



**ADOPTED BY THE STEARNS COUNTY BOARD & BENTON COUNTY BOARD
JUNE 2, 2020**

GREAT RIVER PARK COMPLEX

MASTER PLAN
Stearns & Benton Counties, MN



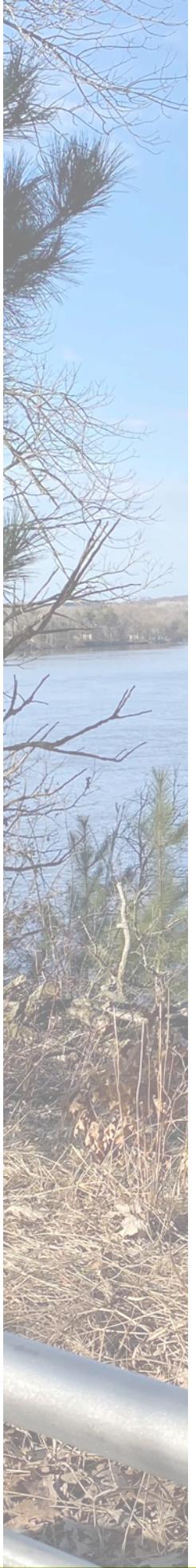


May 29, 2020

We are proud to collaborate across the Mississippi River to create a regional park complex that preserves resources for future generations, provides unique recreational amenities and outdoor experiences, and encourages healthy activities in a tremendous natural landscape. During this time of uncertainty in the spring of 2020, the Great River Park Complex allows for safe social distancing while recreating in a beautiful outdoor setting. The preservation of wildlife habitat, diverse Minnesota ecosystems, and Mississippi River shoreland have been identified as highly valued by our regional residents and visitors. Outdoor education and environmental learning are key programming pieces to the current and future interpretation and use of the park. We welcome you to visit the Great River Park Complex!

Sincerely,

*Benton County Parks Commission &
Stearns County Parks Commission*



Acknowledgments

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Thanks you to all the community members who provided valuable input to the master planning process!

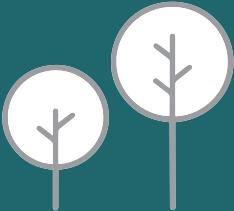
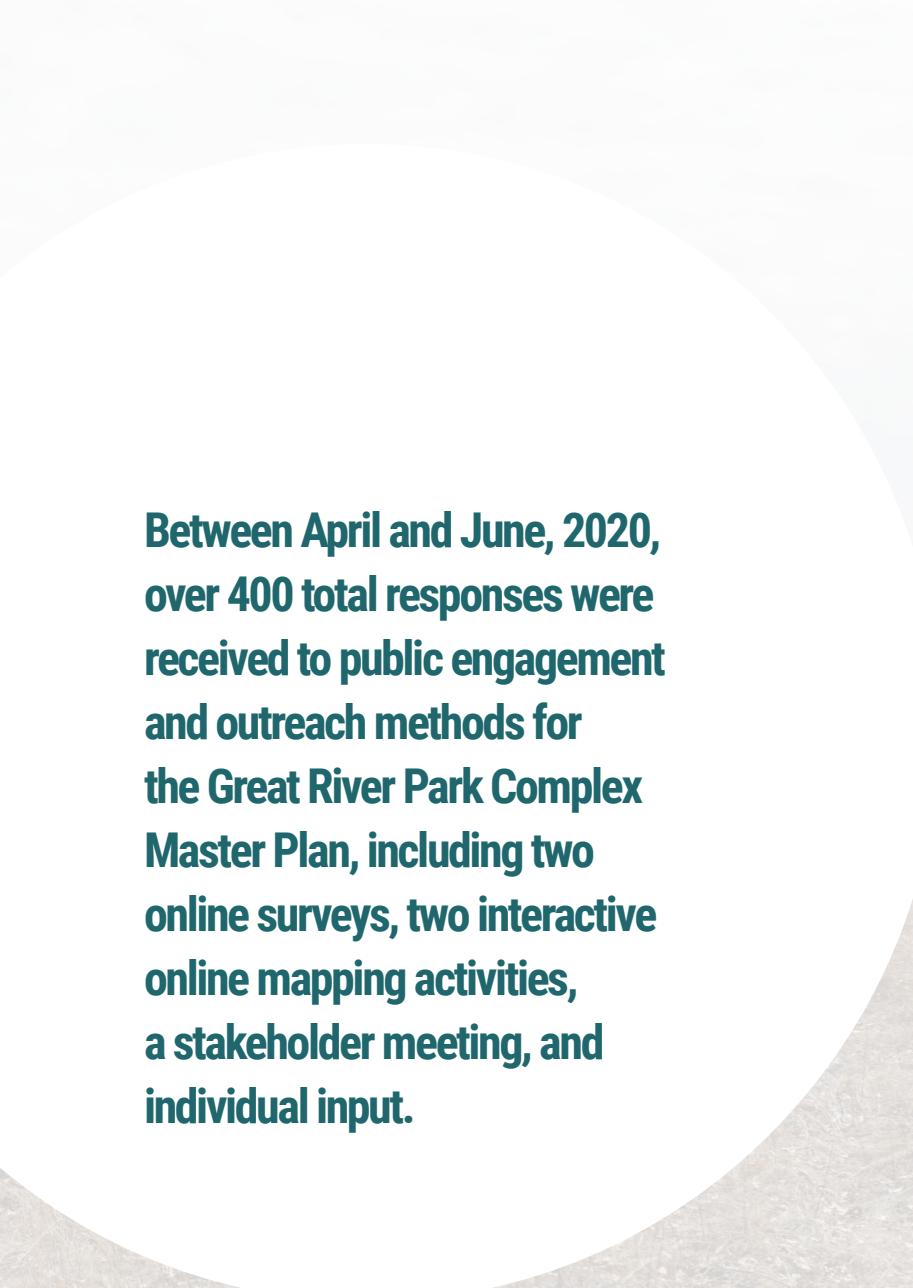


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**Between April and June, 2020,
over 400 total responses were
received to public engagement
and outreach methods for
the Great River Park Complex
Master Plan, including two
online surveys, two interactive
online mapping activities,
a stakeholder meeting, and
individual input.**



REGIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction and Overview

This master plan describes the master planning process, existing conditions, and future plans for the **Great River Park Complex**.

Stearns and Benton Counties partnered in 2019 to form the Great River Park Complex by joining two existing county parks: Mississippi River County Park and Bend in the River Regional Park. An initial application was completed and received a “high” ranking from the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. This master plan document is a follow up step to that initial application.

Several elements make the Great River Park Complex an important and compelling natural resource based regional park in Minnesota:

- The park offers a number of desirable recreation opportunities, including archery, disc golf, hiking, boating, and cross country skiing, within a natural resource complex full of high-quality native landscapes, river shoreline and unique restoration areas.
- The park is adjacent to the DNR's **Michaelson Farm Wildlife Management Area** in Benton County, whose 258.3 acres, combined with the Great River Park Complex's 519 acres, create **777.3 acres of connected natural area** within the Mississippi River corridor.
- Proposed acquisition north of Mississippi River County Park would add 74 acres of upland and almost a mile of shoreline to an existing 3.6 miles of protected shoreline on both sides of the Mississippi River. This will **protect over four miles of Mississippi shoreline** from future development.
- Within the combined natural complex of the two County parks and the WMA, several different Minnesota ecosystems and diverse landscapes of the Anoka Sand Plain and the Mississippi River corridor, can be seen and explored: floodplain forests, river bluffs, emergent wetlands, a high-quality smallmouth bass fishery, prairie restoration, oak savanna restoration, and a river island.
- The physical layout, existing features, siting, and proposed facilities within the parks offer tremendous opportunities for unique programming and events, such as joint events that involve paddling and boating along the river and between the shorelines, hiking and nature exploration, interpretation of the historic farmstead and agriculture in the region, archery and disc golf tournaments, cross country ski events, and outdoor education and environmental camps.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Park Classification

The Great River Park Complex is classified as a **Natural Resource Based Regional Park**

District

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission District 4

Total Acreage: 519 acres

(289 acres in Benton County; 230 in Stearns County)

Park Owners:

Benton County & Stearns County

Bend in the River Regional Park:

11231 River Road NE, Rice Minnesota 56367. Located approximately 1 mile south of the City of Rice in Benton County. Bend in the River Regional Park encompasses almost .66 mile of Mississippi River shoreline.

Mississippi River County Park:

41300 County Road 1, Rice Minnesota 56367. Located approximately 1 mile south of the City of Rice in Stearns County. Mississippi River County Park incorporates an estimated 1.3 miles of Mississippi River shoreline.

PROJECT SUPPORTERS

The following organizations have expressed their support for the Great River Park Complex:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Nordic Ski Club
- T.H.E. Great River Archery Club
- Granite City
- Junior Olympic Archery Development
- Rice Area Sportman's Club
- Boy Scouts of America
- St. Cloud Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
- St. Cloud Scheels
- Archery Country
- HikeHoppers
- Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District

Location Description

The Great River Park Complex is comprised of **Bend in the River Regional Park** located in Benton County, and **Mississippi River County Park** located in Stearns County. The parks are linked by the Mississippi River. The Great River Park Complex is roughly 15 minutes from downtown St. Cloud, MN, and within a two-hour drive from the Twin Cities metro area.

Bend in the River Regional Park

Bend in the River Regional Park is a 289-acre park that was acquired in 2002 in anticipation to develop the historic farmstead into a significant county attraction for the public. Improvements to the property include; restoration of some farm fields to native tall grass prairie and oak savanna, construction of walking trails and river overlooks, and preservation/stabilization of historic farmstead buildings. Restoring the native landscape to pre-European settlement condition is a priority as well as the educating and understanding of the restoration process. Storyboards throughout the park inform visitors about the history of the area and the purpose of the work. With over 2.5 miles of aggregate hiking trail, visitors can spend their time walking along the Mississippi River and viewing the waterway from three different overlooks. Visitors can learn about the historic farmstead and farming practices of Central Minnesota in the northern section of the park. The southern portion offers additional parking, trails, and picnic tables.

Mississippi River County Park

Mississippi River County Park consists of 230 acres on the Mississippi River. The park is developed with 1.1 miles of roadway, over five miles of walking trails, over four miles of groomed cross-country ski trails, an open-air shelter, open play area, two restroom locations, boat launch, 18-hole disc golf course, and an outdoor archery range. Mississippi River County Park offers group camping opportunities to non-profit youth organizations, bicyclists, and a canoe camping site. Native tall grass prairie and oak savanna restoration have occurred throughout the park. An additional proposed 74-acre purchase would allow for more facility development and shoreline restoration and protection. The variety of outdoor activities allows for visitors with any experience level to enjoy the outdoors. In 2018, the Mississippi River County Park saw an estimated 63,000 visitors; and hosted over ten non-profit events, graduation parties, scout camping, family gatherings, 3D archery competitions, and church events. Public/private partnerships, such as with T.H.E. Great River Archery Club and Hike Hoppers (a non-profit focused on using the outdoors to enhance people's wellbeing) will provide programming opportunities throughout this complex.

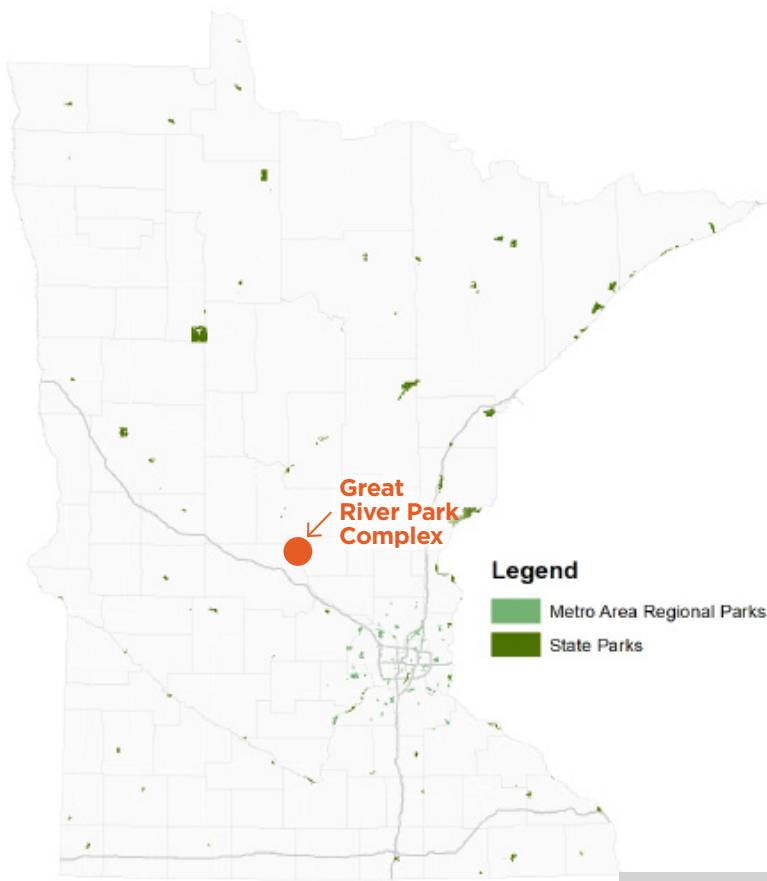


Figure 1. State Context (State Parks)

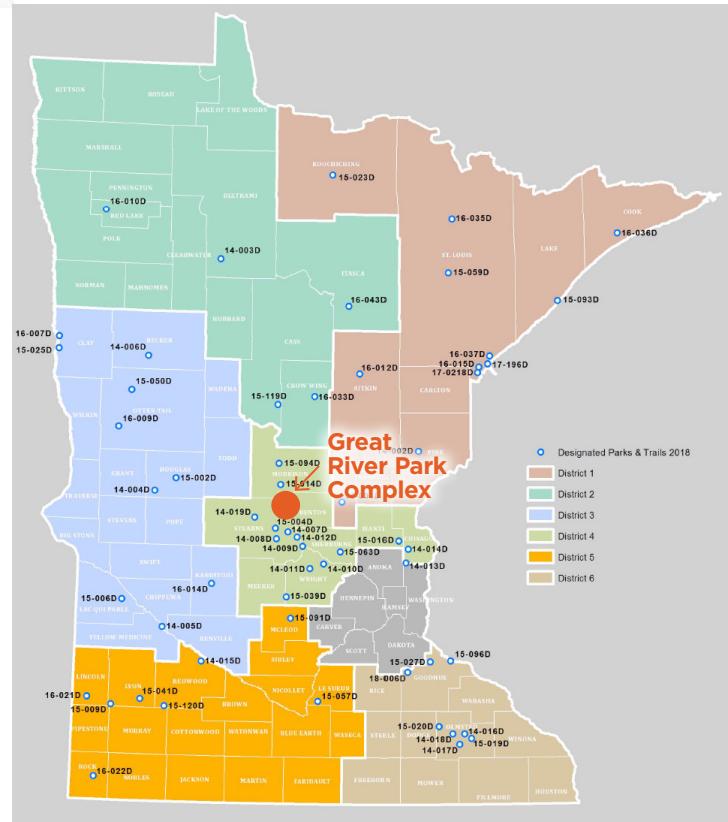


Figure 2. State Context (GMRPTC Districts)

Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails Commission Designated Parks and Trails through 2018

Map Source: <https://www.gmrptcommission.org/our-work.html>

Regional Significance Statement

Protected Mississippi River shoreline

Area	Status	Length
Mississippi River County Park	Existing	1.3 miles
	Proposed	0.7 miles
Bend in the River Regional Park	Existing	0.7 miles
Michaelson Farm WMA	Existing	1.6 miles
TOTAL		4.3 miles

Protected Open Space

Area	Status	Area
Mississippi River County Park	Existing	230 acres
	Proposed Acquisition	74 acres
Bend in the River Regional Park	Existing	289 acres
Michaelson Farm WMA	Existing	258 acres
TOTAL		851 acres



View of Mississippi River County Park and the WMA from Bend in the River Regional Park overlook



Restored Prairie at Mississippi River County Park

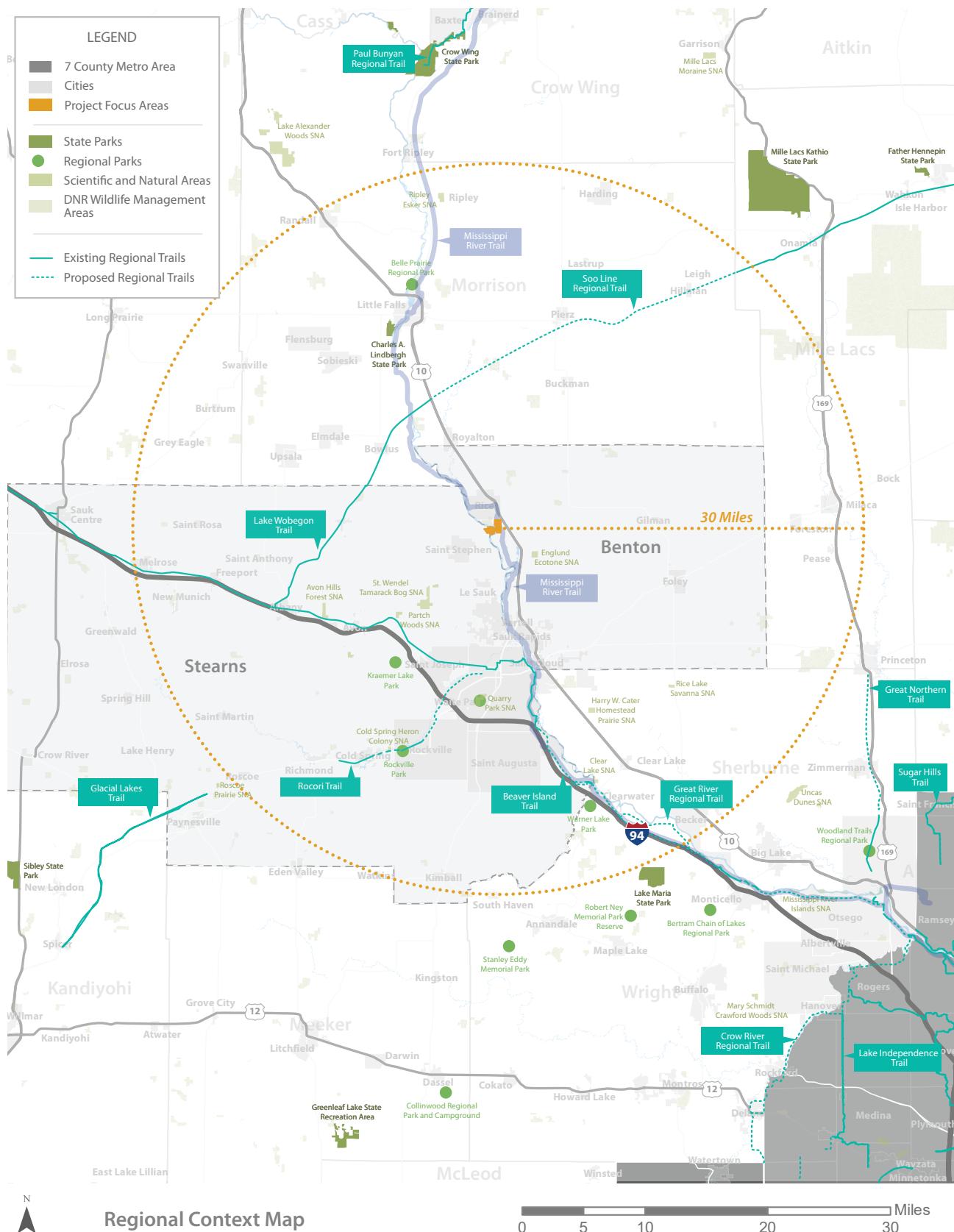


Figure 3. Regional Context (30-mile radius)

Related Planning

Mississippi River County Park Riverbank Restoration Project 2018 Phase 1 Study

Prior to completion of a riverbank stabilization project in 2018, an archaeologist was engaged for a phase 1 study to determine if there were historic or prehistoric sites in the project area. Research of previous work found one possible prehistoric site identified in 1975 in the floodplain area of the Mississippi River County Park, and the proximity to the Mississippi River made the area more likely to contain archeological sites. The archeological work completed in May of 2018 did not find any artifacts in the riverbank. Furthermore, the investigator was unable to locate the other possible prehistoric site. This may be due to incorrect locating of the site as stated in 1975. Beyond the possible site, no other archeological artifacts have been found in Mississippi River County Park, although it remains a more likely location, due to the Mississippi River.

Benton County Comprehensive Plan, Parks Chapter

Benton County recently finished their 2040 Comprehensive Plan, which included a parks chapter addressing the recreation offerings in the county. The planning process emphasized a desire from County residents and leadership to invest in the facilities the County currently owns and operates, and to focus on making them great places before expanding the system to additional lands.

Comprehensive Plan findings related to Bend in the River Park include the desire for more trails, the need to better manage natural resources, and the initiative to provide more opportunities for residents and visitors to connect with nature. The park is specifically cited by residents as a place that has shaped memorable experiences for them.

Benton County Master Plan for Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

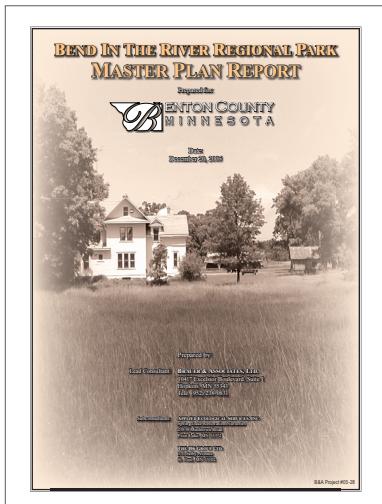
The 2002 Master Plan for Benton County's recreation facilities provided an outline for the development of those facilities over time. This plan was being developed at the same time the County acquired the land for Bend in the River Park. It identified the property as valuable for historic preservation, trails, interpretation, and natural resource improvements and education.

Stearns County Comprehensive Plan, Parks Chapter

Stearns County is in the process of updating their comprehensive plan. The parks chapter lays out the vision for the county's parks at a higher, policy level. The plan talks about the importance of supporting the highly valued parks in the county's system. According to surveys, Mississippi River County Park was the second most visited park in the system behind the regional Quarry Park.

Bend in the River Park Master Plan

In 2004 a master plan was completed for the Bend in the River Regional Park. The plan incorporated some smaller, more readily achievable ideas, as well as some more challenging, visionary concepts. Since the completion of the master plan, Benton County has implemented some of the initiatives including trails, stabilization and interpretation of the historic farmstead structures, new picnic areas, a new restroom building, parking lot improvements, and natural resources work. Other concepts such as the relocation of County Road 55, an underpass, programmed historic farming demonstrations, and river bluff structures have not been realized.



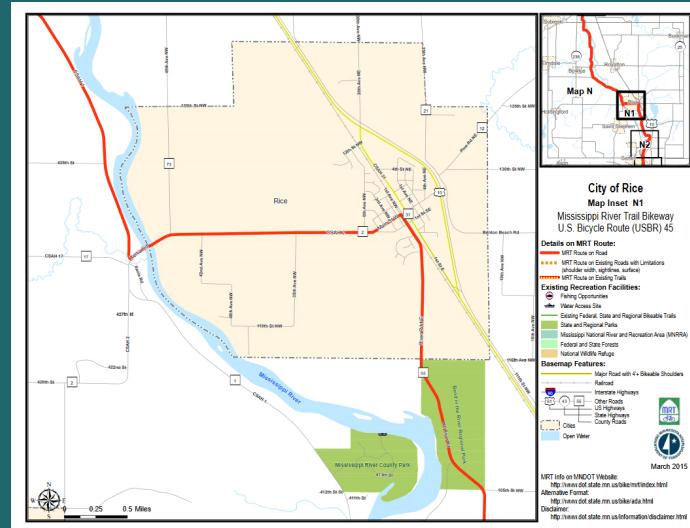


MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRAIL (MRT)

The Mississippi River Trail (MRT) is a bikeway that follows the Mississippi River for about 600 miles from Itasca State Park to the Iowa border. The route is mostly on road shoulders that parallel the river, but some portions of the route are located on state, regional, and local trails. The route connects to regional and local parks, cities and rural areas, and river overlooks and touchpoints. The MRT route between Little Falls and Monticello is called the "Scenic Mississippi," and the route currently cuts through Bend in the River Regional Park on the east side of the river.

The MRT offers a great opportunity to connect the Great River Park Complex to a national recreational trail.

Source: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html>



MISSISSIPPI STATE WATER TRAIL

The Mississippi River that winds through the Great River Park Complex is part of the Mississippi State Water Trail, a designated paddling route along the Mississippi River from Lake Itasca down to the Iowa border. The Minnesota DNR has mapped the entire water trail and identified rest stops, campsites, parks, shelters, restrooms, points of interest, and other information.

Mississippi River County Park is a designated rest stop along the water trail with a watercraft campsite accessible from the water trail. The state water trail offers an opportunity for the Great River Park Complex to link to other parks by water and to offer enhanced recreation opportunities and facilities on both sides of the river for paddlers.

Source: Mn DNR website
https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/canoe_routes/mississippi7.pdf

GREAT RIVER ROAD

The Great River Road National Scenic Byway is a driving route that traces the course of the Mississippi River for 3,000 miles through 10 states, traveling through the Mississippi River Valley's rich history, vibrant culture and inspiring natural beauty. The route identifies places and sites to visit along the route. The Great River Park Complex is a potential destination to add to the route.

Sources:

<https://experiencemississippiriver.com/>
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways/byways/2279/maps>





***The park is adjacent to the
DNR's Michaelson Farm Wildlife
Management Area in Benton
County, whose 258 acres,
combined with the Great River
Park Complex's 519 acres,
create 777 acres of connected
natural area within the
Mississippi River corridor.***



VISION & TRENDS

A Vision for the Great River Park Complex

The Great River Park Complex is envisioned as an example of multiple agencies working together to preserve treasured natural resources and provide unique, regional recreation offerings on one of the world's great rivers.

A Model for Multiple Agencies

Ecological functions rarely align with the jurisdictional boundaries that we have set up to govern our communities. The Great River Park Complex will serve as an example for other recreation clusters around the state on how to square local authority with a more balanced comprehensive look at natural resources and recreation. It also fits into, and improves a larger framework of national, state, local, and private groups providing environmental and parks oversight.

Ultimately, the character of both parks is enhanced by the natural functioning, recreational programming, and visual appearance of the other side of the river. Working together helps ensure the protection of those views and expands the recreation opportunities for residents and guests of both Stearns and Benton Counties.

Preserving Natural Resources

The Mississippi River corridor is an important habitat for many plant, aquatic, bird, and land species. Many species have made this area their permanent home, and countless others rely on the river to facilitate seasonal migrations. With the growth of Sartell and the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area, neighborhoods of residential shoreline homes have been developed on both sides of the river, up to the southern boundaries of both park properties. The park complex, paired with the Michaelson Farm WMA, protects over four miles of shoreline and 780 acres on the river. The complex incorporates river, shoreline, floodplain forests, bluffs, and upland forests and savanna.

Unique and Regional Recreational Draws

Without a Minnesota State Park in Stearns or Benton County, the Great River Park Complex fills a similar role for the greater St. Cloud Area. The complex mixes traditional and popular park offerings such as shelters for large gatherings and hiking with more unique features including an historic farmstead, boat access to 25 miles of river, disc golf, and a well used, popular archery range with a planned expansion into a regional archery destination. The complex offers a wide range of experiences, from highly programmed to remote and undeveloped.

SCORP GOALS & STRATEGIES

The 2008-2012 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is Minnesota's outdoor recreation policy plan and gives outdoor recreation decision-makers and managers a focused set of priorities and suggested actions to guide decisions about outdoor recreation. The clearly stated goal of SCORP is to "increase participation in outdoor recreation by all Minnesotans and visitors." Key strategies include:

- Acquire, protect, and restore Minnesota's natural resource base, on which outdoor recreation depends; this includes obtaining prime outdoor recreation areas throughout the state prior to anticipated land use changes
- Develop and maintain a sustainable and resilient outdoor recreation infrastructure
- Promote increased outdoor recreation participation through targeted programming and outreach
- Evaluate and understand the outdoor recreation needs of Minnesotans and the ability of Minnesota's natural resources to support those needs

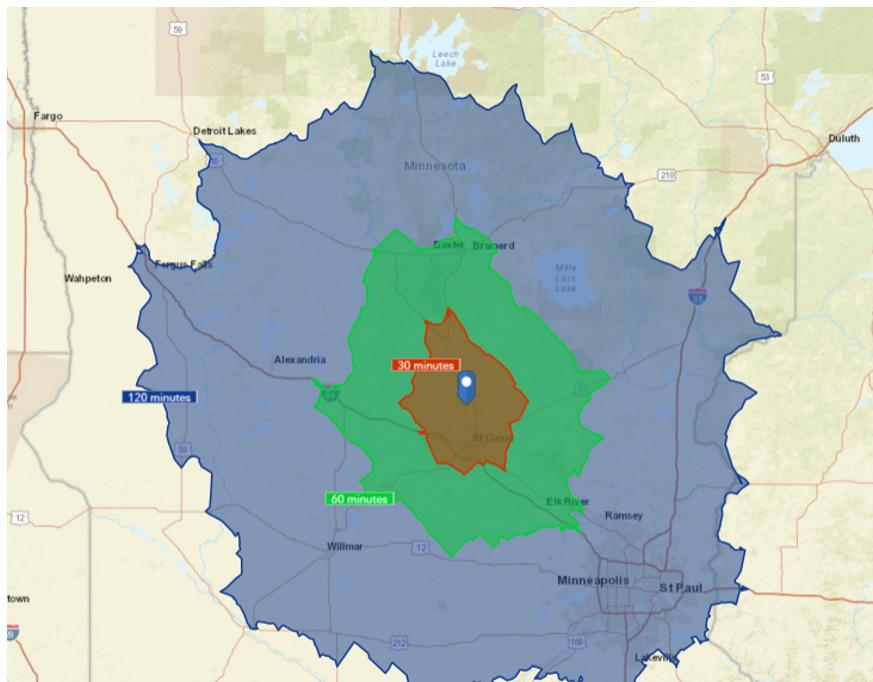
Source: Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan

Demographics

The Great River Park Complex is located in both Benton and Stearns Counties. The closest cities are Rice, a couple miles to the north, and Sartell, five miles to the south. Local residents live along the river adjacent to the park on either side. The Greater St. Cloud Area is approximately ten miles south of the park location, and is the fourth largest population center in the State of Minnesota with over 200,000 residents in the two counties. Approximately 450,000 Minnesotans live within one hour of the park complex, and over 4 million are within two hours.

Stearns County has estimated that over 60,000 people visit Mississippi River County Park each year. The population in Stearns County is growing, with the highest growth to occur in St. Cloud and the area to the north, where Mississippi River County Park is located. An additional 7,500 people are expected to be added to the County by 2050, with most of that growth expected in and around St. Cloud. As population grows, so does development. Benton County's population is growing as well, with over 5,000 people expected to be added to the County by 2050. The Great River Park Complex is located in an area that is impacted by sprawling suburban and rural development just outside the St. Cloud metropolitan area.

The average age of Stearns and Benton County residents is rising, which is a nationwide trend. As baby boomers are aging, they are staying active and are especially interested in outdoor activities, such as walking and biking. Active seniors, as well as families, and youth groups, will be core visitor groups of the park.



Map identifying the geographic region and cities within a 30-minute drive, 60-minute drive, and 120 minute-drive to the Great River Park Complex.



Public Health Values

Current and past research is confirming that getting out into nature has benefits for the mental and physical health of children and adults. In the face of declining health outcomes nationally, parks, trails, water access, and outdoor activities become even more important. Connecting people with opportunities to stay active and relax in nature is a key piece to improving public health. Current and ongoing programming in the park includes physical events, such as disc golf and cross country skiing events, outdoor exploration and education, such as programs provided by HikeHoppers, self-guided hiking and interpretation, and group/social events at the archery range, picnic shelter, and boat launch. Through the master planning process, stakeholders and the public expressed their appreciation of the park for its value in providing a space to get into the outdoors, view natural areas, access the Mississippi River, and the availability of the area to participated in multiple types of activities that include but are not limited to trails (hiking, skiing, fat tire biking), disc golf, archery, boating/canoeing/kayaking, and nature viewing.

In the current public health climate of COVID-19, getting outside into parks and natural areas is specifically valuable and important as outdoor group athletics, local businesses, and indoor fitness activities are closed or unavailable to large portions of the population. During this time of uncertainty in the spring of 2020, the Great River Park Complex allows for safe social distancing while recreating in a beautiful outdoor setting. The preservation of wildlife habitat, diverse Minnesota ecosystems, and Mississippi River shoreland have been identified as highly valued by our regional residents and visitors.

Economic Development and Tourism Opportunities

Parks as a Driver of Economic Development

Regional parks can be a major driver of tourism. Across the country, many cities, counties, and states are recognizing parks as a driver of tourism, and tourism spending. In a time when the future of many forms of tourism is unclear, parks offer a safe opportunity for people to visit a different place, have new experiences, and recreate. An online survey of park users in April of 2020, with almost 350 respondents, found that over a third of park visitors were coming from St. Cloud, and a quarter of park users were coming from farther cities and areas beyond the St. Cloud area. Even with social distancing measures in place, visitors will continue to spend money on food, gas, and other services when visiting the Great River Park Complex.

The Great River Park Complex is located along three major state-wide and national routes: the Great River Road, the MRT bike route, and the Mississippi River State Water Trail. These routes bring visitors by vehicle, bike, and paddle craft through the Great River Park Complex and other parks, town centers, and destinations along the Mississippi River. Users of these routes value the significance of the Mississippi River to the state of Minnesota and the United States. The addition of the indoor archery facility and expansion/upgrades of the disc golf course will also significantly impact local economics as these amenities are expected to bring in tournament participants not only from around Minnesota but from out of state as well. Proposed acquisition adjacent to the Great River Park Complex would preserve almost a mile of river shoreline from development in an area north of St. Cloud that is continuing to develop farther out from the city. Preservation of this shoreland would make the park more valuable as a nature-based park, as a wildlife habitat, and as a place to experience the natural river corridor, which would in turn bring more visitors to the park and the surrounding area.

Recreational Trends

There are several trends in outdoor recreation that impact the future of the Great River Park Complex.



Image Source: <https://fpdcc.com/things-to-do/hiking-walking-running/>

Experiences with Nature

The Great River Park Complex contains a unique and diverse set of ecosystems in a small area--these are valuable for environmental education and passive recreation. Hiking on trails was listed as the most popular activity and one of the top desires for expansion in the public input methods for the Great River Park Complex. As a society, we have become more connected to our technology and devices. At the same time, opportunities to get outside and connect with the natural world are disappearing as we get busier. People are now recognizing the need to spend some time re-linking with the outdoors by walking in the woods, listening to birds, following the leaves through the seasons, or watching a river flow by. In parks it is important to provide a varied set of natural experiences that can serve a wide range of interests and abilities.

Disc Golf

Over 20 percent of our public survey respondents, which received almost 350 responses, said they participate in disc golf at Mississippi River County Park. There were also almost 70 write-in comments related to expanding the existing disc golf course at Mississippi River County Park or adding disc golf to Bend in the River Regional Park. As traditional leisure activities, such as golf and tennis, are declining in participation numbers, many non-traditional and lower cost recreational activities, such as disc golf, paddling, and geocaching, are giving people new ways to enjoy the outdoors. These activities offer participants the opportunity to enjoy beautiful natural settings while also participating in a sport with a group or individually. The Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA) says disc golf is designed to be enjoyed by people of all ages, gender identity, and economic status, making it a great lifetime fitness activity. Because disc golf is so easy to learn, no one is excluded; players merely match their pace to their capabilities and proceed from there.



Image Source: <https://www.visitstcloud.com/things-disc-golf-courses-multiple/>



Image Source: Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

River Trails

Mississippi River County Park contains a campsite meant for paddlers who are navigating the Mississippi River over all or a portion of its course. Interest was expressed from the public and Park Commissioners to expand opportunities to utilize the state water trail and to connect from one side of the river to the other by paddling. Water based recreation is special for many Minnesotans, but in recent years kayaking and canoeing technologies have improved to make boats more user friendly, affordable, and efficient. With these improvements has come a renewed interest in water trails. These are formalized routes that include the necessary infrastructure to allow for both short and long trips on the water. Campgrounds, launches, portages, signage, and mapping can all facilitate a better experience. Minnesota has designated the Mississippi as a State Water Trail from Itasca all the way down to Iowa, and many people continue the trip paddling the entire 2,350 miles to the Gulf of Mexico.



Image Source: The Great River Archery Club

Archery

The existing archery range receives approximately 20,000 visits per year, based on car counters utilized by Stearns County. T.H.E. Great River Archery Club is a partner of the Stearns County Parks Department; the club is active, organized, and has a demand for expanded facilities and programs. Archery is a popular recreational activity, both among hunters as well as those who simply like to shoot at targets. It supports the development of hand/eye coordination, upper body strength, and is a ton of fun! The activity can be done alone, on one's own time, or in groups as part of a competition. For those archers that hunt, year-round continual practice is important to stay skilled enough to be able to harvest animals in season. This means taking time to keep shooting during the off-season.

Events

Throughout the public and stakeholder input, the Take a Day Off Event was mentioned several times as a great event that was discontinued but should be brought back to the park. Several non-profit organizations who currently partner with Stearns County Parks have expressed interest in assisting with the Take a Day Off Event or with planning and organizing other types of classes, programs, and events in the park. Parks and recreation facilities are now being developed with placemaking at the forefront of the design. This approach considers the potential for events, gathering spaces, festivals, and entertainment. While parks do not have to be actively programmed all the time, it is better to design with the flexibility to accommodate events. Parks can be important places for families, teams, classes, and communities to make memories and enjoy programs. These events can also be a source of revenue, and contribute to the area's cultural and social identity.



Image Source: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/rivers/national-water-trails-system.htm>



The historic farmstead at Bend in the River Regional Park has been a popular backdrop for photography.
Image Source: Benton County

Unique Experiences

The public and Park Commissioners expressed their interest and desire to highlight the importance of the Mississippi River and natural area preservation in the park. The views from the park show an undeveloped river, which is a unique site as the river continues to develop around St. Cloud. As social media becomes more popular, and more visual, parks are being used to deliver unique, "share-worthy" experiences. These experiences can include distinctive programming or events, features like overlooks that highlight incredible views and photo opportunities, and the provision of unique activities that people may not get elsewhere. Using social media to promote outdoor recreation can attract more users to a park, who can in turn promote the area even more.



Image Source: <https://www.landscapearchitectureprojects.com/projects/2018/8/8/centenary-lakes-nature-play>

Nature Play

The public input and Park Commissioner input included the desire to make play equipment in the park unique, flexible for several active play experiences, and nature-based. Many park users are becoming more interested in nature-based play. Moving beyond playgrounds of highly structured play options, nature play offers kids the opportunity to get dirty, creative, and interact with natural elements. Play features made of wood, stone, water, plants, soil, or sand help to facilitate imaginative play and connections to nature. By creating less structured play options, children strengthen skills such as observation and problem solving, leading to improved confidence, independence, and stewardship of the environment.



***The complex offers
a wide range of
experiences, from
highly programmed
to remote and
undeveloped.***





PUBLIC INPUT

Summary of Public Engagement

The master planning process for the Great River Park Complex consisted of public engagement methods that were focused on digital and online input due to the fact that it took place during the spring of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was in its beginning stages.

- Phase 1 Engagement (Issues + Opportunities)
 - An **online survey** (Survey Monkey) was open from April 27-May 19, 2020. The survey asked how often the respondent visited the parks, which activities the user engaged in at the parks, which improvements were desired, and where the respondent traveled from to get to the parks.
 - An **interactive mapping tool** (Social Pinpoint) asked respondents to place comments on a map of the park indicating features that they liked, great views, connection opportunities, ideas for improvement, and areas of concern. The mapping tool was open from April 27-May 19, 2020.
 - A virtual **stakeholder meeting** was held in order to gather input from invited organization representatives regarding future park improvements. The meeting was held on May 7, 2020, with 11 attendees.
 - A virtual meeting with the **Stearns County Park Commission** was held on May 13, 2020. Commissioners were presented with an overview of the master planning process, a summary of public input, and asked to offer their input on the initial master plan recommendations.
 - A virtual meeting was held with the **Benton County Park Commission** on May 18, 2020. Commissioners were presented with an overview of the master planning process, a summary of public input, and asked to offer their input on the initial master plan recommendations.
- Phase 2 Engagement (Review Draft Concept Plan)
 - An **online survey** (Survey Monkey) was open from May 20-27, 2020. The survey asked people to review the draft master plan and rank the recommendations by priority level.
 - An **interactive mapping tool** (Social Pinpoint) asked respondents to place comments on the concept master plan indicating recommendations that they liked, concerns they had, and other ideas to consider. The mapping tool was open from May 20-27, 2020.
 - A virtual meeting with the **Stearns County Park Commission** was held on May 28, 2020, to review the Draft Master Plan.
 - A virtual meeting was held with the **Benton County Park Commission** on May 27, 2020, to review the Draft Master Plan.
 - A virtual meeting with the Stearns County Board was held on June 2, 2020, to review and approve the Master Plan.



PUBLIC OUTREACH

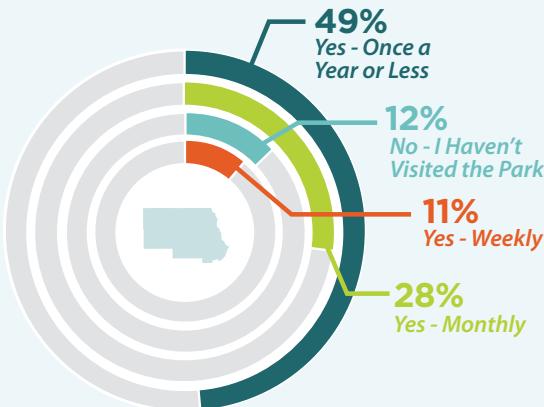
In order to promote the engagement methods, outreach included:

- Direct emails to stakeholder groups
- Direct mailing to property owners near Mississippi River County Park
- Social media announcements on the Counties' Facebook pages
- Counties' websites
- Press release
- Word of mouth

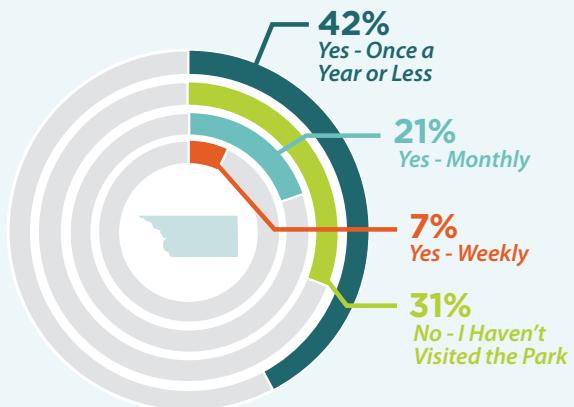
Survey Monkey: Phase 1

An **online survey** (Survey Monkey) was open to the public from April 27-May 19, 2020. The survey asked ten multiple choice questions with the option to write in other answers. The survey received over 300 responses. Overall, respondents indicated a high interest in hiking, nature viewing, and expanded trails in the park.

Have you visited Mississippi River County Park in Stearns County?



Have you visited Bend in the River Park in Benton County?



How do you think the two parks should be linked?

17% Other

More Camping

Foot Bridge

Guided Nature

Mobile Nature Tours

More Trails

Ski Bridge

Allow Horses

38%
Signage and Interpretation

56%
More River Overlooks

39%
Events Throughout the Year That Involve Both Parks

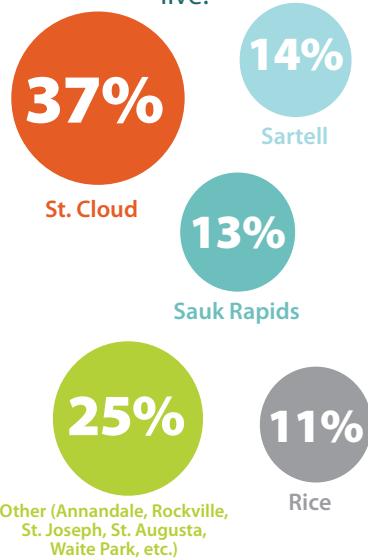
49%
Canoe/Kayak Rental with Boat Landings on Either Side of the River to Paddle Between Them

What activities do you engage in at the parks?



Other:
Biking **Events**
4-Wheeling
Birding **Mountain Biking**
Geocaching
Snow Shoeing

In order to understand how far people travel to get to the parks, please tell us where you live:



What improvements would you like to see at Mississippi River County Park?



What improvements would you like to see at Bend in the River Park?



Social Pinpoint: Phase 1

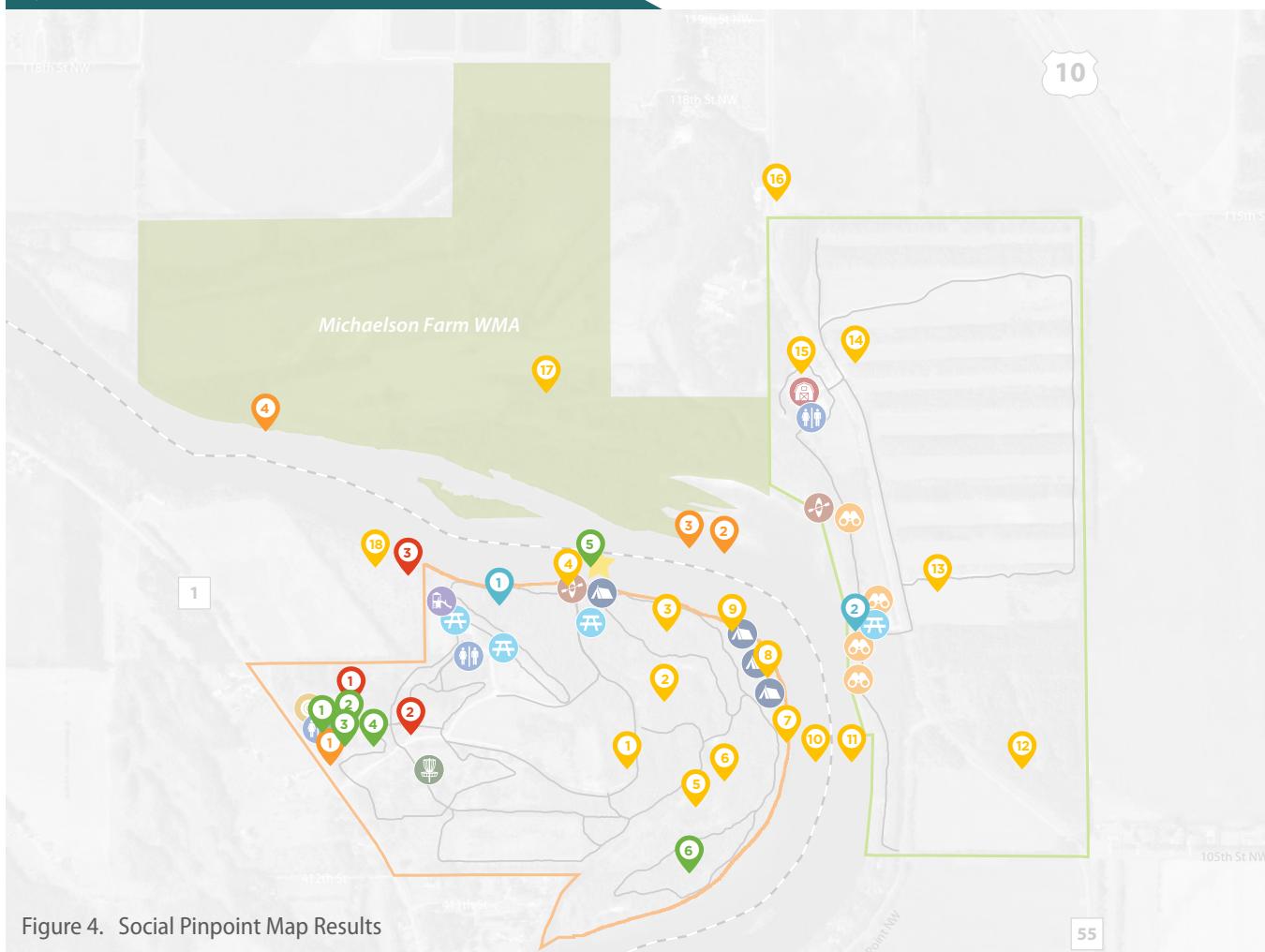


Figure 4. Social Pinpoint Map Results

		LOVE THIS	COMMENT
#	BOOST		
1			There have been over 20,000 visits to the archery complex. The archery ranges are greatly appreciated and heavily used. The family friendly tournaments are fun and well attended by families.
2	3		The Archery Range is an awesome feature of the park and I use it often. It would be great if we could get an expanded course in the woods.
3			The addition of a multipurpose indoor facility will greatly increase the four season use of the park. It will provide not only an indoor archery range, it will also allow provide a large class room for hunter safety education and other organizational meetings.
4			Got engaged here while off trail snowshoeing eleven years ago. He fell over on the first attempt of one knee on a snowshoe, then success! Much laughter in the memories
5			Love the new Boat Landing!
6	+3		Excellent trails along the Mississippi River backwaters. Watch for turtles sunning on logs. Tons of waterfowl!

GREAT VIEW		
#	BOOST	COMMENT
1	+1	Beautiful view looking up the river!
2	+1	These really are great viewing spots
AREA OF CONCERN		
#	BOOST	COMMENT
1	+4 -2	With the plan for increased expansion of the Archery range, 3D Course, potential indoor facility, etc. we expect increased park usage, which is great, just want to be mindful to limit the encroachment or displacement of other activities within the park like disc golf and hiking.
2	+1 -2	Entry road could benefit from dust control.
3	-1	This land is for sale. This is a critical opportunity lost if not acquired to expand the park.
CONNECTION OPPORTUNITY		
#	BOOST	COMMENT
1	1	The outdoor archery range is excellent but an indoor facility would offer year round education and multi-purpose use. Also found the 3-D archery shoots an added benefit and fun competition.
2	-1	Winter Snowshoeing?
	+3 -1	kayak route between the park
3	+1	There are two land parcels totaling 251 acres of public hunting grounds that are connecting Bend in the River Park, west toward the river. Why cant trails be extended into this section. They would be closed of during hunting season. Maybe two river campsites could be added here to help connect with the the river campsites across the river.
IDEA FOR IMPROVEMENT		
#	BOOST	COMMENT
1	+5	I would like to see better signage for points of interest. For example, there are woodland flowers that could be identified.
2	+1	Please keep cross country ski trails intact
3		Buckthorn management is needed. It's not severe yet, which makes this a great opportunity. Willing to volunteer to help.
4		Can be tight to launch 2 foot peddle kayaks from side of boat landing. Especially in high water.
5	+3	A new out-and-back trail between these backwaters would be welcomed
6	+2	Definitely need trail improvement during high water/rainy periods. Trail footpath damage/erosion when too much traffic in mud
7	+2 -1	Add a kayak and canoe launch t connect both parks by river
8	+1 -1	Agreed about the need for camping marketing. Are reservations needed? Is it FCFS? Can you only camp if you're canoeing? ...
9	+5	The riverside camp sites are fantastic but could benefit from improved "marketing". Many people probably have no idea they exist. The entire hiking/skiing trail along the river is gorgeous and educating the public about it would bring more people to the park.
10	+4	How would there be a way to connect the two parks without having to drive around? Is there an easy way possible without having to go on the water? A walking bridge across the water. Nothing for motorized vehicles!

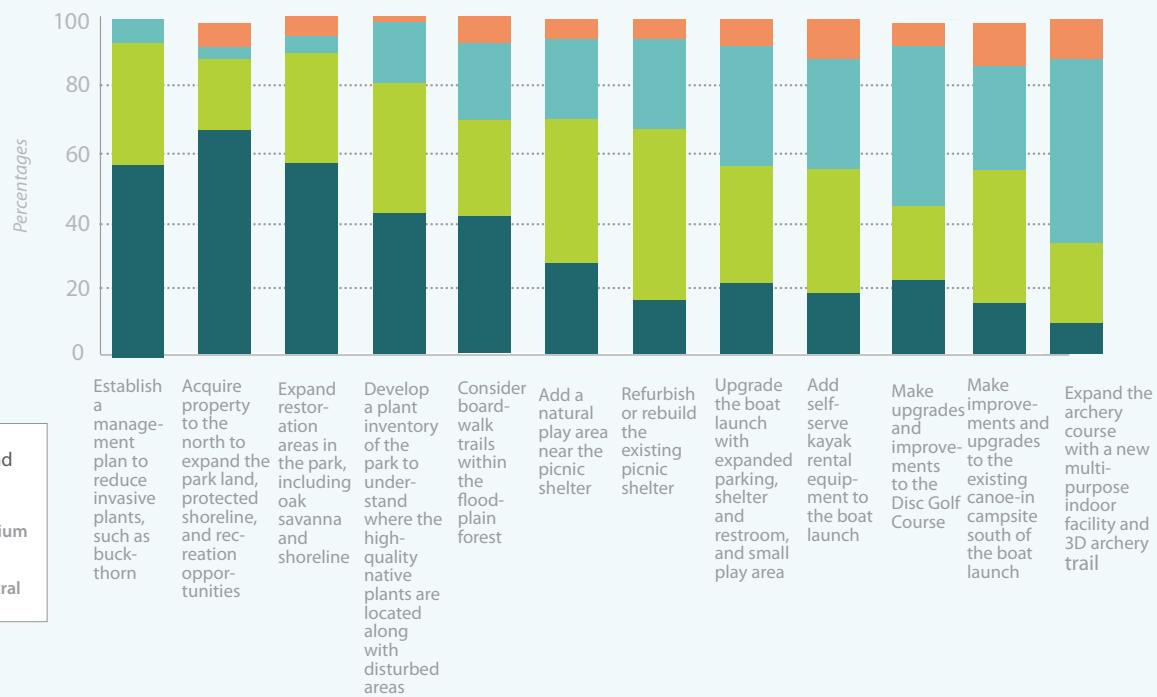
11	+1 -1	Add a kayak launch and canoe launch on both sides of river to connect parks.
12	+3	If this almost 40 acre unused parcel of land is already owned by the County Park, then why not use the land for expanding the trails? The concept with the picture attached shows a road crossing at the straightest section of the road for cars sight, plus there are already three other road crossings so it's hard to make the argument that it would be to dangerous to cross.
13	+1 -1	Additional trails at BITR Park
14	+4 -1	Simple picnic tables and a stand up grill would be a great addition near the parking areas.
15	+5 -1	This shed made out of old railroad car doors has to be extremely rare and unique, with historic connections of using improvised materials to build with during the depression times. It would be such a loss if it were to get damaged from roof collapse during a heavy snow event. Could it get supported from the inside to help prevent this from happening?
16	+1	Would like a walking/bike trail to Rice from Bend In The River County Park.
17	+3	There are two land parcels totaling 251 acres of public hunting grounds that are connecting Bend in the River Park, west toward the river. Why can't trails be extended into this section. They would be closed off during hunting season. Maybe two river campsites could be added here to help connect with the river campsites across the river.
18	+8 -1	It would be fantastic to acquire additional land along the river to expand the riverside trail.



Survey Monkey: Phase 2

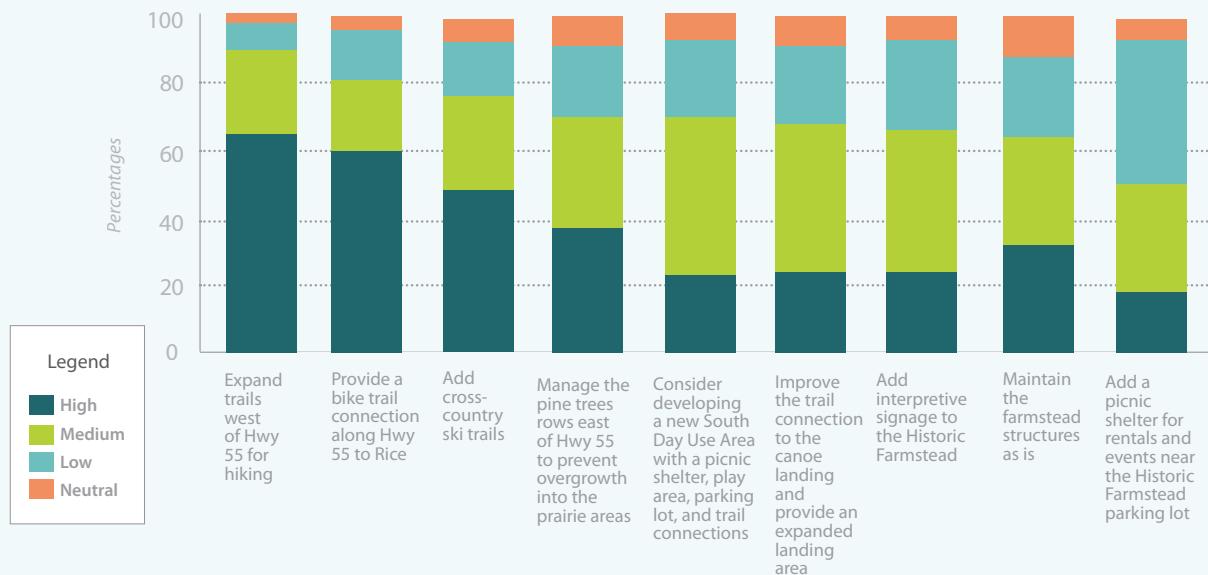
An **online survey** (Survey Monkey) was open to the public from May 20-27, 2020. The survey asked about priority levels for proposed park improvements. There were 67 responses to the survey.

The following list includes recommendations for improvements within Mississippi River County Park in Stearns County. Please select what you feel the priority levels are for each of the following recommendations.



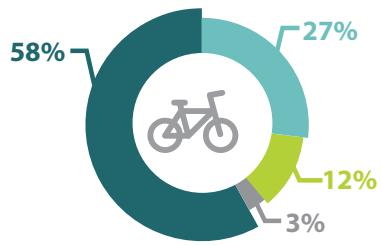


The following list includes recommendations for improvements within Bend in the River Regional Park in Benton County. Please select what you feel the priority levels are for each of the following recommendations.

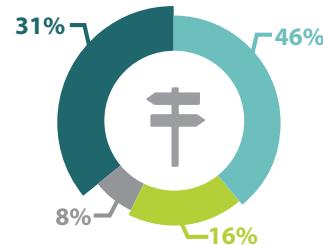


The following list includes recommendations for providing connections within the Great River Park Complex. Please select what you feel the priority levels are for each of the following recommendations.

Develop a bike loop route that connects Sartell, both parks, and Rice (approximately 24 miles)



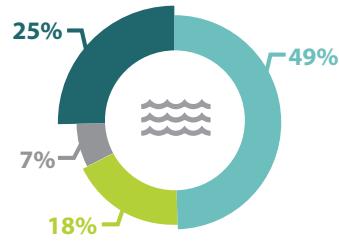
Provide interpretive signage at both parks that links the parks through stories, trails, and wayfinding information



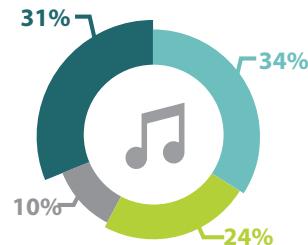
Provide marketing and promotion of the natural resource value and recreational opportunities of the Great River Park Complex and its connection to the Michaelson Farm WMA



Provide a kayak/canoe water trail between the Miss. River Co. Park boat launch and Bend in the River Park canoe landing: Identify and promote it with signage, marketing, and amenities



Plan and host events that involve both parks and the river



What are other ideas that are not listed above that you think should be considered?

“

The river flood plain area on the southern path of Mississippi River Park does get flooded and soggy during times of the year, but would the CC ski groomer be able to operate on a boardwalk? I think some bio-engineered landscaping and possibly one or two culverts in priority areas might work for trial improvements and be groomer friendly.

I would like to see the Archery Center include some multiuser features, such as a door to the outside that would provide access to a place for skiers to warm up or change clothes. An area that could be used by other group events would be great too.

Naturalist-led hikes.

Promote a native edible landscape along the walking trails.

Re-establish historic landcover from tallgrass prairie, oak savannah, pine-forest, upland hardwoods, to riparian timber. Extensively manage all areas for native species. Conduct timber stand improvement to improve spacing in forest. Prescribed fire in prairie and savannah areas. Invasive species removal across all park areas. Connect everything with multi-use trails.

A walking/biking bridge between the two parks over the river.

Disc golf on the Benton County side.

A fish cleaning station and invasive species education site for aquatic and plant species to educate hikers, boaters and fisherpersons.

Put the Farmstead at BITR on the National Register of historic places to obtain funding for its stabilization. It's eligible. Protect the farmstead from commercialization and modern buildings on its premises. Develop the picnic shelter and playground at the very south end of the park so it doesn't erode the historic quality of the farmstead area.

Garbage cans and recycle bins. Wherever there is a picnic area it usually ends with a mess of garbage.

It would be very neat if Stearns County Parks could develop a Junior Ranger program for kids (similar to National Parks) to get families into the parks to learn and recreate. Also, a program with local school districts to exploit the living history of the farm could make this park important for cost-effective field trips to study Minnesota history as well as wildlife.

Improve trails and manage tick populations as best you can.

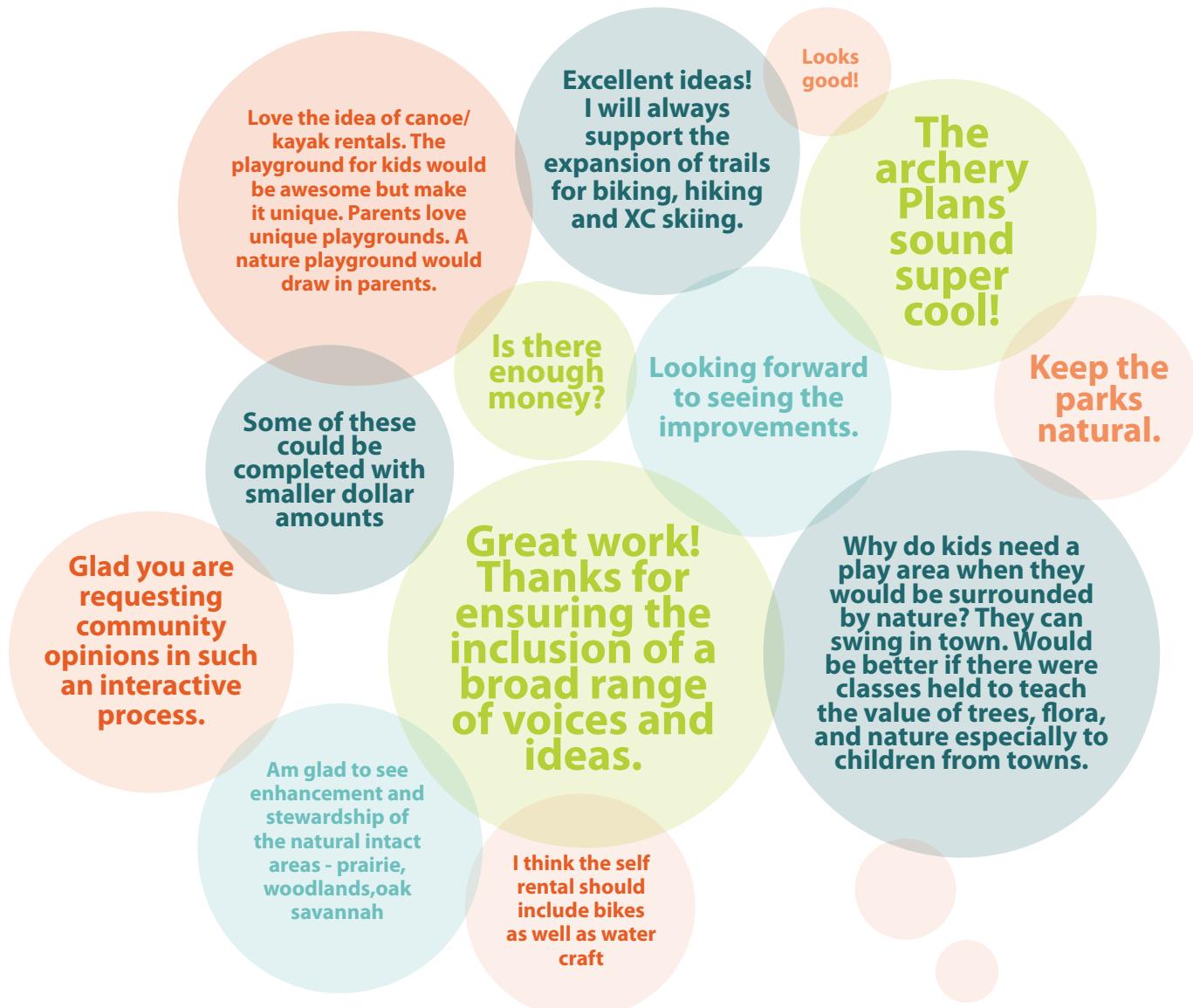
Maybe a nice off leash dog park/walking area.



”



Please list any other comments you have on the Draft Concept Plan for the Great River Park Complex.



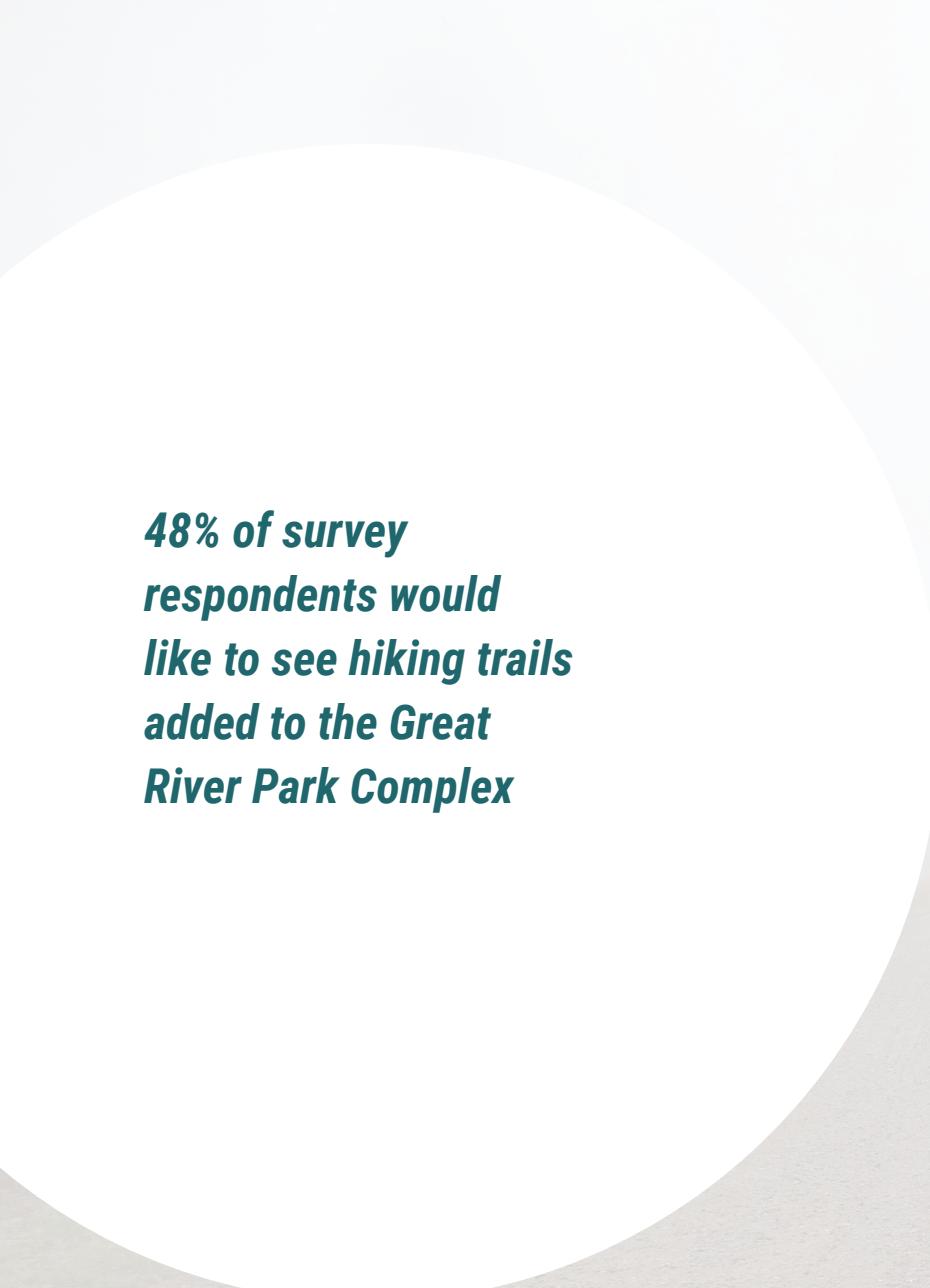
📍 Social Pinpoint: Phase 2



Figure 5. Social Pinpoint Map Results Phase 2

LOVE THIS		
#	BOOST	COMMENT
1	+2	I think it is a great idea to add trails or an overlook into this area
2		Make sure
3	+1 -1	Great wooded Disc Golf Course. Especially Holes 7 thru 16, because they utilize the natural terrain and tree lines. Requested improvements, which would drive increased play: - Permanent Tee Pads (Either Cement, Brick or other) - Approximately \$5,000 - \$6,000 would buy 18 Tournament caliber Baskets and transform this course into a Destination
4	+1	Some type of restroom would be a great idea
5		I like the idea of additional recreation in this area
6	+1	Expanding the trails to this large unused area of the park is a great idea
7	+1	Make a bike trail from Sartell
8	+1	I like the idea of increasing the interpretive/education signs and preserving the buildings.
9	+1	I think expanding the trails is a great idea. I don't know what tree management (cutting the trees down in areas) would accomplish if the current trails do not even go under the tree canopy in the first place?
10	+1	I like the idea of expanded trails

OTHER IDEAS TO CONSIDER		
#	BOOST	COMMENT
1		How would a kayak/canoe rental system work out? Would there have to be a paid county employee to manage the rental system? And if so would this person have to be liable as a lifeguard then? I love canoeing and kayaking on the river and am all for getting more people involved in the recreation of it, but am just thinking of the logistics and expense of it.
2	+1 -1	I like the idea of having trails through here to connect this large unused section of the park, but with a parking lot and picnic area already just 1500 ft up the road I think it would make more sense to plan for any playground equipment in that already built and designated area. It would be much cheaper to not build another parking lot And would be safer having it on the long straight road. Does this park need three parking lots?
3	+1	Not appropriate to put new construction, ie picnic shelter or playground equipment in the Farmstead area. This would destroy the historic value of the farmstead, These are not just interesting buildings, this is a historic site. eligible for Natl. Register, which should not be threatened by modern additions. In 2005, it won one of MN's top ten endangered places. It's endangered now by possible new construction. Consult with MN Historical Soc. before changing anything in the Farmstead area.



**48% of survey
respondents would
like to see hiking trails
added to the Great
River Park Complex**





DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

Existing Features

The Great River Park Complex is one of few public spaces in the region offering undeveloped Mississippi River frontage and high river bluff views. Given the Complex's emphasis on nature and low-intensity development, park users can enjoy an escape from urban environments to a place that is truly peaceful.

Bend in the River Regional Park offers over a half mile of incredible views of the Mississippi River. With 289 acres of land, it provides visitors the opportunity to hike through riverside forest, restored prairie, and visit a historic homestead. It is also a great place to watch birds migrating. With the Michaelson Farm WMA to the northwest, wildlife movement is abundant and can include: deer, small game, upland birds, pheasant, waterfowl, and turkey.

Mississippi River County Park has over five miles of looping trails that intertwine between lowland river wetlands, mixed forest, and restored oak savanna. The park offers a variety of activities for all ages, abilities and experience levels including but not limited to: hiking, archery, disc golf, fishing, snow shoeing, and cross-country skiing. Picnic facilities allow for different size gatherings to spend time together outside. Restroom amenities are scattered throughout the park. Future amenities may include another shelter down by the boat landing. The public/private partnership with the T.H.E Great River Archery group and the construction of indoor and outdoor archery facilities will welcome additional park visitors and fill a gap of needed space for this lifetime sport.

Accessibility

Most developed facilities within the park complex are constructed of natural surfaces and are not fully accessible to those visitors in wheelchairs or with other mobility limitations. Many of the trails are on even, level terrain which makes them accessible for most visitors. As new facilities are developed, efforts will be made to include accessibility for all ages and abilities. For example, the proposed archery center and trail will be built to accommodate all potential users and visitors, including handicapped and disabled archers.

EXISTING FEATURES

Bend in the River

Regional Park

- Benches
- Historic Farmstead
- Hiking trails
- Interpretive signage
- Picnic area
- Parking
- Restroom
- River overlooks
- Prairie overlooks
- Prairie restoration areas

Mississippi River County Park

- Archery range
- Boat launch (motorized and non-motorized)
- Bicycle campsite
- Canoe campsite
- Cross country ski trails
- Disc Golf course
- Fat tire biking in winter
- Fishing from shore
- Group campsite
- Hiking trails
- Natural Surface trails
- Picnic area
- Picnic shelter (Reservable)
- Play equipment
- Prairie restoration areas
- Restroom (vault toilet)
- Riverbank stabilization
- Snowshoeing

Existing Park Features



Historic Farmstead



Disc golf course



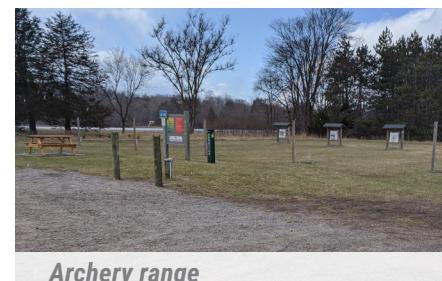
Mississippi River views



Boat launch



Hiking trails



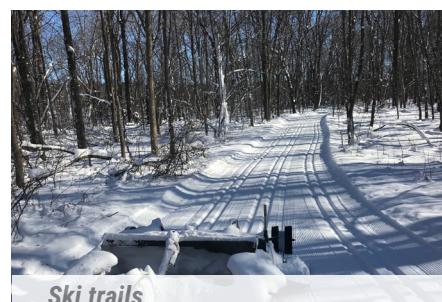
Archery range



Overlooks



Picnic shelter



Ski trails



Interpretive signage



Parking lot



Restroom



Play area



Restroom



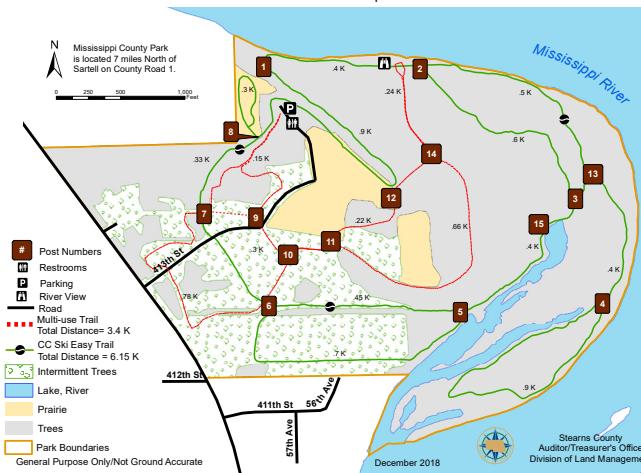
Prairie restoration



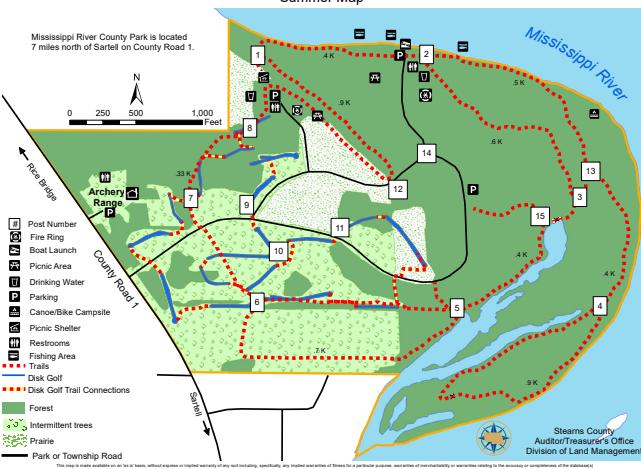
Figure 6. Existing Conditions Map

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Mississippi River County Park Winter Map



Mississippi River County Park Summer Map



Mississippi River County Park

The park was acquired in 1973 and covers 230 acres with 1.3 miles of Mississippi River shoreline. The park is popular with Sartell residents and regionally for cross-country skiers.

There are no known historical sites in the park, some archaeological work was done as part of the recent shoreline restoration project but was limited to the project area near the boat landing.

Recent and upcoming investments:

- Archery range, developed in partnership with archery club and eagle scout project.
- The County received \$130K for riverbank restoration completed in 2018. Project included shoreline approximately 400 feet upstream and 400 feet downstream from the existing boat launch.
- Ongoing natural resource restoration projects
- In partnership with the County SWCD, there is \$60-70K available for habitat restoration in the park (likely Oak Savanna type restoration)

Disc Golf Course

The course was installed as a 12 hole layout in 2004, and designed by Tim Mackey, Tim Schreder, and Greg Stein. Used and donated baskets were installed for the course. This was the first Stearns County disc golf course. The course was expanded to an 18 hole course in 2013, and designed by Tim Mackey using both used and donated baskets.

The course is used for recreational, league, tournament, and special events; and it is a great facility for all ages, offering outdoor activities year round.

Bend in the River Park

The park was purchased in 2002 for \$2.1 million (\$800K was from grants with the remainder from County bonding) from the family of a local veterinarian, Dr. Graves, who wanted to preserve the land for parks and open space; his family's homestead still exists in the park. The buildings are currently being maintained in their original state. There are significant barriers to accessibility in the structures, most notable the two-story farmhouse.

The park has become a popular spot for photos—the farm buildings have been used as a backdrop for portrait photography (graduations, engagements, family photos, etc.)

Recent investments at the park include:

- Overlooks and trails, funded through Legacy grants
- Eagle scout projects, such as prairie overlook structures and benches
- A new restroom building was installed near the farm homestead parking lot
- A master plan was completed in 2004; several ideas from that master plan have been incorporated into this plan:
 - *Additional hiking trails*
 - *Cross country ski trails, potentially with lighting*
 - *Playground*
 - *Expanded day use area in the south part of the park – potentially with another restroom*
 - *Add a picnic shelter building near the restroom to host larger gatherings – reunions, weddings, etc.*



PROPOSED FEATURES

Bend in the River Regional Park

- Historic Farmstead interpretation
- Expanded hiking trails
- Picnic shelter
- New day use area with parking, picnic shelter, playground, and trail connections
- Canoe landing improvements
- River overlooks
- Pine tree management

Mississippi River County Park

- Disc Golf course improvements
- Archery course expansion
- Great River Archery Center multi-purpose building
- Picnic shelter improvements
- Nature play area
- Boat launch improvements
- Canoe-in campsite improvements
- Boardwalk trails
- Cross country ski trails
- Oak savanna restoration
- Self-serve kayak rental equipment

Proposed Development

The master plan for the Great River Park Complex includes improvements to existing features within the parks as well as key additions that unite the parks into one park complex across the Mississippi River. Utilizing the river as a part of the park complex offers recreation opportunities that span two counties, various ecosystems, land, and riverine environments. The following pages describe the proposed park improvements in detail.

Several recommendations and improvements will be incorporated throughout the park:

- Bike parking and Mississippi River Trail (MRT) trailhead with bike repair station will be considered at the best possible location for bicyclists. In addition, a 23-mile bike loop from Sartell to Rice with connections to Mississippi River County Park and Bend in the River Regional Park would expand recreation opportunities beyond the park land.
- Interpretive signage on both sides of the river will include information related to the geological and ecological history and existing conditions, the Mississippi River corridor, wildlife, cultural history of the site, and current surrounding land uses.
- Natural resource improvements and projects will ensure the stability of the landscape and value as a wildlife habitat. Projects will include: conduct an inventory of existing high-quality native plant areas and invasive species, recommendations for invasive species management, partnership projects with Stearns Co. SWCD and DNR to protect native species and manage invasives.
- Work with the Great River Archery Center group to identify multi-purpose uses of the proposed new archery facility. Primary winter use of the building will be for indoor archery. However, potential additional uses include: ski warming chalet and ski event location; disc golf course tournament hosting; outdoor education events; youth camps; and location for general park information and interpretation signage.
- The small mouth bass fishery within the Mississippi River should be identified and promoted with signage and marketing.
- Bring back the formerly popular Take a Day Off event and consider the addition of other large public events that offer outdoor recreation and education opportunities.
- Develop a consistent set of wayfinding signage along the trails in both parks.
- Consider the addition of an indoor or outdoor Environmental Learning Classroom—look to Camp Ripley's Environmental Classroom as a precedent.

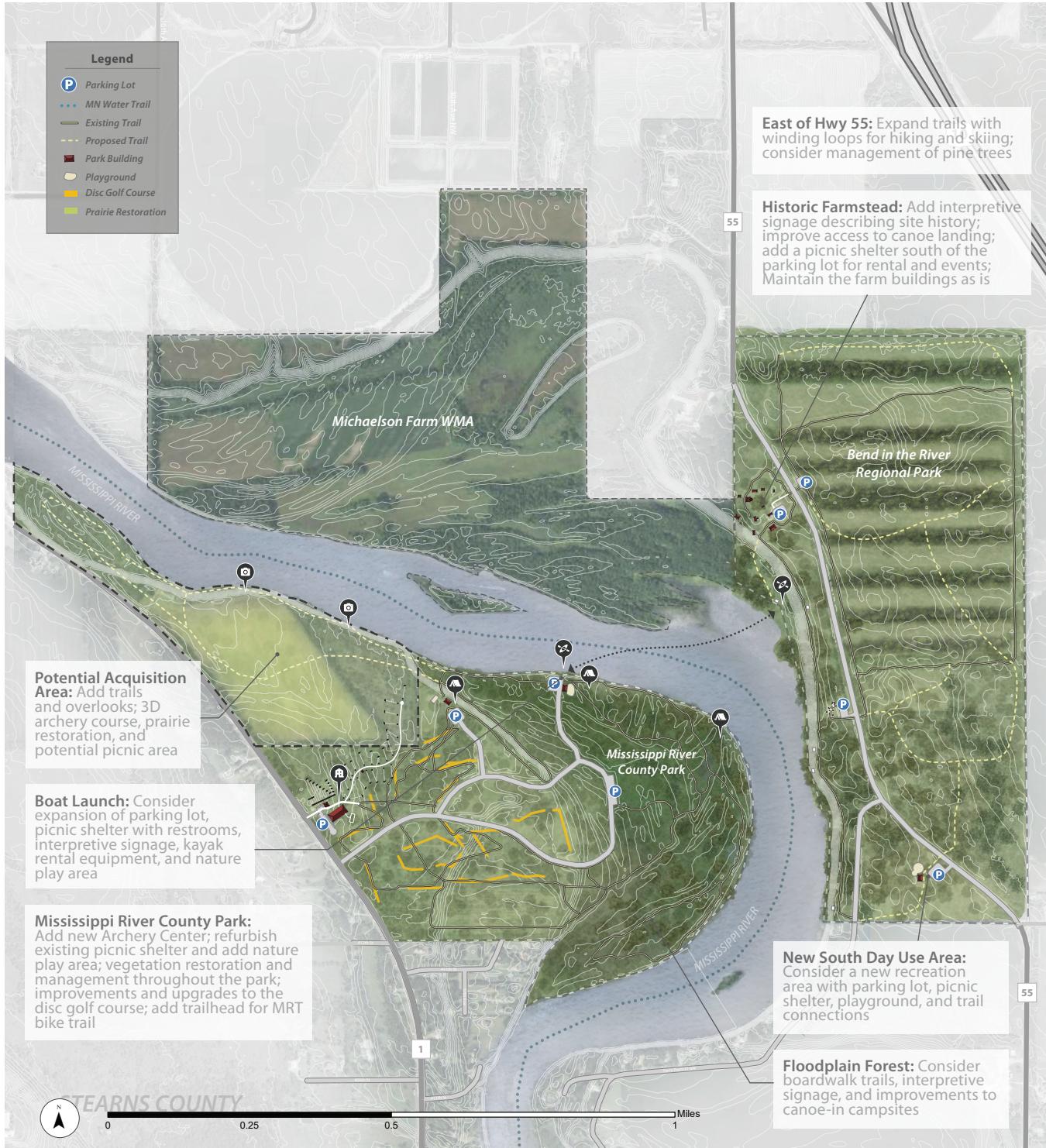


Figure 7. Great River Park Complex Concept Master Plan

Key Connection Opportunities

In order to link the Mississippi River County Park with Bend in the River Regional Park and the Mississippi River to form the Great River Park Complex, the following strategies are recommended:

- Stearns and Benton Counties should partner to plan and host, and encourage other organizations to plan and host, joint events that involve both parks and the river. These events could include outdoor education camps and events, boating and fishing events, historic and cultural events.
- Establish a water trail for paddling between the parks. The Stearns County side of the river should consider installing a self-serve kayak rental equipment station at the boat launch in order to promote short trips up and down river as well as across to Bend in the River Regional Park's canoe landing.
- Plan and design overlooks and interpretive signage along the river to enhance and highlight views of the river, and to interpret the history of the river corridor, the ecology, and the cultural development and protection of the river and the parks.
- Add wayfinding signage at both parks at parking lots, trailheads, and trail intersections with information including maps of the parks, information about the Great River Park Complex, and how to visit the other side of the river.
- Collaborate with the Cities of Sartell and Rice to develop a bike loop route between Sartell, Rice, and both parks. The loop will incorporate portions of the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) bikeway and facilitate biking on road shoulders or on existing or proposed trails. Trailheads should be included in both parks and in the cities of Rice and Sartell. Look into potential designation of the west side of the river as part of the MRT route.

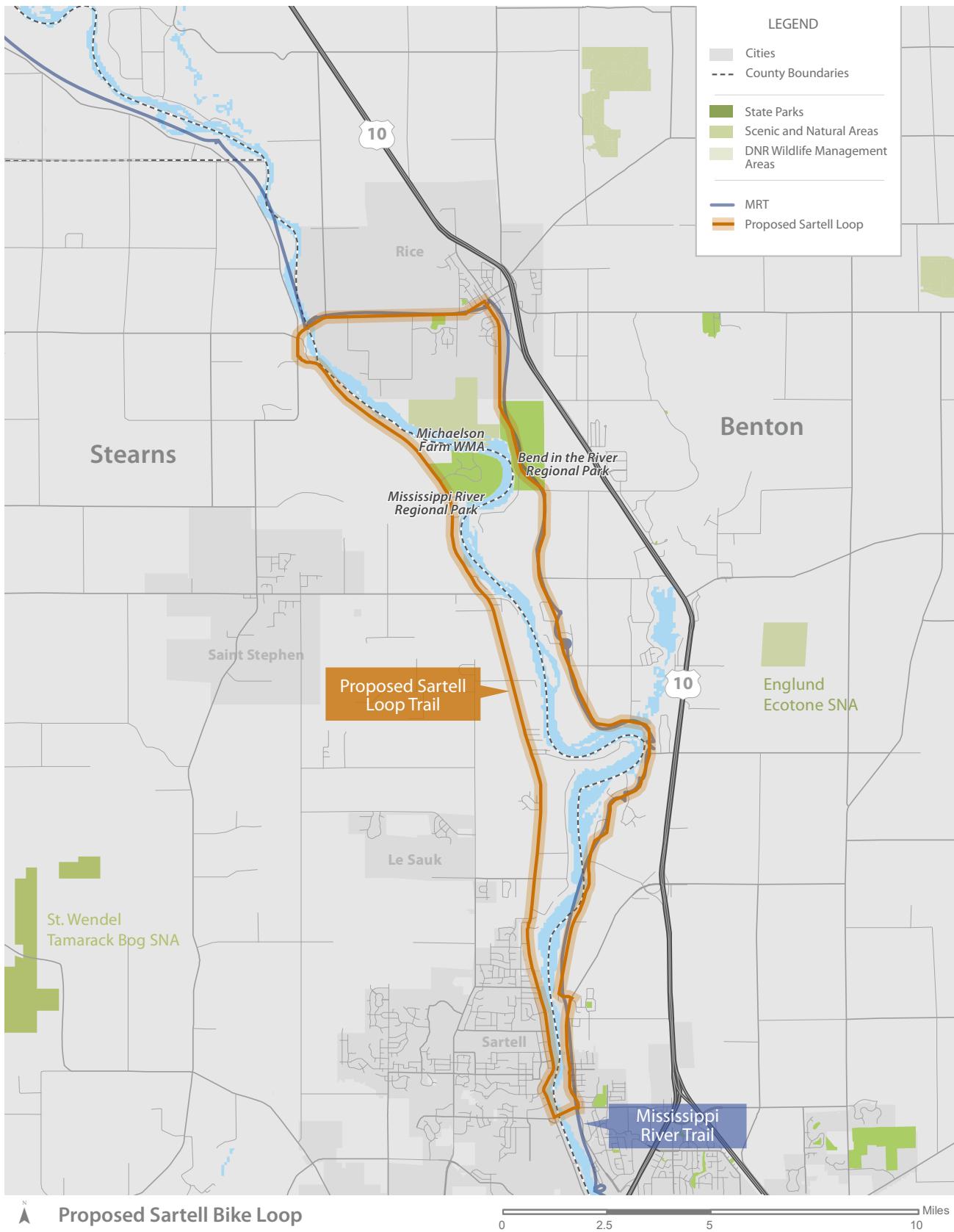


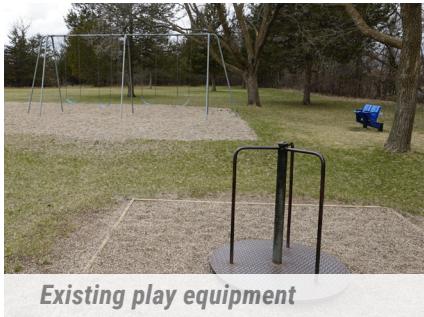
Figure 8. Concept Map for Proposed Sartell to Rice Bike Loop



Existing ski trails



Existing picnic shelter



Existing play equipment

Mississippi River County Park Central Area

Existing recreational facilities within Mississippi River County Park are popular and well-used. These facilities should be maintained, improved, and expanded over time: disc golf course, cross country ski trails, hiking trails, and parking areas.

Suggested disc golf improvements include:

- Enhance the course in order to facilitate existing and future recreational, league, tournament, and special event use.
- Consider improvements in order to ensure that the course is a full service course for all ages and skill levels.
- Engage existing disc golf users and stakeholders on future improvements.

The existing large picnic shelter should be refurbished or rebuilt to better facilitate large events and for rental gatherings. Adjacent to the picnic shelter, the existing play equipment should be replaced with a nature play area that incorporates natural materials and offers interpretation of the surrounding natural environment.

Ongoing vegetation restoration and management of invasive species should continue in partnership with the Stearns County SWCD and the DNR. A future plant inventory would help identify areas that should be protected and areas that should be restored.

Replace existing play equipment with natural play area

Refurbish or rebuild the picnic shelter

Make minor improvements to the disc golf course

Maintain and enhance existing hiking and ski trails over time



Boat Launch

Mississippi River County Park

In order to serve the existing boating community and future motorized and non-motorized boaters, consider expansion of the existing parking lot.

Add a small picnic shelter with indoor restrooms to facilitate events and boaters who may want to have a picnic, use the restroom before or after boating, and for small gatherings. Add a nature play area near the picnic shelter for families using the park.

Consider the addition of interpretive signage to highlight the significance of the small mouth bass fishery in the river, the Mississippi State Water Trail, the water trail route over to the Bend in the River canoe landing, and general boating on the river information and rules.

Install a self serve kayak rental equipment station to offer the opportunity of paddling on the river to those who don't own a boat, don't want to transport their boat, or want to experience kayaking as a new activity. The County would work with an outside vendor to install and operate the paddle share station.



Existing boat launch



Paddle Share station
Image source: nps.gov





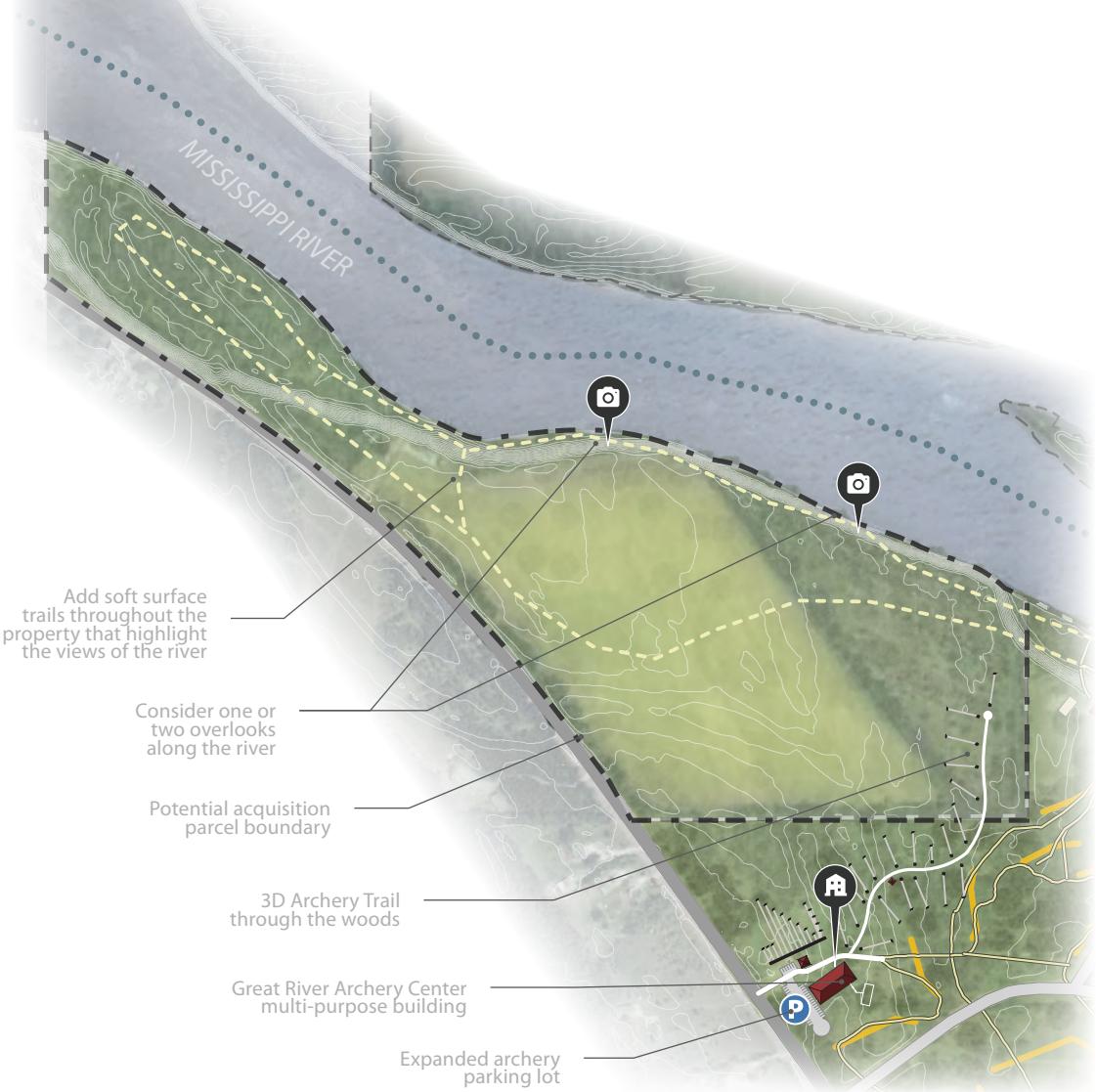
Proposed Archery Center

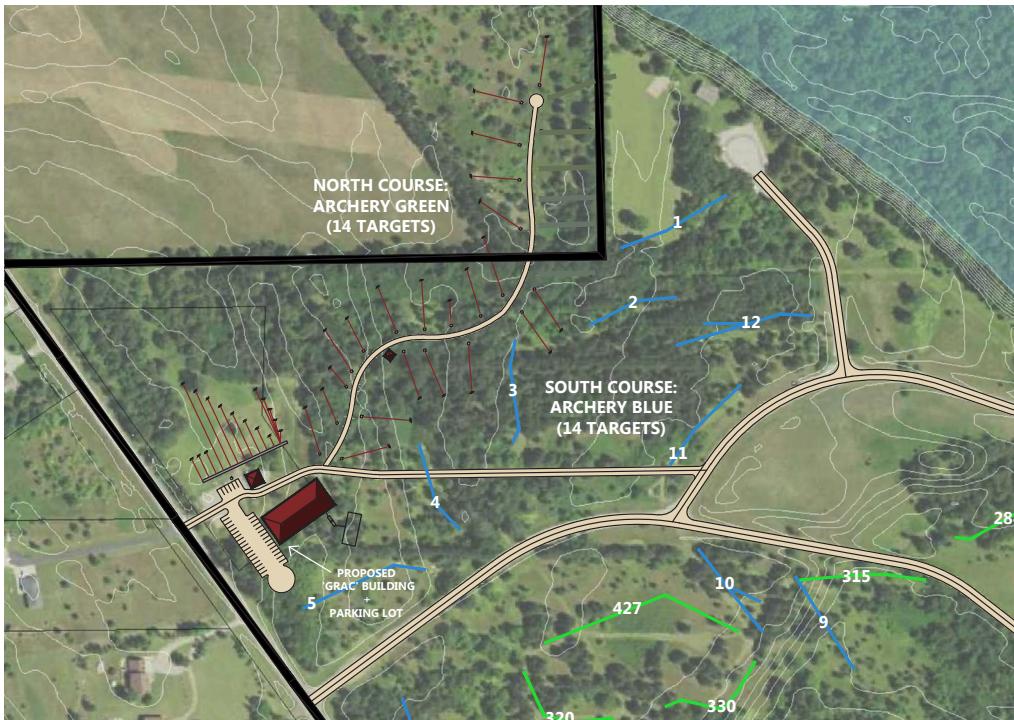
Archery Course and Potential Acquisition Area Mississippi River County Park

Work with the Great River Archery Club to build the Great River Archery Center building. Establish a multi-purpose use for the building with publicly accessible restrooms and entrance area and the opportunity for hosting events and serving as a ski warming shelter.

In the potential acquisition area, add trails and river overlooks. Use a portion of the wooded area on the south part of the parcel for 3D archery trail and course. Convert the crop field to prairie restoration. Consider a small picnic area with views of the river.

Consider integrating a bike trail connection to the MRT off of County Road 1 into the park with a bike trailhead that would include bike parking, benches, signage, water, bike fix-it station, and picnic table. Locate the trailhead in an easily accessible site adjacent to existing parking and restrooms, if possible.





The proposed new Great River Archery Center building and associated outdoor 3D trail should be designed to connect the existing range and new building site through the woods to the north. The trail should avoid conflict with the existing disc golf course holes.



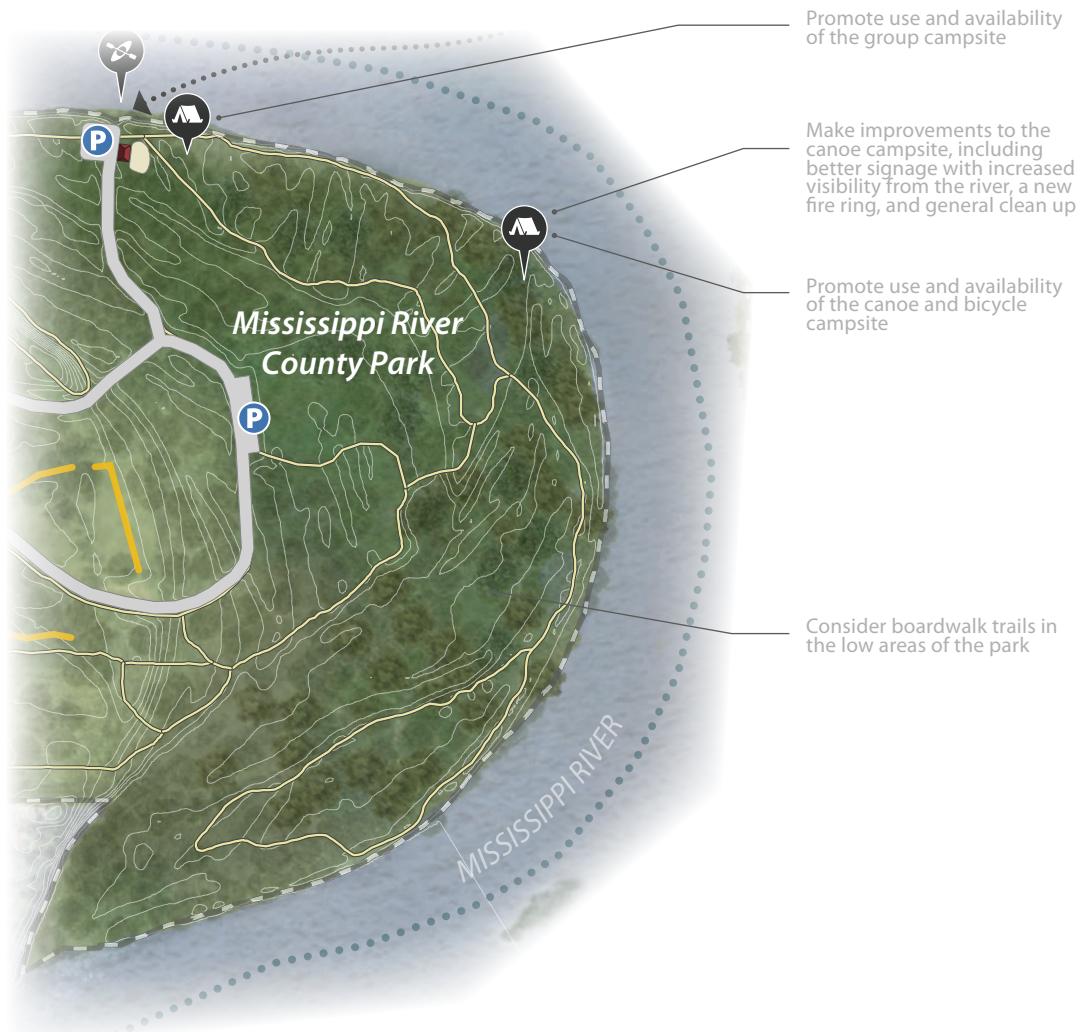
The proposed new Great River Archery Center building would be a multi-purpose building for park users. Primary use would be for indoor archery instruction and practice, but restrooms and the vestibule would be open to the general public, and the building would be available to host events and for a ski warming center.

Floodplain Forest

Mississippi River County Park

Consider boardwalk trails to replace or connect between the existing soft surface trails in the southeastern part of the park. In the spring, high water can make these trails wet and inaccessible. Ensure cross-country ski trails are maintained with any potential boardwalk addition.

Consider interpretive signage along the trails to provide information about spring ephemeral plants to observe and protect within the floodplain. Make improvements to the canoe campsite, including larger signage that is visible from the river to alert canoers and kayaks to the site. The canoe campsite is intended to be used by canoers and kayaks who are travelling along the Mississippi River.



East of Hwy 55

Bend in the River Regional Park

The east side of the park consists of over 200 acres of former farm fields that have been restored to prairie and several pine wind rows. Existing trails are mainly old farm access roads that circumnavigate the fields. The trails could be connected and expanded to include winding loops for hiking and potentially cross-country skiing.

Management of the pine rows should be planned with a certified forester in order to prevent further seeding of trees into the prairie areas.

Consider the addition of amenities to improve the trail experience for all ages, abilities, and types of users. For example, add doggy bag stations for dog walkers who forget to bring bags and to encourage cleaning up after pets. Also, consider installing more benches and trash receptacles along the trails and at trailheads. Work with scout groups and volunteers to install projects as available.

Long term, consider adding a disc golf course and/or an archery range east of Hwy 55. These recreation amenities were identified by current park users as opportunities for improvements to the park, and as potential ways to tie the two sides of the park together. With either addition, the Great River Park Complex could be the site of archery or disc golf events and tournaments that incorporate the two Counties and two sides of the Mississippi. Any future course development must be sensitively designed and incorporated into the existing landscape so as not to disturb hiking trails and native restoration areas.



Historic Farmstead and Mississippi River shoreline *Bend in the River* Regional Park

Continue to maintain the existing farm buildings for visual interest and a memorial to the history of the site. The structures are not planned to be restored or improved for interior access. Add to the existing interpretive signage that explains the history of the site related to agricultural uses and prior to European settlement. See Appendix A for an in-depth summary of the cultural history of the site—an excerpt from the 2005 ***Bend in the River Regional Park Master Plan***.

In order to take advantage of existing parking and restroom facilities, construct a new picnic shelter with access to the farmstead parking lot and restroom building. The structure should be designed to complement the natural beauty of the site and farmstead structures and fit into the existing prairie restoration area.



Add interpretive signage to the farmstead area

Continue to maintain the historic farmstead structures in their current state

Add a large picnic shelter for events and rentals

Improve the trail access to the canoe landing

Improve canoe landing for better visibility from shore and more space for canoes and kayak staging

Provide improved access to the existing canoe landing. Clearly mark the trail from the parking lot to the canoe landing. Provide benches or resting locations along the trail for boaters portaging their boats between the parking lot to the river shore.

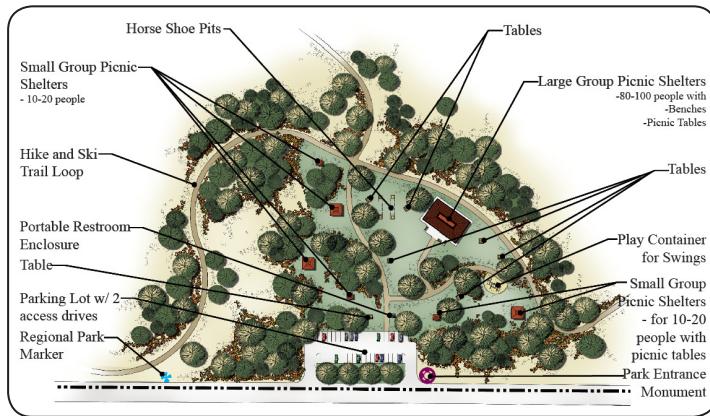
Clear downfalls and brush from the canoe landing to provide more space for launching and landing non-motorized boats. Ensure clear sightlines from the river in order to provide access to canoers and kayaks arriving from Mississippi River County Park.



New South Day Use Area

Bend in the River Regional Park

Consider development of a new recreation area with a parking lot, picnic shelter, nature-themed playground, and trail connections. The southern part of the park is situated between Ferry Point Place NW and Hwy 55 and primarily an open field. A new day use area could provide a trailhead for new trails in the southern and eastern areas of the park and a space for families to have picnics and play outdoors.



The 2005 Bend in the River Regional Park Master Plan included a design of a picnic area along the southern boundary of the park.



Precedent image: Large picnic shelter

Image source: linnparks.com/parks/waterloo/



Precedent image: natural themed playground

Image Source: <https://www.landscapearchitectureprojects.com/projects/2018/8/8/centenary-lakes-nature-play>





Given the Great River Park Complex's emphasis on nature and low-intensity development, park users can enjoy an escape from urban environments to a place that is truly peaceful.





ECOLOGICAL & LAND RESOURCES PLAN

As a natural resources based park, the Great River Park Complex is focused on the management and preservation of ecological habitat, land, and water resources. This emphasis is present both within the park, and as part of a bigger river and migration corridor.

The evaluation of natural resources within the Great River Park Complex included gathering readily available data, such as the Minnesota DNR's Minnesota Land Cover Classification System inventory and the Minnesota County Biological Survey; conducting a site tour and observation of the park; and talking with County staff and park users to understand the existing conditions related to vegetation and ecology.

Regional Context

Anoka Sand Plain

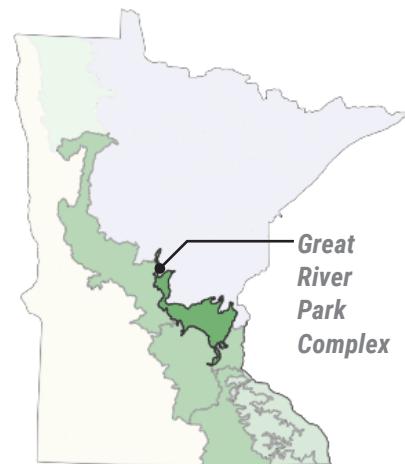
The park sits in the northern leg of the Anoka Sand Plain, an area that is home to some of Minnesota's most important Oak Savanna, floodplain forest, wetlands, rivers, and streams. It is also home to swaths of upland prairie above the river. This creates critical habitat for many plants and animals, including many rare ones.

The area was formed when glacial outwash was deposited by the Mississippi River thousands of years ago as glaciers receded. This left upland soils (Hubbard Loamy Sand) that are sandy, deep, and excessively drained. Soils in the floodplain and bottomlands (Fordum Winterfield Complex) are more recently deposited and are significantly less well drained.

The sandy soils help allow the aquifer to replenish as it serves Central Minnesota and the Twin Cities. These soils also make the aquifer more susceptible to contamination, and protecting against that is key to preserving an important source of drinking water to a large part of the state's population.

Mississippi River Flyway

The park is also part of the Mississippi River Flyway, a migration route for numerous bird species that travel seasonally, some as far as the arctic ocean and the southern tip of South America. Approximately 60% of all migratory birds in North America follow this path including over 325 species. The park complex provides the habitat for birds to rest along their journey, as well as exciting opportunities for bird watchers.



*The Anoka Sand Plain and park location
Map Source: MNDNR*



*The Mississippi River Flyway
Map Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service*



A shoreline stabilization project was recently completed near the boat launch.

The Great River Park Complex Landscape

The park complex, along with the adjacent WMA and proposed acquisition area, consists of 851 acres, and 4.3 miles of Mississippi River shoreline. The land is a mix of types, including:

- Floodplain Forest/Backwaters
- Restored Prairie
- Oak Savanna
- Pine Plantations
- Vegetated Wetlands (WMA)

This mix represents a landscape that has historically served an agricultural purpose and also sits at the intersection of Minnesota's coniferous and deciduous forest biomes with interspersed prairie grassland. The park complex offers an appropriate and unique combination of landscapes that represents three of Minnesota's biomes, as well as the Mississippi River. The combination of the two parks, along with the WMA, give park users a look at the river with an undeveloped backdrop, much like one would have seen centuries ago.

It is the size, the opportunity to preserve and protect over four miles of the Mississippi River shoreline, and the diversity of the ecological landscape that makes the Great River Park Complex a distinguished nature-based park.

Oak Savanna

Oak Savannas occur at the transition zone between the prairies to the west, and the deciduous forests to the east. The oak savanna ecosystem once covered 10% of the state, but has been reduced to less than 1% of its original size.

Historically, the oak savanna would burn from time to time, helping to manage weedy species and slow or stop the succession of the forest. Oak species like the Bur Oak and Northern Pin Oak found in the park complex were able to withstand the fires and survive. Although the savannas are no longer allowed to burn due to lightning or other natural causes, there are prescribed burns that occur in the western sections of the park complex. These burns typically occur every 3-4 years in different areas in different years and are managed by Stearns County. Benton County manages these areas through mowing. In addition to fire and mowing, invasives are managed with spot treatment and pulling. Some of the oak trees in the park complex are over 130 years old.

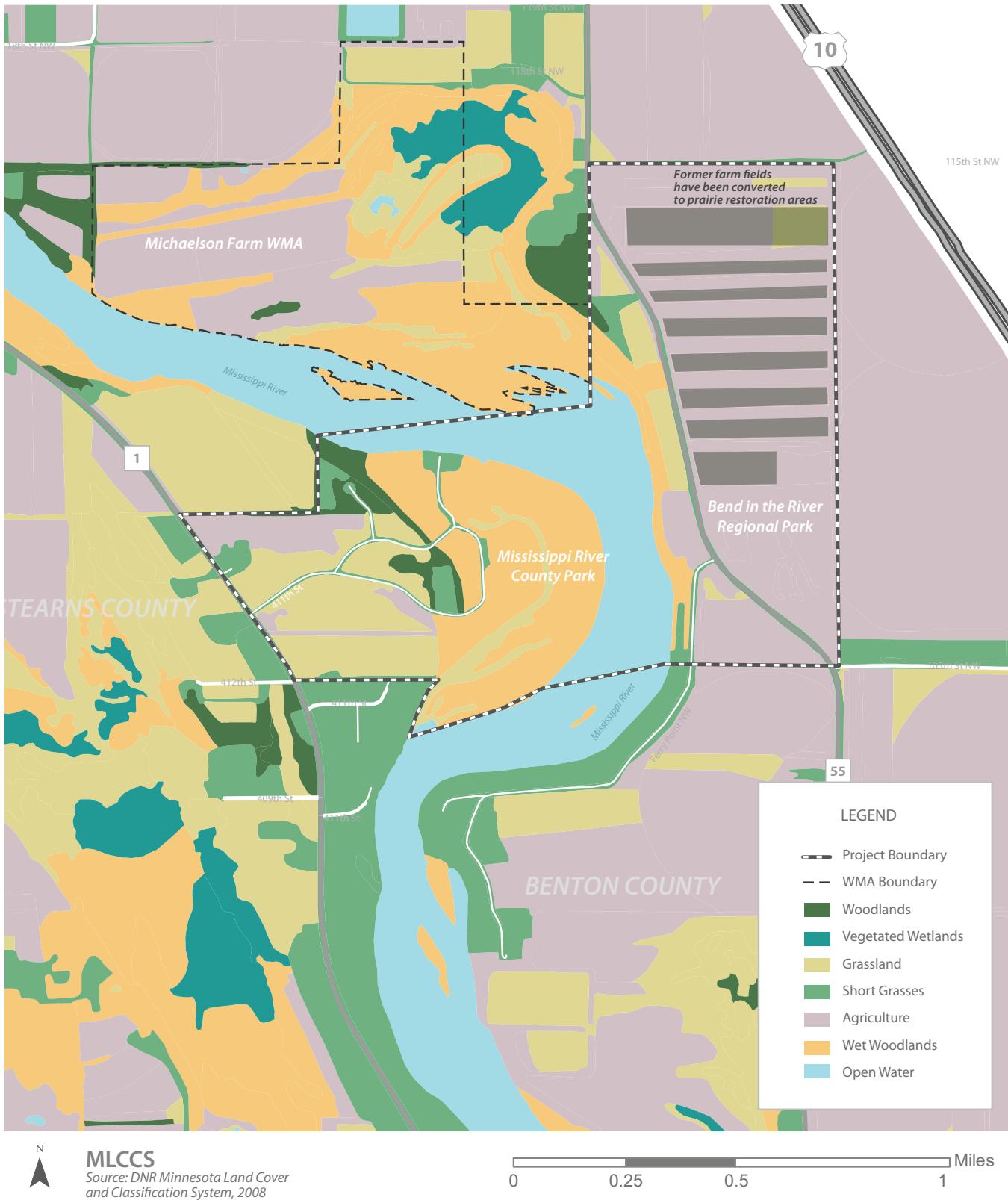


Figure 9. Minnesota Land Cover Classification System

Restored Prairies

Similar to the oak savanna, the prairies historically would burn from time to time. Due to proximity to other landscapes, and the size and shape of the restored prairies, fire has only been incorporated into the management regime in select locations. Instead, annual mowing is done which has similar effects. Goats have also been attempted at this location, although they did not turn out to be as effective for management of the prairie and have since been discontinued as a management method.

The prairie areas on the east side of the river are managed by Minnesota Native Landscapes and Prairie Restorations in partnership with Benton County.

Restoration from Agricultural Uses

The land that is now prairie had functioned as farmland until the mid 2000s, most recently growing corn and soybeans as well as being used for pasture. This means that the restoration of the prairie will take some time as the soils recover and slower plant communities re-establish to the point where they can compete with more quickly establishing species and the forage grasses that were planted on fallow fields. Active management is helping that process along.

Seed Share

While the landscape has been changed back from agricultural uses, the prairies still serve as a “working” landscape. Minnesota Native Landscapes and Benton County collect seeds from the prairies and use them for restoration after construction projects, for the establishment of new prairies, and for use in local and regionally appropriate seed mixes.



Pine Plantations

Rows of planted pines are a reminder of the eastern portion of the complex's history as a working landscape. The Red, Jack, and Scotch Pine, and White Spruce were originally planted as a windbreak to minimize wind and erosion in the farm fields. The fields have since been converted back to prairie, and the pine rows remain. Many of the trees are now 60-80 years old and there are some pockets of mortality within the rows.

To this point, trees have not been managed, except at the edges of the windrows where the pines, particularly the Scotch Pines, are very good at seeding new trees and expanding into adjacent fields. Different approaches have been tried to keep the expansion at bay, including use of goats, but manual cutting and the annual mowing process seems to be the most successful. This regime will be continued moving forward to preserve the open prairie.

The pine-rows have also come to host a number of shrubs, both native and non-native. Invasive Buckthorn and Tatarian Honeysuckle have thrived, but so have native shrubs such as choke cherry, raspberry, and red-berried elder.

Selective harvest of these trees will be difficult. Trees of this age tend not to do well with thinning due to the potential for wind damage when internal trees are exposed to wind for the first time. With that being said, the Scotch Pines present a challenge due to spreading and should be removed at edges and in coordination with trail layouts to leave larger patches of trees.

NATURAL RESOURCES CHALLENGE: BUCKTHORN

Like many areas throughout the state, buckthorn has become an issue and needs to be managed. Current management practices include pulling buckthorn as well as cutting and treating the stumps. A great deal of headway has been made in combatting buckthorn, utilizing staff, volunteers, and sentenced to serve. Heading off the spread is a high priority, as populations within the park complex are still currently manageable, and delays in managing the invasive will likely be more expensive and challenging in the future.



NATURAL RESOURCES CHALLENGE: ZEBRA MUSSELS

The Mississippi River as it passes through the Great River Park Complex is considered a "Designated Infested Water" due to the presence of Zebra Mussels. Zebra Mussels outcompete native species for food sources while also spreading into infrastructure like drainage pipes causing significant damage. The boat ramp on the west side of the park complex has a designated Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) inspection area to ensure that boaters have cleaned their watercraft before going elsewhere and possibly spreading Zebra Mussels or other AIS.



Floodplain Forests

The floodplain forests on both sides of the river are a constantly shifting landscape. While this makes it difficult to develop amenities, it provides a unique look into the power and changing character of the Mississippi River. The land changes as floods bring and remove deposits.

The floodplain forests are made up of overstory trees including silver maples, green ash, cottonwood, hackberry, and box elder. Understory vegetation includes plants that are typically found in wet areas and floodplain forests such as sedges, marsh plants, and nettles. One unique feature of the park complex, especially in the floodplain forest, is the presence of spring ephemeral wildflowers including white trout lily, bloodroot, hepatica, bellworts, dutchman's breeches, anemones and false anemones. Invasive species are also present in these locations, and can be moved downriver in the right conditions, making their management a priority.

Because of the soils and water table, efforts must be made to avoid compaction in these areas. Development such as roads should be minimized and localized to a few strategic locations, considering the impacts of inundation. When larger machinery is required, timing their work with periods when the soils are dry or frozen can help reduce compaction, rutting, and erosion.



Bluffs

The bluffs are a defining characteristic of the park complex on both sides of the river. The views of the Mississippi River from the eastern bluffs are remarkable, as are potential views from the acquisition parcel on the western side of the River. Management of invasives along the bluffs will have the dual effect of improving views while restoring native plant communities. Restoration of those plant communities protects the bluffs from erosion which helps protect water quality here and downstream. Establishing these communities will require a management program including cutting, spot treatments, prescribed burns, native seeding and planting of appropriate native trees and shrubs.

Providing access up and down the bluffs in a sensitive way will help reduce erosion on the bluffs. Both sides of the park have established routes to help reduce the prevalence of unofficial foot paths that follow fall lines down the bluffs. Established routes are located to minimize erosion to the extent possible. These routes could further be improved by continuing maintenance, and utilizing durable surfaces or steps for up and down access.



NATURAL RESOURCES CHALLENGE: EMERALD ASH BORER

Emerald ash borer (EAB) has been found in Stearns County. Although EAB has not been identified in the Great River Park Complex, County staff should proceed with regular surveys for infested trees. If trees are observed to be infected with EAB, they should be removed and replaced with other native species trees, appropriate to the location. This could help slow tree loss, and minimize the impact of all ash trees being lost at once. At this time, the Counties do not anticipate treating with neonicotinoids due to the number of trees, the proximity to open waters, and the susceptibility of contamination to groundwater. Stearns County is a quarantined county for the movement of firewood.



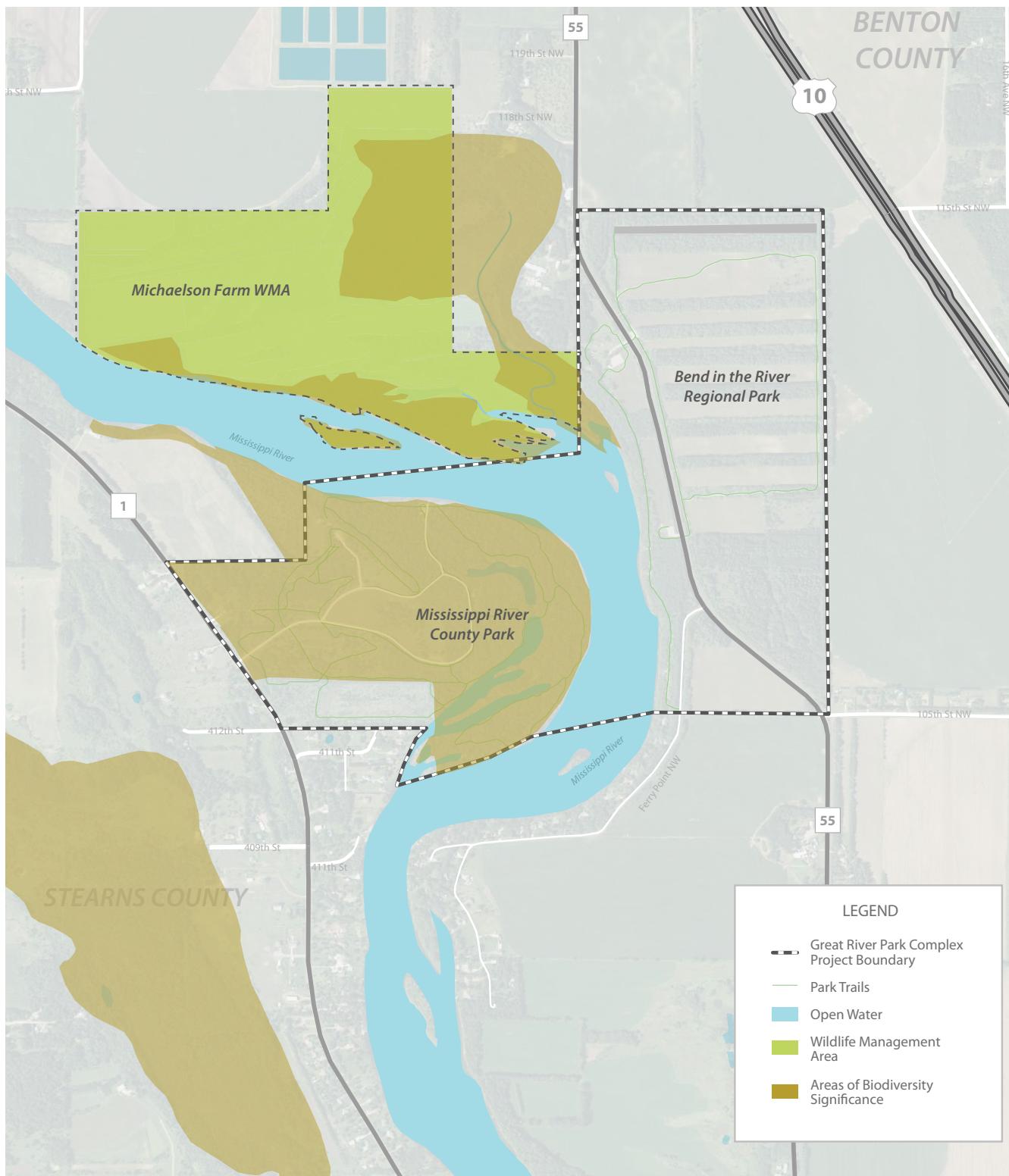


Figure 10. Areas of Biodiversity Significance



Areas of Biodiversity Significance

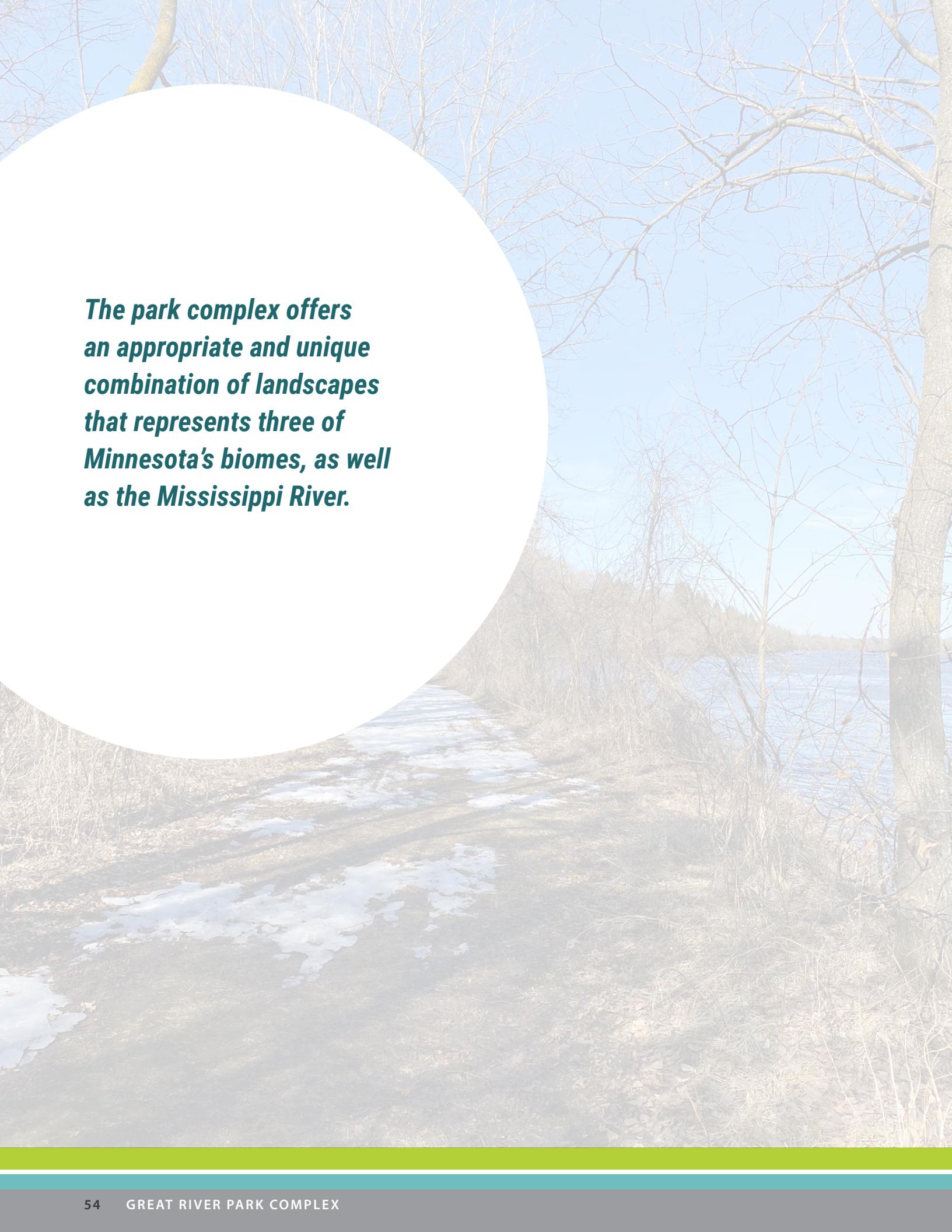
The Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) has been in the process of mapping the areas in the state that have statewide significance when it comes to biodiversity. The MBS considers the landscape, the native plant communities, and the species present to help guide conservation and management.

The west side of the Great River Park Complex and portions of the potential acquisition area have been deemed an area of biodiversity significance based on the presence of rare species and a large enough habitat area. Similarly, the Michaelson Farm WMA, extending into portions of the Benton County side of the complex, was also found to be an area of biodiversity significance. Both areas scored as "moderate" which means they *"contain occurrences of rare species, moderately disturbed native plant communities, and/or landscapes that have strong potential for recovery of native plant communities and characteristic ecological processes."*

Animal Life

A field survey completed prior to the master planning process found the park complex was host to a number of animal species, particularly wide ranges of bird species. Because the complex is part of a significant migration pattern, and the survey was not completed during migratory seasons, this list is not exhaustive. Animals included:

- Turkey Vulture
- Wild Turkey
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Field Sparrow
- Eastern Bluebird
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Blue Jay
- American Robin
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Downy Woodpecker
- Eastern Wood Pewee
- Eastern Phoebe
- Leopard Frog
- White-tailed Deer
- Pocket Gopher
- Red Squirrel
- Possible Badger diggings
- Possible Bullsnake burrows



***The park complex offers
an appropriate and unique
combination of landscapes
that represents three of
Minnesota's biomes, as well
as the Mississippi River.***



PROGRAMMING PLAN

The Great River Park Complex provides facilities and partnerships that support individual/self-guided programming and group programs and events. The programming plan lists existing programs as well as ideas for new programs.

Self-guided Programming

At Mississippi River County Park and Bend in the River Regional Park today, park visitors are welcome to engage in a number of individual and small group activities on their own schedule. This self-guided recreation includes:

- Summer activities:
 - *Hiking*
 - *Nature viewing and river overlooks*
 - *Historic farmstead and interpretation*
 - *Archery course (free will donation box for public use)*
 - *Disc golf course*
 - *Picnicking*
 - *Play equipment*
 - *Boating: motorized and non-motorized*
 - *Fishing*
 - *Canoe or bike camping*
 - *Group camping for non-profit youth groups*
- Winter activities:
 - *Cross-country skiing*
 - *Snowshoeing*
 - *Fat tire biking*
 - *Winter walking*
 - *Nature viewing*

At the Great River Park Complex, the above self-guided recreation opportunities will remain and be enhanced with expanded facilities, such as more walking trails, added interpretation, improved picnic and play facilities, expanded indoor and outdoor archery facilities, more river overlooks, and new kayak rental equipment.

The online survey conducted during this master planning process identified hiking and nature viewing as the most popular activities visitors engage in at the parks today. The vision for the Great River Park Complex is for these activities to remain the core recreation in the future.

Both Benton and Stearns County will continue to maintain the existing facilities that serve individual recreation. Additional facilities, such as new trails and picnic shelters, will be maintained by the appropriate County.



FARROWING HOUSE OR PIGGERY

THE FARROWING HOUSE OR PIGGERY WAS USED TO RAISE NEW BORN PIGLETS. THE LOW DOORS PROVIDED ACCESS FOR THE ANIMALS. THE PIGGERY WAS BUILT OF MORTARED GRANITE SLAB REMNANTS. THE SOUTH-FACING, HALF-MONITOR ROOF PROVIDED NOT ONLY LIGHT, BUT ALSO WARMTH DURING THE WINTER MONTHS. THE SUN WOULD WARM THE MASONRY WALLS, WHICH WERE MORE DURABLE AND EASIER TO KEEP CLEAN THAN WOOD.

Historic structure (top) and interpretive sign (bottom)



Hiking the trails

PROGRAMMING GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The following groups and organizations have used the parks to host events and gatherings:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Nordic Ski Club
- T.H.E. Great River Archery Club
- Granite City
- Junior Olympic Archery Development
- Rice Area Sportman's Club
- Boy Scouts of America
- Archery Country
- HikeHoppers
- Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Natural Parks & Trails Coalition



Cross country ski trail

Group Programs and Events

Current and future envisioned group programs and events at the Great River Park Complex include active recreation and natural resource-based programs and are hosted by a number of different public and non-profit organizations.

Recreational programs and events

The park trails serve as the location for races and trail events throughout the year. The Great River Park Complex welcomes partnerships with schools and recreation groups to host events:

- Fun runs/5Ks and cross country meets are hosted by local schools or non-profit organizations
- Cross country ski events and races
- T.H.E. Great River Archery Club hosts group archery instruction and events (<https://www.greatriverarcheryclub.org/>)
- Disc golf tournaments
- Fishing events
- Bike races and events utilizing the MRT

Outdoor education programs

A variety of cultural and ecological resources within the Great River Park Complex and the Mississippi River provide a tremendous outdoor space in which to learn about and explore Minnesota's ecology and history through small group programs and large events:

- HikeHoppers events: Snowshoe Hike, HIKE@Night, Student Camps, Wellness Retreats, She Ascends gatherings, and more
- The Take a Day Off Event was a popular annual event held at Mississippi River County Park, which has since been ended. There is a great desire to bring back that event.
- Natural Parks & Trails Coalition: guided walks on park trails, events at the farmstead area
- Girl Scout and Boy Scout youth outdoors camps
- An astronomy organization has used the park to view the stars at night with a large group

Future Recreation Programming and Events

With the addition of proposed park facilities, new and larger events are envisioned at the park.

T.H.E. Great River Archery Center

The proposed T.H.E. (Target. Hunting. Education.) Great River Archery Center indoor facility and associated outdoor 3D archery trail is envisioned to support archery as a lifelong sport in Minnesota and also serve as a multi-purpose facility in the park. The Great River Archery Club will be the primary user of the building with potential programs to include hunter safety courses, advanced bow hunter courses, and becoming an outdoor woman (BOW) courses.

Other goals of the archery center are to maintain a close working relationship with federal conservation groups, law enforcement agencies, and landowners to ensure a place to shoot and enjoy the great sport of archery. The archery club promotes Junior Olympic Archery Development, National Archery in Schools Program, 4-H archery, and Scouting programs, as well as amateur competition by hosting local and state archery tournaments. Archery and hunting for Disabled American Veterans, Wounded Warriors, and adaptive archers have been identified as future programs as well.

While primary use of the facility will focus on indoor archery, the building is envisioned to host other events, such as disc golf tournaments, ski events, youth camps, rental for large events, and outdoor education.

Nature Center

The idea of an indoor or outdoor nature center space has been suggested by several groups. The DNR and the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District have expressed interest in assisting with outdoor-focused events that get people in the park and exposed to nature in new and exciting ways.

The HikeHoppers organization has also expressed interest in a collaborative enclosed space, from which to focus their youth, educational, and wellness programming. The organization is interested in growing their programming with existing and future business, community, and school partnerships.

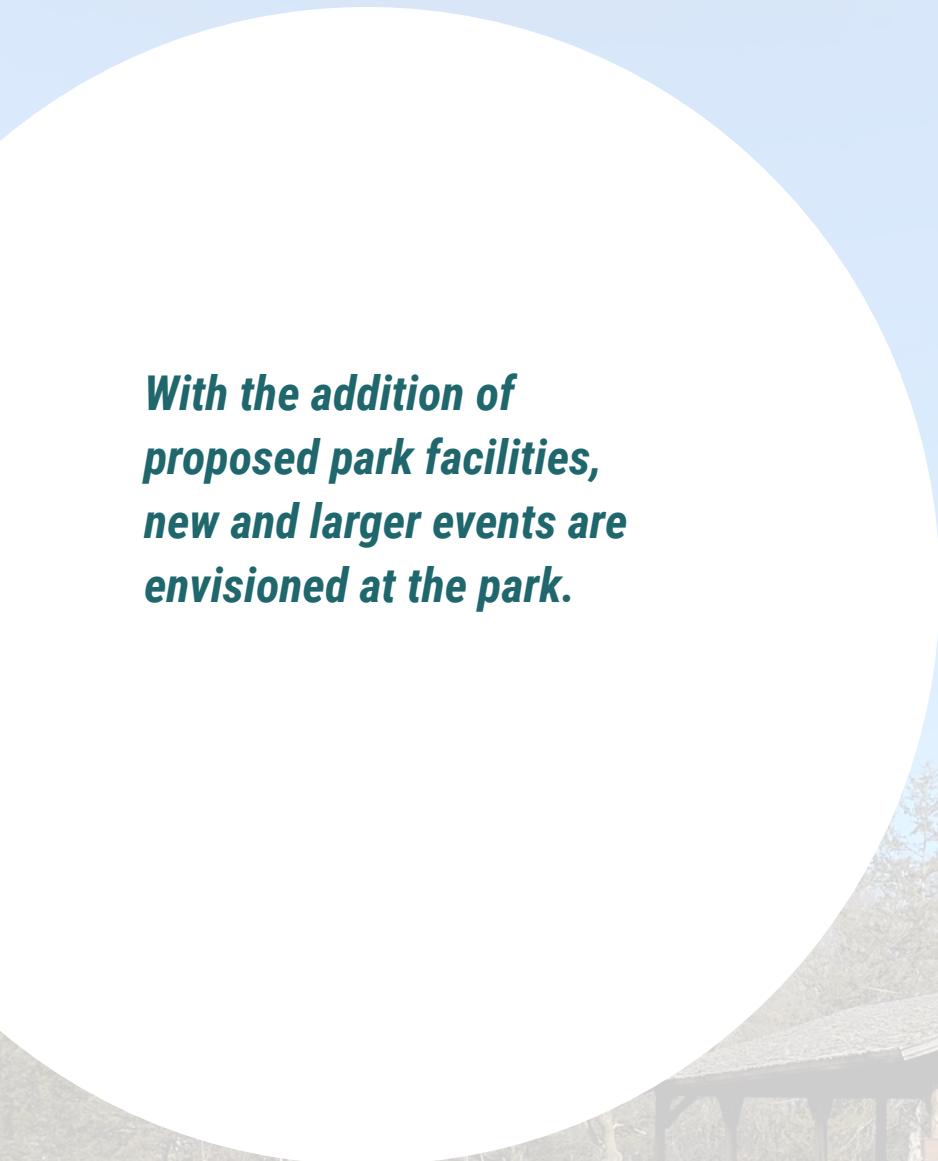
The Camp Ripley Environmental Classroom, which serves as an outdoor laboratory for student and youth groups, has been suggested as a precedent for the type of nature center that could be developed at the Great River Park Complex.

Research Initiatives

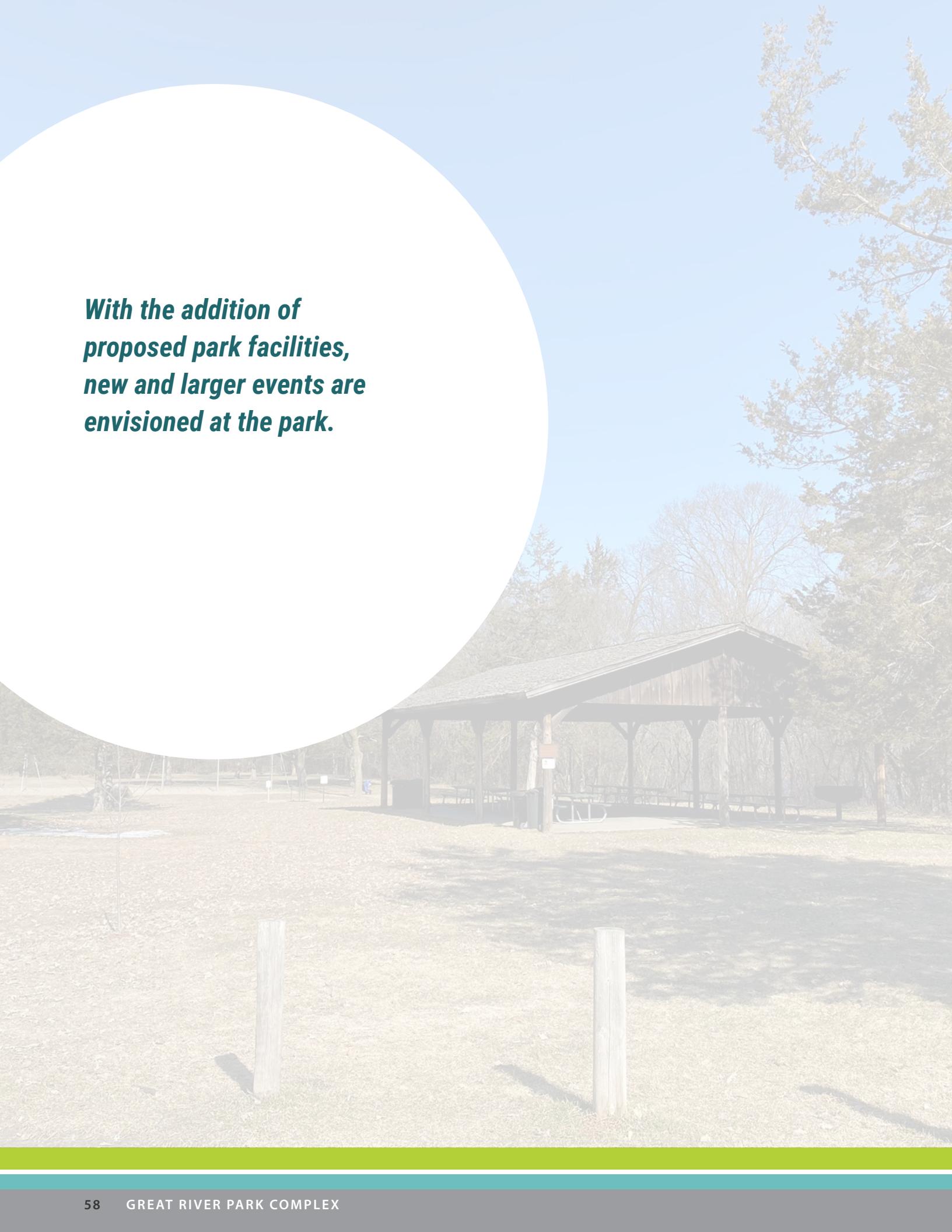
Currently, there are no research efforts underway outside of the analysis undertaken for development of this master plan. Some records are available for specific uses such as canoe campsite use and archery usage. Stearns County does use vehicle counters, which have given the estimates of 20,000 users of the archery range annually, and over 60,000 of Mississippi River County Park annually. Benton and Stearns Counties will partner to participate in research initiatives requested by the GMRPTC as these are developed and implemented over time. Such initiatives may address visitation counts, visitor profiles, and recreation trends and demands. Information gathered may inform further development of the regional park system in Greater Minnesota.



Archery is a popular regional draw for the Mississippi River County Park



***With the addition of
proposed park facilities,
new and larger events are
envisioned at the park.***





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation Strategy and Priorities

The Great River Park Complex improvements will be implemented over time as opportunities arise and funding and staffing resources are available. Priority has been placed on projects that will improve facilities and amenities that increase the regional draw to the park and take advantage of current opportunities for park expansion and land preservation.

Project Phasing

Projects are identified as either short term, mid term or long term, with no specific time frame associated with each phase. It is possible that short term projects are completed in the next 3-6 years, but some items may shift to longer timeframes. In general, short term projects will be pursued prior to mid term or long term projects. However, this master plan is flexible so that it is possible for a long term project to be implemented earlier than expected, as opportunities arise. The Stearns County and Benton County Park Commissions will ultimately recommend the timeline for park improvements and project implementation as they occur.

Priorities for park improvements and development include:

- Property acquisition north of Mississippi River County Park—this parcel will add significant river shoreline and upland area to the park.
- Vegetation management and restoration projects, such as invasive species management and prairie or oak savanna restoration—these projects take years to realize with annual ongoing work after initial implementation, so it is best to start these projects as soon as possible.
- New trails in Bend in the River Regional Park—these are a low cost improvement that will add tremendous value to the park.
- Picnic shelter in Bend in the River Regional Park—a facility is needed to serve as an event hosting location and for rentals for private use.

Costs

Project costs are identified by which County they are located in and which County would be the responsible entity for capital costs and ongoing operations. The project costs are high level planning estimates in 2020 dollars assuming contractors will be hired to provide installations. It is possible that project costs may be more or less depending on availability of volunteers, County staff, or non-profit organizations to complete some of the work. Assumptions are included where shown in the following tables. As projects are designed and constructed, appropriate inflation should be factored into the overall cost estimate.

Table 1. Cost Estimate Summary for the Great River Park Complex

Great River Park Complex Total	\$7,316,900
Stearns Total	\$5,125,300
Benton Total	\$2,191,600
High Priority / Short Term Total	\$3,023,600
Medium Priority / Mid Term Total	\$879,500
Low Priority / Long Term Total	\$3,413,800



Figure 11. Implementation Plan

Table 2. Cost Estimate for Stearns County Projects

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	PHASING	PROJECT TYPE	ESTIMATED COST
Stearns County Projects				
Property Acquisition	High	Short	Acquisition	\$2,000,000
Archery Building (paid for by T.H.E. Great River Archery Club)	High	Short	Capital	\$500,000
Archery 3D Range (28 targets) partnership project	High	Short	Capital	\$28,000
Disc Golf Tee Boxes (18)	High	Short	Capital	\$36,000
Kayak/Canoe Rental Station	High	Short	Capital	\$15,000
Canoe campsite improvements (better signage visible from river, new fire ring, clean up)	High	Short	Capital	\$5,000
Oak Savanna Restoration (~10 acres; paid for in partnership with SWCD)	High	Short	Restoration	\$50,000
Picnic shelter refurbishment or replacement	Medium	Mid	Restoration	\$75,000+
New nature-based play area near picnic shelter (First phase: \$50,000-100,000)	Medium	Mid	Capital	\$75,000
Plant inventory project (Partnership with SWCD)	Medium	Mid	Planning	\$15,000
Prairie restoration (~35 acres on Acquisition parcel)	Medium	Mid	Restoration	\$122,500
Establish invasive species management plan, including Buckthorn management	Medium	Mid	Planning	\$10,000
Interpretive signage (~10 signs)	Medium	Mid	Capital	\$50,000
Wayfinding signage (~8 signs)	Medium	Mid	Capital	\$16,000
MRT Trailhead (Bike Fixit, Bike Parking, Signage, Benches, Water Fountain) --collaborate with the Cities of Sartell and Rice to provide a trail or on-road bicycle route loop connection to the MRT	Medium	Mid	Capital	\$15,000+ TBD ³
Soft Surface Trail (~one mile) on Acquisition Parcel	Low	Long	Capital	\$184,800
Overlooks (2) on Acquisition Parcel	Low	Long	Capital	\$40,000
Paved Trail (3,750 ft of MRT along western edge of park)	Low	Long	Capital	\$300,000
Boardwalk Trails (2,640 ft in floodplain forest)	Low	Long	Capital	\$528,000
Parking Lot Expansion (10 spaces) at Boat Launch	Low	Long	Capital	\$35,000
Picnic Shelter with Restroom at Boat Launch, if feasible	Low	Long	Capital	\$200,000
Small Nature Play Area at Boat Launch, if feasible	Low	Long	Capital	\$75,000
Native landscape restoration (~150 acres of woodland, prairie, oak savanna, and shoreline)	Low	Long	Restoration	\$750,000
Consider disc golf course expansion to 27 holes	Low	Long	Capital	TBD



Table 3. Cost Estimate for Benton County Projects

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	PHASING	PROJECT TYPE	ESTIMATED COST
Benton County Projects				
Canoe Landing Improvements, brush clearing and trail access	High	Short	Restoration	\$20,000
Soft Surface Trail (10,560 ft east of Hwy 55)	High	Short	Capital	\$369,600
Cross-country ski trails	Medium	Mid	Capital	TBD ¹
Wayfinding signage (3 signs)	Medium	Mid	Capital	\$6,000
Buckthorn management (50 acres)	Medium	Mid	Restoration	\$250,000
Pine tree management (pilot project)	Medium	Mid	Restoration	TBD ²
Large Picnic Shelter near farmstead parking lot and restroom	Medium	Mid	Capital	\$200,000
Interpretive signage (5 signs)	Medium	Mid	Capital	\$25,000
Maintenance to historic farmstead structures as necessary for stabilization	Low	Mid	Restoration	\$20,000
Paved Trail (13,200 ft of MRT through east side of park)	Low	Long	Capital	\$1,056,000
Nature Themed Playground at South Day Use Area	Low	Long	Capital	\$150,000
Gravel Parking Lot (20 spaces) at South Day Use Area	Low	Long	Capital	\$50,000
Medium-size Picnic Shelter at South Day Use Area	Low	Long	Capital	\$45,000
Bike trail loop connection to Rice and Sartell (signage, coordination with the City of Sartell and the City of Rice)	Low	Long	Capital/Program	TBD ³
Disc golf course east of Hwy 55	Low	Long	Capital	TBD
Archery range east of Hwy 55	Low	Long	Capital	TBD

¹Cost of cross-country ski trails will vary based on length of trails, whether trails are groomed or back country (ungroomed), whether trails are skate ski or nordic/classic ski, availability of grooming equipment, and opportunity for volunteer partnerships.

²Cost of pine tree management will vary based on size of pilot project, whether the management is performed by a hired for-profit company or in partnership with a public/agency representative, whether the harvested timber is sold for revenue, etc.

³Cost of bike trail connection to Rice and Sartell will vary based on whether the trail is on-road/shoulder trail or off-road/separated trail, and who funds the trail (County vs. City vs. other entity).

Operations and Maintenance

Management and operations of the Great River Park Complex will be the responsibility of the Stearns County Parks Department and the Benton County Public Works Department. Each County will manage and operate the area within its boundary.

Maintenance activities include building maintenance, weed and brush control, trail grooming, noxious weed control, general park maintenance, safety inspections, trash clearing and cleaning, tree care, and administrative work. Additionally, natural resources maintenance occurs by outside contractors and County staff, which include prairie mowing and burning (every 3-4 years), seed collection (as needed), and overseeding (as necessary). Annual costs for maintenance and operations are based on current maintenance practices by both Stearns and Benton Counties' staff.

Operations and Maintenance Costs

Stearns County currently spends approximately \$26,000 per year to maintain Mississippi River County Park. As projects are implemented and developed over time, this cost will increase. The County will consider additional staff in the coming decades to address increased maintenance needs. Benton County currently spends approximately \$20,800 per year to maintain Bend in the River Regional Park. Total cost to maintain the Great River Park Complex as it sits today is approximately \$50,000 per year. The current maintenance routine is expected to continue.

The anticipated annual routine maintenance and operations cost total (in the next 5-10 years, as facilities are developed and improved) is: \$75,000.

Marketing, law enforcement, and research costs are included in general administrative costs at the County, and are performed on an as-needed basis.

Funding for operations and maintenance of facilities at Mississippi River County Park and Bend in the River Regional Park is generally allocated as part of County-wide parks and trails operations and maintenance and across County staff.

As new facilities are constructed or improved within the park, or as new land is acquired, costs for operating and



Park Rules are posted on a sign at Mississippi River County Park

maintaining the park will increase. It is important to consider impacts to future staffing and operating costs when improvements are made.

Programming, Outreach, and Marketing

The estimated annual cost of programming today is \$1,000, with revenue from programming at \$1,383.

Outreach and marketing of the current parks have included, online information through the Counties' websites, social media posts through the County parks' social media accounts, press releases as necessary related to park development and events, physical posting of information on signs in the parks, and word of mouth through existing park users, staff, and elected officials.

Past and future programs include a wide-range of recreation and outdoor-education based programs, such as archery tournaments and events, ski events, scout events, classes and camps for youth, and more. Outreach will include engaging with non-profit organizations, government agency partners, local cities, private entities and schools.

Partnerships

As the Great River Park Complex is a partnership between Benton County and Stearns County, it is imperative that consistent communication is maintained between the two Counties' staff.

It is recommended that a Memorandum of Understanding is developed in order to outline the responsibilities identified in this master plan. Future updates to this master plan, applications for funding of park improvements, and implementation of joint park projects and events will need to include input and agreement from both Counties.

The adjacent Michaelson Farm WMA is managed by the Minnesota DNR, who is an important partner in terms of river shoreline preservation and wildlife habitat. Regular communication with the WMA manager is recommended, especially related to restoration projects in the park complex.

Ongoing and future partnerships with non-profit groups and organizations are important to park users and park operations. These partnerships will assist with operation of some park facilities. For example, the archery range is operated in partnership with T.H.E. Great River Archery Club.

Operating Hours

Park hours are generally from 6:00am to 11:00pm.

Public Awareness

Information is provided on both the Stearns County and Benton County websites regarding the park area, facilities, and rules. Informational signage provided at the parking lots within the parks provides information about park rules and hours.

Rules, Regulations, and Ordinances

Existing policies and ordinances that regulate the use of Mississippi River County Park and Bend in the River Regional Park are established by each County. Both Counties do not allow hunting or trapping in County parks, unless otherwise allowed by special permit.

Benton County Park Ordinances

The Benton County Park Commission sets the policies and goals for County parks. County park ordinances can be found on the County's webpage:

<https://www.co.benton.mn.us/Archive.aspx?AMID=45>

The following County ordinances pertain to County parks:

- Ordinance 473: Establishing a Benton County Park Commission
- Ordinance 353: Regulating the use of County Parks

Stearns County Park Ordinances

The Stearns County Park Commission is responsible for policies and goals related to park planning and facilities.

Park ordinances can be found on the County's website:

<https://co.stearns.mn.us/Government/CountyOrdinances/ParksOrdinances>

The following County ordinances pertain to County parks:

- Ordinance 524: Regulating the use of County Parks

Funding

In order to fund capital improvements and acquisition for the park, Stearns and Benton Counties will identify existing and future County funds through County Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) and pursue grant funding whenever possible.

Sources of Funding

Funding for capital improvements and operations and maintenance will primarily be the responsibility of Benton County and Stearns County. Grants will be sought whenever possible for acquisition, capital improvements, and operations and management costs.

Potential outside funding sources include:

- Park dedication funds
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funds
- Foundations and non-profits
- Statewide Health Improvement Program

Revenue

Existing and future revenue at the Great River Park Complex may be obtained from the rental of facilities, such as picnic shelters and campsites, and from potential events and programs hosted at the park. The park does not require an entry fee, and trails are free to use.

Ongoing and future partnerships with non-profit groups and organizations are significantly valuable to park users and park operations.

its landscape like, before settlement began? Will this plot of earth remain and its legacy be realized?

PRAIRIE & OAK RESTORATION

The prairie and oak savanna restoration project began in 2008. This spring, with the help from local volunteers, the prairie and oak savanna begins to bloom again.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public voiced its ideas—residents, staff, park commissioners, and the Friends of the River Regional Park—about what the park should be. The Friends of the River Regional Park, a non-profit organization, was formed in 1999. The Friends of the River Regional Park and Nature Park was created. Thus began a new era for the farmstead, a legacy the Grays family wanted to share with the public.

This unique park remains easily accessible to the public, offering the opportunity to walk the farmstead, picnic, bike, look for wildflowers, enjoy the beauty of prairie wildflowers and the river. The park will not find organized recreational facilities. Instead, park visitors are invited to appreciate the area's natural resources and ongoing restoration efforts.

Picnic Area

BEND IN THE RIVER REGIONAL PARK HISTORIC AERIAL PHOTOS

Aerial, 1931—Mid-century, during the farm's working years. Note the regions lacking trees. These are mostly agricultural fields. Mississippi Islands are larger than today's.

Aerial, 1931—After the park's acquisition. Note the established woodlands (not yet plantation) along with early park amenities such as trails, parking, and picnic. Residential housing has increased.



APPENDICES

The following Appendices are included:

- A. Bend in the River Regional Park Master Plan (2005) Historic Preservation Section**
- B. DNR Grants used to purchase land for Bend in the River Regional Park (2002)**
- C. Detailed Cost Estimate**
- D. Summary of Public Input**

Appendix A. Bend in the River Regional Park Master Plan (2005) Historic Preservation Section

The following text is an excerpt from the 2005 Bend in the River Regional Park Master Plan. It is provided for reference to the historic and cultural resources and inventory information within it. The recommendations in this section are not necessarily adopted as recommendations in this version of the Master Plan.

Heritage of A PLACE – the Human Experience

Introduction

People take pleasure in knowing that they stand on a landscape where others have stood before them; they are drawn to the stories of human lives and endeavors that both create and enhance a sense of place. Bend in the River Regional Park is a unique place, special not only for its natural beauty and dramatic setting, but also for its inherent sense of heritage. The history of the place reveals itself through the collection of farm buildings, which define the family who created them and worked the land for nearly a century, as well as illustrate a bygone day of agricultural achievements in Minnesota. Other aspects of the place's history are less obvious, though equally important. The rugged roads that crossed the land provided access to the earliest frontier and military outposts. These roads were preceded by the trails of the Native Americans, who were drawn to the river and occupied the surrounding land for millennia.



The Graves Farm, winter 2005. Photo by Pioneer Photography.

The Native American Experience

Before farm buildings were constructed, and crops were planted in neat rows on the land, Native peoples traveled through and across what is today Bend in the River Regional Park. Their paths were the first. Travel was by foot, but also by river: the Mississippi River functioned as the original highway through the area. It provided a major route of transportation, and it facilitated communication and trade amongst indigenous peoples.

The importance of the Mississippi River to Native peoples of the area encompasses aspects both utilitarian and spiritual. While their villages flourished around the river floodplains and on terraces, and generations hunted and gathered along the shoreline, it was the area around the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers that was known alternatively as MDOTE, meaning “the mouth or junction of one river with another” or BDOTE, meaning “throat of the waters.” For the Dakota peoples, MDOTE is the center of the Earth and the point of their creation.

Very little archaeological information is available with regards to the early inhabitants of Benton County. One site has been recorded, however, in the southwestern region of the County that confirms the lengthy presence of Native American peoples in the area. Excavations at the East Terrace site (21BN6) uncovered what was described as a “transient camp” periodically used by small groups for the last 10,000 years (4G Consulting 2002:9). Indeed, because much of the Native American experience was so transient in nature, especially prior to 2,500 B.C., its evidence on the land is often displayed only through faint artifactual traces and few sites. Archaeological sites are typically found in locales situated with unhindered access to water resources. In terms of Bend in the River Regional Park, it is because the bluffs rise steeply from the Mississippi River that any establishment of villages or temporary encampments was likely discouraged. This was confirmed during an archaeological investigation of the park, conducted in 2002, which did not reveal the presence of any cultural material associated with Native American people.



Natives load up their canoe along the river.

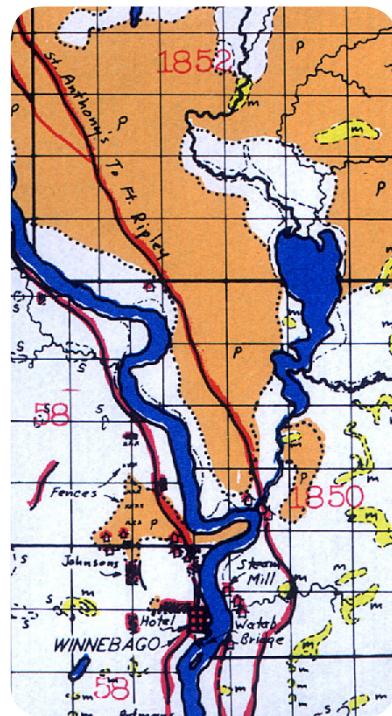
A lack of physical evidence does not, however, negate the fact that canoes once moved up and down river routes. And while the river may have once provided the primary means of transportation through the Bend in River Regional Park area, trails were often located alongside river routes. Indeed, while the history of Native peoples on the land may not be as readily seen as farm buildings and historic homesteads, early people did use and travel through this place. The historian Eva Hoffman’s words best capture the essence of history, place, and the lives that infuse a landscape with meaning:

I never fail to be moved by knowing that the ground on which I walk is layered with the past – with achievement and strife and the repeated passions and conflicts of human creatures, always changing, always the same. Generations passing like grass (1993).

Byways, Highways, and Railways

Just as they do today, transportation corridors facilitate and create community and commerce. For millennia, river systems provided the most efficient means of travel, and in central Minnesota, the Mississippi River was a veritable highway, providing a major route of transportation, and facilitating communication and trade not only among indigenous peoples, but later residents of the area as well.

Once the arrival of Euro-Americans began in Minnesota – first with the fur traders, and later by the United States military in advance of permanent settlers – additional layers of transportation corridors were created. Frequently, these new roads were created over existing trails used by Native peoples, since they had already proven to be the most efficient routes and led to locations of mutual interest (e.g. significant river communities or crossings). Beginning in 1850, when Minnesota was still a territory, the United States federal government, under the auspices of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, oversaw the construction of seven military roads through the State. These roads represent some of the earliest transportation infrastructure built by Euro-Americans in Minnesota. One of these roads, leading from Point Douglas (at the confluence of the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers), via St. Anthony to Fort Ripley at the mouth of the Nokasippi River, passed through Bend in the River Regional Park and may have followed an earlier route used by fur traders leading them from the Red River to St. Paul. These roads had a significant impact on the newly opened territory, wherein settlers could better travel to commercial destinations, be in better contact with their community, and receive mail. The Point Douglas-Fort Ripley Road ran along the east bank of the Mississippi and was instrumental in opening up the central part of the State during the early territory years (Hess 1989).



Map of region from early surveyor field notes, illustrating the military road.

A survey was completed for the Point Douglas-Fort Ripley Road in 1851, and construction began a year later. By 1857, just before Minnesota became a State, the 146-mile road was still incomplete in sections and already needed repairs. The road passed through virgin land, comprised of both prairie and oak savannahs. In Benton County, the road passed through the town of Sauk Rapids, Sartell, and then the community of Watab, a small platted village at the site of a river crossing that briefly thrived yet all but disappeared by 1880. Further along, the road crossed Little Rock Creek, then passing into the sandy and mostly treeless territory, including the Bend in the River Regional Park. North of there, the village of Rice provided a tavern and hotel, operated by proprietor George Rice (Hess 1989; Singley 1974).

By the late 1850s, the military necessity of the Minnesota roads came into question. With national defense on the western frontier no longer seen as a priority, the federal government withdrew its support from road-building activity. Consequently, the roads in Minnesota came under the jurisdiction of the various local townships, many of which lacked the resources to maintain them. In any case, by the late 1860s, the public began focusing their attention less on the bumpy and muddy roads, and more on the promise of steel tracks: the railroads. The rails transformed greater Minnesota by opening new territory, linking producers with markets, and creating new towns. In the meantime, the road system became, at best, a secondary means of getting from place to place, and easily fell into

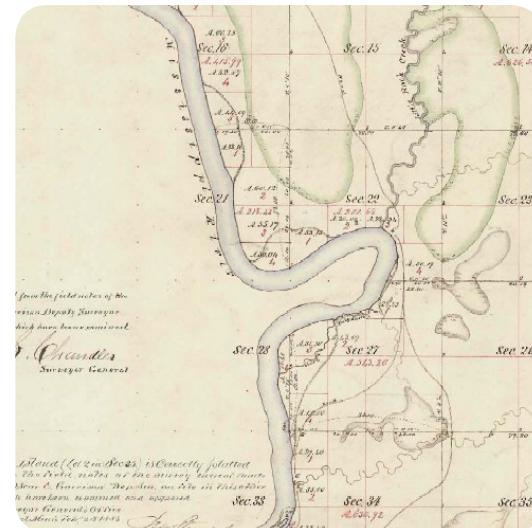
disrepair. Indeed, for many the roads became simply a means of getting to the railroads (Hess 1989). In Benton County, portions of the old Fort Ripley Road remained in use. Eventually, the road became part of County Road 55, which passes through Bend in the River Regional Park. Because County Road 55 was re-routed in the vicinity of the old farmstead sometime between 1938 and 1948, the original alignment of the old military road remains unused on the west side of the old farm house (4G Consulting 2002:27).

Adding to the river and the roads, the railroads brought yet another means of transportation to the prairies of Benton County and through the adjacent parcel to the east of Bend in the River Regional Park. The railroad was incorporated as the Western Railroad Company of Minnesota (WR) in 1874 with the intent to build and operate a railroad from Brainerd to Sauk Rapids, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Mankato, as well as other lines. Between 1877 and 1879 the WR constructed its line from Sauk Rapids to Brainerd, passing through Benton County on its way. The name was changed to St. Paul & Northern Pacific Railway Company in 1883. By 1884, a line from Sauk Rapids to Minneapolis was constructed, and then extended to St. Paul in 1886. The line was sold to the Northern Pacific Railway Company in 1896 (Prosser 1966:159).

Settlement on the River: the Graves Farm

The land now known as Bend in the River Regional Park is perched above the Mississippi River on the edge of the prairies of central Minnesota. The sandy soil of the region may not have made for the best farmland, but the land was nevertheless snapped up, along with so much of the State during the initial land grants of the 1850s. Land grants were issued for several parcels that later comprised the Graves Farm, now the Park. The difficulty of successfully creating a viable farm and living from the land is apparent in the early land records. When taxes were unable to be paid, and farmsteads could not be "proven" according to the original homesteading agreements, the land reverted back to the ownership of the State. Little is known about the early owners of the land, or whether they even occupied the lands they owned.

In their vicinity, the early owners could boast the amenities of two nearby communities: Watab and Rice. In the village of Watab, a few miles south of the farm, David Gilman cleared himself a farm and built a hotel near his river in 1848. The name “Watab” comes from the Ojibwe word for the long and slender roots of the tamarack and jack pine, which were dug by the Ojibwe, split, and used as threads in sewing their birch-bark canoes. For its first decade, Watab was the most important commercial place in Minnesota northwest of St. Paul. It hosted the County’s first election, was briefly the County seat, had a post office, and provided a crossing to the west side of the Mississippi River. The successes of nearby Sauk Rapids and St. Cloud eventually superseded that of Watab, however, and by 1880 the community had all but vanished. A second village north of the farm also provided a source of supplies and community interaction. The village of Rice was named for innkeeper George T. Rice who kept a hotel to provide rest for weary stagecoach travelers on the old military road. Once the railroad went in, the town was platted on the Little Rock River and later thrived when a station on the Northern Pacific Railroad went in. In the early days of Minnesota, the presence of the railroad could transform a town into a commercial hub; bypassing the community could send it into oblivion (Upham 2001).



An 1884 survey map of Area showing the river's bend.

It was not until the 1880s that the land that now forms Bend in the River Regional Park was consolidated from various parcels by George Wolhart, who was likely the first to actually settle on the property and make a working farm from it. The early log cabins reported to have been on the property could be attributed to Wolhart, or perhaps to one of the subsequent owners, Andrew Lorin or John Tindle (4G Consulting 2002).

It is the Graves family, however, who are most closely associated with this farmstead, having constructed all of the existing buildings standing on it and having worked the land for nearly 100 years. Although the Graves family was living in Watab Township as early as 1905, possibly as renters from the Tindles, it was not until 1912 that Edgar C. Graves purchased the 292-acre farm for \$4,600 at the age 27. Edgar, a bachelor for all his life, resided on the farm with his parents, Willis and Emelie Graves, and his siblings Ethel, Irving, Stewart, and Ruth.

Once the Graves family acquired the farm, they set to work on creating improvements that would not only increase the productivity of the farming activity, but also enhance their comfort. According to family oral history, the barn was constructed before the present house, in around 1907. This was a common practice when farmsteading, since it was the barn where the industry of the farm took place, which would in turn earn the money to build the house. The circa-1912 house the family constructed was a fine one indeed. At two stories in height, the lap-sided house exhibits a slimness and

verticality often associated with houses placed on tight, urban lots. The complex, cross-gabled roofline emphasizes the triangular form of the gable ends with full pediments and cornice returns. Constructed in a vernacular expression of the Queen Anne style, the long-popular style was commonly seen on Minnesota farms of the period. The practicality inherent to the farming lifestyle turned away from the fussy ornamentation displayed on the high-style Queen Anne mansions in towns and cities, and faced a more utilitarian simplicity aesthetic.



The Graves House

The Graves Farm collection of outbuildings demonstrates both the ordinary aspects of Minnesota's early twentieth century farming practices, and the uniqueness of the Graves family values and building patterns. The variety of outbuildings illustrates the diversified farming techniques that were encouraged in Minnesota following the over-production of wheat during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Diversified farming meant that farmers were not reliant on a single source crop or income. It was also preferable to the intensive farming of single crops, which was harsh on the land. The Graves Farm wonderfully exhibits diversified farming practices and the necessary compliment of specific-use buildings. Knowing little about the farm's history, the careful observer can still see what crops and animals were raised on this farm



The Graves Barn and Silo



Farrowing House

over 50 years ago. The farrowing house, or piggery, was used to raise newly born piglets. The south-facing, half-monitor roof provided not only light, but also warmth during the winter months. The sun would warm the masonry walls, which were more durable and easier to keep clean than wood. The evidence of pig or hog raising is further substantiated by the presence of the drive-through corncrib, where harvested corn could be dried and stored, and later fed to the hogs. The granary confirms the practice of growing grain, perhaps oats, barley or wheat, or even a combination of grains. The grain could be stored in the protected, tin-lined bins of the granary and used for feed or for sale.



Corncrib

The big barn, and its attached silo can be considered a small complex for the storage, feeding and raising of large livestock. The lower level of the barn could house large animals – horses would have been used to pull farm equipment to plow the fields, sow the seeds, reap the harvest, and to generally do the heavy lifting needed to sustain a farm. It is likely that the Graves kept milk cows, which were common in this area of Minnesota, and would have provided a ready source of income to the family. Hay to feed the cows and horses would be grown on the farm, then stored in the overhead loft and delivered by chutes to the stalls. Later, the concrete-stave silo was probably added to provide a more efficient way to store nutritious silage to feed the cattle through the winter. The chicken coop was a building commonly seen on nearly every Minnesota farmstead. Often considered the responsibility of the women on the farm, large numbers of chickens were raised to provide the family with fresh eggs, cash from the sale of eggs, and fresh meat.

Several buildings are evidence of the continuing evolution of farms and technology. The four-bay machine shed, probably constructed in the 1930s, rose from the need for larger and more mechanized farming equipment. Instead of horses, farm machinery was powered by tractors, which could pull

larger equipment more efficiently till the 289 acres of the Graves Farm. The new equipment created the need for increased and specific storage needs on the farm. Another later addition is the potato warehouse, believed to have been constructed in the 1940s. This building exemplifies the family's transition to a new type of crop, one to which the soil was eminently suited. Potato storage required the qualities of a subterranean cellar, so the warehouse was imbedded into the earth with a concrete block foundation. The gambrel roof offered a large, open space, providing easy access to the contents.



Chicken coop and machine shed



Other outbuildings on the farm have a closer relationship to the farm's residential use than its industrial purposes. The well house protected the important source of water, which in early years would have been retrieved by hand,

and in later by the use of an electrical pump. The woodshed allowed for the storage of firewood, probably used to burn in the kitchen stove, and perhaps in a furnace or other heating stoves. The garage, apparently constructed around 1915, shortly after the house, housed the most modern of conveniences: the automobile.

While this collection of outbuildings demonstrates the function and operations of a typical farm of its period, the methods of construction and the notable materials represent something more unique: an expression of the Graves family personality. According to the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the buildings are a “striking example of Minnesota folk architecture” because of their use of indigenous materials and salvaged parts (Preservation Alliance of Minnesota 2005). Such commonplace buildings, like the farrowing house, were constructed using remnant pieces of granite blocks and slabs from nearby quarries – a highly unusual material, but one reflecting both the common stone material of the region, and the thrifty re-use of available supplies. Even the corncrib stands on a foundation of cut and polished granite. The gabled well house is constructed of huge, rusticated granite blocks, grossly disproportionate to the modest size of the utilitarian building. Reportedly, the stone blocks were salvaged



Granite block well house and tin-sided garage



** An inspection of a circa 1920 photograph of the William Bell Mitchell house shows that the granite blocks used in the house's foundation appear to match the type used in the well house.*

following the demolition of the William Bell Mitchell* house in St. Cloud. Indicative of another period, the machine shed employs old wood railroad

car doors – many of which are still emblazoned with the original railroad car numbers – for its walls and roof. Railroad ties may have been used as part of the footings. Other metal panels, possibly salvaged from other sources, were applied to the barn, chicken coop, and granary. The use of these clever construction techniques reflects the thriftiness and the ingenuity of the builders, and creates a unique farmstead landscape.

The Graves Family

These buildings tell us something of the persons and personalities of those who made this farmstead their home for nearly a century. Though they cannot possibly tell the entire story, conversations with members of the Graves family and other documentation have helped to illuminate the stories that are both common to many Minnesota families and special to this one family.

Willis Graves, the family patriarch, was of Yankee heritage – his father born in New York and his mother in Connecticut – while he born in Pennsylvania. In about 1875, at the age of 19, Willis Graves immigrated to Minnesota to make a life of his own. Graves met his bride, Emelie Carlton, in Minnesota and the two were wed in 1881 in Emelie’s hometown of Winona. Emelie was born to a Minnesota pioneer family who settled in Waseca in 1856, and she was born the following year. Willis and Emelie started their lives together in Winona, and later moved to St. Cloud (*St. Cloud Daily Times*

[SCDT] 19 February 1931:5). Between 1883 and 1894, Emelie gave birth to five children – Ethel, Edgar, Stewart, Irving, and Ruth (from oldest to youngest). By the 1890s, the Graves family was living in St. Cloud. For a time, they lived at 27 2nd Avenue NE, just two blocks east of the Mississippi River, which flows through the town. From there, Willis, a carpenter, could make the short walk to his job at the St. Cloud Manufacturing Company, a bobsled manufacturer on Wilson Avenue. Eventually, Ethel became a school teacher and the Graves' his eldest son Edgar joined his father at the bobsled factory (St. Cloud City Directory 1904). Reportedly, several years of low snowfall doomed the bobsled company, and the Graves family was forced to seek out new life and living.

Census records state that the Graves were living in the vicinity of Bend in the River Regional Park by 1905, although the family and other sources indicate that they settled on the farm in 1907. Their first home was probably in a small cabin, perhaps constructed by the previous owners. While on the Graves Farm, the children reached adulthood. Edgar acquired the property in his own right in 1912 and probably took over the farming. With the entry of the United States into the raging war in Europe in 1917, both Stewart and Irving (also known to the family as “Pat” or “Patsy”) joined the armed services, leaving their beloved family and farm on the Mississippi River behind. Letters sent home from both sons tell of the sacrifice that the Graves family made during the war. They are on file at the Minnesota Historical Society (Stewart Horatio Graves papers 1918-1919).

Votre Toujours, Pat

Irving Graves' letters to the “home folks” signal his affection for his family, optimism for his future, and attachment to home. His letters provide some insight into the Graves family back in Benton County, even though we can only glimpse it through Irving's eyes, as the letters sent *from* home are not known to have survived. In his letter, we learn that Irving was “on the water” for 21 days when departing for France; it was a particularly long and difficult journey because his ship was rammed going out to sea. We know that his job with Company E was working on the railroad line, although he could write very little about his daily activities, conditions or locations due to censorship restrictions. He optimistically writes, “I'll tell you all about it when I see you.” Irving was attentive to the activities on his beloved Benton County farm home, expressing pleasure that the crop prospects are good, and wishing his family that they could have some of the badly needed rain of which he had so much. We learn that young Ruth, 24 years old, is musical and is active volunteering with the Red Cross in the war effort. Ruth had written him about their brother Stewart's engagement with a young Anna Paulson, hoping that it would be breaking news. Irving replied that he already knew that “Stew is very much elated over Miss Paulson” and that he had accompanied his brother when “bought that rock,” adding “Anna is a fine girl.” After the war, Stewart and Anna Paulson married. Irving expressed hope that his father's eyes were getting better, perhaps an indication that Willis Graves had an injury or had undergone some sort of surgery. He also asks how his “old boat is getting along” and wishes he could take it out for a spin.

Mail delivery between Central Minnesota and the Western Front was slow at best, and interrupted at worst. Both Irving and those on the home front express dismay that their correspondence had not been received, and sadness that more letters had not been forthcoming. Irving began numbering his letters, so his family would know their sequence and if any were missing. Although he would sign his letters to his mother using his given name – Irving – those to his sisters closed with “*Votre Toujours, Pat*” – Always Yours. The last letter the family received was on October 26, 1918. He cheerfully wrote, “everything is going well... there isn't much to tell,” but sadly noted “we haven't had any mail in some time.”



Private Irving L.
Graves, circa 1917

News of the family tragedy arrived by mail. Stewart Graves' letter to his family from Langres, France on December 29, 1918 states his dismay that he knew nothing of Irving being wounded from official channels, but instead by a letter from home. Giving words of courage in response, he wrote, "It is not so hard to die mother. Fellows on the line don't give it a thought. If a man is mortally wounded, the shock is great enough to make him insensible to pain and if the wound is not mortal, a strong man like Patsy will stand it." Stewart did not know that Irving had already died from his wounds received on November 10, 1918, the day before the Germans signed an armistice for peace; he died two days later. On January 3, 1919, after learning of his brother's death, Stewart writes his family again: "It doesn't seem so terrible to me perhaps as it does to you. I know that a soldier doesn't find it so hard to die – if they did they couldn't walk into the very jaws."

The death of Stewart's close friend and brother – especially on the eve of the armistice –dramatically affected his outlook on life and his political views. Wanting to know more about the circumstances of Pat's death, he and his sister Ethel wrote to many of Irving's comrades in arms. Most were glad to write back, and were honored to express their admiration for their fallen friend. Although some of the details vary, the Graves learned that Irving was part of the Meuse-Argonne offensive ordered by General John J. Pershing. The battle was the biggest operation and victory of the American Expeditionary Force in the war. During the six weeks of battle (September 26 through November 11, 1918), 26,277 American forces were killed, and 95,786 were wounded. Irving was a member of the 1st Battalion of the 61st Infantry, which was ordered to harass the retreating Germans. On the early morning of November 10th, tired and exhausted, the troops stopped in the woods near Chateau Charmois to get some rest during the night. Yet rest proved impossible, as the men were cold, wet and hungry. As one soldier put it, "we passed the night in misery like many others before, and always hoping the war would end, or that we would get a slight wound and be sent to the hospital."

Upon morning, they again pursued their enemy forming a column of twos. The signal corps, of which Irving was a part, followed up in the rear. All of the troops had crossed a hill bordering the woods, except for the signal men. It was then that a surprise attack was made from the woods with machine guns; they were trapped on three sides. The men fell flat to the ground. Three men were killed, and seven wounded. Bullets entered through Irving's back just above his kidney, and into his bowels. The wounded men were able to crawl to the foot of the hill where they could dress their wounds and find protection in the woods. By mid-afternoon, the men were able to crawl or walk under shellfire to an old house in the clearing, where they could stop to await an ambulance. The house, however, was under observation by the Germans and was bombed by shellfire. Irving and others survived the shellfire, and in a massive struggle, Irving was able crawl on his hands and knees, a few hundred yards at a time, perhaps one or two miles towards the first aid station. Irving was getting weaker, but pursued his goal with dogged determination. Finally, he fell and could not get up, an ambulance carried him with two others to the first aid station. Every bump in the road was painful; he was carried in on a stretcher and went unconscious. The wounds were severe, and he was transferred to a hospital. One friend wrote that he understood that Irving remarked to a fellow patient, "well Naigel, it is pretty tough to go thru so much and then get it when the game is finished." Another wrote, "it seems awful to think that so many were killed the last few days of the war, but I suppose it had to be. I don't know a more honorable death than that of a soldier fighting for his county." Private First Class Irving L. Graves was buried in Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, the largest American military cemetery in Europe.

Although the war dealt a lethal blow to the Graves family, Stewart responded with charity and generosity. While in France, Stewart's company encountered a French boy, named Charles Monnet. The son of French peasants, eight-year-old Charles wandered into the American camp near the village of Til-Chatel along with other children looking for food left over by the soldiers. Tired, malnourished, and dirty, the soldiers took a liking to the well-mannered and brave boy. The outfit cleaned him up and provided medical attention, and gave him a uniform and boots to wear. As time went on, the

boy became a “mascot” for the 16th Corps of Engineers, Company E. For nearly two years, Charles stayed with the company and joined them in the regular Army life of trenches, long marches, and an occasional barrage of shells. When the company was at the front line, Charles attended school. At war’s end, the company wanted to continue their care for young Charles, and Stewart Graves volunteered to be his foster father, with the permission of Charles’ parents. As Charles was probably the first “war orphan” to come to America, provisions for the transportation of French children were not available. Stewart found a freight skipper who was willing take him aboard. Stewart met up with him a short time later, and the two went off to Minnesota. Charles lived with Stewart’s parents and sisters on the farm, while Stewart attended law school. Eventually, Stewart would adopt Charles as his own (SCDT 22 November 1955).

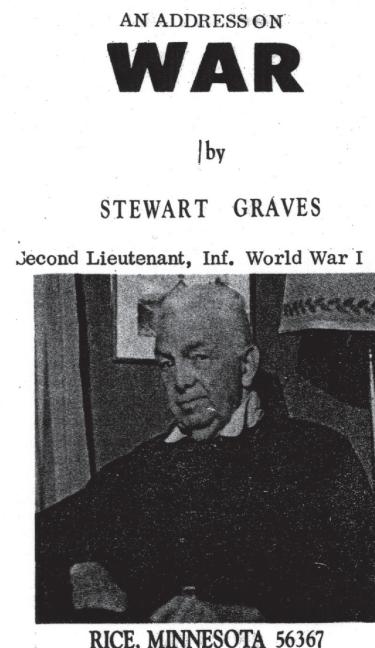
After the War

The death of young Irving in the war was followed by another sad series of events in the Graves family. Father and husband Willis Graves fell ill during the winter of 1920, and died at the age of 64, in May of that year. The following year, the vivacious and well-liked Ruth, the youngest sister in the family, suddenly fell ill and died at the age of 27. She had been married to Mr. Charles Crosby only two years earlier (SCDT 29 May 1920; SCDT 29 April 1921).

After the war, Stewart Graves returned to Minnesota with his foster son Charles and held odd jobs, such as butcher at the St. Paul Hotel (R. L. Polk & Company 1920) while earning his law degree from St. Paul College of Law (now William Mitchell Law School), which he completed in 1921. After working as manager at the Hotel Ogden in Minneapolis, he went on to work as a lawyer in Minneapolis (St. Paul College of Law 1923 and 1922; St. Paul College of Law Alumni Association 1940). He also served as vice president for Mutual Holdings Company in 1930, and for a time lived in St. Louis Park (Minneapolis City Directory 1930). Stewart returned to service during World War II with the construction forces in the Aleutian Islands, Alaska. He later worked for 15 years as a guard and high school instructor at the State Reformatory in St. Cloud (SCDT 2 June 1971:8).

Stewart and Anna (Ann) Paulson were married in 1925. They eventually had three children, Carlton, Irving L. and Ruth Ann, in addition to their adopted son, Charles Monnet. Both Carlton and Irving earned doctoral degrees. Stewart is perhaps best known for his peace activism, antiwar writings, and pleas for international unity. He was a contributing member of the Peace Committee for the American Humanist Association. Although most of his known writings date from the 1960s, his point of view and outrage concerning the futility of war are clearly influenced by the traumatic loss of his beloved brother Irving, some 50 years earlier. Ann Graves was equally prominent in her progressive values, as the State president of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and a member of the American Association of University Women, and League of Women Voters. Both Ann and Stewart were founding members of the St. Cloud Unitarian Universalists Fellowship. Stewart died in 1971, and Ann in 1985.

Ethel Graves was a lifelong educator, and began her career as a teacher at Sauk Center, and later advanced to principal of the grade school at Two Harbors. She was enlisted to join the faculty of St. Cloud State Teachers College in 1918, where she continued until her retirement in 1945. She received her B.A.



degree from the University of Minnesota, her M.A. at the Colorado State College of Education, and also studied geography at the University of Chicago. In addition to her broad interests in the field of education, she served as president of the Stearns County Historical Society. Although her advanced education took her to Colorado, her thesis stemmed from her affection for her St. Cloud home. The purpose of her study was to provide materials to supplement student field trips to the granite quarries and polishing mills of St. Cloud. Family sources indicate that she had a close relationship with A. E. Morgan, a St. Cloud native who was a noted engineer and became president of Antioch College and a director of the Tennessee Valley Authority under the Roosevelt administration. The family indicates that Ethel could never contemplate marriage because she was needed to care for her mother, following the death of her father. Ethel never married, and died in 1946 (SCDT 28 May 1946:4; 4G Consulting 2002:C-2; Graves 1934).

Charles Monnet Graves lived most of his adult life in Sauk Rapids, except when he farmed near Mankato between 1935 and 1945. He was employed by the St. Regis Paper Company, from which he retired in 1974. He died in 1981.

The eldest Graves sibling, Edgar, ran the family farm. He never married and died in 1930 at the age of 55. His mother, Emelie passed away in February of the following year. With Stewart and Ethel pursuing law and teaching careers in other places during the 1930s, the Graves Farm was rented out and no longer farmed by the family. Stewart and Ann Graves and their family eventually returned to the farm to make it their home. Their son, Carlton, later ran his veterinary practice out of the old farmstead, using the house's basement as an examination room. No longer housing cattle, the barn was converted for use as a giant chicken coop. After Carleton died in 1999, the Graves family desired to see the beautiful riverside setting and the historic farmstead available for public enjoyment. The family sold the Graves Farm to Benton County for development of a regional park in 2002. The ecologically and culturally rich site and historic farmstead is now in the stewardship of the community for the pleasure and enrichment of all.



Ethel Graves, circa 1945

Preservation and Interpretation

Official Historic Recognition

The Graves Farm, including its historic acreage, has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is an official listing kept by the National Park Service of properties deemed worthy of preservation. The National Register is a largely honorary recognition, but also carries some weight with it in terms of protecting historic properties and providing benefits of historic designation. The term "determined eligible for listing" is an official designation, not merely an opinion, bestowed by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and carries with it many of the same protections and benefits as an officially listed property.

The National Register is a national listing of properties with historic significance and it includes those that are historic within national, State *or* local contexts. In the case of the Graves Farm, it bears local significance as a representation of Minnesota's agricultural heritage. The complex of outbuildings, as well as the fields, meadows, and wooded areas may all contribute to the property's historic significance, according to the SHPO documentation.

Preservation

Preservation Plan

Building upon the master planning process, the first step in the preservation process is to develop a preservation plan in order to thoroughly and systematically preserve the historical resources of the Graves Farm. A preservation plan would help to ensure the protection of the valuable heritage embodied by the buildings and landscape of the Graves Farm. A preservation plan would gather additional information about the property, analyze the status of its historic components, evaluate its current condition, and prioritize the next steps necessary for the continued public enjoyment of the historical resources. Ideally, a preservation plan is the result of consensus-building activities that create a shared vision for the future. The plan can result in a variety of outcomes, such as nomination to the National Register, prioritization of stabilization and preservation activities, addressing of re-use opportunities, and development of public interpretation programs.

National Register Nomination

Although determined eligible for listing on the National Register, the Graves Farm is not currently listed on the register. Nomination to the National Register can take the Graves Farm to its final step in acquiring official recognition of its historical significance. A nomination would require additional research of the farm and its inhabitants, which would be carefully documented on a registration form; this is generally done by trained historians. The SHPO occasionally sponsors National Register nominations, although funding for this type of work is quite limited.

Once the form is finalized, the nomination is reviewed by SHPO staff and presented to the Minnesota Historical Society's State Review Board. After its approval, it is sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer, and then to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C. This process may take as much as one year to complete.

Formal listing on the National Register conveys certain honors, privileges and responsibilities and should be carefully considered by Benton County before pursuing. Implications for listing the Graves Farm on the National Register include:

- Formal acknowledgement that the farm has historical significance that is recognized nationally;
- A certain degree of protection from State or federally funded public projects that may negatively affect the property, including transportation projects (a “determination of eligibility” offers protection only where federal projects are involved);
- Access to the State Capital Grants-in-Aid program, which is generally limited to National Register-listed properties;
- Potential for private parties under certain lease conditions to receive historic preservation tax incentives; and
- A mandatory Minnesota Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) when demolishing a building.

As noted above, the benefits of listing the Graves Farm on the National Register outweigh any potential negative effects and would provide protection for the property and potential funding. Additional funding for historical properties that are listed on the National Register may be available in the future, and it may be wise to have the property listed in advance should such funds become available.

Stabilization and Preservation

Though the Graves Farm is situated along a well-traveled County road, its location leaves it relatively isolated and remote in feeling. This isolation already has resulted in some vandalism to the structures and continues to threaten the historic site. A preservation plan should address the variety of means by which to limit these security concerns, which may include lighting, alarm systems, or on-site supervision.

The farm buildings have experienced significant physical deterioration and will continue to do so as they remain unused and unmaintained. A preservation plan should address the continued maintenance of the buildings, utilizing reconstruction, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration measures as necessary.

Re-Use Potential

The re-use of the historic buildings and grounds in a manner that is respectful of the historical use, materials, and spirit of the farmstead will be a challenge for Benton County. Many of the buildings, however, are eminently adaptable to uses that are both appropriate to their historic character, practical in nature, and fit within the current use of the property as a regional park. It is important that the buildings are *used*, almost regardless of their type of use, as this leads to diligent maintenance practices and deters vandalism and other security concerns.

A process for identifying appropriate re-uses has been employed by the SHPO for many years, and would be a likely starting point of the preservation planning process. The process includes the assembly of a team of experts in historic preservation, architectural design, real estate development, building construction specialists, and local representatives. Through a process of interviews, a variety of local stakeholders contribute a broad array of perspectives, information, ideas, suggested opportunities and possible limitations about the re-use potential for historic properties. In general, the goals of the re-use team are: 1) to understand the community issues that may affect a historic property, 2) to develop re-use alternatives, 3) to evaluate the economic and preservation merits of re-use alternatives, 4) to define the most viable options, and 5) to recommend a plan for the community to consider.

Principles for adaptive re-use of historic buildings:

- The new use should not require extensive alterations to the historic buildings, such as large additions, gutted interiors, and/or extensive replacement of historic materials.
- The new use should be as close as possible to the historic use of the building.
- Whenever possible, rehabilitation should adhere to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines on Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*.
- The new use and rehabilitation should be financially and economically feasible.
- The new use should not exert undue wear or cause extensive damage to the historic property.
- Interim uses, such as storage, are appropriate uses as long as the building is maintained and preserved.
- Where immediate uses for buildings are not apparent, appropriate “mothballing” procedures should be undertaken in order to preserve the unused building.

Telling the Story: Interpretive Concepts

Interpretation is the “guiding hand” that enables the visitor to have an enhanced learning experience, creating a more profound and lasting impression. Because the Graves Farmstead is now a public park and is receiving visitors, the property lends itself to the interpretation of historical, ecological,

and cultural themes. Interpretive themes are best utilized when they arise from authentic experience – connecting the place with active enjoyment and education. The heritage embodied by the Graves Farm offers opportunities for numerous interpretive themes, both historical and natural/ecological. Several potential historical themes are discussed below. Ecological themes would best be developed by an environmental consultant.

A variety of themes related to the historical events that took place at Bend in the River Regional Park provide possibilities for interpretation.

- **Systems of Transportation.** The special site of Bend in the River Regional Park, near the Mississippi River and along historic road systems, creates an opportunity to discuss how people from ancient times to the present moved across the land. Native peoples traveled by water along the river – a virtual highway – and that pattern was continued by the Euro-Americans who later settled in Minnesota. Overland routes – possibly those used by Native Americans, and certainly those used by early settlers and soldiers – traveled across the parkland, closely following the established transportation route and lifeline of the Mississippi. These early road routes grew out of favor when the nearby railroad transformed Minnesota's frontier life, making the population centers and markets easily and quickly accessible. The old roads, then relegated to little more than connectors to rail stations, often became County roads, as in the case of County Road 55. As a result of the re-routing of County Road 55 in the 1940s to the east side of the farmstead, the resulting abandoned road segment west of the farmstead offers a tangible opportunity to interpret the early overland roads in much the same way as they were originally experienced: unpaved trails passing through wooded areas along the edge of the river. Trail markers may more clearly identify and interpret both the location and meaning of the historic road.
- **Ecological Transformations.** The transformation of the landscape at Bend in the River Regional Park offers an excellent opportunity to explore the continuing tension between natural and man-made landscapes. In little more than a century, the land has been transformed from its natural setting and ecology into an agricultural landscape complete with ordinary, yet intentional, features such as tree lines, windbreaks, and open fields. As this parcel of land enters into a new century with a new purpose as a public park, how will the landscape continue to evolve?

Exploration of the following questions can help develop this theme:

- What did the site look like before the arrival of Euro-Americans?
- What plant and animal life is indigenous to the area, and how much of it is still there?
- How did the first settlers work to transform their land and what impact did their work have on the environment?
- What is the purpose of such traditional and mundane agricultural landscape features such as tree lines, oak groves, windbreaks, and field configuration?
- What effects do traditional farming methods, once used on the Graves Farm and on others, have on erosion, native plant life, and the Mississippi River?
- What prompted the creation of the extensive windbreaks and what were the policies that encouraged such formations?
- How will land be managed in the future? What changes will be made and what will be kept the same?

The use of historical aerial photographs can be used to provide a visual perspective of the land's evolution, and particularly of the development of the distinctive windbreaks found east of County Road 55.

- **Family Stories.** The history of the farm avails itself to the interpretation of the interesting family who lived and occupied the land for almost one hundred years. All families have unique and exceptional events that mark not only personal experiences, but also signify the tenor of the times. The Graves family provides such insight and the Bend in the River Regional Park is fortunate to have several sources, in addition to the farmstead, that document the lives of the Graves family members. Most poignant are the letters received from two sons – Stewart and Irving – during World War I. The family lost one of their sons in battle, on the eve of the Armistice. The family’s response to the death of their son and brother, although not entirely known at this time, was that of increased activism for world unity and pacifism. Other sources, such as diaries, letters, and photographs have been reported, but not investigated at this time. In all, the sources provide a remarkable documentation of a family’s personal history. With permission and cooperation from the family, such items can be used to tell the story of this family while making links with the broader social, political, and economic trends of the times.

In addition to the written sources on the family, the farm itself stands as a record of the Graves’ family heritage. The unique and salvaged building materials are a testament to a family’s cleverness and resourcefulness in building a farm during economically difficult times. The buildings make the farm unique and have a story to tell in and of themselves.

- **Farm Practices.** Agricultural methods have dramatically shifted over the past century. Changing technology, increased scale, and specialized farming practices have resulted in many of the outbuildings found on the Graves Farmstead becoming obsolete. This provides an opportunity to interpret an important part of Minnesota and Benton County heritage as what we consider to be a “typical farmstead” rapidly vanishes from view. Interpretive programs can utilize the various outbuildings to demonstrate or describe the activities that historically occurred on the farm and how they fit together as a whole. See the section below for examples of how other parks and history museums have incorporated agricultural heritage into their interpretive programming.

Examples of Interpretation at Similar Park Sites

Several agricultural park and outdoor museum sites in the region may serve as models for potential re-use studies and interpretive programming for Bend in the River Regional Park. These examples are worth noting to gather ideas for potential programming, to get a sense of operational possibilities, and to appreciate the market demand for additional agriculture-related parks.

Living History Farms. Perhaps the best known and most successful agriculture-related, living history museum in the region is Living History Farms, located in Urbandale, Iowa, just outside of Des Moines. The 550-acre open-air museum tells the story of the transformation of the fertile Iowa prairies into highly productive farmland over a 300-year period. The museum utilizes re-created buildings and live interpreters with demonstrations to depict agricultural activity in four different periods spanning from 1700 to 1900; an exhibit center displays the history of the twentieth century. In 1999, the museum attendance reached 110,092 visitors, with an additional 29,670 utilized ancillary activities, such as facility rentals.

Old World Wisconsin. Old World Wisconsin similarly approaches agricultural heritage through the contributions of the State’s various ethnic groups. Historic farmhouses, outbuildings and small-town structures – many of them important and unique specimens – were transported and reconstructed at the 600-acre site in Waukesha County in eastern Wisconsin. The property

now has more than 60 historic structures. The museum portrays the history of immigration and resettlement in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Wisconsin. Costumed interpreters re-enact daily life of rural citizens and visitors can take part in many of the activities. Old World Wisconsin is one of the major historic sites operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Historic Murphy's Landing. Located in Shakopee, Minnesota, Historic Murphy's Landing is a re-created historic site illustrating the settlement of the Minnesota River Valley. Once the site of the Mdewakanton Dakota village Tinta Otonwe, the property later became home to Major Richard Murphy's inn and ferry services in the mid-1850s and a grist mill for the sons of Christian Indian missionary Samuel Pond. In the 1960s, the property was established as a living history museum and the historic buildings were complemented by some 41 historic structures moved onto the site, including the log cabin of fur trader Oliver Faribault. The 89.5-acre museum, now owned and operated by Three Rivers Park District (formerly Hennepin Parks), provides visitors with weekend opportunities and activities focused around a variety of themes, such as the popular Folkways of the Holidays from Thanksgiving to December. Livestock and chickens complete the agricultural interpretation of the Berger Farm.

Grimm Farm. The Three Rivers Park District also operates the Grimm Farm in northern Carver County. The brick farmhouse was home to Wendelin Grimm and his wife Julianna. Grimm made a significant contribution to Minnesota agriculture by developing the first winter-hardy alfalfa, known as Grimm Alfalfa, the source of most modern varieties of alfalfa. The Grimm Farm was acquired by the Hennepin County Park Reserve District in 1962 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. According to the program statement, the property is ideally situated to educate urban and suburban school children about contemporary agricultural issues as well as Minnesota's agricultural heritage. The property garnered additional attention when the Minnesota Historical Society declared that the State was losing historic agricultural sites at an alarming rate, and identified the Grimm Farm as one of its highest priorities. As a result, the house is currently undergoing restoration and has received a total of \$186,000 in State funds. The Three Rivers Park District provided \$240,000 in restoration and rehabilitation funding, with an additional \$54,000 contributed by private donors.

Oliver H. Kelley Farm. The Oliver H. Kelley Farm was settled in 1849, prior to Minnesota becoming a State, at the new town of Itasca along the Mississippi River in Sherburne County. Kelley became an expert farmer and learned firsthand the impact that debt, weather, insects and crop failures can have on a farmer. He went on to found the National Grange, which purchased the farm in 1935 and then donated it to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1961. It was named a National Historic Landmark in 1964. Trained interpreters who perform daily farm activities of rural life between 1850 and 1876 teach students about historical agricultural practices and now staff the farm. Scenic trails allow visitors to walk the grounds as well as explore the wildlife and plants along the Mississippi River.

Eidem Homestead. The Eidem Homestead is located in Hennepin County and is owned and operated by the City of Brooklyn Park. The restored historic site consists of a late-nineteenth century farmstead, comprised of a house, a barn, and several outbuildings. Current interpretation depicts the farm at the turn of the century, and has guided tours, hands-on activities, and living history events.

Holz Farm. Not unlike Bend in the River Regional Park, the Holz Farm is a historic farmstead

operated by the City of Eagan in Dakota County. The Holz family operated the farm from the 1890s through the mid 1970s, and in 1993, the City acquired the land and farmstead. The property is one of the last remaining historic sites in Eagan. The farm is open to the public and interpreted to reflect a 1940s farmstead, focusing on the period that electricity came to the farm. The farmstead hosts major city events and other special activities. The barn is used to house the city's equipment and chickens still occupy the old coop. The Friends of the Farm is a grass-roots organization developed to partner with the city to raise funds for acquisition, restoration and preservation efforts on the farm. They actively recruit volunteers and develop educational programs for students. The City is currently developing plans to have the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Gibbs Museum. The Gibbs Museum centers around the homestead of the Jane and Herman Gibbs family, who settled on the St. Paul site in 1849 – then well outside of the city. Interpretive programs emphasize the historical interactions of the Gibbs family with the Dakota, whose trails leading to the northern rising lakes crossed their farm. In addition to the pioneer farmstead, Dakota-style *tipis* are erected on the farm to depict the relationships between the settlers and Native Americans. Plant life illustrates the ecology of this part of Minnesota, where prairie restoration of tall grasses and oak savannahs has been undertaken, and examples of traditional Dakota and Euro-American pioneer gardens are planted. Several historic buildings are used and interpreted, including a 1910 barn, a 1958 barn designed by noted architect Edwin Lundie for the Minnesota Centennial, and a one-room schoolhouse.

Riedel Farm Estate. The Riedel Farm Estate is located in Fridley, Anoka County within the Riverfront Regional Park. The 140-acre park features biking and walking trails, picnicking, and a boat launch in addition to the restored 1880s home of dairy farmer Albin E. Riedel. The house now serves as a special event facility and markets its use for meetings, receptions, and celebrations. The property is owned by Anoka County.

Finnish Homestead. The Town of Embarrass in St. Louis County conducts tours of restored Finnish homesteads, log buildings, and the *Sisu Tori*, a Finnish craft shop and museum, during the summer and by special appointment. These historic buildings reflect the heritage and vernacular building traditions of the Finnish immigrants who settled in the township during the early twentieth century.

These brief descriptions of the regional and local historical and agricultural museums and public sites suggest that there is an abundance of such resources and that visitorship and funding may be competitive. Staffed interpretive programs and living history museums are expensive propositions. The presence of programs focused on historical farms – particularly that of the Kelley Farm, operated by the Minnesota Historical Society and located about one hour south of Bend in the River Regional Park – would make the introduction of another historic farm museum a challenge. Not only may it be unfeasible, but it may be unnecessary, as many of the programming needs for the interest groups appear to be met.

Historical interpretation may be considered a “bonus” to the natural and scenic qualities of the park, providing an additional layer of interest and enjoyment. Yet, interpretation should express the authentic aspects of the property and should not replicate or extensively overlap with programming available elsewhere. Interpretive programming for Bend in the River Regional Park should offer something unique to both the County and to the region, and it should do so in an unprecedented and distinctive way.

Recommendations

Planning and Preservation

The Master Plan is the first step in the planning process for Bend in the River Regional Park and lays out the overall direction and long-term goals for the park's development. Additional planning may be required to flesh-out and further develop the programs stated in the Master Plan. From a historic preservation perspective, the following initiatives should receive priority to maintain and enhance the historical aspects of the park.

1. Secure property from vandalism and further deterioration

The historical resources of the Graves Farm are under threat from vandalism and natural deterioration though lack of use and maintenance. Efforts should be made to minimize the exposure to vandalism. While passive methods, such as alarm systems and outdoor lighting, can be useful in detecting intruders, the active presence of an on-site caretaker would be the most effective manner to ensure that the property is thoughtfully protected and maintained. The regular maintenance and repair of the historic buildings, as well as maintenance of the grounds would give the property a “lived in” appearance and would discourage intruders.

2. Minimize deterioration of buildings

Regular maintenance and use of historic buildings is the best protection against the strain of time and weather. However, when conditions limit expensive rehabilitation projects or when the re-use of buildings has not yet been determined, it may be necessary to temporarily close a building to protect it. This is known as “mothballing.” When following the correct procedures for mothballing, buildings can be kept for extended periods of time. Special care must be taken to prevent rot-causing moisture build-up, deter intruders, and retain an attractive environment. Procedures for mothballing historic buildings are outlined in Technical Preservation Brief Number 31 presented by the National Park Service available at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief31.htm>.

3. Establish a “Friends of the Graves Farm”

A non-profit “Friends of the Graves Farm” organization would provide additional support to help preserve the historic farm and would leverage funding sources not available to the County. This type of organization would expand the grass-roots advocacy and interest in the farm and provide an avenue for volunteers to provide visitor services, spearhead restoration efforts, and raise money. This type of partnership has been used at Holz Farm in Eagan.

4. Initiate a re-use study process

The re-use study process would systematically and exhaustively explore the re-use potential for all of the properties associated with the historic farmstead, creatively addressing the economic feasibility and physical realities of the buildings and landscapes. The SHPO may provide guidance and technical assistance for the study.

5. Develop a preservation plan

The development of a preservation plan would help guide the future of the park's historic resources by addressing the special needs of significant buildings and landscapes. The SHPO has already suggested that this would be a good next step for Benton County.

6. Nominate to National Register

Only six properties in Benton County are listed on the National Register. Nomination of the Graves Farm would elevate the status of the property and add to the growing collection of historic resources in the County. Furthermore, listing on the National Register offers certain protections and opens additional funding sources.

7. Develop an interpretive plan

An interpretive plan would expand upon the significant stories already known to be associated with the Graves Farm and outline both the interpretive message and the means that would be most effective and appropriate for Bend in the River Regional Park.

Specific Re-Use Suggestions

The development of specific uses of the historic farm buildings is best done in conjunction with the development of the park's overall Master Plan, which guides the use and physical layout of the overall property as a park. While an intensive re-use study could more comprehensively address the best and most appropriate adaptive uses for the buildings and landscape, several suggestions can be made at this time for the re-use potential of several key buildings and structures.

- **Circulation System.** Removal of the present alignment of County Road 55 through the property (re-located circa 1940) to an alignment outside of the park would allow for an approach into the park that better replicates the historic thoroughfare and returns the orientation of the house to face the roadway. Portions of the historic roadway may be left untouched, but regularly mowed, to interpret the historic transportation routes once found there.
- **House.** At the earliest stage of the park's development, the dwelling could be used to house a resident caretaker. This use would not only be appropriate, but would also allow for the better oversight of the property and protection against intruders. Future re-use options may utilize the house as an interpretive center, with materials and displays most suitably centered on the Graves family.
- **Well House.** The well house with its massive granite blocks may provide for an appealing shelter for park visitors. As a safe, and largely fireproof structure, the building may well be used as a warming house for outdoor winter activities.
- **Barn.** The large barn may offer several opportunities for re-use, depending on the programming needs of the park. Such spaces have often been converted into picnic pavilions, party facilities, and general shelter areas. Consideration also may be given to stabling horses in the barn for park users or for the growing suburban population of Rice and other areas of Benton County. Another use, one equally appropriate for the Machine Shed, would be for the display and interpretation of historic farm machinery.
- **Potato Barn.** As a later addition to the farmstead (circa 1940), the potato barn may lack some of the historical significance and distinction of the other outbuildings. However, its sturdy frame and open expanse may lend itself for behind-the-scene uses, such as storage for Benton County's mowers and snowplows, which would be entirely appropriate as long as the building was not significantly modified or damaged in any way.
- **Other Outbuildings.** Other uses may also be found for the remaining outbuildings, although some simply may be preserved as artifacts. Should the park host cross-country skiing and rent skis to visitors, the granary or the farrowing house may be suitable for storage and rental facilities.
- **Landscape.** The landscape of the woods and fields surrounding the farmstead are part of the historic fabric of the Graves Farm. While the general feel of the landscape should be appropriate

to the property's historic character, there is potential for alternative uses. The field immediately adjacent to the farmstead has already been planted in native prairie grasses, evoking the natural landscape pre-dating Euro-American settlement. Other portions of the farm may also represent other eras, or may also be used for alternative farming techniques such as micro-farming or organic farming.

Specific Interpretive Ideas

Although an interpretive plan would further develop the concepts for educational opportunities and methods, several suggestions and observations can be made at this time.

- Use a “light wash” interpretation approach that can easily be overlaid onto a park with important natural and scenic qualities, complementing the visitor experience by adding depth and understanding of this unique site.
- Utilize passive interpretive techniques, such as signage and artifact collections, to minimize staffing requirements.
- Develop a non-museum approach that would lend the farm buildings to be creatively and adaptively re-used for new purposes, rather than simply kept as artifacts.
- Display of family memorabilia, letters and diaries along with contextual information (such as the experience of World War I), in the house.
- Employ interpretive signage for the remnant of the old military road along the historic alignment of County Road 55 west of the house.
- Arrange historical farm equipment along with informative signage in the sheds and barn.
- Use creative interpretive signage oriented to children for discussing the use of farm buildings.
- Address the natural and man-made landscape features by a qualified ecological scientist through walks and tours.

Additional Recommendations

- Ask the Graves family to consider donating their collection of letters, diaries, plans, and photographs relating to the farm and family to an appropriate repository, such as the Benton County Historical Society or the Minnesota Historical Society. Copies can be made to have on file at the park.
- Research and consider conducting an archaeological excavation on the apparent farmstead site located on the eastern portion of the park. Community volunteers and children under the supervision of a licensed archaeologist can conduct the archaeological dig.

Potential Funding Sources

- One Minnesota granting source for preservation of historic properties is the State Capital Grants-in-Aid Program administered by the SHPO (<http://www.mnhs.org/about/grants/capitalcontents.html>). This fund provides capital grants for historic preservation projects for publicly owned properties between \$10,000 and \$150,000.
- Investigate transportation enhancement funds offered by the Federal Highway Administration through the district office of the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Such funds can often be used for recreational facilities and for historic transportation-related projects.

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Appendix B. DNR Grants used to purchase land for Bend in the River Regional Park (2002)

Hello Gabrielle,

Thanks for asking the question.

So, there are two different grants with each one having its own stipulations. With NS02-001, Benton County acquired 54 acres and with RP02-001, Benton County acquired 235 acres. The NS02-001 grant (54 acres) has limited active development requirements. I'm attaching the Guidelines for Use of Natural and Scenic Area Grants for your information.

With the RP02-001 grant (235 acres), this part of the park can be actively developed for outdoor recreation. That is, disc golf and archery courses and playgrounds are acceptable recreational uses for this portion of the land.

Please let me know if you need the maps for NS02-001 or RP02-001.

Feel free to email me with any other questions or concerns.

Thanks!

Mai Neng

Mai Neng Moua

Grants Specialist Coordinator | Parks and Trails

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, MN 55155-4039

Phone: 651-259-5638

Email: mai.n.moua@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov

Guidelines for Use and Development of Land Acquired with Natural and Scenic Area Grants

Program Purpose: The purpose of the Natural and Scenic Area Grant Program is to help local governments and school districts increase, protect and enhance natural and scenic areas through matching grants for up to 50% of the cost of land acquisition. The main goal of the program is to protect the natural features of the land (plant and animal communities, geological and topographical features, water resources, scenic views, etc.). Outdoor recreation and environmental education may be secondary benefits of the program if they are compatible with the main goal of protecting the resource.

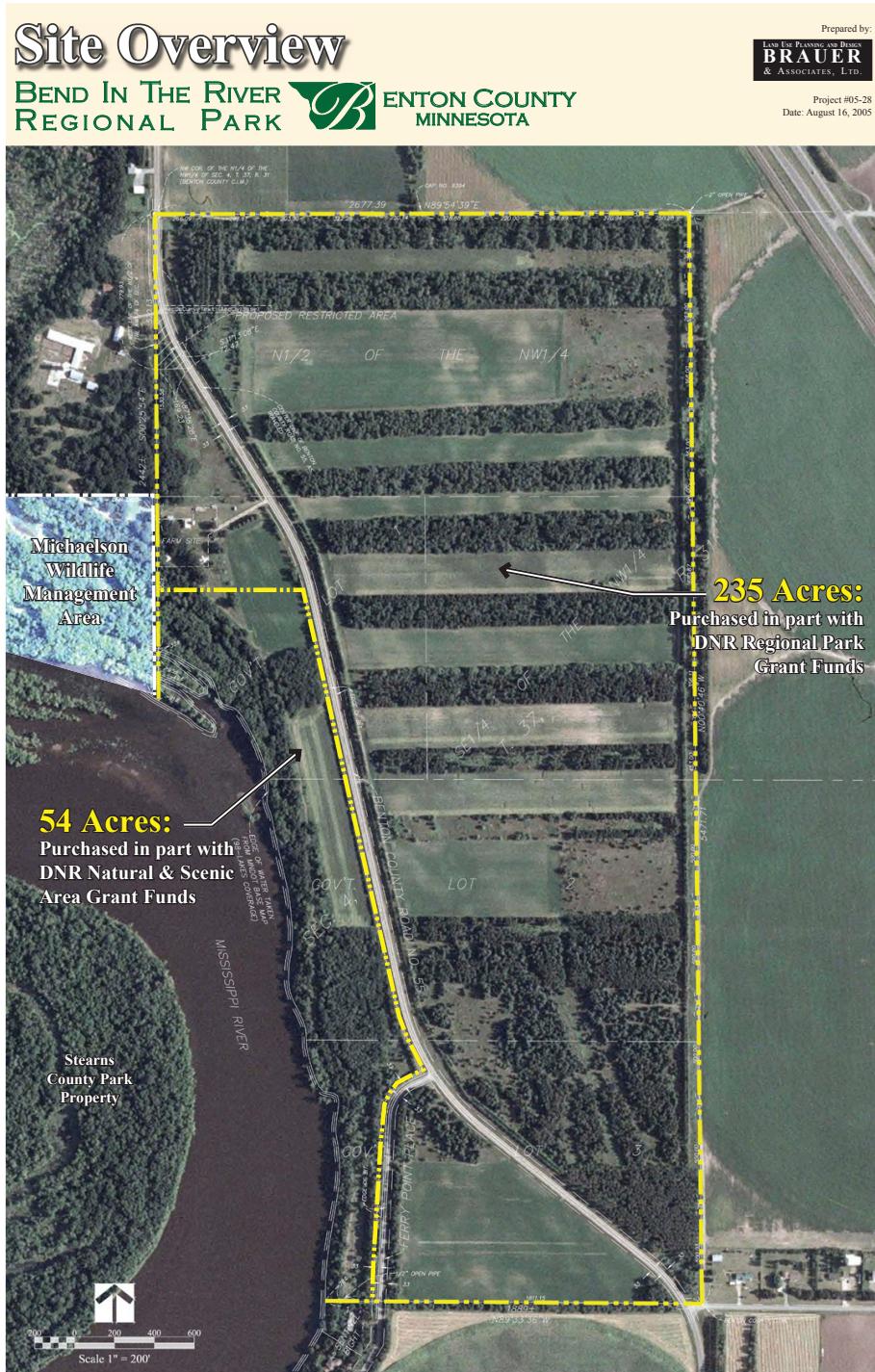
Compatible Use and Development: In general, outdoor recreation use of natural and scenic areas should be limited to passive outdoor recreation activities, such as nature observation, walking or hiking, bird watching, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, canoeing, photography and similar low impact activities. In some cases, environmental education activities may be appropriate. Limited facilities to support these activities, such as trails, overlooks, interpretive displays, benches, informational and boundary signing, protective fencing, and parking, are allowable uses. In some cases, rest room facilities and limited picnic facilities may also be compatible.

All development plans should be submitted for review and prior approval by the Local Grants Program staff of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Development proposals will be reviewed on a case by case basis, taking into account the specific characteristics of the natural and scenic area. Any development should be designed to avoid damage to natural resources and features, steer activities away from sensitive areas (such as steep bluffs, erosion prone shorelines, rare plant communities, etc.), and discourage inappropriate recreational use. Facilities must meet all safety and accessibility standards.

Incompatible Use and Development: Natural and scenic areas should not be developed for more active outdoor recreational uses, such as athletic fields and courts, campgrounds, motorized sports, etc. Any use or development that could result in damage to significant natural and/or scenic resources must be avoided. In some cases, it may be necessary to prohibit access to certain portions of the property to avoid damage to highly sensitive or rare resources. Protective fencing may be used when appropriate. Natural and Scenic Areas sites may not be used for a wetland mitigation or banking area. The intent of this program is to expand and protect natural and scenic areas and not provide areas that can be used for replacement of natural areas lost through development.

Bend in the River Regional Park Site Map identifying DNR Grant purchase areas

Image Source: Brauer & Associates, Ltd. (2005)



*Graphic illustrating areas purchased
 with different DNR grants*

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
NATURAL AND SCENIC AREA GRANT AGREEMENT
NS02-001

State Accounting Information:

CFMS Contract No. A39674

Agency Contract Identification No.: NS02-001

Agency: R29	Fiscal Year: 03	Vendor Number: 03405300101
Total Amount of Contract: \$500,000.00	Amount of Contract Frst FY: \$500,000.00	
Commodity Code: 023-10	Commodity Code:	Commodity Code:
Object Code: 5A00	Object Code:	Object Code:
Amount: \$500,000.00	Amount:	Amount:

Accounting Distribution 1:	Accounting Distribution 2:	Accounting Distribution 3:
Fund: 030	Fund:	Fund:
Appr: 954	Appr:	Appr:
Org/Sub: P732	Org/Sub:	Org/Sub:
Rept Catg	Rept Catg:	Rept Catg
Amount: \$500,000.00	Amount:	Amount:

Contract Start Date: 07/01/02

Expiration Date: 12/31/03

Contractor Name and Address:

**Benton County
Ms. Carrie Tripp
Park Director
P.O. Box 129
Foley, MN 56329**

THIS Grant Agreement, and amendments and supplements thereto, is between the State of Minnesota, acting through its Department of Natural Resources, Office of Management and Budget, Grants Unit, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4010 (hereinafter "STATE") and **Benton County**, a local government unit, address P.O. Box 129, Foley, MN 56329 (hereinafter "GRANTEE").

WHEREAS, the STATE, pursuant to **2001 Minnesota Laws, First Special Session, Chapter 2, Section 14, Subd. 5(b)** is empowered to provide matching grants to local units of government for acquisitions, development, or renovation of a capital nature of local parks, regional parks, and natural and scenic areas, and

WHEREAS, the GRANTEE has made application to the STATE for a portion of the allocation for the purpose of conducting the project entitled **Graves Farm Acquisition** in the manner described in the GRANTEE's "APPLICATION" which is incorporated into this Agreement by reference, and

WHEREAS, GRANTEE represents that it is duly qualified and willing to perform the services set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is agreed:

I. GRANTEE's DUTIES (see Attachment A, which is incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.)
GRANTEE shall:
Acquire 54 acres of river frontage along the Mississippi River, connected to DNR Wildlife Management Area. Site is across the river from Stearns County Park, and offers scenic views and protects undeveloped shoreline.

The GRANTEE agrees to complete the project in accordance with the approved budget to the extent practicable and within the project period specified in the Agreement. Any material change in the scope of the project, budget or completion date shall require prior written approval by the STATE.

II. CONSIDERATION AND TERMS OF PAYMENT:

A. CONSIDERATION: Consideration for all services performed by GRANTEE pursuant to this grant Agreement shall be paid by the STATE as follows:

1. COMPENSATION: Compensation in an amount not to exceed \$ 500,000.00, based on the following computation: See Attachment A for Project budget.
2. MATCHING REQUIREMENTS: GRANTEE certifies that the following matching requirement for the Grant will be met by GRANTEE. The total project cost is \$ 1,000,000.00. GRANTEE agrees to match at least 50% of this project cost.

THE TOTAL STATE OBLIGATION FOR ALL COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENTS TO GRANTEE SHALL NOT EXCEED:

Five Hundred Thousand Dollars \$ 500,000.00.

Funds made available pursuant to this Agreement shall be used only for expenses incurred in performing and accomplishing the purposes and activities specified herein. Notwithstanding all other provisions of this Agreement, it is understood that any reduction or termination of funds allocated to the STATE may result in a like reduction to the GRANTEE.

Where provisions of the GRANTEE's "APPLICATION" are inconsistent with other provisions of the Agreement, the other provisions of this Agreement shall take precedence over the provisions of the "APPLICATION."

B. TERMS OF PAYMENT

1. PAYMENT/DISBURSEMENT SCHEDULE: The STATE shall disburse funds to the GRANTEE pursuant to this Agreement on a reimbursement basis, based upon a payment request and required expenditure documentation submitted by the GRANTEE and reviewed and approved by the STATE. The GRANTEE shall be limited to no more than four payment requests during the period covered by this Agreement. The GRANTEE shall submit a final billing within 30 days of the end of the project period.

III. **CONDITIONS OF PAYMENT:** All services provided by the GRANTEE pursuant to this Grant Agreement shall be performed to the satisfaction of the STATE, as determined at the sole discretion of its Authorized Representative, and in accord with all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. The GRANTEE shall not receive payment for work found by the STATE to be unsatisfactory or performed in violation of federal, state or local law, ordinance, rule or regulation.

IV. **TERM OF GRANT:** This Grant shall perform the activities outlined in the approved project scope during the period from July 1, 2002, and shall remain in effect until December 31, 2003, or until all obligations set forth in this Grant Agreement have been satisfactorily fulfilled, whichever occurs first. No Grant reimbursements will be made until or upon the date that the final required signature is obtained by the STATE, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 16C.05, subd. 2, whichever occurs later.

V. **CANCELLATION:** This Grant Agreement may be canceled by the STATE or GRANTEE at any time, with cause, upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the other party. In the event of such a cancellation, GRANTEE shall be entitled to payment, determined on a pro rata basis, for work or services satisfactorily performed. Also, in the event of such a cancellation, the STATE shall be entitled to repayment, determined on a rata basis, of any funds initially advanced by the STATE to the GRANTEE.

The STATE may cancel this Grant Agreement immediately if the STATE finds that there has been a failure to comply with the provisions of this Grant Agreement or that reasonable progress has not been made, or that the purposes for which the funds were granted have not been or will not be fulfilled. The STATE may take action to protect the interests of the State of Minnesota, including the refusal to disburse additional funds and require the return of all or part of the funds already disbursed.

VI. **STATES AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:** The STATE'S Authorized Representative for the purposes of administration of this Grant Agreement is **Julia Cuchna, Grant Manager**. Such representative shall have final authority for acceptance of GRANTEE's services and if such services are accepted as satisfactory, shall so certify on each invoice submitted pursuant to clause II, paragraph B. The GRANTEE's Authorized Representative for purposes of administration of this grant Agreement is **Ms. Carrie Tripp, Park Director**. The GRANTEE's Authorized Representative shall have full authority to represent GRANTEE in its fulfillment of the terms, conditions and requirements of this Grant Agreement.

VII. **ASSIGNMENT:** GRANTEE shall neither assign nor transfer any rights or obligations under this Grant Agreement without the prior written consent of the STATE.

VIII. **AMENDMENTS:** Any amendments to this Agreement shall require prior written approval by the STATE. Any such amendments to this Grant Agreement shall be in writing and shall be executed by the same parties who executed the original Grant Agreement or their successors in office.

IX. **LIABILITY:** GRANTEE shall indemnify, save, and hold the STATE, its representatives and employees, harmless from any and all claims or causes of action, including all attorneys' fees incurred by the STATE, arising from the performance of this Grant Agreement by GRANTEE or GRANTEE's agents or employees. This clause shall not be construed to bar any legal remedies GRANTEE may have for the STATE'S failure to fulfill its obligations pursuant to this Grant Agreement.

X. **AUDITS:** The books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the GRANTEE relevant to this Grant Agreement shall be subject to examination by the contracting department, the Legislative Auditor, the Secretary of the Interior and the Comptroller General of the United States, for a minimum of six years from the end of this Grant Agreement. State and local governments are authorized to substitute microfilm copies in lieu of original records.

XI. **GOVERNMENT DATA PRACTICES ACT:** (if applicable) The GRANTEE must comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, as it applies to all data provided by the STATE in accordance with this Agreement, and as it applies to all data, created, collected, received, stored, used, maintained, or disseminated by the GRANTEE in accordance with this Agreement. The civil remedies of Minnesota Statutes Section 13.08, apply to the release of the data referred to in this Article by either the GRANTEE or the STATE.

In the event the GRANTEE receives a request to release the data referred to in this Article, the GRANTEE must immediately notify the STATE. The STATE will give the GRANTEE instructions concerning the release of the data to the requesting party before the data is released..

XII. **OWNERSHIP OF MATERIALS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS:** (if applicable)



A. *The STATE shall own all rights, title and interest in all of the materials conceived or created by the GRANTEE, or its employees or subgrantees, either individually or jointly with others and which arise out of the performance of and are paid for under this Grant Agreement, including any inventions, reports, studies, designs, drawings, specifications, notes, documents, software and documentation, computer based training modules, electronically, magnetically or digitally recorded material, and other work in whatever form ("MATERIALS").*

The GRANTEE hereby assigns to the STATE all rights, title and interest to the MATERIALS. GRANTEE shall, upon request of the STATE, execute all papers and perform all other acts necessary to assist the STATE to obtain and register copyrights, patents or other forms of protection provided by law for the MATERIALS. The MATERIALS created under this Grant Agreement by the GRANTEE, its employees or subgrantees, individually or jointly with others, shall be considered "works made for hire" as defined by the United States Copyright Act.

All of the MATERIALS, whether in paper, electronic, or other form, shall be remitted to the STATE by the GRANTEE, its employees and any subgrantees, shall not copy, reproduce, allow or cause to have the MATERIALS copied, reproduced or used for any purpose other than performance of the GRANTEE's obligations under this Grant Agreement without the prior written consent of the STATE'S Authorized Representative.

B. *GRANTEE represents and warrants that MATERIALS produced or used under this Grant Agreement do not and will not infringe upon any intellectual property rights of another, including but not limited to patents, copyrights, trade secrets, trade names, and service marks and names. GRANTEE shall indemnify and defend the STATE, at GRANTEE's expense, from any action or claim brought against the STATE to the extent that it is based on a claim that all or part of the MATERIALS infringe upon the intellectual property rights of another. GRANTEE shall be responsible for payment of any and all such claims, demands, obligations, liabilities, costs, and damages including, but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees arising out of this Grant Agreement, amendments and supplements thereto, which are attributable to such claims or actions. If such a claim or action arises, or in GRANTEE's or the STATE'S opinion is likely to arise, GRANTEE shall, at the STATE'S discretion, either procure for the STATE the right or license to continue using the MATERIALS at issue or replace or modify the allegedly infringing MATERIALS. This remedy shall be in addition to and shall not be exclusive to other remedies provided by law.*

XIII. **PUBLICITY/ACKNOWLEDGMENT/SIGNAGE:** Any publicity given to the program, publications, or services provided resulting from this Grant Agreement, including, but not limited to notices, informational pamphlets, press releases, research, reports, signs, and similar public notices prepared by or for the GRANTEE or its employees individually or jointly with others or any subgrantees, shall identify the STATE OF MINNESOTA as the sponsoring agency. Upon project completion, the GRANTEE shall post a permanent funding acknowledgment sign, in a form prescribed by the state, at the entrance to the project site, or at an alternative conspicuous location on the site.

XIV. **WORKERS' COMPENSATION:** GRANTEE shall provide acceptable evidence of compliance with the workers' compensation insurance coverage requirement of Minn. Stat. § 176.181, subd. 2.

XV. **ANTITRUST:** GRANTEE hereby assigns to the State of Minnesota any and all claims for overcharges as to goods and/or services provided in connection with this Agreement resulting from antitrust violations which arise under the antitrust laws of the United States and the antitrust laws of the State of Minnesota.

XVI. **PROMPT PAYMENT TO SUBCONTRACTORS:** (When applicable.) Prime contractors are required to pay subcontractors pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 16A.1245.

XVII. **JURISDICTION AND VENUE:** This Grant Agreement and executed amendments thereto, shall be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota. Venue for all legal proceedings arising out of this Grant Agreement, or breach thereof, shall be in the state or federal court with competent jurisdiction in Ramsey County, Minnesota.

XVIII. **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** The GRANTEE shall submit status reports to the STATE by the first of June and December of each year and a final report at the end of the Grant period prior to receiving final reimbursement.

XIV. **CONVERSION OF USE:** It is the intention of the State that the property acquired under this agreement shall exist in the Grantee's ownership and be maintained and managed consistent with the purpose and type of property to properly protect the natural and/or scenic resources in perpetuity. The Grantee shall not at any time convert any property acquired or

developed pursuant to this agreement to uses other than the permitted uses specified in this agreement without the prior written approval of the State.

The State will consider a conversion request only after the following pre-requisites have been met:

- 1. All practical alternatives to the conversion have been evaluated and rejected on a sound basis;*
- 2. The Grantee has agreed to replace the converted lands with other lands of at least equal fair market value and*

The State shall have the authority to approve or disapprove conversion requests.

The Grantee shall have the following condition recorded with the deed to all lands within the park as it was described in this agreement and submit an attested copy of the deed and the condition to the State.

In order to comply with the Department of Natural Resources Project Agreement NS02-001 Benton County does hereby impose the following restrictions on the property:

- 1. The property shall be permanently managed and maintained consistent with the purpose and type of property acquired using appropriate management and protection practices to protect the natural and/or scenic resources.*
- 2. The Grantee shall not at any time convert any portion of the natural and/or scenic area to uses other than permitted in this Agreement without the prior written approval of the State.*

XX. **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION:** *The GRANTEE shall protect, manage and maintain, or cause to maintain, the property acquired pursuant to this Agreement. Properties shall be kept reasonably safe for public use, if applicable. All state and federal accessibility laws, regulations and standards shall be adhered to. Vegetation management and similar safeguards and supervision shall be provided to the extent feasible. Buildings, roads, trails and other structures and improvements, if any, shall be kept in reasonable repair throughout their estimated lifetime to prevent undue deterioration. Failure to adequately manage, maintain and properly protect the resources and properly assisted through this agreement may result in the withholding by the State of any current or future payments to the Grantee related to this or any other Local Grants projects and may result in ineligibility of the Grantee to receive future Local Grants Program Grants. The GRANTEE shall keep the facility open to the general public at reasonable hours and at times of the year consistent with the purpose and type of use of the property and appropriate management and protection of natural resources.*

XXI. **Americans with Disability Act Compliance:** *In fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the Grant the Agency shall comply with P. L. 101-336, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. Section 12101-12213 and 47 U.S.C. 225, 611.*

XXII. **INSPECTIONS:** *The STATE'S authorized representatives shall be allowed at any time to conduct periodic site visits and inspections to ensure work progress in accordance with this Agreement, including a final inspection upon project completion.*

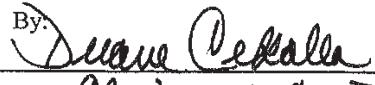
Following closure of the project, the STATE'S authorized representatives shall be allowed to conduct post-completion inspections of the site to ensure that the site is being properly operated and maintained and that no conversion of use has occurred.

XXIII. **OTHER PROVISIONS:** *A copy of this agreement and all incorporated elements, shall be permanently maintained on file by the Grantee.*

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Grant Agreement to be duly executed intending to be bound thereby.

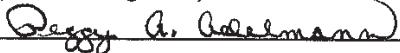
1. GRANTEE: Benton County

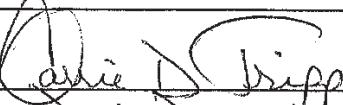
GRANTEE certifies that the appropriate person(s) have executed the Grant Agreement on behalf of the GRANTEE as required by applicable articles, by-laws, resolutions, or ordinances.

By:	
Title:	Chair of the County Board
Date:	11 AUG 08

2. STATE AGENCY: DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Grant Agreement approval and certification that STATE funds have been encumbered as required by Minn. Stat. §§ 16A.15 and 16C.05.

By (authorized signature):	
Title:	Administrator - Management and Budget
Date:	8-14-02

By:	
Title:	Park Director
Date:	8-12-02

Distribution:

*Agency - Original (fully executed) Agreement
Grantee
State Authorized Representative*

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
REGIONAL PARK GRANT AGREEMENT
RP02-001

State Accounting Information:
CFMS Contract No. A39683

Agency Contract Identification No.: RP02-001

Agency: R29	Fiscal Year: 03	Vendor Number: 03405300101
Total Amount of Contract: \$232,200.00	Amount of Contract Frst FY:	
Commodity Code: 023 10	Commodity Code:	Commodity Code:
Object Code: 5A00	Object Code:	Object Code:
Amount: \$232,200.00	Amount:	Amount:

Accounting Distribution 1:	Accounting Distribution 2:	Accounting Distribution 3:
Fund: 030	Fund:	Fund:
Appr: 954	Appr:	Appr:
Org/Sub: P735	Org/Sub:	Org/Sub:
Rept Catg	Rept Catg	Rept Catg
Amount: \$232,200.00	Amount:	Amount:

Contract Start Date: 07/01/02

Expiration Date: 12/31/03

Contractor Name and Address:

Benton County
Ms. Carrie Tripp
Park Director
P.O. Box 129
Foley, MN 56329

THIS Grant Agreement, and amendments and supplements thereto, is between the State of Minnesota, acting through its Department of Natural Resources, Office of Management and Budget, Grants Unit, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4010 (hereinafter "STATE") and Benton County, a local government unit, address P.O. Box 129, Foley MN 56329 (hereinafter "GRANTEE").

WHEREAS, the STATE, pursuant to *2001 Minnesota Laws, First Special Session, Chapter 2, Section 14, Subd. 5(b)* is empowered to provide matching grants to local units of government for acquisitions, development, or renovation of a capital nature of local parks, regional parks, and natural and scenic areas, and

WHEREAS, the GRANTEE has made application to the STATE for a portion of the allocation for the purpose of conducting the project entitled *Regional Park Acquisition* in the manner described in the GRANTEE's "APPLICATION" which is incorporated into this Agreement by reference, and

WHEREAS, GRANTEE represents that it is duly qualified and willing to perform the services set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is agreed:

I. GRANTEE's DUTIES (see Attachment A, which is incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.)
GRANTEE shall:

Acquire 235 acres in Benton County, known as Graves Farm, to be developed into a regional park. Adjoins 54 acre proposed Natural and Scenic area on Mississippi River. Future plans include development of regional park master plan, to include year-round trails, educational opportunities.

The GRANTEE agrees to complete the project in accordance with the approved budget to the extent practicable and within the project period specified in the Agreement. Any material change in the scope of the project, budget or completion date shall require prior written approval by the STATE.

II. CONSIDERATION AND TERMS OF PAYMENT:

A. CONSIDERATION: Consideration for all services performed by GRANTEE pursuant to this grant Agreement shall be paid by the STATE as follows:

1. COMPENSATION: Compensation in an amount not to exceed **\$ 232,200.00**, based on the following computation: See Attachment A for Project budget.
2. MATCHING REQUIREMENTS: GRANTEE certifies that the following matching requirement for the Grant will be met by GRANTEE. The total project cost is **\$ 650,000.00**. GRANTEE agrees to match at least 40% of this project cost.

THE TOTAL STATE OBLIGATION FOR ALL COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENTS TO GRANTEE SHALL NOT EXCEED:

Two Hundred Thirty Two Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$ 232,200.00).

Funds made available pursuant to this Agreement shall be used only for expenses incurred in performing and accomplishing the purposes and activities specified herein. Notwithstanding all other provisions of this Agreement, it is understood that any reduction or termination of funds allocated to the STATE may result in a like reduction to the GRANTEE.

Where provisions of the GRANTEE's "APPLICATION" are inconsistent with other provisions of the Agreement, the other provisions of this Agreement shall take precedence over the provisions of the "APPLICATION."

B. TERMS OF PAYMENT

1. PAYMENT/DISBURSEMENT SCHEDULE: The STATE shall disburse funds to the GRANTEE pursuant to this Agreement on a reimbursement basis, based upon a payment request and required expenditure documentation submitted by the GRANTEE and reviewed and approved by the STATE. The GRANTEE shall be limited to no more than four payment requests during the period covered by this Agreement. The GRANTEE shall submit a final billing within 30 days of the end of the project period.

III. CONDITIONS OF PAYMENT: All services provided by the GRANTEE pursuant to this Grant Agreement shall be

performed to the satisfaction of the STATE, as determined at the sole discretion of its Authorized Representative, and in accord with all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. The GRANTEE shall not receive payment for work found by the STATE to be unsatisfactory or performed in violation of federal, state or local law, ordinance, rule or regulation.

IV. **TERM OF GRANT:** This Grant shall perform the activities outlined in the approved project scope during the period from July 1, 2002, and shall remain in effect until December 31, 2003, or until all obligations set forth in this Grant Agreement have been satisfactorily fulfilled, whichever occurs first. No Grant reimbursements will be made until or upon the date that the final required signature is obtained by the STATE, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 16C.05, subd. 2, whichever occurs later.

V. **CANCELLATION:** This Grant Agreement may be canceled by the STATE or GRANTEE at any time, with cause, upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the other party. In the event of such a cancellation, GRANTEE shall be entitled to payment, determined on a pro rata basis, for work or services satisfactorily performed. Also, in the event of such a cancellation, the STATE shall be entitled to repayment, determined on a rata basis, of any funds initially advanced by the STATE to the GRANTEE.

The STATE may cancel this Grant Agreement immediately if the STATE finds that there has been a failure to comply with the provisions of this Grant Agreement or that reasonable progress has not been made, or that the purposes for which the funds were granted have not been or will not be fulfilled. The STATE may take action to protect the interests of the State of Minnesota, including the refusal to disburse additional funds and require the return of all or part of the funds already disbursed.

VI. **STATE'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:** The STATE'S Authorized Representative for the purposes of administration of this Grant Agreement is **Julia Cuchna, Grant Manager**. Such representative shall have final authority for acceptance of GRANTEE's services and if such services are accepted as satisfactory, shall so certify on each invoice submitted pursuant to clause II, paragraph B. The GRANTEE's Authorized Representative for purposes of administration of this grant Agreement is **Ms. Carrie Tripp, Park Director**. The GRANTEE's Authorized Representative shall have full authority to represent GRANTEE in its fulfillment of the terms, conditions and requirements of this Grant Agreement.

VII. **ASSIGNMENT:** GRANTEE shall neither assign nor transfer any rights or obligations under this Grant Agreement without the prior written consent of the STATE and, if applicable, the National Park Service.

VIII. **AMENDMENTS:** Any amendments to this Agreement shall require prior written approval by the STATE. Any such amendments to this Grant Agreement shall be in writing and shall be executed by the same parties who executed the original Grant Agreement or their successors in office.

IX. **LIABILITY:** GRANTEE shall indemnify, save, and hold the STATE, its representatives and employees, harmless from any and all claims or causes of action, including all attorneys' fees incurred by the STATE, arising from the performance of this Grant Agreement by GRANTEE or GRANTEE's agents or employees. This clause shall not be construed to bar any legal remedies GRANTEE may have for the STATE'S failure to fulfill its obligations pursuant to this Grant Agreement.

X. **AUDITS:** The books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the GRANTEE relevant to this Grant Agreement shall be subject to examination by the contracting department, the Legislative Auditor, the Secretary of the Interior and the Comptroller General of the United States, for a minimum of six years from the end of this Grant Agreement. State and local governments are authorized to substitute microfilm copies in lieu of original records.

XI. **GOVERNMENT DATA PRACTICES ACT:** (if applicable) The GRANTEE must comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, as it applies to all data provided by the STATE in accordance with this Agreement, and as it applies to all data, created, collected, received, stored, used, maintained, or disseminated by the GRANTEE in accordance with this Agreement. The civil remedies of Minnesota Statutes Section 13.08, apply to the release of the data referred to in this Article by either the GRANTEE or the STATE.

In the event the GRANTEE receives a request to release the data referred to in this Article, the GRANTEE must immediately notify the STATE. The STATE will give the GRANTEE instructions concerning the release of the data to the requesting party before the data is released..

XII. **OWNERSHIP OF MATERIALS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS:** (if applicable)



A. *The STATE shall own all rights, title and interest in all of the materials conceived or created by the GRANTEE, or its employees or subgrantees, either individually or jointly with others and which arise out of the performance of and are paid for under this Grant Agreement, including any inventions, reports, studies, designs, drawings, specifications, notes, documents, software and documentation, computer based training modules, electronically, magnetically or digitally recorded material, and other work in whatever form ("MATERIALS").*

The GRANTEE hereby assigns to the STATE all rights, title and interest to the MATERIALS. GRANTEE shall, upon request of the STATE, execute all papers and perform all other acts necessary to assist the STATE to obtain and register copyrights, patents or other forms of protection provided by law for the MATERIALS. The MATERIALS created under this Grant Agreement by the GRANTEE, its employees or subgrantees, individually or jointly with others, shall be considered "works made for hire" as defined by the United States Copyright Act.

All of the MATERIALS, whether in paper, electronic, or other form, shall be remitted to the STATE by the GRANTEE, its employees and any subgrantees, shall not copy, reproduce, allow or cause to have the MATERIALS copied, reproduced or used for any purpose other than performance of the GRANTEE's obligations under this Grant Agreement without the prior written consent of the STATE'S Authorized Representative.

B. *GRANTEE represents and warrants that MATERIALS produced or used under this Grant Agreement do not and will not infringe upon any intellectual property rights of another, including but not limited to patents, copyrights, trade secrets, trade names, and service marks and names. GRANTEE shall indemnify and defend the STATE, at GRANTEE's expense, from any action or claim brought against the STATE to the extent that it is based on a claim that all or part of the MATERIALS infringe upon the intellectual property rights of another. GRANTEE shall be responsible for payment of any and all such claims, demands, obligations, liabilities, costs, and damages including, but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees arising out of this Grant Agreement, amendments and supplements thereto, which are attributable to such claims or actions.*

If such a claim or action arises, or in GRANTEE's or the STATE'S opinion is likely to arise, GRANTEE shall, at the STATE'S discretion, either procure for the STATE the right or license to continue using the MATERIALS at issue or replace or modify the allegedly infringing MATERIALS. This remedy shall be in addition to and shall not be exclusive to other remedies provided by law.

XIII. **PUBLICITY/ACKNOWLEDGMENT/SIGNAGE:** *Any publicity given to the program, publications, or services provided resulting from this Grant Agreement, including, but not limited to notices, informational pamphlets, press releases, research, reports, signs, and similar public notices prepared by or for the GRANTEE or its employees individually or jointly with others or any subgrantees, shall identify the STATE OF MINNESOTA as the sponsoring agency. Upon project completion, the GRANTEE shall post a permanent funding acknowledgment sign, in a form prescribed by the state, at the entrance to the project site, or at an alternative conspicuous location on the site.*

XIV. **WORKERS' COMPENSATION:** *GRANTEE shall provide acceptable evidence of compliance with the workers' compensation insurance coverage requirement of Minn. Stat. § 176.181, subd. 2.*

XV. **ANTITRUST:** *GRANTEE hereby assigns to the State of Minnesota any and all claims for overcharges as to goods and/or services provided in connection with this Agreement resulting from antitrust violations which arise under the antitrust laws of the United States and the antitrust laws of the State of Minnesota.*

XVI. **PROMPT PAYMENT TO SUBCONTRACTORS:** *(When applicable.) Prime contractors are required to pay subcontractors pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 16A.1245.*

XVII. **JURISDICTION AND VENUE:** *This Grant Agreement and executed amendments thereto, shall be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota. Venue for all legal proceedings arising out of this Grant Agreement, or breach thereof, shall be in the state or federal court with competent jurisdiction in Ramsey County, Minnesota.*

XVIII. **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** *The GRANTEE shall submit status reports to the STATE by the first of June and December of each year and a final report at the end of the Grant period prior to receiving final reimbursement.*

XIX. **CONVERSION OF USE:** *The Grantee shall not at any time convert any portion of the park area to uses other than public outdoor recreation uses specified in this Agreement without the prior written approval of the State. This condition applies not only to the property acquired or the facilities developed through this Agreement but to the entire park as it was described in this Agreement.*

The State will consider a conversion request only after the following pre-requisites have been met:

1. All practical alternatives to the conversion have been evaluated and rejected on a sound basis;
2. The Grantee has agreed to replace the converted lands with other recreation lands of at least equal fair market

The State shall have the authority to approve or disapprove conversion requests.

The Grantee shall have the following condition recorded with the deed to all lands within the park as it was described in this agreement and submit an attested copy of the deed and the condition to the State.

In order to comply with the Department of Natural Resources Project agreement the Benton County does hereby impose the following restrictions on the property.

1. The property shall be permanently managed and maintained for outdoor recreation purposes consistent with the approved grant agreement RP02-001.
2. The Grantee shall not at any time convert any portion of the park area to uses other than public outdoor recreation uses specified in this Agreement without the prior written approval of the State.

XX. *FACILITY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE:* The GRANTEE shall operate and maintain, or cause to be maintained, the property or facilities acquired and/or developed pursuant to this Agreement. Sanitation and sanitary facilities shall be maintained in accordance with the applicable public health standards and shall be made available to users during reasonable park hours. Properties and facilities shall be kept reasonably safe for public use. All state and federal accessibility laws, regulations and standards shall be adhered to. Fire prevention, lifeguards and similar safeguards and use supervision shall be provided to the extent feasible. Buildings, roads, trails and other structures and improvements shall be kept in reasonable repair throughout their estimated lifetime to prevent undue deterioration and to encourage recreational use of the project and associated facilities. Failure to adequately maintain and properly operate the facility assisted through this grant may result in the withholding by the STATE of any current or future payments to the GRANTEE related to this or any other Local Grants project and may result in ineligibility of the GRANTEE to receive any future Local Grants Program Grant.

The GRANTEE shall keep the facility open to the general public at reasonable hours and at times of the year consistent with the purpose and type of facility.

XXI. *Americans with Disability Act Compliance:* In fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the Grant the Agency shall comply with P. L. 101-336, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. Section 12101-12213 and 47 U.S.C. 225, 611.

XXII. *INSPECTIONS:* The STATE'S authorized representatives shall be allowed at any time to conduct periodic site visits and inspections to ensure work progress in accordance with this Agreement, including a final inspection upon project completion.

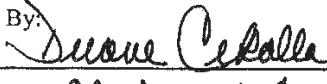
Following closure of the project, the STATE'S authorized representatives shall be allowed to conduct post-completion inspections of the site to ensure that the site is being properly operated and maintained and that no conversion of use has occurred.

XXIII. *OTHER PROVISIONS:* A copy of this agreement and all incorporated elements, shall be permanently maintained on file by the Grantee.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Grant Agreement to be duly executed intending to be bound thereby.

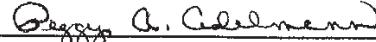
1. GRANTEE: Benton County

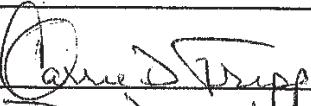
GRANTEE certifies that the appropriate person(s) have executed the Grant Agreement on behalf of the GRANTEE as required by applicable articles, by-laws, resolutions, or ordinances.

By:	
Title:	Chair of the County Board
Date:	12/4/02

2. STATE AGENCY: DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Grant Agreement approval and certification that STATE funds have been encumbered as required by Minn. Stat. §§ 16A.15 and 16C.05.

By (authorized signature):	
Title:	Administrator - Management and Budget
Date:	8-14-02

By:	
Title:	Park Director
Date:	8-12-02

Appendix C. Detailed Cost Estimate

Park Complex Total	\$7,316,900
Stearns Total	\$5,125,300
Benton Total	\$2,191,600
High Priority/Short Term Total	\$2,654,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	COUNT	UNIT	UNIT COST
Property Acquisition	Stearns	1	LS	\$2,000,000.00
Archery Building	Stearns	1	LS	\$500,000.00
Archery 3D Course	Stearns	28	Lanes	\$1,000.00
Disc Golf Tee Boxes	Stearns	18	Each	\$2,000.00
Kayak/Canoe Rental Station	Stearns	1	Each	\$15,000.00
Canoe campsite improvements	Stearns	1	LS	\$5,000.00
Oak Savanna Restoration	Stearns	10	Acres	\$5,000.00
Picnic shelter refurbishment or rebuild	Stearns	1	Each	\$75,000.00 +
New nature-based play area near picnic shelter	Stearns	1	Each	\$75,000.00
Plant inventory project	Stearns	1	LS	\$15,000.00
Prairie restoration	Stearns	35	Acres	\$3,500.00
Establish invasive species management plan, including Buckthorn management	Stearns	1	LS	\$10,000.00
Interpretive signage	Stearns	10	Each	\$5,000.00
Wayfinding signage	Stearns	8	Each	\$2,000.00
Bike Loop/MRT Trailhead	Stearns	1	LS	\$15,000.00
Soft Surface Trail	Stearns	5280	LF	\$35.00
Overlook	Stearns	2	Each	\$20,000.00
Paved Trail	Stearns	3750	LF	\$80.00
Boardwalk Trails	Stearns	2640	LF	\$200.00
Parking Lot Expansion	Stearns	10	Spaces	\$3,500.00
Picnic Shelter with Restroom	Stearns	1	Each	\$200,000.00
Small Nature Play Area	Stearns	1	Each	\$75,000.00
Native landscape restoration	Stearns	150	Acres	\$5,000.00
Canoe Landing Improvements	Benton	1	LS	\$20,000.00
Soft Surface Trail	Benton	10560	LF	\$35.00
Cross-country ski trails	Benton		LF	
Wayfinding signage	Benton	3	Each	\$2,000.00
Buckthorn management	Benton	50	Acres	\$5,000.00
Pine tree management	Benton	1	LS	
Interpretive signage	Benton	5	Each	\$5,000.00
Maintenance to historic farmstead structures as necessary	Benton	1	LS	\$20,000.00
Large Picnic Shelter	Benton	1	Each	\$200,000.00
Paved Trail	Benton	13200	LF	\$80.00
Nature Themed Playground	Benton	1	Each	\$150,000.00
Gravel Parking Lot	Benton	20	Spaces	\$2,500.00
Medium Picnic Shelter	Benton	1	Each	\$45,000.00
Bike trail connection to Rice/Sartell (signage, coordination)	Benton		LF	

TOTAL	PRIORITY	PHASING	TYPE	NOTES
\$2,000,000.00	High	Short	Acquisition	North of existing park (\$1,443,400 EMV)
\$500,000.00	High	Short	Capital	Paid for by Great River Archery
\$28,000.00	High	Short	Capital	Partnership
\$36,000.00	High	Short	Capital	concrete pads, posts
\$15,000.00	High	Short	Capital	work with vendor to provide station
\$5,000.00	High	Short	Capital	Better signage visible from river, new fire ring, clean up
\$50,000.00	High	Short	Restoration	Paid for in partnership with SWCD
\$75,000.00	Medium	Mid	Restoration	
\$75,000.00	Medium	Mid	Capital	First phase: \$50,000-\$100,000
\$15,000.00	Medium	Mid	Planning	Paid for in partnership with SWCD
\$122,500.00	Medium	Mid	Restoration	Conversion of Acquisition Parcel farm field
\$10,000.00	Medium	Mid	Planning	
\$50,000.00	Medium	Mid	Capital	
\$16,000.00	Medium	Mid	Capital	
\$15,000.00+/tbd	Medium	Mid	Capital	Bike Fixit, Parking, Signage, Benches, Water Fountain
\$184,800.00	Low	Long	Capital	Acquisition Parcel
\$40,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	Acquisition Parcel
\$300,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	MRT in park
\$528,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	Floodplain Forest
\$35,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	Boat Launch--paved or gravel?
\$200,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	Boat Launch--confirm with DNR
\$75,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	Boat Launch
\$750,000.00	Low	Long	Restoration	woodland, prairie, oak savanna, shoreline
\$20,000.00	High	Short	Restoration	Brushing and Trail Improvements
\$369,600.00	Medium	Mid	Capital	Soft surface trails through prairie areas and pine tree rows for hiking
tbd	Medium	Mid	Capital	groomed or back country?
\$6,000.00	Medium	Mid	Capital	Within the park, information about Mississippi River County Park and the Great River Park Complex
\$250,000.00	Medium	Mid	Restoration	
tbd	Medium	Mid	Restoration	Pilot Project
\$25,000.00	Medium	Mid	Capital	Historic farmstead, ecology
\$20,000.00	Low	Mid	Restoration	Maintain as is
\$200,000.00	Medium	Mid	Capital	South of historic farmstead parking lot
\$1,056,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	Bike trail connection to Rice along Hwy 55
\$150,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	New South Day Use Area
\$50,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	New South Day Use Area
\$45,000.00	Low	Long	Capital	New South Day Use Area
tbd	Low	Long		Coordination with Rice, Sartell, County Highway Dept.

Appendix D. Summary of Public Input

The following pages include public input received during the Great River Park Complex master planning process from April to June, 2020:

- Emails and letters received from individuals, organizations, and stakeholders
- Meeting notes from Stakeholder meeting, May 7, 2020
- Online Survey (Survey Monkey) responses
 - *Phase 1 Survey (May 19, 2020)*
 - *Phase 2 Survey (May 28, 2020)*

May 21, 2020

To: Gabrielle Grinde

From: Friends of the Graves Farmstead

Re: The farmstead at Bend In the River Park, Benton County

Dear Gabrielle

We think it is not appropriate to place a new picnic shelter building near the farmstead. It is the position of Friends of the Graves Farmstead that any new building in the farmstead area would greatly harm the historical integrity of the farmstead, likely interfering with its status of being eligible for The National Register of Historic Places. Though the current Park Commission and Benton County Commission have a history of opposing National Register designation, future Park Commission and County commission members might feel differently.

In 2005, The Farmstead won the designation of one of the top ten endangered historical places for that year in Minnesota from the Minnesota Preservation Alliance. The farmstead has its own unique atmosphere which would be greatly degraded by a new building in close proximity. When visitors walk into the farmstead, they have a feeling of stepping back in time; it is a place radiating a feeling of peace and the wonder of the past. Please do not diminish this sacred atmosphere by placing a new building close to it.

The beautiful restored prairie just south of the farmstead must be protected from development. Much time and effort has been made by the County to develop this prairie into a place visitors love. Do not take a piece of it for a building.

The shelter and playground equipment in the original Master Plan for Bend In the River are placed at the very south end of the park. We believe that is where the shelter should be placed.

Have you contacted the Minnesota State Historical Society or the State Historic Preservation Office about the adverse effect of placing a new building, or any new structures in the farmstead area?

Friends of the Graves Farmstead believes it's crucial to keep *all* of the buildings stabilized as its value as a history site is as a collection of farm buildings demonstrating "Folk" or "Salvage Architecture." The machine shed is currently in need of stabilization and can't wait much longer. If all of the buildings are not preserved, historical value is lost.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Brenda Graves, Secretary, Friends of the Graves Farmstead

CC: Ed Popp, Benton County Commissioner , Mary Kivi, Park Commission Chairperson

Email Input

[We] had an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas for the Great River Park Complex Master Plan and would like to add our ideas:

We'd love to focus our youth, educational, and wellness programming out of a collaborative enclosed space. This space could come in the form of a "Nature Center", but we are excited about the opportunity to utilize it as a gathering for all group events such as Snowshoe Hike, HIKE@Night, Student Camps, Wellness Retreats, She Ascends gatherings, etc..

In addition, we would love to be hired by the park systems to grow programming with our community following, our business partnerships, and our school connections. It would be great to have a work/office space included in this building.

Please feel free to share this information with other stakeholders and key decision makers.

Thank you!

~ HikeHoppers

Here are my comments about Bend In the River Park.

1. Stabilize and preserve the farmstead buildings. They won the "one of the ten most endangered historical places in MN in 2005" from the Preservation Alliance of MN.
2. The Farmstead is eligible as a collection for the National Register of Historic Places. Placing it on the register would provide grants for its stabilization. If one of the buildings collapses, its eligibility would be threatened. The National Register would bring many visitors. Also adding amenities such as picnic shelters or playground equipment or new buildings would greatly erode the farmstead's old-farm atmosphere and threaten its National Register's eligibility. The machine shed is very unstable. Friends of the Graves farmstead and a private donor have offered \$3,400.00 to help with the stabilization of the machine shed. Hopefully, it will be stabilized.
3. I would hope that grills would not be part of Bend In the River Park because of fire hazard and especially not in the farmstead area.

There are plans for a shelter in the Master Plan for Bend In the River and it is not in the farmstead area. That original Bend In the River Master Plan should be followed as much as possible.

4. We need management of the trees at Bend in the River. In the windrows and along the road, the trees may die from being overcrowded.
5. Please bring back the wonderful event Take the Day off on the Mississippi. A great event!
6. Keep the areas that are natural at Mississippi Co. Park, natural. Have a bike trail between the two parks, over the existing bridge, etc.
7. Let's have more trails at Bend In the River. Ski trails in both parks would be nice.
8. Keep Bend In the River natural.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



I'm sending comments and suggestions in this message because I'm not able to access the links for the survey and interactive mapping tool due to my computer and internet limitations.

I'm aware that Bend in the River Park already has a master plan. Much of that would seem to still be relevant and should be incorporated into the new plan. I'm with a local group called Natural Parks & Trails Coalition which has been supportive of this park from the beginning. We held several public events there from 2006 - 2016, in the farmstead area, and offered guided walks on the trails. The events were well attended and there seems to be a lot of interest in preserving the farmstead buildings as well as preserving and restoring the natural areas of the park.

RECOMMENDATIONS for Bend in the River Park:

- Preserve the farmstead buildings, perhaps by applying to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Avoid adding amenities in the farmstead area that are incompatible with the historic aspect of that area.
- Add amenities such as a covered picnic shelter near the south parking lot.
- Avoid grills and other fire options because of fire danger.
- Avoid clear cutting as was done at the river overlooks. (It still looks terrible from the cutting 5 years ago.)
- Tree thinning is needed in the windbreaks.
- Add interpretive signs about nature and history on the east side of highway 55.

RECOMMENDATIONS for Mississippi River County Park:

- Keep the undeveloped parts natural by adding any future development to the already disturbed areas.
- Add interpretive signage similar to the signs at Bend in the River.
- Add signs about significant natural features and habitats.
- Add signs at the intersections of park roads to direct to various amenities like the covered picnic shelter and boat landing.
- Purchase adjoining land to expand the park and shoreline.

Connecting the parks:

- Add signs in each park near the entrance/exit with information about the other park including what's available there and how to get there.
- Add information about the other park at overlooks in each park.
- Add bike lanes and signage between the parks.

Thanks for considering these comments as you proceed with developing the master plan.

Looking at the current park land and the future purchase of park land, a nine hole addition could be a viable upgrade for disc golf. This nine hole course could be a stand alone course layout, or be incorporated into the current 18 hole course layout. This would be the first 27 hole layout in a Minnesota County Park that I am aware of.

Option 1: Expand the nine hole design to the south/southeast area of the park. After playing the current holes 1-9, there are paths, open areas, woods, and elevation changes that would lend well to this nine hole loop. It would then re-hook up with current hole 10. Thus, nothing changes on the current 18 hole layout other than re-numbering the tee signs and pins 10-27.

Option 2: Depending on the location of new land to the north/northwest, a nine hole could stand alone, or connect with the front nine of the current 18 hole layout. Thus no changes on the current layout, except for re-numbering tees and pins 10-27.

The DGA Mach V's or Mach 7's would match up well with the current DGA Mach III baskets. You also have several pins in storage that could be used based on budget, and DGA conversion that Ben has currently been implementing the past several years.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this disc golf concept plan on behalf of the SCDGC, and MFA.

Sincerely

Tim Mackey-DGCDG

May 7, 2020: Stakeholder Meeting Notes

At least 11 stakeholders joined us to discuss their thoughts about the future of the Great River Park Complex.

Invited Stakeholders: T.H.E. Great River Archery Club; Central MN Cycling Club; Mid MN Cycling Club; Park Users; Nordic Ski Club of Central Minnesota; Natural Parks and Trails Coalition; Stearns SWCD; Brockway Township; Stearns County Environmental Services; Chair of the Park Commission; City of Sartell; City of St. Stephen; Clearwater River Outfitters; Disc Golfer; HikeHoppers

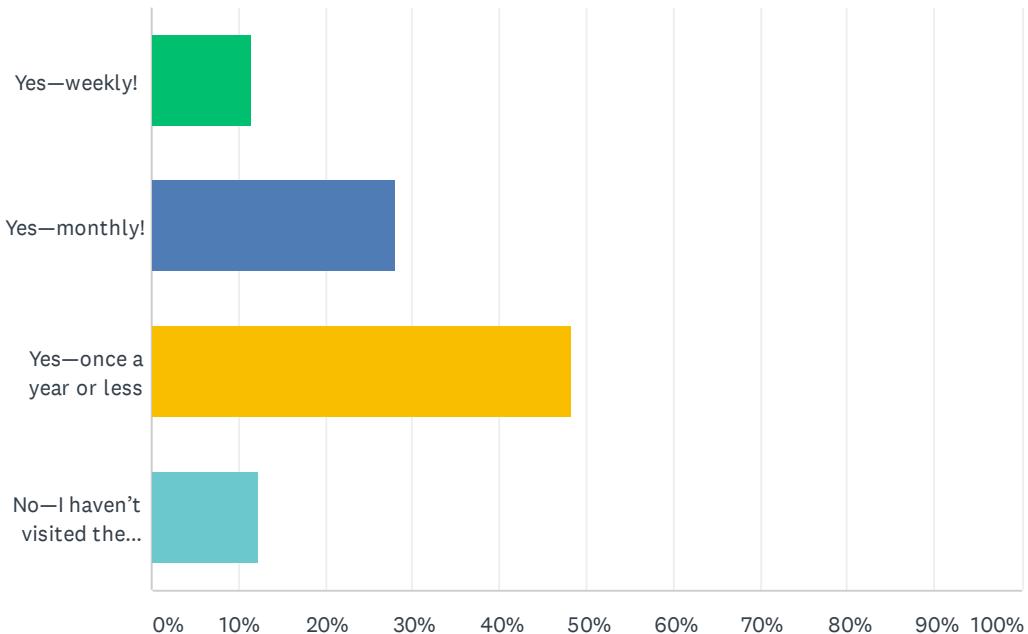
Input Summary:

- Natural resources interests and ideas include: manage buckthorn; protect and promote native plants and spring ephemerals, especially along the river in Mississippi River County Park; support for future oak savanna restoration in the southern part of Miss. River Co. Park; interest in a future plant inventory by the Stearns Co. SWCD; interest in converting brome grasses to prairie with pollinator species
- Access and Connections interests and ideas include: add wayfinding and interpretation signage at both parks that talks about the features at the other park to draw park users to visit the other park; connect the bike trail from Sartell up to Miss. River Co. Park, consider a bike trailhead for the MRT and a bike parking facility and bike fix-it station in the park; add a bike trail loop from Sartell to Miss. River Co. Park and over to Bend in the River Park and back to Sartell; expand parking at the boat launch and promote the small mouth fishery at that point in the river; improve the canoe landing at Bend in the River Park—clear the downed trees and create a spot for kayak/canoe parking; consider creative ways to cross the river—in winter over the ice
- Recreation Facilities and Programs interests and ideas include: the Great River Archery Center will be a multi-purpose building in Miss. River Co. Park primarily for hosting indoor archery, tournaments and events, but it can also be used to host bike events, host disc golf tournaments, as a warming chalet for cross country skiers, host park events, etc.; maintain and promote the history of the farmstead at Bend in the River Park—it is a unique feature in the park; bring back Take a Day Off event; add interpretive signage about the natural environment; consider a nature center or environmental classroom in the park; many programming suggestions for youth activities in nature
- Acquisition: high support for acquisition of adjacent property and expansion of the park

Phase 1 Online Survey Responses (Survey Monkey)
April 27-May 19, 2020

Q1 Have you visited Mississippi River County Park in Stearns County?

Answered: 340 Skipped: 3

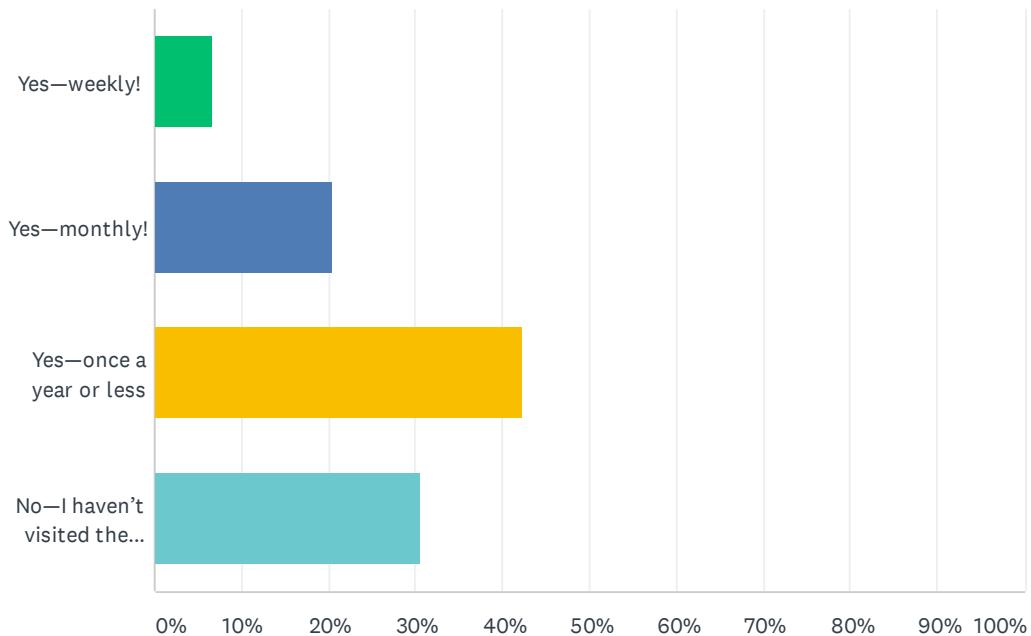


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes—weekly!	11.47%	39
Yes—monthly!	27.94%	95
Yes—once a year or less	48.24%	164
No—I haven't visited the park	12.35%	42
TOTAL		340

Q2 Have you visited Bend in the River Park in Benton County?

Answered: 341 Skipped: 2

Great River Park Complex

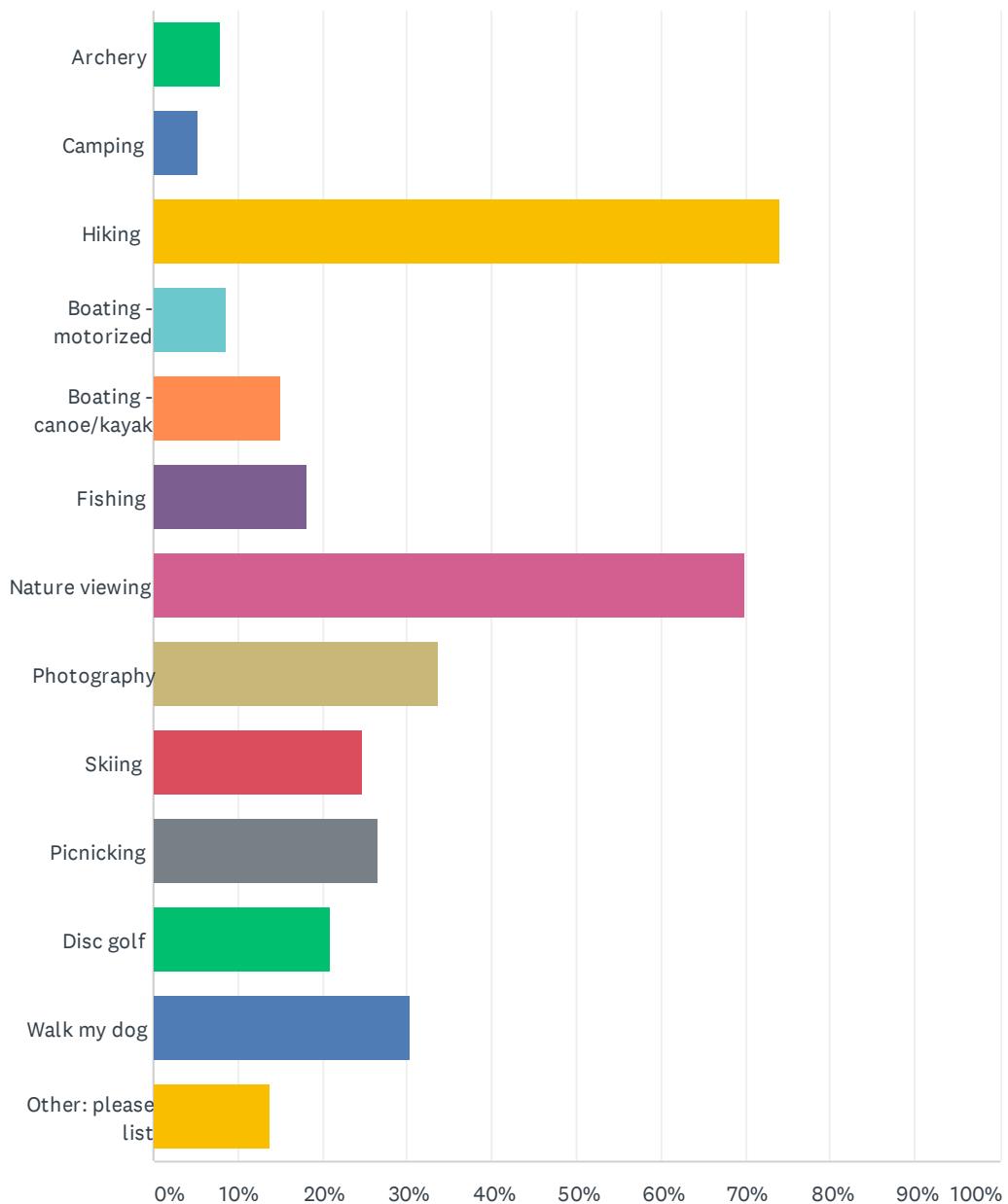


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes—weekly!	6.74%
Yes—monthly!	20.53%
Yes—once a year or less	42.23%
No—I haven't visited the park	30.50%
TOTAL	341

Q3 What activities do you engage in at the parks? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 339 Skipped: 4

Great River Park Complex



Great River Park Complex

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Archery	7.96%	27
Camping	5.31%	18
Hiking	74.04%	251
Boating - motorized	8.55%	29
Boating - canoe/kayak	15.04%	51
Fishing	18.29%	62
Nature viewing	69.91%	237
Photography	33.63%	114
Skiing	24.78%	84
Picnicking	26.55%	90
Disc golf	20.94%	71
Walk my dog	30.38%	103
Other: please list	13.86%	47
Total Respondents: 339		

Great River Park Complex

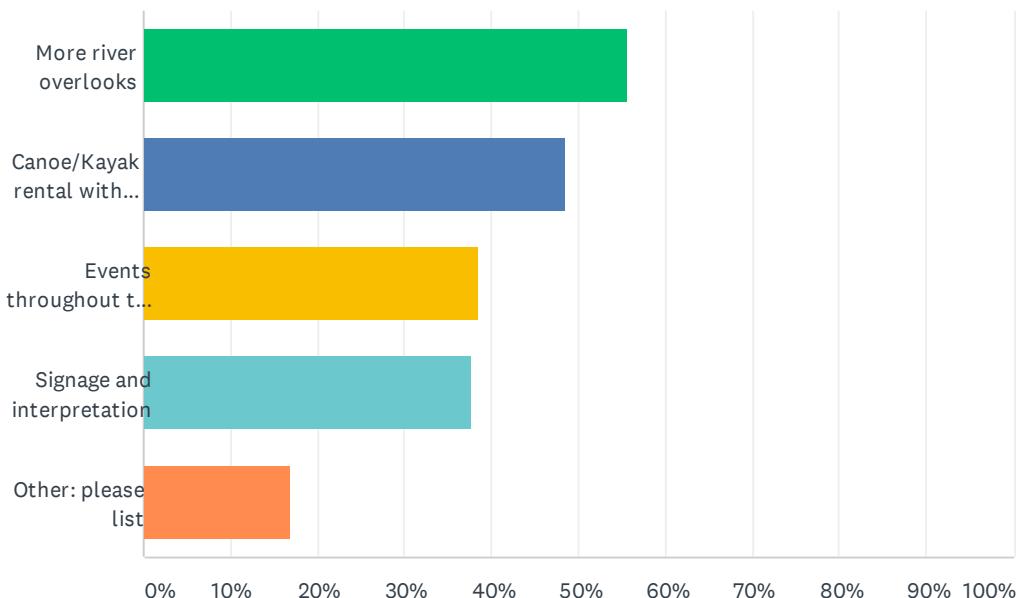
#	OTHER: PLEASE LIST	DATE
1	snowshoeing	5/18/2020 5:29 AM
2	Horse back riding	5/14/2020 2:22 PM
3	Birding	5/12/2020 2:06 PM
4	2	5/12/2020 8:32 AM
5	geocaching	5/12/2020 7:32 AM
6	bike camping in the future	5/12/2020 6:48 AM
7	History at Bend in the River	5/11/2020 12:14 PM
8	Mountain biking	5/10/2020 7:44 PM
9	Running, biking	5/10/2020 6:16 PM
10	Picnic	5/10/2020 4:45 PM
11	as a means to get away from the city for a short while	5/8/2020 2:34 PM
12	biking	5/7/2020 10:42 AM
13	Biking, kid activities	5/7/2020 10:28 AM
14	getting my child out of the house	5/7/2020 9:32 AM
15	birding	5/5/2020 11:37 AM
16	Not Interested at A	5/4/2020 12:46 PM
17	Walking	5/2/2020 5:02 PM
18	Park	5/2/2020 9:49 AM
19	snowshoeing	5/1/2020 9:47 PM
20	Mountain bike	5/1/2020 5:59 PM
21	I love everything about this park. It's very quite and never too crowded. I use it the most to disc golf, more than once a week. I would love to see a second 18 hole course like some places have. Other than that my second idea would be clear more shoreline for fishing areas.	5/1/2020 9:55 AM
22	Telescope for astronomy	5/1/2020 8:26 AM
23	NO MONEY FOR ANY PARKS UNTIL THE STREETS ARE FIXED	5/1/2020 7:38 AM
24	birding	4/30/2020 8:56 PM
25	Mountain biking	4/30/2020 8:13 PM
26	walking	4/30/2020 6:39 PM
27	Where are these parks?	4/30/2020 6:00 PM
28	Birding	4/30/2020 5:33 PM
29	geocaching	4/30/2020 1:47 PM
30	Biking	4/30/2020 11:16 AM
31	ooking for nature's wildflowers	4/30/2020 10:00 AM
32	Running and Walking for exercise	4/30/2020 9:12 AM
33	running	4/29/2020 11:57 AM
34	Trail Running	4/29/2020 10:56 AM
35	just for a walk	4/29/2020 9:26 AM
36	Hosted Events	4/29/2020 8:45 AM

Great River Park Complex

37	Snowshoeing	4/28/2020 4:20 PM
38	snow shoing	4/28/2020 1:22 PM
39	Snowshoeing	4/28/2020 12:59 PM
40	Enjoyed "Take a Day Off" in the past. Wish it would come back!	4/28/2020 12:31 PM
41	4-wheeling	4/28/2020 11:04 AM
42	Swimming, biking	4/28/2020 10:54 AM
43	Snowshoeing	4/28/2020 10:45 AM
44	Foraging for wild edibles	4/28/2020 10:43 AM
45	Trail running	4/28/2020 10:39 AM
46	cycling	4/28/2020 10:36 AM
47	geocaching	4/28/2020 10:28 AM

Q4 How do you think the two parks should be linked? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 332 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More river overlooks	55.72%	185
Canoe/Kayak rental with boat landings on either side of the river to paddle between them	48.49%	161
Events throughout the year that involve both parks	38.55%	128
Signage and interpretation	37.65%	125
Other: please list	16.87%	56
Total Respondents: 332		

Great River Park Complex

#	OTHER: PLEASE LIST	DATE
1	Allow horses on trails	5/14/2020 2:22 PM
2	Paved trail	5/12/2020 9:56 PM
3	Do they need to be linked? Novice paddlers might go down river and be unable to paddle back to either park... Could a private outfitter provide any service decided upon?	5/12/2020 8:59 AM
4	No need to link	5/12/2020 8:50 AM
5	Online guides to plants, trees found in parks, especially those unique to the habitat; naturalist-led hiking series	5/12/2020 8:20 AM
6	not sure they need to be linked	5/11/2020 7:47 PM
7	Please no more river overlooks in Bend in the River, they are an eyesore, with a design that does not blend in with natural setting.. They are overbuilt, has a railing in front that blocks the view.. From the Stearns cty side, they look like gun batteries.	5/11/2020 2:17 PM
8	I don't think they need to be linked.	5/11/2020 1:53 PM
9	ski trails at Benton would be great	5/11/2020 11:00 AM
10	Mountain biking trails	5/10/2020 7:44 PM
11	Bridge and walking trails	5/9/2020 3:45 PM
12	I dont feel that they have to be linked. They are both unique in their own way and not everything has to be connected	5/8/2020 2:34 PM
13	Fire pits. Just leave the park rustic. More benches and picnic tables. Stop cutting down trees on the shoreline.	5/7/2020 9:49 PM
14	More fishing piers	5/7/2020 9:46 PM
15	Seasonal rope ferry barge, we know, liability	5/7/2020 7:52 PM
16	A walking/biking only bridge. Ski bridge in winter. That would be something lasting and add a lot of value	5/7/2020 10:28 AM
17	Camping	5/7/2020 9:49 AM
18	Collaboration with food vendors or dining collaboration. Educational opportunities for children and kidsPossibly deer camps for underserved children.	5/7/2020 9:36 AM
19	Walking Bridge to connect the parks	5/7/2020 8:33 AM
20	More disc golf!	5/7/2020 7:52 AM
21	Disc golf course improvements!	5/4/2020 10:51 PM
22	Not interested at All	5/4/2020 12:46 PM
23	New baskets for disc golfers.	5/3/2020 6:33 PM
24	Rentals might be a long shot but I like the idea of being able to paddle between the parks. Also, the disc golf course could use some maintenance at Mississippi River	5/2/2020 7:23 PM
25	longer snowshoe/hiking trials	5/1/2020 9:47 PM
26	Disc golf, revamp.	5/1/2020 2:47 PM
27	Disc golf	5/1/2020 11:49 AM
28	More disc golf	5/1/2020 11:30 AM
29	Put in disc golf in bend I. The river. I would be willing to host a tournament that plays at both parks. I LOVE the canoe and kayak rental idea!	5/1/2020 10:40 AM
30	Please add a second, 18 hole disc golf course. They are easy to make and attract the most people. I know many people who already love the first course, a second would be awesome. A canoe and kayak rental is also a genius idea. Whoever had that idea, pay them more.	5/1/2020 9:55 AM

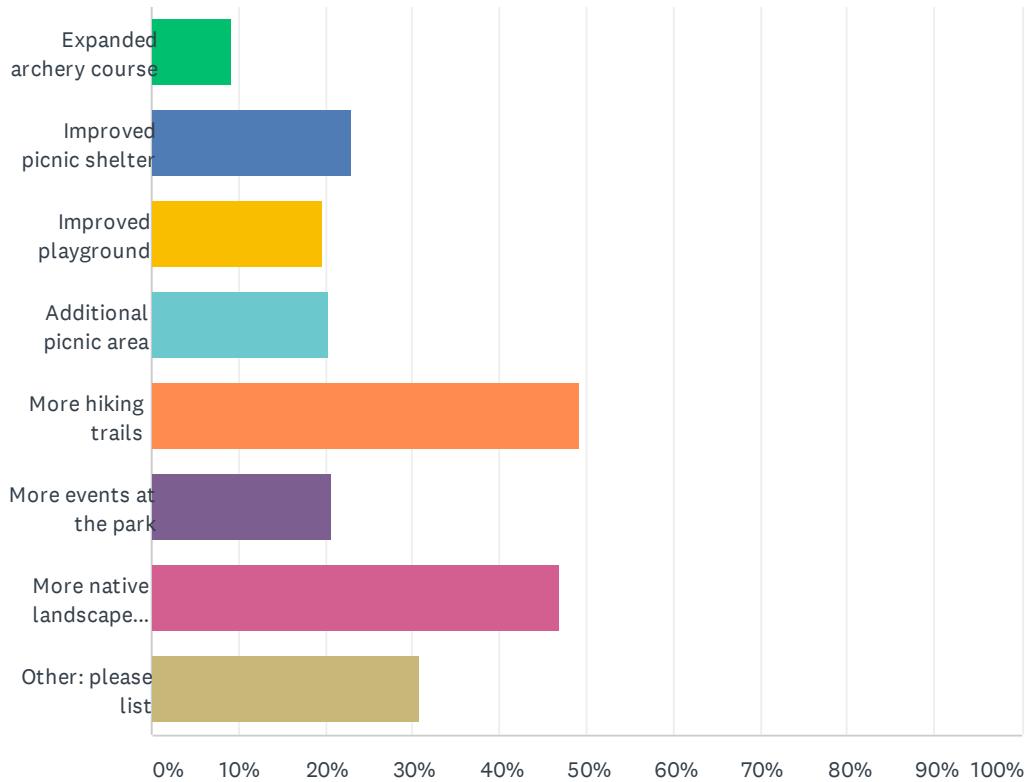
Great River Park Complex

31	You could put disc golf in both parks and have both courses used in events	5/1/2020 9:22 AM
32	Disc golf	5/1/2020 9:13 AM
33	Gravel tee pads for disc golf	5/1/2020 9:06 AM
34	Should not be linked.	5/1/2020 8:58 AM
35	plow them under, no money for parks until the streets are fixed	5/1/2020 7:38 AM
36	Walking bridge	4/30/2020 8:13 PM
37	None of the above. Leave them wild as possible. If people want amenities and pavilions and stuff like that they can get it in city parks. Don't even mow the grass	4/30/2020 7:25 PM
38	Where are these parks?	4/30/2020 6:00 PM
39	Walking bridge for wheelchairs	4/30/2020 5:33 PM
40	MASSIVE BRIDGE	4/30/2020 2:45 PM
41	Do not add anything.	4/30/2020 2:15 PM
42	offering suggestion at each park about the other park	4/30/2020 10:51 AM
43	gguided nature walks explaining the impoortance of natural area for plants and animalsas	4/30/2020 10:00 AM
44	A trail connecting the two, providing more mileage for hikers, runners, and bikers.	4/29/2020 10:56 AM
45	do not use this park	4/29/2020 9:26 AM
46	Informative areas on wildlife and plants. Maybe some historical stories. More dog poop stations.	4/28/2020 1:57 PM
47	Just let them be natural. If people need entertainment, it detracts from the purpose of parks.	4/28/2020 1:34 PM
48	Buy more land!!!	4/28/2020 12:52 PM
49	Preserving the natural resource opportunity of land on both sides of the river. Enjoy the natural resources as is without developing.	4/28/2020 12:48 PM
50	Purchase more land adjacent to them to protect these gems!	4/28/2020 12:30 PM
51	Walking trails	4/28/2020 11:53 AM
52	Canoe-in campsites where feasible	4/28/2020 10:54 AM
53	Expand both parks, more trails, restore native plant community	4/28/2020 10:52 AM
54	Additional river side ammenites and public access for Bend in the River Regional Park.	4/28/2020 10:43 AM
55	Foot bridge	4/28/2020 10:39 AM
56	zip line	4/28/2020 10:28 AM

Q5 What improvements would you like to see at Mississippi River County Park? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 325 Skipped: 18

Great River Park Complex



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Expanded archery course	9.23% 30
Improved picnic shelter	23.08% 75
Improved playground	19.69% 64
Additional picnic area	20.31% 66
More hiking trails	49.23% 160
More events at the park	20.62% 67
More native landscape restoration—prairies, oak savanna, shoreline	46.77% 152
Other: please list	30.77% 100
Total Respondents: 325	

Great River Park Complex

#	OTHER: PLEASE LIST	DATE
1	Allow horses on trails	5/14/2020 2:22 PM
2	A natural playscape where kids and maybe even adults can play with nature elements. Maybe a designated "please leave the trail and explore" area. A place for kids to get outside their comfort zones and truly play with the environment.	5/13/2020 7:55 AM
3	I don't feel safe, security, user fee to keep waders out	5/12/2020 9:56 PM
4	Nature programs	5/12/2020 9:04 PM
5	Dedicated skate ski trail	5/12/2020 8:44 PM
6	I use the DNR camping area for bicycle-camping. I do not recommend offering camping due the need for an attendant and clean-up crew. How does the camping at Warner Lake work out?	5/12/2020 8:59 AM
7	More interpretive activities. One of the great things about this park is there is less playground and picnic area and therefore more natural area to explore.	5/12/2020 8:20 AM
8	More ski trails	5/12/2020 7:52 AM
9	Maybe some doggie-do bags and signage to encourage people to pick up after their dogs.	5/12/2020 6:48 AM
10	Improved disc course, tee boxes and baskets	5/11/2020 3:47 PM
11	plan & develop a x-c ski course & try to have regular grooming like at Quarry Park.	5/11/2020 2:58 PM
12	Purchase land to the north to expand the park further along the river. It would be a nice natural area.	5/11/2020 2:17 PM
13	More ski trails	5/11/2020 12:59 PM
14	Protection of bluff with all the amazing wildflowers, more signage including keeping dogs on lesh and cleaning up as well as ensuring ski trails are not hiked on; warming shelter (with bathrooms, waxing area, ...) for skiing;	5/11/2020 12:14 PM
15	Disc golf, cabins, bike trail access to park	5/11/2020 8:12 AM
16	Warming area for skiing	5/10/2020 7:45 PM
17	Mountain bike trails	5/10/2020 7:44 PM
18	Part of a building where skiers could warm-up, change clothes, use rest room.	5/10/2020 4:11 PM
19	Lighting, tarring and improved bathroom facilities	5/9/2020 3:45 PM
20	plank walk ways or something to make trails more accessible during rains and high water. this would help trails from erosion etc from foot traffic when trails get saturated on low ground.	5/8/2020 10:17 AM
21	Fire pits	5/7/2020 9:49 PM
22	Add a fishing pier	5/7/2020 9:46 PM
23	Park office on either Benton or Stearns County	5/7/2020 2:23 PM
24	Consider some security camera. If horse are allowed have designated areas. I pick up after my dog but, clearly one weekend there had been horse all over the trails it was awful. I saw a lady slip in horse poo.	5/7/2020 2:14 PM
25	Pave the main road coming into the park	5/7/2020 12:02 PM
26	Mountain bike trails	5/7/2020 10:53 AM
27	biking trail, more river overlooks	5/7/2020 10:42 AM
28	Mountain Bike Trails	5/7/2020 10:28 AM
29	Single track bike trails, man made beach, walking bridge between the two parks	5/7/2020 10:28 AM
30	Development/updating the disc golf course.	5/7/2020 10:11 AM
31	Camping	5/7/2020 9:49 AM

Great River Park Complex

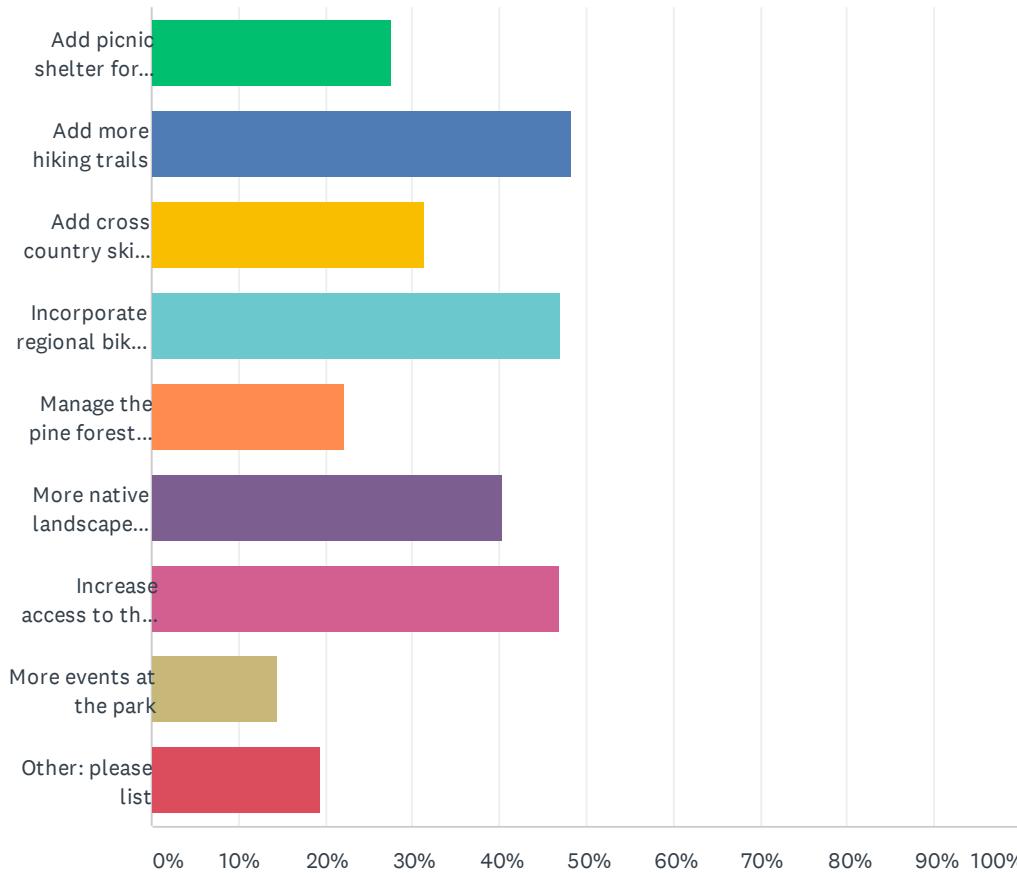
32	Snowmobile trail connection	5/7/2020 8:33 AM
33	Improvements on the disc golf course. New baskets, better Tpads.	5/7/2020 7:52 AM
34	More disc golf	5/4/2020 10:51 PM
35	Tee pads for disc golf along with a handful of new disc golf baskets to replace the extremley old ones	5/4/2020 4:35 PM
36	Not interested at all	5/4/2020 12:46 PM
37	Fishing pier	5/4/2020 10:01 AM
38	Improve the disc golf course	5/3/2020 6:33 PM
39	Improve the disc golf course, it's a great course, but is difficult to play due to maintenance, teepads and baskets.	5/3/2020 6:02 PM
40	Mountain bike trails	5/3/2020 4:52 PM
41	Disc Golf course improvements	5/3/2020 8:28 AM
42	Disc golf practice pin, concrete teepads, fsiteays trimmed and cleaned up	5/2/2020 8:05 PM
43	Disc golf course maintenance.	5/2/2020 7:23 PM
44	New disc baskets	5/2/2020 6:14 PM
45	Discgolf baskets are old and beat up.... course could use some maintenance..... and the dog poop on disc golf course is super bad!!!	5/2/2020 5:58 PM
46	Docks for fishing	5/2/2020 9:49 AM
47	New Disc golf baskets and full concrete tee pads	5/2/2020 9:41 AM
48	better disc golf baskets	5/2/2020 7:16 AM
49	New disc golf pins, and tee pads	5/1/2020 11:14 PM
50	miles more of hiking trials and second disc golf course	5/1/2020 9:47 PM
51	Improve disc golf	5/1/2020 9:09 PM
52	More disc golf too!	5/1/2020 8:09 PM
53	Mountain Bike Trails	5/1/2020 7:53 PM
54	Improved disc golf baskets and tee pads	5/1/2020 6:50 PM
55	Mountain bike trails.	5/1/2020 5:59 PM
56	Improvements to Disc Golf Course	5/1/2020 4:55 PM
57	Upgrades to the discgolf course. Maybe tee pads?	5/1/2020 4:49 PM
58	Improvements to the disc golf course and ongoing maintenance	5/1/2020 1:27 PM
59	Update Disc Golf Course, Better tee pads and signage.	5/1/2020 1:08 PM
60	Improve the disc golf course please. it's a great park overall!	5/1/2020 12:20 PM
61	Upgrade disc golf course	5/1/2020 12:06 PM
62	Improved disc golf baskets!	5/1/2020 11:49 AM
63	More disc golf	5/1/2020 11:30 AM
64	New baskets and tee pads for disc golf course	5/1/2020 11:26 AM
65	Tee pads and basket upgrades for the disc golf course. Also a bit of trimming maintenance	5/1/2020 10:40 AM
66	More well maintained disc golf course. Improve tee pads and baskets.	5/1/2020 10:33 AM
67	Disc golf course improvement	5/1/2020 10:20 AM
68	Cement tee pads for the disc golf coarse. Also maintenence trimming trees ect ect.	5/1/2020 10:04 AM

Great River Park Complex

69	A second, 18 hole disc golf course	5/1/2020 9:55 AM
70	Improve disc golf course. New baskets and cement tee pads would be greatly appreciated amongst the disc golf community, which continues to grow rapidly.	5/1/2020 9:42 AM
71	The disc golf course could use some improvements to bring it up to date with the growing sport. New baskets. New tee boxes. Probably a re design	5/1/2020 9:22 AM
72	Update disc golf course/baskets	5/1/2020 9:17 AM
73	Disc golf upgrades!	5/1/2020 9:13 AM
74	Tee pads for disc golf course	5/1/2020 9:06 AM
75	Same/ better disc golf baskets. Concrete tee pads for the course. Little maintenance	5/1/2020 9:02 AM
76	Tee pads and new baskets on the disc golf course	5/1/2020 9:00 AM
77	what don't you people understand, no money for a useless piece of dirt until you fix all of the streets	5/1/2020 7:38 AM
78	Disc golf	4/30/2020 11:22 PM
79	Mountain bike trails	4/30/2020 8:13 PM
80	Enough with the "improvement ". Leave it wild.	4/30/2020 7:25 PM
81	Where are these parks	4/30/2020 6:00 PM
82	Get rid of boat launch. The river current is very strong compared to the Bend in the River side. Walleye Road Landing is pretty close. It doesn't make sense to have two landings on the west side so close to each other.	4/30/2020 12:48 PM
83	more trail signage	4/30/2020 10:51 AM
84	I would have to visit it again to observe and make suggestions	4/30/2020 9:12 AM
85	Buy the Property to the north of Mississippi Park	4/30/2020 7:06 AM
86	An overlook from the Broker site similar to what Bend in the River's overlooks are like. Get that long view up and down the river. Build a berme high enough where you can see over the trees; or clear a very good viewing lane.	4/29/2020 8:55 PM
87	Don't know at this time	4/29/2020 8:53 PM
88	I cannot answer this because I've only been to the park a few times	4/29/2020 1:09 PM
89	just dont use this park	4/29/2020 9:26 AM
90	None	4/28/2020 1:34 PM
91	Think it's beautiful	4/28/2020 12:31 PM
92	Ensure that the planned indoor archery range includes access for Nordic skiers as a warming shelter and bathroom. This would be an awesome multiuse recreation facility that could serve as a ski chalet and cross country ski destination similar to the Mora, MN Vasaloppet Nordic Ski Center, as well as serve the disc golf community for disc golf leagues and tournaments.	4/28/2020 12:30 PM
93	Fishing dock	4/28/2020 12:28 PM
94	4-wheel trails	4/28/2020 11:04 AM
95	Park maps show sufficient hiking trails. Do not add hiking trails - this only leads to greater habitat fragmentation. If anything, assess existing trails-remove redundant trails (i.e parallel trails leading to same location) & improve trail conditions/deal with erosion problems.	4/28/2020 10:54 AM
96	Expand and enlarge the park!	4/28/2020 10:52 AM
97	Leash-free area for dogs	4/28/2020 10:46 AM
98	Ski trails that allow dogs	4/28/2020 10:46 AM
99	Overall park improvements are just right for this park.	4/28/2020 10:43 AM

Q6 What improvements would you like to see at Bend in the River Park? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 325 Skipped: 18



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Add picnic shelter for informal and reservable use	27.69%	90
Add more hiking trails	48.31%	157
Add cross country ski trails	31.38%	102
Incorporate regional bike trail to Rice	47.08%	153
Manage the pine forest areas	22.15%	72
More native landscape restoration—prairies, oak savanna, shoreline	40.31%	131
Increase access to the shoreline	46.77%	152
More events at the park	14.46%	47
Other: please list	19.38%	63
Total Respondents: 325		

Great River Park Complex

#	OTHER: PLEASE LIST	DATE
1	Horses on trails	5/14/2020 2:22 PM
2	Natural play areas similar to what I suggested for the other side	5/13/2020 7:55 AM
3	Bike trail to Sartell too	5/12/2020 8:50 AM
4	Camping for youth groups, canoeists, bicyclists	5/12/2020 8:32 AM
5	Disc golf course?	5/11/2020 3:47 PM
6	No more ugly overlooks. and why is there one by parking lot? It is totally out of place. Better they were never built!	5/11/2020 2:17 PM
7	Preservation of the historic buildings and more programs about the history of the farm; MRT - biking infrastructure (bike station, camp site), canoe/kayak landing improvements	5/11/2020 12:14 PM
8	cabins, disc golf	5/11/2020 8:12 AM
9	Mountain bike trails	5/10/2020 7:44 PM
10	Keep maintenance of the building up to date. Repair any damages or aging.	5/10/2020 4:45 PM
11	Lighting and improved bathroom facilities	5/9/2020 3:45 PM
12	I'm not sure what Manage the pine forest areas consists of. Is there something wrong with the trees? Are the fact that the trees are not being managed to please our own looking of how they 'should' look wrong then? How would managing the trees benefit hikers when the path does not even go underneath them?	5/8/2020 2:34 PM
13	i did not know this Bend in the River Park existed. more information to public perhaps at each park to inform public of the other park.	5/8/2020 10:17 AM
14	atv riding and camping	5/7/2020 2:16 PM
15	Add more area through the park to dispose of waste.	5/7/2020 2:14 PM
16	Keep accessible to dogs. Do not cut down the trees. Keep available for winter hiking and skiing..	5/7/2020 11:59 AM
17	Mountain bike trails!	5/7/2020 10:53 AM
18	Mountain Bike Trails	5/7/2020 10:28 AM
19	Walk/bike bridge to other park	5/7/2020 10:28 AM
20	Add disc golf	5/7/2020 10:11 AM
21	Camping	5/7/2020 9:49 AM
22	PLAYGROUND/ KIDS ACTIVITY	5/7/2020 9:32 AM
23	snowmobile trail connection	5/7/2020 8:33 AM
24	Disc Golf	5/4/2020 10:51 PM
25	Not interested at all	5/4/2020 12:46 PM
26	Fishing	5/4/2020 10:01 AM
27	Mountain biking	5/3/2020 4:52 PM
28	Another Discgolf course!!!	5/2/2020 5:58 PM
29	Mountain Bike trail	5/1/2020 8:00 PM
30	Mountain bike trails	5/1/2020 5:59 PM
31	Disc	5/1/2020 2:47 PM
32	Disc golf!	5/1/2020 11:49 AM
33	More disc golf	5/1/2020 11:30 AM

Great River Park Complex

34	Disc golf!	5/1/2020 10:40 AM
35	Haven't visited this park	5/1/2020 10:20 AM
36	Another 18 hole disc golf course. Dont overlook the disc course. Many more people around this area today are participating in disc golf more than most recreational activities.	5/1/2020 9:55 AM
37	Improve disc golf course	5/1/2020 9:42 AM
38	Add a new disc golf course	5/1/2020 9:22 AM
39	Disc golf course	5/1/2020 9:13 AM
40	Disc golf	5/1/2020 9:02 AM
41	fix the streets first	5/1/2020 7:38 AM
42	Mountain bike trails	4/30/2020 8:13 PM
43	Leave it wild	4/30/2020 7:25 PM
44	Where are these parks never heard of any of them	4/30/2020 6:00 PM
45	Add boat/canoe launch. The slow current on this side of the river would make for a very pleasant launch compared to the Mississippi River County Park launch. Also there is no launch on the east side of the river, while there are two in this area on the west side.	4/30/2020 12:48 PM
46	CAmping options At both	4/30/2020 12:19 PM
47	expand natural habitats	4/30/2020 10:00 AM
48	increased signage on walking paths.	4/30/2020 8:50 AM
49	Some form of mosquito control. When you take the trail down to the river (headed south) it is unbearable.	4/29/2020 3:45 PM
50	to easily accessed from the City of Rice for a nice walk	4/29/2020 9:26 AM
51	Try and a disc golf course like at Mississippi River park! Our family loves playing it.	4/28/2020 2:10 PM
52	None	4/28/2020 1:34 PM
53	xealia1	4/28/2020 12:59 PM
54	Fishing dock	4/28/2020 12:28 PM
55	Please leave this precious park as natural and quiet as possible	4/28/2020 11:53 AM
56	unsure	4/28/2020 11:52 AM
57	Don't add more trails! It cuts down on habitat and tends to make parks confusing to navigate	4/28/2020 11:11 AM
58	4-wheel trails	4/28/2020 11:04 AM
59	Park maps show sufficient hiking trails. Do not add hiking trails - this only leads to greater habitat fragmentation. If anything, assess existing trails-remove redundant trails (i.e parallel trails leading to same location) & improve trail conditions/deal with erosion problems. Manage native habitats for future climate scenarios (i.e. pine are not a great option). Only increase shoreline access if this can be done sustainably & with best shoreline management practices.	4/28/2020 10:54 AM
60	Expand and enlarge the park!	4/28/2020 10:52 AM
61	Leash-free dog area	4/28/2020 10:46 AM
62	Ski trails that allow dogs	4/28/2020 10:46 AM
63	I've not been to the park, but I hope all parks will restore native landscape. We are losing bird and insect populations	4/28/2020 10:40 AM

Q7 In order to understand how far people travel to get to the parks, please tell us where you live:

Great River Park Complex

Answered: 335 Skipped: 8

Great River Park Complex

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Sartell	5/18/2020 5:29 AM
2	St. Cloud	5/17/2020 6:54 AM
3	Sauk Rapids, MN	5/15/2020 5:23 PM
4	Sartell	5/14/2020 2:22 PM
5	saint augusta	5/14/2020 5:58 AM
6	St cloud	5/13/2020 7:55 AM
7	Sauk Rapids	5/12/2020 10:31 PM
8	Big Lake, but work in St Cloud	5/12/2020 9:56 PM
9	Sartell	5/12/2020 9:04 PM
10	Sartell	5/12/2020 8:44 PM
11	1 mile from Mississippi River Park	5/12/2020 8:08 PM
12	Sartell	5/12/2020 8:01 PM
13	St. Cloud MN	5/12/2020 3:46 PM
14	Moose Lake, Mn	5/12/2020 2:06 PM
15	Sartell	5/12/2020 9:17 AM
16	South St. Cloud	5/12/2020 8:59 AM
17	Sartell	5/12/2020 8:50 AM
18	South Saint Cloud	5/12/2020 8:32 AM
19	saint cloud mn 56304	5/12/2020 8:25 AM
20	St. Cloud	5/12/2020 8:21 AM
21	Saint Cloud	5/12/2020 8:20 AM
22	Saint Joseph, MN	5/12/2020 7:52 AM
23	Bowlus	5/12/2020 7:48 AM
24	Little Falls	5/12/2020 7:32 AM
25	St cloud	5/12/2020 6:54 AM
26	Rockville, MN	5/12/2020 6:48 AM
27	St. Cloud	5/12/2020 6:48 AM
28	Sartell	5/12/2020 6:47 AM
29	near downtown Saint Cloud	5/11/2020 7:47 PM
30	Clearwater MN	5/11/2020 7:14 PM
31	St. Cloud	5/11/2020 5:03 PM
32	I live in NW St. Cloud, off of Cypress Road.	5/11/2020 4:14 PM
33	St. Joseph MN	5/11/2020 3:47 PM
34	33rd Are. No., St. Cloud, MN	5/11/2020 2:58 PM
35	Sartell	5/11/2020 2:17 PM
36	Sartell	5/11/2020 1:53 PM
37	Sartell	5/11/2020 12:59 PM

Great River Park Complex

38	St. Cloud	5/11/2020 12:14 PM
39	sauk rapids township	5/11/2020 11:00 AM
40	St cloud	5/11/2020 10:56 AM
41	Rockville	5/11/2020 10:23 AM
42	south St. Cloud neighborhood	5/11/2020 10:00 AM
43	St Cloud	5/11/2020 9:53 AM
44	St. Cloud	5/11/2020 9:29 AM
45	Rural St. Cloud, Sherburne County	5/11/2020 8:12 AM
46	Sauk Rapids	5/11/2020 7:55 AM
47	Sartell	5/10/2020 8:40 PM
48	St. Cloud	5/10/2020 7:45 PM
49	St. Cloud	5/10/2020 7:44 PM
50	Waite Park, MN	5/10/2020 6:50 PM
51	St Cloud	5/10/2020 6:16 PM
52	St. Cloud	5/10/2020 4:45 PM
53	South St. Cloud, 56301	5/10/2020 4:11 PM
54	Little Falls 8 months of the year.	5/10/2020 2:00 PM
55	Sauk rapids	5/10/2020 1:27 PM
56	1 mile away	5/9/2020 3:45 PM
57	St Cloud - go to Mississippi River park a few times a year (wasn't an option up top)	5/9/2020 7:20 AM
58	Sauk rapids	5/8/2020 6:03 PM
59	St Cloud	5/8/2020 5:40 PM
60	Waite Park	5/8/2020 4:12 PM
61	Rice	5/8/2020 3:53 PM
62	Saint Stephen	5/8/2020 3:29 PM
63	Sauk Rapids	5/8/2020 2:34 PM
64	south St Cloud	5/8/2020 11:13 AM
65	St. Cloud	5/8/2020 11:01 AM
66	1/4 mile from Mississippi River Park	5/8/2020 10:17 AM
67	56320	5/8/2020 12:04 AM
68	St. Joseph/Sartell	5/7/2020 10:27 PM
69	Richmond, MN	5/7/2020 10:20 PM
70	Sartell	5/7/2020 9:49 PM
71	Sauk Rapids	5/7/2020 9:46 PM
72	Waite Park	5/7/2020 8:43 PM
73	St. Cloud, MN	5/7/2020 7:52 PM
74	7714 County Road 17	5/7/2020 6:14 PM
75	56301	5/7/2020 3:19 PM

Great River Park Complex

76	St.cloud MN	5/7/2020 3:06 PM
77	Stearns	5/7/2020 2:23 PM
78	rice on little rock lake	5/7/2020 2:16 PM
79	Originally the north end of Saint Cloud. Now I am in Sartell	5/7/2020 2:14 PM
80	Along County Rd 1 north of Mississippi River Park	5/7/2020 12:02 PM
81	Sauk rapids	5/7/2020 11:59 AM
82	Sartell	5/7/2020 11:50 AM
83	St. Cloud MN	5/7/2020 11:35 AM
84	SE Saint Cloud	5/7/2020 10:53 AM
85	Sartell	5/7/2020 10:42 AM
86	North St. Cloud	5/7/2020 10:28 AM
87	Watab township	5/7/2020 10:28 AM
88	St Cloud	5/7/2020 10:11 AM
89	Sartell	5/7/2020 9:49 AM
90	South of Saint cloud	5/7/2020 9:36 AM
91	RICE	5/7/2020 9:32 AM
92	Outside Clearwater	5/7/2020 8:51 AM
93	St. Cloud	5/7/2020 8:33 AM
94	Annandale	5/7/2020 7:52 AM
95	St. Cloud	5/7/2020 7:45 AM
96	40552 County Road 1, Rice	5/6/2020 5:49 PM
97	42206 County Road 1, Rice, MN	5/6/2020 3:09 PM
98	Rochester, MN	5/6/2020 9:54 AM
99	North side of St. Cloud, MN	5/5/2020 2:55 PM
100	St Cloud	5/5/2020 2:01 PM
101	Seberger-Roosevelt Neighborhood in St. Cloud	5/5/2020 11:37 AM
102	Montevideo but I visit St. Cloud area often	5/4/2020 10:51 PM
103	Rice	5/4/2020 6:43 PM
104	St.cloud mn	5/4/2020 4:35 PM
105	sauk rapids	5/4/2020 2:59 PM
106	St Joseph Mn	5/4/2020 12:46 PM
107	North St Cloud	5/4/2020 12:25 PM
108	St cloud	5/4/2020 10:01 AM
109	Monticello	5/4/2020 12:28 AM
110	NE St Cloud	5/3/2020 9:43 PM
111	saint cloud, MN about 20 miles	5/3/2020 6:40 PM
112	Sauk rapids	5/3/2020 6:33 PM
113	St. Cloud	5/3/2020 6:02 PM

Great River Park Complex

114	St. Cloud MN	5/3/2020 4:52 PM
115	Rockville, MN	5/3/2020 8:28 AM
116	Santiago, MN	5/3/2020 7:34 AM
117	56377	5/2/2020 11:53 PM
118	St. Cloud	5/2/2020 8:15 PM
119	St cloud	5/2/2020 8:05 PM
120	St. Stephen	5/2/2020 7:23 PM
121	Rice mn	5/2/2020 6:14 PM
122	St. Cloud	5/2/2020 5:58 PM
123	Sartell, in town	5/2/2020 5:02 PM
124	Rice	5/2/2020 11:36 AM
125	Sauk Rapids	5/2/2020 9:49 AM
126	Sartell	5/2/2020 9:41 AM
127	Waite Park	5/2/2020 7:16 AM
128	Sauk Rapids	5/2/2020 2:28 AM
129	Cold Spring	5/2/2020 12:56 AM
130	Saint cloud	5/1/2020 11:14 PM
131	sauk rapids	5/1/2020 9:47 PM
132	Waite Park, MN	5/1/2020 9:09 PM
133	Sauk rapids	5/1/2020 8:09 PM
134	Rice, MN	5/1/2020 8:00 PM
135	I live in St. Stephen and visit both parks weekly.	5/1/2020 7:53 PM
136	Sartell MN	5/1/2020 6:50 PM
137	Sartell	5/1/2020 6:38 PM
138	7 miles	5/1/2020 6:03 PM
139	Rice MN	5/1/2020 5:59 PM
140	St. Augusta	5/1/2020 4:55 PM
141	st. Cloud	5/1/2020 4:49 PM
142	In a 10 mile radius	5/1/2020 2:47 PM
143	St cloud	5/1/2020 1:51 PM
144	Saint Cloud	5/1/2020 1:27 PM
145	St Cloud near Calvary Hill	5/1/2020 1:08 PM
146	Pleasant lake St. Cloud my	5/1/2020 12:27 PM
147	Rice, MN	5/1/2020 12:24 PM
148	Watertown, MN	5/1/2020 12:20 PM
149	Saint Joseph	5/1/2020 12:06 PM
150	Saint Cloud, the home of incredible disc golf!	5/1/2020 11:49 AM
151	Saul Rapids	5/1/2020 11:34 AM

Great River Park Complex

152	Clear lake	5/1/2020 11:30 AM
153	Sartell	5/1/2020 11:26 AM
154	Sartell mn	5/1/2020 11:14 AM
155	Opole	5/1/2020 10:42 AM
156	Albany. I grew up real close to Mississippi River park	5/1/2020 10:40 AM
157	St. Cloud	5/1/2020 10:33 AM
158	Mound mn	5/1/2020 10:20 AM
159	rice	5/1/2020 10:04 AM
160	Rice, MN	5/1/2020 9:55 AM
161	Cold Spring, Minnesota. Like a 40min drive for me but so worth it.	5/1/2020 9:55 AM
162	sauk rapids	5/1/2020 9:49 AM
163	Sauk rapids	5/1/2020 9:42 AM
164	4405 Oakland Dr Sauk Rapids	5/1/2020 9:22 AM
165	Sauk Rapids	5/1/2020 9:17 AM
166	South st.cloud	5/1/2020 9:13 AM
167	Holdingford	5/1/2020 9:06 AM
168	St cloud	5/1/2020 9:03 AM
169	St. Cloud	5/1/2020 9:02 AM
170	St. Cloud	5/1/2020 9:00 AM
171	Sartell	5/1/2020 8:59 AM
172	Saint Cloud	5/1/2020 8:58 AM
173	st cloud mn	5/1/2020 8:39 AM
174	Sauk rapids	5/1/2020 8:39 AM
175	St. Cloud	5/1/2020 8:35 AM
176	Sartell	5/1/2020 8:26 AM
177	st "high taxes" cloud with piss poor streets	5/1/2020 7:38 AM
178	South St. Cloud, near 33rd Street	5/1/2020 7:25 AM
179	Sartell mn	5/1/2020 5:36 AM
180	St Cloud	5/1/2020 1:28 AM
181	56303	4/30/2020 11:22 PM
182	Benton County on the river	4/30/2020 10:58 PM
183	St. Stephen	4/30/2020 10:54 PM
184	St Cloud	4/30/2020 9:29 PM
185	east St. Cloud	4/30/2020 8:56 PM
186	Sauk rapids	4/30/2020 8:16 PM
187	Central Minnesota	4/30/2020 8:13 PM
188	Rice	4/30/2020 7:35 PM
189	Sauk Rapids	4/30/2020 7:25 PM

Great River Park Complex

190	St cloud	4/30/2020 7:02 PM
191	St Cloud	4/30/2020 6:56 PM
192	North side of St. Cloud. 3207 Park Drive	4/30/2020 6:55 PM
193	St cloud	4/30/2020 6:52 PM
194	Saint cloud	4/30/2020 6:49 PM
195	Sartell	4/30/2020 6:46 PM
196	Sartell	4/30/2020 6:42 PM
197	Saint Cloud	4/30/2020 6:39 PM
198	watab township	4/30/2020 6:39 PM
199	Sauk Rapids	4/30/2020 6:38 PM
200	City limits of rice	4/30/2020 6:36 PM
201	St. Cloud, mn	4/30/2020 6:36 PM
202	Sartell	4/30/2020 6:34 PM
203	Sauk Rapids	4/30/2020 6:34 PM
204	Sauk Rapids, MN	4/30/2020 6:10 PM
205	St cloud	4/30/2020 6:00 PM
206	Sartell	4/30/2020 4:24 PM
207	rockville	4/30/2020 4:03 PM
208	Clearwater MN	4/30/2020 3:49 PM
209	Sauk Rapids	4/30/2020 3:23 PM
210	City of Rice	4/30/2020 3:15 PM
211	Sartell	4/30/2020 3:09 PM
212	St Cloud MN	4/30/2020 2:45 PM
213	St cloud mn	4/30/2020 2:45 PM
214	Sauk Rapids	4/30/2020 2:15 PM
215	Sartell	4/30/2020 2:05 PM
216	3 miles north of sartell	4/30/2020 1:47 PM
217	St Cloud	4/30/2020 1:43 PM
218	Sauk Rapids, MN	4/30/2020 1:39 PM
219	Rice, MN	4/30/2020 1:18 PM
220	Rice City limits	4/30/2020 12:48 PM
221	Sartell	4/30/2020 12:37 PM
222	St. Cloud	4/30/2020 12:32 PM
223	West st cloud	4/30/2020 12:19 PM
224	11515 NE River Road, basically next door!	4/30/2020 11:16 AM
225	Rice area	4/30/2020 11:05 AM
226	North side of St Cloud	4/30/2020 10:51 AM
227	Rice, MN	4/30/2020 10:28 AM

Great River Park Complex

228	I live north of Rockville	4/30/2020 10:00 AM
229	16th Avenue SW, Rice	4/30/2020 9:12 AM
230	St.Cloud, MN	4/30/2020 8:50 AM
231	Foley, MN	4/30/2020 8:14 AM
232	St Cloud	4/30/2020 8:07 AM
233	West side of St Cloud	4/30/2020 8:06 AM
234	Rice	4/30/2020 7:57 AM
235	St. Cloud	4/30/2020 7:06 AM
236	6712 - 5th Av. N.E., Sauk Rapids, 56379	4/29/2020 8:55 PM
237	Just east of rice	4/29/2020 8:53 PM
238	Gilman, MN	4/29/2020 3:45 PM
239	Sauk Rapids	4/29/2020 2:48 PM
240	St Cloud	4/29/2020 1:23 PM
241	sartell	4/29/2020 1:09 PM
242	St. Cloud (north side)	4/29/2020 12:18 PM
243	618 2nd Ave SW, Rice, MN	4/29/2020 11:57 AM
244	South St. Cloud	4/29/2020 10:56 AM
245	Waite Park Mn	4/29/2020 10:22 AM
246	Sartell	4/29/2020 10:11 AM
247	City of Rice	4/29/2020 9:26 AM
248	Oak Court, Rice	4/29/2020 9:06 AM
249	Sauk Rapids	4/29/2020 9:04 AM
250	about 30 to 40 minutes out from each park....	4/29/2020 8:45 AM
251	Brockway township. 5 miles from Mississippi River Park	4/29/2020 7:30 AM
252	Avon	4/29/2020 6:25 AM
253	Watab township RICE	4/29/2020 5:45 AM
254	Sauk Rapids	4/28/2020 8:22 PM
255	Cold Spring	4/28/2020 8:22 PM
256	Freeport	4/28/2020 7:57 PM
257	East of Rice	4/28/2020 7:27 PM
258	Sartell	4/28/2020 7:11 PM
259	Sartell	4/28/2020 6:54 PM
260	St. Joseph Township, MN	4/28/2020 6:50 PM
261	St. Cloud, Minnesota	4/28/2020 6:23 PM
262	302 6th Ave N Saint Cloud	4/28/2020 5:36 PM
263	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 5:14 PM
264	Sauk Rapids	4/28/2020 5:05 PM
265	St cloud	4/28/2020 4:53 PM

Great River Park Complex

266	Sauk rapids	4/28/2020 4:24 PM
267	rice mn	4/28/2020 4:20 PM
268	sartell, Mn	4/28/2020 3:19 PM
269	Sartell, MN	4/28/2020 2:53 PM
270	St. Cloud. Southside	4/28/2020 2:30 PM
271	Clear Lake, MN	4/28/2020 2:10 PM
272	We use to live in St Cloud MN and bring our dogs here everyday. We now live in CO, but still visit the park when we come back home.	4/28/2020 1:57 PM
273	Rice, MN	4/28/2020 1:28 PM
274	Holdingford	4/28/2020 1:26 PM
275	north St cloud	4/28/2020 1:22 PM
276	Milaca area	4/28/2020 1:17 PM
277	Avon MN	4/28/2020 1:16 PM
278	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 1:15 PM
279	Momticello	4/28/2020 1:14 PM
280	South st cloud	4/28/2020 1:10 PM
281	Sauk Centre	4/28/2020 12:59 PM
282	11825 16th Ave NW Rice, MN	4/28/2020 12:58 PM
283	Sauk Rapids	4/28/2020 12:56 PM
284	Saint Cloud MN	4/28/2020 12:53 PM
285	Clear Lake, MN	4/28/2020 12:52 PM
286	Rockville, MN	4/28/2020 12:48 PM
287	South St. Cloud	4/28/2020 12:44 PM
288	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 12:43 PM
289	FOLEY, MN	4/28/2020 12:31 PM
290	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 12:31 PM
291	SE Saint Cloud, MN	4/28/2020 12:30 PM
292	Foley	4/28/2020 12:29 PM
293	Rice	4/28/2020 12:28 PM
294	Maplewood, MN	4/28/2020 12:23 PM
295	Foley	4/28/2020 12:14 PM
296	St Cloud	4/28/2020 12:09 PM
297	Cold Spring	4/28/2020 12:03 PM
298	7 miles from Mississippi River Park	4/28/2020 11:59 AM
299	8th Ave. N., St. Cloud, MN	4/28/2020 11:53 AM
300	Watab Township	4/28/2020 11:53 AM
301	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 11:52 AM
302	Foley, MN	4/28/2020 11:48 AM
303	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 11:34 AM

Great River Park Complex

304	Rice	4/28/2020 11:24 AM
305	Sauk Rapids	4/28/2020 11:16 AM
306	clearwater	4/28/2020 11:11 AM
307	Rice,MN	4/28/2020 11:09 AM
308	Saint Cloud	4/28/2020 11:08 AM
309	Sauk Centre	4/28/2020 11:04 AM
310	Sauk Rapids	4/28/2020 10:56 AM
311	Clearwater	4/28/2020 10:54 AM
312	St. Augusta	4/28/2020 10:54 AM
313	Sartell	4/28/2020 10:52 AM
314	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 10:52 AM
315	Rice	4/28/2020 10:46 AM
316	Stearns county side of Rice	4/28/2020 10:46 AM
317	St Cloud	4/28/2020 10:46 AM
318	In Rice	4/28/2020 10:45 AM
319	City of Rice	4/28/2020 10:45 AM
320	Sartell, MN	4/28/2020 10:43 AM
321	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 10:42 AM
322	south St. Cloud	4/28/2020 10:40 AM
323	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 10:39 AM
324	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 10:37 AM
325	St. Joseph Mn	4/28/2020 10:36 AM
326	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 10:36 AM
327	Sartell	4/28/2020 10:36 AM
328	St. Cloud	4/28/2020 10:32 AM
329	SAUK RAPIDS	4/28/2020 10:29 AM
330	Sartell	4/28/2020 10:28 AM
331	Sauk Rapids	4/28/2020 10:28 AM
332	South St Cloud	4/28/2020 10:25 AM
333	Sauk Rapids	4/28/2020 10:25 AM
334	Richmond, MN	4/28/2020 10:25 AM
335	sartell	4/28/2020 10:21 AM

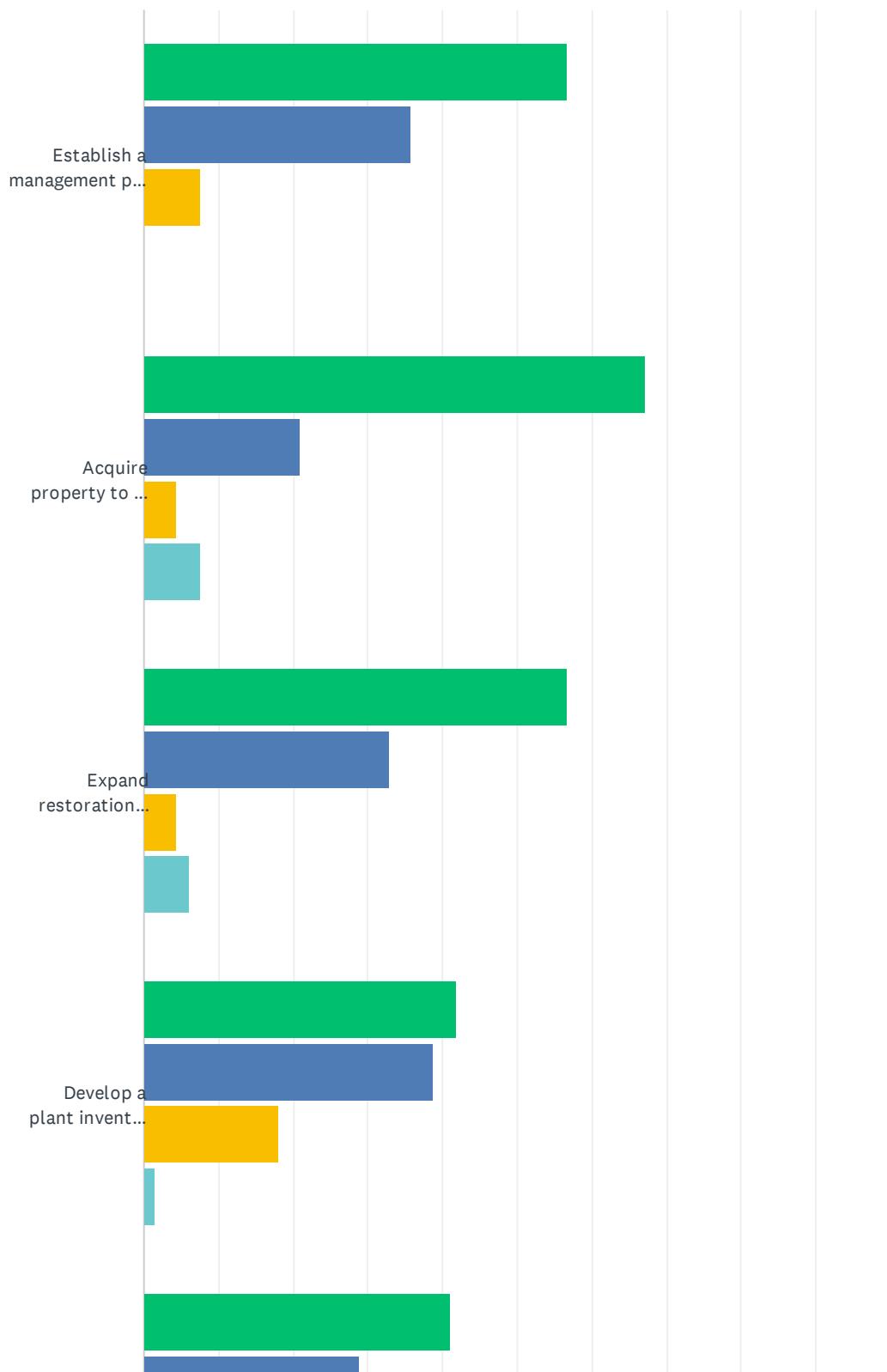
Q8 List your name and email if you'd like to be added to a contact list for future engagement opportunities:

Answered: 132 Skipped: 211

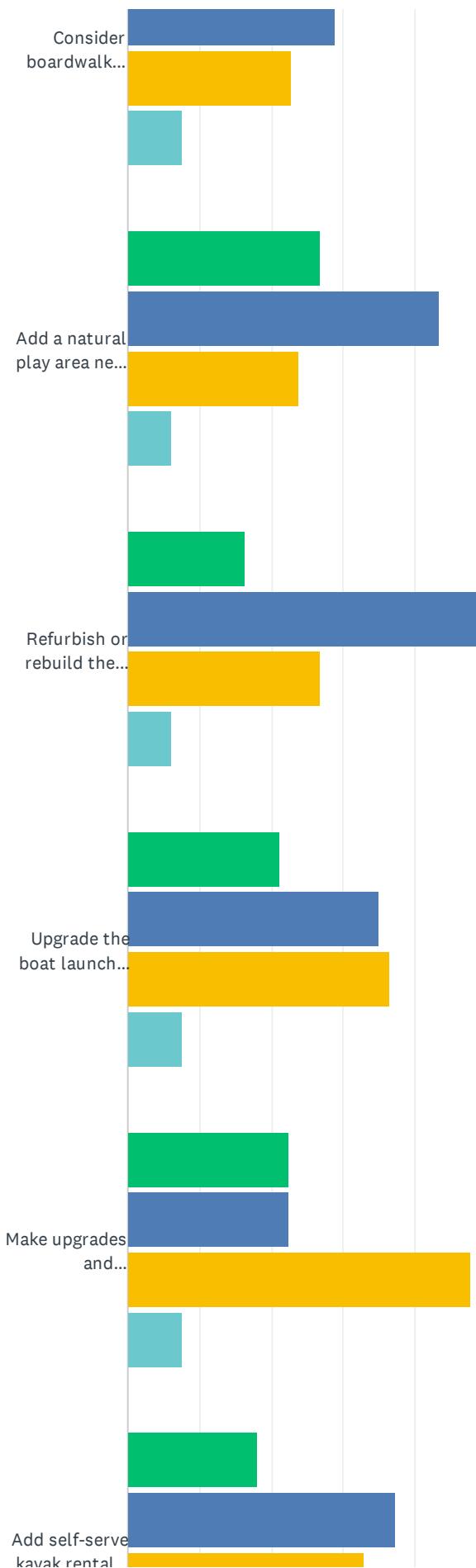
Phase 2 Online Survey Responses (Survey Monkey)
May 20-28, 2020

Q1 The following list includes recommendations for improvements within Mississippi River County Park in Stearns County. Please select what you feel the priority levels are for each of the following recommendations.

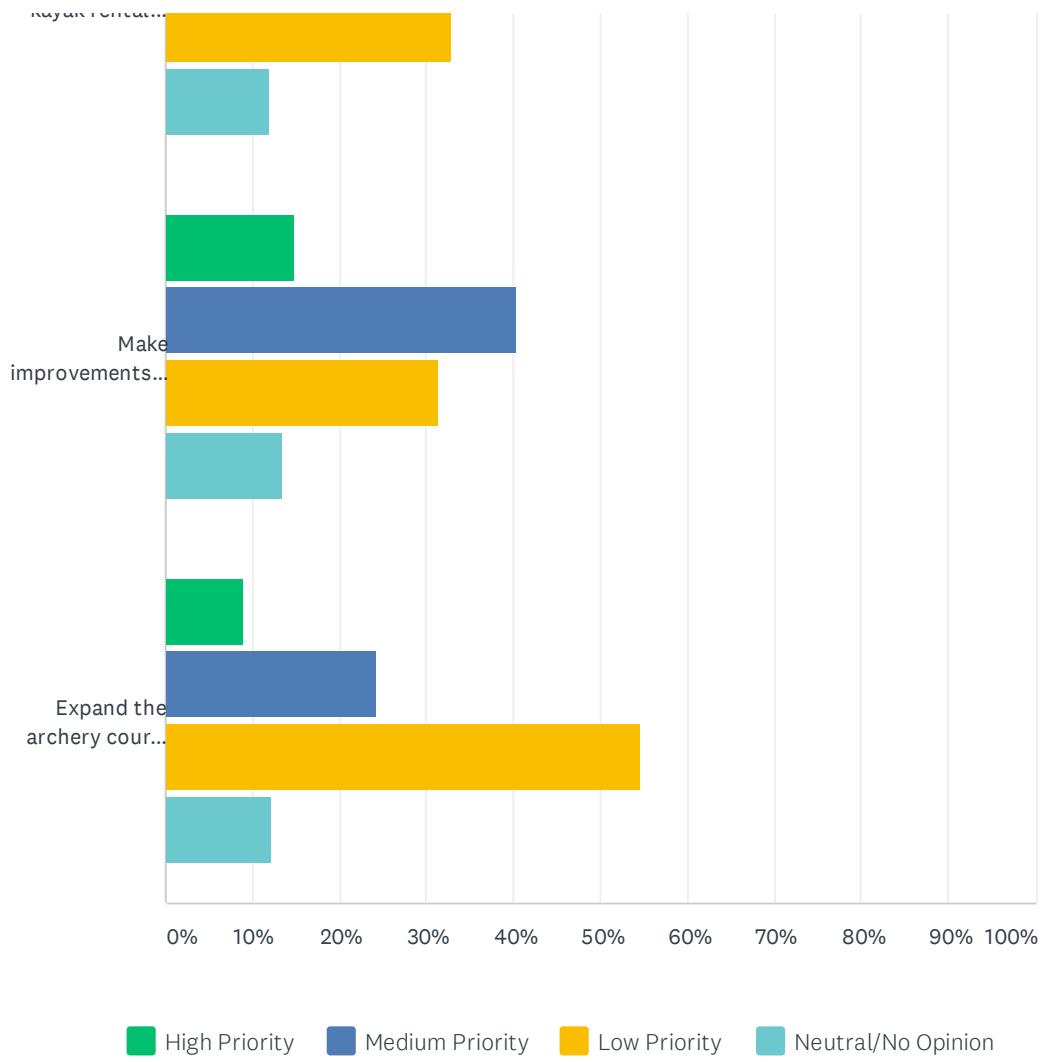
Answered: 67 Skipped: 0



Great River Park Complex Concept



Great River Park Complex Concept

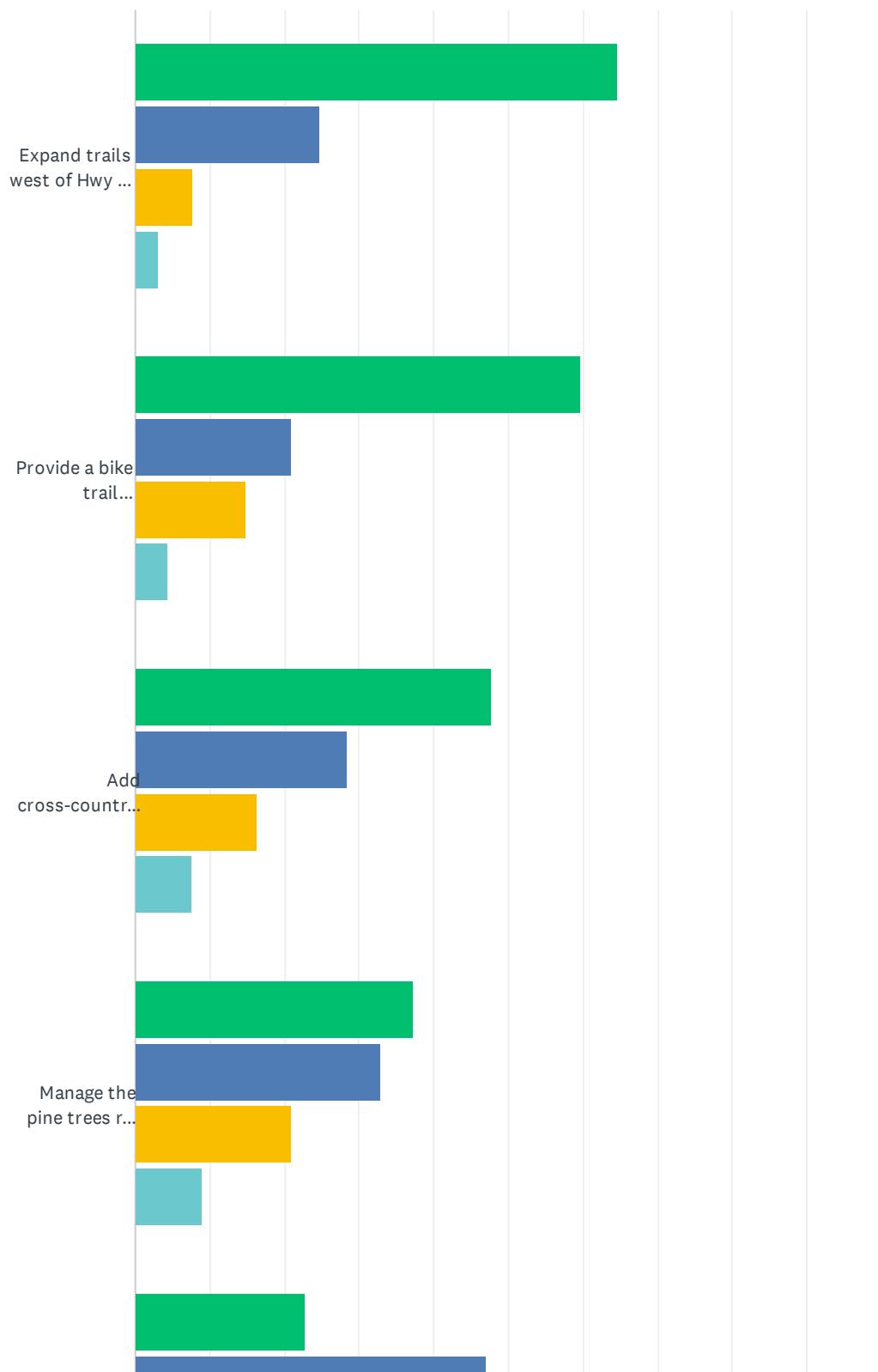


Great River Park Complex Concept

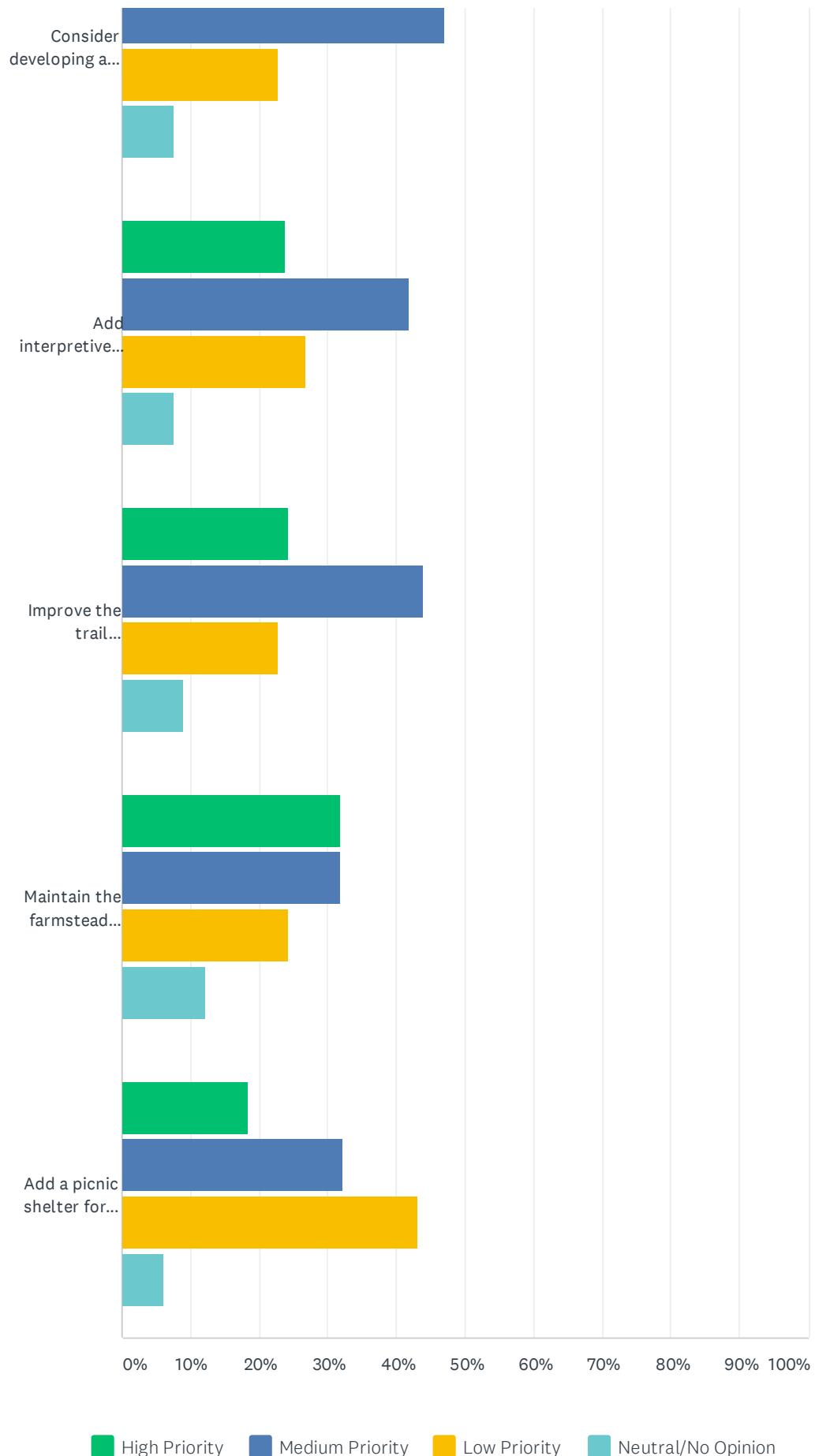
	HIGH PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	NEUTRAL/NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Establish a management plan to reduce invasive plants, such as buckthorn	56.72% 38	35.82% 24	7.46% 5	0.00% 0	67	1.51
Acquire property to the north to expand the park land, protected shoreline, and recreation opportunities	67.16% 45	20.90% 14	4.48% 3	7.46% 5	67	1.60
Expand restoration areas in the park, including oak savanna and shoreline	56.72% 38	32.84% 22	4.48% 3	5.97% 4	67	1.66
Develop a plant inventory of the park to understand where the high-quality native plants are located along with disturbed areas	41.79% 28	38.81% 26	17.91% 12	1.49% 1	67	1.81
Consider boardwalk trails within the floodplain forest	40.91% 27	28.79% 19	22.73% 15	7.58% 5	66	2.05
Add a natural play area near the picnic shelter	26.87% 18	43.28% 29	23.88% 16	5.97% 4	67	2.15
Refurbish or rebuild the existing picnic shelter	16.42% 11	50.75% 34	26.87% 18	5.97% 4	67	2.28
Upgrade the boat launch with expanded parking, shelter and restroom, and small play area	21.21% 14	34.85% 23	36.36% 24	7.58% 5	66	2.38
Make upgrades and improvements to the Disc Golf Course	22.39% 15	22.39% 15	47.76% 32	7.46% 5	67	2.48
Add self-serve kayak rental equipment to the boat launch	17.91% 12	37.31% 25	32.84% 22	11.94% 8	67	2.51
Make improvements and upgrades to the existing canoe-in campsite south of the boat launch	14.93% 10	40.30% 27	31.34% 21	13.43% 9	67	2.57
Expand the archery course with a new multi-purpose indoor facility and 3D archery trail	9.09% 6	24.24% 16	54.55% 36	12.12% 8	66	2.82

Q2 The following list includes recommendations for improvements within Bend in the River Regional Park in Benton County. Please select what you feel the priority levels are for each of the following recommendations.

Answered: 67 Skipped: 0



Great River Park Complex Concept



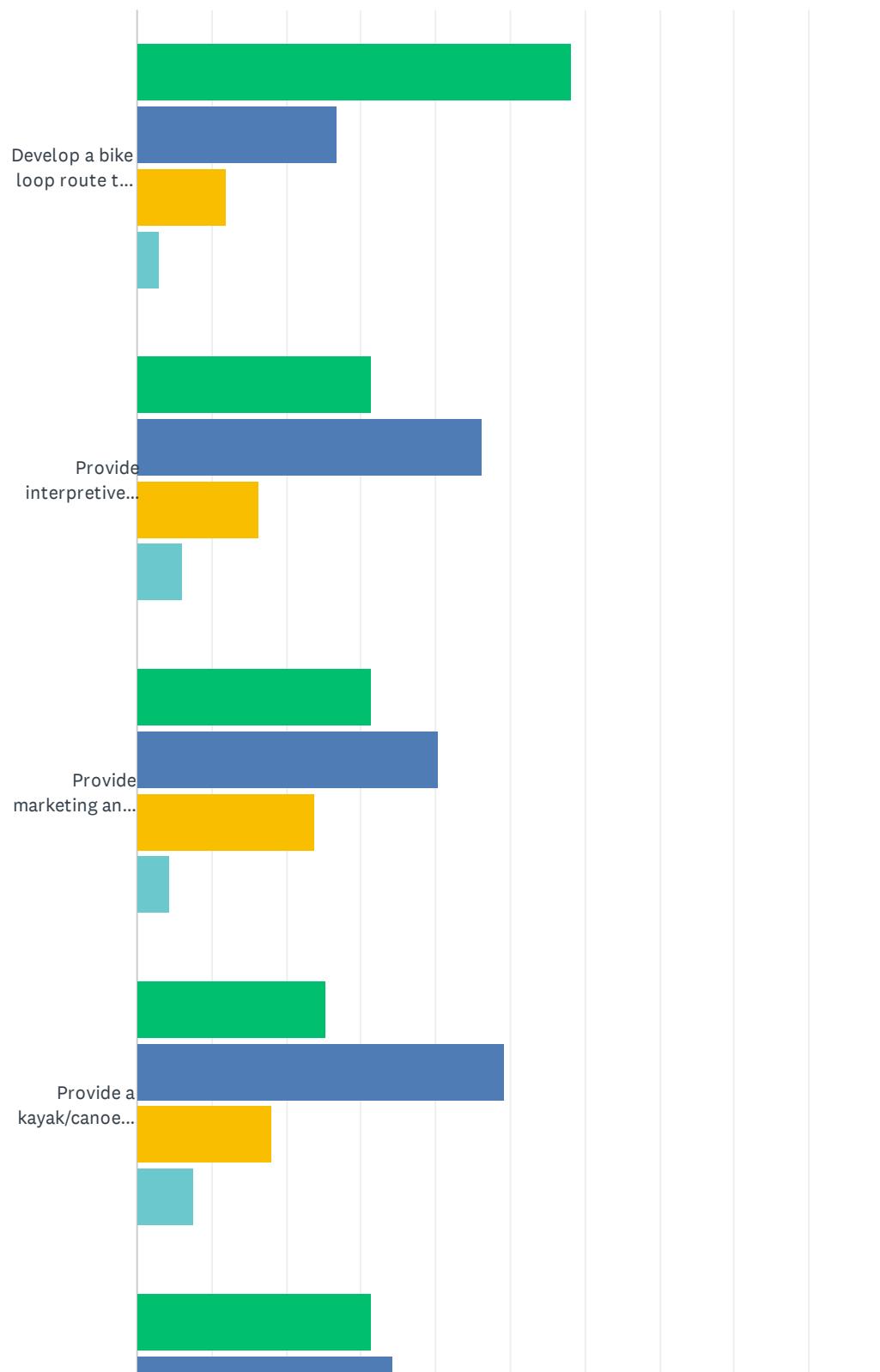
High Priority Medium Priority Low Priority Neutral/No Opinion

Great River Park Complex Concept

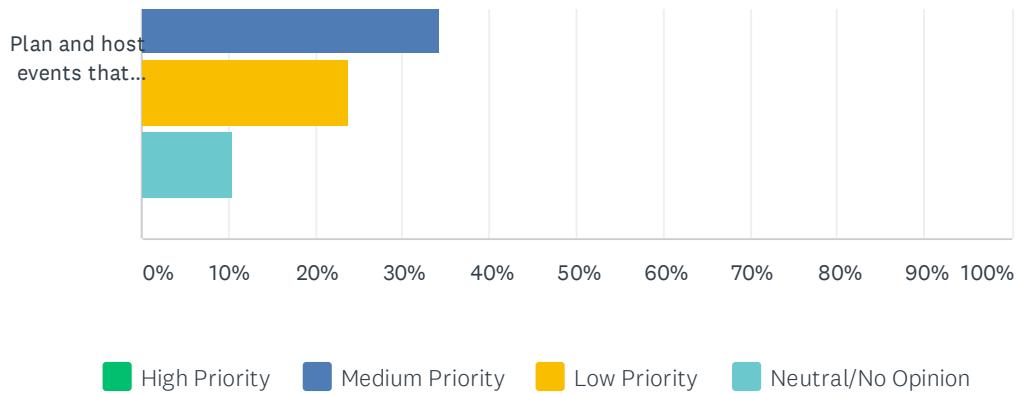
	HIGH PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	NEUTRAL/NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Expand trails west of Hwy 55 for hiking	64.62% 42	24.62% 16	7.69% 5	3.08% 2	65	1.52
Provide a bike trail connection along Hwy 55 to Rice	59.70% 40	20.90% 14	14.93% 10	4.48% 3	67	1.69
Add cross-country ski trails	47.76% 32	28.36% 19	16.42% 11	7.46% 5	67	1.91
Manage the pine trees rows east of Hwy 55 to prevent overgrowth into the prairie areas	37.31% 25	32.84% 22	20.90% 14	8.96% 6	67	2.10
Consider developing a new South Day Use Area with a picnic shelter, play area, parking lot, and trail connections	22.73% 15	46.97% 31	22.73% 15	7.58% 5	66	2.23
Add interpretive signage to the Historic Farmstead	23.88% 16	41.79% 28	26.87% 18	7.46% 5	67	2.25
Improve the trail connection to the canoe landing and provide an expanded landing area	24.24% 16	43.94% 29	22.73% 15	9.09% 6	66	2.26
Maintain the farmstead structures as is	31.82% 21	31.82% 21	24.24% 16	12.12% 8	66	2.29
Add a picnic shelter for rentals and events near the Historic Farmstead parking lot	18.46% 12	32.31% 21	43.08% 28	6.15% 4	65	2.43

Q3 The following list includes recommendations for providing connections within the Great River Park Complex. Please select what you feel the priority levels are for each of the following recommendations.

Answered: 67 Skipped: 0



Great River Park Complex Concept



	HIGH PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	NEUTRAL/NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Develop a bike loop route that connects Sartell, both parks, and Rice (approximately 24 miles)	58.21% 39	26.87% 18	11.94% 8	2.99% 2	67	1.63
Provide interpretive signage at both parks that links the parks through stories, trails, and wayfinding information	31.34% 21	46.27% 31	16.42% 11	5.97% 4	67	2.03
Provide marketing and promotion of the natural resource value and recreational opportunities of the Great River Park Complex and its connection to the Michaelson Farm WMA	31.34% 21	40.30% 27	23.88% 16	4.48% 3	67	2.06
Provide a kayak/canoe water trail between the Miss. River Co. Park boat launch and Bend in the River Park canoe landing: Identify and promote it with signage, marketing, and amenities	25.37% 17	49.25% 33	17.91% 12	7.46% 5	67	2.15
Plan and host events that involve both parks and the river	31.34% 21	34.33% 23	23.88% 16	10.45% 7	67	2.24

Q4 What are other ideas that are not listed above that you think should be considered?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 31

Great River Park Complex Concept

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Yes the river flood plain area on the southern path of Mississippi River Park does get flooded and soggy during times of the year and a expensive board walk would help with this, But would the CC ski groomer be able to operate on a board walk then? I think some bio engendered landscaping and possible one or two culverts in priority areas might work for trial improvements and be groomer friendly	5/26/2020 5:53 PM
2	naturalist led hikes	5/26/2020 5:25 PM
3	Maintain the existing buildings on the farm so they do not fall apart.	5/26/2020 3:08 PM
4	Re-establish historic landcover from tallgrass prairie, oak savannah, pine-forest, upland hardwoods, to riparian timber. Extensively manage all areas for native species. Conduct timber stand improvement to improve spacing in forest. Prescribed fire in prairie and savannah areas. Invasive species removal across all park areas. Connect everything with multi-use trails.	5/26/2020 9:45 AM
5	Are there other means besides a boardwalk trail to have paths through the floodplain forest? I feel there would be a lot of upkeep and need to replace boards often.	5/26/2020 8:09 AM
6	Promote a native edible landscape along the walking trails.	5/26/2020 7:14 AM
7	Disc golf on the Benton County side	5/26/2020 6:52 AM
8	Include in proposed archery indoor archery range building a cross country ski chalet warming shelter also accessible for disc golfers.	5/26/2020 12:26 AM
9	I would like to see the Archery Center include some multiuser features, such as a door to the outside that would provide access to a place for skiers to warm up or change clothes. An area that could be used by other group events would be great too.	5/25/2020 10:25 PM
10	Kayak launch dock at both sites	5/25/2020 8:45 PM
11	More land acquisition with more trails.	5/24/2020 7:51 PM
12	There should be a place for Nordic skiers to change and use the bathroom. Easy access via an outside door is important.	5/24/2020 3:58 PM
13	New discbaskets and add more pins	5/23/2020 9:17 PM
14	Put the Farmstead at BITR on the National Register of historic places to obtain funding for its stabilization. It's eligible. Protect the farmstead from commercialization and modern buildings on its premises. Develop the picnic shelter and playground at the very south end of the park so it doesn't erode the historic quality of the farmstead area.	5/23/2020 7:36 PM
15	A fish cleaning station and invasive species education site for aquatic and plant species to educate hikers, boaters and fisherpersons	5/23/2020 10:45 AM
16	Interpretive programs led by a naturalist that are promoted through the local communities. It would be very neat if Stearns County Parks could develop a Junior Ranger program for kids (similar to National Parks) to get families into the parks to learn and recreate. Also, a program with local school districts to exploit the living history of the farm could make this park important for cost-effective field trips to study Minnesota history as well as wildlife.	5/23/2020 10:02 AM
17	put in concrete tee pads for disc golf course and new baskets where need be	5/23/2020 5:56 AM
18	hiking trails along river are a priority	5/22/2020 8:33 PM
19	If disc golf was expanded and more well cared for, it can bring great revenue. See Dane county in Madison Wisconsin as an example. Disc golf is HUGE in our area and people will pay \$5 day passes all day to play at well cared for courses. Expand to 27 holes and you could host tournaments for additional revenue as well	5/22/2020 5:50 PM
20	Practice putting basket area	5/22/2020 2:08 PM
21	Ensure the multi-purpose facility by the Archery Course is truly multi-purpose with input from a range of groups so that it meets a broad range of needs by various interest groups.	5/22/2020 1:58 PM
22	school programs at bend in the river part time naturalist at bend i the river	5/22/2020 1:53 PM
23	Leave the parks to nature. Every thing doesn't have to be a goddam amenity. If you opened	5/22/2020 1:47 PM

Great River Park Complex Concept

your eyes you might realize nature is beautiful

24	Hire a naturalist to do nature programs for various age groups	5/22/2020 1:40 PM
25	A walking/biking bridge between the two parks over the river. Cheapest way to double size of parks and be progressive making a landmark for years to come	5/22/2020 12:43 PM
26	More trails. Especially bike	5/22/2020 12:05 PM
27	Garbage cans and recycle bins. Wherever there is a picnic area it usually ends with a mess of garbage.	5/22/2020 11:49 AM
28	Horse trails	5/22/2020 11:20 AM
29	Disc Golf: Tee Boxes Baskets Signage Events Add another 9 Holes, combination hiking trail and disc golf holes?	5/22/2020 11:18 AM
30	Maybe a nice off leash dog park/ walking area.	5/22/2020 11:08 AM
31	Possible atv trail on the east side of co rd 55 as a connector from Sauk Rapids to Rice	5/22/2020 10:50 AM
32	Area for pets and clean up sites	5/22/2020 10:46 AM
33	Make sure there are many restrooms available along trails, in the parks and camp grounds. Also make sure their maintained regularly. Restrooms for children too	5/22/2020 10:03 AM
34	Adding paved biking and hiking trails should be priority that's what draws people in. Most in the hiking community won't bother with a park that has less than 5 miles of trails.	5/22/2020 7:57 AM
35	A bridge to connect the parks, even if it was for walkers and bicycles only.	5/21/2020 4:56 PM
36	Improve trails and manage tick populations as best you can.	5/21/2020 3:14 PM

Q5 Please list any other comments you have on the Draft Concept Plan for the Great River Park Complex.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 41

Great River Park Complex Concept

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	<p>I am a huge fan of parks but all parks are not equal in use and natural landscape. Both of these parks being planned are rare for the unique natural offering that they provide. Would new indoor use buildings, rent able shelters, and tacky colored plastic playground equipment ruin the feel that that many people have come here over the years to visit? While I think yes, I also know that areas can be kept natural and areas could be upgraded. The farmstead is historic and the view around it should remain natural and historic as it has mostly been to this point. City parks with manicured lawns and playground equipment are a dime a dozen, people do not travel to them such as a regional destination park that this area is being planned for now. People get out and drive to county parks to get away from buildings and city for a few hours, to walk, relax, and take in the views not to get inside of another building or to use playground equipment. Nature is free, and once disturbed for our own pleasure will continue to cost more money forever.</p>	5/26/2020 5:53 PM
2	<p>I go to these parks to escape urban noise and activity and to observe and enjoy nature. people who party and kids on playgrounds screaming spoil the natural aspect. There are many other places they can be. I believe people/kids should be exposed and learn to appreciate natural environments in a natural way. Nature hikes etc. How do you account for people responding more than once to this survey?</p>	5/26/2020 5:25 PM
3	NA	5/26/2020 9:45 AM
4	None	5/26/2020 7:14 AM
5	Looking good!!	5/26/2020 6:52 AM
6	<p>Seemed to be a lack of input from cross country skiers included in survey to incorporate additional uses of proposed archery center for Nordic skiers and disc golfers, which was unfortunate to see not reflected in phase 2 of the master plan survey with all the input received by Stearns County requested those additions be included to make it a multiuser facility.</p>	5/26/2020 12:26 AM
7	<p>Excellent ideas! I will always support the expansion of trails for biking, hiking and XC skiing. Safe trails that keep bikers off the ever more dangerous roads is a priority for me. Thank you!</p>	5/25/2020 7:14 AM
8	<p>1. New construction is not appropriate in the historic farmstead area at BITR, therefore, no picnic shelter near there, no playground. Don't cut into the restored prairie adjacent to the farmstead. 2. No expanded archery building in Miss. Co. Park. You can put a building in the city. Keep the parks natural. 3. Canoe Landing is for one canoe at Bend In the River, Keep it that way. 4. There are enough trails west of Hwy 55 at Bend in the River. Expand trails on the east side. 5. Thin the trees the wind rows and green ash along the road at BITR or they will die. 6. Bend in the River has very strict DNR rules on it. Those rules should always be followed. Keep the park natural.</p>	5/23/2020 7:36 PM
9	i think the self rental should include bikes as well as water craft	5/23/2020 10:45 AM
10	Large parking area for tailgating/food trucks	5/22/2020 8:33 PM
11	The archery Plans sound super cool! I am more than willing to help connect you with the proper folks to discuss implementing revenue generating disc golf. Please don't hesitate to contact me	5/22/2020 5:50 PM
12	N/A	5/22/2020 2:08 PM
13	Great work! Thanks for ensuring the inclusion of a broad range of voices and ideas.	5/22/2020 1:58 PM
14	Am glad to see enhancement and stewardship of the natural intact areas - prairie, woodlands, oak savannah	5/22/2020 1:40 PM
15	People don't need signs or maintenance of habitat. They need active space/trails to get people off their phones. Most people can't name the trees or plants to begin with	5/22/2020 12:43 PM
16	I think the development of a picnic area near the historic farmstead is a bad idea. It undermines its historic aesthetics and would destroy part of the restored prairie off of the parking lot.	5/22/2020 12:32 PM
17	None	5/22/2020 12:05 PM
18	Why do kids need a play area when they would be surrounded by nature? They can swing in town. Would be better if there were classes held to teach the value of trees, flora, and nature especially to children from towns.	5/22/2020 11:49 AM

Great River Park Complex Concept

19	Some of these could be completed with smaller dollar amounts and they should go to the head of the list.. Like interpretive signs and buckthorn removal	5/22/2020 11:28 AM
20	Looking forward to seeing the improvements.	5/22/2020 11:20 AM
21	Glad you are requesting community opinions in such an interactive process.	5/22/2020 11:18 AM
22	N/A	5/22/2020 11:08 AM
23	Looks good	5/22/2020 10:50 AM
24	Looks good!	5/22/2020 10:46 AM
25	Is there enough money? Is there anything else that's more important than this park complex?	5/22/2020 10:03 AM
26	Love the idea of canoe/kiayak rentals. The playground for kids would be awesome but make it unique. Parents love unique playgrounds. A nature playground would draw in parents.	5/22/2020 7:57 AM



Great River Park Complex

Master Plan

DRAFT for County Board Review
May 29, 2020