Statewide & Regional Opportunities
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Opportunities to Enhance Existing Assets
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Statewide Opportunities

Opportunities to Enhance Existing Assets

The opportunities identified here are based on a review of the natural resource-based recreation resources in Minnesota, the kind of activities visitors take part in at each setting, and the experiences they have before, during, and after engaging in recreation. Minnesota’s landscape is varied both geographically and demographically. This diversity of landscapes and differences in population distribution mean it is not possible, appropriate, or desirable to create a one-size-fits-all strategy for Minnesota’s natural resource-based parks and trails.

// Support and expand communications, facility design, and programming that promote activities and experiences sought by various racial and ethnic groups. For instance, integrate multi-lingual information / interpretation and facilities that accommodate large groups and on site meal preparation (e.g., group picnic areas with barbeque grills, group campgrounds, fishing piers).

// Support and expand communications, facility design, and programming that promote recreation experiences associated with learning (e.g., cultural and natural history) for older generations.

// Support and expand communications, facility design, and programming that promote recreation experiences associated with achievement, stimulation, and challenge (e.g., taking risks, being active, feeling exhilarated, being adventurous, developing new skills) for younger generations.

// Examine existing facility accessibility through audits and planning processes to implement 2012 accessibility standards (http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/ada-standards-doj.cfm#recreation).

// Plan for continued increases in demand for camping opportunities and consider supply as well as appropriateness for inter-generational, multi-modal, and ethnically/racially diverse group preferences.

// Maintain existing areas and trails across and throughout seasons, as appropriate.

// Plan for increases in nature observation through identification and clustering of existing opportunities, with attention to both protection of and appropriate recreation access to diverse natural habitats across ecological regions and sections.

// Plan for increases in all-terrain vehicle ridership and consider supply and visitor capacity (i.e., types of activity, particularly in the Central, Northeast, and Northwest regions) as well as rider preferences for communication, facility design, and programming.

// Acknowledge, identify, and reduce constraints to participation across age groups, in particular younger and older populations. Acknowledge, identify, and reduce constraints to participation for racial and ethnic minority groups.
Opportunities to Develop New Assets

// Prioritize the Central Region for outdoor recreation resource development, based on the projected population growth and relative deficit of outdoor recreation resources.

// Prioritize the Metro and Central Regions for nature-based trail development, based on current population size and population growth projections.

// Prioritize the Metro, Central, and Southern Regions for non-motorized, winter trail-related activity.

// Develop accessible resources that meet the 2012 accessibility standards (http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/ada-standards-doj.cfm#recreation) and reduce constraints for aging users and users with disabilities.

// Anticipate stable-to-increased participation in walking/hiking and jogging/running and address the trail supply accordingly.
Regional Opportunities

Regional Opportunities are based on an in-depth and systematic analysis of natural resource-based recreation supply and demand in each region.

Central Region

Significant population density and high population growth through 2035 characterize this region. Opportunities for nature-based recreation are lower than the state score and are exacerbated through 2035, when population is projected to increase 74%. Though every county in the region is projected to grow, Wright, Stearns, and Isanti Counties are expected to experience the highest population growth. As such, significant opportunities exist to meet 2009 and projected demand in this region.

Opportunities to Enhance Existing Assets

// Address below the state score supply of group and primitive camping opportunities to meet existing and increasing population-based demand.

// Emphasize opportunities for young people as this region has a higher proportion of younger residents (i.e., 18 years of age and younger) than the state overall. Enhance communications, facility design, and programming that promote recreation experiences associated with achievement, stimulation, and challenge (e.g., taking risks, being active, feeling exhilarated, being adventurous, developing new skills).

// Consider trail enhancement opportunities for adventure and physical challenge. Trail users in this region tend to seek experiences related to skill development, challenge, and excitement more than the state overall.

// Address potential problems tied to high use levels including noise, crowding, resource degradation, and accessibility problems.

// Increasing demand on recreation resources overall may place added pressure on existing facilities requiring additional enhancements and design strategies.

Opportunities to Develop New Assets

// Identify and expand opportunities for nature-based recreation area development to meet existing and future population demand.

// Acquisition and expansion should consider the region’s high participation in hunting, fishing, and motorized trail activities.

// Expand snowmobiling trails to address high participation and low population-based supply in 2035.

// Evaluate water bodies as potential state water trails to address low population-based supply in 2035.

// Evaluate supply of accessible fishing piers and access points and consider increasing the supply in response to the aging angler population.

// Examine opportunities to develop new nature-based recreation resources in the Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal and Western Superior Uplands as these ecological sections are below the state standardized score in supply of outdoor recreation resources.

Metro Region

This region is characterized by high-density population and is expected to remain dense, with 20% growth by 2035. Scott, Carver, and Washington Counties are projected to have the highest growth in this region. The population remains more diverse than any other region through 2035. In particular, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties have the highest percentage of Black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino residents in the state. The region is above the state score in density of recreation resource trails; however as of 2009 and through 2035, the population-based supply of areas, trails, and amenities will remain below the state score unless there are significant system changes.

Opportunities to Enhance Existing Assets

// Support and expand communications, facility design, and programming that promote activities and experiences sought by Hispanic, Black, and Latino populations. For instance, multi-lingual information/interpretation, family-oriented programming, and facilities that accommodate large groups and on site meal preparation (e.g., group picnic areas with barbeque grills, group campgrounds, fishing piers).

// Support and expand communications, facility design, and programming that promote activities and experiences sought by Asian
populations. For instance, multi-lingual information/interpretation, family oriented programming, and facilities that accommodate large groups and on site meal preparation (e.g., group picnic areas with barbeque grills, group campgrounds, fishing piers). Opportunities for fishing, hunting, and gathering should be enhanced with consideration of unique game species that may be sought by various ethnic groups.

// Evaluate and enhance camping facilities of all types (e.g., developed, group, primitive, accessible sites meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 2012 design standards) to meet predicted increase in participation in camping, with particular consideration to inter-generational and racially/ethnically diverse recreationists.

// Prioritize efficient, safe, and accessible trails and connections for activities in which there is higher than state score levels of participation, including walking/hiking, biking, running/jogging, and inline skating.

// Consider outdoor recreation resource enhancements that promote experiences such as exploring or discovering new things. Residents in this region tend to seek these experiences to a greater extent than the state average.

// Acknowledge, identify, and reduce conflict among non-motorized trail users in this region through effective outreach and education throughout all phases of the recreation experience, with consideration to inclusive and effective communication with diverse age and racial/ethnicity groups.

// Address potential problems tied to high use levels including noise, crowding, resource degradation and accessibility problems.

Opportunities to Develop New Assets

// Identify and expand opportunities for nature-based recreation areas and trail development to meet existing and future population demand, with consideration of existing higher than the state score density of summer and winter trails and amenities in this region.

// Develop amenities to meet existing and future population demand with special consideration of camping facilities, RV/camper camping facilities, primitive camping facilities, visitor centers, and equipment rental, which were below population-based state scores.

// Examine opportunities to develop new recreation resources in the Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal ecological section as it is below the state score in supply of outdoor recreation resources.

Northeast Region

This region is characterized by a dispersed population with below-average population growth and above-average numbers of people age 65 and older. Generally, the number of natural resource-based recreation areas and trails is higher than the state standardized score when considering the population base in 2009 and in 2035. However, the area is lower than the state score when one considers inter-regional demand for regionally significant areas both now and in 2035. When the area-based supply is considered, the Northeast is below the state score in winter motorized trails, regionally significant areas, picnic areas, and developed and group

Opportunities to Enhance Existing Assets

// Maintain existing resources to retain high-quality recreation opportunities.

// Evaluate and enhance camping facilities of all types (e.g., developed, group, primitive, ADA accessible sites) to meet predicted increase in participation in camping with particular consideration to inter-generational recreationists.

// Evaluate and enhance supply of accessible fishing piers and access points and consider enhancing supply for aging angler population.

// Evaluate and enhance supply of picnic facilities across providers, with attention to ADA accessibility.

// Consider outdoor recreation resource enhancements for activities in which there is above-average participation, such as mushroom and berry gathering.
Regional Opportunities

// Consider outdoor recreation resource enhancements that promote experiences such as solitude, silence and quiet, and being away from other people. Residents in this region tend to seek these experiences to a greater extent than the state as a whole.

Opportunities to Develop New Assets
// Identify and expand opportunities for winter motorized trail development to address lower than the state standardized score in density, with significant attention to soundscapes to reduce visitor conflict.

// Examine opportunities to develop new recreation resources in the Southern Superior Uplands and Western Superior Uplands, as these ecological sections are below the state score in supply of outdoor recreation resource areas.

// Examine opportunities to develop summer trails in the Northern Minnesota and Ontario Peatlands eco-sections as it is below the state score in supply of summer trails.

Northwest Region
Similar to the Northeast, this region is characterized by a dispersed population with below-average population growth and above-average numbers of people 65 and older. This region is home to the highest percentage of American Indians in the state. The region has above-average participation in consumptive recreation activities (e.g., hunting and fishing) and motorized recreational activities (e.g., ATV and snowmobiling).

Generally, the number of nature resource-based recreation areas and trails is higher than the state standardized score when considering the population base. However, the region is below the state score when one considers population increases in 2035 and inter-regional demand for regionally significant areas both 2009 and in 2035. Specific to trails, the region is below average for winter non-motorized trails both now and the future. When the area-based supply is considered, the Northwest is below the state score in all trail types other than summer motorized, as well as for camping and picnic opportunities.

Opportunities to Enhance Existing Assets
// Maintain existing resources to retain high-quality recreation opportunities.

// Evaluate and enhance opportunities for camping of all types (e.g., developed, group, primitive, ADA accessible sites) to meet predicted increase in participation in camping with particular consideration to inter-generational and racially/ethnically diverse recreationists.

// Evaluate and enhance supply of accessible fishing piers and access points and consider supply for an aging angler population.

// Evaluate and enhance supply of picnic facilities across providers, with attention to ADA accessibility.

// Consider outdoor recreation resource enhancements that promote experiences such as experiencing silence and quiet and being on one’s own. Residents in this region tend to seek these experiences to a greater extent than the state score.

Opportunities to Develop New Assets
// Identify and develop opportunities for trail activities to meet area-based state score; pay significant attention to soundscapes to reduce visitor conflict in all seasons.

// Examine opportunities to develop new recreation resources in the Lake Agassiz, Aspen Parklands; Red River Valley; Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal; and North Central Glaciated Plains ecological sections as they are below the state score in supply of outdoor recreation resources and trails.
South Region

This region is characterized by below-average density and projected population growth through 2035. While the population mirrors the state average in age groups, it is below average in diverse constituents, except for Nobles and Watonwan Counties.

Without new investment, the region is and will remain below the state standardized score in all recreation resource areas. Based on both area and population, the Southern region will continue to have lower than the state score summer trails through 2035. In contrast, both water and winter trails are at or above the state score now and through 2035, with the exception of inter-regional demand adjustments for winter trails. With the exception of primitive camping, select existing facilities indicate the existing areas are higher than the state score in supply now and in the future. Residents in the region participate below the state average in most recreation activities, with only half the state score in cross-country skiing and inline skating.

Opportunities to Develop New Assets
// Identify and expand opportunities for nature-based recreation areas and trail development to meet existing and future population demand with consideration to region's average participation in most activities.

// Consider tourist preferences as areas are developed; this area is a major corridor for tourists.

// Identify and expand opportunities for summer trail development, both motorized and non-motorized, to meet state scores, with significant attention to soundscapes to reduce visitor conflict.

// Examine opportunities to develop new recreation resources in the North Central Glaciated Plains and Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal ecological sections as they are below the state score in supply of outdoor recreation resources and trails.

// Support and expand communications, facility design, and programming that promote activities and experiences sought by Hispanic/Latino populations especially in Nobles and Watonwan Counties where growth in these populations is projected. For instance, multi-lingual information/interpretation, family oriented programming and facilities that accommodate large groups and on site meal preparation (e.g., group picnic areas with barbeque grills, group campgrounds, fishing piers).

// Prepare for increased nature observation as rural residents age.

// Consider tourist preferences for hiking, fishing, and bicycling in this region as areas and trails are enhanced and developed, as the region is a major corridor for tourists.

// Evaluate and enhance opportunities for camping of all types (e.g., developed, group, primitive, ADA accessible sites) to meet predicted increase in participation in camping with particular consideration to inter-generational and racially/ethnically diverse recreationists.

// Consider outdoor recreation resource enhancements that promote experiences such as being on one's own, getting away from the usual demands of life, doing something with family, and being with people who enjoy similar things. Residents in this region tend to seek these experiences to a greater extent than the state average.

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