

APPENDIX E
Regional Significance and Use
for Greater Minnesota Regional Parks

Examples of the Geographic Area from Which Visitors are Drawn

The following information on regional use is taken from some of the applications submitted in 2003 for parks funded through the Regional Park Grant program.

- 1) Hormel Nature Center (City of Austin): “Visitors primarily come from southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa, but enthusiasts from 16 different countries and 43 states have also stopped.” “The nature center is the only environmental education day use facility for Mower and Freeborn counties.” “Over 10,000 area students have participated in environmental education programs in 2001. Environmental education workshops are offered to teachers annually. Special programming such as guest speakers, nature hikes, bird watching, family canoe trips, and star gazing are also open to the public of all ages. This is the only park in the area with a full time naturalist on staff year round.”
- 2) Oxbow Park (Olmsted County): “Environmental programs have been presented to school groups from about a twelve county area in southeastern Minnesota plus a few schools from Wisconsin and Iowa.” “Oxbow attracts approximately 50,000 visitors annually ...” “The county is the sole public provider of recreational camping facilities within its borders and serves recreational users from southeastern Minnesota, northeastern Iowa, and eastern Wisconsin.” “The park contains a nature center and zoo and park naturalists provide formal environmental education programs to grade school students from about a twelve county area. We have presented programs to schools from as far away as Iowa and Wisconsin.” “The zoo is the focal point of activity in the park and park staff feel it is one of the best in outstate Minnesota attracting visitors from the Twin Cities, parts of Iowa and Wisconsin, and from all of southern Minnesota.” “We ask nature center visitors to sign a log book and at last count had registered visitors from all fifty states and over one hundred foreign countries.”
- 3) Robert Ney Memorial Park Reserve (Wright County): “Robert Ney Regional Park draws visitors from around Wright County as well as from Meeker, Sherburne and McLeod Counties. Program sign-up sheets include the following towns: St. Michael, Albertville, Otsego, Monticello, Big Lake, Becker, Clearwater, Annandale, South Haven, Buffalo, Cokato, Delano, Rockford, Waverly, Howard Lake, Maple Lake, Hutchinson, and Zimmerman.” “Robert Ney Park is the only Environmental Education Center within the Wright County Parks System.”
- 4) Koronis Regional Park (Meeker County): “Each year the Koronis Regional Park campground accommodates approximately 2,000 people. They come from many different locations in Minnesota as well as other states –

Nebraska, Oregon, Iowa, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Virginia, Washington, South Dakota, Arizona, Montana, Tennessee, Ontario and Alberta Canada.”

- 5) Alexander Ramsey Park (City of Redwood Falls): “First, it’s size causes it to draw visitors from throughout southwestern Minnesota, from around the state, as well as cross-country travelers going through this area.”
“Campground registrations, at approximately 1,000 per season, indicate strong use by local residents as well as regional visitors from other parts of Greater Minnesota, the Twin City metropolitan area, Iowa, and South Dakota.” “...the nearest parks with similar amenities are all state parks: Fort Ridgely, Upper Sioux, Camden, and Sibley. Each of these parks are approximately 35-40 miles away and Ramsey Park is the only regional park that does not charge a daily admission fee.”
- 6) Pomme de Terre Park (City of Morris): “The park is recognized in our area as more than a City Park. We have campers who stay at the park from all over the state of Minnesota as well as many from our neighboring states. This is due to a total lack of county parks in Stevens County and, in addition, the nearest State Park, Glacial, is located 30 miles away.” “We have many campers visit from all over the state of Minnesota in addition to many from the surrounding 4-state area (ND, SD, Iowa and Wisconsin). The next closest camping is 30 miles away.”
- 7) Dennis Frandsen County Park: “The park is in close proximity to Pine County, Isanti County, Kanabec County and lies in Chisago County. Surveys show a high percentage of users also visit from Washington , Anoka and Ramsey Counties and additionally from around the country”.
- 8) Kiwanis Park (City of Mankato): “The park will serve persons of various abilities in the communities of Mankato, North Mankato, St. Peter, Blue Earth County, Nicollet County and travelers along Highway 169 and Highway 14.” “According to recent market studies the Mankato area is a regional destination for retail, education, medical and recreation activities for over 300,000 people. The Mankato area services the needs of Region 9 and beyond. We believe this is the only park of this type on the upper and middle reaches of the Minnesota River”.