



*Common ground. Common good.*

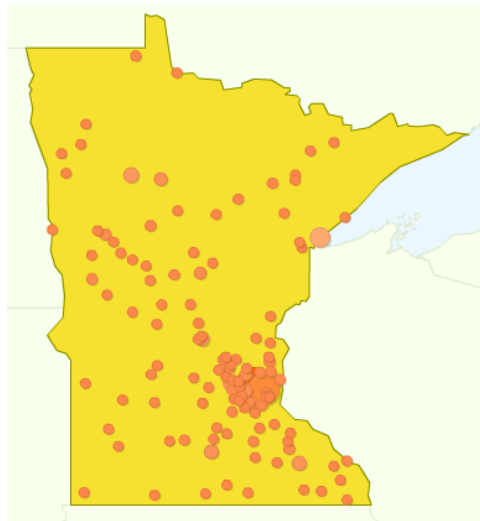
## **Public Input Themes**

### **Feedback from Public Engagement Efforts on the Draft Plan**

#### **Introduction**

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The Citizens League worked with the Department of Natural Resources' Parks and Trails Legacy project to conduct a series of public workshops and online activities to share the draft Legacy Plan and gather initial feedback. Workshops were held in four locations throughout the state: Mankato (30 attendees), Duluth (27 attendees), Bemidji (52) and Saint Paul (26 attendees) and were held between December 2 and 8, 2010. Online participation came from all over the state, as indicated on the map below.



The format of the in-person workshops included a PowerPoint presentation that provided some background on the project, findings to date, and the high-level recommendations outlined in the draft Legacy Plan. Participants were asked to discuss a key question around each of the strategic directions, first in small groups and then to report back to the large group. After discussion of the four strategic direction areas, participants identified their priorities for the strategic direction areas via a "game" allocating chips – as a table – to each area. See Appendix I for the full set of discussion and written questions, and Appendix III for a listing of all written comments.

Online activities included: 1) posting the plan and all of its components (workgroup reports, public participation report, etc.) and inviting comments; 2) hosting a discussion of each of the questions asked in the meetings around the four strategic direction areas, and 3) creating and promoting a weekly topic (4 weeks) that included both a quick poll (1-2 questions) and discussion of a particular issue. See Appendix II for an account of the

CitiZing activities and survey responses. CitiZing hosted more than 900 unique visitors who viewed an average of 5 pages and spent nearly 5 minutes on the site. For those who actively logged in to participate, 373 people to date have joined the project. Of those, 209 submitted surveys and 146 total comments were logged.

The engagement activities did not seek to reach consensus on any of the issues, nor did they attempt to cover everything outlined in the plan. The purpose (and outcome) was to present the key ideas outlined in the plan, begin discussion on the issues, and gather initial feedback. The findings outlined in this document describe the general themes and ideas that emanated from these public activities, and have been categorized into each of the plan's strategic direction areas, as well as overall themes relating to regionalism, public involvement, and motorized recreation.

To summarize reactions to the draft plan:

1. General agreement that the plan is on the right track.
2. Improve the plan's understanding of the role of local parks and trails, and think about the link between these and regional and state parks and trails in efforts to increase participation.
3. To increase participation, focus on more numerous and different users of nature-based recreation, not more use by the same users.
4. Place a greater priority on youth, and rethink ways they might get engaged.
5. Consider and address more explicitly the needs of lower income individuals.
6. Be clearer about the opportunities for coordination, collaboration and connecting services, and make this way of operating a hallmark of how we do things.
7. Rethink the definition of regionalism.
8. Be transparent about how the funds are used and find ways to keep the public involved.
9. Disagreement about the use of Legacy funds for motorized recreation remains.

## **Connect People with the Outdoors**

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### **1) Provide close-to-home, easy access opportunities that can help to build a culture of stewardship.**

The importance of opportunities close to home was affirmed by participants at each of the four workshops and online. These nearby places and activities provide an easy-to-access place for people where they can connect with the outdoors, thereby building a culture of stewardship and appreciation for the outdoors. Local parks are an important part of this, because while they are beyond the scope of the Legacy funds, they provide a key link to building participation in the regional and state systems.

When asked online "how important do you think local parks and trails are to increasing participation in state and regional parks," 84% of respondents answered either "critical" or "important". Of the 52 respondents, only 2% said they were not at all important. One user wrote about the potential benefit of better connecting local parks with regional

and state ones. "...Studies have shown a strong connection between availability of nearby green space for exploration by children and an increase in interest in outdoor recreation activities. So if the target market is kids, more open space in the neighborhood geared towards unstructured exploration would be a viable way to increase long-term participation in outdoor recreation activities."

Proximity can help increase participation. Families can access and introduce their children to camping, fishing, etc. more easily and frequently than if opportunities were far away. Teens who may be unable or uninterested in traveling long distances to reach a park or trail are more likely to connect with nature if the proximity to them makes it easier to do so. As one participant said, "We must be able to connect to people where they live, close by, where kids can ride their bicycles." Nearby opportunities can also provide a valuable access point for young people by partnering with local schools and youth clubs.

These nearby opportunities provide an important entrée to the outdoors. As people learn to value nature-based experiences through their local outdoor spaces, they may be more likely to travel to explore and use other parks and trails. Workshop participants agreed that proximity matters.

## **2) Rethink what it means to "participate" at a park or trail.**

As our culture continues to evolve, so do our forms of recreation. Parks and trails must keep up with – and should strive to be on the cutting edge – of these trends. If few people stargaze but many play disc golf, then those activities and opportunities should be reflected in our parks and trails. We must embrace new forms of recreation to continue to be relevant to and attract new users to parks and trails.

The strategy here should be to attract people where and how they're interested in connecting with parks and trails. Particular ethnic groups, for instance, may not be interested in learning how to snowshoe, but may be interested in using parks for a cultural gathering. Youth may be interested in geocaching, but not fishing. As one middle-aged participant put it, "Our values of what a park is may be totally different than someone in their 20s."

## **3) Target youth by developing appropriate and attractive opportunities for them and connecting with them where they are.**

Youth were again recognized as an essential component to the success of the Legacy funds. To attract them to parks and trails, and indeed, to make parks and trails relevant to our new and changing lifestyles, participants recommended instituting activities and opportunities attractive to our current lifestyles. Some examples include better integrating technology (e.g. mobile app's), introducing and expanding new recreational activities (e.g. geocaching), and providing modern amenities (e.g. wifi).

Participants also spoke about the importance of partnering with schools, clubs and other groups comprised primarily of youth. They also noted the need for adults to lead the way for youth.

#### **4) Create connections (not necessarily physical) between spaces.**

To increase participation and foster stewardship, it is not just enough to get people using one park or trail. Ideally, parks and trails become part of their way of life-- something they use frequently, throughout the state and beyond. To help make the leap between one's near-home park or trail and others throughout the state and region, it's important to create connections (not just physical ones) between the spaces. Physical connections aside, these could include interpretation, activities, information, marketing, education, outreach, transportation and more. Connections between non-outdoor places are also important. These could be schools, community centers, clubs, churches, etc.

#### **5) Be clear about who should make up the proposed increase in users; it shouldn't just be the same people using parks and trails more.**

While there was general agreement that increasing participation is a good goal, participants urged leaders to more specifically identify where that increase should come from. It shouldn't just be current users using parks and trails more frequently, but rather, new users. These targets should be made explicit and strategies identified to reach each. A number of participants felt the plan needed to better address and recognize the challenges low income families might have, such as user fees and lack of transportation.

### **Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities**

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#### **1) Distribute funds throughout the state, not just based on population.**

Participants felt passionate that investments should not be made solely on the basis of population; this was particularly true in Greater Minnesota. The importance of near-home parks has already been discussed, yet opportunities in many places around Minnesota are few and far between. Many Greater Minnesota residents also noted that we can get more value for our money outside the metro area; land prices aren't so high, for instance. One participant summed up this popular sentiment by stating: "Just remember when you're going to spend the money where all the traffic goes on the weekend."

Participants also underscored the need to respect the various needs of different parts of the state. What is needed in northwest Minnesota (trails) may not be the top priority for the southern part of the state (where land acquisition may be more important right

now). This was echoed online when almost half of the 74 survey responders identified “projects that reflect each region’s unique needs will be underway” as the primary milestone by which to judge short-term progress and success with the Legacy funds.

In each meeting, participants also stressed the importance of securing our trails network by placing a high priority on permanent land easements.

**2) Focus equally on natural resource protection/conservation and recreational opportunities.**

Legacy dollars should not be spent only on recreational opportunities, but should also focus on natural resources protection and preservation. Part of the mission of parks and trails is to preserve the natural environment, so Legacy dollars should also support those ends.

**3) Develop the trail system so that it builds a useful network, provides access and opportunities to more people, and creates connections between opportunities.**

Greater Minnesota participants, in particular, noted the importance of further developing the trails system. Trails provide valuable connections between spaces, including parks and other nature-based recreational opportunities. Trails are a relatively easy way to provide near-home opportunities for many in Greater Minnesota while also increasing their access to other spaces and opportunities.

On CitiZing, participants were asked to select up to three options of how funding for trails should be prioritized? Of the 61 respondents, 60% chose connecting existing trails. Other top vote-getters were filling a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortages (42%), securing a critical piece of a trail system (42%), and connecting to communities (39%). The options that users did *not* rank as important include a financial commitment by the proposer, use by commuters, and securing a unique opportunity or experience. For these respondents, connecting to various opportunities (recreational opportunities, destinations, etc.) are the most important factors for Minnesotans in their trail system.

**4) There must be a “legacy” component to each project.**

Some participants noted a potential difference in the intent of the Legacy funds and Minnesotans’ vision for the funds. Some want the focus of the funds to be primarily on acquisition and other tangible projects, while youth in particular noted the importance of programming and information. Regardless of what is funded, participants stressed the need for each project to be “legacy worthy”, to help create something lasting and meaningful. More information on this is included in #1 of “Take Care of What We Have.”

## Take Care of What We Have

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### 1) Legacy funds should not be used for day-to-day maintenance and operations.

Participants agreed, nearly unanimously, that Legacy dollars should not be used for day-to-day maintenance. However, their views varied somewhat on what kinds of operations and maintenance *should* be eligible for Legacy funds. Some want Legacy funds to focus primarily on “legacy worthy” projects like acquisition and tangible projects that develop and maintain opportunities for public use. This often means that the focus should be on larger, capitol projects, rather than many smaller ones. Regardless of project type (acquisition, development, programming, etc.), the funds should be used in a way that truly leaves a legacy and doesn’t fritter away the funds.

Several participants noted that we shouldn’t “reward” poor maintenance on existing facilities by handing out Legacy funds to improve them. However, this was a major discussion point as participants recognized the need to take care of what we have and get the most bang-for-our-buck from the money spent. For development projects, the suggestion was made to identify the useful life of a facility and provide the funding to support that lifespan.

### 2) “Legacy” must support – not supplant – current funding.

Participants echoed the need for Legacy funding to support, and not supplant, current funding practices.

## Coordination Among Partners

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### 1) Make it easy for small groups and communities to follow the use of Legacy funds and access funding.

Participants indicated a desire for stronger connections to and support for local groups. Many were members of local “friends” or recreation groups. Many spoke of how difficult it was to follow the process for how funds were allocated, and to connect into these efforts. Transparency and access will be important to consider moving forward. Reaching out to and providing a process to easily include these groups is needed.

Many supported the idea of the DNR convening various providers within and between regions of the state so that these groups could better coordinate their own work, collaboratively identify needs, and forge project partnerships. The DNR’s primary role in these efforts could be helping create and maintain the network.

Groups also noted that matching requirements and other grant stipulations often make it difficult to access funds.

## 2) Participants were mixed on the creation of an advisory body.

With limited time at each workshop, there was seldom the opportunity to talk in-depth about the creation of an advisory body for the Legacy funds. However, in the brief conversations that participants did have, there was not clear agreement on whether or not this would be a good thing; some participants loved the idea, others did not like it. Generally, the emphasis seemed to be on the need transparency on how the Legacy funds are used, and on continued public involvement. For example, one person said, “Don’t get a new board. Just periodically hold a review with all people who have a stake in it.”

### Priority Game

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Participants were asked to divide up 12 chips into each of the 4 strategic direction areas to identify where they think the focus of Legacy efforts (funds, staff time, local groups, etc.) should go. As mentioned previously, due to time restrictions, there was little time to discuss the “coordinate with partners” strategic goal of the draft plan, which may have impacted the results.

	Connect People & the Outdoors	Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities	Take Care of What We Have	Coordinate With Partners
Mankato	4	5	2	1
Duluth	2	5	4	1
Bemidji	2	3	5	2
Metro	3	4	3	2
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>

Participants’ priorities varied someone depending on where in the state they lived. These differences reflect the need for Legacy funds to respect regional differences and needs.

### Regionalism

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Participants at the Greater Minnesota meetings strongly stressed the need to re-think how “regional centers” are defined. The current definition seemingly places disproportionate emphasis on the metro area, which isn’t necessarily keeping with the idea of regionalism (versus focusing on population). The funds should be distributed throughout the state, with a focus on geography and nature, in addition to population. Two of the major ideas for re-defining “regional” included:

- 1) Define regional centers in terms of the proportion of people living in that community compared to communities around them. Communities that reach a particular ratio (e.g. 5 times more people living in a town or city than in any other town or city in a 100-mile radius) could be defined as a regional center.

- 2) Use current regional services and amenities to define regional centers. Hospitals, nursing homes, emergency management services or other like services tend to be spread regionally, and could be used to identify regional centers.

## **Transparency, Accountability and Public Involvement**

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Participants felt strongly about the need for accountability in how the Legacy funds are used, and in their minds, this includes opportunities to keep the public involved. Comments included:

- There are many organizational and technical difficulties in establishing and maintaining a single “outdoor recreation” website. Explore a “wiki” approach where users add and update information.
- Investing in local ownership is critical with each element. Ownership meant to mean: participation, understanding, part of decision process.
- Regular public forums and continued input from the public. Annual reports on funded projects should be developed.
- If recommendations made by citizens are respected, and not over ridden by the legislature, then we will know that the process is working.

## **Motorized and Non-motorized Recreation**

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During the first round of 17 regional meetings, there appeared a sharp divide between some who favor and look to expand trails and opportunities for motorized recreation, and those who feel that motorized recreation is incompatible with the intent of the Legacy amendment. These opposing sentiments surfaced during the plan review period as well, both in the written comments provided at the meetings and online. People in both groups are very passionate in their opinions, and those who are most passionate show few if any inclinations to make concessions.



## Appendix I Workshop Questions

### **Discussion Questions**

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#### *Connect People to the Outdoors*

- Do you think what we're proposing will achieve the goal of increased participation and stewardship? If not, what do you suggest?
- How do you see yourself as part of the solution?

#### *Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities*

Focus acquisition and development in the areas of Minnesota projected to grow most rapidly over the coming 25 years, in regional centers, and in major tourism destinations.

- What do you think about these priorities for acquisition and development?

#### *Take Care of What We Have*

Maintenance needs are broad and could easily consume all of the Legacy funds. The plan recommends that Legacy funds should be used only for maintenance that makes a long-lasting impact, rather than for day-to-day maintenance such as trash removal and cleaning bathrooms.

- Do you agree with the recommendation? If not, where would you draw the line?

#### *Coordinate Among Partners*

The state and regional park and trail system is too fragmented: on the ground, how information about parks and trails is provided, and how providers work together. The goal is to develop a seamless system where users experience high quality, integrated recreational opportunities, regardless of who provides them.

- What do you think are the defining characteristics of a seamless system?

### **Table Exercise**

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How would you prioritize the four strategic directions in the next 3-5 years?

### **Written Questions**

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- 1) Over the next five years in your part of Minnesota, what would you need to see to give you the confidence that we're heading in the right direction?
- 2) What will be different in Minnesota as a result of the Parks and Trails Legacy effort?
- 3) What advice do you have before we adjourn?
- 4) If there is one big improvement to make to the draft plan before turning it in to the legislature on February 15<sup>th</sup>, what is it?

## Appendix II CitiZing Activities

CitiZing hosted 4 weeks of structured activities – quick polls and discussions – as well as an ongoing open discussion about the draft plan.

### **Week 1: Milestones and Markers**

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Quick Poll: We heard from Minnesotans that they want the Legacy funds to build something big and lasting. If we do that, what milestones will we reach in 3-5 years that show we're on the right path? (*Answers came from 74 respondents*)

- We will have identified and started working on a few big projects – 16%
- Projects that reflect each region's unique needs will be underway – 45%
- The quality of experiences will have improved (good maintenance of facilities, relevant programming, etc.) – 20%
- Many more people will be using parks and trails – 19%

#### Survey comments:

#### **by Alyson Johnson on Nov 22, 2010 @ 7:51pm**

If a diverse group of youth could serve as the labor for new projects, it would lead to a greater number of people taking ownership in these parks. I worry about the lack of diversity in park visitors, and the lack of low income youth specifically.

I wanted to have my students participate in this survey, but even as older as high school students, few could name a state park. Even less have ever visited a state park.

#### **by Ann Lewandowski on Nov 22, 2010 @ 7:57pm**

Really big projects will not be far enough along in 3-5 years to see important measurable changes. But at the same time we are build groundwork for long term results we should also take actions that have immediate results in increased usage, while protecting and improving the quality of experiences. (It is possible that increased usage could reduce quality.) I agree with Mike -- nothing happens in parks and trails without engagement of people in the great outdoors.

#### **by Rita Hussman on Nov 24, 2010 @ 8:13pm**

Excellent comments from everyone. I agree that it was difficult to choose an answer, but in the end I opted for projects that reflect each regions unique needs. The assumption being that the mutual or shared needs for all regions serves as a common template for each region. I agree with Mike that conservation begins with appreciation, and add that authentic stewardship is the outward expression of an internal ethic.

Ann is right - if we make getting more people into the parks a top priority, then we can expect greater impacts. Not all experiences outdoors result in a positive learning experience or a greater appreciation for nature. Somehow we need to find a way to increase the

chances that those experiences produce positive results. I don't know how many adults think they need or might benefit from any sort of guided outdoor learning experience. Kids, on the other hand ...

So Alyson, I am completely with you regarding youth engagement. It makes sense to facilitate the development of a land ethic in our children first. I am a true believer in youth service because I have personally witnessed the incredible power of youth leadership many times over! Just as it is in nature, diversity is key to any plan like this. Our children are our greatest reason and our greatest resource. Disadvantaged kids are everywhere, in urban, suburban and rural settings. We need to do what we can to include them all.

**by Joanne Keyes on Nov 27, 2010 @ 9:29am**

I think a regional approach is a good one. Each region has its unique needs and changes made locally will allow for community involvement in planning and executing.

**by Joel Dunnette on Nov 30, 2010 @ 9:45pm**

longer term the goal I would want is to have more people using parks and trails. But for short-term, as stated, I think focusing on regional priorities would be good.

**by Jonathan Vlaming on Dec 1, 2010 @ 2:12pm**

I always like lots of information. What big projects are being considered? What are the unique needs for each region? Is current quality of experience really an issue at this time? Visits are always the easiest measure, but not all visits are equal in the benefits that they provide so it is arguable that visits are too simplistic a measure. Now I voted for the "each region's unique needs" as that will most likely best reflect the varying needs across the state. However, the first sentence of the question indicates that Minnesotans want to build something big and lasting, which sort of implies that they want progress on some large "legacy" type projects that are tangible and symbolic, such as aggressive park land acquisition programs.

**by Peter Breyfogle on Dec 1, 2010 @ 8:01pm**

I am an advocate for maintaining and improving what we have first before expending resources on new facilities. It is cheaper to maintain what we have first. It does no good to build stuff and then not maintain it.

**by Steve Mayer on Dec 1, 2010 @ 8:48pm**

One big project would be cleaning up the Minnesota River as well as some of the smaller rivers and streams. I don't think new facilities or parking lots are good investments.

**by Joel Peck on Dec 3, 2010 @ 11:42am**

I think more than anything, people want to see something done; some progress; some effort, rather than bureaucratic layers delaying good ideas. Most often, a demonstration that a program is working can be conveyed through large, grand projects. But these are often not the best way to spend money. I like the regional significance approach. This would send the message state-wide that the Legacy Amendment is working.

**by Brad Blackett on Dec 13, 2010 @ 3:21pm**

There are some maintenance that has long been neglected. Prior to taking large leaps forward I think one of the big programs necessary would be to list each regions needs in terms of what is out there that needs fixing or abandoned. Keeping what we got in terms of programs, staffing and facilities in good working order will be a sizable undertaking in it's self. This has to happen first so visitors continue to have quality experiences, which will keep bringing them back. Through peer to peer promotion more people will become involved, but to truly make opportunities available we need to figure out how to get people there in the first place. Getting them there not only physically(transportation) but emotionally re-connected with Nature and prepared for the experience.

Discussion Question: We heard from Minnesotans through in-person workshops and here on CitiZing that they want the Legacy funds to build something big and lasting. If we do that, what milestones will we, as a state, reach in 3-5 years that show we're on the right path? What would give you confidence that we're moving in the right direction?

Discussion Comments:

**by Neil Lageson on Nov 18, 2010 @ 7:37pm**

We have a few relatively short trails in this corner of the state. Our trails are not that far from major state trails like Central Lakes and Glacial Lakes, so it makes sense to look at linking up.

Starbuck was a railroad town. Part of the old rail bed is now a trail between Starbuck and Glenwood, but the line could go west to Morris, and east to Sauk Centre.

Another very wild and scenic route would follow the glacial ridge/ble mounds from Glacial Lakes state park to Sibley state park. There are many small and medium sized lakes along the route, as well as land held by the Nature Conservancy. The cost could be minimal because of this, plus many state and federal wildlife areas along the way. An unpaved trail could cross private land with permission, similar to the snowmobile trails in the area. The trail could be multi-use, hiking, mountain biking, horse back riding, and skiing. If this could be done, I believe the trail could rival the Superior Hiking Trail. Once a few people experience the scenery from these hills, the word would spread quickly. We are not that far from the Twin Cities, and the local economy would benefit greatly.

**by Mike Bauer on Nov 19, 2010 @ 8:47am**

In our city trails that connect within our community and to other communities is the number one request.

**by Peter Braido on Nov 19, 2010 @ 1:23pm**

I believe that education does not stop in the classroom and healthy living does not end on a treadmill. It would be most useful to have these opportunities on an everyday basis.

As part of the Linwood Park and Recreation Committee we have found that there is a need to link fragmented lands via trails since we have thousands of acres of protected land that

goes mostly unused!! Additionally, we have seen the most progress when town, county, state, and federal agencies work together for the greater good. I hope the Legacy Act can break these barriers down.

**by John Hickman on Nov 19, 2010 @ 1:51pm**

Completion of the Minnesota Valley State Trail, including a river crossing at Old Cedar Avenue, would be a big and lasting accomplishment in the metro area.

**by Erin Sapp on Nov 22, 2010 @ 2:16pm**

These are all great ideas. It sounds like overall, making progress on some specific, major needs is a good benchmark to judge success by. Is that right? What other milestones - other projects or ideas - do you have?

**by Joanne Keyes on Nov 27, 2010 @ 9:39am**

I agree with Mike in that trails that connect within and among communities would be a great goal to be working toward. We have a lot of open spaces in our community, but only 3/4 mile of trail! Something big and lasting could be an amazing trail system with funds set aside for maintenance. In three to five years there could be a master plan and regional plan in place with land and right-of-way acquisition underway or completed. Depending on the situation, some of the trails could even be in place.

**by Jonathan Vlaming on Dec 1, 2010 @ 2:23pm**

I'd like to see milestones and markers for each region, with some fundamental categories:

Acquisition (parks; greenways/trail corridors; blueways)

Infrastructure (new trail miles, new campsites, new interpretive centers, etc.)

Education (school groups, adults, by theme - conservation skills, environmental ed, sustainability ed, etc)

Visitation - raw and by activity, and by demographics; also tourism estimates

Integration - measures of how Legacy projects work in coordination with other community, regional and/or state initiatives

**by Annie Eastey on Dec 15, 2010 @ 12:18pm**

Confidence would come from seeing trails completed, still being built and being maintained! I believe we have our road systems for work that bring us to anywhere we need to go, and we also need Minnesotan "road systems" for when we want to play. I believe there is much more potential for outdoor recreation in this state, I would like to see some serious and notable trails, be it hiking, ATV, or whatever; crisscross this state, and join the ranks of other states that are recognized for their recreational opportunities. Not trails that start in one county and do not continue to and through the next!

## **Week 2: Stewardship**

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Quick Poll: Minnesotans place a high priority on stewardship. What does "stewardship" mean to you? Select up to three. (*Answers came from 22 respondents*)

- Respecting natural resources (e.g. staying on the trail) - 15
- Participating in outdoor activities (hiking, etc.) - 14
- Engaging in nature-based cultural activities (e.g. learning about MN's Native American traditions) - 14
- Volunteering at parks and trails (e.g. helping collect prairie seed) - 7
- Living as "green" as possible - 7
- Inspiring younger generations to engage with the outdoors - 5

Survey comments:

**by Brad Blackett on Dec 13, 2010 @ 3:41pm**

Yes, Engaged (committed through lifestyle, career, participation, volunteering, consumer choice all in a way to preserve, conserve, protect, enhance, rehabilitate the natural resources for generations to come is what environmental stewardship means to me. This included supporting laws and policy at local, regional, state, federal and internationally that recognizes the importance to sustainable living on this planet earth includes justice and liberty for all peoples and communities.

Discussion Question: We've heard a lot about stewardship in our conversations with Minnesotans. But, we don't always know that that means. What does "stewardship" mean to you? How do practice being a good steward of our natural resources?

Discussion Comments:

**by Jim Etzel on Dec 10, 2010 @ 8:53am**

First and foremost, realizing that we can be part of the natural environment and not separate from it. Nature is not ours to do with as we please, but something that should be cherished and protected. Humans are not alone on this planet and to respect the other animals that share space should be top priority. Diversity is something every child should learn about from a very early age. If anyone has seen the movie AVATAR, then you know what stewardship is all about. That movie says it all!

**by Julie Muehlberg on Dec 8, 2010 @ 8:22pm**

First: Respect and protect natural heritage through fun and learning. Science/conservation curriculum in school beginning in 4th or 5th grade. Second: Develop a conservation ethic which values plants, animals and natural communities in our state (and beyond our borders) through multifaceted programming and hands-on learning oppys. for people of all ages.

**by Stephen Gruber on Dec 6, 2010 @ 10:42pm**

Learn about the native plants and animals. Encourage/Teach the use of native plants in landscaping. Teach and conserve. This means passing on knowledge to future generations, about the importance of managing resources, fostering a relationship with the environment, and sustainable conservation practices.

**by Brian Hubbard on Dec 4, 2010 @ 7:38am**

Stewardship means to me people and places: The different places and people that have had a profound impact on my life has co-created what stewardship means to me.

Much of my work with the Conservation Corps and youth programs has given me great opportunities to build my meaning of stewardship together with people. This has been an essential relationship for me with stewardship! Learning with others and implementing this into my own experiences.

### **Week 3: Connecting to Local Opportunities**

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Quick Poll: How important do you think local parks and trails are to increasing participation in state and regional parks and trails? (*Answers came from 52 respondents*)

- critical – 46%
- important – 38%
- somewhat important – 13%
- not at all important – 2%

Survey Comments:

**by Dudley Edmondson on Dec 15, 2010 @ 10:03am**

you gotta start folks somewhere. if they learn to appreciate parks and trails in their own communities then they will understand the importance of these places statewide

**by Annie Eastey on Dec 15, 2010 @ 12:32pm**

Established local parks and trails are already dedicated, they have already taken steps to establish a "little legacy" for their particular areas on their own, with participation between local, state, and regional groups; I would venture to say that combining such groups of passionate people that carry a similar goal could be a force to reckon with. I think local parks and trails should be integrated into larger trail systems if they so wish, it would make the big picture even larger. MORE TRAILS!

**by Peggy Knapp on Dec 16, 2010 @ 3:27pm**

I agree that local parks and trails are critical first steps into nature for many people as Mr Edmondson notes below. I also agree that this question is a big ol' softball. The "meatier" questions, as Mr, Mattison points out below, are what kinds of trails, where, how are they used and by whom? There seem to be two very large categories of trail users, as far apart on the issues as Dems and Republicans are on, well, on every issue.

One group wants nature reserved for activities that have minimal impact and the other wants open access to nature to use in whatever way they see fit. These would be analogous to Treehuggers v. WreckreationNation. The two perspectives are virtually irreconcilable.

Virtually.

So, do we seek common ground and compromise and negotiate or square off and end up with winners and losers? As much as I dislike motorized "nature": experiences and the noise and damage ATVs cause, it only makes sense to me to look for ways to acquire more land for a variety of uses, restore, protect and preserve critical habitat where we can, build, and manage and monitor less critical areas for use by more damaging activities like motorized transport.

**by Rhonda Silence on Dec 16, 2010 @ 9:08pm**

I think it is very important to have links/trails between parks and communities--trails of all types, hiking, biking, ATVing, XC skiing, and snowmobiling. There is enough room for everyone on our public lands. In the Grand Portage State Forest and Pat Bayle State Forest in Cook County, we have an amazing assortment of trails/old logging roads for these purposes. The DNR now just needs to enhance trailheads, signage and connections to local communities.

**by Nancy Gornik McReady on Dec 16, 2010 @ 10:15pm**

Public lands need to be for multiple recreational uses. Calling motorized uses Wreckreation is so childish. All recreation has some impact, even walking. Just look at the portages in the Boundary Waters. Constant travel over them shows wear. Minnesota has some great trails, but more emphasis should be on connecting trails between communities. Motorized uses may not be everyone's passion, but having trails where they are allowed keep them out of where they shouldn't be. Gilbert has a great OHV Park and we need more parks like this for ATV users.

**by Elizabeth Perry on Dec 17, 2010 @ 6:47am**

This is a survey that only folks who can navigate the internet and Facebook can access. I only came here because a local club informed me of this activity. I hope the DNR uses any information collected here with the understanding that it does not represent the public at large. In our local club of over 300 adults only two or three use Facebook.

My take on the 25 year plan is that it has been written by people who are under 25 years of age with little time in the woods and only academic environmental experience. There is an urban view with little input on the outer forests throughout the State.

The last I heard, the use of parks and trails is down statewide except for motorized use. The folks wanting and often needing motorized access are desiring more access. I am a business person. If you have a good customer, cater to them first and go after new customers in a secondary marketing effort. There is a loud voice right now from both young and old wanting to have more and better trails designed for ATVs, snowmobiles and such. Many efforts are being made to muffle what your best customer is asking for. Even



the writing of this 25 year plan shows bias. Biting the hand that feeds is not good business.

Any trail designed for motorized use should be multiple use being that horses, bikes, hikers and such can all enjoy a well built trail. This is less expensive than separate trails for each activity and less intrusive on the forest. Your urban view may see too many people to share successfully. But in the outer forest there is room for all without a problem other than attitude. If you want total piece and quiet you have the BWCA. It is unfair to ask for more of the same.

Cater to the motorized folks first and the other recreational uses will be accomodated at the same time.

**by Stacy Becker on Dec 17, 2010 @ 1:39pm**

Wow, this is a great discussion, and while it may seem like a "softball" discussion, it actually has important policy implications. We asked it because of what we were hearing in the community meetings (and yes, this forum is designed to make sure that people without access to a community meeting are not precluded from weighing in; actually-- most of the 1200+ citizens who have weighed in have been middle-aged or older.)

Local parks are NOT eligible for Legacy funds by law; however, some people suggested that the local parks are the gateway to increased participation at the state and regional level. We were interested in knowing if people agree, because then the plan should think about how it can integrate better with local activities, as Peggy, Dudley and Annie suggest.

BTW-- the Citizens League job is to make sure folks are heard, not to make policy. If we were to take sides on the non-motorized vs. motorized issue, we lose credibility as an impartial moderator. I regret that some folks see this as favoring a particular view. We have indeed passed on comments to the DNR throughout the process on the motorized vs.nonmotorized and indicated how strongly people feel on both sides of the issue. The issue will be at an impasse only if we choose it to be.

**by Stacy Becker on Dec 17, 2010 @ 1:52pm**

p.s., i think this is a really important discussion to be having-- given the sensitivity on both sides.

**by Ted LaFrance on Dec 20, 2010 @ 9:44am**

In the most forward thinking sense, connecting our local trails and parks to the larger regional and state systems is important. The benefits of eco-tourism, health, and sustainability (especially in regards to transportation) that are directly related to local, regional, and state trail and park systems will become increasly more important as time progresses.

**by Jonathan Vlaming on Dec 21, 2010 @ 10:37am**

These are my opinions on the question at hand:

Increased participation through provision of local parks depends on the types of local parks, and the target markets you are looking to increase. Lots of local parks are focused on sports-based recreation (e.g. basketball, baseball, football, etc) and I have yet to see a correlation between participation in team sports and increased visits to parks. On the other hand, studies have shown a strong connection between availability of nearby green space for exploration by children and an increase in interest in outdoor recreation activities. So if the target market is kids, more open space in the neighborhood geared towards unstructured exploration would be a viable way to increase long-term participation in outdoor recreation activities.

Adults that currently do not participate in outdoor recreation pursuits at state and regional parks are not likely to be enticed to do so by offering them more local parks near home.

So for parks, I could see Legacy funds being justified for sub-regional open space acquisition – ideally in a form of greenways and blueways that connect with higher density population areas. However, I don't think it is an appropriate use of legacy funds for plain old local parks, tot lots, playgrounds, sports fields, etc.

Trails are different matter entirely. Numerous studies have shown that people are much more comfortable learning to ride bikes on trails than in the street, and that people are much more likely to go walking if they have trails (or at least sidewalks) as opposed to a street walking only option. Local trails are where people "learn" these outdoor activity skills. The state/regional trail network acts as the arterials of the system, but without the local trails acting as the capillaries, the regional/state trail network is much less effective. Investments in local trails is, to me, an acceptable use of legacy funds, if, and only if, those trails are part of a planned local trail network that feeds into the arterial (regional/state) trail network.

But state law does not allow for Legacy funding of local parks and trails. Consequently, perhaps what is an appropriate use of the Legacy funds at the "local" level would be to provide regional and state programming (recreation skills training like fishing, canoeing, biking, etc) hosted in local parks and trails. Although I really do think that a local network of open space for childhood exploration is critical, and that creative policy & planning could cobble those spaces together as a regional network of open space so as to be eligible for Legacy funding.

Discussion Question: Legally, Legacy funds can only be used for parks and trails "of regional and statewide significance." But, as we strive to create a seamless system of parks and trails (local, regional, state) with near-home opportunities for everyone, what does this mean for the use of Legacy funds? Given this legal restriction, how can we bring local into the picture better?

Discussion Comments:

**by Neil Lageson on Dec 22, 2010 @ 11:32am**

Our local state park, Glacial Lakes, is rather small, and doesn't get a lot of visitors.

It can be argued it has "regional and statewide significance" because of its geology, and its native prairie species. But I believe a simpler way to look at it is from the prospective of trails. There are trails within the park, and a paved trail from Starbuck to the park. The

problem is that these trails are not linked to other trails and state parks. The key here is to continue to build a contiguous statewide trail system. For instance, a hiking trail along the glacial ridge connecting Glacial Lake SP to Sibley SP, and then to the Glacial Lakes trail from Willmar to St. Cloud.

#### **Week 4: Trails Criteria**

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Quick Poll, Question 1: The draft Legacy plan proposes criteria to evaluate which trails projects to fund. Which should be the top 3? (*Answers came from 61 respondents*)

- Connects to communities (schools, work opportunities, central business districts, etc.) - 24
- Connects with existing state trails, regional trails - 37
- Connects with high quality natural resources or recreation area - 22
- Connects to multiple destinations - 18
- Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage - 26
- Secures a critical piece of a trail system - 26
- Secures a unique opportunity or experience - 11
- Financial commitment by the proposer - 4
- Use by commuters - 6

Question 2: The draft Legacy plan proposes criteria to evaluate which trails projects to fund. How would you prioritize these criteria? Are there any that you don't think should be on the list? Are there any that are missing?

Connects to communities (schools, work opportunities, central business districts)  
Connects with existing state trails, regional trails  
Connects with high quality natural resources or recreation areas  
Connects to multiple destinations  
Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage  
Secures a critical piece of a trail system  
Secures a unique opportunity or experience  
Financial commitment by the proposer  
Use by commuters

All answers given:

- The key to great trail systems is "connectivity", the ability to access multiple destinations with as few gaps as possible. Items 1, 2 and 4 are top priorities, and in that order.
- Regional significance.
- All 9 criteria above seems solid, and argument can be made that each is important. Prioritize these based on survey results (for instance, I checked my 3 top criteria in #1), and other inputs then assign points based on survey. Applicant would earn points to achieve funding.
- Distributed among all types of trail users - added  
Fills a critical gap

Secures a unique Opportunity  
Financial commitment by the user

- Connect existing county and state trails to broaden any outing's horizon.
- 1 - Secures a critical piece of a trail system  
2 - Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage  
3 - Connects to multiple destinations
- Commuter use is primarily an urban area issue it should not be considered.

Defining a unique experience is varied

- I think the most important aspect is connecting with existing trails. Some major recreational trails have connecting trails into communities along the way, which helps bring people into town. A network of interconnected trails makes more sense than a patchwork of smaller trails. Users will come from farther away and spend more time in an area, if the recreational opportunities make it worth the trip. Also very important, but not on the list: Figuring out a return on investment, when proposing new trails. This is to appease the people who think recreational trail building is pork and whose political influence is not to be underestimated. If you can show in actual numbers what a trail can do for an area in tourism revenue, your chances of convincing the public are greater. I am not sure if "Financial commitment by the proposer" means making sure trail maintenance is being taken care of in the future. I think figuring out this part should be automatically included, hardwired and built into any trail proposal. State trail or regional trail, sometime in the future they will need repairs which should be budgeted for. I am not opposed to user fees, trail specific or statewide. This will also appease those who favor motorized recreation, because most of those trails are being built and maintained by local clubs. If you have ever been involved in any kind of recreational trail work, you will hear that argument (over and over again).

Jan Lasar

- It appears the greatest threat to the integrity of the state-wide snowmobile trail system is loss of private landowner permits. It would appear most appropriate to expend Legacy funds to begin to secure permanent easements. Perhaps this issue is covered under "Secures a critical piece of a trail system"??
- add; improved safety on existing trails

delete; financial commitment by the proposer  
use by commuters

- I would put maintain existing trails before any of those listed. Some of the trails we already have are in rough shape, e.g. Munger from Duluth to Carlton.
- Off the list: Use by commuters and the Work Opportunities portion of connecting to communities. I don't understand how funds for trails (of Parks and Trails funds) could possibly be morphed into commuting use.
- Considering that off road motorized recreation such as atv and ohm's is one of the fastest growing forms of recreation in the state, with over 250,000 registered atvs, maybe this should be on the top of the list of priorities for new trails and connections to existing trails. With this in mind, trails should be designed or connected to multiple destinations that offer goods and services, thereby satisfying the needs of the recreationist as well as supporting local economies.

- It would be helpful to have a number attached to each one to re-order. I think that "connects with existing trails" and "secures a critical piece of a trail system" are pretty much the same thing. I would order them: 1,4,5,2,3,7,9,8 and I would drop #6 and consider it part of #2
- Connecting to communities should be the first step (advertising per se)
- Preserve access for the public... and prevent private citizens from owning all of the pristine acreage, shoreline, etc.
- Contributes to the greater plan for a state wide system... opps that assumes there is one. Well there should be. And whether a trail project fits that plan should be the top priority.
- The list looks fine but from a priority standpoint I would like to see "use by commuters" up the list a bit. it falls in line with the first one serving communities schools,work etc
- Connects to communities sounds extremely vague. What is a community? I think this needs to be defined more succinctly otherwise it will be meaningless and difficult to prioritize.  
Financial commitment would certainly make our legacy dollars go further but it may also favor wealthier areas of the state over those with fewer resources to work with.
- Connects to multiple destinations  
Connects to communities (schools, work opportunities, central business districts)  
Connects to multiple destinations  
Connects with high quality natural resources or recreation areas  
Financial commitment by the proposer  
Use by commuters  
Secures a unique opportunity or experience  
Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage
- Use by commuters is a bonus but not a high priority for this batch of funds. There are federal funds for commuter trails.
- I think anything that "completes existing systems" should be top priority.
- The line between transportation needs and recreational needs is getting confusing here. The State has a department of Transportation. If there is a need for avenues of transportation other than roadways for cars and trucks, then the Dept. of Transportation should be addressing a need for foot and bike routes for urban commuters and shoppers. It is also appropriate for each city and town can address such needs. Parks and Trails should not get involved in this area. Building and maintaining trail systems on State land through the State is more than enough to take care of. Therefore "Connects to communities" and "Use by commuters" should not be on this list.
- #1 Connections with existing trails is #1 priority - for example, connecting the Moose Walk/Red Dot ATV trail system with the North Shore via the CJ Ramstad State Trail!  
#2 Connecting high quality natural resources & recreation areas - connect trails, trailheads, and technical riding areas and scenic overlooks  
#3 connects to multiple destinations - it would be good to connect existing trails to services (snowmobile/ATV/hiking trails to restaurants and lodging)  
#4 Secures a critical piece of a trails system (like the NSST between Moose Walk & the North Shore)

#5 Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage (ATV trail between Moose Walk & North Shore!!)

- I would rank "use by commuters" lowest.

Here are four additional ones:

- 1) Should NOT be used to fund motorized trails, except for increasing enforcement activities designed to protect the environment and reduce conflict with other trails & other trail uses.
  - 2) Protects the environment through sustainable design.
  - 3) Enforces trail use limitations to protect the user experience and environment.
  - 4) Provides a high quality user experience.
- Secures a critical piece of a trail system  
Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage  
Connects to communities (schools, work opportunities, central business districts)  
Connects with existing state trails, regional trails  
Connects with high quality natural resources or recreation areas  
Secures a unique opportunity or experience  
Connects to multiple destinations  
Financial commitment by the proposer  
Use by commuters
  - Connect community centers or major city centers
  - 1. Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage
    2. Connects to communities (schools, work opportunities, central business districts)
    3. Secures a critical piece of a trail system
    4. Financial commitment by the proposer
    5. Connects to multiple destinations
    6. Connects with high quality natural resources or recreation areas
    7. Connects with existing state trails, regional trails
    8. Secures a unique opportunity or experience
    9. Use by commuters
  - 1. Connects with existing state trails, regional trails [to create a network].
    2. Secures a critical piece of a trail system [same rationale as criteria 1].
    3. Financial commitment by the proposer [trail network doesn't meet citizen needs if it is not fully supported by the proposer responsible for providing the trail to the public].
    4. Connects to communities (schools, work opportunities, central business districts) [provides commuter benefits as well as recreational benefits]

Drop the following because they are redundant with criteria listed above.

- Connects with high quality natural resources or recreational areas
- Connects to multiple destinations
- Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage
- Secures a unique opportunity or experience
- Use by commuters
- Nearly all of your questions assume all recreational trails are of equal desirability, have equal (benign) impact on the natural resource through which they might be routed and are equally compatible with other forms of trail or nature-based outdoor recreation. Any answers provided to survey questions that make these assumptions are so very vulnerable to mistaken application to motorized recreation as to be

detrimental to your work. PLEASE, allow your audience to make a distinction between motorized and non-motorized trails when answering these questions! I'll not answer any of your quick survey questions because my answers without this distinction can be misinterpreted as support for funding motorized trails with Legacy Funds. I would submit that many, if not all of the data you have been collecting are subject to this bias because the MDNR and Citizen's League have refused to make the distinction. Your audience needs to have good information about the impacts of motorized recreation so you are getting feedback from an "informed" public. Then begin to poll them on these kinds of preferences for funding. Also be honest with the audience about various sources of funding already available to motorized recreation other than Legacy Funds. With this kind of information in hand, the public can start to give you "informed" feedback. Lacking this general information, the survey feedback you are getting is very vulnerable to criticism because of the built in bias. Let me give you a VERY pertinent example. You somewhere have gotten the notion that the public wants a "seamless" system of Parks and Trails across the landscape. If I were a motorized trail advocate, I could run with that input claiming that the majority of public input you have received is in support of connecting all the existing GIA ATV trails around the state to one another. That is certainly not justified by the public input you have received but I could be made to sound that way. PLEASE start to separate the high resource and social impact recreation forms from the traditional forms when framing these questions or we will continue to level these criticisms at your plan and your process. I expect better from the Citizens League that prides itself in being a forum for civic involvement and then allows this bias, even after having it called to their attention.

- #1 - connects to communities
- #2 - connects to high quality natural resources
- #3 - Use by commuters
- Do not fund anything connected to motorized wreckreation!!!  
Bicycles, walking, x-country skiing, etc. Stay away from motors and the noise, fumes, and destruction
- 1) Connects with existing state trails, regional trails
- 2) Connects with high quality natural resources or recreation areas
- 3) Connects to communities (schools, work opportunities, central business districts)
- 4) Secures a critical piece of a trail system
- 5) Connects to multiple destinations

Use by commuters would be a side benefit, but for most of Minnesotans I do not see this as a driver. The trail systems out your front door to connect to the community and larger trails is critical.

- Don't quite know how to prioritize without a numbering system, but the three I chose for question one seem the most important. Trails should connect people to people, ie shouldn't just be part of a little-used even if beautiful park system.
- prioritize the criteria by their regional/local impact and connectedness to existing trails.
- geographical funding for hike, bike, horse and water trails
- 1. Connects to communities
- 2. Connects with high quality natural resources and/or recreation areas.
- 3. Financial commitment by the proposer.

Survey Comments:

**by Jim Etzel on Dec 21, 2010 @ 3:13pm**

Commuting for 6.5 months out the year will be a priority when gas goes above \$4.00/gallon, and it is coming!!! Instead of waiting for it to happen and then scrambling, why not prepare for it and be ready when the inevitable happens. The trails should connect communities but isn't that what commuting would do also?

**by Pete Theismann on Dec 21, 2010 @ 3:18pm**

the priority for legacy funding is natural resource related projects and programs.

Highway,road/transportation funding should build communter trails

**by Rhonda Silence on Dec 21, 2010 @ 3:52pm**

This process should not be used as another means to bash motorized forest users, as in this comment:

Should NOT be used to fund motorized trails, except for increasing enforcement activities designed to protect the environment and reduce conflict with other trails & other trail uses.

Responsible use of our public lands means safe, sustainable, motorized trails - with 260,000plus ATVs registered in the state of MN, there needs to be trails to meet the needs for these folks. Who, given proper trails, maps, and signage are law-abiding citizens who deserve to use the forest just as all others. PLUS "motorized" users are not just motorized - we also hike, bike, ski, paddle, camp, fish, hunt, etc. There is room in the forest for all. Let's try to find a way to work together and not bash one group or another.

**by Matthew Davis on Dec 21, 2010 @ 4:11pm**

This is a forum for sharing opinions.

If motorized recreationists would stop bashing the environment (e.g. riding routinely off your trails, riding routinely in wetlands, riding routinely on designated non-motorized trails) and negatively impacting other forest users, then we "silent sports folks" would certainly agree to all "work together" and would quit "bashing" you! It's your own fault that we're so passionately opposed to irresponsible motorized recreation on our public lands.

**by Elizabeth Perry on Dec 21, 2010 @ 4:17pm**

When you live in the city you want trails at your door to escape the reality of where you are and its hectic traffic. Walkways and bike routes away from cars and trucks would be a wonderful opportunity for a more healthy lifestyle in the urban existance. But this is not the business of the Department of Natural Resources. There are existing grant opportunities through the Depart. of Transportation for the development of such routes in cities and towns.

The discussion here should focus on the development and maintenance of multiple use trails on State lands and beyond that create recreational opportunities for various modes of outdoor experience. Nothing virtual here, just good honest fresh air with full consideration of environmental issues in the process. The desire for more trails by the ATV community is



rising and these folks pay good money towards trails through the gas tax. Every ATV trail is an opportunity for hikers, bikers, horses as well as ATVs. So if you want nice trails, work with the ATV clubs on multiple use trails. That way we all benefit.

**by Jonathan Vlaming on Dec 21, 2010 @ 4:23pm**

I think funding motorized trails is fine, as long as it is tied to environmentally sensitive design and development of those trails. A logical place would be the private timberlands on which the Lessard funds were used to secure covenants.

I think there should be two primary foci for any type of trail network funding: 1) Eliminating gaps in the existing network (meet current needs), and 2) expanding the existing network (meet future needs). Within the metro there are several gap analysis studies, and there are well documented & pressing current needs. There are also more long-term systemic needs in the growth areas, and it is critical that acquisition of trail corridors occurs prior to development, or it will be much more difficult to later build a trail.

I have reservations over who will be making the grant decisions when it comes to trails. The DNR has very limited experience for trail planning and development within the Twin Cities area. It may be more appropriate to shift the grant program over to the Metropolitan Council.

**by Peter Breyfogle on Dec 21, 2010 @ 6:57pm**

I have never had a good experience hiking or biking near an ATV trail. The noise and dust just don't do it for me.

**by Andy Lawson on Dec 22, 2010 @ 6:42am**

Connectivity is chiefly important; it's important in the metro, and it's important outstate. Multi-use trails are simply the reality. Would it be nice if motorized and non-motorized users had their own trail systems? You bet. But that's not realistic everywhere, and it's important that motorized users get more trails. Licensure, education and enforcement are key. At the end of the day, I'd like to be able to ride my bicycle, atv, or snowmobile as far as I'd like to because we have good connectivity.

**by Judy Schrupp on Dec 22, 2010 @ 8:11am**

The state has enough state land to keep up now and use what land they have and leave the private citizens with their own land.

**by Joanne Keyes on Dec 22, 2010 @ 9:17am**

Would it be wise to have the DOT involved in the planning here? Is there some sort of interdepartmental synergy that would help develop better trails? I don't know what the commentor below had in mind, but it might be a good step to involve someone from that agency in the planning. (Or maybe that is already going on!)

**by Brent Ostwald on Dec 22, 2010 @ 1:34pm**

Since the Legacy Plan seems to address both metro areas and outstate trail issues, I think that the DNR, through their survey is asking us "what portion of the funding should be applied to each of these areas"? There is an initiative that began last April by President Obama, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency. There were (16?) major cities that were chosen as host "listening sessions" areas to get public input on "America's Great Outdoor Initiative". It seemed to me as a participant that a great deal of the input centered around environmental issues and inner city activities, including trails, parks, etc. If the Federal govt. findings (I don't think they have been released yet) put more weight on metro areas, I hope the DNR takes this into consideration in their planning when deciding how much funding will go to outstate trails. As a motorized off road enthusiast, I am familiar with the US Forest's mandated Travel Mgt Plan to designate trails for off hwy use. The process is lengthy, offering comments and input from myriad stakeholders including environmental groups, sportsmen's groups, govt organizations and private citizens. Particular consideration is given to multiple use, environmental concerns such as plant species and wildlife concentrations, and a managed, sustainable trail system. Keeping this in mind, I hope the DNR remembers that there are over 250,000 registered atvs in MN and that motorized recreation is one of the fastest growing forms of recreation in the country.

**by John Engel on Dec 22, 2010 @ 2:22pm**

If we were to apply the "protect, enhance, restore" to any actual trail, we'd have none. However, if we look at how trails do protect, enhance and restore the surrounding natural areas, by providing a controlled area of use throughout these areas, we're golden. And please, can the non-motorized folks sit back and realize many people enjoy those activities. And most do so responsibly!

**by Fergus Falls Cvb on Dec 22, 2010 @ 2:55pm**

As to other non-motorized trails let's not forget the birding trails. I think there are three in Minnesota?

**by Mike Hughes on Dec 22, 2010 @ 6:57pm**

after reading the list of comments, i would have to say that a number of them sound like members of mrr (minnesotans against motorized recreation dba minnesotans for responsible recreation). the extreme viewpoints of those types of people will do nothing to further this project and will only lead to strife. they don't believe in cooperating with those who oppose their views, they want everything done their way. those of us who really understand how this will work know that it will take cooperation from all sides to make it happen. there is room and money enough for all.

**by Roxanne Napper on Dec 22, 2010 @ 7:01pm**

Delete - Financial commitment by the proposer  
Delete - Use by commuters

**by Marybeth Block on Dec 22, 2010 @ 7:01pm**

Recognize the significance of the Equestrian Trail Users! A 2008 U of MN survey concluded that the total Economic (2008) Impact of Horseback Riding was \$49,853,000. Even though

hauling horses to riding destinations results in the purchase of a lot of gasoline, none of the gas tax is earmarked for this sport as it is for OHVs . . .

**by Willis Mattison on Dec 23, 2010 @ 11:07am**

Okay, here is where the MDNR staff and Citizen's League could serve as educators to the public. Again, an informed public makes better citizens. While the MDNR has some 270,000 registered ATV's in the state, the statistics show that 70% never leave the land of the owner, another 15% are only ridden on road rights of way leaving only 15% of these machine owners seeking other public lands on which to ride. This is a very small percentage of the recreating public and they can justify only this percentage of public land for their exclusive sport. I say "exclusive" because those of us who do not recreation on machines recognize what the ATV riders refuse to recognize. That is as was published in the Wisconsin State Outdoor Recreation Plan (Chapter 4) that ATV recreation is the only form of recreation that is both "incompatible with and antagonistic to" every other form of outdoor recreation. ATV recreation is the only form of recreation that can and does significantly reduce the quality of every other person's experience on public land. No amount of denial or protest on their part can change that fact. It would be important for MDNR and Citizen's League reps to make a distinction between Legacy Funds and the dedicated funds in the MDNR for ATV trail funding. This fund in the MDNR exists "EXCLUSIVELY" for ATV's and the ATV crowd has made a case for that. Let them open their "exclusive" fund for other recreational trail creation and then they might have a better case for wanting to "share" in the Legacy Act money.

**by Willis Mattison on Dec 23, 2010 @ 3:57pm**

Reply to Andy Lawson who says: "Would it be nice if motorized and non-motorized users had their own trail systems? You bet. But that's not realistic everywhere, and it's important that motorized users get more trails." I'm interested in your reasoning as to why motorized (ATV) trails cannot be segregated from other non-motorized trails. Most every other state has recognized that the only physical way to address the obvious one-sided conflict and antagonism is to separate the activities in time or space. It is not practical to set up separate periods for a trail to be used for motorized and then for non-motorized uses so the solution of choice has been to separate them is space. Since an aggressively ridden ATV can be heard for over two miles, there should be a minimum of two mile separation. On you second point that you believe it is important that motorized users get more trails, the trend data for ATV registration peaked, flattened and now has begun a decline. Again, this is contrary to "opinions" expressed elsewhere in the comments on this question but check with Tim Kelly, MDNR staff who tracks trends in outdoor recreation and he will confirm the "facts". This argument does not hold up to the fact check test. A whole lot of stern comments to the contrary from the organized ATV culture will not change the facts.

**by Ken Olson on Dec 24, 2010 @ 5:55pm**

MN has nearly 100,000 horses on over 13,000 farms across the state. We rank near the top of all states in horse numbers. Many horse owners attended all of the 17 public input meetings last spring. Probably the best representation percentage wise of all park and trail users. MN has had the same number of miles of horse trails for over 30 years while other trail types have steadily increased. Economic impact/investment of the typical horse trail rider and camper will be from \$10,000 to over \$100,000. Horses and hikers are the original users of MN's parks and trails. Horse trail users contribute \$120,000 annually to the repair

and maintenance of state managed horse camps and trails via the State Horse Trail Pass enacted through legislation supported by horse owners.

Yet the Legacy plan includes virtually nothing for horse/equine camps and trails! The planning process for most parks and trails does not even include horse interests while other user groups are always included.

Horses do not make noise to disturb other users.

The Legacy Plan needs to recognize and include all user interests.

Still the plan comes out with

**by Erin Sapp on Dec 30, 2010 @ 1:26pm**

Ken - Thanks for your comments about horse trails. Indeed, we did hear from many horse lovers during the first round of regional meetings. People who indicated that their favorite outdoor activity is horseback riding was 9% of participants (which ranked 6th out of 8 choices). Horse trails are mentioned many times throughout the plan. Check out the first line of the introduction and pages 16, 28, 41, 44, 45 for mentions or references to horse trails. Don't think that we've forgotten about you, because we haven't!

All - The point of the Legacy plan is to outline priorities and guidelines for funding, rather than outline specific projects (or even types of projects, e.g. horse trails or motorized trails) to fund. This plan is intended to last for 25 years, so aims to outline a set of guidelines to follow, as well as a broad vision for our parks and trails.

Motorized recreation in Minnesota's parks and trails is a hot debate, and it's great that we have so many perspectives represented here. While I represent the Citizens League and NOT the DNR, it's my understanding that motorized recreation activities have and will continue to be eligible for Legacy funding. That said, we can all work to figure out how our many diverse interests in parks and trails can better co-exist. I imagine what we all would envision as the "perfect" space for our favorite type of recreation may be very different (i.e. birders, hikers, bikers, fishers, horseback riders, snowmobilers, etc.). I think it's most constructive to focus on how we can meet the needs and wants of ALL of our interests.

**by Rhonda Silence on Jan 5, 2011 @ 7:42pm**

Wow, there are so many misconceptions and half-truths about ATVing that I would like to comment on, but unfortunately I have limited time. However, I must respond to Willis Mattison's statement. The fact that ATVing is growing is NOT an "opinion." Trend data shows that ATVing is the ONLY recreational activity that has grown and is predicted to continue to grow, according to the DNR's own research. See the DNR 10-year Strategic Parks & Trails Plan or talk to Colin Kelly, Principal Recreation Planner, Division of Parks & Trails.

You assert that an "aggressively ridden ATV can be heard for over two miles" and that there "should be a minimum of two mile separation." I question your sound data information. Unless an ATV is modified (which is illegal!) it is no louder than an average passenger. And it's far quieter than a semi or a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Both of which can be heard from

just about any hiking trail in the state -- where are any hiking trails built farther than two miles from a roadway. Be realistic!

There is an amazing beautiful place you can go where you won't hear the sound of motors, the BWCAW. But even in the Boundary Waters, expect to hear sound a few thousand feet in. Humans are here, they are making noise. It's a fact of life on Planet Earth. You have the choice of being annoyed at hearing the sound of a motor in the distance.

Regarding the comment that although there are 270,000 registered ATVs in the state, 70% of them never leave the land of the owner, that obscure data was part of an incomplete survey conducted by the DNR many years ago. At that time the DNR was in the process of designating roads and trails and ATVers had no where to ride but there own land! Many ATVers were riding on old forest roads at that time, but were afraid to report it as they were not sure that they were riding legally or not. The very best thing for the State of MN would be to create a safe, sustainable, clearly-signed, clearly-mapped ATV trails system. Look at the problems/conflicts 30 years ago over snowmobiling and look how well everyone gets along now.

The anti-motor folks need to remember we are all motorized recreationists. Some of us just stay on our machines a little bit longer.

Also, the suggestion that ATVers should not be eligible for legacy funds because we have an "exclusive fund" for our trails is incredibly selfish and short-sighted. The reason ATVers have an "exclusive fund" is because we pay gas taxes and vehicle registrations. We also pay the legacy fund sales tax. So we are being taxed three times for MN trails. As a bicyclist and hiker, I pay nothing. When I ride my ATV, I pay over & over and the DNR should recognize that.

Horses also pay with their trail pass and should have more trails and facilities. Up North in Cook County horses and ATVers get along just fine. In fact, many of us are one and the same. We (ATVers) are also hikers, birders, anglers, snowmobilers, canoeists, and all-round outdoor lovers. And we're tired of being demonized because we occasionally ride an ATV too. Come ride with the Cook County ATV Club someday and meet the grandparents and grandkids who ride together, stopping to picknick, pick berries, hike, and just enjoy being together. Motorized recreation in the State of MN should not be a hot debate. Live and let live, already!

**by Jim Etzel on Jan 6, 2011 @ 7:59am**

People are upset about motorized WRECKREATION because it is a huge money hole. These machines cause air pollution, soil erosion, noise pollution, habitat fragmentation, and the list goes on. Gas prices are not going down and money is being spent on these machines that will cost a BOMB to ride and for the trails to be maintained. If they are truly thinking about the future generations, then the trails implemented now have to reflect what is to come and gas operated machines are not a thing of the future. Americans are becoming more lazy every day. Is it too much to ask to walk or ride a bike or trike for enjoyment and exercise? When gas does hit \$8.00/gal. , then what? The Native Americans had a seven generation philosophy about all of their acitvities; they thought ahead. When is the short sitedness going to end.

**by Susan McCabe on Jan 6, 2011 @ 3:00pm**

I like the seven generation philosophy. What would we like our land to look like in seven generations? Probably not what I've seen after ATV users have destroyed wetlands in one "fun" summer afternoon.

Discussion Question: The draft Legacy plan proposes criteria to evaluate which trails projects to fund. How would you prioritize these criteria? Are there any that you don't think should be on the list? Are there any that are missing?

- Connects to communities (schools, work opportunities, central business districts)
- Connects with existing state trails, regional trails
- Connects with high quality natural resources or recreation areas
- Connects to multiple destinations
- Fills a critical gap in recreation opportunity shortage
- Secures a critical piece of a trail system
- Secures a unique opportunity or experience
- Financial commitment by the proposer
- Use by commuters

Discussion Comments:

**by Matthew Davis on Dec 21, 2010 @ 4:06pm**

Motorized trails should not be funded by Legacy Trails funds. Unless, the funding is going toward increased enforcement efforts designed to protect the environment, other recreational trails, or other trail uses. This is the only way that trails funding meets the intent of the Legacy amendment (to protect, enhance, and restore).

**by Rhonda Silence on Dec 22, 2010 @ 12:00am**

Mr. Davis - I think this is the more appropriate place for me to respond as it seems to be for discussion & the other for comments to the DNR. Regarding your comment about disrespectful riding -- "e.g. riding routinely off your trails, riding routinely in wetlands, riding routinely on designated non-motorized trails"

believe me, no one is more upset by this behavior than the majority of ATVers. We know there is a small minority of idiots that don't follow the rules. However, the majority of us are respectful and do our best to police the rowdy folks. That is why we've worked with the MN DNR to establish the Trail Ambassador program and why there are hundreds of volunteer youth ATV safety trainers that teach safe and ethical riding. The majority of riders are respectful and want to do the right thing - there just needs to be clear maps and signage where people know where to go. And, there needs to be a few more challenge areas like the Gilbert OHV Park where technical riders can practice. Having an area where high energy folks can ride cuts down on trail problems.

Please, if you see someone riding disrespectfully, contact the DNR! We pay registration & fuel taxes to support the OHV enforcement program because we don't want to see this irresponsible behavior either!

**by Willis Mattison on Dec 23, 2010 @ 3:43pm**

Ms Silence, I respect your opinion that only a small minority of idiots don't follow ATV trail rules but as far as I'm aware, there are no facts on Minnesota ATV riders to support your opinion. There are several studies in five western states and one in Wisconsin that do find that it is much much more than a small minority of idiots but instead the range is from 40-60% of ATV trail riders knowingly and intentionally ride off well marked trails when they know doing so violates trail rules. ATV advocates are entitled to their own opinions about the ATV culture but they are not entitled to their own facts. I have investigated the MDNR's Trail Ambassador Program and found that there is no data to support the conclusion that the Ambassador program has any positive effect on incidents of off-trail riding violations. A check with ATV Enforcement Officers and MDNR Conservation Officers reveals that they seldom if ever get reports or referrals for enforcement from Trail Ambassadors. A review of citizen complaints of ATV off-trail violations to County Sheriffs and MDNR Enforcement Officers reveals that it is extremely difficult to apprehend and/or convict an ATV off-trail offender because they are long gone with no identifying evidence to trace the offender. Obtaining a license number from the ATV involved in an off-trail violation is extremely difficult and very few citizen complaints involve the observer having been able to record the license number. Again, I know you want to offer the best image you can of the ATV culture but the fact is, the image is poor and the facts don't support your contention that this is "a small minority of idiots".

**by Ken Olson on Dec 31, 2010 @ 11:23am**

Prioritizing trail projects can mean many things. In the plan I see criteria that involve inclusivity, connectedness, partnering, coordinating with other groups and agencies, building on existing structures and opportunities, etc.

I see a lot of focus on attracting new users of parks and trails and that is good BUT we must do that in a way that retains the interest of those who are already there. I'd like to offer an example but then someone will just focus on my example and not on the principle. (hike, ATV, bike, horse, etc.)

I also see connectivity as a criteria - there are 2 kinds of connections being included - 1) connecting people to the outdoors and 2) connecting facilities.

The first, "connecting people to the outdoors" is good and we'll probably all agree as good for everyone. The second, "connecting facilities" means very different things for different users. Some users, usually those that move at a slow pace (hikers, horses, mountain bikers, ..), want connectivity of trails so they can do their activity in routes within a relatively short distance - perhaps 2 to 40 miles. Other users, that move at a faster pace (bikers, ATV's, snowmobiles, ..), have a much larger range and like to be able to have routes that take them many miles - perhaps 25 - 100 miles.

When we start considering the "connectivity of facilities" we must be careful to not fall in the trap of "one fits all" or that a trail that connects one facility to another is a need for all users.

Partnering and Inclusivity criteria - there are likely to be several organizations that represent each of many user types. Some of these are very intensively organized and others somewhat less organized but a point here is that all user types need to be well represented and equally considered. Many of these organizations have a lot of resources (expertise, dollars, volunteers, etc.) to offer. Some groups have \$'s generated from state required fees and other sources that are already being investing in facilities - the state

horse pass (enacted with the support of horse riders) is an example. When prioritizing Legacy funds, leveraging Legacy funds with existing resources ( \$'s, volunteers, etc.) should be a very positive consideration and attract Legacy funds rather than thinking "that's already taken care of".

### **What do you think of the draft plan?**

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**by Erin Sapp on Dec 2, 2010 @ 2:05pm**

The recommendations in the plan have been made using extensive public input from Phase I of the project when 1,000 Minnesotans participated in one of our 17 regional workshops, and another 1,500 visited us online. Now that you can see how all of the work has come together, what do you think?

**by Jim Etzel on Dec 10, 2010 @ 9:06am**

Does this plan involve motorized Wreckreation? If it does then I believe you are taking steps in the WRONG direction. No one ever complained about bicyclists ripping up the road approaches or wading through wetlands destroying natures filters. I hope you take these funds and create opportunities that are quiet, less polluting, and less to maintain. The budget downfalls are only getting worst and adding to that mess only makes problems worst. Keep it quiet, less invasive, and somewhat easy to maintain.

**by John Engel on Dec 10, 2010 @ 10:41am**

Jim,

"Wreckreation"? Really? The very complaints you mention about road approaches and wetlands would not be an issue if a really good ATV and/or Snowmobile trail system existed throughout the state. Shouldn't these funds support activities for all Minnesota citizens?

**by Stacy Becker on Dec 11, 2010 @ 9:07am**

Jim and John,

Speaking as a moderator, and not on behalf of the DNR, I'd like to address the issue you both raised. Motorized vs. non-motorized recreation is perhaps the hot button issue for the Legacy dollars. The plan allows motorized recreation for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the large numbers of Minnesotans who volunteer and contribute financially to enable motorized recreation.

But let me propose reframing this issue in a way that I suspect both of you can agree with, and that has surfaced in other ways: degradation of the natural environment. Unless we live as feral humans, we all impact the natural environment! The question for the plan is how to balance impacts on the environment with the goal to increase Minnesotan's love of nature and participation in outdoor recreation.

This is a very tricky question. Some people argue that we shouldn't have any trails in wilderness areas--that any trail is a degradation of the environment. Some research shows that paved trails for biking or walking creates more harmful environmental effects than



unpaved trails for motorized recreation. And how the recreationist treats the environment is of critical importance--whatever the form of recreation.

Maybe part of the answer for the plan is in the "stewardship" question: perhaps we need to start understanding our impact on the environment as a recreational user, much like people now measure the environmental footprint of various activities. Maybe the plan should contain some measure of balance, such as an "impact ratio" as parks and trails are developed throughout the state and recreation increases.

Just some thoughts.

**by John Engel on Dec 13, 2010 @ 9:26am**

Thanks for your thoughts Stacey. Thanks too, for pointing out the contributions of ATV and Snowmobilers. And we can't forget the financial contributions to various businesses throughout the state that those recreations create.

I could not agree more about protecting the environment, but I'm not clear as to how an "impact ratio" would be formulated. I do ride in Wisconsin and their trail systems are far superior to Minnesota's. The trails are wider (safer) and are more contiguous. It results in fewer roadside ditches being used, which I believe is what most people see, and perhaps base their opinions on. On well placed trails, one doesn't normally see the impact similar to what happens in ditches.

Another concern I have is when some park trail plans have been based on actual actual use. When a regional park that may not be connected properly to other trail systems is looked at in terms of snowmobile ridership, the numbers are falling, compared to walking/running. You can't really compare the two. A regional park is a destination for a walker/runner, whereas it's probably a small portion of a snowmobiler's planned outing. So if the regional park is disconnected from other trails, it won't get used as often. Yet it seems decisions are being made to end the snowmobile use solely because of this ridership issue.

Thanks.

**by John Engel on Dec 17, 2010 @ 9:33am**

Hi Erin,

After spending a few weeks attempting to participate in the online project, I have become quite frustrated at many levels.

1) CitiZing seems to be more complicated than it needs to be for a forum of this sort. I find it difficult to follow up where I left off at my last visit. Have you thought of using a simpler system that enables viewing all content from one page? WordPress come to mind. Although it's a blog format, there are ways to include the rest of the content you currently house at CitiZing.

2) Access to participate seems like it would be daunting for those less internet savvy. My 67 year old father-in-law comes to mind. He would never figure out the various ways to participate and would be completely lost, once he was on the site (see above).

3) Comments and discussion related to a specific topic become scattered in various places. For example, the growing debate of motorized vs. non-motorized has been scattered throughout various topics.

4) Overall participation seems very low for this type of forum. I believe I saw there were 1223 participants during the activities last Spring. I see there are currently 342 participants online. Actual participation in the discussions is very low. I presume you had hoped for much higher numbers. It's unfortunate more Minnesotans aren't involved in this. Perhaps part of the problem is the use of CitiZing. Ultimately, I find the overall participation so low compared to the Minnesota population, that I would consider the input nearly meaningless.

5) Finally, regarding my concerns, I have to wonder what the budget is for this project.

Thanks,  
John

**by Erin Sapp on Dec 22, 2010 @ 10:20pm**

Hi John,

I'm sorry you've been frustrated with CitiZing, and THANK YOU for your feedback. CitiZing is - and will continue to be - a work in progress, and we have a lot of development plans for the new year. Feedback like yours helps us figure out what to do and how to make CitiZing better. To your specific comments:

1) We've tried to build a system that can accommodate many different activities, topics and tasks. In projects with lots of different activities, phases and tasks (various to-do items), putting everything in one place can be confusing (which is why we created something different than Wordpress, Ning, Drupal, etc.). That said, we want to make it simpler to find and get back and forth between various activities.

2) We require roughly the same information to participate in CitiZing as we do for an in-person meeting (name, contact info, etc.) for transparency reasons. More info available via the sign-up page.

3) People don't always stay on topic in discussion threads, just like in in-person conversations. Nature of the beast. :-)

4) In our in-person meetings, we had about 1,000 people participate during the spring meetings, and around 125 in our most recent round. The CitiZing project has more than 350 members - that is, people who have actively joined to participate. However, we've had more than 2,250 people visit and look around CitiZing, many more than we've reached in the in-person meetings. Just like in-person, not everyone stands up in front of the group to talk into the microphone (like joining the project on CitiZing). Many just come to listen and learn (visitors). We've had participants from ALL over the state, and have been able to reach a much younger audience. And that's not counting our Students Speak Out version of the work. We're thrilled with how many people we've reached.

5) CitiZing is a special project of the Citizens League, and its development is NOT funded by the DNR or with Legacy dollars. It's a civic platform that we provide to partners on public engagement work.

Thanks for your feedback John, and feel free to be in touch with any other concerns or ideas.

**by John Engel on Dec 23, 2010 @ 8:41am**

Thanks for your reply Erin.

**by Ken Olson on Dec 26, 2010 @ 9:26am**

I don't think the League listened or followed what many of the people at the citizens meetings said. There were many people at all meetings that represented equine riding interests and there is little to nothing in the plan for equine trail and camp users.

Trail use surveys regarding equine trail use that have been done in the past a very inaccurate and biased against equine users. Examples: Many equine users ride a lot in the spring and fall - the survey was done during the summer. The surveys were done at trail heads but many/most of the trail heads are not compatible with horse trailers (size, space, traffic configuration), hence equine users get on and off trails at other locations.

Thus the survey results are invalid.

The League needs to go back and look at the people who attended the meetings and rethink the plan with a much more open minded look at all of the facts. A BIG factor in the plan is to involve more people in the outdoors - that means retaining and increasing the use from the current people, including equine users!

**by Jennifer Greiber on Dec 27, 2010 @ 9:14am**

I appreciate that the plan addresses connecting people to the outdoors. I believe that we need to continue to get youth engaged in the outdoors for their own health and the future health of the environment. I was so glad to see this point featured in many places throughout the report. This should remain a priority.

Additionally, I was pleased to see that the changing face of Minnesota was also addressed. Open space should be for everyone. My fear is that this will be lost or lose priority once the plan is put in action, but I had an even bigger fear it wouldn't be acknowledged in the proposal.

I understand the desire for a one-stop-shop for outdoor recreation information, and I know that collaboration is critical for the future of parks and trails. However, I'm concerned about the sustainability and success of a single website/marketing strategy/etc. I see this an area that could have very little returns unless done very well and very intentionally.

**by Brian Hubbard on Jan 4, 2011 @ 10:14am**

Hi Jennifer,

As a staff member with the Conservation Corps and MN DNR I was able to attend the Increasing Outdoor Recreation and Participation work group that provided information to the chapter you may be referring to. I have seen the sincere dedication of the members in this group as a top priority in providing a welcoming environment for youth and diverse

communities. See the Workgroup Report: Increasing Participation for additional information under plan components on citizenizing.

Also I produced the youth outreach report that may be of interest and I would appreciate your comments on this report Legacy Youth Engagement Report.

I agree with your comments on the sustainability and success of the website. I believe this will need to be used as an outreach tool along with face to face outreach in the future.

**by Jerry Trout on Jan 5, 2011 @ 9:12am**

I believe the plan needs to better incorporate footpaths. Footpaths are so versatile for hiking, hunting, bird watching, berry picking and many other activities. More people are connected to the outdoors through footpaths than any other medium.

There is only one National Scenic Trail in Minnesota. That trail is the North Country National Scenic Trail. Legislation is currently under way in congress to associate the Border Route Trail, the Kekekabic Trail and the Superior Hiking Trail with the North Country Trail. The North Country Trail is completed from the Aitkin County Line through the Chippewa National Forest in Cass County, through Hubbard County and beyond to Itasca State Park and west into Clearwater and Becker County. Plans are underway to complete the trail beyond Becker County to the North Dakota Border. Some trail has been completed north of Grand Rapids as well. Eventually, this premier footpath will stretch from Wisconsin to North Dakota completely across northern Minnesota.

The North Country Trail now stretches from New York to North Dakota. Plans are under development to connect the NCT to the Appalachian Trail and to connect it west from North Dakota to the Pacific Ocean, thus a footpath across the entire nation.

The Superior Hiking Trail is proof of the value of a good footpath to Minnesotans. We need to make sure these trails are formally part of the Parks and Trails Legacy plan. We are not looking for special treatment but to just be equal, qualified, recognized and at the table competing with other interests for Legacy funds. There are hundreds of Minnesotans who have invested thousands of hours of volunteer sweat equity in the Border Route, Kekekabic, Superior Hiking Trail and the North Country Trail.

I have attended the two meetings in Bemidji on this topic. At both meetings concerns were raised about the status of motorized trails and legacy funding. There was no comment from the meeting leaders. I firmly believe that the vast majority of Minnesotans when voting Yes were not expecting that motorized trails would benefit from Legacy Funding.

Regards,  
Jerry Trout

**by Matthew Davis on Jan 5, 2011 @ 3:36pm**

Two major concerns that I have in reading the plan are...

1) It gives the impression that trails of State or Regional Significance are only those administered by the DNR. Other trails that are nationally significant (e.g. North Country National Scenic Trail) are ignored or barely mentioned at all.

2) I personally don't believe that Legacy Parks & Trails funds should be spent on motorized recreation projects - unless funds go toward increasing enforcement efforts. There are already other funds (e.g. Grant in Aid) set up to fund facilities for these activities. Since they often come with significant environmental impacts, it's not very honest to say that voters .

Here are some other comments on the draft plan:

The plan needs to better incorporate hiking trails since they are barely mentioned - despite the fact that hiking is our State's most popular recreational activity. Hiking trails/footpaths are low in environmental impact and are cost-effective to build and maintain since they general are made of on-site materials. The plan as written sends a message that only government agencies create and provide parks and trails of regional / statewide significance. Non-profit organizations are also doing this relying upon their own staff and volunteers. Citizen-volunteer models like the Superior Hiking Trail Association and the North Country Trail Association provide an exceptional value to Minnesotans. These trails are built and maintained primarily by local volunteers with limited support from agency partners and others. The success of the Superior Hiking Trail and how it's been embraced by Minnesotans (and people from all over the U.S.) proves they will support top quality hiking/backpacking trails if provided. These trails also significantly benefit local communities and regional economies. The definition of parks and trails of regional significance (p. 34) seems to exclude trails of National Significance like the North Country National Scenic Trail. Why is that? The NCT has state (the only National Trail located in Minnesota) and regional significance (it traverses the full extent of northern Minnesota). Despite it's national designation, the NCT meets the criteria outlined in the plan for Regional Trails. It also embodies many of the other elements in the plan, including: connecting people to the outdoors, providing opportunities, taking care of what we have, and working better together (e.g. partnership, coordination, balanced funding). More details are needed on the Statewide Advisory Body. It should have representation from non-profit organizations that provide parks and trails. Strategic acquisition - focusing on "densely settled and rapidly growing parts of the state" makes sense but opportunities in more remote, un-developed parts of the State to make critical acquisitions should not be ignored. After all, these are where the "once in a lifetime" opportunities are most likely to exist (e.g. acquiring a large parcel at a reasonable price). Quality (p. 12-13) - It's a great goal to expect highest quality experiences. But, without adequate enforcement of OHV regulations and policies (primarily for ATVs), it will be increasingly difficult to provide the "highest quality experiences" for non-motorized trails. This is because of un-managed OHV recreation and negative impacts to other recreation resources caused by OHVs. 6) Encourage local contribution - Volunteer labor should be added to the list of local contributions.

**by Peter Braido on Jan 5, 2011 @ 5:03pm**

I have to agree with Matthew and Jerry about non-motorized paths, funding, etc. I additionally believe we need to rethink how we look at our land management. For example, we have several WMA's primarily used for hunting. I think that we should model the usage to coexist with other recreational activities like Sherburne NWF and Crex Meadows in WI. It is fairly clear that this is the direction we need to be going to keep our youth involved, continue to fund WMA's, and utilize the land we already own to its fullest potential.

I completely agree that we need more close to home opportunities. The example of the 7 county metro council proposed trails and parks is a perfect example of the planning that has already shown where new trails and parks should go next. I would like to see us execute on these plans.

It will be important to break down the barriers amongst parties to maximize the resources. For example, I do not think that it would be best for money to be spent on small parks (should be town and county), but connection between these parks and enhanced network were appropriate to make them regionally significant should be considered.

Lastly, I do not think that we should spend as much money on marketing. I have seen too many times where more money was spent on marketing than the actual project it was marketing...and even to the extent the marketing ideas never took off and the money was squandered. I would rather see a streamlined usage of the state, county, and local websites...as well as educational outreach programs do this so the resources can be focused on tangible parks and trails we can enjoy.

All in all I am very excited, and will be working on tapping into this movement in my area.

**by Ken Olson on Jan 6, 2011 @ 5:59am**

I would like to build on a couple of points that Matthew Davis and Jerry Trout have made in their comments -

1. The Legacy Plan does need to relate better to other resources - both of these people mention national trails, wildlife areas, etc. The same thing is true of another great MN resource - our MN State Forests. Matthew and Jerry apparently are hikers, I am a horse trail rider. There are slightly over 1000 miles of existing horse trails in MN (the # of miles has not increased in 30 years) and many of the most popular ones are in State Forests scattered around MN. There are 13,000 farms, ranches and hobby farms with horse in MN. MN has about 100,000 horses (#15 in the nation in horse numbers), the majority of which are used for trail riding. There are statewide horse organizations to partner with - MN Trail Riders Assn (MTRA) and the MN Horse Council (I belong to both) and many local saddle clubs that contribute 1000's of dollars and 1000's of hours of volunteer time - many opportunities to PARTNER with!

I'd like to make one more point parallel to hiking - I'm sure there are many kinds of hikers - those who want to hike all the way across MN and those who want to go to a local or regional facility and hike for a few hours in one place to exercise and take in the scenery. That is also true of horse riders - some want to travel from one place to the other - i.e. one town to the next like the Douglas Trail in SE MN which is "dual tread" for hikers, bikers, horses, snowmobiles, etc. and those who want to go to a facility and ride for 1 to 6 hours and return to their starting point to camp over night or visit with their friends and return home. Both of these scenarios are important to consider in the plan!

My wife and I travel all over MN (as do many other horse owners) riding these trails. We also ride out of state and experience how other state and national facilities are owned, operated and managed. MN has very nice facilities and horse people from many states also come to MN to ride. That leads me to my second point-

2. Economic impact of park and trail users is very important to MN. Matthew and Jerry mention the travel aspects of tourism (hotels, meals, etc.) but there is also the investment that these people have in their sport/hobby. Hikers buy equipment as do horse people. We have about \$100,000 invested in horses, tack (saddles, etc.), a modest "living quarters" horse trailer, and truck to pull it. As we travel around MN we buy food, souvenirs, fuel, and many other things. We pay park/camp fees and buy an annual MN Horse Trail Pass. (side note - the MN Horse Trail Pass provides DNR with about \$120,000 annually to use to repair and maintain horse camps and trails. It was established by legislation supported by horse owners!)

Horse owners spend 100's and 1000's of dollars to buy hay and other feeds, use veterinary services to care for their animal's health, and purchase equipment and buildings to feed and care for their animals all of the time.

The people in charge of the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan needs to understand the far-reaching impacts it has for MN (that's why we voted for it!) and be sure that ALL users are considered and INCLUDED as the plan moves to implementation. The make up of the permanent advisory committee is important and must include the interests of ALL users - hikers, horses, bikers, etc. etc.!

### **by Fergus Falls Cvb on Jan 6, 2011 @ 11:00am**

First - I commend the plan writers on a very well-written and thorough plan. I have a few comments but mostly want to indicate areas that are priorities so they don't get lost or diluted in the process.

Strongly agree with all four strategic directions. Specifically, the reinvestment and providing ability to take care of what we have. And the Development/network of trails are key to our area.

Trail Development - the Central Lakes Trail is a gem but we are a dead-end. We frequently have cross-country bicyclists inquire about how to get here from the Fargo/Moorhead area and there are few good options. Once they can get here though, they have a great paved-trail option all the way to St. Joseph. I am hoping the "Saintly Seven" miles that are needed to connect St. Joseph into St. Cloud - is a priority when you discuss "gaps" in the network. Even consideration of connecting the Central Lakes Trail north near Hwy 59 to Maplewood Park and up to the Heartland Trail would create a loop in central MN for the long-distance bicyclist. This especially is helpful in the tourism/destination goal of economic development opportunities.

Partnerships - I realize Otter Tail County is fortunate to have the Central lakes Trail and two state parks. Yet there is not a County Parks department or person in our county government responsible for carrying this torch. Phelps Mill Park is a hidden treasure and the only park in our County (at a County level). Trails ranked high in our City government/citizen input and the City of Fergus Falls has a comprehensive parks & trails plan. I see great opportunities to partner with state efforts. In the tourism area we rely heavily on leadership from Explore MN Tourism and have also found MN Trails publishers to be great advocates for trails. The notion to include the MN Dept. of Transportation is good. Trail use isn't just recreation!

Birding Trail - The Pine to Prairie Birding Trail meets all of the first 5 requirements of "Trails of Regional Significance." Please be sure to keep flexibility in the plan to allow funding, promoting, etc of this and related unique trails.

Youth as the future stewards - wholeheartedly agree. Be sure you are aware of our unique Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. This could be a model for some of the park programming/curriculum development. It is a partnership with the City, USFWS, School District allowing kids in 4th and 5th grade to take half of all their school classes during those years "on the prairie."

Marketing/Demographics - is there potential to partner grandparents with kids? If parents aren't making it a priority, maybe their parents would (and they have more time). Articulate the benefits of trail/park use beyond the obvious physical health - less stress? more family connections? low cost?

Create Activities - we also have had good success with geocaching. The detective-like hunt plus use of technology have made it a good fit for young people. In the effort to promote things like weddings, reunions, etc. be sure to make that an easy process. We have not had good luck with the MN Dept of Health in some of that (even in our own City parks) and customer service/ease of execution are important to success.

Could "Friends" or local groups of some sort adopt the care or at least reporting on needs for trails? You could write up "job descriptions" identifying what they should be looking for, what/how they can do on their own (vegetation maintenance? mowing? crack filling? sweeping?), how often to report in (at a minimum), etc. I think it would be easier for local communities to establish such groups if a framework or best practices were identified.

Sign/Trailhead Consistency - love this! Our Central Lakes Trail group has funding earmarked for trailheads in each community along the route and mile-markers but we are hesitant to be too early with this if there will be a template or protocol we can follow that helps the user. Bring it on!

Flexibility - this is a great addition to the "Recommendations for Funding." Too often government entities are the cog in the wheel and miss opportunities because of that.

Thanks for the opportunity to review and weigh in on this important document!

**by Dawn Lanning on Jan 6, 2011 @ 1:32pm**

Go to my FB page and look at notes for detailed comments already given to DNR at public meetings--Equestrians and mushers if you want to be included in the plan you must get involved and let them know we are out there as a valid user group and should not be ignored in the planning process. Look at the survey--not in a heavily used equestrian area, look at the work groups--no one from the equestrian community was included while going out of the way to include organizations representing bikers, hikers, ATV users and minority groups.

**by Susan McCabe on Jan 6, 2011 @ 3:11pm**



I don't know whether the Gitchee Gami Bike Trail organization has had any input but this is a gem of a trail along the north shore that has some major gaps. If funds were available to finish it we would have a fantastic trail along Lake Superior.

**by Allan Schroden on Jan 6, 2011 @ 9:20pm**

Hello! I am currently most interested in the development of hiking trails and canoe trails. For years we have had to drive 4-6 hours to get to a hiking trail that allowed for 2-6 day hikes. More recently, there is the the development of closer state trails, and the NCST is being developed. Dollar for dollar, the hiking trails and canoe routes are the least expensive, the least disruptive, and are available to use most of the year around. If there could be a bit more emphasis on the hiking trail and canoe route development, including more canoe routes that have cansites available, I am confident that the canoists and hikers in Minnesota and the region around will make significant use of these.

**by Dave Hendrickson on Jan 6, 2011 @ 9:27pm**

As I read the draft plan, I see a lot of emphasis on acquire land and I have a hard time understanding the rationale behind this unless their is high priority piece of land that would expand an existing park. At the meeing I attended in Marshall, close to half of the people were horse people or people that use horse trails. I see very little attention given to this group in the draft plan, which make me think that we are not an important user of parks and trails. Most of us at that meeting were emphasizing to take care of and improve what we have. There are many improvements that could be made if money was availabe to parks and trails that I visit throughout the state. Shower facility, electric sites, Drive thru sites, corrals, Making site more assesable for bigger rigs. We would like our voices heard and made a part of our plan for utilizing our tax dollars.

**by Willis Mattison on Jan 7, 2011 @ 11:31pm**

In spite of several strong call for the Citizen League and the MDNR to utilize the extensive public input opportunities (in the field and on line) to guage the recreating public's response to extending legacy funds to motorized recreation both organization refused to do so. This is a major failure in the process. We realize the the motorized recreation community is very vocal and will express their "wants" to have even more money that is in their dedicated accounts for their exclusive use. Citizen's League and DNR staff regularly rebutt any calls to restrict the Legacy funding of these destructive and disruptive forms of motorized recreation by saying that they have heard from the OHV/ATV people and they want their "fair share". We are led to believe that their asking for Legacy money, justifies the sharing of the Legacy Act money with the only form of outdoor recreation that is the distinct antithesis of the spirit and the intent of the Legacy Act: "Preserve, Protect & Enhance" Minnesota's natural environment. This nearly leaves the "conservation" minded citizen speechless! How, on God's green earth, can you defend such an atrocity and injustice! The motorized recreation culture claims that they are "nature lovers" but they will steadfastly deny the published reports (USGS - Environmental Effects of Offhighway Vehicle on BLM Lands, a synthesis of over 600 individual research studies). That is understandable but how can the Citizen's League and the MDNR not take this into account? Add to this the finding in the State of Wisconsin's State Outdoor Recreation Plan that only ATV recreation was found to be both incompatible with and antagonistic to ALL other forms of outdoor recreation. The MDNR has an unpublished internal report on the environmental effects of OHV/ATV recreation that reaches the same conclusions as the USGS report mentioned above. (Google search on these titles and you will find both of the reports). The entire Park and Trails

Legacy Planning process has been predicated on the false assumption that all recreational trail activity was essentially equal in merit and impact therefore all forms, motorized and traditional had equal standing in consideration for Legacy Funding. This is outrageous and is leading to a major miscarriage of justice insofar as administration of the Legacy Act. I don't think you could find a single voter who supported the passage of the Legacy Act could have envisioned the state department entrusted with administering any portion of these funds expressly dedicated to the "preservation, protection, and enhancement" of the state's natural resources would even consider funding an activity as destructive and disruptive as motorized recreation on public lands. If you have any doubt about these claims of destruction and disruption, please visit the nearest ATV/OHV trail or scramble area near you. Ask yourself after viewing the scars on the landscape left by these machines: "Is this preservation, protection or enhancement?" Anyone taking a stroll through our public forests that comes across areas impacted by ATV riders will instantly have the quality of their experience in nature severely degraded. Let me show you some wetlands turned into quagmires up in our neighborhood by a local ATV Club. Visit our local Woods 'n Wheels ATV club's website and view for yourself the photo's of this club's "recreational" activities on both private and public lands. And you propose to allow Legacy Act funds to facilitate this? Look at the ATV's mired deep in wetlands! Look at them winching their machines through mudholes. And these are the activities that they so proud of that they will post photos of their escapades on their website! What do they do that they might be too ashamed of the post on the website? It boggles the imagination! Look at the photos of grinning ATV riders just emerging from a "closed" area marked by broken "caution" tape! Legacy Funds? Don't give the excuse that these are just a few bad apples, studies in five states (including Wisconsin) demonstrate that the majority of ATV trail riders knowingly, and purposely ride OFF well marked trails when they know that it is illegal to do so! Why, because they become bored with the benign route of the trail that does not challenge them, their riding ability, or their powerful machine! This is a culture that cannot be allowed unrestrained on our public lands. The only justifiable type of recreation for OHV/ATV's is that represented by the Gilbert ATV/OHV Recreation Park, a mined out iron ore pit that had been environmentally devastated already so that no amount of mis-behaviour by these riders could further degrade the natural resources struggling to survive on the site. These areas are easily funded by the dedicated gas tax diverted to their funds and their registration fees.

Other studies have shown that young people introduced into nature by hiking, camping, canoeing, wildlife watching, photographing etc. universally develop an affinity for the resource and begin to develop a sense of stewardship contemplated in the Parks and Trails Plan. Nature represents a challenge to the mind and the body and the spirit to understand and to negotiate and to come to terms with. However, those same children, when introduced to natural areas on the backs of powerful machines develop a sense of "challenge" to overcome, to conquer, to surmount, to have dominion over the trees, the shrubs, the windfalls, the steep bluffs, the wetlands, the stream crossings. Nature presents "obstacle", a physical "challenge" to be negotiated by the aid of the power, traction and agility of their "MACHINE". PLEASE, do not foster this attitude in our youth by promoting this motorized manner of introducing our youth to our natural areas under the guise of getting our children into the woods so they will develop a sense of stewardship. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Future generations will hold you responsible for the outcome of your decision on this.

Motorized recreation has its own sources of funding from unrefunded gas tax and registration. Legacy funds, if used for ATV/OHV trails would supplant these dedicated funds! Again, this is in direct violation of the promise made to the citizens of Minnesota. The ATV Grant in Aid funds are being used to blaze motorized routes deep into our public forests already. Do not use Legacy Funds to add further insult to this injury.

All claims for "fairness" of access to these funds from the motorized recreation community are disingenuous in that they would cry foul in a New York minute if anyone were to propose these funds be diverted for other recreational purposes. Let them keep their hands off these "preservation, protection, and enhancement" funds!.

The only imaginable stretch of the spirit and intent of the Legacy Act funds that could be directed toward OHV/ATV recreation that would prove a modicum of "preservation, protection (or enhancement?)" of our public lands would be to fund a rigorous program of strict enforcement of ON TRAIL riding where GIA ATV/OHV trails already exist!

### **Connect People to the Outdoors**

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**by Erin Sapp on Dec 2, 2010 @ 2:02pm**

Do you think what's proposed will achieve the goal of increased participation and stewardship? How do you see yourself as part of this solution?

**by Julie Muehlberg on Dec 8, 2010 @ 8:28pm**

Yes, and there are many talented conservation leaders in our state - some retired or doing other jobs. Track them down and bring them together in a volunteer effort, coordinated by DNR Parks, to bring the best minds to bear on these essential goals of increased participation and stewardship! I would help through message development, writing and presentations to church/school or other organizational groups.

**by Lisa Paxton on Dec 13, 2010 @ 12:05pm**

"If you build it, they will come" is only a line in a movie unless you apply sufficient marketing resources. Be sure you are allocating legacy funds for promotion. These recreational opportunities need a well developed multi-media marketing plan that utilizes local and state partnerships.

**by Brian Hubbard on Dec 20, 2010 @ 4:38pm**

In my work with the Parks and Trails Legacy effort with youth and young adult outreach youth identified having a voice in parks and trails can ultimately transform participation in the community creating new roles for both young people and adults. I suggest inviting young people to be a part of the process and be seen as an integral part of learning, community, planning and problem solving in parks trails and nature based recreation.

**by Kim Embretson on Jan 4, 2011 @ 3:53pm**

Funding parks and trails from Legacy funds will have an impact on economic development in rural MN. Access to trails is one of the reasons people give for moving to a community. More and more people are seeking active entertainment. Trails for biking and walking are a safe way for people to interact with nature and create a healthy lifestyle.

### **Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities**

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What do you think about the priority areas outlined for acquisition and development? (Areas of MN projected to grow rapidly, in regional centers, and in major tourist destinations)

**by Eric Viken on Dec 6, 2010 @ 8:22pm**

I would like to see Mountain Bike/Multi-Use trails in all regional parks. Mountain biking has been around for 25 years but has not been supported well by the MN DNR up until now. Cyuna is going to be the first high quality mountain bike trail system in a Minnesota State Park. All the others have been cross-country ski trails used for mountain biking which is fine for beginners but single track trails are more fun for novice, intermediate and advanced riders. I think the DNR needs to do more to catch up on mountain bike trails in the state.

### **Take Care of What We Have**

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Maintenance needs are broad and could easily consume all of the legacy funds. Do you agree with the recommendation to only use legacy funds for maintenance that makes a long-lasting impact? If not, where would you draw the line?

**by Barbara Magnuson on Dec 8, 2010 @ 9:59am**

Page 19 of the Strategic Plan recommends "decommissioning parks" and "closing park" to save money. While the acquisition of land in the metro area is a priority on a previous page. Is this calling for the flow of Lessard funding to the metro area and away from Greater Minnesota? I find it very disturbing that closure of parks is even considered in the plan.

**by Stacy Becker on Dec 8, 2010 @ 10:50am**

Barbara, thanks for your comment. I don't think it is intended to flow funds away from Greater MN-- your reading of the two together is a good catch. I have forwarded your concern to the DNR.

**by Erin Sapp on Dec 10, 2010 @ 12:58pm**

Barbara, I've spoken with the DNR about your concern. We heard loud and clear from the public that they don't want parks to be sold. However, the legislature asked the DNR to specifically identify a plan for decommissioning parks, which is why it's included. Here's an excerpt they wanted me to pass along from one of the workgroup reports. I think your comment has also prompted them to include more explanatory language in the final draft about this.

*What Minnesotans Think About Decommissioning: Findings from the 2010 Parks and Trails Planning Process*

*The overarching sentiment during the 17 public workshops and numerous targeted meetings during 2010, was that the outright sale of parks and trails is not a good idea. When presented with the option of selling land to help deal with budget gaps, participants overwhelmingly and adamantly spoke against it. People greatly favored other strategies, such as the ones described above.*

*Other ideas for reducing costs that have arisen during these public conversations include*

*building partnerships that help reduce operating costs as well as recruiting volunteers to help care for the facilities. Minnesota's recreation providers are using these strategies, but it is possible to expand these efforts. Building partnerships and working with volunteers requires an investment in staff time. This said, these efforts can often result in stronger stewards and a more engaged citizenry that is interested in caring for Minnesota's park and trail network into the future.*

### **Coordinate Among Partners**

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What do you think are the defining characteristics of a seamless system?

**by Lisa Paxton on Dec 13, 2010 @ 12:07pm**

Explore Minnesota Tourism has initiated conversations among various State departments to coordinate tourism marketing for Minnesota. This initiative needs to be supported by this legacy project. It makes sense that we utilize the marketing expertise of EMT to promote Minnesota's rich parks and trails resources.

## Appendix III Workshop Comments

### **Mankato**

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#### **Participant: 1 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: I like it. Network with schools and science teachers. Love the educational building at Minneopa Park

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Buy up land along MN River from beginning to end. Buy up wetlands and link with trails. Buy up lakeshore that remains so that it becomes public.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Long term impact; group of volunteers to do some maintenance; MN Conservation Corps.

4. Coordinate among partners: Like a spider web. Link all areas as much as possible. The internet should be a great help in disseminating information. Coordinate between communities, counties and state parks.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Acquiring.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: First, more trails linking New Ulm, North Mankato, Mankato and St. Peter. Second, help municipalities maintain wetlands. The land gets bought up by developers because the city can't afford to buy the land.

Advice: Thanks so much. This is great work you've done over these long months.

#### **Participant: 2 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Laws enforcing stewardship are needed.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Restore to primitive status.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Return what we have now to a primitive state.

4. Coordinate among partners: Restore wetlands.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Primitive trails.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: More wildlife, less corn and more prairies.

Advice: Spend for primitive trails only.

#### **Participant: 3 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Partnerships should start local and work up. Access is a big issue, develop interest very young (get kids there), economic development needed (building more trails will help with this). Cost, youngest families have least amount of money.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquire land where cheap and provide transportation there. Tie Legacy funds together.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Very important to maintain natural areas. Utilize Conservation Corps MN in maintenance. Concerned about maintenance of buildings that should be done through bonding.

4. Coordinate among partners: Easily accessed information on how to connect use of various units. One pass/fee for all.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Provide assistance for local groups for trail formation and collaborative learning.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: No response given.

Advice: No response given.

#### **Participant: 4 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Very important to connect urban population with natural areas, the key is connection and access in multiple ways.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: No brainer. Buy it and they will come! Priority is to continue to purchase annually and dedicate funds. Don't short preservation over recreation.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, with a good capital improvement plan, coordinate funds with other agencies and funds (i.e. Lessard, LCMR).

4. Coordinate among partners: The outcome makes great sense.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Land acquisition, trail development, and technical assistance. Get on with the MN Valley Trail from the Twin Cities to Mankato!

Advice: I think the DNR needs to get back in the game again – working directly with active trail efforts. The fact that Legacy funds are there should now legitimize a more active role.

We need your expertise and support in a strategic role, a thoughtful and persistence role as a helpful partner.

#### **Participant: 5 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Reduce user fees. Fees are a barrier to access for families, which is where future stewardship (kids) comes from.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: MN River Valley please connect the regional centers.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Legacy funds should be applied towards maintaining historical facilities and natural resources but NOT for regular maintenance; that should be funded via regular budget.

4. Coordinate among partners: Easy to understand rules. Rather than try to bring people to the DNR, take the DNR public. For example, get maps and trails on Google maps rather than recreate the wheel.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: The MN River trail from the Twin Cities to Mankato is under construction or completed.

Advice: In 25 years, Minnesota should be winning every award for trails, clean water, arts, etc. or it is not a legacy!

**Participant: 6 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: No response given.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Meet two Legacy Fund objectives (improve water quality and provide recreational/commuter connections) by acquiring MN River Valley land. First, provide filtration margins and second, acquire trail easements at the higher elevations of these river margins.

3. Take Care of What We Have: No response given.

4. Coordinate among partners: There should be a coordinating body (statewide advisory committee) to work with county, state and federal agencies as well as organizations such as the MN Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy to meet Legacy Fund goals.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: I told Erin Sapp about New Zealand's excellent website. It should be emulated to inform potential tourists from outside MN about our recreational opportunities.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 7 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: No response given.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquiring land – get it now. Same principle as what was done in purchasing woodland easements up north. I don't agree with focusing most acquisition and in the areas of MN projected with the most growth – Twin Cities shouldn't be the center. Regional centers – recognize those 'nodes' around the state as the centers of trails/parks wheels with the beginning spokes. Too costly to buy land in T.C. area, plus there are already a lot of regional parks in T.C. – just need to figure out how to transport people to them.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Put maintenance of the ecosystem within our parks and public lands 1<sup>st</sup> over maintenance of buildings. Tie with the other Legacy funding.

4. Coordinate among partners: Statewide advisory body is a good idea so long as it has some teeth to keep legislators from having too much influence (as per Lessard Council). Non-governmental organizations, local groups, LGU's and church/youth groups are all great resources that should be partners with state agencies.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: First, strategic acquisition. Second, take care of what we have. Third, partnerships.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: First, local groups at some point need DNR help to move projects of regional importance forward. Second, let's truly leave a great legacy 25 years from now!



Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 8 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Good Start. Emphasize introducing children to the pleasure of the outdoors. Make contacts with organizations (example YMCA) who work with groups of children to bring them to parks and have someone to teach the children how to enjoy nature!

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquire land in rural areas, then urban people may enjoy visiting parks that are not urban in nature. While concentrating on creating recreational parks, don't neglect preserving parks and have them be as natural as possible.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes! Legacy funds should be used only for maintenance that makes a long-lasting impact, rather than being used for day to day maintenance.

4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: More funding directed toward maintenance, improvement and preservation of parks. At Minneopa, funds are needed to restore prairie (long lasting benefit) and interpretive personnel.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 9 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: People to educate the people about our natural resources.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Maintain natural areas throughout the state. The wetlands and prairie has been lost throughout enlargement of cities and farming. Save as many of these natural habitats as possible. Do not increase recreational parks only where the most people live.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Take care to maintain the habitat.

4. Coordinate among partners: Organizations used to work together to maintain the habitats that we have.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: We are seeing more concern by people to maintain our natural habitats.

Possibly this is though education of the younger generation in our public education system.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 10 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Get YMCA/YWCA with kids involved. Educate younger generation about outdoors. The outdoors is not an entitlement, people need to get involved.

- 2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Spend wisely, stay outstate as much as possible. Not sure acquiring land should be a major focus. Do not change definition of original bill.
- 3. Take Care of What We Have: Use funds as bill had originally intended, don't change bill to satisfy fund shortages.
- 4. Coordinate among partners: We have a good system but we can close the gaps.
- C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Connecting people with the outdoors.
- D. Final thoughts  
Look Ahead: Success would be having more young people getting involved; the older generation has carried the ball long enough, if the young don't take over all will pass away.  
Advice: Protect the funds we voted for from being taken or miss used.

**Participant: 11 Mankato** Ronald Nickerson (Professor at MSU)

- A. Introductory question:  
Yes, I was at the meeting at North Mankato.
- B. Four Strategic Directions
  - 1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Help get younger generations involved, groups and organizations need participation from all members. Volunteer to promote outdoor activities.
  - 2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Buy land in all areas of state, maybe dense areas might go out to less population areas, dense population areas parks might want to have more activities (water parks, swimming pools) paved trails. Buy all railroad beds for commute connections.
  - 3. Take Care of What we Have: No, anything built new should have a maintenance budget, instead of passing expenses on to counties, people enjoy clean areas. Who is going to pay for extra care?
  - 4. Coordinate among partners: No answer
- C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: 1. Connect people outdoors, 2. Acquire land, 3. Take care of what we have, Coordinate with partners
- D. Final thoughts: Getting people to connect with the outdoors spending the money wisely across all areas, getting all agencies to work together.

**Participant: 12 Mankato**

- A. Introductory question: No response
- B. Four Strategic Directions
  - 1. Connect People to the Outdoors: The language here is good, sounds great, but also sounds very adult oriented. As we move to implementation let's remember that it is key to draw young people to parks and trails and that will mean thinking creatively and out of the box. I want to drive the "fun bus"
  - 2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: More balance with public lands available rather than areas with growing population. Acquire important natural areas.
  - 3. Take Care of What we Have: Focus forward rather than on simply replacing day to day maintenance needs. Build matching funds and partnerships.
  - 4. Coordinate among partners: No response
- C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response
- D. Final thoughts: No response  
Look Ahead: No response  
Advice: No response

**Participant: 13 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: Mankato workshop

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Need to reach 5-12 yr olds; it must be "your state park"

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Should be more than acquisition for a trail by that, more a harbor for nature, so not just a trail system but access to this harbor of nature.

3. Take Care of What we Have: I agree no payroll. Let the use be directed toward payroll.

4. Coordinate among partners: Do not duplicate efforts

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response

D. Final thoughts: No response

Look Ahead:

Advice: No funds for standing committees

**Participant: 14 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Increase involvement with youth in MSU, High Schools, scouts, etc. Youth go out and get started. Then get busy and return as adults. Start them when they're young.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Habitat protection as well as recreation

3. Take Care of What we Have: No daily maintenance (garbage, etc)

4. Coordinate among partners: Good to coordinate information, Create advisory board from people that attended workshops, use email addresses for contact, coordination should be a part of strategic direction #1.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response

D. Final thoughts:

Look Ahead: Don't get a new board. Just periodically hold a review with all people who have a stake in it.

Advice:

**Participant: 15 Mankato**

A. Introductory question:

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Partnerships with single groups, with county and city government, youth agencies, senior agencies. Enhance opportunities beyond summer programs. Do activities in large and small groups.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Bring parks to communities, don't abandon mission of preserving natural areas. Create more parks on lakes to stop overtake of land as private property. Lakes belong to all of us.

3. Take Care of What we Have: Minnesota Conservation Corps, "Adopt a park: for maintenance, maintain the land first, host.

4. Coordinate among partners: Quality is consistent, Access is consistent (pricing, hours of operation, maintenance), sharing of resources don't allow major use parks to use up funds, allow parks in need to fulfill their tasks.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Take care maintain what we have, keep up with working with youth groups, increase number of presentations to youth groups and schools about Legacy, parks and trails.

D. Final thoughts:

Look Ahead: Safety and care of parks

Advice: Protect and preserve Natural Resources first. That includes helping our wildlife, we count on the DNR and regional parks to identify, critical habitat (floral, trees, fauna), secure it for the next generation and the next.

**Participant: 16 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Expand camping/cabin experience into winter. More cabins that are heated for winter use.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Work with nature conservancy conserve wild life protection and migration as an educational focus for future generations.

3. Take Care of What we Have: This is good, utilize Conservation Corps of Minnesota.

4. Coordinate among partners: Coordinate with Nature Conservancy. Who will?

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions:

D. Final thoughts:

Look Ahead: Create at least one new park or expand park in Mankato. More winter opportunities

Advice: Preserve areas for wildlife-both plants and animals. This is an important part of the legacy. There is too much focus on recreation and not enough on protection areas.

**Participant: 17 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: If we want to invite younger generations cover all state parks with wi-fi. Use this wi-fi to go directly to information website page on parks and trails and give all up to date real time information.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquire and preserve (not develop)

3. Take Care of What we Have: Maintain nature

4. Coordinate among partners: No response

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response

D. Final thoughts:

Look Ahead: Start baseline data now. Then identify information that measures progress.

Advice: To engage young people, we must integrate technology with nature.

**Participant: 18 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: No response

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Take advantage of existing unique- geography features and natural areas Increase partnerships with recreational groups (paddling club, friends of park, sierra club

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Use Vermillion example. In Southern Minnesota look at land along rivers and streams. Develop wetlands areas that will mitigate erosion and provide wildlife habitat. Also provide more fulfilling recreation experiences as canoeing and kayaking.

3. Take Care of What we Have: Adopt a park, river road approach. Use volunteers to gain ownership and contribute.

4. Coordinate among partners: No response

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response

D. Final thoughts:

Look Ahead: Seeking out and pin pointing unique geographic areas, natural features, unique scenery and preserve and utilize now and for future generations.

Advice: No response

### **Participant: 19 Mankato**

A. Introductory question: yes, both online and workshops

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Increase physical connection. Increase biking paths to parks.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Lower Minnesota has interest in acquiring land near river valleys to connect and create parks and trails.

3. Take Care of What we Have: Create long lasting maintenance.

4. Coordinate among partners: Most "lay people" don't think much about this maybe that's news you are doing good about this.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Acquire land, make connections

D. Final thoughts:

Look ahead: We need more people at the parks and trails in Minnesota.

Advice: There is a big gap in parks trails in southern Minnesota.

## **Duluth**

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### **Participant: 1 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: People need to want to be connected.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: The sports that I am involved in are growing (ATV, snowmobile) thus causing the trails to deteriorate due to overuse. More miles of trails are needed.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, we need to preserve existing easements as well as maintaining bridges. I don't need flush toilets, an outhouse will work.

4. Coordinate among partners: We need a single data base to research recreational opportunities in a specific area.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Preserve existing opportunities.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: All user groups need to learn to get along.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 2 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: Yes, meeting at Depot.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: We need to add multi use trails to parks, motorized trails in state parks. There are walking and bike trails, how about those who would like to reach places with an ATV or snowmobile, etc. We do not need to spend money on advertising of our parks, etc.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: We need to acquire permanent easements to keep our trails. Public land tax for fit land with trails; need to give clubs that easement not pay for it. We need multi use trails; bike trails should be opened up to snowmobiles in winter months when not being used.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Not maintenance, there are funds available for this. Updating facilities is not what money should be used for. I do understand that we do need to keep what we have but to fix bathrooms, roofs, etc. Leave funding in place already.

4. Coordinate among partners: Most trails have maps, DNR has goal maps now, the internet has many sites that will allow you to print maps, clubs put maps out, etc.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: 70% acquiring permanent easements, 0% connecting people, 25% taking care of what we have, and 5% coordinating groups.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Permanent easements, let's see them.

Advice: Start making motorized trails, some or many people can't use or walk or bike and should be able to get to some of the same destinations.

**Participant: 3 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Marketing, destination idea, concerned about ability to impact process at this point, opportunity to leverage.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Invest in local opinion – planning and support.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, I agree. This is common sense.

4. Coordinate among partners: Coordination is a very critical and essentially invisible element as of 12/6/10.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: All are very important, chips should not be taken directly.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Hopeful, not yet certain.

Advice: Investing in local ownership is critical with each element. Ownership meant to mean: participation, understanding, part of decision process.

**Participant: 4 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: Yes, May meeting at Depot. No, to online due to privacy issues/inability to protect/speak to what would happen with my information.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Need to ensure parks and trails are close to where people live. Transportation costs will rise, people may not (already cannot) afford to travel

far. Maintain trail corridors and access to parklands near areas of dense population will ensure participation due to access.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: See above.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Look at funding items that lead to structural integrity over the long term, big-budget items and infrastructure.

4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Protection of trail corridors, purchasing significant corridors and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

Advice: Please be aware of the needs and limitations of lower income residents. Fees, transportation costs and equipment can be barriers to use. Majority of citizens are low to middle income and these people may not be represented at meetings or on the website.

### **Participant: 5 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: Yes, at the Duluth Depot.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: This is a very small part in my mind. I think there are a lot of reasons there already.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: I don't agree with spending most of the money near the Twin Cities metro area. Lots there already, people love to come up north to recreate. Need money for land easements on existing trails.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Very little of this money should go towards this. Money should be there already for that.

4. Coordinate among partners: I like the idea of one map and one web site. I carry four or five maps of the same area and that's a waste.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Open to more uses. My passion is snowmobiling and ATV, so I hope that's included. I don't want to see the money used to repair things that should come from different existing funds.

Advice: Money should not be used to fix things that should have been fixed 10-15 years ago.

### **Participant: 6 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Access to information, shovel read projects, marketing and access to map reading/access to digital maps.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Strategic connections, easements.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Infrastructure.

4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: No response given.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 7 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Yes, I agree with ideas presented. Advertising needs to be done to attract new users...youth, minorities, and new residents. Or, new opportunities to get these people involved either by increased programming or better access.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Make sure to spend the money around and not focus all of the money in the metro area. That said consider the fact that transportation costs may significantly rise in the next 25 years. Travelling large distances on a regular basis may not be a normal thing in the future to get to parks.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Use the money for investments, not regular maintenance.

4. Coordinate among partners: Maps that show your proximity to all outdoor/park/trails so you can see all of your options in one place.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Seeing a few key piece trails completed in a few, regionally diverse areas of the state.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 8 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: Yes, at the Depot.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: The lack of youth participation concerns me most. If more participation could happen with day use and residential learning centers, then programming could help with learning about the outdoor world.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Northern MN is a destination for tourism and maintenance of what we have currently and purchasing additional connective lands. Looking to protect important trail corridors.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Use funding for day-to-day operations, not maintenance; use for invasive species control and nature based education at every turn.

4. Coordinate among partners: I think if you focus on all the priorities, that coordination will happen to the regional approach and providers would have to interact more and share resources.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: How can you keep the public up to speed, involved, regular meetings, etc.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 9 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: Yes, all of these.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Rent equipment at park, partner with schools, transportation needs, targeted programming at nature centers (day use to start), mentor program, communicate with non English speaking communities.



2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquire land for trail connections, eliminate dead end trails (snowmobile), develop shared facilities for trail amenities, complement with other Legacy funds, invest in special natural resource areas rather than only metro area, and spend where people recreate (tourism area).

3. Take Care of What We Have: Definitely not for day to day maintenance, invasive species make everything accessible ADA, (?) voted for Legacy – slippery slope with maintenance.

4. Coordinate among partners: Less territorialism, and work out bureaucratic barriers.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Projects done around state which are identified as funded by Legacy – formal sign?

Advice: Great job! Hard to please everyone, you really tried to cover all bases.

### **Participant: 10 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: How to reach those who don't show up at these meetings and find out what they want? Provide equipment for use at parks, transportation is too expensive for some groups and create a link from day use to overnight.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Develop regional trails, provide shared trail heads and connect with other Legacy funds.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Don't spend on day to day, focus on doing a better job, spend on providing accessibility and on invasive species removal.

4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: No response given.

Advice: No response given.

### **Participant: 11 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: No Wi-Fi in some parks, transportation to the facilities needed, school grants, entrance fees down and vary the price on under used parks.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: No response given.

3. Take Care of What We Have: No response given.

4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Continue funding of the general fund so that the Legacy fund can do what it should do. Reach out to the non-state facility users to get their input. More ADA and more alternative energy projects.

Advice: No response given.

### **Participant: 12 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: Yes, at the focus group at the Depot, last May.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Wi-Fi?

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Permanent acquisition of easement for the trail system.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Maintenance that makes a long-lasting impact: Infrastructures, restore natural resources – invasive species, reconstruct – bridges.

4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: ATV trails that are connected to major areas, safer trail systems to accommodate growing numbers of riders. I do not believe the Legacy money should be highly allocated to the metro area as they already have a lot of opportunities for recreation, we don't – major sports teams, zoos, theaters, etc. They also have public transportation.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 13 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: Yes, workshops and online.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Mentoring, marketing and bringing kids to the outdoors to show them how fun it is.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Regional priorities, permanent easements (state legislative issue).

3. Take Care of What We Have: Fund major repair rather than maintenance (bridges never had a maintenance budget).

4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: First priority is to acquire land and develop opportunities.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Would like updates of what is happening, also more/improved trails and parks.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 14 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: No response given.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Distance to outdoor access is a major barrier, so ensuring access to outdoor opportunities is a key concern. Nature is not just up north, but everywhere. Plus, these threatened ecosystems and corridors are important from a conservation stand point; so I think a focus on rapidly growing areas is warranted.

3. Take Care of What We Have: No response given.

4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: No response given.

Advice: We need an ecological gap analysis.

**Participant: 15 Duluth**

A. Introductory question:

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Keep costs down for families (Park fees)
2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Strategic Acquisition plans by region. Mind local comprehensive plans by region for priority areas.
3. Take Care of what we have: No response
4. Coordinate among partners: Fine line between marketing and education and outreach.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Prioritize for projects that demonstrate partnerships. (Using weighted formats) Projects should also address issues in local plans. (Be proactive rather than reactive)

D. Final thoughts:

Look Ahead: Regular public forums and continued input from the public. Annual reports on funded projects should be developed. Create a set of performance measures and reports to promote individual/projects.

Advice: No response

**Participant: 16 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No response given.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Schools are an important introduction. Opportunities for youth that are structured. Technology can it be used to help or hinder.
2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Strategic acquisitions are critical (Connections) What is the traditional strategy so we know what will make the Legacy different. There is no easement concept in this plan. Regional priorities are critical.
3. Take Care of what we have: Legacy funding shouldn't take the place of existing funding for maintenance (day to day operations)
4. Coordinate among partners: No response given.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: No response given.

D. Final thoughts:

Look Ahead: "See bricks and mortar building projects" this builds confidence that things are happening. There is a need for checkpoints along 25-year way to see and elevate success.

Tweak plan as needed.

Advice: No response given.

**Participant: 17 Duluth**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: No, keep it simple; volunteer, educate.
2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Need to focus on all areas of state equally, metro people recreate up north.
3. Take Care of What We Have: Legacy means keeping what we have and getting more. No day to day maintenance costs.
4. Coordinate among partners: Need an independent site to coordinate.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Acquire land and take care of what we have.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: No response given.  
Advice: Keep it as acquiring trails and land.

## **Bemidji**

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### **Participant: 1 Bemidji**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Have state issue senior pass to seniors for using state parks as a way to get young people outdoors (Like Federal Senior Pass) (Grandchildren/mentors)
3. Take Care of What We Have: Be used only for maintenance that makes a long-lasting impact.

### **Participant: 2 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: Yes

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: I am against the technology hook including motorized recreation and geo caching, etc. because in my experience, individuals (Ex. Young people) who are introduced to nature via the higher tech methods and tools experience the technology toys (the ride, the hide and seek of GPS) and become energized with technology but not connected with the elements of nature that would foster desired stewardship mentality. The awe and wonder of nature needs to be made as attractive and interesting as their I Pod or their ATV or GPS.
2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Focus on lower cost, higher quality acquisition to get bigger bang for the Legacy buck.
3. Take Care of What We Have: Need for high quality natural resources. I do not support funding for motorized trails on public lands. This is not the intent of the "protect, preserve and enhance" essence of the Legacy act. Motorized trails should be supported through a different type of funding (gas tax/registration).

### **Participant: 3 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question:

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Move some trails closer to user groups rather than move groups to trails.
  2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Take a care with land acquisition in urban/sub-urban areas as land prices will be very high.
  4. Coordinate among partners: All maps and info need to be accessible.
- D. Final thoughts

Advice: To date: This may be nothing more than a "feel good" exercise.

### **Participant: 4 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: Yes, all of them.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Yes, but there needs to be a lot of thought put into programs that are designed to attract new diverse interests. Is it better to bring trails and parks to the people instead of bringing people to the parks and trails? Importance of involving youth in building the next generation of stewards. The North Country Trail Association is committed to getting involved with hiking and the outdoors.
  2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Focusing on these areas will not stretch the money very far. The funds should be balanced with more rural areas, where the money will go farther. Other Legacy funds e.g., Outdoor Heritage-should also be looked at to benefit parks and primarily trails.
  3. Take Care of What We Have: What about taking care of the resources? Yes, it should be used for long term maintenance and local politicians should fund regular maintenance. The language in the law was clear and we should hold decision makers to this. New facilities that will be maintenance intensive-e.g. visitor centers-shouldn't be built until long term maintenance needs are addressed for existing facilities.
  4. Coordinate among partners: As a recreation provider that crosses multiple-ownerships, it is very difficult to get other entities-e.g., counties, state agencies-to help provide information on our trail.
- D. Final thoughts
- Looking Ahead: Buy land now because it will be cheaper in a depressed economy.
- Advice: Don't use Legacy funds for motorized recreation unless it's used to fund enforcement of OHV's.

**Participant: 5 Bemidji**

- A. Introductory question: No. first time.
  - B. Four Strategic Directions
    1. Connect People to the Outdoors: 10% percent goals may not be achievable with current strategies; suggest intentional collaborations with schools and other youth groups and introduce resources and make connections.
    2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Priorities should have statewide distribution, not just tied to population growth areas. Focus should be on high amenity resource areas and development of connectedness. Suggestion: use local/regional forums to identify specific projects.
    3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, use Legacy dollars on capital improvements and restorations. Designate user fees, general funds on operating costs.
    4. Coordinate among partners: Common language, formats, multiple access points.
- D. Final thoughts
- Looking Ahead: If recommendations made by citizens are respected, and not over ridden by the legislature, then we will know that the process is working.
- Advice: Don't know yet, must read draft.

**Participant: 6 Bemidji**

- D. Final thoughts
- Looking Ahead: Remove all the red signs in the Mississippi Headquarters closing all the trails. The only people you hurt was the local residents. This is public land, which is to be open to all the people.

**Participant: 7 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Need collaboration with schools and youth groups. Youth programs to spark their interests. Marketing to inform all people of opportunities. Need convenient locations and identify regional significance and multi use.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: 1. Development of Northern Minnesota vs. acquisition as we have a lot of public land already. 2. Develop recreational areas 3. Twin Cities people come here to recreate.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, charge fees for all recreation to fund maintenance.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions:

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Development of trail system for horses, ATV's and hiking (non paved), snowmobiles.

**Participant: 8 Bemidji**

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: In our part of the state we have plenty of public land. What we need is keep existing trails open. What I've seen in my area is a more restriction.

Advice:

**Participant: 9 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: Yes

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Funds to bus school children to outdoor events (Wolf Ridge). Keep costs down (user fees so that lower income citizens can participate in outdoors. Continue introductory classes (e.g. I can camp) and mentoring projects, but not necessarily using Legacy funds.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Continuity of trail corridors, trail easements should be one focus for acquisition. Proposed direction seems reasonable; one goal should be to have parks and trails reasonably close to all citizens.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Agree that Legacy funds should only be used for capital improvements, not for routine maintenance or operations.

4. Coordinate among partners: Coordination among recreation providers is a good goal, but I don't see a statewide advisory board as necessary. There are many organizational and technical difficulties in establishing and maintaining a single "outdoor recreation" website. Explore a "wiki" approach where users add and update information. Encourage use and development of "activity" websites such as skinnyski.com for x-c skiing.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions:

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Acquisition and development of a few new parks or trails. Visible infrastructure improvements-repave trails, replace bridges, upgrade buildings and facilities.

Advice: Remind legislature that the Legacy amendment was passed because citizens felt they weren't doing the job we elected them to-adequately fund habitat, clean water, parks and trails and arts. Emphasize that the Legacy Fund are to supplement not supplant use of general funds for these activities.

**Participant: 10 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Yes, I would like to see the definition of outcome to include locally significant parks, trails and outdoor destinations (not just DNR). I would like to see continued efforts to invite kids to participate using creative new approaches.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: I don't want to see our hands tied with regard to where projects are located. Not living in one of the regional centers. I question the validity of focusing on location centers. I would like to see a birding center at Zax-Zim Bog developed this is not a populated area but would be a world-class destination.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, I agree try to maintain infrastructure example landslides and holes in the Munger trail.

4. Coordinate among partners: I like this strategy, characteristics of a seamless system. 1. Coordinate planning, 2. Coordination of marketing inclusive of a variety of partners. Create new partnerships between communities and regional/DNR parks and trails.

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: I want to see outcomes i.e. Upper LaSalle Lake Recreation Area progress (measured) in programming and strategic improvement in reaching kids.

Advice: I would like to have you consider funding of Minnesotans birding trails; enhancing infrastructure, amenities, participation and marketing. MN has four birding trails.

**Participant: 11 Bemidji**

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: In your quest for tourism, don't forget the local people, there the public to. Don't operate as a resort to make money? You will lose. Operate as a Maintenance.

Advice: This is not just for the Twin Cities people but for the locals to. And foremost don't forget the constitution and rights of the local people.

**Participant: 12 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Provide lower fees and marketing of facilities.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: I believe people will leave higher growth areas to enjoy parks in lower growth areas. Best utilized in strong tourism areas. Higher growth areas may be more utilized for trail development.

3. Take Care of What We Have: I disagree to increase utilization requires a stable budget for keeping a quality park and park experience.

4. Coordinate among partners: Need for a statewide marketing source designating all parks and trails.

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Recognized as the state with the most varied, well maintained and accessible park and trail system in the country.

Advice: Spend wisely

**Participant: 13 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: Yes, in Thief River Falls.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Getting children involved in the outdoors. More better marketing of existing parks. Education of what's in their neighborhoods. All people can help to promote regional parks. The need to be regionally significant will have negative impacts in getting important projects funded.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: There will need to be more recreation facilities on existing public lands to accommodate the increase in visitors for the years to come. For most of NW Minnesota there is adequate lands, more facilities needed.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Maintenance should be used for long term repairs.

4. Coordinate among partners: All organizations will be or should be willing to work together for the betterment of the system.

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Money should be spent throughout the whole state. The state has a great recreational system, the Legacy funds should improve the existing system.

Advice: The required local match is very difficult for rural MN communities and counties to meet.

**Participant: 14 Bemidji**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Outreach to schools increased and more interpretive programs. More accessible and less user fees. No special promotions.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Don't focus so much on metro. Disparity favoritism to southern region. Preserve northern region. Develop recreational opportunities North of Brainerd to bring tourism dollars north also.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Page 54 in Strategic Plan Draft- Discussed extensively closing or transferring parks. This is unacceptable as small northern parks will be closed for lack of revenue in favor of metro parks.

4. Coordinate among partners: Team with Federal Trails; one website for trails not links but one website.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: take care of what we have with emphasis on 'green' development. Develop what we have and defragment.

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Openness on what is spent and let the public know exactly where this money is spent in the most cost effective ways.

Advice: Take out park closure option or getting rid of parks. Expand and develop what we have.

**Participant: 15 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: More signage at the trail access points.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquire more access (with parking) to existing rivers and hiking/biking trails.

3. Take Care of What We Have: All bridges should be pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

D. Final thoughts



Advice: No Legacy funds for motorized recreation.

**Participant: 16 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No, I plan to go online now.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: This is the responsibility of user groups and should not require a lot of dollars. This could be/should be mostly a volunteer effort.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: This is ok with me. But most of the money should not be more than 60% not a 95%-5% split.

3. Take Care of What We Have: This is the number 1 with me, take care of what we have. Infrastructure needs to be replaced before we buy more. No money to be spent on daily cleaning activities.

4. Coordinate among partners: Include Federal Lands and Trails in this partnership to fully reflect all land use available within our state.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Take care of what we have, partnerships, develop new opportunities, connect people

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Replacement of old unsafe bridges. Upgrade existing buildings.

Advice: Do not tar another foot trail outside a three-mile radius of any city or town.

**Participant: 17 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Yes

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Need access to all our resources, canoeing , biking, hiking, motorized.

Advice: In this economy buying access land should be a priority (good deals are out there) it will change soon.

**Participant: 18 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: Yes

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Mentoring, transportation and communications are important. Elevate shooting sports and hunting this will increase participation.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Advocate prioritizing resources in development of regional centers and major tourist destinations.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Definitely long term maintenance. Consider connecting youth at risk and disconnected to aspects of maintenance through applied and contextual learning.

4. Coordinate among partners: I believe coordination is important, but it needs to connect info for park and trail users to user groups.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: 1. Connecting people to the outdoors 2. Take care of what we have 3. Acquire land and develop opportunities 4. Coordinate with partners

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Prioritize funding to regional centers and tourist destinations.

Advice: Continue involving young adults and new users to this process as it develops.

**Participant 19: Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Multiple use all truck, ATV, horse, bike, etc. on old logging trails.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Accountability-spending on weekends, the traffic all drives north. Send more money north. Keep existing trails open and useable for free.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes I agree- new or long lasting impact not for staff or cleaning supplies. To many trails dead end.

4. Coordinate among partners: Collaboration between all use group (young families) when planning, don't forget low income families and elderly who do not have atv's, snowmobiles, etc. Let them have access to trail entrance in their areas.

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Conservation-Trench planting does not promote a sustainable forest.

Advice: Keep working together with all user groups.

**Participant: 20 Bemidji**

B. Four Strategic Directions

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Target opportunities for land in need of conservation. Outstate needs acquisition too.

3. Take Care of What We Have: More emphasis on care of natural resources is needed. The explanation of what this means is vague. Climate change, development, invasive species, fragmentation all are negatively impacting natural resources. Much work is needed and it can not be accomplished in one year. Long term consistent funding of restoration and reversing degradation is needed.

4. Coordinate among partners: Communication and collaboration

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Really tired DNR staff.

**Participant: 21 Bemidji**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Looks good for reaching increased participation.

Marketing and Partnership have some overlap. Don't stray to far from basic draw of parks, not to many frills to satisfy common denominator. Work with marketing and partnerships to promote trails.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Still a need for access to rivers, trails, parking lots throughout the state of Minnesota. Most should not be 90% this requires funds. There are trail connections that need to be funded or completed.

3. Take Care of What We Have: I agree Legacy funds should be used on building maintenance, erosion control, road and parking maintenance.

4. Coordinate among partners: This should be easy for people to find information when in their car or when on the internet. The tourist info sign concept be applied here.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Balance

**Participant: 22 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Take care of what we have and have a state all trail system with maps.

**Participant: 23 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Marketing is an important tool for families out to the park areas, offering group activities that offer opportunity to learn new skills and awareness of what nature is all about. Offering funds for transportation for school children, field trips introducing natural plants, trees and wildlife. Show them how to enjoy outdoors with out motors, machines, electronics. Volunteer programs could help with guiding activities. Children need to be taught to make outdoors part of their lives.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquisition of large areas that are ecologically sensitive is more likely possible than spending most of the funds for park activities in highly populated areas. It is also possible that population in crowded areas need to leave their areas to experience unique areas, quiet areas, birding, wildlife photography that are different from city parks.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Buildings and roads need to be limited to the number that can be properly maintained without Legacy funding. Maintenance of walking trails needs to be taken into consideration. Legacy funds should not be used for Legacy funds.

4. Coordinate among partners: Marketing could help with informing people where to find the information that can easily be found now.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Priority should be for protecting and enhancing natural resources. Therefore motorized recreation should not be funded with Legacy Funds

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: That motorized recreation be curtailed and actual contact with nature will improve.

**Participant: 24 Bemidji**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Diversity of trails-multi use trails. Volunteers, special events. Education to the trails

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Bemidji is a landmark and it needs facilities for the public to use at parks.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Money not to be used for daily maintenance. Use funds for new projects or rehab of major projects.

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Balance the dollars equally between state parks/metro and greater MN area.

Advice: Smaller projects are just as important as big ones.

**Participant: 25 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Multi use trails

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: No new land acquisition-maintain what we have.
3. Take Care of What We Have: Use for new or existing maintenance. Do not use for trash, etc.

Advice: Use Minnesota business and labor when possible.

**Participant: 26 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question:

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: I can be a taxpayer, a volunteer and a committed user of MN parks and trails.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities:

3. Take Care of What We Have:

4. Coordinate among partners:

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: take care of what we have and maintain. Hire youth for maintenance.

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead:

Advice:

**Participant: 27 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question:

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors:

3. Take Care of What We Have:

4. Coordinate among partners: Work with each other.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Connect people, Take care of what we have, land opportunities, coordinate with partners.

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Use your funds wisely.

**Participant: 28 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: More education in schools in outdoor classes. Need to have strong marketing.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Put a tax on all sporting goods and

4. Coordinate among partners:

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions:

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead:

**Participant: 29 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question:

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: We do more cross planning.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: can some of this money come from a different part of the Legacy Amendment.

Looking Ahead: Carefully look at the spirit of the Legacy Amendment. Do not fund things apart from that involved.

**Participant: 30 Bemidji**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Intentional needs, what do people want. Technology and outdoors, creativity, partnerships with schools, children, boys and girls club access is real issue.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Balance population with availability of land, not necessarily focusing on population. Rural MN-has land opportunities this shouldn't be completely based on population.

3. Take Care of What We Have: No routine maintenance.

4. Coordinate among partners: Update information access. Ease both to find and provide information.

C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions:

D. Final thoughts

Looking Ahead: Good start with hearing/gathering input. Important to find balance (very challenging) per regional and statewide areas. Increase use and participation and our resources, but will have a huge impact.

**Participant: 31 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: The funds should be used to acquire land in SW MN where most of the wetlands have been drained.

3. Take Care of What We Have: The funds should be used to create wetlands and grass lands for ducks and other wildlife.

**Participant: 32 Bemidji**

A. Introductory question: No

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Intentional bussing of students to state parks. Technology (geo-caching) and mentoring programs.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Create connectivity to trails in metro areas. Need to acquire desirable lands-land worth protecting for statewide distribution.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Be used for development and capitol projects-not maintenance of small-scale items.

**Participant: 33 Bemidji**

B. Four Strategic Directions

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: More parking spots along the trails so it isn't so far to recreate. Canoe in sites so people can use the recreation areas.

**Participant: 34 Bemidji**

- A. Introductory question: Yes, Mankato meeting
- B. Four Strategic Directions
  - 1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Programs to educate and build investment among youth. Provide logical and easy access to resources.
  - 2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquire land, develop resources “near” population regional centers i.e. MN River Valley.
  - 3. Take Care of What We Have: Take care of the land (ecosystems) w/Legacy Funds. Maintain infrastructure with regional funds as much as possible.
  - 4. Coordinate among partners: Start with common goals for all provisions when possible, give priorities to initiatives that serve multiple goals. (i.e. Water Quality, Rec. and habitat)

## **Metro**

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### **Participant: 1 Metro**

- A. Introductory question: No.
  - B. Four Strategic Directions
    - 3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, diversified funding – operating expenses should come from general funds.
    - 4. Coordinate among partners: Improve work with youth groups and special interest groups.
  - D. Final thoughts
- Look Ahead: More cooperation with youth organizations, conduct better surveys of trail users, and place less focus on immigrant users at the expense of established users (English vs. other languages and customs vs. traditions).
- Advice: Generally good ideas, concepts, and goals. Congrats on your national recognition.

### **Participant: 2 Metro**

- A. Introductory question: No.
- B. Four Strategic Directions
  - 1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Yes.
  - 2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Please acquire land west of Elm Creek Park to Crow Hassen, south of Diamond Lake. Use for horse and human trails.
  - 3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, a high priority.

### **Participant: 3 Metro**

- B. Four Strategic Directions
  - 2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Prioritize regional centers that lack a near-home park or trail.

### **Participant: 4 Metro**

- A. Introductory question: Yes.
- B. Four Strategic Directions
  - 1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Focus on youth and parents with young kids, new populations and future leaders (young adults/college-aged).
  - 2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Trail connections – city, county, regional, state. What/who are the trail users – horses, dogs, mountain bikes...accommodate all users.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Long lasting impacts: infrastructure 50% and ecological 50%.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: More trails, and more connected trails.

Advice: Think ahead.

### **Participant: 5 Metro**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: One day a week free park entrance. Need to look at areas around parks besides just within park boundaries, parks are not islands. Need to engage natural recreation and educational opportunities.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: State parks only make up 4% of DNR holding; are there recreation, ecological, cultural or educational opportunities or other state or public lands – all should be inventoried and addressed for increased use opportunities.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Focus on investments that have a useful life of 10 or more years, ideally 20 years or more. Begin focus on ecological protection.

4. Coordinate among partners: Include local connection opportunities; the ecological quality and connection should be seamless too being more web like vs. isolated boxes of ownership.

### **Participant: 6 Metro**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: No. A great plan but it doesn't include the parks where most kids play, especially low to moderate income and recent immigrant kids – the "wild" areas of the local parks that they walk to. Idea: put bikes on trails for rent with a credit card as in Minneapolis.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: You should acquire where animals/plants are endangered or are missing a corridor for seasonal migration and long term (50-100 yr) migration due to global warming. Also people complain about too many rabbits and mice – cities and towns need wild areas as homes for predators to keep them in check (hawks, owls, possums, coyotes). Also, enhance the trails for harvesting wild berries.

3. Take Care of What We Have: There is a lot of garbage where kids are playing! On St. Paul east side, the school near me won't use the wild areas due to glass, etc. The funds should go as a carrot to neighbors removing their own litter – if city parks met you "Legacy Park" criteria of litter removal and invasive plant removal they qualify as a "Legacy Park" and get help with native plantings, nature workshops, signs showing how it connects to trails, etc.

4. Coordinate among partners: Communities will get this info in different ways, not just the internet. Posters, brochures, signs at parks, schools and libraries are all ideas. But the system is for all wildlife to travel on and fly over, and the design and brochures should explain this. Also, can the rules be clear for harvesting berries? Can you go off trail to harvest them or is this sensitive habitat? Also, farmers have an interest in getting rid of buckthorn as a host plant for soybean aphids, partner with them all the way down to Iowa as the aphids blow down there.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Kids and families are introduced to how North American ecology works at their local parks. Information about how their park connects to other parks and trails is available. They know to look for and remove the worst invasive species at their park to keep them from getting into other parks.

Advice: Include incentive money for cities and towns to upgrade their neighborhood wild parks (trash removal, invasive removal, plan for nature enhancements, safety). This is the only way to include lower income kids and families who pay a big % of their income on sales tax and thus into this fund.

**Participant: 7 Metro**

A. Introductory question: Yes, online and in person at a couple of events (AGO).

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Yes, but we need more ATV trails.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: As an ATV rider I need to haul my machine a minimum of an hour south of the metro area to ride. The tri-county ATV Park is only 10 acres. We need a riding area in the metro.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Yes, I would like to see more money go to the trail ambassador program and enforcement.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: I would be confident the Legacy program is working if we can double the ATV trails and there was more hunting land.

**Participant: 8 Metro**

A. Introductory question: No.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: How do you measure an increase? First, target a population in each area and put in amenities to cater to the cultural population in each area. Second, don't lose focus of local parks.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: First, I like these priorities. Connections are very important and need to be accelerated. Second, make better use of the land by offering more multi-use trails.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Many user groups already pay for maintenance such as ATV/snowmobile registration fees, cross country trail passes, etc. I think these trail pass proceeds should pay for day to day maintenance.

4. Coordinate among partners: Trails that stop at a county/city line because a boarding area did not coordinate the trail building is a problem. Doing research on trails like this and putting connections in as in strategic direction #2 is important.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Seeing more designated ATV/OHV/snowmobile trails. If we know where we can ride we are more likely to stay on the trail and keep the environmental impact low.

Advice: Emphasize sharing and multi-use, let's use our parks and trails better.

**Participant: 9 Metro**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: First, repackage the product as destinations, seek out joint marketing across jurisdictions to provide a multitude of opportunities. Second, we need



to have an honest discussion about whether the product is currently attractive to potential consumers. We all believe it is important and relevant.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Not focused on other regional areas of growth and significant population densities (Fargo-Moorhead, Duluth-Superior, etc). Do an evaluation of existing land holdings to see if they can provide new opportunities.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Broaden the discussion – be transparent – take a leadership role and share the collective vision. Be transformational and innovative.

**Participant: 10 Metro**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Outreach to ethnic groups via churches, provide equipment and skills programming like: take a kid fishing, clubs providing snowmobile safety training, need to engage teens and volunteering expansion.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Put some value on more vulnerable natural resource areas instead of their location near population centers. Place priority on development and re-development.

3. Take Care of What We Have: “Long lasting impact” is good criteria but define what is “long lasting”. Rehabbing infrastructure to make it accessible and long lasting would have impact.

**Participant: 11 Metro**

A. Introductory question: Yes.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Make sure to engage minority populations and communities, engage older children in park activities (+12 years old), utilize new technologies and encourage more volunteering opportunities.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Focus on valuable natural resource areas and land areas which create important open space and trail connections.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Agree.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Improvements made at regional park facilities.

Advice: Prioritize list of projects/acquisitions over an extended period of time.

**Participant: 12 Metro**

A. Introductory question: Workshop in Brainerd

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Relationships with schools in greater Minnesota.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Believe that certain areas in rapid growth should be protected as parks for nearby families. Land acquisition is not a priority in our area however, and do not want our possibilities or funding to suffer.

3. Take Care of What We Have: I agree with the proposal. Day to day maintenance is or should be part of an existing budget.

4. Coordinate among partners: Less government (statewide advisory body).

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: I want to see visible results in all parts of the state.

**Participant: 13 Metro**

A. Introductory question: Yes, in Brainerd.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Increased snowmobile safety training, geo-caching, mountain biking, volunteers, and better relationships with schools.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Acquire land at best price and give inner city kids somewhere to go.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Capital asset management only, natural resource management only.

4. Coordinate among partners: Counties have GPS trails, website, apps, no government red tape.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: Balance between parks/trails and connecting trails.

Advice: Don't forget about the motorized folks and trails.

**Participant: 14 Metro**

A. Introductory question: Yes.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: We need to stress "youth" in the communications.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: The summary sounded good, but I would like to see the details in the report.

3. Take Care of What We Have: Long lasting impact may be hard to define, however it makes more sense to maintain rather than replace sooner than may be needed if it were maintained. If maintenance is not an allowed expense we may see our Legacy dollars wastefully used in unnecessary re-development.

4. Coordinate among partners: Website helping with a seamless experience is a great idea.

D. Final thoughts

Look Ahead: There needs to be some legislature direction toward the priorities or this will not happen. The public is really watching how this is spent.

**Participant: 15 Metro**

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Yes. Need to study those who don't visit/participate and find out why. Reach out to schools, churches, social groups, create fishing packages and create opportunities to volunteer.

2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Repurpose or redevelop land already in holding.

D. Final thoughts

Advice: Nice job on a complex issue; let the region work to determine their priorities.

**Participant: 17 Metro**

A. Introductory question: Several years ago I participated in a 1-2 year committee on the future of the parks in 2025. I have been to all the state parks 3 times.

B. Four Strategic Directions

1. Connect People to the Outdoors: Parks are being made available to disabled but campers are not accessible. Minnesota needs to push manufacturers to make campers accessible. Keep up and finish what you are doing; more time available so people are able to use it.
  2. Acquire Land, Develop Opportunities: Go where you can make the deal, complete the existing system.
  3. Take Care of What We Have: More ecology based repair and longer lasting equipment.
- C: Prioritizing the four strategic directions: Take care of what we already have!
- D. Final thoughts
- Advice: Do this in regional and state parks.