how to take advantage of this program visit: www.mnenvirofund.org

Financial Health

Statement of Activities

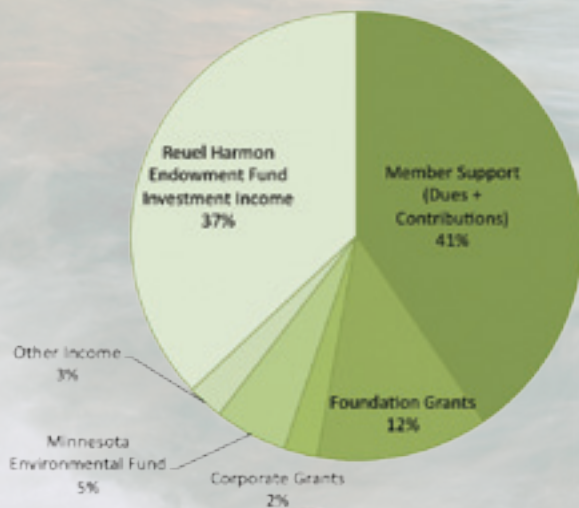
| Support & Revenue | Unrestricted | Temporarily Restricted | Total |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Grants & Contributions | \$197,075 | \$25,000 | \$222,075 |
| Membership Support | 151,669 | - | 151,669 |
| Special Events (net expenses of \$27,449) | 2,535 | - | 2,535 |
| Investment Income | 229,054 | - | 229,054 |
| Loss on Sale of Property | (120,328) ^a | - | (120,328) ^a |
| Other Income | 15,979 | - | 15,979 |
| Satisfaction of Program Restrictions | 264,500 | (264,500) | - |
| Total Support & Revenue | 740,484 | (239,500) | 500,984 |

| Expense | Unrestricted | Temporarily Restricted | Total |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------|
| Program Services | 408,551 | - | 408,551 |
| Management & General | 82,515 | - | 82,515 |
| Fundraising | 39,343 | - | 39,343 |
| Total Expense | 530,409 | - | 530,409 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Change in Net Assets | 210,075 | (239,500) | (29,425) |
| Net Assets at Beginning of Year | 6,843,612 | 265,000 | 7,108,612 |
| Net Assets at End of Year | 7,053,687 | 25,500 | 7,079,187 |

(a) Parks & Trails Council holds land in trust for public partners. Occasionally land values decline by the time of sale. This lost value is absorbed by the Council's land fund.

Revenue



Expenses





Kettle River at Banning State Park (photo by Gary Alan Nelson)

Statement of Financial Position

| Assets | 2012 | 2011 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash & Cash Equivalents | \$ 3,711,743 | \$ 3,976,151 |
| Pledges Receivable | 27,637 | 125,000 |
| Prepaid Expenses | 11,545 | 10,387 |
| Accounts Receivable | - | 8,167 |
| Contract for Deed | - | 2,717 |
| Protected Property | 1,841,708 | 1,497,507 |
| Equipment - Net | 6,833 | - |
| Investments | 1,828,977 | 1,670,813 |
| Insurance Policy | 72,449 | 68,808 |
| Contract for Deed | - | 148,131 |
| Total Assets | \$ 7,500,892 | \$ 7,507,681 |
| Liabilities & Net Assets | 2012 | 2011 |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Accounts Payable | \$ 21,131 | \$ 12,333 |
| Accrued Expenses | 5,593 | 4,227 |
| Deferred Revenue | 800 | - |
| Funds Held for Others | 155,226 | 154,455 |
| Long-term Liabilities | | |
| Notes Payable | 238,955 | 228,054 |
| Total Liabilities | 421,705 | 399,069 |
| Net Assets | | |
| Unrestricted | 7,053,687 | 6,843,612 |
| Temporarily Restricted | 25,500 | 265,000 |
| Total Net Assets | 7,079,187 | 7,108,612 |
| Total Liabilities & Net Assets | \$ 7,500,892 | \$ 7,507,681 |

Net Assets by Fund

| Fund | 2012 | 2011 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund (Unrestricted) | \$ 310,177 | \$ 274,998 |
| Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund ^b | 4,914,533 | 4,897,801 |
| Reuel Harmon Endowment Fund ^c | 1,828,977 | 1,670,813 |
| Temporarily Restricted | 25,500 | 265,000 |
| Total | \$ 7,079,187 | \$ 7,108,612 |

(b) The Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund is a revolving account that covers acquisition costs and is reimbursed when land is transferred to a public agency.

(c) The Reuel Harmon Endowment Fund provides up to 5% of its balance annually for general operations.

Financial information is based on an independent auditor's report conducted in accordance with auditing standards for the years ended Dec. 31, 2012 and 2011. To obtain a copy of the complete audit, please contact the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota office at 651-726-2457.

Thank you to supporters

Parks & Trails Council's work is made possible through the generosity of individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations who support our mission. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed. If your name is incorrectly displayed, please contact the office so we can promptly make the correction.

Magney Circle Members

Recognizing individuals who made a gift of \$500 or more to the general operations in 2012

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Paul H. Brown
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Peter K. Butler
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Bruce Hendrickson and Laura Wolf
Steve and Ellen Young
Barb L. Zajicek-Daggett

Individual, Corporation & Foundation Donors

Recognizing those who made gifts to the general operations and/or the Samuel H. Morgan Land Fund in 2012

\$5,000 and more

3M Foundation
The Athwin Foundation
Patrick & Aimee Butler Family Foundation
Mary Lee Dayton
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