



**EVERY YEAR**, Parks & Trails Council meets with community leaders, local advocates, and park and trail managers to determine priorities for the upcoming legislative session. Every project we support is reviewed to ensure its public value, whether that be providing a high-quality outdoor experience, improving connectivity and safety, or protecting Minnesota's exceptional natural resources. Piece by piece, we're working to cultivate a world-class park and trail system that benefits all Minnesotans.



The key pieces of our  
**2018 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA:**

 **GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES**

We work with local volunteers around the state to identify and complete park and trail projects from the ground up. **In 2018 we're helping 14 communities advocate at the capitol to get their project funded.**

 **MANAGEMENT NEEDS**

We work with park and trail managers to secure the resources they need. **In 2018 we're advocating for rehabilitation and development dollars, plus critical funding for important grant programs.**

 **SMART POLICY**

We work with policy experts to advocate for smart park and trail policies. **In 2018 we're fighting to keep state parks quiet and natural by opposing the potential introduction of off-highway vehicles.**

*See reverse side for details*

# 2018 Parks & Trails Council's Legislative Priorities

## GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES

### BLAZING STAR STATE TRAIL

\$2.5 million is needed for a 6-mile trail connecting Hayward to Myre-Big Island State Park, including a bridge over Albert Lea Lake.

### CANNON VALLEY REGIONAL TRAIL

\$2.84 million is needed for improvements to trail access facilities and storm water infrastructure.

### CHESTER WOODS STATE TRAIL

\$2.5 million is needed for a trail connecting Rochester to Chester Woods County Park.

### FARIBAULT NORTHERN LINKS TRAIL

\$710,000 is needed to connect the Sakatah State Trail with Faribault's city trails and downtown.

### FRONTENAC STATE PARK

Land acquisition to add 160 acres of restored bluffslands to the state park, valued at \$900,000.

### GLENDALOUGH STATE PARK

\$750,000 to build a visitor center, needed to accommodate an 80% increase in visitors since 2014.

### GITCHI GAMI STATE TRAIL

\$3.2 million is needed for a 1.5 mile trail extension into Lutsen; and planning costs for future trail connections with Tettegouche and Cascade River State Parks.

### GOODHUE PIONEER STATE TRAIL

\$1.87 million is needed for continued trail development connecting Zumbrota and Red Wing.

### HARMONY-PRESTON STATE TRAIL

\$1.5 million is needed to extend the existing trail from Harmony to Niagara Cave and the Iowa border.

### HEARTLAND STATE TRAIL ITASCA SPUR

\$500,000 is needed for planning and design of a planned trail connection to Itasca State Park.

### MILL TOWNS STATE TRAIL

\$1 million is needed for trail development and rehabilitation near Dundas.

### MISSISSIPPI BLUFFLANDS STATE TRAIL

\$2 million is needed for planning and development of a 17-mile trail connecting Red Wing and Lake City.

### PRESTON-Forestville STATE TRAIL

\$5 million is needed to extend the existing trail to Carimona, following the Root River.

### WAGON WHEEL TRAIL

\$2 million is needed for a trail bridge and safety improvements, connecting downtown La Crescent to the Mississippi River.

## MANAGEMENT NEEDS

### STATE PARK AND RECREATION AREA REHABILITATION

\$20 million is needed across the state park system to renew visitor facilities and campgrounds, rehabilitate water access sites, and repair park roads in poor condition.

### STATE PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

\$20 million is needed across the state park system to renovate visitor facilities to improve accessibility for Minnesotans with disabilities.

### LAKE VERMILION-SOUDAN UNDERGROUND STATE PARK

\$13 million is needed to continue developing Minnesota's newest state park, including construction of a new visitor center, campground, and hiking trails.

### STATE TRAIL REHABILITATION

\$12 million is needed to rehabilitate state hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, including bridge and culvert repair, trailhead upgrades, and pavement replacement.

### METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS

\$15 million is needed for capital improvement grants for regional parks and trails across the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

### REGIONAL AND LOCAL GRANT PROGRAMS

\$5 million is needed to fund critical grant programs for outdoor recreation, regional parks, local trail connections, and regional trails.

### ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND GRANTS

\$11 million - as recommended by the LCMMR - is needed for parks and trails across Minnesota. Projects include the Superior Hiking Trail, the Mesabi Trail, the Swedish Immigrant Trail, and land acquisition and forest restoration in state parks and trails.

## SMART POLICY

In a move that would forever alter the character of Minnesota State Parks, park managers are facing mounting pressure to remove the long-standing prohibition on off-highway vehicles (OHVs) in state parks. It's crucial to keep the existing laws and rules on the books so that state parks stay quiet, natural and special places.

**This is important because...**

### THE LAW IS CLEAR:

“[Only] Outdoor recreation activities... that can be accommodated *without material disturbance of the natural features of the park or the introduction of undue artificiality* into the natural scene may be permitted... (Outdoor Recreation Act; M.S. 86A. Subd 2)

### VISITORS OPPOSE THE CHANGE:

**72%** say the smells and sounds of nature are “very important” for their visit.

**60%** oppose expanding OHV opportunities in state parks. Only 12% support the idea.

**57%** say silence and quiet is “very important” for their visit.

### OHVs ALREADY HAVE DISPROPORTIONATE ACCESS TO STATE LAND:

