

**COMPARISON OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR
STATE PARKS, METRO REGIONAL PARKS, NON-METRO REGIONAL PARKS, AND STATE TRAILS**

	State Park System	Metropolitan Regional Park System	Non-Metro Regional Parks	State Trails
Who manages and operates each of the park systems?	<p>Parks and Recreation Division of the Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources is responsible for planning, developing, operating, and maintaining Minnesota's state-owned park system.</p> <p>DNR Field Operations, Management Information Systems, Human Resources, and Information and Education provide support services to the Division.</p>	<p>Park and trail units are owned and operated by 10 regional park implementing agencies: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties, the Three Rivers Park District, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the cities of St. Paul and Bloomington.</p> <p>The Metropolitan Council, with advice from the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC), is responsible for managing the system-wide planning and capital improvement funding process.</p>	<p>Of the 53 examples identified by DNR staff and an ad hoc group of county and city staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79% of the parks are managed by counties and • 21% are managed by cities. 	<p>The Trails and Waterways Division of the Department of Natural Resources is responsible for planning, developing, operating, and maintaining the State Trail System.</p> <p>DNR Field Operations, Management Information Systems, Human Resources and Information and Education provide support services to the division.</p>
How do the park systems vary in purpose?	<p>DNR manages, preserves, and restores the natural and cultural resources in the state park system. The system is designed to preserve representative examples of Minnesota's pre-settlement resources. The state park system provides outdoor recreation opportunities and education and interpretive services.</p>	<p>Metro regional parks and trails provide facilities and activities to meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people in the metro area. The system also protects open space and land with significant natural resource features.</p>	<p>Non-metro regional parks provide outdoor recreation facilities and activities that are primarily natural resource based and used by a regional clientele. Protects open space and significant natural resource features.</p>	<p>State trails are multi-use trails, however, the combination of uses allowed and the pattern of use varies by trail. Several trails are developed primarily for non-motorized uses (Root River, Shooting Star, Gateway). Other trails are non-motorized in the summer and snowmobile trails in the winter (Paul Bunyan, Heartland). Other trails are primarily snowmobile trails (Arrowhead, Taconite and North Shore).</p>
Authorizing legislation	<p>Minn. Stat. Chap. 85 and 86A, the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1975, authorize and govern the creation and management of the system. State parks, recreation areas, waysides, and state forest campgrounds are part of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system, which is designed to accommodate the outdoor recreation needs of all citizens of Minnesota.</p> <p>Only the Legislature can create, expand, or change the boundaries of state parks, recreation areas, and waysides.</p>	<p>Minn. Stat. §473.147, the Metropolitan Parks Act of 1974, established the basis for Metropolitan Council management of a planning and funding process to build a regional park and open space system for the metropolitan area.</p> <p>The Council, with advice from the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, develops a policy plan that identifies areas that should be added to the metropolitan regional parks system.</p>	<p>Minn. Stat. §§85.50-85.52 authorizes Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne counties to create a joint powers board to coordinate and plan for regional park and trail development.</p>	<p>Minn. Stat. Chap. 85 and 86A, the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1975, authorize and govern the creation and management of the system.</p>

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<p>Detail of authorizing legislation</p>	<p>To protect and perpetuate extensive areas of the state possessing those resources which illustrate and exemplify Minnesota's natural phenomena and to provide for the use, enjoyment, and understanding of such resources without impairment for the enjoyment and recreation of future generations (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, subd. 2(a))</p> <p>Administered... to preserve, perpetuate, and interpret natural features that existed in the area of the park prior to settlement... Programs to interpret the natural features of the park shall be provided. ... Outdoor recreation activities to utilize the natural features of the park that can be accommodated without material disturbance of the natural features... may be permitted.... (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, subd. 2 (c))</p>	<p>The Metropolitan Council shall prepare and adopt... a comprehensive development guide ... the guide shall recognize and encompass... parks and open space land needs... (Minn. Stat. §473.145)</p> <p>The metropolitan council after consultation with the parks and open space commission, municipalities, park districts and counties in the metropolitan area, ... shall prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for regional recreation open space as part of the metropolitan council's development guide. ...<u>The policy plan shall identify generally the areas which should be acquired by a public agency to provide a system of regional recreation open space comprising park district, county and municipal facilities, which together with State facilities, reasonably will meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area and shall establish priorities for acquisition and development.</u> (Minn. Stat. §473.147) <u>(emphasis added)</u></p> <p>Regional recreation open space means: "land and water areas, or interests therein, and facilities determined by the metropolitan council to be of regional importance in providing for a balanced system of public outdoor recreation for the metropolitan area including but not limited to park reserves, major linear parks and trails, large recreation parks, and conservatories, zoos, and other special use facilities." (Minn. Stat. 473.121 Subd. 14)</p> <p>Minn. Stat. §473.351 proposes that the state finance at least 40 percent of operating and maintenance costs for the regional park system.)</p>		<p>A state trail shall be established to provide a recreational travel route which connects units of the outdoor recreation system or the national trail system; provides access or passage through other areas which have significant scenic, historic, scientific, or recreational qualities; or establishes or permits travel along a historically prominent travel route or which provides commuter transportation. (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, subd. 4(a))</p>

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<p>Criteria for new units</p>	<p>For establishing new state parks, Minn. Stat. 86A.05, subd. 2(b) states:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exemplifies the natural characteristics of the major landscape regions of the state... in an essentially unspoiled or restored condition... contains essentially unspoiled natural resources of sufficient extent and importance... 2. Contains natural resources, sufficiently diverse and interesting to attract people from throughout the state; 3. Is sufficiently large to permit protection of the plant and animal life and other natural resources which give the park its qualities and provide for a broad range of opportunities for human enjoyment of these qualities. <p>For state recreation areas "to provide a broad selection of outdoor recreation opportunities in a natural setting which may be used by large numbers of people." (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, subd. 3)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. 	<p>The Regional Recreation Open Space Policy Plan states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional parks (RP) should contain diverse natural resources... and the ability to provide for a wide range of natural resource related recreational opportunities. Access to water bodies suitable for recreation is particularly important. A regional park should be large enough to accommodate a variety of activities, preserve a pleasant natural aspect and buffer activity areas from each other. 200 to 500 acres, occasionally an exception may be made and a RP may be as small as 100 acres. • Park reserves are expected to provide a diversity of outdoor recreational activities. A reserve is also intended to provide, protect and manage representative areas of the original major landscape types in the metro area. Optimal size exceeds 2,000 acres, while the minimum size is about 1,000 acres. • Regional trails are intended to provide recreational travel along linear pathways. They are selected to pass through, or provide access to, elements in the regional park system and to intersect with local trail systems. • Special recreation features, which are called for in MS 473.121, are defined as regional park system opportunities not generally found in the parks, park reserves or regional trails. SRF often require a unique managing and programming effort on the part of the regional park implementing agency. 	<p>General criteria used to evaluate and rank DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant applications and identify examples of non-metro regional parks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. size = 100 acres or more, or special features; 2. use = regional clientele and users from outside local area; 3. recreational activities offered = provides outdoor recreation facilities and activities that are primarily natural resource based; 4. special features; 5. scarcity of recreational resources = provides natural resource based recreation opportunities that are not otherwise available within a reasonable distance; 6. statewide significance = characteristics of the park are of statewide significance, such as site of a major state historical event or unique resource; and 7. minimum grant request = at least \$20,000 	<p>For establishing new state trails, Minn. Stat. 86A.05, subd. 4(b) states:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permits travel in an appropriate manner along a route which provides at least one of the following recreation opportunities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Travel along a route which connects areas or points of natural, scientific, cultural and historic interest; (ii) Travel through an area which possesses outstanding scenic beauty; (iii) Travel over a route designed to enhance and utilize the unique qualities of a particular manner of travel in harmony with the natural environment; (iv) Travel along a route which is historically significant as a route of migration, commerce, or communication; (v) Travel between units of the outdoor recreation system or national trails system. 2. Utilizes to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the purposes of this subdivision, public lands, rights-of-way and the like. 3. Provides maximum potential for the appreciation, conservation, and enjoyment of significant scenic, historical, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trail may pass. 4. Takes into consideration predicted public demand and future use.

DESCRIPTION	State Park System	Metropolitan Regional Park System	Non-Metro Regional Parks	State Trails
Number and types of units in the system	67 state parks 6 recreation areas 8 waysides 1 state trail 54 state forest campgrounds and day use areas	35 regional parks (4 more planned) 10 park reserves (1 more planned) 22 regional trails covering 170 miles (128 more miles planned in next five years; 355 more miles planned beyond five years) 5 special recreation features (1 more planned)	53 non-metro regional parks -- the list in the packet is not intended to be exhaustive, but provides examples of existing parks that have regional significance Additional county and city parks of regional significance are being added to the preliminary list. In addition, local governments administer regional trails, such as the Lake Wobegon, Cannon Valley, Mesabi trails. A complete list of non-metro regional park and trail facilities will be identified during the course of this study.	26 legislatively authorized state trails; 18 are developed for public use.
Total acres / miles	268,208 acres, including Greenleaf Lake State Park and recent boundary changes to existing state parks. 215,000 acres are owned by the State 93 percent of the land is in state park ownership	51,785 acres open for public use The Metropolitan Council and implementing agencies have identified planned units yet to be acquired and/or developed. An additional 5,164 acres are in these other units; 2,656 acres of which remains to be acquired.	Over 20,000 acres -- acreage data is missing for some non-metro regional parks.	There are 1066.1 miles of state trail: 372.6 miles are paved with asphalt for bicycling and in-line skating, 36 miles are paved with limestone for bicycling, 459 miles are for mountain bicycling, 855.1 miles are available for hiking and walking, 473 miles for horseback riding, 939 for snowmobile and 102.5 are groomed for cross-country skiing.
Size range	State parks = 118 to 33,900 acres	Regional parks = 100 to 500 acres Park reserves = 1,000 to 4,800 acres	62 to 3,000 acres	State trails range in length from 8 miles of the Goodhue Pioneer State Trail to the 163 mile Taconite State Trail.
Average size	State parks = 3,658 acres	Regional parks = about 580 acres Park reserves = about 2,800 acres	350 acres	The average trail length is 59.3 miles. The median trail length is 46.5 miles.

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Amenities provided	<p>Examples of park amenities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5,496 campsites 68 group camps 86 camper cabins, cabins, guest houses and lodges 218 horse camp sites 6,526 picnic sites 33 visitor centers 40 beaches 62 historic districts or landmarks 1,600 buildings (620 that are on the National Register of Historic Places) 360 archaeological sites 1,255 miles of trail 332 miles of road and 72 bridges 7 scientific and natural areas 33 fishing piers (20 that are accessible to people with disabilities) 135 water access sites 1,118 state forest campsites <p>Also contain significant natural resources including prairies, rivers, waterfalls, stands of old growth pine, bluff lands, habitat for rare and endangered flora and fauna, critical endangered and threatened landscapes and countless lakes.</p>	<p>Examples of park amenities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 658 RV compatible campsites 120 tent-only campsites 4 group campsites (155 total capacity) <p>170 miles of paved regional trails</p> <p>Trails in regional parks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 244 miles of paved trails 177 miles of mowed/dirt trails 100 miles of horse trails 30 miles of mountain biking trails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 123 picnic shelters 3,576 picnic tables 42 parks with playgrounds 47 boat launches (ramp) 26 boat launches (carry in) 902 boat-trailer parking spaces 30 fishing piers 23 swimming beaches 28 interpretive centers 27 refreshment stands 16 boat rentals 	<p>Examples of park amenities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42 parks with nature / hiking trails 42 parks with picnic areas 29 parks with camping and campgrounds 23 parks with swimming / swimming beaches 22 parks with boating / canoeing 22 parks with fishing 10 parks with cross country skiing 3 parks with a zoo or nature center 8 parks with an interpretive center for environmental education 1 arboretum over 100 miles of paved regional trails, excluding internal park trails <p>Also contain unique features, such as scenic valleys, gorges, waterfalls and rapids, granite quarries, natural prairies, lake and river frontage.</p>	<p>Parking areas, toilets, trail orientation and interpretive signing, rest areas with picnic tables and shelters.</p>
POPULATIONS SERVED	State Park System	Metropolitan Regional Park System	Non-Metro Regional Parks	State Trails
Estimated total visitors	<p>8.1 million people each year in 2000, 2001, 2002 based on DNR average for these three years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 901,236 or 11% of all visitors were overnight visitors staying in campgrounds, camper cabins, or other lodging <p>132,000 total visitors to state forest campgrounds</p>	<p>30 million visitors in 2002</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most visits (45%) occurred during the summer season • 22% of visits were to regional trails • 78% were visits to regional parks, park reserves and special recreation features <p>Regional park visitation pattern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47% weekday • 53% weekend <p>Regional trail visitation pattern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41% weekday • 59% weekend 	Data not available	<p>Summer trail user surveys indicated that nine state bicycle trails received 886,000 hours of use between Memorial Day and Labor Day. (Based on summer trail user surveys conducted in 1996, 1997, and 1998.) Fall, winter, and spring use has not been similarly determined.</p>

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Most frequently visits parks / trails	<p>Gooseberry Falls = 579,989 Itasca = 516,673 Fort Snelling = 479,728 Interstate = 352,463 Split Rock Lighthouse = 335,519</p> <p>Based on DNR three-year average data for 2000-2002</p>	<p>Mpls. Chain of Lakes = 5,554,600 Mississippi Gorge = 2,407,700 Como RP = 2,218,400 Minnehaha Parkway RT = 2,187,700 Nokomis-Hiawatha RP = 1,260,600 (excludes golf visits)</p> <p>Based on four-year average data from 1999-2002.</p>	Hormel Nature Center in Austin reports 30,000 visitors annually.	Summer use of the trails differs. Four of the trails have total summer user hours exceeding 100,000 (Gateway, Heartland, Paul Bunyan, and Root River. The Sakatah is nearly 100,000. To compare trail use between trails of different lengths, total user hours are normalized by trail length yielding an intensity of trail use statistic - user hours per trail mile. In terms of summer use intensity, each mile of the Gateway is the highest. After the Gateway Trail, the next most intensively used trails are the Heartland and the Root River, followed by the Douglas and the Paul Bunyan.
Overnight visitors	901,236 or 11 percent of total visits	254,500 or 0.8 percent of total visits	NA	Trails and Waterways does not provide any overnight facilities.
Where are visitors from?	<p>84% from Minnesota 16% from outside Minnesota (for May to September 2001)</p> <p>For visitors <u>from</u> Minnesota: 9% from Northwest 7% from Northeast 13% from Central 16% from Southwest 13% from Southeast 43% from Metro</p> <p>(Source: <u>2001 MN State Visitor Survey</u>, DNR, Dec. 2002)</p>	<p>58.6% are "local" visits - a visit by a person who lives within the jurisdiction of the park agency which owns/ manages that regional park or trail. 35% are "regional" visits - a non-local visit by persons living within the metro. area 3% are visits from residents of Minnesota who live outside the metro area 3.4% are visits from people who live in other states or countries</p> <p>(Source: <u>Annual Use Estimate of the Metropolitan Regional Park System for 2002</u>, Metropolitan Council, April 2003.)</p>	NA	Survey results show that the Heartland, Paul Bunyan and Root River serve mostly a long distance or tourist market, with between 62 and 71% of the trail users coming from over fifty miles to the trail. Three other trails serve a mix of local users and tourists. Three of the trails, (Douglas, Gateway and the Luce Line), draw primarily from the local area (within 10 miles of the trail).
What are common activities?	The top three activities for both day users and campers are hiking, sight seeing and nature observation.	Walking is the top activity, followed by biking, swimming, and picnicking.	NA	Bicycling is the most common summer activity. Other summer activities include walking, in-line skating, and horseback riding. Winter trail use includes snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, walking, and dogsledding.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION	State Park System	Metropolitan Regional Park System	Non-Metro Regional Parks	State Trails
What was the operations and maintenance budget?	\$32.2 million State Fiscal Year 2004 (projected) \$32.2 million SFY 2005 (projected) \$64.4 million for 2004-05 Biennium	\$63.6 million actual in Calendar Year 2002 \$68.0 million budgeted in CY 2003	NA	Summer maintenance budget was \$729,000. SFY 2004 Winter budget for maintenance and grooming of 2,135 miles of trail was \$1.4 million. (The 2,135 miles includes state forest and state park trail mileage in addition to state trail mileage.)
How are park system operating and maintenance costs financed?	In the 2004-05 Biennium, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of the operating budget is from the general fund • 10% from lottery in lieu • 28% from user fees • 12% from Working Capital Account (merchandise sales and Douglas Lodge) 	In CY 2002, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85.6% of the operating budget was from local revenue sources, primarily property taxes and park user fees • 14.4% was funded with state general fund and lottery in lieu of appropriations. In CY 2003, these projected figures are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89% local implementing agencies; • 11% state general fund and lottery in lieu of appropriations 	Generally, O&M costs are financed through county and city general levy funds or other local revenues. Data needs to be collected.	General fund, lottery in lieu, and dedicated snowmobile funds.
How much revenue is currently generated from user fees and from other non-tax sources, such as merchandise sales and/or enterprise revenues?	From entrance and camping fees: \$9.0 million in each year for SFY 2004 and 2005 (projected) From Working Capital Account: \$4.0 million in each year for SFY 2004 and 2005 (projected)	From user fees: \$9.4 million in CY2002 \$9.85 million in CY2003 (projected) From enterprise revenues/merchandise sales: \$1.57 million in CY 2002 \$1.5 million in CY 2003 (projected)	NA	None.
What percent of the operating budget is funded from fees?	28% with entrance and camping fee increases effective July 1, 2003,	14.8% in CY2002 for the system. 14.3% in CY2003 (projected) This figure varies by implementing agency (2002 data): 25% Anoka County 10% Bloomington 20% Carver County 10% Dakota County 13% Minneapolis Park & Rec. Board 7% Ramsey County 8% St. Paul 18% Three Rivers Park District - Henn. Co. 50% Three Rivers Park District - Scott Co. 34% Washington County	Complete data on fees charged and fees revenues generated needs to be collected..	0%

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What percent of the operating budget is funded from other non-tax sources (such as merchandise sales and/or enterprise revenues)?	12% in STF 2004 and 2005	2.4% from other non-tax sources in CY2002 for the system 2.1% from other non-tax sources in CY 2003 (projected). This figure varies by implementing agency (2002 data): 1% Carver County 3% Dakota County .01% Minneapolis Park & Rec. Board 18% Ramsey County 3% Three Rivers Park District - Henn. Co.		0%
What percent of the operating budget is funded from user fees and other non-tax sources combined?	40% of the operating budget in FY2004-05 (projected) In past years, about 32 percent of the state park operating budget was funded from user fee and other revenues.	17% in CY 2002 for the system 16.4% in CY 2003 (projected)		0%
How are capital development costs financed?	State sources include capital bonds, LCMR funding, supplemented by federal reimbursement from the state share of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) and TEA-21 grants (federal transportation).	State funds are matched with regional bonds as follows: • 60% state funds from state bonding and LCMR funding • 40% Metropolitan Council regional bonding In addition, implementing agencies use local funding for some capital projects which is reimbursed with Metro Council bonds if the Council approves the project before it is started. Plus federal TEA-21 grants for regional trails, other federal grants (e.g., NPS), watershed district grants and donations are used to leverage State and Metro Council funds. .	Prior to 2000, many parks received grants under the state Outdoor Recreation Grant Program which funds up to 50% of capital costs. Since then, 14 projects have been funded under the new Regional Park Grant program, which provides a 60% state contribution matched by 40% local fund. Finally, local funding sources.	State sources include capital bonds, LCMR funding, TEA-21 (federal transportation enhancements).