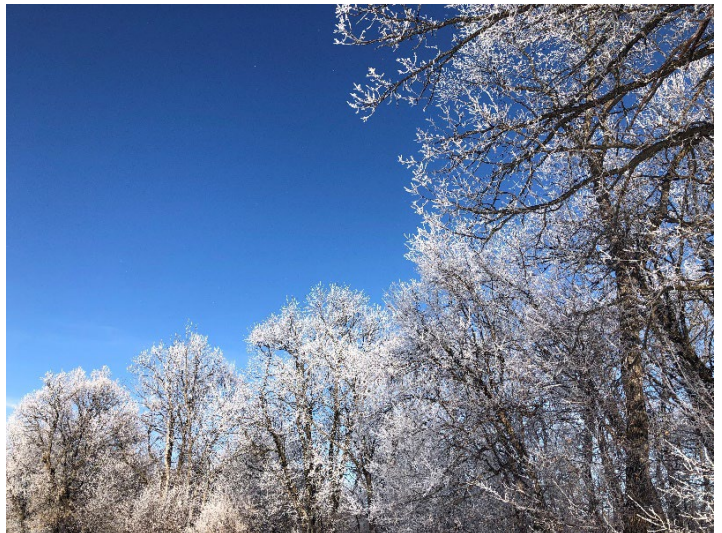




# 2021 Annual Report



## Parks and Trails Committee

### 2021 Parks and Trails Committee Members:

Penny Macik - District 1	12/31/21 (term expiration)
Louise A. Kiecker - District 2	12/31/23 (term expiration)
Calvin R. Aarons - District 3	12/31/23 (term expiration)
Stephen Altmann - District 4	12/31/23 (term expiration)
Larry A. Eekhoff - District 5	12/31/21 (term expiration)
Ike Case - At Large	07/01/22 (term expiration)
OPEN - Youth At-Large	
Thomas P. Gruendemann - At-Large	12/31/22 (term expiration)
Dave Fischer - At-Large	12/31/22 (term expiration)
Bob Fox - County Board Chair	
Randy Kramer - County Board Vice Chair	
Jesse Diehn - Parks Manager	
Stefanie Ryan - Economic Development Authority	



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 Plain 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.



## 2021 Committee Highlights

- Recommended 2021 Parks Archery Hunt.
- Recommended 2021 woodcutting program.
- Recommended a Lake Allie campground host.
- Reviewed Parks fee schedule and recommended adding a monthly camping rate at Birch Coulee for 2022.

## 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 two full-time employees. A Park Manager, whose primary duties are performed within the office, but who also provides direction and assistance in the field when needed, and the Lead Maintenance Worker whose duties are performed in the field. There are also three seasonal park maintenance workers that assist the Lead Maintenance worker, generally

between the months of May and August. The Parks Department also received assistance in the Spring and Fall from a Highway employee when help was needed.

With the staffing that the department had in 2021, the primary focus of the maintenance crew from April through October was to maintain the current condition of the parks, which included mowing common areas, cleaning of the shelters, restrooms, horse bunkers, and campsites and other routine maintenance.

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

- Trail directional signage, trail name signage, you are here map signage and park kiosk signage installed in Beaver Falls Recreation Area and in Birch Coulee.
- Trail signage was installed at Vicksburg.
- Assisted with camping reservations.
- Ordered road signage to better direct motorist to the Beaver Falls Horse Camp and Recreational Area.
- Cut, split and supplied wood at parks for campers.
- Re-mulched plants and flower beds in all of the parks.
- Added more horse ties in Beaver Falls.
- Attended the 2021 MN Horse Expo.
- Attended the Renville County Fair.
- Fixed, stained and numbered picnic tables and benches.
- Helped an Eagle Scout install horse shoe pits at Beaver Falls and Skalbekken.
- Cut trees along park roads and trails.
- Installed new bathroom doors at Skalbekken.

- Made trail improvements in wet areas at Beaver Falls.
- Repaired and refurbished trash cans.
- Attended multiple organized horse hides at Beaver Falls with different originations.
- Had a snow plow route with the Highway Department.

### **Contracted Work**

- Groomed winter trails at Beaver Falls and Skalbekken.
- Road work in Beaver Falls at the hairpin

### **Saddle Club Volunteer Hours**

- Between six different Saddle Clubs, members volunteered 229.25 hours to keep up and improve Renville County's Horse Camps and Trails.

### **Grants**

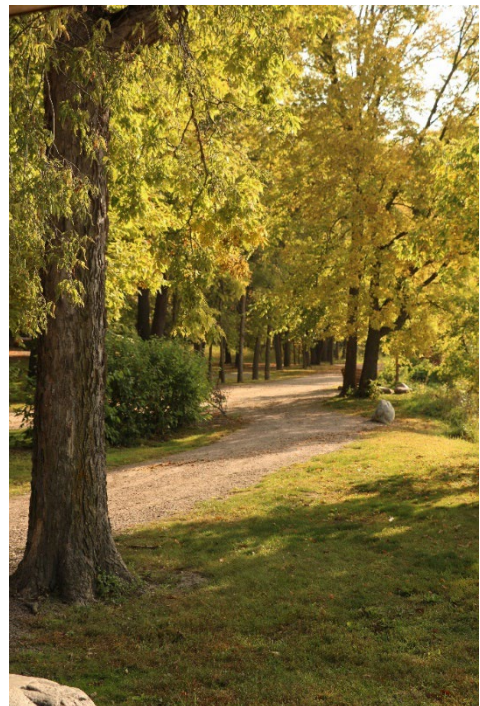
- Minnesota Trail Riders Association - \$5,000 to replace steel doors on restroom facilities at both Beaver Falls and Skalbekken horse camps.

### **2021 Park Usage**

The Renville County Parks Department tracked camping usage within the park system via camping permits. Camping fees for rustic camping is the same in all parks, but different parks with electric and or water had different rates.

**The rates for 2021 are shown below:**

- Rustic Camping all parks \$20 per night
- Birch Coulee Electric
  - \$25 per night
  - \$140 Weekly
- Lake Allie Rates
  - \$27 Nightly
  - \$150 Weekly
  - \$550 Monthly
  - \$1630 Seasonal



## 2021 Data Collected from Camping Permits

<u>Park</u>	<u>Total Income</u>	<u>Nights Stayed</u>	<u>Shelter Reservations/ Large Events</u>
Lake Allie	\$38,689.73	2099	1
Beaver Falls	\$6,922.72	364	4
Birch Coulee	\$9,925.26	464	8
Vicksburg	\$6,202.40	321	7
Skalbekken	\$5,931.07	317	
Mack Lake	\$1,272.28	68	
Firewood	\$450.63		
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$69,394.09</u>	<u>3633</u>	<u>20</u>

## Donations Received in 2021

- Jason Vagle- \$215 in memory of Madison Vagle
- Sullivan Family Farms- Insulated part of the well house at Birch Coulee

## Parks Marketing/Communications

*(In partnership with the Renville County EDA)*

- Central Community Transit (CCT): Wrapped two CCT busses with advertisements.
  - Bus #1 Route: Olivia, Bird Island, Danube, Fairfax, Redwood Falls and Hutchinson
  - Renville County to Willmar
- Minnesota Trail Riders Association Newsletter: Five Issues per year distributed to 1,000 subscribers throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North and South Dakota
- Facebook: Weekly posts promoting Renville County Parks. 1,503 Followers/1,457 Likes
- Renville County Parks Rock: Kicked off a kindness-spreading treasure hunt for kids and families. Approximately 200 painted rocks, with inspirational messages and themes, were hidden throughout the parks to draw in visitors. The Cairo Sharpshooters 4-H Club participated this year by painting and hiding rocks.



- Renville County Tourism Poster: Updated Renville County tourism poster promoting the parks, points of interest, dining establishments and historical points in the county.
- Park Kiosk Updates: Updated local tourism information in the kiosks located on all park restrooms/shelters.
- Spring Outdoor Expo: Attended the Spring Outdoor Expo at the Willmar Civic Center to promote Renville County.
- Renville County Fair: Featured the Parks Trail Enhancement Project at the Renville County Fair Booth. Had a “selfie station” with a kayak and parks backdrop to interact with attendees. Kayak was given away as a door prize. Registrant information placed in database for marketing.
- Community Table: Participated as the featured community table in September at the Olivia Farmer’s Market.
- Southern MN Tourism Association (SMTA): Represented Renville County in the Southern MN Tourism Association regular, executive committee and marketing committee meetings.
- MN Gravel 160 Event: Hosted the MN Gravel 160 bike event participants at Mack Lake and Skalbekken County Parks in September and participated on the planning committee. Bikers rode from Willmar to Mack Lake to Skalbekken and back to Willmar over three days.



- Drone Footage: Public Works staff did a drone fly over of each county park. This video footage will be used to create promo videos.
- Outdoor Education Day: Planned for 300 students from Renville County to attend an Outdoor Education Day held at Birch Coulee in partnership with the EDA, Extension Office, Sheriff’s Office, Environmental

Services Office, Public Works, GIS, SWCD, Master Gardeners, and Historical Society. Postponed to Spring 2022 due to COVID.