



Renville
COUNTY
PARKS

2024 Annual Report



Parks and Trails Committee

2024 Members:

- Penny Macik - District 1
- Louise A. Kiecker - District 2
- Calvin R. Aarons - District 3
- Stephen Altmann - District 4
- Larry A. Eekhoff - District 5
- Brad Bastian - At-Large
- Dave Fischer - At-Large
- OPEN – Youth At-Large
- OPEN – Youth At- Large
- Randy Kramer County Board Chair
- David Hamre - County Board Vice Chair
- Jesse Diehn - Parks Manager



The nine-member Parks and Trails Committee meets quarterly. One member is appointed by the Renville County Board of Commissioners from each of the five commissioner voting districts with four members selected at-large, two of which are youth members. Members serve three-year terms with a term limit of nine consecutive years. Each Parks and Trails Committee Member is paid a per diem of \$65 per meeting plus compensation for mileage to and from meetings.

The Parks and Trails Committee has the following duties and responsibilities.

1. Study, report, and make recommendations on amendments to the Park Ordinance and the Parks and Trails Plan prior to adoption of an amendment by the Renville County Board of Commissioners.
2. Conduct public hearings, review all information, and prepare a report and recommendation to the County Board on park land acquisition and development.
3. Act as an advisory committee to the County Board reviewing all recreation, leisure, and park-related issues including park planning, operation, maintenance, protection, and improvement and trail related issues including trail planning, development, construction, operation and maintenance, and funding sources.
4. Study and recommend appropriate fees for park permits and trail system user fees.
5. Such other duties as the Renville County Board of Commissioners may recommend.

2024 Committee Highlights

- Recommended 2024 Parks Archery Hunt.
- Recommended 2025 Woodcutting Program.
- Reviewed and recommended several future potential park improvements.
- Recommended a two-night minimum reservation for holiday weekends.

Parks Department Staff

The Renville County Parks Department maintains the seven county parks and provides grounds keeping at several of the Public Works' buildings, the Government Services Center complex, Renville County Fairgrounds, and the Birch Coulee Battle Field grounds. The Department has three full-time employees. A Park Manager, whose primary duties are administrative, but also provides direction and assistance in the field. Two Park Maintenance Workers whose duties are performed in the field. There are also three seasonal park maintenance workers, generally between the months of May and August. The Parks Department also receives assistance from highway employees when additional help is needed.

The primary focus of the maintenance crew is to maintain the current conditions of the parks, which included mowing, cleaning of the shelters, restrooms, horse bunkers, and campsites along with other routine maintenance.



While maintaining the parks a few other things park staff accomplished were:

- Assisted with camping reservations.
- Cut, split, and supplied wood at parks for campers.
- Mulched plants and flower beds in all of the parks.
- Attended the Willmar Outdoor Expo.
- Attended the Renville County Fair.
- Continued conversations with DNR for investing in outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Held the third annual Parks Outdoor Education Day at Birch Coulee.
- Fixed and stained picnic tables and benches.
- Cut trees along park roads and trails.
- Installed sand volleyball in Birch Coulee
- Installed a playground in Birch Coulee
- Completed the Park Enhancement Project.
- Continued work with the Lake Allie Outdoor Recreation Grant.
- Created bench areas in several Parks.
- Mowed and maintained selected trails in various parks.
- Installed six concrete picnic tables throughout various parks.
- Performed trail inspections at River Warren SNA.



Upper MN Valley Trail Riders Association

All of the volunteers belong to one of five Saddle Clubs.

- Amigo Riders
- Granite Valley
- Hawk Creek
- Redwood Valley
- Triple T

Between eight outings there were 62.25 total volunteer hours.

Donations Received in 2024

- Brad Erickson - \$523 for a park bench in Memory of Brenda Erickson
- Firewood Donations- \$439.75

2024 Park Usage

The Renville County Parks Department tracked camping usage within the park system via camping permits. Camping fees for rustic camping are the same in all parks. Campsites with electric and water have different rates.

The rates for 2024 are shown below:

- Rustic Camping all parks \$20 per night
- Birch Coulee Electric
 - \$27 Nightly
 - \$150 Weekly
 - \$550 Monthly
- Lake Allie Rates
 - \$27 Nightly
 - \$150 Weekly
 - \$550 Monthly
 - \$1,630 Seasonal



2024 Data Collected from Camping Permits

<u>Park</u>	<u>Total Income</u>	<u>Nights Stayed</u>	<u>Shelter Reservations</u>	<u>New Guest in Reservation System</u>
Lake Allie	\$ 33,239	1,780	1	81
Beaver Falls	\$ 8,218	430	7	109
Birch Coulee	\$ 11,038	484	8	48
Vicksburg	\$ 5,642	296	4	60
Skalbekken	\$ 7,824	417	2	80
Mack Lake	\$ 1,007	54	0	22
Totals	\$ 66,968	3,461	22	400

Groomed Trails

The Parks Department and the EDA have teamed up since 2021 to provide groomed winter trails that follow the park road at Beaver Falls and Skalbekken Parks. Both Parks have approximately 1.6 miles of groomed trails. Due to the lack of snow the winter of 2024 there were no groomed trails and usage was not tracked.

Parks Marketing/Communications

(In partnership with the Renville County EDA)

- **Minnesota Trail Riders Association Newsletter**: Advertised in five issues that are distributed to 1,000 subscribers throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North and South Dakota.
- **Facebook**: Weekly posts promoting Renville County Parks. 1,891 Followers.
- **Renville County Tourism Poster**: Marketed the Renville County tourism poster promoting the parks, points of interest, dining establishments, and historical points in the County.
- **Spring Outdoor Expo**: Attended the Spring Outdoor Expo at the Willmar Civic Center to promote Renville County and Renville County Parks.
- **Renville County Fair**: Had a “selfie station” with a prize package and parks backdrop to interact with attendees (*Selfie station was also used at the Spring Outdoor Expo*). Email addresses were collected from registrants and placed in a database for marketing Renville County Parks and tourism.
- **Southern MN Tourism Association (SMTA)**: Represented Renville County in the Southern MN Tourism Association regular, executive committee, and marketing committee meetings.
- **Outdoor Education Day**: Hosted the third annual Renville County Parks Outdoor Education Day. 150 students from GFW, BLH-S and RCW schools attended the event, which was held at Birch Coulee County Park. Partners included the EDA, Sheriff's Office, Environmental Services Office, Emergency Management, SWCD, Hawk Creek, Master Gardeners, RRRSWA, Public Health/SHIP, and Pact for Families Collaborative. (*Photo right: Students learned about wildlife in Renville County from Holly at the Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District*).

