

STEARNS COUNTY PARKS

ANNUAL REPORT
1998

STEARNS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Rose Arnold
Bob Gambrino
Leigh Lenzmeier
Henry Dickhaus
Mark Sakry

STEARNS COUNTY PARK COMMISSIONER

Don Bauer - chair; District 1
Steve Hennes; District 2
Joseph Chovan - vice chair; District 3
Ed Bouffard; District 4
Paul Bugbee - resigned July 1998; District 5
James Boie - appointed September 1998; District 5
Richard Hall; Planning Commission Member
Mark Sakry; County Commissioner

STEARNS COUNTY PARK STAFF

James Burke, Park Maintenance II
LeRoy Gapinski, Park Maintenance I
Paul Wirth, Park Maintenance II - Lead
Peter Theismann, Intern
Charles Wocken, Park Director

REPORT PREPARED BY: Chuck Wocken, Park Director

1998 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION STATEMENT OF STEARNS COUNTY:

The mission of the County of Stearns is to provide quality public services as determined by law and citizen needs, through innovative leadership and the teamwork of its people, officials, and employees. Services shall be provided in a fair, respectful, and professional manner consistent with available human, natural, and economic resources.

MISSION STATEMENT OF PARK DEPARTMENT:

To secure sufficient outdoor recreation area and open space, and conserve the natural resources of the County (features which make Stearns County a pleasant place to live); to maintain parks to be safe, scenic and functional for the public; and to maintain all support facilities and equipment.

GOALS STATED IN THE BUDGET PROCESS FOR 1998:

1. *Open up Quarry Park & Nature Preserve and the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail, and achieve effective management of both facilities.*
2. *Open up Two Rivers Lake park site; at least for minimal use.*

The annual report is divided into the following sections:

- I. PLANNING
- II. ACQUISITION
- III. DEVELOPMENT
- IV. MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS
- V. FUNDING
- VI. USERSHIP

I. PLANNING:

OFFICERS

- Chair of Park Commission was Don Bauer. Vice chair was Joseph Chovan.
- Jim Boie was appointed in September to fill the remainder of Paul Bugbee's term.

QUARRY PARK & NATURE PRESERVE:

- Park opened for public use on January 1, 1998. The Grand Opening was held June 14, 1998 in conjunction with Waite Park's city "Spas Tag" Festival.
- Park Commission developed gatehouse plans for 1998 construction.
- State Representative Knobloch attempts to provide state bonding funds for park expansion and development. No development funds were allocated.
- State Legislature awarded \$1 million for expansion of park southward to assist in creation of a state recognized SCIENTIFIC & NATURAL AREA, contingent on the County matching the funds.
- County Board authorized first official park patrol position to help manage use of the park.
- The first Quarry Park & Nature Preserve tourism brochure was developed as part of an internship by Jennifer Putnam and Jon Stricker through the St. Cloud State University Graphic Arts Department, Don Bruno as advisor. The Park Dept. published 10,000 color copies.
- Interpretive Center designer selection would be done through a contest by architects.

LAKE WOBEGON TRAIL:

- Groundbreaking ceremony was held on April 21, 1998 at Lower Spunk Lake in Avon. Attending were county commissioners, park commissioners, city representatives, Albany Jaycees, community development director and park staff.
- Construction engineering was provided by the Stearns County Highway Dept., under the direction of Douglas Weiszhaar, County Engineer; and SRF Consulting as design contractors.
- Grand opening was held in Albany on September 30, 1998. Guest speakers included humorist and radio personality Garrison Keillor, and U.S. Representatives James Oberstar and Colin Peterson. About 300 people attended on that Wednesday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. The Albany Jaycees and City Chamber provided hospitality and refreshments. The trail was constructed by Tri-City Paving at a cost of about \$1.4 million.
- Park Commission reviewed the proposed trail ordinance and saw adoption by the County Board of Ordinance #201 on December 8, 1998.

REGIONAL PARK & TRAIL PLAN:

State Representative Joe Opatz requested the County join with other central Minnesota jurisdictions to develop a regional plan that would help compete for state funding dollars at the state legislative level. The Area Transportation Planning Organization agreed to provide start up coordination. The goal was to have a plan in place for the State's Fiscal Year 2000 bonding program.

STEARNS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

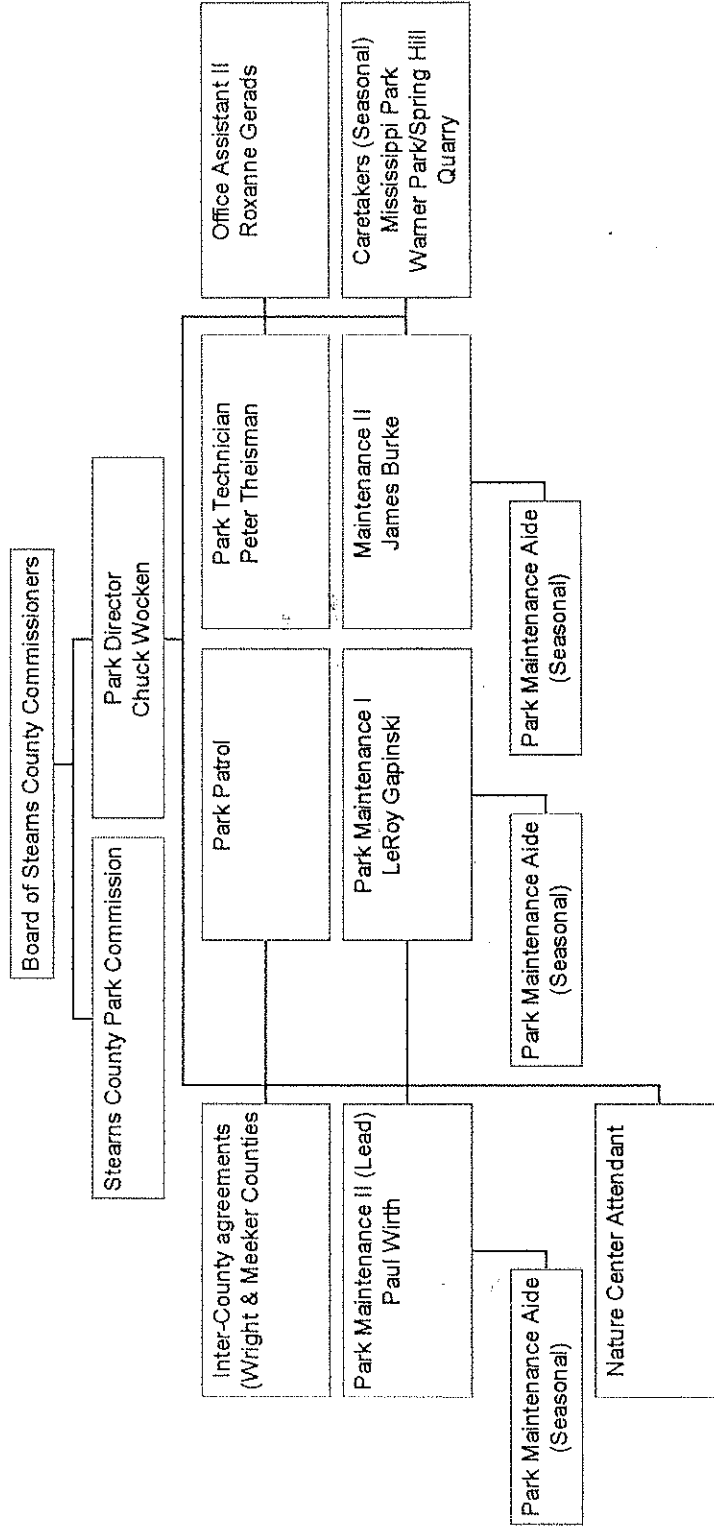
- Park Commission reviewed the planning process and submitted recommendations on:
 - Extending the Sauk River Greenway from Melrose to Sauk Centre;
 - Expand Two Rivers Lake Park Site toward boat landing and connect to the Lake Wobegon Trail;
 - Connecting rail trails to parks and natural areas;
 - Preserving remaining natural habitat;
 - Expanding Quarry Park & Nature Preserve and do additional development;
 - Developing a regional trail system including
 - The Lake Wobegon Trail
 - Lake Wobegon Trail / Soo Line section
 - Extend Lake Wobegon Trail into St. Cloud and Quarry Park
 - Extend St. Cloud's Beaver Island Trail to Warner Lake County Park
 - Extend the STATE DNR "Glacial Lakes Trail" to Quarry Park & St. Cloud
- Encouraged zoning and protection of natural features including the Sauk River and the upper portion of the Mississippi River.

BUDGET 1999:

- The Park Commission proposed raising the park levy, construction of two boardwalks at Quarry Park & Nature Preserve, additional parks in other parts of the county, hiring of a park technician and secretary, Lake Wobegon Trail maintenance, purchase of the Soo Line rail corridor, and connecting the Soo Line to Two Rivers Lake park site. The County Administrator supported the requests for park technician, park secretary, moving the park office to Quarry Park and the Park Bond.
- The current organizational chart for the Park Department is shown on Page 4.

STEARNS COUNTY PARK DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

MARCH 1999



PARK BOND:

The Stearns County Board BONDED \$2.67 million dollars for

- Quarry Park & Nature Preserve expansion by 393 acres;
- Additional improvements at Quarry Park;
- Acquisition of the 40 mile Canadian Pacific Soo Line rail corridor;
- Construction of Phase 2 of the Lake Wobegon Trail (Albany/Holdingford);
- Creation of a temporary parking lot at Two Rivers Lake park site;
- Construction of a new Park Operation & Maintenance Center at Quarry Park to consolidate park functions; and, the
- Creation of new county park sites.

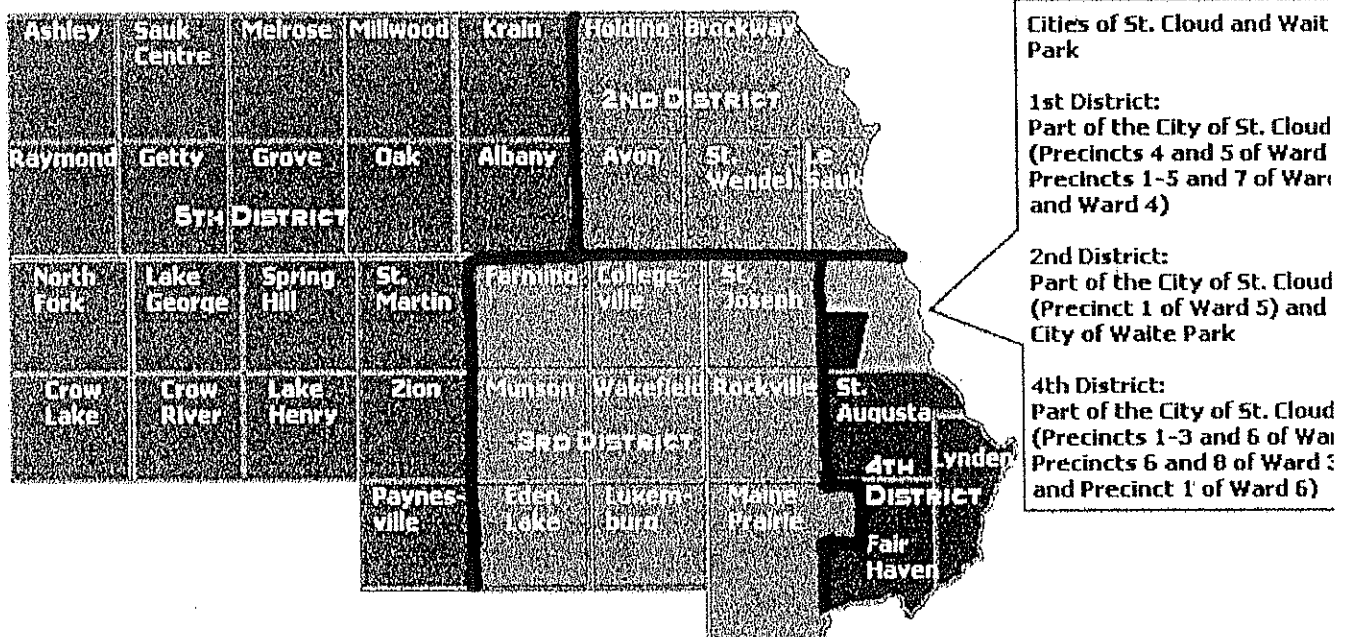
This was the first bond executed by Stearns County for the preservation and development of parks and open space since the creation of the Park Department in 1974. The County Board held a public hearing on the Capital Improvement Plan on November 24, 1998 and voted unanimously to approve the bond. It was a 15 year bond with an net interest rate (NIR) of 4.3428%. The proposed cost to a person with a \$100,000 home was \$4.66. The issuance cost was \$32,000 paid to Evanson & Dodge. The bond funds were in hand by March 28, 1999. This will increase the amount budgeted for parks by about \$260,000 annually and will be budgeted through the Debt Service Fund, not the Park Fund.

II. ACQUISITION: In 1998 there was no land acquired.

STEARNS COUNTY PARK ACREAGE DISTRIBUTION
DECEMBER 31, 1998

COMMISSIONER DISTRICT

PARK NAME	1	2	3	4	5
Mississippi River County Park		230			
Warner Lake County Park				241	
Upper Spunk Lake County Park		5	2		
St. Martin Canoe Access					1
Oak Township Park Site					32
Two Rivers Lake Park Site					56
Lake Sylvia Wayside and Access					3
Spring Hill County Park					82
Richmond River Wayside			8		
Lake Koronis Regional Park (partial)					42
Quarry Park & Nature Preserve				252	
Heims Mill Canoe Access		1			
Fairhaven Mill (not owned by Stearns)				5	
Miller Landing			6		
Lake Wobegon Trail (Leased)		36			303
Acreage		272	16	498	519
TOTAL ACREAGE		1305			



III. DEVELOPMENT

- The gatehouse was constructed at Quarry Park & Nature Preserve. It was built of St. Cloud Red Granite salvaged on site by the Sentenced to Serve crew. Cost of the building was about \$18,000 and was mostly constructed by Stearns County Building Maintenance staff.
- Lehmeier House - The former 3 - bedroom home was converted into a public use office area.

IV. MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

- Rustic granite benches were placed by Park Maintenance staff along the main trail north of the prairies at Quarry Park.
- Quarry Park's swimming platform was modified to release quickly for underwater recovery purposes. This was a result of the fatality in Melrose Deep Seven. A person tried to dive from high on a rock pile and died.
- A one-way exit gate was salvaged from a City of Hopkins park and installed at Quarry Park. This will prevent anyone from being locked in the park.
- At Mississippi River Park the abandoned Hiscock house was boarded up to prevent recurrence of vandalism.
- Paul Wirth, Lead Park Maintenance staff was granted a 6-month leave-of-absence. This resulted in a reduction from 3 maintenance crews to 2 crews for the summer. Jim Burke was assigned acting Lead for the summer.
- Staffing included:
 - 3 permanent park maintenance staff;
 - 3 seasonal maintenance aides;
 - 3 seasonal caretakers; 1 at Mississippi River, 1 at Spring Hill, and 1 at Quarry Park.
 - 5 Green View, Inc. contract caretakers; 3 at Warner & 2 at Quarry Park;
 - 2 Green View, Inc. contract attendants for the Warner Nature Center;
- Quarry Park again dominated the maintenance schedule with much staff time placed in trail development and improvement. Trail improvements prepared the park for 4 miles of groomed winter ski trail use and access to fishing quarries.
- Park maintenance staff assisted the DNR FISHERIES Division in stocking the quarries with rainbow trout. This is the first stocking of trout in area granite quarries since the 1950's. Trout were 9 inches and ½ pound each.
- Despite massive signing on the Lake Wobegon Trail, additional signs needed to be added by Parks staff. These signs designated trail uses, restricted metal traction devices and publicized trail rules.
- Groomed ski trail mileage increased from 9 miles to 13 miles with the addition of the "skate ski & diagonal stride" ski trails at Quarry Park. Two-way trail grooming is a major winter maintenance activity for park staff.
- Summer maintenance activities include mowing, rodent control, noxious weed control, forest management, prairie management, building maintenance and repair, building modification, grounds maintenance and improvements, public safety inspections, and a host of other activities related to the hospitality mission of county parks.

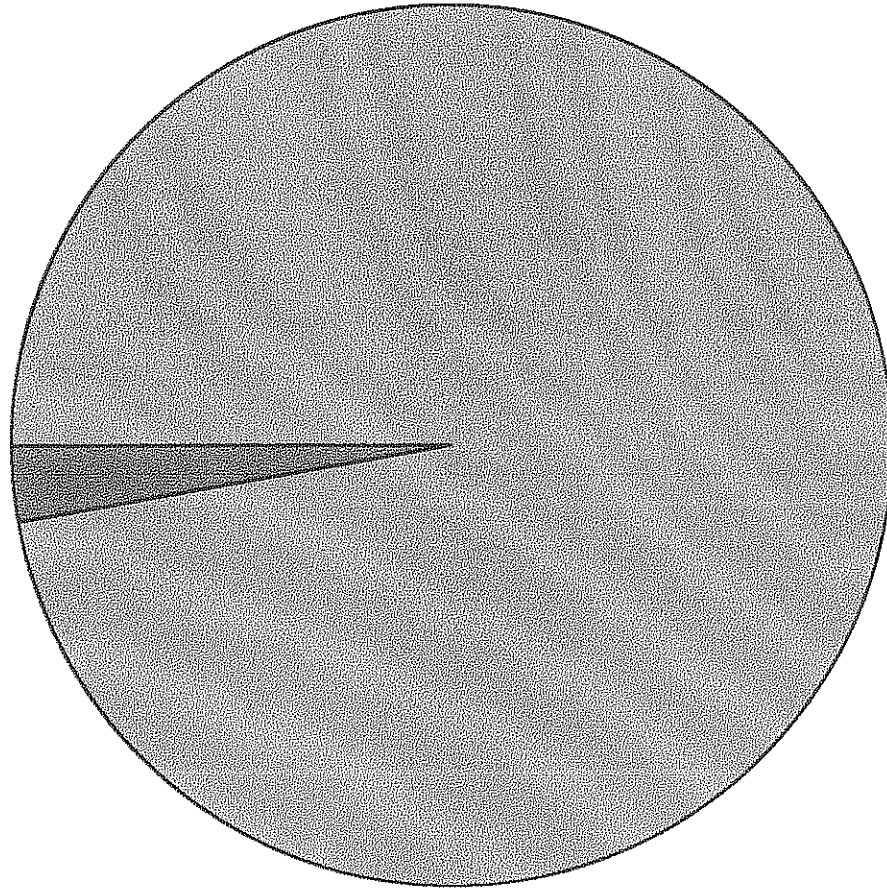
V. FUNDING

Estimated county population for 1998: 131,981.

Overall county budget:	\$70,577,264
County property tax levy:	\$24,151,095
Park Budget (Fund 18):	\$ 1,921,620
Park Budget less Capital Outlay:	\$ 450,820
Park property tax levy:	\$ 310,591

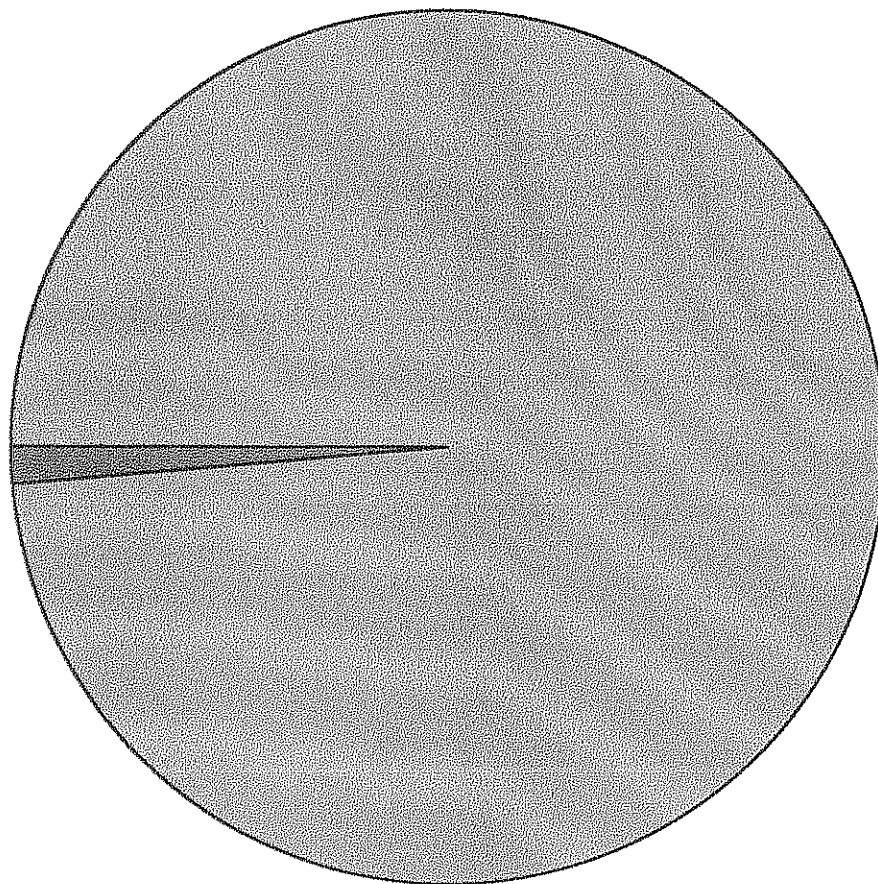
The per capita cost of the Parks program, looking at the park property tax levy was, \$ 2.35 (\$2.68/capita in 1997). The average household size is 2.9 people. The per household park cost was \$6.82 .

1998 BUDGET



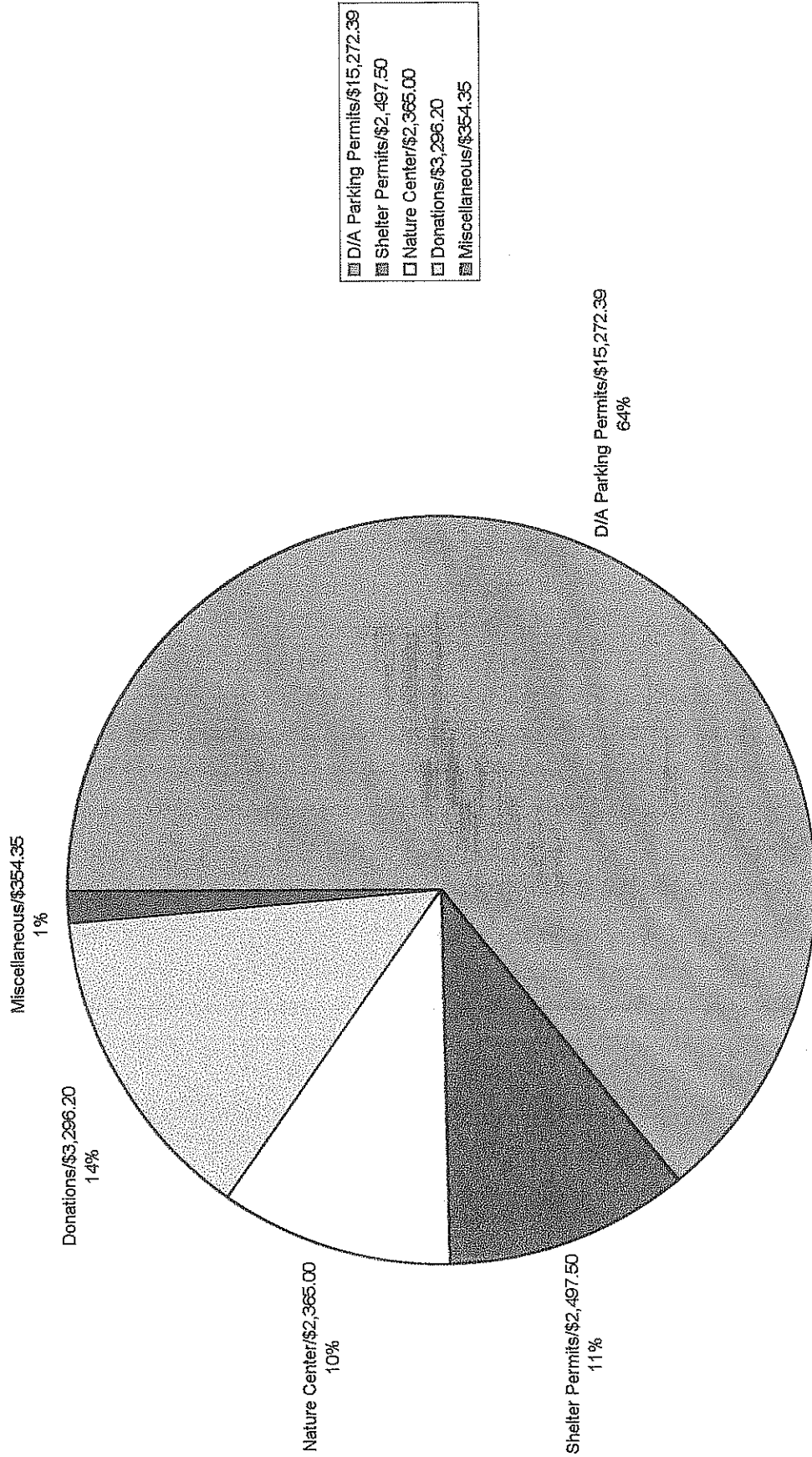
County Budget \$70,577,264
Park Budget (Fund 18) \$1,921,620 3%

1998 PROPERTY TAX LEVY



■ County Property	Levy	\$24,151,095
■ Park Property	Levy	\$310,591 (1%)

1998 Non-tax revenue



IV. USERSHIP

- A volunteer cross-country ski patrol was organized for Quarry Park and Nature Preserve for the second year in a row. The Nordic Ski Club of Central Minnesota members have helped guide skiers through the park on weekends throughout the ski season.
- The Albany Jaycees volunteered to host the grand opening ceremony of the Lake Wobegon Trail. Approximately 300 people participated in the event. Garrison Keillor was inducted as an honorary Albany Jaycee at the ceremony.
- The Nordic Ski Club of Central Minnesota sponsored its annual Moonlight Ski at Warner Lake County Park. The event drew about 300 participants. The event helped raise funds for the Quarry Park ski trail lighting project.
- Using parking permit receipts, use of Quarry Park & Nature Preserve was estimated at about 40,000 visitors during its first year.
- Troop 20, Boy Scouts of America, and science professionals help staff on a voluntary basis the grand opening of Quarry Park & Nature Preserve. Golden Shoes Stables donated use of its horse-drawn trolley. About 300-400 people participated in the event.
- Eagle scouts Adam Lanz and Steve Romstad both coordinated volunteers to brush out additional mountain bike and technical zone pathways at Quarry Park.
- Park permits and reservations listed below account for only formal uses of the park. The rest of the use is spontaneous, informal public visitation. No specific counts are available.

1998 RESERVATION LIST

WARNER LAKE PARK			QUARRY PARK PERMIT		
GROUP NAME	DAYS RESERVED	GROUP SIZE	INFORMATION	DAYS RESERVED	GROUP SIZE
St. Michael Hospital Foundation	1	500	SCSU Freshwater Biology	1	2
St. Peter, Paul & Michael	1	250	Underwater Sports	21	105
Southway Juniors	1	80	Fanta Sea Scuba	1	10
Kimball Elementary School	1	45	Boy Scouts	1	30
St Peter, Paul & Michael -8th	1	65	Blue Water Divers	13	36
St Mary's Cathedral	1	40	SCSU Field Geology	0	20
Madison Elementary	1	100	SCSU Geological (Earth Science)	2	36
Mark Storms	1	150	Geological Society of Minnesota	1	20
Barb Manuel	1	75	Benton-Stearns Education District	4	12
YMCA Day Camp	25	35	Whitney Senior Center	1	25
Brenda Pritchard	1	25	Minn. County Biological Survey	0	1
Allen Becker	1	50	Institute on Lake Superior Geology	1	40
Margie Hartneck	1	30	Jerry Carter	2	2
Mary Lou May	1	50	Central MN Volsports	2	100
Karen Aronson	1	50	SCSU Stratigraphy Class	1	20
Community Corrections	1	60	SCSU Lake Ecology	1	2
Jack Wimmer	1	50	Rotary International	1	40
Thomas Sturm	1	50	Boy Scout Trail Builders	2	5
Girl Scouts Unit 12	4	100	MPCA	1	5
1st American Trust	1	50	Discovery School Grade 5 & 6	0	60
Bonnie Peterson	1	30	Sierra Club State Exec. Committee	1	30
Joyce Peterson	1	50	Minnesota Geological Survey	2	50
Boy Scouts	1	50	Waite Park Boy Scouts (TR 20)	1	40
Renee Lojeais	1	100	St Francis Xavier School K & 1	1	80
Mary Ergen	1	30	Environment Class; Area Learning Center	1	30
Robin Rothstein	1	200	Holdingsford Middle School Grade 5	2	150
McDonalds	1	50	St Cloud Tech High School	1	100
Otremba Family Reunion	1	40	Discovery Elementary School Team 10	1	70
Red Lobster	1	60	SCSU Biology Dept (Teacher Workshop)	1	22
Keith Mauer	1	40	29 Groups	67	1143
McDonalds - Waite Park	1	60			
Ann Murphy	1	30	WARNER LAKE PARK CAMPIING	DAYS	GROUP
McDonalds	1	70	GROUP NAME	RESERVED	SIZE
Paths	1	15	Boy Scouts TR 6	1	16
McDonalds - Sartell	1	80	Hillside Elementary	2	55
Kim Gau	1	40	Boy Scouts TR 6,3,14 & 28	3	50
U.S. Navy Group	1	40	Boy Scouts TR 84	2	50
Boys & Girls Club	4	60	Boy Scouts TR 106	3	40
Johnson Group Marketing	1	12	Rejoice Lutheran Church Youth Group	3	20
Sinlge Source Transportation	1	70	Boy Scouts TR 18	3	20
Thomas Rudolph	1	10	Twin Citites Habitat for Humanity (Bike Tour)	1	70
T.O. Plastics	1	150	Boy Scouts TR 16	2	10
Freeman Motorcycle Club	1	175	Boy Scouts TR 473-Rice	3	20
Northland Bible Baptist Church	1	50	Boy Scouts TR 9	3	20
Clearview School	2	30	Boy Scouts - Sartell	2	10
Becker Middle School	1	130	Boy Scouts - TR 6	1	10
St Peter, Paul & Michael	3	150	Boy Scouts	2	50
47 Groups	80	3677	Tech High School Girls Swim Team	2	50
			18 Groups	33	491

MISSISSIPPI PARK GROUP NAME	DAYS RESERVED	GROUP SIZE
Dale Scholtes	1	35
Rice Campfire Boys & Girls	4	50
Best Buy	1	80
YMCA Day Camp	5	35
Central Group Mgmt Co	1	10
St Cloud Church of Christ	1	50
Robert Taubr	1	25
MN Rural Letter Carriers	1	250
Dean Froemming	1	30
Cub Scouts - Pack 9	2	70
Boy Scouts Troop 216	2	60
Lincoln Elementary	1	50
Jean Nelson	1	70
Boy Scouts (Kurt Stelten)	3	200
North Star Therapy	1	30
Church - Dave Kestner	1	30
Donna Miller	1	50
Rosie & DJ Andrews	1	70
Gary Hommerding	1	50
Sue Nilson	1	100
Hannon Security	1	75
St Cloud Boxing & Wrestling	1	35
	33	1455

22 Groups

LAKE KORONIS SHELTER INFORMATION	DAYS RESERVED	GROUP SIZE
1998	42	3025
1997	46	3250

LAKE KORONIS CAMPING	1997	1998
Receipts	538	455
People	1798	1440
Net	\$14,202.50	\$11,170.00

Caretaker's share	\$11,602.50	\$9,170.00
County's share	\$2,600	\$2,000

Number of nights camped 1333 1001

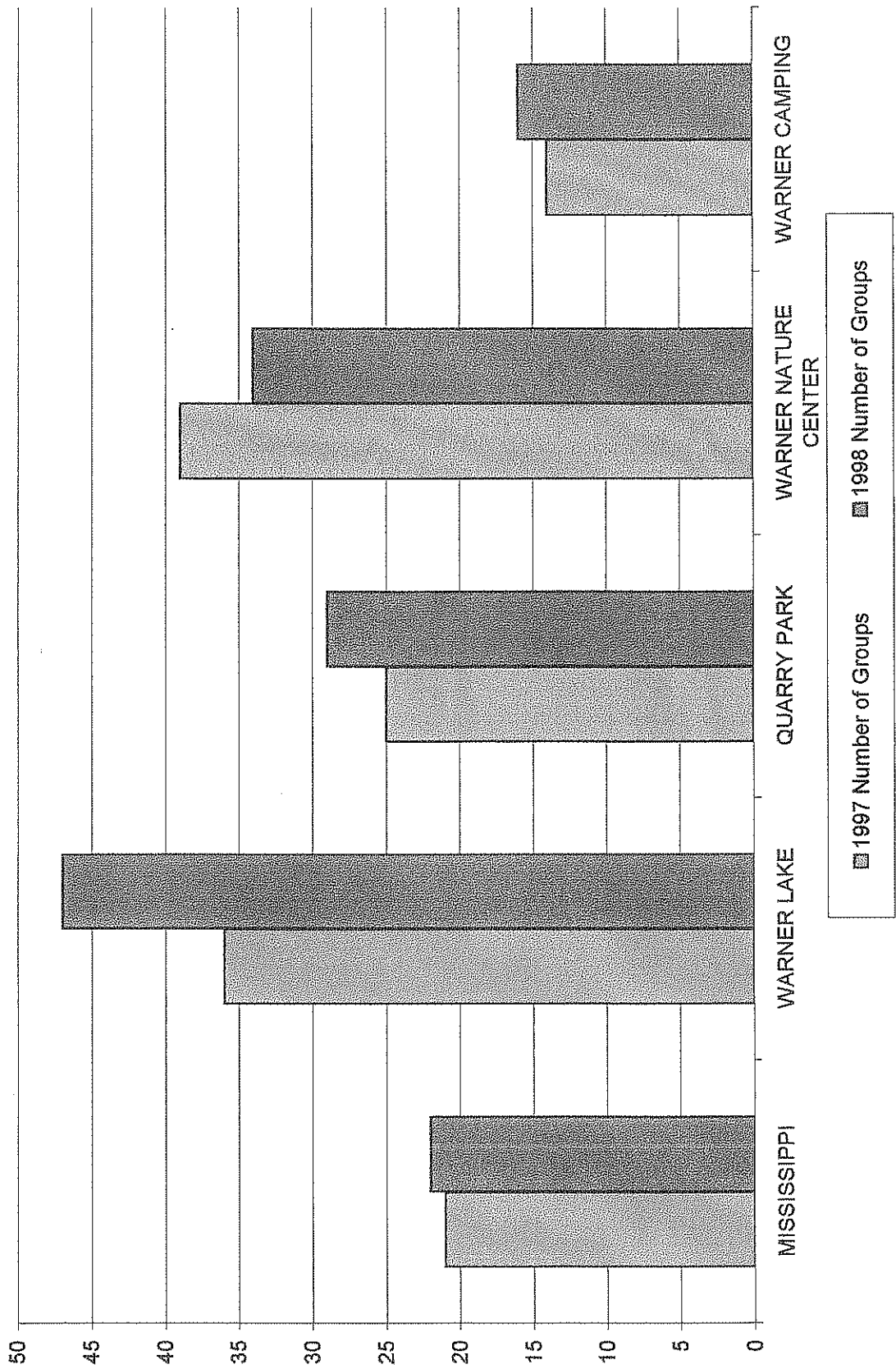
RECEIPTS

\$810
\$890

WARNER NATURE CENTER INFORMATION	DAYS RESERVED	GROUP SIZE
St Peter, Paul & Michael	3	150
Royal Rangers	1	100
Agriculture - John Waldorf	1	15
Nordic Ski Club	1	400
Barb Potter	1	50
Boy Scouts - TR 18	1	50
St Peter, Paul & Michael	1	250
Steichen Reunion	1	50
St Cloud Visitor	1	15
Executive Committee Meeting	1	20
Royal Rangers	1	100
Charles Gohman	1	50
SCSU - Minority Studies	15	45
County Assessors Office	1	18
Lynell Russell	1	80
Les Voyageurs	3	110
Ilene Isdahl	1	50
Immaculate Conception Church	1	100
Paula Crowther	1	20
Mary Perkins	1	100
Dogged Daze of Disc-Frisbee	1	50
Rejoice Lutheran Church	1	100
Beverly Fiereck	1	100
GAB Mens Group	1	40
Stearns County Agriculture	1	24
Schwans	2	35
DCI	1	150
Lauren Mundell	1	70
Boy Scouts	1	50
Becker Middle School	1	130
County Extension Offices	1	30
Assessor Office (Stearns)	2	35
Environmental Services	1	22
Stearns County IS Dept	1	15
	54	2624

34 Groups

NUMBER OF RESERVATION GROUPS



NUMBER OF RESERVATION DAYS

