SCOTT COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION
PRELIMINARY AGENDA

****Note: Location and Time Change****

3:30 PM May 1st, 2019

Scott County Extension and Conservation Center – “The Fair Grounds”
7151 West 190th Street, Jordan, MN 55352

1. Roll Call – Pat Stieg, Chair

   Mark Ewert, District 4
   Kristin French, At Large
   Kathy Gerlach, District 3
   Barb Hedstrom, District 1
   Jerry Hennen, At Large
   Eric Spieler, District 2
   Patrick Stieg, District 5
   Commissioner Jon Ulrich, Scott County Board Liaison

2. Approve Agenda

3. Approve Minutes of the February 6, 2019 and April 3, 2019 meetings

4. Recognition of Interested Citizens for Items Not on Agenda (No action will be taken.)

5. Administration, Planning and Development
   a. Parks and Trails Legacy – 10th Anniversary Report (3:40 PM to 4:00 PM)

6. Maintenance, Facilities/Visitor Services, and Natural Resources (4:00 PM to 4:30 PM)
   a. Blakeley Bluffs Land Stewardship Update and Partnership with Scott Soil and Water
      Conservation District (No packet information.)
   b. Ravine Study (No packet information.)

7. Adjourn (4:30 PM)

****Immediately following the meeting the Parks Advisory Commission meeting will partake in a tour of
the Blakeley Bluffs area****

Parks Advisory Commission Tour

See Packet for Background Material to Review in Preparation for Tour

- Board the Tour Bus (4:40PM)
- Tour of Blakeley Area (5:00PM to 8PM) – A tour packet will be provided on the bus.
- Arrive back to the Scott County Extension and Conservation Center (8:30PM)
SCOTT COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 6, 2019

The Scott County Parks Advisory Commission held their February meeting on February 6, 2019 at Cleary Lake Regional Park Visitor Center / Golf Clubhouse, 18106 Texas Avenue, Prior Lake, MN 55372. Staff members present were Patty Freeman, General Manager of Scott County Parks and Trails, Nathan Moe, Parks Planner, Scott Fuhrman, Parks and Natural Resources Coordinator, and Beverly Cox-Alexander, Secretary.

1) Roll Call: Chair Patrick Stieg called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM and proceeded with the roll call.
   Members present: Kristin French, Kathy Gerlach, Barb Hedstrom, Eric Spieler, and Patrick Stieg.
   Members Absent: Jerry Hennen, Mark Ewert and Commissioner Jon Ulrich

2) Approval of Agenda
   Motion by Commissioner Hedstrom second by Commissioner Spieler to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

3) Approval of meeting minutes for 01/02/19
   Motion by Commissioner Gerlach second by Commissioner Hedstrom to approve the 01/02/19 meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously.

4) Recognition of Interested Citizens for Items Not on Agenda
   • No citizen comment

The Advisory Commission will meet in work session to discuss the preliminary 2020-2024 Parks Improvement Program and CSAH 27 Construction Project

Workshop

1) Administration, Planning and Development

   Workshop lead by Patty Freeman
   • The workshop is to continue the conversation with proposed capital projects
     o The Capital Improvement Projects are still very early in the process
     o We will not be zeroing in and handing projects off to the County Government Team until May 2019
     o Feedback and review process as two agencies are involved in review
   • Funding coming from Scott County, from Parks and Trails Legacy, and State & Met Council bonds
   • Patty’s direction is to include input on capital projects from several groups
Park District Capital Review Committee (staff level) provides review and input
- Parks Commission review, input, suggestions
- Governance team (review prior to being submitted to the County Board)
- County Board review, input, final decision
- Looking for feedback; not necessarily a precise recommendation
  - Patty will bring the PAC feedback to the CPC (Capital Planning Committee) and come back next month with an update

Parks Advisory Commission Feedback on PIP
- Help target projects that are most needed
- Information to share with community
- Keep abreast and engaged on operation and infrastructure
- Ask questions to help us hone in on scope
- Opportunity to suggest ideas
- Weigh near term within vision and goals
- Feedback for team, county leadership and County Board

20 Year System Vision (based on 2040 plan; for discussion)
- Design for Phase 1 Doyle-Kennefick
  - Development (2025) Construction (2026)
- Blakeley Master Plan (2026)
- Scott Regional Trail (2026)
- Design Cedar Lake Farm Phase 2
  - Development (2028) and construction (2029)

2020 Vision
- Master Plan Cleary Lake Regional Park (2019 – 2020)
- Maintenance Shop (2019 – 2020)
- Regional Trail Plans (2020)
- Design for Lakefront Development (2020-2021)
  - Construction (2022)

Other System Plans, Opportunities for Consideration
- Regional Trail Development
  - Potential opportunity north of Cedar Lake
  - Minnesota River Bluffs Extension UP Rail Line
  - Scott Regional Trail Development Cleary to Murphy-Hanrehan
- Cedar Lake Farm
  - Market Discovery Center
  - Off Leash Dog Area
- Murphy Hanrehan
  - Hike-In Camping
  - Trailhead and Programs Building
- Clearly Lake Regional Park
  - Campground Overhaul Opportunity
  - Picnicking expansion
  - Other amenities
- Blakeley Bluffs
  - First Phase of Development
  - Continued Acquisition
- Doyle-Kennefick
  - Nature Discovery Center
  - Paved Trails
  - Continued Acquisition
- The Landing
  - What is the long term vision

15 Year Vision for Expanded Outdoor Recreation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleary Vault Latrine</td>
<td>Legacy 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleary Maintenance</td>
<td>Legacy 2018-2020 County and TRPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Master Planning</td>
<td>Legacy 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Lake Lakefront</td>
<td>Legacy 2021-2023 Regional CIP – State/MC Bonds FY 2019-2022, County Bond Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doyle-Kennefick</td>
<td>Legacy 2024-2026 Regional CIP – State/MC Bonds FY 2023-2026 County Bond Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Lake Farm</td>
<td>Legacy 2027-2026 Regional CIP – State / MC Bonds FY 2027- 2030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Legacy 2030-2032 Regional CIP – State / MC Bonds FY 2030 - 2032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review of Preliminary Proposed Projects
- PAC Top (5) Priority Votes of Proposed Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Park</th>
<th>PAC Priority Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fence around maintenance compound</td>
<td>Cedar Lake Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-Dog Off Leash Area</td>
<td>Cleary Lake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic Entrance Gate – Horse Trail / Group Camp Parking Lot</td>
<td>Murphy - Hanrehan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary Dump Station &amp; Well Cleary Campground</td>
<td>Cleary Lake</td>
<td>X (4 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towing Vehicle and 12-passenger Van</td>
<td>System Wide</td>
<td>X (4 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shade Shelter – Beach</td>
<td>Cedar Lake Farm</td>
<td>X (3 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shade Shelter – Dog Off Leash Area</td>
<td>Cleary Lake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Utility Vehicle</td>
<td>System Wide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shade Shelter – Dog Off Leash Area</td>
<td>Spring Lake</td>
<td>X (1 vote)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic Entrance Gate – Main Trailhead</td>
<td>Murphy - Hanrehan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic Entrance Gate – South Entrance</td>
<td>Cleary Lake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install Windmill</td>
<td>Cedar Lake Farm</td>
<td>X (2 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Trails Master Planning</td>
<td>System Wide</td>
<td>X (5 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleary Lake Master Plan Update</td>
<td>Cleary Lake</td>
<td>X (4 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Leash Dog Area at Cedar Lake Farm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Area</td>
<td>Cleary Lake</td>
<td>X (2 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Play Area</td>
<td>Cleary Lake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splash Pad</td>
<td>Cleary Lake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. CSAH 27 Reconstruction Impacts and Mitigation Options

- Project will address deficiencies in roadway
  - Increase in development
  - Substandard design speed
  - High crash rate
- Conversion from (2) lane rural roadway to a (4) lane divided road
- Impact to Cleary
  - As the roadway tapers south of CSAH 27 and 21 portions of Cleary are affected
  - ~ 2 acres permanently impacted
  - 1.5 acres temporarily impacted
  - Engineering at 60% design
  - Construction in 2021
  - Paved loop trail / Scott West Regional Trail
  - Cross Country Ski Trail (minimal)
  - Tee box on hole 7
- Mitigation options
  - PAC members see value in each of the potential mitigation options, with the exception of the electronic messaging signs. (There is support for these signs in general, but not as mitigation to the road construction impact.)
  - Recognition that each option involves complexities, and would support any (except the signs).
  - Scott West Regional Trail Acquisition or Development
    - Supported by Commissioner Hedstrom
    - Supported by Commissioner Stieg
    - Supported by Commissioner Gerlach
  - Cleary Facility Improvements
    - Electronic messaging signs
  - Cleary Facility Improvement
    - Campground support Facilities
      - Supported by Commissioner Spieler
  - Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve Acquisition
    - Supported by Commissioner French
    - Supported by Commissioner Hedstrom
    - Supported by Commissioner Stieg
    - Supported by Commissioner Spieler
    - Supported by Commissioner Gerlach

2) Informational Items
   a. Update on Camp Kici Yapi Relocation

- The YMCA is considering resubmit a plan for Phase I
- Another public open house will be forthcoming
- Negative impact from the public has been received on this project

b. Update on Cleary maintenance Facility Construction

- The necessary agreements at this time are signed
- Project team meets in a week to officially kick off project
c. Advisory Commissioner Reports

- Commissioner Spieler advised French Lake Park has new play-ground equipment
- Commissioner Stieg commented there is a new development going in on the north end of Murphy
  - Development to be mixed housing.
  - Hearing feedback (at City) that multi-family homes are not fitting to have next to the regional park
- Commissioner Stieg reported Commissioner Spieler was featured in the Scott County Residence Report Magazine
- Commissioner Stieg will present an update on the 10 year Legacy celebration at the March meeting

d. Upcoming Events
   (1) Fat Bike Fun Race at Cleary Lake – February 16th, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

3) Upcoming Meetings – Tentative
   a. March
      - Wayfinding Update
      - Acquisition Priorities
      - Recreation Programming update
      - Preliminary Budget Discussion
      - Capital Projects
      - Mitigation
   b. April
      - Capital Projects Update
      - Tours
      - Budget Update

4) Adjourn

   Motion by Commissioner Hedstrom; Second Commissioner Spieler to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

   The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.
Patrick Stieg, Vice Chair

Date

Beverly Cox-Alexander, Secretary
SCOTT COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 3, 2019

The Scott County Parks Advisory Commission held their April meeting on April 3, 2019 at the Scott County Government Center, 200 Fourth Avenue West, Shakopee, MN 55379. Staff members present were Patty Freeman, General Manager of Scott County Parks and Trails, Nathan Moe, Parks Planner, and Beverly Cox-Alexander, Secretary.

1) Roll Call: Chair Patrick Stieg called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and proceeded with roll call.
   Members present: Kathy Gerlach, Barb Hedstrom, Jerry Hennen, Patrick Stieg, Mark Ewert and Commissioner Jon Ulrich
   Members Absent: Kristin French and Eric Spieler

2) Pledge of Allegiance

3) Approval of Agenda

   Motion by Commissioner Hedstrom; second by Commissioner Gerlach to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

4) Approval of meeting minutes for 02/06/19
   • Hold for staff review

5) Recognition of Interested Citizens for Items Not on Agenda
   • No citizen comment

6) Administration, Planning and Development
   a. 2019 Tour Planning
      Spring Lake Lakeside Inspiration (Spring?)
      • The master plan identifies several amenities
        o Picnic options
        o Lake access
          ▪ Boat access (hand carry)
          ▪ Fishing pier
        o Playgrounds
          ▪ Other amenities on a smaller lakeside footprint
      • Destination ideas
        o Cleary
        o Lakefront Park
        o Lebanon Hills VC
        o Bryant Regional Park
        o Bush and Normandale Lake
Commissioner Hedstrom commented she would be interested in visiting parks with newer facilities. Spring Lake Park has a very sloped shoreline; it would be interesting to see other parks with that kind of a sloped shoreline.

Commissioner Gerlach commented it would be beneficial to look at other parks with a similar footage. Also recommend focusing on parks with no swimming beach.

Commissioner Hennen commented Woodlake in Richfield has a nature center.

- Murphy-Hanrehan (summer?)
  - Tour of the inner portions of the park
  - Trailhead building
  - MORC discussion
  - Forestry/wildlife manager presentation

- Doyle-Kennefick (Fall)
  - Highlighting the stewardship and envisioning the future
    - Anticipate introducing use ~ 5 + years
    - Drive car / bus; possible golf cart / ATV’s
    - Visit the homestead and barn
    - Review natural resources restoration progress
    - Visit with a natural resources partner Great River Greening

Other ideas
- Blakeley Bluffs Driving Tour
  - Review county owned property
  - Review potentially available properties
- US Fish and Wildlife
  - Important amenity for outdoor recreation
  - Discussion needed to identify what elements of the Wildlife Refuge are important to help inform the regional parks and trails in SC
- The Landing
  - Folkways of the Holidays

b. 2019 Calendar and Work Planning

1. Tour Priorities
- Lakefront areas – (recommended)
- Murphy-Hanrehan
- Doyle-Kennefick (still a few years out in planning)
- Blakeley Bluffs – (recommended)
- MN Valley Wildlife Refuge
- The Landing Folkways (social event)

2. Calendar (Proposal)
- May 1 PAC Meeting plus Tour
  - Blakeley Ravines Project
    - Ryan Holzer with the WMO to provide presentation
  - 10th anniversary PTLF Report
    - Commissioner Stieg to provide update
o Acquisition Update
  o Tour (Blakeley Bluffs) plus meeting (3:30 to 8:30 PM)
• June 5th PAC Meeting plus tour
  o PAC / County Board Workshop
  o Tour and meeting / workshop with Scott County Board (3:30 to 8:30 PM)
• July 3rd PAC Meeting – (Move date due to Independence day)
  o Proposed dates: July 22, 23, 24, or 25
• August 7th PAC Meeting
  o Move date or leave as tentative?
• September 4th PAC Meeting plus Tour
• October 2nd PAC Meeting plus Tour

c. 2020 Operating Budget Process and Preliminary Priorities

• 2019 Budget High Level Breakdown
  o Partnership Budget: $2,464,635.00

• Budget Process Timeline
  o April 3rd – PAC Meeting
  o May 1st – PAC Meeting
  o June 4th – Board Workshop
  o June 5th – PAC Meeting
  o July 11th – Joint Board Meeting
  o July 30th – Preliminary 2020 Budget Proposal to Board
  o September 3rd – Budget and CIP Session with Board
  o September 17th – Set Preliminary 2020 Levy
  o October 29th – Strategic Planning and Budget Session
  o November 12th – Board Planning Workshop

• Partnership Team discussion to date
  o Staff Team – Principles Discussed
    ▪ Work as a team
    ▪ New revenue and meet demand
    ▪ Consistency with County leadership and policy makers
    ▪ Consider new ways of doing business
  o Staff Team – Objectives Discussed
    ▪ Build Awareness of system through partnerships and events; build awareness of events / programs
    ▪ Tours for policy makers
    ▪ Address inefficiency and capacity in maintenance delivery
    ▪ Build awareness; support ~ 5 – 10 year Comp Plan goals and 15 – 20 year vision

• Budget Focus
  o Outdoor Recreation and Education
  o Maintenance and Natural Resources
  o Facilities / Visitor Services and Park Service
  o Revenue Gap
  o Wages and Benefits

• Proposed Budget Goals:
  o Growth through Partnerships (Rec programs, Natural Resources)
  o Address Inefficiencies (Rec Programs and Maintenance)
  o Grow Senior Golf League (Visitor services)
  o Confirm Budget Savings or Reallocation (Visitor Services)
d. Trail Kiosk and Wayfinding Update

Wayfinding work group progress

- Staff recommend Option 1 with some modifications
  - Level A
    - Remove the middle post and center the partnership logo, and include a flat or tilted roof option
  - Level B
    - Remove Level B2 and add a level between the A and B
  - Level C
    - Removing the trail name sign and placing a sign on the post itself in two directions
    - Trail name to be displayed vertically on the post
  - Branding / Marketing
    - Option of removable oval branding
    - Commissioners in favor of branding
  - Content
    - The first draft of content updates have been reviewed
    - The next phase includes refinements
    - Improvements: More universal messaging, focus on amenities, and flexibility of extra space
  - Next steps
    - Signia will develop specifications
    - Content will be revised and vetted with project team
    - Coordination with local government
    - Siting and site design for kiosk placement
    - Patty Freeman suggested having (3) mock-ups be brought in for Commissioners to view / discuss

7) Informational Items

a. Projects / Other Updates

i) Camp Kici Yapi Relocation

- New Market township recommended denial of the Conditional Use Permit by a 4 to 1 vote siting neighborhood concerns as the main issue
  - In recommendation for denial they provided suggested conditions should the county elect to approve the CUP
- The County Planning commission held the public hearing on March 11th
  - Approval was recommended of the CUP by a vote of 4 to 1
- Staff is working with the Township attorney on a development agreement and providing review comments to the YMCA consultants on the submitted project plans
- County staff is anticipating the YMCA will need to submit additional revised plans to the board likely at a County Board Meeting for action on May 7th

ii) Cleary maintenance Shop

- 7600 square foot maintenance shop
- Project cost is close to $2.3 Million
• Oertel Architects is working on the schematic design
• Preliminary plans to be complete April 18th
• Next steps to determine mechanical and electrical needs
• Executive team meeting is scheduled for April 24th
• Design development to be complete beginning of June
• On schedule for a tentative wrap up of design by the end of summer
• Bid phase starting in August 2019
• Construction between September 2019 and Spring 2020

iii) CSAH 27/21 Construction Project and Mitigation
• The Policy Committee Park District in Scott County met about (3) weeks ago and had a high level overview of the construction project needs, benefits, impact to the park, land impacts and facility impacts
• Staff received feedback from the Policy Committee to prioritize facility improvements for mitigation
• Parks staff will further review facility needs and opportunities opportunity or need there is for funding being contributed to the maintenance building

iv) 2018 Joint meeting Three Rivers Park District and Scott County Board
• Joint meeting is on the calendar for July 11th at Cedar Lake Farm

b. Upcoming Events, Programs, Camps
   i) Recreation and Education Opportunities
      (1) Spring Programs – at Cleary and Cedar Lake Farm Regional Parks and Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve
      (2) Summer Camps – at Cleary and Cedar Lake Farm Regional Parks and Murphy – Hanrehan Park Reserve
      (3) Outdoor Recreation School – School Flier

c. Advisory Commissioner Reports
• Chair Patrick Stieg commented the signage system at Murphy is a tremendous improvement

8) Upcoming meetings
a. May – Cleary Maintenance Facility, 10th Anniversary Report Parks and Trails Legacy, Blakeley Ravine Project, Acquisition Update, Tour


9) Adjourn

   Motion by Commissioner Ewert; Second Commissioner Hedstrom to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.
PARKS COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM: 5.a 10th Anniversary Report on Parks and Trails Legacy

MEETING DATE: May 1, 2019

PREPARED BY: Patricia Freeman

REQUESTED ACTION: Discuss and Provide Feedback

Parks Advisory Commission Chair, Pat Stieg, will lead a discussion of the report ‘Marking the 10th Anniversary of Legacy Amendment Impact on Minnesota’s Parks and Trails’. The PAC is asked to discuss the summary of statewide feedback presented in the report and to reflect on the impact of Parks and Trails Legacy in the Scott County Parks and Trails System and community.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

In 2008, Minnesota’s voters passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment) to the Minnesota Constitution to: protect drinking water sources; to protect, enhance, and restore wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat; to preserve arts and cultural heritage; to support parks and trails; and to protect, enhance, and restore lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater.

The Legacy Amendment increases the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent beginning on July 1, 2009 and continuing until 2034. The additional sales tax revenue is distributed into four funds as follows: 33 percent to the clean water fund; 33 percent to the outdoor heritage fund; 19.75 percent to the arts and cultural heritage fund; and 14.25 percent to the parks and trails fund.

The Four Legacy Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Revenue</th>
<th>Fund Name</th>
<th>Funding Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Clean Water Legacy</td>
<td>Thirty-three percent of the sales tax revenue from the Legacy amendment is allocated to the Clean Water Fund. Those funds may only be spent to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation. At least five percent of the clean water fund must be spent to protect drinking water sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Outdoor Heritage Legacy</td>
<td>Thirty-three percent of the sales tax revenue from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment is allocated to the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Those funds &quot;may be spent to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forest and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.75%</td>
<td>Arts and Culture Legacy</td>
<td>The Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund receives 19.75 percent of the sales tax resulting from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment to support arts, arts education and arts access, and to preserve Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.25%</td>
<td>Parks and Trails Legacy*</td>
<td>The Parks and Trails Fund receives 14.25 percent of the sales tax revenue resulting from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment. Those funds may only be spent to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 10th Anniversary report focuses on the Parks and Trails Legacy Funding and outcomes.
The Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee
The Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee (PTLAC) is composed of representatives from the Metropolitan Council, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. Its purpose is to provide recommendations to enhance promotion, coordination, and accountability related to the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund throughout the implementation of the 25-year life of the Legacy Amendment.

The Report
‘Marking the 10th Anniversary of Legacy Amendment Impact on Minnesota’s Parks and Trails’

The Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee, along with the leadership of the park agencies, undertook an effort in 2018, to celebrate the first ten years of one of the funds – The Parks and Trails Legacy Fund - and to gather feedback from the residents of Minnesota on the impact of Parks and Trails Legacy.

Through nine events held across the state including at the MN State Fair, the Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment was celebrated with over 12,500 people; state and regional parks were showcased; and participants had opportunities to share their perspectives on the outcomes of the Parks and Trails Legacy fund over the last ten years and aspirations for the future.

Attachments:
An email copy was provided previously. Please contact Patty if you would like to receive the report again by either email or a hard copy by mail.
PARKS COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM:  Tour Preparation Materials

MEETING DATE:  May 1, 2019

PREPARED BY:  Patricia Freeman

REQUESTED ACTION:  Review for Tour

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The PAC is asked to review excerpts of the Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Acquisition Master Plan in preparation for the tour. The selected excerpts include a vision and goals established as a part of the master planning process and an introduction to the future park uses and significance of the lands proposed to be acquired.

The full document may be accessed at this link: Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Acquisition Master Plan

Attachments:

Excerpts from the Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Acquisition Master Plan.
Boundary Plan

Introduction
This section presents the vision and goals for the park reserve, describes the park reserve boundary and process of identifying an alignment, and details the anticipated function of the lands selected for the park reserve. The firm SRF Consulting Group was hired to provide master planning and site analysis and to facilitate the process of identifying the boundary.

Boundary Plan
Based on early community feedback and technical findings a set of broad goals and a vision for the future park reserve emerged. From these a set of criteria was established to guide selection of lands to acquire for the park reserve and these were used along with a set of alignment considerations to design the overall boundary (Figure 3 Map 1). Through an iterative review process that involved the CDT, Parks Advisory Commission, County Board, Blakeley Township Board and residents of Scott County the 6,000 acre Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Search area (Figure 2) was refined to approximately 2,440 acres.

Park Reserve Goals
The following park reserve goals emerged:
- Preserve scenic character, historic landscapes and offer scenic viewing of river valley.
- Enhance native plant communities and expand core wildlife habitat areas.
- Protect opportunity for destination hiking trails, river access, canoeing and kayaking, and bike trail connections.
- Protect cultural resources and Native American history of site.
- Protect and enhance opportunities for nature and culture exploration.
- Partnership with Ney Environmental Learning Center in Le Sueur County.
- Create opportunity to improve water quality of Minnesota River.
- Create possibilities for economic growth in Blakeley – “Little Lanesboro” concept.

Vision for Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve
This vision looks ahead after decades of acquisition and stewardship efforts have set the stage for a new master plan and development of the site.

Blakeley Bluffs is a regional destination for river-bluff hiking, canoeing and kayaking. The park reserve is known for its high quality scenery and habitat and trail network that forms a unique water and bluff grand-round adventure trail through the Minnesota River Valley landscape. Restoration of the park reserves’ landscape to a corridor of forests, woodlands, prairies and wetlands has created a quality natural environment where natural and cultural resource exploration, camping and biking opportunities compliment the grand-round trail offering the best outdoor recreation setting in the region.
Park Reserve Boundary

This section gives an overview of the park reserve boundary and the primary factors that went into determining its placement (Figure 3). It is broken up into a description of the Overall, Western and Northern and the Southern and Eastern portions of the boundary. (Full page enlargements of the park reserve can be found in the Maps Section.)

**Overall Boundary**

The Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve boundary encompasses approximately 2,440 acres of land. (Full page master plan images appear in the Maps Section.) At its northern tip the boundary includes a portion of the hamlet of Blakeley. To the south the boundary extends just beyond a portion of Salisbury Hill Road and is adjacent to the Ney Wildlife Management Area. On its western side, the park reserve is bounded by the Minnesota River and floodplain lands. The eastern park reserve boundary follows roadways and parcel lines.

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**Figure 14.**
Parcel Review Criteria and Alignment Considerations used in Designing Park Reserve Boundary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcel Review Criteria</th>
<th>Alignment Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Natural Resources</td>
<td>Utilize easily recognized features to create clear boundaries (roadways, distinct topographic features)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Views of River Valley</td>
<td>Minimize impacts to landowners. Follow parcel lines and agricultural fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of Bluff and Ravine Areas</td>
<td>Community interest in supporting long-term agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffer Lands for Bluff and Ravine Areas</td>
<td>Landowner interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known or Potential Cultural Resources</td>
<td>US Fish and Wildlife acquisition plans for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Minnesota River</td>
<td>Contiguous land areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacency with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Lands</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildable Area for Park Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proximity to cities of Henderson and Blakeley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proximity to Ney Nature Center</td>
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**Figure 3 Blakeley Bluffs Master Plan**
Western and Northern Boundary
The western park reserve boundary follows the Minnesota River and its floodplain. This boundary captures lands that offer outstanding natural, cultural and scenic features that will support outstanding recreation activities and resource conservation. There were three primary considerations in determining the extent of the western boundary from the hamlet of Blakeley on the north end to the Ney Wildlife Management Area (Ney WMA) on the south. Assembling sufficient contiguous area that as a whole will protect the identified goals for the site was a strong consideration. Access to the Minnesota River and to areas of floodplain landscape at key locations was identified as being important to providing quality river-based recreation as a compliment to bluff and upland based activities, and to support a connection with the hamlet of Blakeley as a gateway to the river and a “Little Lanesboro” concept. Floodplain lands offering access to the Minnesota River across the Burlington Northern Railway were considered a high priority. This rail line runs between the Minnesota River and the base of the bluffs the full length of the park reserve, limiting pedestrian and vehicular access to official railway crossings. New crossings for park reserve purposes are unlikely, making acquisition of areas that have existing crossings a priority.

Eastern and Southern Boundary
At the northern tip of the park reserve, the eastern boundary follows County Road 1 and parcel lines towards County Road 51 where the site of the future main park entrance has been preliminarily identified. The boundary continues to the west along County Road 51, and then follows parcel lines southward, to just south of Salisbury Hill Road. The southern boundary follows parcel lines and is adjacent to the Ney WMA. Lands in what is roughly the eastern half of the park reserve were selected for their natural features, capacity to buffer cultural and natural resource areas, opportunity for native plant cover restoration and habitat expansion, and for locating infrastructure and amenities related to park use and development. Specific alignment of the eastern boundary uses parcel lines and roadways to limit impacts to landowners and for ease of boundary management.

The southern park reserve boundary was based on the presence of the Ney WMA. Adjacency with this property provides protection of the ecologically linked resources within the WMA and park reserve and provides an opportunity for cooperative programming and land stewardship between the County and MNDNR. The specific alignment of the southern boundary follows roadways and parcel lines. Several parcels to the south of the park reserve boundary were removed from a preliminary park reserve concept. Strong landowner opposition to the park reserve triggered a reassessment of the potential value of the lands to the park reserve. It was determined that while the forests in this area are of exceptionally high quality and the properties potentially could offer trail connections, land owner concerns outweighed the need to plan for these lands as a part of the park reserve today. Partnering with the private landowners on stewardship activities will be an effective way to protect these ecologically impressive lands. In the coming years and with a future development master plan process, these parcels should be re-evaluated for their potential functional value to the regional park reserve for paved trail connection, recreational use and other possible functions. Any future planning would also include public, resident and landowner involvement.
Park Reserve Elements and Land Function
Below is a detailed discussion of the park reserve features and land function identified as priorities for the park reserve and intended to be protected through acquisition.

Scenic Character and Views
Acquisition of the site’s contiguous land areas featuring ravines and bluff tops was identified as critical to ensure the scenic and historic character of Minnesota River Valley landscape continues to define the site and offer a quality setting for outdoor recreation. It will be important to acquire and subsequently restore residential and agricultural areas to native land covers in order to protect the fundamental character of the park reserve. Bluff property in the northern and central areas of the site offer extensive view sheds of the Minnesota Valley. Acquisition of these areas will ensure the scenic character of the bluff landscape is a part of the recreational experience of Blakeley Bluffs. Future site design and placement of infrastructure and support amenities will need to carefully consider impacts to views and sightlines.

Ecological and Natural Resources
The Blakeley Bluffs area has regional ecological significance as one of only several large, continuous blocks of habitat in the surrounding region and as the only large area of contiguous bluff and ravine landscape currently protected or planned for protection on the Minnesota River in the region. Acquisition and restoration of the ravines and the intervening upland areas currently in agricultural and residential cover is intended to enhance the site’s value as a wildlife corridor and habitat area for rare species, to preserve native plant communities and biological diversity and to help address ravine erosion which may be contributing to poor water quality of the Minnesota River. Due to the extreme slopes of ravine areas the majority of the visitor access and experience in the upland portions of the park reserve will occur in the restored agricultural fields.
Cultural Resources
Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve presents a significant opportunity to protect culturally important sites and to interpret the intensive occupation of the Minnesota River and its tributaries by indigenous people during the Ceramic/Mound state (ca. 3,000 BP to A.D. 1750) as well as the Euro-American history period. Archaeological sites representing both pre-contact and early Euro-American are documented in this area and the lands have been identified as having high potential for additional cultural resources. Bluff and ravine areas have the highest potential for containing pre-contact cultural artifacts. Inclusion of these cultural resources into the park reserve was recognized as being important to their protection and for the opportunity to interpret the history of the site, particularly the story of the earliest inhabitants of the area.

Gateway to the River and “Little Lanesboro Concept”
Floodplain properties adjacent to the hamlet of Blakeley are included in the boundary, identified to provide a ‘Gateway to the River’ for direct access to the Minnesota River for passive recreation (canoeing/kayaking, fishing, birding, and informal swimming) and educational pursuits providing a superb point of interaction with the river. Eight acres of these floodplain lands are former residential properties that were purchased by the County Highway Department over the past several years due to repeated flooding and will be transferred for park purposes. Capacity of the lands to provide a motor boat access and the need and site appropriateness for a power-boat access will be evaluated during a future development master planning process.

The floodplain lands adjacent to the hamlet of Blakeley also support a “Little Lanesboro” concept that emerged from a public tour of the park reserve site. The concept envisions economic growth possibilities within the town of Blakeley related to the site as a trailhead and Gateway to the River. Small business venture opportunities could be based on these outdoor activities. The concept recognizes and builds on existing trail, canoe and kayak use in the area, on the unique character of the hamlet, and the proximity to the City of Henderson, a river community that actively promotes nature exploration and education.
Recreational Uses
While recreational and development amenity planning is not a component of acquisition master plans, the Blakeley Bluffs park reserve goals and vision reflect recreational use and conservation ideas that came through strongly in the public workshops and parallel the values shared by members of the community. These set the stage for future use and will guide acquisition priorities. They are in-line with the concept of park reserves, and through careful design should fit sustainably within the natural and cultural resources of the site; however a development master planning process will confirm future uses, amenities and infrastructure. The uses most commonly identified in the process included an extensive network of hiking trails, bike trail connections and linkages to regional and state trails; wildlife observation and nature study; camping; cultural resources learning and river canoeing and kayaking.

A grand-round water and bluff trail concept was envisioned to meander through a diversity of bluff top and ravine landscapes and then a paddle on the river. Camping could be incorporated and potentially the hamlet of Blakeley could offer outfitting, food and lodging accommodations. The City of Henderson, upstream approximately 20 river miles currently offers similar accommodations and potentially could serve as the upstream gateway for the water and bluff trail.

Environmental Education and Outdoor Recreation Programming
It is the County’s intent to partner with organizations and other public agencies as much as possible to offer outdoor and environmental programming in the park reserve. A short distance to the south of the park reserve across the Le Sueur County boundary is the Ney Environmental Learning Center. The Ney offers year round environmental learning and outdoor recreation programming and events. The County will explore opportunities to collaborate with the Ney, and the Cities of New Prague, Belle Plaine and Henderson in delivering programs and activities.

Main Entry and Road System
A possible future main entrance has been identified on County Road 51 (250th Street), close to the intersection of County Road 1 and County Road 51, providing fairly direct access to/from
Interstate 169. The County’s 2030 Comprehensive Transportation Plan identifies the current and future functional classification of County Road 1 as Collector street, but in the future will be tied in with an extension of County Road 2, an A Minor Arterial. The existing road network is expected to be utilized and a possible access road provided towards the north end of the park from County Road 1 (Union Trail). The master plan also identifies the possibility of making a road connection along the base of the bluffs, reconnecting Chatfield Drive where it flooded out previously, if it is found feasible and meets a vehicular access need.
Conflicts and Mitigation

Land Acquisition and Residents
Residents within and adjacent to the park reserve expressed interest in the County’s approach to land acquisition – is the County actively seeking to acquire park land? Will the County utilize eminent domain? Residents were provided with the County’s current approach to acquiring land for the park reserve. The County is not actively seeking to purchase land, but will respond to opportunities as they arise. For instance, if a landowner approaches the County with the intent to sell or if land is proposed for development the County will consider acquisition. If funding is identified, the County may choose to purchase the property. While, the County has legal authority to utilize eminent domain and has chosen to use it related to road projects, it has been the County’s practice to only buy parkland from willing sellers and this practice is expected to continue. This acquisition approach was shared with residents throughout the master planning process. It will be critical that residents and property owners continue to receive consistent and updated communication regarding the park reserve. The County is committed to proactively communicating updates on the park reserve and to proactively clarify the County’s acquisition approach and any changes to the approach.

Park Roads
Much of the road system within the planned park reserve boundary is currently under the jurisdiction of Blakeley Township with the remainder under County jurisdiction. While a future development master plan will determine the need and location for the park reserve road network, this Plan anticipates it will primarily utilize the existing roadway network and could include the addition of an access road on the north side of the park off of Union Trail and potentially (if feasible) a reconnection of Chatfield Drive towards the hamlet of Blakeley. Typically the road network within a developed park or park reserve offering public services is the responsibility of the park agency jurisdiction, in this case Scott County. Blakeley Bluffs is anticipated to be in an acquisition phase for years to come, and possibly decades, with public use either not offered during that time or offered at very low levels. As land is acquired for the park reserve and as interim or formal facility development occurs, the County will work with the Township to evaluate when the transition of a road should be made from Township responsibility to the County.
MAP 1: Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Master Plan
MAP 3: Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Master Plan Enlargement Area B
MAP 4: Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Master Plan Enlargement Area C
MAP 5: Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Master Plan Enlargement Area D
MAP 7: Slope, Soils and Hydrology
Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve