

1984 ANNUAL REPORT



Stearns County Park Commissioners

James Gammell
Ervin Gelle
Claude Dullinger
Donald Verreux
Joseph Gully
Edward Richardson
Keith Maurer

Staff

Paul Wirth
James Burke
Charles Wocken

Report prepared by;
Charles B. Wocken
Park Director

Table of Contents

<u>Planning</u>	<u>Page</u>
New Park Commissioners	1
Holiday Heights Addition	2
Craxton Site	2
Sauk River Canoe Route	4
Ski Trail Council	4
River View Ski Trail	4
Railroad R.O.W. Abandonment	5
Stearns County Bikeway System	5
Park Ordinance Revision	6
Recreation facility inventory of school districts ...	6
Surface use zoning on Warner Lake, Lynden Township ..	7
 <u>Acquisition</u>	
Ramsden & Olson Partnership site	8
 <u>Development</u>	
Warner Lake Shelter and Sanitary Facility	9
 <u>Maintenance and Operations</u>	
Staffing	10
Time Use	11
Park Costs	11
Lake Koronis Regional Park	12
Fairhaven Mill Park	12
 <u>Funding</u>	
Property Tax Levy	13
Revenue	14
Expenditures	15
Administration detail	16
 <u>User ship</u>	
Mississippi River County Park	17
Warner Lake County Park	18
Spring Hill County Park	18
Big Fish Lake along C.S.A.H. #50	19
Park Reservations	20
User Evaluation	21

Thank you to all of the county commissioners, park commissioners, staff and volunteers who have made a contribution to Stearns County's outdoor recreation, park and open space program.

Following are the major areas of activity of the Stearns County Park Commission and the Stearns County Park Department: 1) Planning, 2) Acquisition, 3) Development, 4) Maintenance and Operations, 5) Funding, and 6) Usership.

P L A N N I N G

1984 saw two new park commissioner appointments to the Stearns County Park Commission. Mr. Claude Dullinger, of Colledgeville Township was appointed as the representative of District #3 replacing Mr. Ferdinand Peters, II. Mr. Dullinger's first meeting was on March 14, 1984.

Mr. Joseph Gully, of Zion Township, was appointed as the representative for District #5, replacing Mr. Alan Dufner. Mr. Gully's first Park Commission meeting was May 9, 1985. Both representatives are semi-retired farmers.

In addition to being a member of the Park Commission, Mr. Gully was appointed by the Park Commission to represent Stearns County on the Fred and Josephine Marshall Endowment Trust Board. The Trust was set up by the late Fred Marshall for the beautification of Lake Koronis Regional Park.

The Park Commission reviewed 2 parcels of property submitted to it for inclusion in the park system. The first site was a parcel that had been carried as a "parkland" dedication" since 1971. The site contained 3.5 acres in Holiday Heights Addition, Oak Township, Section 25. The original subdivision ordinance for Stearns County required such dedications as part of each subdivision. An alternative to the dedication was the "payment-in-lieu of dedication." The Park Commission had eventually recommended to the County Planning Commission, during its revision of the subdivision ordinance, to drop the parkland dedication section. The reason for the recommendation was to eliminate the establishment of "totlot" parks throughout the county. It was felt this would create a county park system too spread out for effective management. It was also felt that the "totlot" park is more the responsibility of the township and city. The county's responsibility, it was felt, rested more in the natural resource oriented park. The Park Commission recommended that Stearns County not take title to the 3.5 acres in Holiday Heights Addition. This recommendation was forwarded to the owner of the parcel through the Planning Director.

The second parcel presented to the Park Commission for review was the Nora Craxton property on "Pine Point" in Brockway Township, Section 34. The site contained 37 acres. The Park Commission informed the landowner that although the site was attractive, it was too close to the county's existing 209 acre Mississippi River county Park, 3 miles northward. The parcel was rejected.

During a tour of the park system, the Park Commission discussed the property adjoining Mississippi River County Park as a potential addition to the existing park site. The landowner to the upstream-

side of the park was sent a letter informing him of the Park Commission's interest in the site if it should become available in the future.

The Park Commission was involved in a number of trail planning activities during the year. The Sauk River Canoe Route was endorsed by the Park Commission upon publication of a map of the river for canoeing. The map was prepared by the Cartography Department at St. Cloud State University and published by Stearns County. The map details the location and type of public and private facilities available along the Sauk River from Sauk Centre to Sauk Rapids.

The Stearns County Park Commission, in furtherance of the winter trails program, passed a resolution supporting the establishment of a Stearns County Ski Trail Council. The purpose of the Council was to coordinate grant-in-aid trail requests and prioritize each trail as to its desirability for support by the County. The Council was never established due to lack of interest at the ski club level.

The Park Commission was asked for help in establishing a new grant-in-aid ski trail along the Mississippi River from St. Cloud southward. The trail was given the name River View Ski Trail. James Carlen, an eagle scout candidate, accepted the project as the basis for his advancement project for Boy Scouts of America. The Park Commission supported the trail project. The trail proposal was sponsored by Stearns County but was not approved for DNR grant-in-aid status and funding. The project was scheduled to be resubmitted for the 1985-86 ski season.

In 1984 Burlington Northern Railroad Company abandoned its railroad right-of-way from St. Cloud to Clearwater. The Park Commission studied the right-of-way for possible inclusion in the county park system as a multi-use year-round recreational trail. The topic was discussed at a public meeting in February. After evaluation of the proposal the Park Commission decided not to pursue the project. The Park Commission felt that bicyclists would be better served by black-topping the shoulders of County State Aid Highway 75 (Great River Road). The right-of-way would not have made an attractive ski trail. With the potential for a grant-in-aid trail closer to the river there was little need for a second trail so close. The snowmobilers already had a grant-in-aid trail south of St. Cloud on the other side of the interstate highway way.

At about the same time the railroad right-of-way was abandoned, the Stearns County Highway Engineer asked for input from the Park Commission on the recommended bike routes for Stearns County on highway rights-of-way. The request initiated a 9 month project in which the Planning Department became involved. The project resulted in adoption by the County Board of a Bikeway Plan for Stearns County. The plan will qualify the county for state grants on roadway improvements for bicycling.

The Park Commission began a review of the county ordinance regulating use of Stearns County parks (Ordinance #40). A change in the permit issuance procedure was recommended. At present, groups of 100 or more people have to request large group permits from the Park Commission. It was felt that all permits could be issued by the Park Director. Other areas of concern are vegetative protection within the parks, ATV and motorcycle use of trails, and stray animals. The revision will be complete in 1985.

Two projects were initiated by the Park Department to gather data needed for the update of the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan/Recreation Section. With the aid of the Minnesota Emergency Employment Development Act the Park Department was able to hire one person to do park user surveys during the summer. Miss Virginia Richmond was hired to fill this position. During the summer she interviewed park visitors at Mississippi River County Park, Spring Hill County Park, and Warner Lake County Park. In addition to the park surveys, studies were also conducted of the snowmobile clubs, ski clubs, canoeists on the Sauk River, and use of Big Fish Lake along C.S.A.H. 50.

The Park Department commissioned Mary Jo Klobe, an intern from St. Cloud State University, to assist in collecting data for the Recreation Section Update. Miss Klobe inventoried all outdoor recreation facilities owned by the public school districts within Stearns County. This information was meant to supplement the inventory provided by the state DNR on outdoor recreation facilities.

As part of the park ordinance review, the Park Commission began discussion on the possible surface use zoning of Warner Lake in Lynden Township. Discussion revolved around the use of motors on the lake. It is generally felt by the Commission that the lake is too small for some of the motor sizes used. An alternative to the zoning would be the restriction of motor sizes being launched at the park boat landing.

On October 2, 1984 the Stearns County Board of Commissioners signed an option contract with Ramsden & Olson Partnership to acquire 45 acres adjacent to Warner Lake County Park. The site was being proposed for subdivision and development into housing. The Park Commission opposed the rezoning that had been requested by Ramsdon & Olson Partnership to place houses closer to Warner Lake than the Shoreland Management Ordinance would have allowed. As a result of the land being available for purchase, Stearns County negotiated a price of \$65,000 for the parcel and intended to finalize the acquisition by the end of the year. The site contained 600 feet of lake frontage, one-quarter mile of Plum Creek, and 800 feet of pond frontage. At the end of the year the transfer of the title had not been complete.

D E V E L O P M E N T

Part of the 1984 budget was the construction of a new shelter and sanitary facility at Warner Lake County Park. A 58 ft. by 32 ft. partially enclosed shelter was constructed. A caretaker station was included in the structure design. A 22 ft. by 22 ft. vault toilet was also constructed. The toilet contains a 3000 gallon vault which is sealed with a hypalon rubber liner. The buildings were constructed by Ray Tuholsky, Sr. of Avon. Construction was completed in September. The funding of the buildings was received through revenue sharing.

In conjunction with the construction, two of the former dorms and the storm shelter were removed. The former dining lodge was scheduled for removal in 1985.

M A I N T E N A N C E A N D O P E R A T I O N

Staffing of the Park Department changed somewhat for 1984. The 7-month seasonal Utilityman position was changed into a year-round full-time park maintenance position. This provided 2 maintenance positions of a full-time year-round nature. Seasonal staffing included county-paid caretakers for Mississippi River County Park, Warner Lake Park, Spring Hill County Park, and a county-paid mowing crew leader. Summer employment programs through the state and federal government filled out the crews for the summer. Caretakers aides were provided for Mississippi River and Warner Lake County Parks. Eventually each of these positions were eliminated during the summer. 1 park aide was given to the mowing crew leader to assist in mowing and trimming in all parks. 1 park aide was assigned to the construction crew, 2 park aides were assigned to the grounds crew, and a secretary was provided for the office. 1 six-month park aide was provided for the grounds crew through the MEED program.

Maintenance of Lake Sylvia Wayside and Access continued to be contracted out. Robert Fink, of Melrose, was awarded the contract for the site.

Figure 1 shows the types, of activities the staff performed during 1984 and indicates the percentage of time spent in those activity areas.

<u>TIME USE</u>		
<u>Work Function</u>	<u>Manhours</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Manhours</u>
Other (includes caretakers)	1503.0	33.4
Construction	1305.5	28.9
Grounds Care	665.5	14.8
Travel	539.5	11.9
Landscaping	270.5	5.9
Equipment Maintenance	187.0	4.1
Building Maintenance	45.0	1.0
TOTAL	4516.0	100.0

-Figure 1-

The increase in the time spent on Construction was primarily due to the project inspection at Warner Lake County Park. As staff inspected the building construction it also performed other improvements at the park. The improvements included installation of a new play structure and painting of existing buildings.

Figure 2 indicates the approximate cost of each of the parks within the system. All Maintenance and operation expenditures are broken out by manhours spent in each park and acreage of each park.

<u>PARK COSTS</u>	
Mississippi River County Park	\$ 26,948.12
Warner Lake County Park	38,213.64
Upper Spunk Lake County Park	1,570.03
St. Martin Canoe Access	84.03
Oak Township park site	815.48
Two Rivers Lake park site	1,392.40
Lake Sylvia Wayside & Access	1,654.56
Spring Hill County Park	9,239.96
Richmond River Wayside	248.90
Lake Koronis Regional Park	9,331.05
Heims Mill Canoe Access	1,225.30
Fairhaven Mill Park	2,589.33
TOTAL	\$ 92,412.80

-Figure 2-

Maintenance and operation of Lake Koronis Regional Park continued to be operated by Meeker County through a joint powers agreement with Stearns County. A year-round live-in caretaker is provided at the park.

Maintenance of the Fairhaven Mill Park was provided by Green View, Inc., an affiliate of the Minnesota Farmer's Union, through the Fairhaven Mill Historical Wayside and Dam Joint Powers Commission. The Joint Powers Commission disposed of the mobile home at the park and decided to eliminate the live-in caretaker position at the park. It was felt by the Commission that the live-in caretaker approach did not work as well as maintenance contracting with Green View, Inc., did at this site.

F U N D I N G

\$147,700.00 were levied for the Park Fund in 1984. This was .28 mils, or 1.3% of the total county property tax levy for 1984. A summary of the revenue for the Park Fund can be found in figure 3. Figure 4 displays the expenditures from the Park Fund. A detail of administrative costs is found in figure 5.

REVENUE

General property taxes, current	\$ 106,865.73
General property taxes, delinquent	1,996.32
Mobile home taxes, current	265.26
Mobile home taxes, delinquent	13.27
Payment in lieu of taxes, other	115.52
Park	500.00
Commodity and property sales	65.00
Concessions and commissions	51.73
Homestead credit	36,054.53
Local government aid	12,300.00
Wetlands credit	3.54
Wetlands réimbursements	.42
Other	<u>.01</u>
	Subtotal
	\$ 158,231.33
	1983 Park Fund Balance
	<u>63,107.00</u>
	TOTAL
	\$ 221,338.33

* Snowmobile trails	\$ 24,390.98
* Cross-Country Ski trails	825.00

* These funds were transferred directly to the appropriate clubs for the upkeep of the trails.

EXPENDITURES

ALLOCATED AS TO PARK	
Fairhaven Mill Park	\$ 2,589.33
Lake Koronis Regional Park	<u>9,331.05</u>
subtotal	\$ 11,920.38

UNALLOCATED AS TO PARK	
<u>PERSONNEL SERVICES</u>	
Salaries, permanent	\$ 57,685.45
Salaries, part-time	6,643.10
Salaries, overtime	364.57
Longevity	160.00
Insurance, health	6,197.60
Insurance, life	58.02
Insurance, disability	159.12
PERA	2,821.05
FICA	3,963.09
Unemployment	297.43
subtotal	<u>\$ 78,349.43</u>

<u>SERVICES AND CHARGES</u>	
Telephone	\$ 1,929.00
Postage	194.45
Printing and publishing	174.49
Advertising	1,116.98
Dues	150.00
Subscriptions	35.00
Electricity	2,881.44
Gas	476.72
Professional services	593.34
Contracted purchased services	6,298.84
Repair and maintenance on buildings	400.23
Machinery & equipment repair	3,701.54
Mileage	1,443.28
Travel expense	135.30
Registration & conf. expense	281.04
Meal expense	27.13
Machine and equipment rental	235.12
Insurance, comprehensive business	26.28
Insurance, worker' comp.	2,264.02
Insurance, umbrella liability	284.53
Insurance, auto	396.44
Misc. expense	10.90
Appropriations	382.16
subtotal	<u>\$ 23,385.67</u>

<u>SUPPLIES</u>	
Office	\$ 1,341.33
Repair & maintenance	9,254.74
Cleaning	26.90
Fuel & lubricants	3,119.39
Misc.	188.19
Books	50.90
subtotal	<u>\$ 13,981.45</u>

<u>CAPITAL OUTLAY</u>	
Site Acquisition and improvements	\$ 0.00
Building acquisition	70,410.76
Equipment	11,520.59
Vehicles	9,089.00
Furniture	102.15
subtotal	<u>\$ 91,122.50</u>

<u>PARK COMMISSION</u>	subtotal \$ 1,294.18
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TOTAL \$ 220,053.61

1984
Administration

Director's Salary	\$ 23,556.00
Longevity	90.00
Insurance, health	2,194.00
life	23.67
disability	64.92
P.E.R.A.	1,001.13
F.I.C.A.	1,648.92
Mileage, staff	1,443.28
Conference travel	135.30
Reg. & conference expense	281.04
Meal expense	27.13
Dues	150.00
Subscriptions	35.00
Worker's Comp.	2,264.02
Umbrella Liability	284.53
Park Commission	
Per Diem	855.00
Professional Services	66.75
Mileage	215.20
Travel Expense	66.00
Meal Expense	89.21
Books	50.90
Office Supplies	1,341.33
Seasonal secretary	424.62
OBS (clerical services)	63.66
Shramel Clerical	46.00
TOTAL	<u>\$ 36,417.61</u>

A survey of park users at Mississippi River County Park was conducted. Interviews were performed on six weekends and included Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Most of the visitors (86.2%) came from within a 15 mile radius. The largest occupational group was homemakers (14%) followed closely by students (13%). There was a broad range of occupational backgrounds, ranging from graphic designer to laborer. 48.3% of the respondents were from incorporated areas of Stearns County and 35.8% were from rural areas. 75% of the visitors had visited the park before. 44.4% of the respondents visited the park from 1-5 times per year with 12.6% of the respondents visiting the park 6-10 times per year. The activity most participated in was picnicing (53%), followed by Hiking (41%), Fishing (36%), Group Games (23%), Swimming (18%), Frisbee (18%), Canoeing (9%), and Horseshoes (6%). It was difficult to interview fisherman. They were usually at the park very early to launch their boats and returned late in the evening. Most interviews were conducted between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Interviews were conducted at Warner Lake County Park to verify previous surveys and gather more details about park visitors at this site. The service radius of the park continues to be 15 miles. Swimming was by far the most popular activity with 97% of the visitors participating in the activity. The second most popular activity was picnicking at a 41% participation level. 69% of the respondents were at the park for the first time ever. Most visitors (80%) arrived at the park between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Spring Hill County Park was open for its first full year. A study was conducted of the visitors to this park, along with a traffic study. The traffic count showed a use of 500 people per month for the summer season.

Interviews were conducted on 5 weekends during the summer. A total of 17 surveys were performed. A copy of the study is available from the Park Department. In the summary of the survey, 29% of the visitors came from Spring Hill, 12% from Greenwald, 12% from Albany and 12% from St. Cloud. 65% of the visitors were from rural areas, and 24% from incorporated areas. The time of visits to the park were spread rather evenly throughout the day from 9 a.m. through 8 p.m. 59% of the visitors were at the park for the first time ever with 35% having visited the park before. The majority of the visitors (65%) drove 10 miles or less to get to the park. 30% of the visitors travelled 21 or more miles to come to the park. Activity participation among park visitors was as follows: hiking (41%), picnicking (35%), group games (35%), other (29%), fishing (12%), canoeing (6%), and horseshoes (6%).

Some observations were made at Big Fish Lake along County State Aid, Highway #50 where people tend to congregate for swimming. A licence plate survey conducted on 3 different days showed the highest percentage of users to be from the Cold Spring area. On July 4th a vehicle count was done. At the peak of the day there were 68 vehicles parked along the road, 140 people on the beach, and 55 swimming. Of the 68 vehicles, 13 were towing boat trailers. A complete report on these observations is available from the Park Department.

3 other studies were conducted during 1984, one for snowmobiling, one for ski touring, and one for canoeing. The results from these surveys have not been tabulated yet.

The Park Department allows groups to rent and reserve park shelters and facilities. A record of user groups, the park in which the reservation was held, and the number of people in the group is listed in figure 6.

<u>Reservations 1984</u>			
<u>Miss.</u>		<u>Warner</u>	<u>Spring Hill</u>
St. Cloud		Latter Day	Athmann Reunion 80
Antique Club	75	Saints	20
Sartell		Clearwater	Stearns County
Elementary	110	Area AA	Farm Bureau 90
St. Joseph		(2days)	Catholic Aid
School	175	Clearwater	Society of
D.B. Searles		Snowmobile Club	Spring Hill
Employees	60	30	<u>100</u>
AVTI Drafting		Toulouse	270
Design Class	50	Wedding Recep.	3 days,
Broken Arrow		Weiber Family	3 groups
Bow Hunters	75	Boys and Club	
Marion family	50	Regal Order	
New Horizons		of Swine	100
United Methodist	20	MN Pet	
(4 days)		Supply Ass'n	60
Lewandowski		Townhouse	
Party	50	Bakery	50
Good News		Hughes Family	50
Assembly	100	SCSU	60
Midwest Breeders		Tr. 72, B.S.A.	17
Coop	60	Tr. 21, B.S.A.	<u>20</u>
Rice AA	50	14 days,	769
Hesse Wedding	200	13 groups	People
Minnesota Mack			
Employees	30		
TEAM			
Electronics	50		
Seivert Family	100		
Cathedral High			
Class of '64	75		
Kunkel Family	150		
Becker Family	100		
Thimpas	60		
Civil Air Patrol	45		
Cornerstone			
Church	<u>100</u>		
	1785		
25 days	people		
22 groups			

-Figure 6-

Each of the groups who reserve facilities are given an evaluation form to return to the Park Department. Figure 7 is a copy of a letter which was attached to the evaluation form.

Stearns County Park Department
425 So. 72nd Ave.
St. Cloud, MN 56301

We thank you for letting us use the beautiful parks. We appreciate you keeping it so well kept. We enjoyed the hiking and all the cookouts.

Jerry Tricia

Monique

Meadow Schroeder

Leah E.

Andrea

Dorsey Jensen

Leah No

New Horizons United
Methodist Church -
Day Camp