

# Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

## Designation Application

### General Section

Designation Application #: 14-008D      Date Submitted: 07/30/2015

Park or Trail Name: Rockville Park

District #: 4      Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 45.4743 Longitude: -94.3585

Location Description:

Address: Rockville County Park 11503 Glacier Road St. Cloud, MN 56301      Rockville County Park is located approximately 15 minutes from downtown St. Cloud. It is also located just minutes off of Interstate 94. The closest city to the park is Rockville and it is located in Stearns County. Directions: Take Highway 23 (from St. Cloud) approximately 8.3 miles to County Rd. 82. Go about 1 mile. Take a right on County Rd. 139. Go about .3 mi to Sauk River Rd. Take a slight right to Glacier Rd. The park is on the left.

Lead Applicant Organization: Stearns County

Lead Contact First Name: Ben      Last Name: Anderson

Mailing Address: 1802 County Road 137

City: Waite Park State: MN      Zip: 56387

Phone: 320-654-4725      Email: benjamin.anderson@co.stearns.mn.us

Joint Applicant #1 Organization:

Joint Applicant #2 Organization:

Joint Applicant #3 Organization:

Joint Applicant #4 Organization:

Describe other project supporters:

### Description Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park

Total proposed acreage:

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

Rockville County Park contains 284 acres. There is approximately 1.2 miles of Sauk River frontage along the park boundary. Portions of the park property contain natural communities recognized by the Minnesota County Biological Survey. A large granite outcrop is contained on the easternmost portion of

the park. A lowland hardwood forest and a tamarack swamp are also present. Rockville County Park was developed and opened to the public in the spring of 2014. Currently, park amenities include a picnic area, hiking trail, horse trails, a group camping area, a canoe campground and a fishing area. The majority of this property was donated to the Stearns County Parks Department and the family has expressed interest in donating more adjacent property to the parks department. The exact number of acres is yet to be determined. Rockville County Park is regionally significant because it contains roughly 1.2 miles of river frontage along the Sauk River and it provides insight into the local quarrying industry via rock out crops that occur throughout the park. Rockville County Park also contains some rare habitat features such as remnant oak savanna and restored prairie habitat. Current cost estimates for Rockville County Park are as follows. It is estimated that operations, maintenance and programming at Rockville County Park cost \$80,000 annually. It was established during the public process that limiting the built footprint to the minimum necessary to accommodate recreational purposes. Further development includes extension of horse/hiking trails, an open play area, picnic shelter, additional benches along trails, bathroom facilities at group campsite and an accessible fishing access. If additional land is acquired trails will be added to that as well. Estimated cost for future development is roughly \$700,000.

What is the Acquisition and Development Status?

- New Park or Trail (no land acquired or developed)
- Existing Park or Trail
  - Land Acquisition
    - Status: Evaluate as it becomes available
    - Percentage of Land Acquired: 95
  - Development Status
    - No Development
    - Some Development, but more Proposed
      - New Facilities Proposed
      - Existing Facilities to be Upgraded
    - Fully Development

Facility Listing Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
Group campsites, Non- profit youth groups only, Picknicking and picnic shelters, Hiking Trails (natural), Mountain Biking Trails (natural), Horseback Riding Trails (natural), Canoeing Facilities, Nature	Picknicking and picnic shelters, Horseback Riding Trails (natural), Fishing Piers, Play Areas, with an outdoor theme, Play ground

Center/Interpretation Trails, Restrooms/sanitation building, Roads and Parking Areas	
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### Master Plan Status Section

Master Plan Status: Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available

Describe Other Supportive Information:

Master Plan has been completed.

### Classification Details Section

Classification: Natural Resource Based Regional Park

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience: Rockville County Park serves as a destination unto itself because of the amenities that are offered. These include a picnic area, hiking trails, horse trails, canoe camping, fishing, restored prairie, Tamarack swamp and remnant oak savanna. The hiking and horseback riding trails traverse through many unique and some rare habitats. In the greater St. Cloud area it is unique to have an area open for public use that offers a glimpse of so many habitats all within a two hour walk or horse ride. Also, the Sauk River is part of the Minnesota DNR's state canoe routes and thus this may also bring visitors to the park. The previous owners of the property have and continue to control buckthorn throughout the park and thus it is one of few public lands within Stearns County where you can go and enjoy the native natural beauty without an eyeful of buckthorn.

Criteria #2 Preserves a Regionally-Significant and Diverse Natural or Historic Landscape: Bordering approximately 1.2 miles of Rockville County Park is the scenic Sauk River. This river is also part of the Minnesota DNR state canoe route. Rockville County Park also contains regionally important landscapes such as restored prairie and remnant oak savanna habitats, which are both rare plant communities. An eagle nest is also located within the park boundaries. Rockville County Park contains a diverse mosaic of plant communities such as wet forest, tamarack swamp, floodplain forest, mesic forest, oak woodland, oak savanna, restored prairie, wet meadow, rock outcrops and a small stream that flows from the northwest through the eastern portion of the park. The mosaic of these plant communities together creates an extremely diverse and complex plant community which provides high quality wildlife habitat. Immediately to the east of Rockville County Park lies the City of Rockville's Eagle Park. Eagle Park and Rockville County Park are only separated by a county road and thus create connectivity between two properties that are protected by local government jurisdictions.

Criteria #3 Well-located and Connected to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: The greater St. Cloud area is home to 100,000 plus people and the population has been and continues to grow. Because St. Cloud is located in central Minnesota it is generally a short drive away from the majority of Minnesota's population. Thus, Rockville County Park is well located not only because it is close to St. Cloud but also because it is located about 1 hour and 15 minutes from the Twin Cities and

just minutes off of Interstate 94. Currently, the City of Rockville has a bituminous biking and hiking trail that will eventually connect to the Glacial Lakes State Trail in Richmond. This connection would make Rockville County Park a destination for both hikers and bikers.

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region: Rockville County Park offers four miles of horseback trails. To the best of our knowledge, this trail and two others (6 and 2 miles in length) are the only public option for such activities, within Stearns County. Currently, there are no State Parks located in Stearns County and therefore the vegetation, river and trail features offered by Rockville County Park are unique unto itself, for the area.

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)

<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Master Plan	Master plan added from master plan tab
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Master Plan	Master plan added from master plan tab