

**Parks and Trails Local and Regional Grant Program**

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$4,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	9
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$4 million to provide competitive grants to local governments for acquisition and development of local and regional parks and trails across the state.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$4 million to provide competitive grants to local governments for acquisition and development of local and regional parks and trails across the state. These funds will support the following park and trail matching grant programs established in M.S. 85.019:

- The Outdoor Recreation Grant Program helps local governments acquire, develop and/or redevelop close-to-home outdoor recreation facilities.
- The Regional Park Grant Program helps local governments acquire shoreland, natural areas and threatened habitat, and develop and rehabilitate natural resource-based outdoor recreation facilities of regional significance.
- The Natural and Scenic Area Grant Program helps local governments and school districts acquire and protect natural and scenic areas statewide that are diminishing due to development, especially in high growth areas, shore lands, bluff tops and areas where land use changes may limit future opportunities.
- The Local Trail Connections Grant Program provides grants to local units of government to develop and acquire trail connections to residential areas, schools, workplaces, community centers, recreation areas, trails and parks.
- The Regional Trail Grant Program provides grants to local units of government for development and acquisition of regional trails outside of the metropolitan area.

These grant programs allow the DNR to partner with local communities to acquire land and develop parks and trails that help create a network of close-to-home recreation facilities. The request will provide grants to local communities to acquire approximately 100 acres of parkland and trail corridor, develop or redevelop about 10 local and regional parks, and complete about 14 local and regional trail projects.

**Project Rationale**

This project supports Minnesota’s communities by helping to ensure public access to a high-quality

system of local and regional parks and trails. Connecting people to the outdoors is a DNR strategic priority that is critical to enhancing community health and wellness. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of parks and trails to Minnesotans. Pass-through funding for local and regional parks and trails projects further fosters connections of children and families to the outdoors.

**Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

While Legacy funds have provided additional park and trail building acquisition and development funding to areas of regional significance, these funding sources cannot be used for local parks and trails. These programs have received Lottery-in-Lieu, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and General Fund appropriations in recent years but the demand for funding is significantly greater than available funds. Therefore, bond funding remains one of the only sources of money for the purchase and development of smaller recreational opportunities located within communities.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

There will be minimal impact on the operating budget involved in managing the grant process.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

Not applicable

**Project Contact Person**

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