



Photo Credit: Randen Pederson

2016 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

To celebrate Minnesota's parks and trails 125th birthday, let's give them the birthday gift they deserve!

On April 20, 1891, the Minnesota Legislature did something (nearly) unprecedented: By a margin of only one vote, they created Itasca State Park to preserve the headwaters of our country's most treasured river. Only Niagara Falls in New York was protected as a state park earlier.

In the 125 years since, Minnesota's state park system has grown into one of the nation's finest. But after so many years, **Minnesota's state parks and trails need to be revitalized and updated.** They're 125 years old, after all. And in addition to taking care of what we have, there is still a need to create new opportunities for Minnesotans to enjoy the great

outdoors: Approximately half of our state trail miles remain undeveloped, and over 43,000 acres of state park land is still privately owned.

Parks & Trails Council, with the help of local partners and agencies across the state, have identified over \$100 million of capital investment needs to revitalize, update, and expand our parks and trails. This investment, along with the recommendation of the Legislative-Citizen's Commission on Natural Resources (LCCMR) to spend \$4.4 million of the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund on park and trail projects, would leave a lasting legacy for future generations. The needs we've identified build upon projects funded in the 2014 capital investment bill, leverage local dollars, get our parks and trails up-to-date and create new opportunities for the next 125 years.

Top Reasons to Invest in Parks and Trails in 2016:

IT'S THEIR 125TH BIRTHDAY!



- Minnesota State Parks and Trails turn 125 in 2016. We are blessed with the second-oldest state park system in the country.
- After so many years of being loved, Minnesota's state parks and trails have substantial rehabilitation needs.

THEY'RE POPULAR!



- State Parks host over 8 million visitors every year.
- Visits to state parks have been trending up for years, and increased nearly 20% between 2014 and 2015.
- Over half of Minnesotans bike, and a quarter ride at least weekly during the summertime.

QUALITY OF LIFE



- Over half of Minnesotans say parks and trails are a key consideration when deciding where to live.
- Every \$1 spent on trails saves an estimated \$3 in health costs.
- Parks and trails in Minnesota create \$2.8 billion in economic activity and support 22,000 jobs.



OUR 2016 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES: PROJECT DETAILS

WHERE AND HOW \$105 MILLION WOULD LEAVE A LEGACY FOR ANOTHER 125 YEARS

All of our recommended projects have been reviewed to ensure they...



Are relevant and valued by the public



Provide high-quality outdoor experiences



Enhance connectivity and fill system gaps



Protect exceptional natural resources

See back page for our map highlighting the statewide impact of parks and trails



STATE PARK AND TRAIL REHABILITATION

THE NEED: \$57.5 MILLION

State Park and Trail Renewal

\$40 MILLION

Investments are needed to renew Minnesota's aging state park and trail system, where many of the facilities were built in the 1930s. Funds are needed to rehabilitate historic structures, repair park roads, replace sewer lines, fix health and safety issues, ensure ADA compatibility, repair crumbling trail pavement, rehabilitate horse trails and crossings, ensure trail bridges are safe, and improve water access points.

Itasca State Park Renovations

\$10 MILLION

Minnesota's oldest state park has substantial renovation needs as it turns 125 years old. Funds are needed for erosion control at the headwaters, rehabilitating water and sewer systems, renovating the Bear Paw campground, realigning the bike trail to improve safety, renovating the Nicollet Court lodging area, and reforesting the park's pine stands.

State Park Campground Renovations

\$7 MILLION

Camping is the backbone of the state park experience, but many state park camping facilities are antiquated. Funds are needed to replace toilet and shower buildings, upgrade electric and RV sites, repave campground roads, improve energy efficiency, and address storm water runoff issues.

State Park Prairie Restoration

\$500,000

State Parks preserve much of what is left of Minnesota's once sprawling prairies. Funds are needed to continue prairie restoration projects across the state. Priority parks include Glacial Lakes SP, Lake Bronson SP, Big Stone Lake SP, Blue Mounds SP, Camden SP, Sibley SP, and Upper Sioux Agency SP.



GREATER MINNESOTA PARKS & TRAILS

THE NEED: \$6.6 MILLION

Local & Regional Grant Programs

\$5 MILLION

To provide competitive grants to local governments outside the metropolitan area for acquisition and development of local and regional parks and trails. These grants are especially important because they fund projects that aren't eligible for Legacy Funds.

Dakota Rail Trail

\$900,000

For a grant to the McCleod County Regional Rail Authority to extend the existing Dakota Rail Regional Trail an additional two miles into the city of Lester Prairie. This is a key segment for future connections to the Luce Line State Trail.

Faribault Northern Links Trail

\$710,000

For a grant to the city of Faribault to create a key trail link connecting the city's trail system to downtown Faribault, North Alexander Park, the Mill Towns State Trail, and the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail.



STATE PARK AND TRAIL ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT

THE NEED: \$27.7 MILLION

State Park, Recreation Area, and Trail Acquisition & Development

\$10 MILLION

To acquire and develop key recreational features across Minnesota's state parks, recreation areas, and state trails. Priority projects include a new visitor center at Lake Vermilion-Soudan Underground Mine SP, new mountain biking trails at Cuyuna Country SRA, developing the Fort Snelling Upper Bluff, redeveloping the beach picnic area at William O'Brien SP, and many others.

Casey Jones State Trail

\$1.25 MILLION

To develop and pave 5 miles of existing rail bed into Woodstock, MN, including interpretive displays and prairie restoration.

Chester Woods State Trail

\$2.25 MILLION

To complete construction of a 5-mile segment connecting Rochester, MN to Chester Woods County Park, and to acquire land from willing sellers for an eventual connection to Eyota, MN.

Gitchi Gami State Trail

\$3.13 MILLION

To create an unbroken 11-mile segment of trail by completing a key trail connection in Tofta, MN; and to extend the trail 3.3 miles from Grand Marais to Cutface Creek.

Glacial Lakes State Trail

\$2.59 MILLION

To complete a 6.25 mile trail connection between New London, MN and Sibley State Park. Includes costs of repairing existing bicycle trail in Sibley State Park.

Goodhue Pioneer State Trail

\$1.3 MILLION

To extend the Goodhue Pioneer State Trail 5 miles from its current terminus north of Zumbrota, MN, into Goodhue, MN.

Heartland State Trail

\$350,000

To develop a trailhead parking area along the existing trail in Park Rapids, MN, and begin design planning on an authorized trail connection to Itasca State Park.

Interstate State Park

\$2.2 MILLION

To construct a trail connection through Interstate State Park, which is necessary to connect Taylors Falls, MN, to the existing 20-mile Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail.

Mill Towns State Trail

\$650,000

To match federal funds for a bicycle and pedestrian bridge in Faribault, MN, creating a key connection between the Mill Towns State Trail and Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail.

Minnesota Valley State Trail

\$1.5 MILLION

To complete a 13-mile trail along the Minnesota River in Bloomington, MN. The completed trail will feature both a hardened and natural surface trail to accommodate multiple uses.

Mississippi Blufflands State Trail

\$1 MILLION

To begin construction and land acquisition needed to complete the newly authorized trail between Red Wing, MN, to Lake City, MN, including a connection to Frontenac State Park.

Preston-Harmony State Trail

\$1.5 MILLION

To extend the existing Preston-Harmony State Trail 6 miles to the Iowa border to connect with northeastern Iowa's emerging regional trail network. Includes cost of trail connection to Niagara Cave.



METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PARKS & TRAILS

THE NEED: \$13.0 MILLION

Metropolitan Regional Parks & Trails

\$11 MILLION

To fund capital investment projects - including land acquisition, new development, and rehabilitation - in the Metropolitan Area's regional parks and trails. The \$11 million in state funds would be distributed across the 10 implementing park agencies of the Met Council, and be matched by \$7.33 million of local funds. Priority projects include improvements at Bunker Hills Regional Park in Anoka County, implementing the Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan in Minneapolis, improvements to Trout Brook Regional Trail in St. Paul, rehabilitation of Keller Regional Park in Ramsey County, acquisition costs of Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park in Scott County, improvements to the Point Douglas Regional Trail in Washington County, and many others.

Battle Creek Winter Rec. Area

\$2 MILLION

For a grant to Ramsey County to design, construct and equip the Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area in St. Paul with a permanent snow making system for cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, tubing, and sledding. The \$2 million in state bonding would be matched with \$1 million of local funds and \$1 million of private funds.



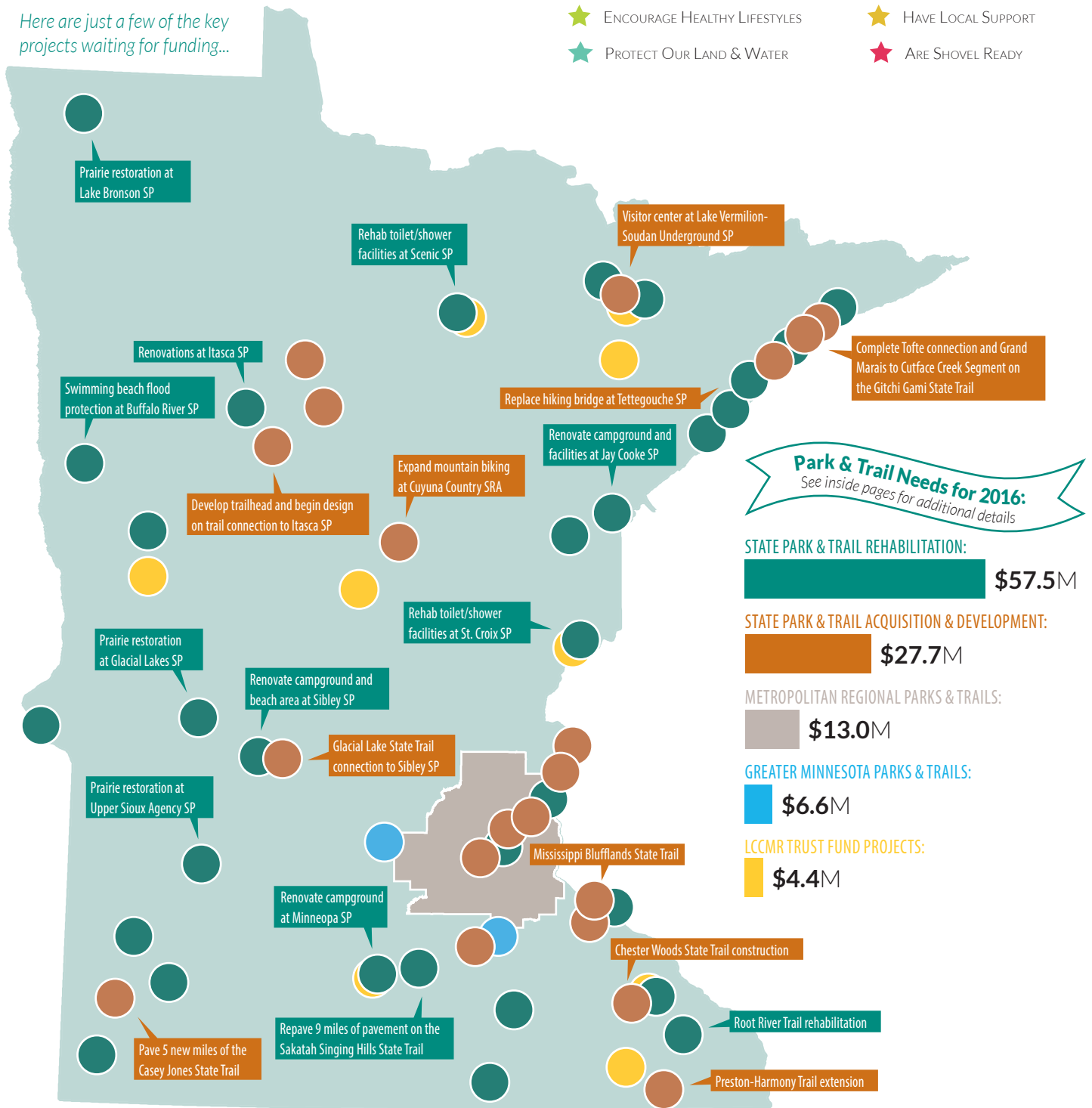
CELEBRATING 125 YEARS WITH STATEWIDE INVESTMENTS IN PARKS & TRAILS



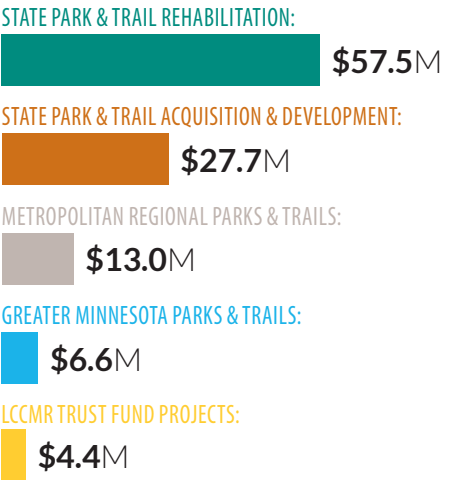
We've identified priority park & trail projects that:

- ★ RENEW EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE
- ★ FIX SAFETY & HEALTH ISSUES
- ★ SUSTAIN LOCAL COMMUNITIES
- ★ IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY
- ★ ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES
- ★ HAVE LOCAL SUPPORT
- ★ PROTECT OUR LAND & WATER
- ★ ARE SHOVEL READY

Here are just a few of the key projects waiting for funding...



Park & Trail Needs for 2016:
See inside pages for additional details



Vector graphics designed by Freepik