

CHAPTER FIVE

SYSTEM PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The major reason why people do not use parks is availability of time.

Many of the recreation facilities in the Chisago County Park System are in need of upgrading as a result of increasing population and resulting use, changing safety and design standards, growing recreation demand and changes in leisure time interests. The Chisago County Parks Department will pursue redevelopment of existing facilities, development of new facilities and expansion of park lands in its effort to continue to provide a high quality recreation service to the county residents.

The Parks and Trails comprehensive planning process has shown that county residents have a strong interest in outdoor recreation activities. The high percentage of family households, the influx of new home buyers and the large population of aging baby boomers and retirees suggests that recreation facilities must appeal to a broad cross-section of age groups. There is a need to serve children with an interest in activities such as swimming and active play; teenagers and young adults with interests such as rollerblading and volleyball and older adults with interests such as hiking and picnicking.

The planning process also has shown that residents are interested in natural resource-based recreation activities such as hiking in natural areas and bird watching and that they support the protection and enhancement of natural areas in the park system. The mission statement prepared during the planning process expresses this clearly by saying: The purpose of the Chisago County Parks Department is to provide parks, open space and leisure services for the public. Our primary mission encompasses the protection, preservation, and restoration of a natural, resource-based park system.

The Chisago County Parks Department is pursuing improvements to recreation facilities throughout the system. The park system is proposed to have the following park types:

County Park

Land classified as a County Park is an area of natural or ornamental quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as limited primitive camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming and trail uses. Although the service areas are intended to be county-wide, in many cases the County Parks are used primarily by the communities that surround them or are nearby. The park sites can be 10 to 200 acres in size and the settings are generally contiguous to water bodies or water courses.

Park Reserve Lands

Park Reserve lands are areas of unique quality such as watercourses and wetlands that are preserved for environmental or aesthetic benefits to the community and/or because of the negative environmental or economic effects of development in them. The service area may be a municipality, township or county. The site should be sized adequately to protect the resource.

The Chisago County Parks Department will utilize the Master Plan and individual park master plans as tools for identifying appropriate improvements or expansion for each park in the system. Cooperative efforts with municipalities and with other local, regional and state agencies are also key to effective development and maintenance of recreation facilities in the county.

This chapter includes:

- I. Discussion of development, redevelopment, natural resource management and expansion of Chisago County Parks;
- II. Discussion concerning the protection of natural areas that are currently in private ownership.

COUNTY PARKS

A County Park is generally 10 to 200 acres in size and provides a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities for county residents. There are five County Parks in Chisago County: Checkerboard, Fish Lake, Dennis Frandsen, Ki-Chi-Saga, and Kost Dam.

CHECKERBOARD COUNTY PARK

OVERVIEW

Checkerboard County Park is located along the eastern boundary of the City of North Branch and is a recreation area serving the local community. It offers water-related recreation opportunities such as playground areas, swimming, and fishing and passive recreation such as picnicking and hiking trails. A proposed regional trail corridor following Trunk Highway 95 will pass through the southeast corner of the park.

The park has a wooded, off-the-beaten-path ambience that should be considered when developing concepts for future uses. The park is surrounded by woodland which lends itself to activities such as hiking, picnicking and camping.

Future improvements to Checkerboard Park will focus on upgrading existing facilities and providing new camping facilities. Some opportunities also exist to provide the local community with opportunities for environmental education programs. In addition, because of its location on a regional trail corridor, park development may include a trailhead serving trail users heading north to Willard Munger Trail and East Boundary Trail, West to the Sunrise Prairie Trail, and future trail connections to Kost Dam Park, the Chisago Lakes area, and north to the St. Croix River.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Proposed Development:

A small campground

Proposed Redevelopment:

Swimming beach improvements including edging around the sand area, additional sand, swim buoys

TRAILS

Proposed Development:

Interpretive trails (approximately 1 mile)

Proposed Redevelopment:

BUILDINGS AND SHELTERS

Proposed Development:

none

Proposed Redevelopment:

Restroom upgrading and A.D.A. retrofitting

ROADS AND PARKING

Proposed Redevelopment:

Campground roads

LANDSCAPING AND AMENITIES

Landscaping in main activity area; possible planting to provide additional shaded areas; replacement of play equipment to conform to safety standards

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Opportunities for wetland restoration in the areas to the west and north of the pond where reed canarygrass is dominant. Parks within the southern portion of the county should be routinely surveyed and managed for common and glossy buckthorn invasion.

ACQUISITION, EASEMENTS AND LAND TRUSTS

The county may consider acquisition of 40 acres of land located adjacent to the park to the northwest of the pond.

ESTIMATED COST OF FULL DEVELOPMENT: \$360,000

DENNIS FRANDBEN COUNTY PARK

OVERVIEW

Dennis Frandsen County Park is located in the northwest portion of the county and has the longest expanse of lake shoreline of any the County Parks. It offers water-related recreation opportunities such as boating and fishing and passive recreation such as picnicking.

Future improvements to Frandsen Park will continue to focus on providing water-oriented recreational program opportunities for the local community. The identity of this park comes from its location on West Rush Lake and its away-from-it-all location. The master plan previously prepared for the park proposes new facilities such as a play area with permanent structures, hiking and interpretive trails and boardwalks, expanded parking, active recreation areas, additional fishing piers and boat docks, restrooms, picnic shelters, restored wetland, prairie, and savanna habitats.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Existing Development:

Fishing pier, picnic areas, informal hiking

Proposed Development:

Play area; fishing pier; picnic furnishings; 2 boat docks, pavilion, amphitheatre, four picnic shelters, horseshoe pit

TRAILS

Proposed Development:

Two miles of soft surfaced paths; boardwalk

INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

Proposed Development:

Signage; information kiosk, birdhouses, restored native habitats

ROADS AND PARKING

Proposed Redevelopment:

Provide all-weather pervious surfacing of roads and one existing and two proposed parking lots.

LANDSCAPING AND AMENITIES

Enhance landscaping throughout the park site; provide landscape plantings in active recreation areas, maintaining open turf areas for game areas. Wetland, prairie, and savanna areas will be planted in a natural manner to enhance the native restoration areas.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Management of exotic species, however species such as buckthorn and siberian elm may not be present or may be at lower densities than other portions of the county; oak savanna reforestation; wetland protection and restoration of wet/sedge meadows and forested wetlands, management of reed canarygrass.

ACQUISITION, EASEMENTS AND LAND TRUSTS

none

ESTIMATED COST OF FULL DEVELOPMENT: \$785,000

FISH LAKE COUNTY PARK

OVERVIEW

Fish Lake County Park is located on the western boundary of the City of Harris and is the most heavily used park within the County system. It offers recreation opportunities such as swimming, boat access, softball, playgrounds, picnicking and hiking and has wetland, pond and aspen-oak woods habitat areas. The park is located on Fish Lake and has the best opportunities for water-based recreation of the parks within the system. The park has close proximity to Interstate Highway 35 and has the highest use by visitors outside the county. The park probably has the strongest identity within the park system as a place with lake-oriented recreation. It is considered to be the prime destination for swimming within the park system. Proposed improvements will respond to the needs of a busy beach and lake facility.

Future improvements to Fish Lake Park will focus on upgrading existing facilities. There will continue to be a major emphasis on providing community-oriented facilities in the park and opportunities for social gatherings.

New facilities at Fish Lake may include new play equipment. Waste treatment systems within the park should be evaluated for providing adequate treatment if park use increases.

ACQUISITIONS

Potential expansion to abutting parcel to west along south shore of Fish Lake.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Proposed Development:

Proposed Redevelopment:

Bring existing play equipment up to safety codes.

INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

Proposed Development:

Information kiosk; signage

BUILDINGS AND SHELTERS

Proposed Development:

Reconfigured and paved parking facilities, expanded hiking trails east of County Road 65.

Proposed Redevelopment: none

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Enhance diverse wildlife habitat areas with additional native plantings; maintain or enhance buffer landscaping along abutting shoreline properties. Maintain vegetative screening of park structures from sight lines across Fish Lake. Monitor and manage shoreline of Fish Lake for erosion control, assess future need for bioengineered slope protection of shoreline periodically. Monitor and manage exotic species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle. Provide stronger management and restoration of areas heavily infested with reed canarygrass.

ESTIMATED COST OF FULL DEVELOPMENT: \$270,000

USER FEES

In 1990, the County implemented a user fee for visitors to Fish Lake Park. In its first year, a small profit was generated after the initial capital costs for setting up the fee collection system were deducted. Fees have been collected on weekends and holidays only. No specific studies have been conducted on the user impacts from the fees, or on the cost-benefit ratio for times of collection. Expansion of the fee system to include other days of the week has been discussed. Expansion of the user fee system has not been seriously considered for other parks within the system.

EXPANSION AND ACQUISITION

Expansion opportunities for the park have been informally explored. The abutting parcel to the west provides significant lakeshore frontage on Fish Lake. However, other development options may be occurring on this site. Wetlands abut the park to the southwest, and therefore would not allow for continuous active recreation space. The north shore of Fish Lake is heavily developed with lake homes, making park expansion in this direction very expensive.

KI-CHI-SAGA COUNTY PARK

OVERVIEW

Ki-Chi-Saga Park is located south of the City of Lindstrom and is highlighted by the historic Karl Oskar House and the largest athletic field complex in the park system. The park also has extensive shoreline on South Center Lake. In addition, it offers recreation opportunities such as picnicking, hiking and shore fishing.

The Karl Oskar House is considered to be one of the two significant historic structures within the park system. The structure is being restored to provide period representation of the time of Swedish settlement of eastern Minnesota in the 1850s and 1860s. The house was originally located on another portion of the South Center Lake shoreline and was moved to the park in late 1995. The house will be used as a park interpretive facility. It will provide historical interpretation about Swedish immigration to the Chisago Lakes region.

In spite of its semi-rural location, Ki-Chi-Saga Park has a community identity that focuses on cultural activities such as the Karl Oskar museum and a large softball complex. The future focus of the park should utilize these aspects of the park and incorporate its proximity to the lake and communities of the Chisago Lakes area.

Recent park improvements have included construction of 2 soccer fields, 3 softball/baseball diamonds, access road and parking lots, restroom facilities, renovation of the Karl Oskar House which is maintained the Chisago County Historical Society, construction of a picnic shelter, picnic furnishings, play equipment, benches and trail upgrades. Future improvements will focus on the social setting by enhancing the historic character of the buildings and site. There will continue to be a major emphasis on providing opportunities for social gatherings and community art programs in the park. Other major proposed improvements include the addition of parking, a fishing pier and a canoe launch at South Center Lake, accessible by an improved pedestrian connection across Glader Boulevard.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Proposed Development:

Fishing pier; small boat pier, pedestrian connections between South Center Lake and Karl Oskar House across Glader Boulevard.

TRAILS

Proposed Development:

Construct a trail connection across Glader Boulevard to the South Center Lake shoreline and Glader Cemetery.

INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

Proposed Development:

Interpretive signs; trail kiosk

BUILDINGS AND SHELTERS

Proposed Development:

none

ROADS AND PARKING

Proposed Development:

Parking lot near new soccer fields

LANDSCAPING AND AMENITIES

Enhance landscape planting throughout the site

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Monitor shoreline and stabilize lakeshore banks using bio-engineering as necessary. Provide buffer plantings between wildlife sanctuary and active use areas of the park and abutting properties.

ESTIMATED COST OF FULL DEVELOPMENT: \$310,000

KOST DAM COUNTY PARK

OVERVIEW

Kost Dam County Park is located southeast of North Branch and is the first park created within the County Park System. It offers recreation opportunities such as fishing, river access, playground, picnicking and walking and historical interest. Kost Dam impounds the Sunrise River creating a pond that extends to the south of the park. The river flows north out of the park through wooded areas. The park is located within 10 minutes of North Branch and the Chisago Lakes area.

The park has an identity as a scenic and pastoral place to go to enjoy a picnic. Significant changes to the nature of the park are not proposed. Additional passive activities that tie in well with the picnicking should be added, but the park is not large enough to accommodate significant changes in use.

Future improvements to Kost Dam Park will focus on upgrading existing facilities. There will continue to be a major emphasis on providing community-oriented facilities in the park and opportunities for small social gatherings. Additional interpretive facilities should be provided regarding the dam, remaining turbine and former mill on the site. Interpretive signage should be consistent with that used within other system parks such as at the Karl Oskar house in Ki-Chi-Saga Park, or within interpretive nature trails proposed for other parks. Funding for ongoing dam maintenance should be sought.

New facilities at Kost Dam will include restrooms and play equipment. The existing play equipment should be replaced with new pieces that conform to ASTM, CPSC and ADA safety guidelines.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Proposed Development:

none

Proposed Redevelopment:

Playground equipment - incorporate play structures into the layout.

INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

Proposed Development:

Information kiosk; signage

BUILDINGS, SHELTERS AND PARKING

Proposed Development:

Expanded and reconfigured parking facilities, provide better definition of parking areas to the west of the dam, consider additional parking near picnic area at west end of park.

Proposed Redevelopment:

none

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Consider expansion potential to the north by adding lowland and upland forest to the park. Enhance diverse wildlife habitat areas with additional native plantings; maintain or enhance buffer landscaping along abutting shoreline properties. Monitor and manage shoreline of pond for erosion control. Monitor and manage exotic species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle.

ESTIMATED COST OF FULL DEVELOPMENT: \$145,000

USER FEES

Expansion of the user fees to Kost Dam Park may not be cost-effective once the relatively low usage is factored.

EXPANSION AND ACQUISITION

Expansion opportunities for the park have not been explored. The abutting parcel to the north provides significant frontage on the Sunrise River and lowland and upland forest habitats. Expansion to the south along the pond would involve the acquisition of more parcels, which are mostly residential. One 40-acre parcel abuts the park to the southeast and has a lengthy frontage on the pond.

POTENTIAL PARK ACQUISITION SITES

LINDBERG SITE, Green Lake, Wyoming Twp.

This site is located on the west shore of Green Lake in Wyoming Township. The site is owned by Carl Lindberg and currently comprises 67 acres of farmland and a small camping facility. The site is mostly open with some tree cover along the lakeshore.

The Lindberg site has been informally discussed as a potential park site by Wyoming Township. It is located in the densely-settled southern portion of the county with easy access off U.S. Highway 8 from the population centers of Wyoming and Chisago Lakes. The site has topography that is fairly level and would provide for easy development. Lakeshore gradients are not excessive.

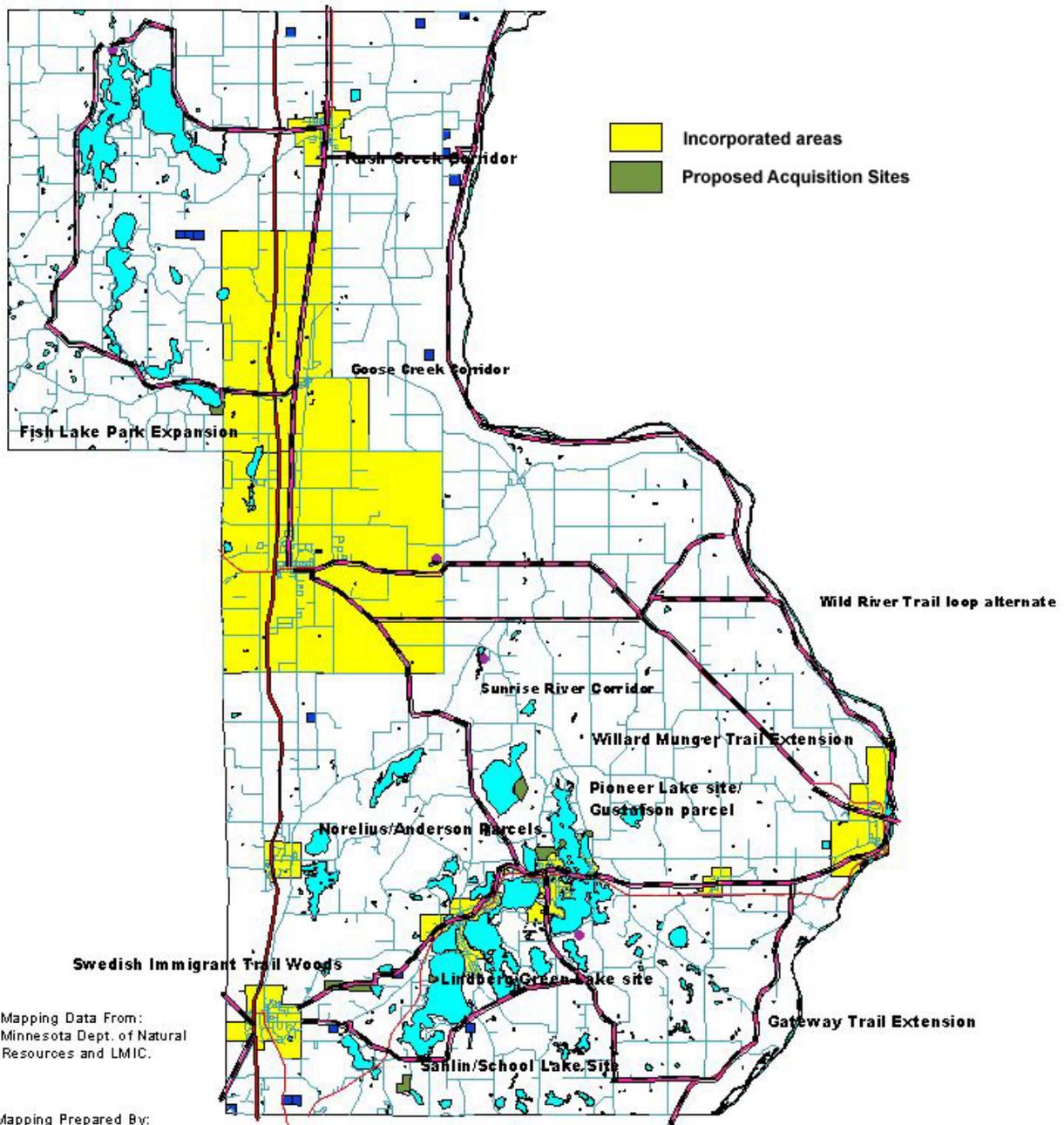
This site would best function within the park system much as it does now as a private facility. The site does not have much native habitat and is therefore well-suited for development as a lake-oriented recreation facility. Camping facilities should be improved by providing permanent restroom and changing facilities. Lake access for boats, fishers, and swimmers should be better defined with permanent gravel roads.

NORELIUS-ANDERSON SITE, North Center Lake, Chisago Lake Twp.

This site is the site most frequently discussed as a potential expansion site. It is located on north of Lindstrom and has frontage on the east shore of North Lindstrom Lake and the west shore of North Center Lake. The site straddles County Road 20. The site comprises over 100 acres of woodland, wetland, open land and lakeshore.

The Norelius-Anderson site is the site most frequently discussed for acquisition as a park site by the City of Lindstrom and within Chisago County. The City has concerns about the feasibility of acquiring a large parcel with extensive lake frontage and may open to discussing options with the County for acquisition and/or management.

The site has the potential of providing a green space connection between North Lindstrom Lake and North Center Lake in the heart of the Chisago Lakes area. The benefits of the site are obvious. The site is large enough to accommodate several uses. Lake access to both lakes can be provided.



Mapping Data From:
Minnesota Dept. of Natural
Resources and LMIC.

Mapping Prepared By:
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**Parks: Potential Acquisition Sites, Conservancy areas,
and Resource Management Areas**



Lake access for boats, fishers, and swimmers could be incorporated. Wetland and woodland areas can be incorporated into a greenway corridor with an emphasis on passive recreation and conservancy activities. This park has the potential of becoming one of the best-known facilities within the park system. Due to the high potential for use, user fees such as launching fees may be considered for this park.

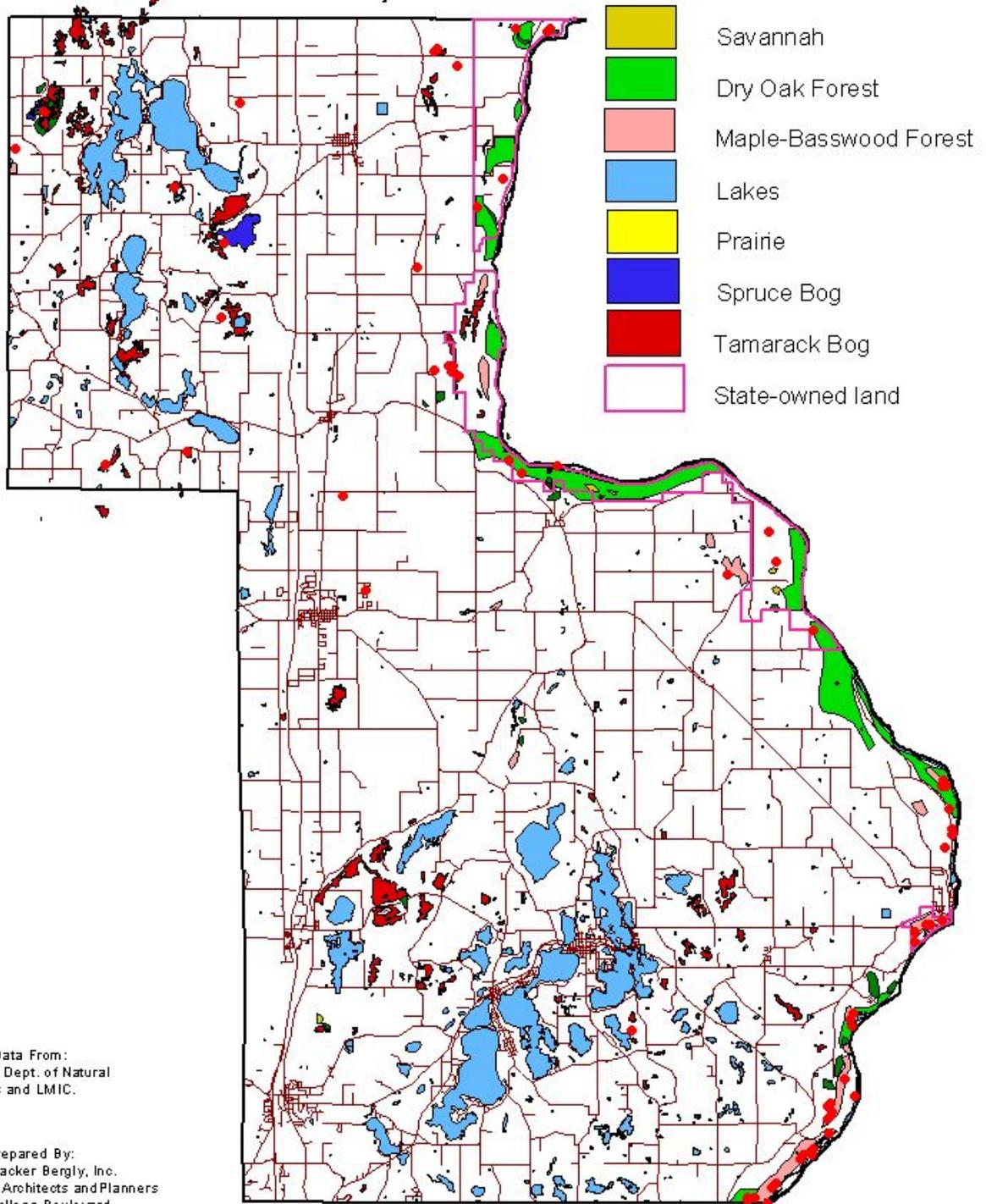
GURTEK SITE, Sunrise Lake, Chisago Lake Township

The Gurtek site is a 136-acre site located on the northeastern shore of Sunrise Lake. The parcel has high potential for park development. Development pressure on the shore of Sunrise Lake makes this site even more valuable since it is located three miles north of Lindstrom. Access to the site is currently along an unpaved county road. This is another parcel that affords significant recreation opportunities. It is of such a large size with approximately one-quarter mile of lake frontage and should receive serious consideration for acquisition.

POTENTIAL PARK RESERVE ACQUISITION SITES

WHITE STONE LAKE AREA, Wyoming Twp.

As part of the future development of the Swedish Immigrant Trail, some of the parcels abutting the trail alignment may be good candidate sites for acquisition for Park Reserve areas. Wyoming Township has reviewed the sites in an informal manner for potential use. Four contiguous parcels that connect the South Branch of the Sunrise River with White Stone Lake flank the proposed alignment. They are owned by Ed Pitala, Edward Plaster, T. Boerboom and Cameron Strand. They comprise a total of 254 acres. The Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area abuts the Pitala parcel to the west and the City of Wyoming waste treatment facility abuts the same parcel to the north. The Boerboom, Plaster and Pitala parcels contain extensive upland and lowland hardwood forests on rolling terrain through which the Swedish Immigrant Trail would pass. The Strand parcel is mostly level agricultural land but has nice views of White Stone Lake. Portions of these sites would make good areas for conservancy of forest, wetland and lakeshore lands.



Native Communities: Candidates for Conservancy



Programmed activities within these any of these sites would be limited. White Stone Lake is a small lake that may be best suited for small watercraft. Lake access for non-motorized lake craft from the trail could easily be provided. Other elements that would be programmed for the area would be passive uses such as walking, birdwatching, and nature interpretation. Existing trails and dirt tracks could be incorporated into the trail system. Vehicles such as mountain bicycles, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles would probably not be allowed to leave the Swedish Immigrant Trail onto local trails since they are not compatible with passive nature study activities.

SCHOOL LAKE SITE, Wyoming Twp.

The area on the west shore of School Lake in Wyoming Township has been discussed as a potential site for acquisition. The 120-acre Sahlin parcel and 168-acre Swenson parcel are located on the southern boundary of the county. The sites are extensively wooded and feature some of the most varied terrain in the county outside of the St. Croix Valley. They contain upland and lowland forest including tamarack swamps, pasture and wetland. The parcels are located in the headwaters area of the Sunrise River and provide open space conservation in an area of the county experiencing high development pressure. The Sahlin parcel has several broad vistas across the Sunrise River Valley. This parcel may already have status as a conservancy site with the Department of Natural Resources. Both parcels have access from public roads.

OTHER SITES

Nessel Township

Within Nessel Township there are several areas of unique natural communities. These site are typically lowland coniferous forest and upland deciduous forest. The coniferous forest sites are valuable in that they occur at the southern limit of their range, and may harbor unique genotypes found only in fringe habitats. A white pine/tamarack swamp is located near the common corner of Sections 8, 17 and 18. A complete biological assessment has not been performed, but the initial review indicates that there should be further consideration for preservation. Also in Nessel Township, a black spruce bog is southeast of East Rush Lake, just south of County Road 7. This is the largest forest of this type within the county. Portions of it may be located within a parcel already under DNR ownership, but remaining portions of the bog should be considered for full public ownership as some residential development has occurred adjacent to the forest.

Pioneer Lake, Chisago Lakes Twp.

Input from the community meetings included support for purchasing a Park Reserve area on the north shore of Pioneer Lake northeast of Center City. This parcel not only would preserve habitat but would also provide lakeside open space that act as a buffer for lakes within the area. By increasing the amount of wetland and upland buffer adjacent to the Chisago Lakes, water quality can be enhanced. A potential acquisition site is the Gustafson parcel on Pioneer Lake. A trail, possibly hard-surfaced, could be developed around Pioneer Lake.

Tax forfeiture parcels, Sunrise Twp.

Tax forfeiture parcels are good candidates for Park Reserve areas if they are wooded or have wetlands and have not been cultivated extensively. Otherwise they can be sites for restoration of native habitats. These parcels are also good sites for use for wildlife management including hunting if they are of a suitable size.

WATERSHEDS

Water has a large presence in the landscape of Chisago County. The Chisago Lakes, St. Croix River, and Rush Lakes are all focal areas for a different portion of the county. Management of the watersheds of the streams and rivers flowing into these water bodies is critical to maintain water quality and habitats in these areas. Citizens expressed a concern for preserving major watercourses within the county at the community input meetings. Specifically, Goose Creek, Rush Creek, and the Sunrise River were mentioned as key waterways. Land use factors such as setbacks, permitted land uses, vegetative cover, wetland impacts, erosion control measures and best management practices should be reviewed by the County Board of Commissioners and the communities within the watersheds. In determining suitable conservation measures, municipal and County parklands should be factored in when determining land use policies. This plan does not propose any direct acquisition of park land within these watersheds. It does recommend that the Chisago County Park Board and Parks Department assist the County Board in making decisions regarding the preservation of these corridors.

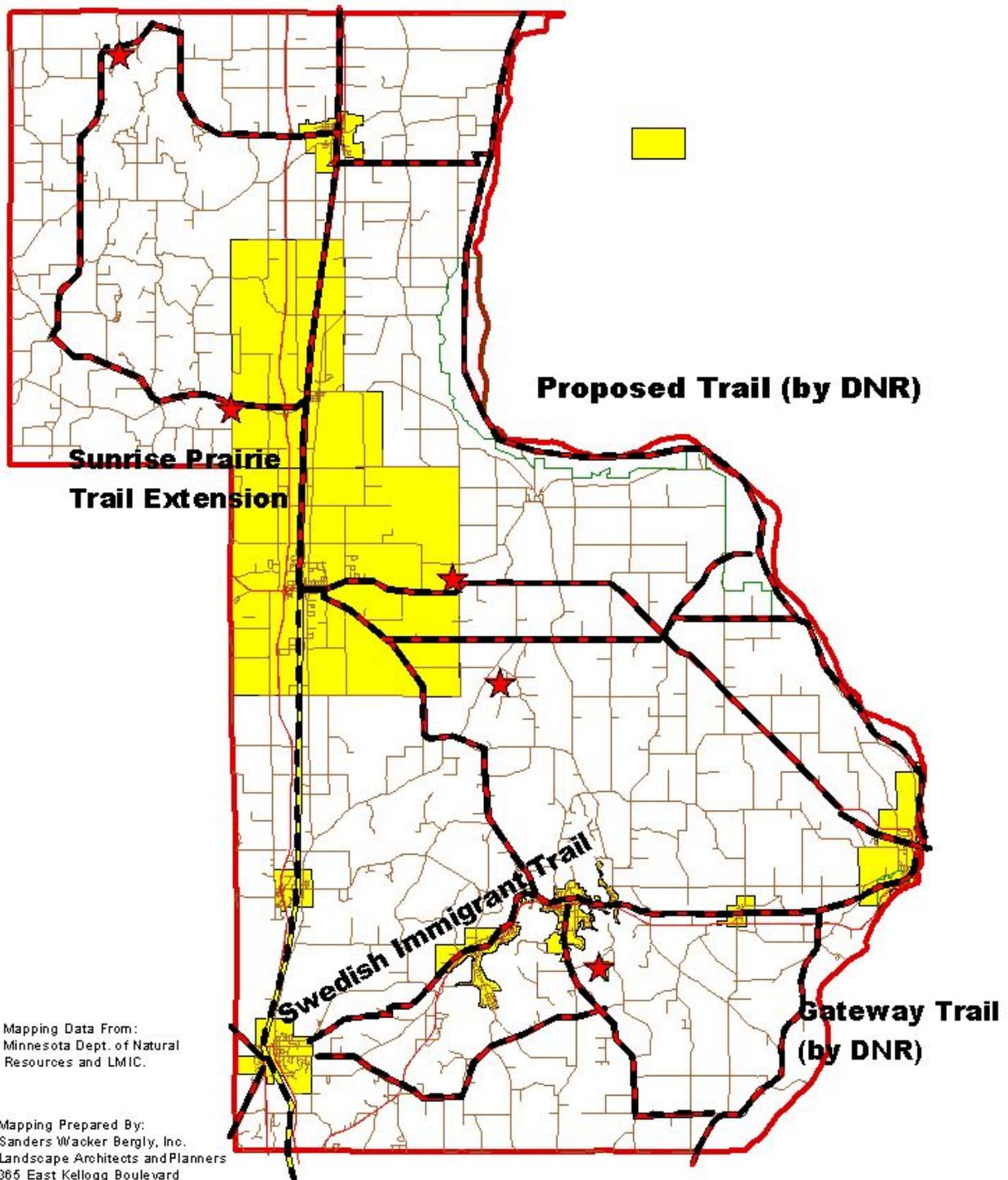
TRAILS

Trails currently provide important connections between population centers in the county. There is one existing trail in Chisago County: The Sunrise Prairie Trail that connects North Branch, Stacy, and Wyoming with Forest Lake in Washington County. Additional trails should connect state, county, and community parks, schools, and major employers within the county.

Trails can take multiple forms within Chisago County. Currently, the Sunrise Prairie Trail is an off-road bituminous paved trail within a former railroad alignment. Extension of this trail to connect with the Willard Munger Trail will likely follow a similar alignment. Other former railroad alignments are being explored for conversion to recreational trail use with the most likely route being the Swedish Immigrant Trail. As county roads and state trunk highways are reconstructed, bicycle routes have been and should continue to be incorporated into the rights-of-way. Trunk Highway 95 along the St. Croix River has been reconstructed in several segments from Stillwater to Taylors Falls. Bicycle routes have been typically provided as paved shoulders or as separate trails near the right-of-way boundary. The reconstruction of Chisago County Road 23 has made provisions for a detached trail within the right-of-way. These locations make sense for trail routing since they connect communities, schools, and parks.

The trail system should ultimately be composed of separated trails from roadways. Funding resources may limit the immediate accomplishment of this goal, and therefore, the County should prioritize segments of the trail system for separate off-road locations. For the busiest roadways such as U.S. Highway 8 and Trunk Highway 95, off-road alignments should be developed. Also, local sections of trails linking schools and parks to neighboring residential areas should have off-road routing. Roadways with narrow widths, poor pavement conditions, or poor vertical and horizontal alignments should also be candidate locations for separated trails and roadways. This prioritization would most likely rank corridors such as the Swedish Immigrant Trail, County Road 10 from Harris to Fish Lake County Park, and the alternate routing for Trunk Highway 95 from Taylor's Falls to North Branch.

Paving surface will determine the type of use. Bituminous trails will encourage use by bicyclists, roller bladders and scooters. Crushed limestone trails favor hikers, mountain bikers, snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles.



Mapping Data From:
Minnesota Dept. of Natural
Resources and LMIC.

Mapping Prepared By:
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Proposed Trails



Trails in these locations would provide direct connections to Checkerboard County Park. Other County Parks would have a paved road connection of less than five miles to this trail network.

Proposed trail locations are:

- **Taylors Falls to Wyoming (Swedish Immigrant Trail)**
Off-road trail following existing rail alignment that may require some routing around parcels not wanting to sell. Will ultimately be multi-use, paved trail connecting major destinations within the county such as St. Croix River/Interstate Park, Center City, Lindstrom, Chisago City and Wyoming. The right-of-way traverses some of the most scenic portions of the county and has much public support. Planning efforts have begun. Design for eastern portion may occur within the next several years.
- **Taylors Falls to North Branch**
This trail would occur mostly along the Trunk Highway 95 right-of-way. Traffic volumes for Highway 95 are marginal for shoulder route. Off-road routing is preferred. County Road 15 provides an alternate routing closer to Kost Dam County Park. This trail will have road connections to Wild River State Park along County Road 16.
- **North Branch to Hinckley (Willard Munger/Sunrise Prairie Trail connection)**
This trail will provide an extension of the Sunrise Prairie Trail along the same railroad alignment from North Branch through Harris, Rush City, Pine City to Hinckley. It will be an off-road trail and will be paved with bituminous material. Construction of this link will complete the trail from the Twin Cities to Duluth.
- **North Branch to Lindstrom/Chisago City (County Road 14)**
This trail routing was suggested through the community input process. County Road 14 was recently reconstructed with a shoulder bicycle lane. This corridor should be considered for future off-road trail routing. This route connects the communities of North Branch, Sunrise Lake, and Lindstrom.
- **Taylors Falls to Stillwater (Gateway Trail)**
This trail along with the Willard Munger/Gateway Trail would have state-wide importance as regional trail connection. The corridor traverses one of the most scenic parts of the state and has high recreational usage. Vehicular traffic volumes in this corridor are heavy, and an off-road trail alignment would be warranted. Trunk Highway 95 has had recent repaving and will

not be reconstructed in the near future. Paved shoulders are generally available along the highway, however off-road trail segments do already exist north of Marine-on-St.Croix. This route has high potential to become a desired bicycling destination.

- Fish Lake Park to Harris spur (County 10)
The intent of this 2.5-mile spur would be connect one of the most popular parks with the County trail system. A paved shoulder route would be sufficient, however County Road 10 may need reconstruction to accommodate this.
- Wild River State Park spur loop
Utilize existing off-road trails where possible, explore additional off-road alignment paralleling County Road 16 from Taylors Falls north within St. Croix River valley, and on-road alignment from the river to Almelund. On-road alignment would be suitable from Almelund to Wild River State Park.
- Trail extension west along County Road 22 from Sunrise Prairie Trail in Wyoming to Anoka County. Also provide connection to the south to trail within Linwood Township.
- Trail connection from Dennis Frandsen County Park to Fish Lake County Park. Lower traffic volumes along County Road 4 will allow consideration of shoulder route for trail.
- County Road 23 Relief Route. As this corridor is reconstructed to provide an alternative route for a southern bypass of the Chisago Lakes area, off-road trail routing should be developed. This would intersect a trail running along County Roads 25 and 86 between Lindstrom and the Gateway Trail in the southern part of the county.

Other trail types exist within the county. There is an extensive snowmobile trail network throughout Chisago and adjoining counties. These trails are private and typically maintained by snowmobiling organizations. This plan does not include proposals to extend the private network of snowmobile trails. However, some trails, particularly those that will not be paved, proposed within this section will be available for use by snowmobiles.