

Boulders saved at Banning State
Park along the Kettle River



2015 Annual Report



Willard Munger State Trail ~ near the connection into Jay Cooke State

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.

Cover photos left to right from top: Kettle River in Banning State Park; Advocates for the Shooting Star State Trail at our 2015 Day on the Hill; Reuel Harmon Award at our 2015 Annual Dinner; Riders from our 2015 Bike Minnesota event at Inspiration Peak State Wayside and along the Central Lakes State Trail; Magney Circle members at the proposed Minnesota Valley State Trail.



Michael Tegeder, President

Brett Feldman, Executive Director



Banning State Park ~ wolf creek
(photo by Gary Alan Nelson)

Dear Friends

Working together to achieve our mission

Putting the finishing touches on our Annual Report before it goes to press is always a fun time of year. It's an opportunity to bundle up our efforts and accomplishments into a tidy package that we can reflect upon. It's like a time capsule that years from now we can look back on to see how far we've come.

In fact, we recently dusted off our annual report from 20 years ago for this very reason. At that time we were celebrating a boost in membership to 880 members. Today those numbers have increased four-fold to 3,700 members and our budget tells the same story. All this translates into increased strength for our efforts at land acquisition, advocacy and member engagement. What's also clear from looking back 20 years ago is the commitment to our mission has been steadfast. In 1995 we completed the transfer of critical land at Crow Wing, Itasca, Sibley and Split Rock Lighthouse State Parks. Since the beginning saving special places was our goal.

In 2015 we continued this goal with our purchase of critical land at Banning State Park that will certainly create benefits that will be felt for decades to come. By partnering with the Minnesota Climbers Association, we not only saved a beautiful landscape, but also saved a rare asset that a dedicated community of outdoor recreationists will cherish for years to come.

The other major accomplishment for 2015 was seeing our efforts at the state capitol pay off. State Parks and Trails received a much-needed restoration of their general funds to operate and maintain the system. This doesn't mean that their job will be easy.

We're seeing renewed excitement in our state parks with visitation numbers higher than ever before. The system needs to keep up with this demand, because it is critical to our state's economy, our health and our environment. We need these places and they need us!

Your support makes it happen--thank you!

Michael Tegeder,
President of the Board

Brett Feldman,
Executive Director



Banning State Park ~ The Kettle River along land acquired (photo by Gary Alan Nelson)

Land Protection



Preserving special places for future generations

Since our founding in 1954, we have helped acquire more than 11,000 acres for parks and trails in Minnesota. Our Samuel H. Morgan Land Fund was created through extensive fundraising to ensure we have the funds available to purchase critical land when it's urgently needed. This fund, paired with expertise in land acquisitions has resulted in the preservation of thousands of acres of land that are enjoyed by countless people everyday and will continue to be enjoyed for generations to come.



We saved the boulders of Banning State Park

Our work to save the rugged boulders at Banning State Park was a multi-year effort that took foresight, determination and a solid partnership with people who cared deeply for this special place, namely the climbers from the Minnesota Climbers Association (MCA).



For years, the MCA had maintained a relationship with the landowners to allow use of the area for bouldering (an activity similar to rock climbing). When they learned of the plans to sell the land, the urgency to save this treasured landscape for Banning State Park was clear.

While the land is located within the statutory boundary of Banning State Park, it had been privately owned since before the park was established in 1963. Yet, the park was not in a position to respond quickly enough to acquire this unique area. So, in Oct. 2012 we began work to acquire the land on behalf of the park.



By Oct. 2013 we finalized our purchase of the 108-acre parcel. During the 17 months when we owned the land, we facilitated discussions between MCA and park managers on the best way to allow climbing while protecting vulnerable resources. By the summer of 2014 Banning State Park's management plan was amended, making it the fifth state park to allow climbing. During this time we also worked with MCA to build a road, parking area and trails to the bouldering area.

Today, this land is fully owned and managed by Banning State Park and open for bouldering. By preserving this place, with its unique boulders and pristine river landscape, we increase opportunities for people to gain a first-hand appreciation for Minnesota's natural environment. Such experiences are vital to a continued environmental stewardship as well as for a healthy state of mind and body.

Anderson County Park ~ overlooking the Horseleg lake adjacent to land we helped acquire in 2015.

2015 Land Projects by Parks & Trails Council

CONVEYED TO A PARK OR TRAIL IN 2015

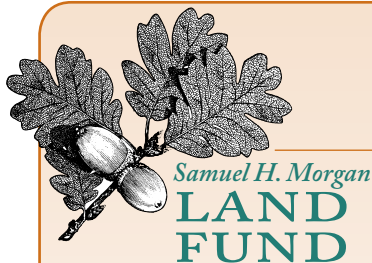
Location of Land	Acres	Land Value	Year Acquired	Description
Banning State Park	108.39	\$250,000	2013	See page 4 for details.
TOTAL	108.39	\$250,000		

HELD IN TRUST FOR A PARK OR TRAIL AT 2015 YEAR END

Location of Land	Acres	Land Value	Year Acquired	Description
Anderson County Park (Isanti County)	24.50	\$155,000	2015	Located between two lakes, this land will provide additional miles of trails, and water access to Horseleg and Horseshoe Lakes.
Becklin Homestead County Park (Isanti County)	9.58	\$141,000	2015	Located at the gateway to the park, this land will substantially enhance the entrance and may provide additional miles of ski and hiking trails.
Casey Jones State Trail (in the city of Lake Wilson)	0.58	\$2,500	2015	Land for a trailhead in the city of Lake Wilson where there is currently a 1.5-mile segment of natural surface trail and efforts to connect to segment into Pipestone.
Crow Wing State Park	5.00	\$135,000	2004	Long-term holding acquired as excess, non-park land as part of a project that expanded Crow Wing State Park by 55 acres.
Finland State Forest (for Crosby Manitou State Park)	3.50	\$16,400	2004	Remnant land acquired as part of a land exchange with Lake County that helped expand Crosby Manitou State Park by 2,060 acres.
Sibley State Park	153.06	\$460,000	2014	Rolling grassy hills at SE corner of Sibley State Park necessary to build a spur for the Glacial Lakes State Trail to lead into the park.
Superior Hiking Trail (at Devil's Track River near Grand Marais)	40.00	\$28,000	1995	Long-term holding of land to which we have granted a permanent easement to the Superior Hiking Trail for use as part of the trail with a primitive campsite.
Tettegouche State Park	2.50	\$19,200	2013	Forested wetlands providing scenic views from Hwy. 31. and a quarter-mile buffer between highway and the Sawtooth Trail. Donated by Mark and Joan Strobel.
TOTAL	238.72	\$957,100		

CONVEYED TO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP IN 2015

Location of Land	Acres	Land Value	Year Acquired	Description
Anderson County Park	2.70	\$5,248	2015	Land sold to adjacent landowner to settle a property line dispute within the title.
TOTAL	2.70	\$5,248		



As our founders 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 critical lands are acquired for protection and incorporation into Minnesota's park and trail system. Our members have added to this fund over the years, making it a powerful force in the effort to preserve parks and trails. Volunteer attorneys and their firms from around the state generously donate all legal expenses.



Itasca State Park ~ headwaters (photo by Randen Pederson via Creative Commons)

Research & Public Policy

Being an independent, honest and forthright voice

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota's ability to effectively communicate the needs of the Minnesota'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, P&TC heads into each legislative session armed with a comprehensive agenda seeking necessary and smart investments in our park and trail systems.

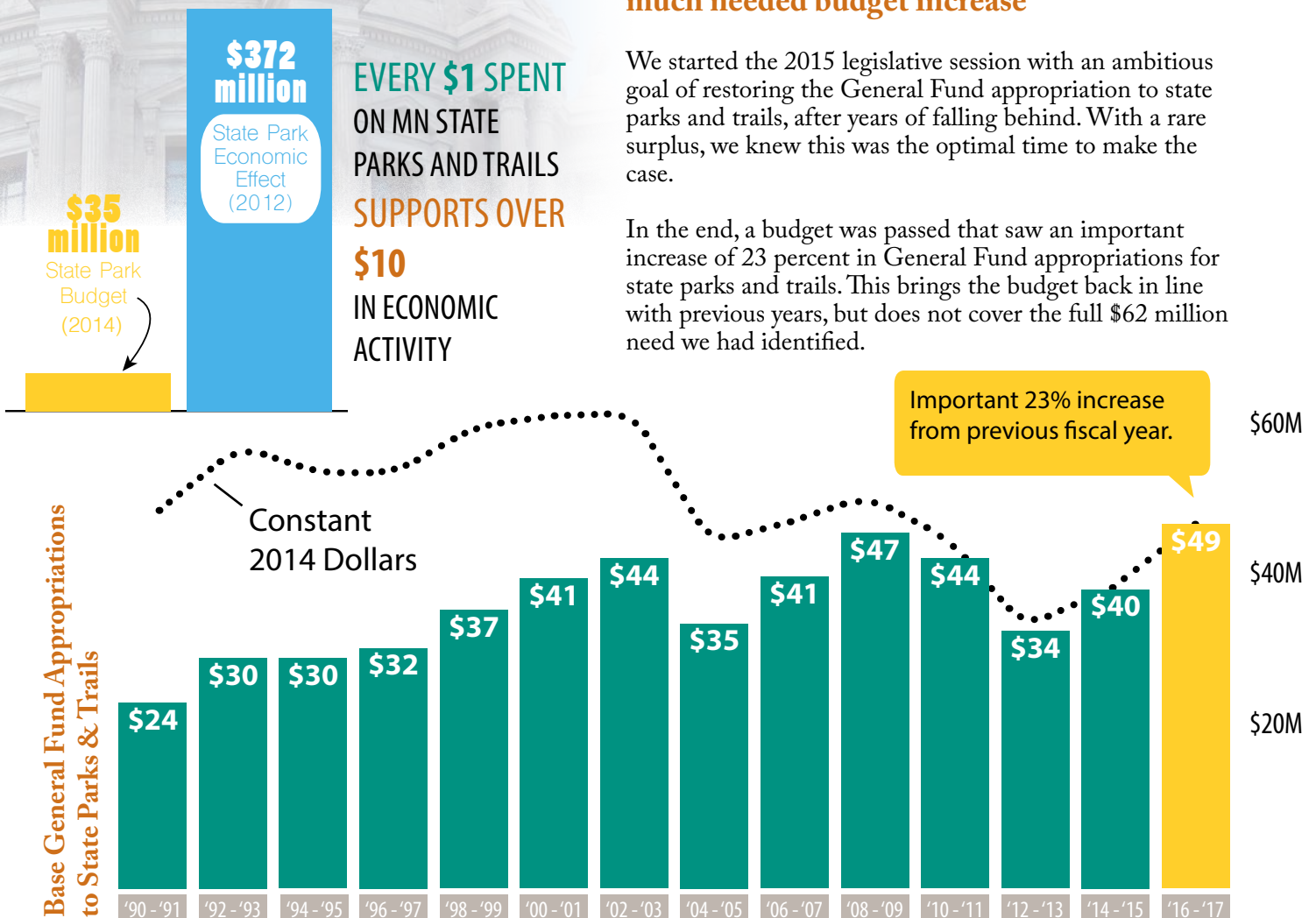


2015 Legislative Agenda

State Parks and Trails receive much needed budget increase

We started the 2015 legislative session with an ambitious goal of restoring the General Fund appropriation to state parks and trails, after years of falling behind. With a rare surplus, we knew this was the optimal time to make the case.

In the end, a budget was passed that saw an important increase of 23 percent in General Fund appropriations for state parks and trails. This brings the budget back in line with previous years, but does not cover the full \$62 million need we had identified.








Brown's Creek State Trail ~ opened June 2015

Other Funding Priorities Achieved in 2015

We had three other priorities for the 2015 legislative session, for which we saw important progress made.

<u>2015 Priority</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Details</u>
✓ Create a stunning park and trail legacy for future generations.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Legacy bill equitably distributed \$91 million across three park systems a) DNR, b) Metropolitan Council, and c) Greater Minnesota. The Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails Commission received necessary funds to continue establishing a more formal system of regionally significant parks and trails in Greater Minnesota.
✓ Reinvest in Minnesota's aging park and trail infrastructure.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bonding bill funded various infrastructure needs across the state, but unfortunately no park or trail projects were included. Bonding for parks and trails will be a major priority for us in 2016.
✓ Build Minnesota's parks and trails through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, which is funded by lottery proceeds, appropriated \$4.1 million for park and trail projects. The breakdown was \$1.5 million for acquisition of state parks and trails, \$1 million for the metro area, \$1 million for the Mesabi trail, and \$600,000 for reintroducing bison to Minneopa State Park.



Our 2015 Day on the Hill

In 2015 Parks & Trails Council's annual "Day on the Hill" event was held on March 4. This event brought nearly 100 supporters from across the state to gather in St. Paul to learn about key issues facing parks and trails. Many of these supporters then met in-person with legislators to urge them to support parks and trails.

Supporters heard from leaders from the three park systems in Minnesota (state, metro and Greater Minnesota), who shared their priorities and concerns for the upcoming legislative session. In addition, several key legislators visited with the group and shared their priorities and outlook.



Central Lakes State Trail ~ 2015 Bike Minnesota! riders leaving lunch at DeLagoon Park in Fergus Falls

Member & Community Engagement



Engaging members to protect & enhance special places

Our motto, "people saving special places" reflects the grassroots nature of our work. Members provide the largest and most important source of our revenue--members make this important work possible. In turn, we keep members informed on issues and provide opportunities to gather and experience the treasured places we are working together to protect.

Friends Group Support

Parks & Trails Council supports the efforts of volunteer-based Friends Groups in a variety of ways. One key way is through fiscal sponsorship services, which enables groups to receive nonprofit status while we assume the responsibility of creating and maintaining accounting records. Through this relationship Friends Groups undertook a number of projects that enhanced our states parks. At the end of 2015 P&TC held \$182,685 on behalf of these 25 Friends Groups:

- * Central Lakes Trail Association
- * Friends of Anderson Park
- * Friends of Bertram Chain of Lakes
- * Friend of Casey Jones State Trail
- * Friends of Father Hennepin State Park
- * Friends of Hayes Lake
- * Friends of Lake Maria
- * Friends of Lashbrook Park
- * Friends of Luce Line West
- * Friends of Maplewood State Park
- * Friends of Murray County Parks
- * Friends of Scandia Parks and Trails
- * Friends of Whitewater State Park
- * Friends of Wild River State Park
- * Friends of William O'Brien State Park
- * Frontenac State Park Association
- * Gateway-Browns Creek Trail Association
- * Glacial Ridge Trail Association
- * Goodhue Pioneer Trail Association
- * Isanti County Sportsmen Club
- * Jackson County Trails Association
- * KIDFUN
- * Minnesota Horse Council
- * Minnesota Wilderness Trails Alliance
- * Sibley State Park Improvement Association



In the 11th year of hosting our annual 3-day bike ride, 32 bicyclists helped raise \$11,000 for our mission of acquiring, protecting and enhancing critical land for the public's use and benefit.

The ride was based at Glendalough State Park over Labor Day weekend. We traveled along the newly built, paved trail that runs through Glendalough and connects into the nearby city of Battle Lake. The Glendalough Park Partners were an important advocate for creating the trail and as they were the co-hosts for our ride, we learned first-hand how that effort took shape.



Planned Minnesota Valley State Trail ~ Magney Circle members



Parks & Trails
COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA

Magney Circle

Mingle & Discover

MINNESOTA VALLEY STATE TRAIL



Trail advocate Peggy Prowe (center) received the Reuel Harmon Award.



Climatologist Mark Seeley gave the keynote address.



Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge Manager discussing the planned trail.



Magney Circle member along the proposed trail.

Nearly 200 supporters gathered at our 61st Annual Dinner, held on March 24. The event celebrates our work and honors the incredible contributions of our supporters.

Climatologist Dr. Mark Seeley gave the keynote address where he shared his extensive knowledge of Minnesota's climate. He presented impressive data showing the need to adapt park management practices as climate change begins to impact Minnesota's state parks.

The Reuel Harmon Award, which is an annual recognition of exemplary service and outstanding achievements on behalf of Minnesota's parks and trails, was awarded to Peggy Prowe. For twenty years, Prowe has steadily advocated for the Mill Towns State Trail with the goal of connecting two already existing trails: the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail and the Cannon Valley Regional Trail.

The event also raised nearly \$5,000 through the silent auction and raffle with items donated by 34 generous individuals and businesses. See the full list of in-kind donors on page 15.

The Magney Circle is our leadership group of individuals who give a contribution of \$500 or more per year. With this commitment comes opportunities to gain in-depth knowledge of our work through tours, presentations and special events. In June 2015, Parks & Trails Council hosted a Magney Circle event to learn about plans for the dual-surface Minnesota Valley State Trail.

We met at the chapter house of the Isaac Walton League, which is located within the planned trail corridor. We heard from numerous supporters of the trail including the manager of the MN Valley Wildlife Refuge (the trail will run through the refuge), the mayor of Bloomington, the Representative from Bloomington, and a DNR trail planner.

The evening ended with a walk along the planned trail led by Ed Crozier, one of the founders of the Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge. The walk led along a quiet section of the Minnesota River with giant cottonwood trees.

Financial Health

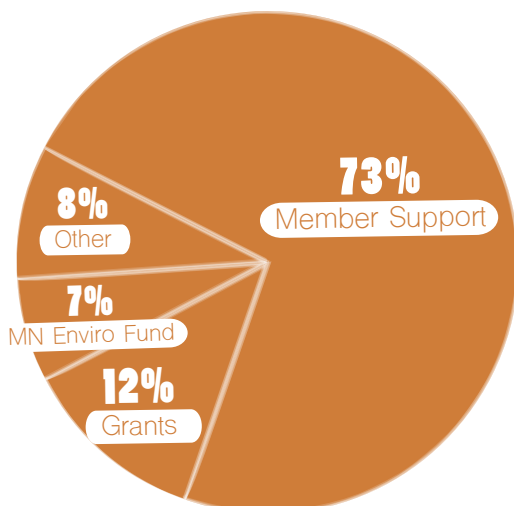


STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

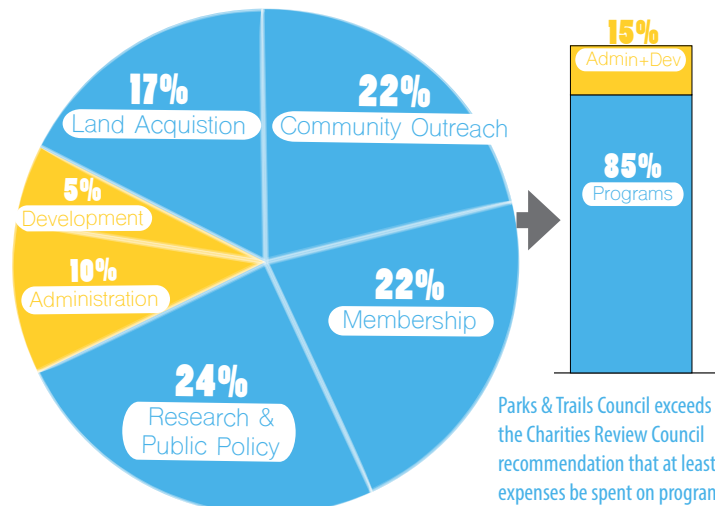
Support & Revenue	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Grants & Contributions	\$ 296,061	-	\$ 296,061
Membership Support	81,515	-	81,515
Special Events (net expenses of \$19,597)	5,314	-	5,314
Investment Income	(3,115)	-	(3,115)
Loss on Sale of Property ^a	(3,550)	-	(3,550) ^a
Other Income	30,193	-	30,193
Satisfaction of Time Restrictions	35,000	(35,000)	-
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	500	(500)	-
Total Support & Revenue	441,918	(35,500)	406,418
Expenses	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Land Acquisition	94,100	-	94,100
Community Outreach	118,125	-	118,125
Membership	119,271	-	119,271
Research & Public Policy	134,480	-	134,480
Administration	53,694	-	53,694
Development	26,405	-	26,405
Total Expenses	546,075	-	546,075
Change in Net Assets	(104,157)	(35,500)	(139,657)
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	7,156,896	35,500	7,192,396
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 7,052,739	-	\$ 7,052,739

(a) Parks & Trails Council holds land in trust for public partners that occasionally declines in value by the time of sale. This decline in value is absorbed by P&TC's Samuel H. Morgan Land Fund.

Revenue



Expenses



Parks & Trails Council exceeds the Charities Review Council recommendation that at least 65% of expenses be spent on programs.



Shooting Star State Trail (photo by Maureen Noterman)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	2015	2014
Current Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 4,339,374	\$ 4,347,814
Pledges Receivable	-	45,200
Prepaid Expenses	11,269	10,537
Accounts Receivable	2,493	335
Protected Property	1,027,582	959,326
Property - Net	8,550	15,616
Investments	2,288,221	2,517,142
Insurance Policy	83,157	79,565
Total Assets	\$ 7,760,646	\$ 7,975,535

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 126,566	\$ 116,196
Accrued Expenses	7,971	7,540
Deferred Revenue	800	800
Funds Held for Friends Groups	182,685	166,258
Long-term Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	115,000	230,000
Notes Payable	274,885	262,345
Total Liabilities	707,907	783,139
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	7,052,739	7,156,896
Temporarily Restricted	-	35,500
Total Net Assets	7,052,739	7,192,396

Total Liabilities & Net Assets \$ 7,760,646 \$ 7,975,535

NET ASSETS BY FUND

Fund	2015	2014
General Fund (Unrestricted)	\$ 310,285	\$ 249,873
Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund ^b	4,685,094	4,734,881
Reuel Harmon Endowment Fund ^c	2,057,359	2,172,142
Temporarily Restricted	-	35,500
Total	\$ 7,052,739	\$ 7,192,396

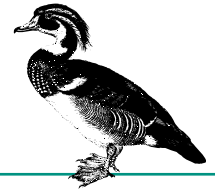
(b) The Samuel H. Morgan Land Acquisition Fund is a revolving account that covers acquisition costs and is reimbursed when land is transferred to a public agency.

(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, 2015 and 2014. To obtain a copy of the complete audit, please contact the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota office at 651-726-2457.



Thank you to our 2015 supporters



The generosity of individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations makes the work of Parks & Trails Council possible. Thank you!

Individual & Organizational Donors

Magney Circle Members

Individuals who gave \$500 or more
for general operations in 2015 are
recognized in green.

\$5,000 and more

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