

Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

April 24, 2025

MINUTES PROVIDE A RECORD OF MINNESOTA'S PARKS AND TRAILS LEGACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS. THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN APPROVED ON June 18, 2025.



***The mission of the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee is
“to champion the 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan by providing
recommendations to enhance promotion, coordination, and
accountability throughout implementation of the plan.”***

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

In-person at Afton State Park, Hastings, MN

And virtual via WebEx

Updates and Announcements:

Next Meeting: June 18th 2025

Meeting Host: Met Council

Meeting Location: Cleary Lake Regional Park

Action Items:

- DNR Staff will post the approved meeting minutes on the LCC Website.

Meeting Minutes:

Members: Janice Erickson, Steve Dubbs, Heather Stirratt, Gina Hugo, , Steve Dietz, Jim Shoberg, Dllona Clendenen, Dozier Hunter, Robert Klatt, Mitchell Travis, Jenna Udenberg; Leila Farah, Derek Madsen, Dolf Moon, Dan Trudeau

Liaisons: Renee Mattson (GMRPTC), Laura Preus (DNR)

Staff: Lars Erdahl (DNR), Luisa Cichowski (DNR),, Eleanor Hohulin (Met Council), Samantha Lee (Met Council)

Guests: Nick Bartels (Afton State Park Supervisor), Arielle Courtney (DNR Parks and Trails Partnerships Development Consultant)

Lars Erdahl opened the meeting, members did a quick round of introductions, and answered Janice's ice-breaker question: "What are you grateful for?"

Afton State Park Welcome

Nick Bartels, Afton State Park Supervisor

- Overview of the facilities and ecology at Afton State Park.
 - The park is 1700 acres, with camper cabins and yurts, a fishing dock (and fishing kits for visitors to check out), 1.5 miles of accessible trails and some accessible cabins and yurts. Accommodations were described as "rustic."
 - A big project for the park has been re-meandering portions of the river.
 - The park has worked on Bluebird conservation as well.
 - Nick discussed the challenges faced during the pandemic with limited staffing and impacts of significantly increased park visitation.
- Questions from members:
 - One member asked about the foraging policies in the park, as she'd been told previously not to pick berries. Nick said that foraging and eating wild foods in the park is allowed.
 - Members asked about PFAS, and Nick mentioned that the park does PFAS monitoring in the St. Croix River.

DNR Updates

Laura Preus, DNR Legacy Liaison

- Laura shared the DRAFT PAT Legacy Strategic Direction FY26-27 Report with the committee.
 - Discussed the document's priorities, and emphasized: using new platforms and methods to reach new people, developing partnerships, intercultural competence, interpretive services.
 - Discussed how most Parks and Trails Legacy funds at the moment are going towards "taking care of what we have" in the form of repairs to aging infrastructure.
- Laura shared the DNR's Ten Year Capital Asset Need report with the committee.
 - A lot of park infrastructure in state system is in poor condition, and infrastructure is ranked to determine order and priority of projects.
 - Funding is dedicated to "taking care of what we have" because of the need to catch up on facility upkeep – Legacy is making a big difference here.
 - Facilities without appropriate ADA accessibility are a priority.
- Questions from members about both documents:
 - Members wondered about how much money the DNR is spending on risk, and planning for the long term.
 - Members asked about how necessary it is to undertake each building project, since many people just want a rustic experience close to nature, and pointed out that keeping things simple is less expensive.
 - Members emphasized how TEK should be used in planning processes.
 - Members wondered how this information has been presented to the legislature, and what the response has been. Laura replied that the response has generally been good, but money does not always get allocated as the parks would like.

Library Pass Program Outreach Strategies and Feedback

Arielle Courtney, DNR Parks and Trails Partnership Development Consultant

- Arielle presented about the State Park Library pass program, which is a pilot program that will be expanded this year from 175 to 500 available passes across the state.
- The program is focused on eliminating economic barriers to park visitation, but not necessarily focusing on a variety of other barriers and factors, like transportation.

- She focused especially on a survey of Library Pass users, and indicated that the program has been serving low income people. Statistics of library patrons do not include information to assess State Park Library pass use by BIPOC users.
- Arielle asked for advice from committee members about outreach efforts for increasing use of the program, and what methods would be most successful. Americorps member Luisa chimed in with a request for outreach advice that could go into planning summer outreach efforts for the program.
- Member advice and questions:
 - Extending the library pass program to tribal colleges and libraries.
 - Transportation to get to the parks still seems like a significant economic barrier. Can this be addressed through partnerships with other organizations that could provide some of these services? Additionally, members suggested that mentorship programs and volunteers could play a role here.
 - Concern to make sure that people aren't feeling singled out, as if they can't use the pass even if they have higher income.
 - What are examples of current outreach efforts? Arielle replied that nature-storytime at libraries has been one outreach effort, but not much has been done because this was a pilot program.
 - Members suggested using existing events at the libraries to promote the passes.
 - Members suggested doing outreach for the library passes at foodshelves and other community spaces to reach people that are not already attending library events.
 - Members wondered whether maps should be included with the library passes.
 - Accessibility as a barrier to park pass use was brought up, with the suggestion that outreach materials encouraging park visitation show pictures of the facilities and restrooms, to address the fear of the unknown. Accessible transportation would also help folks use the library pass program.
 - English as a second language speakers might be missed if all of the library pass outreach occurs at libraries, again emphasizing the importance of doing outreach for the passes at other locations as well.

Lunch

Site Tour

Nick Bartels, Afton State Park Director

Adjourn
