



Renville COUNTY PARKS

2022 Annual Report



Parks and Trails Committee

2022 Members:

Penny Macik - District 1
Louise A. Kiecker - District 2
Calvin R. Aarons - District 3
Stephen Altmann - District 4
Larry A. Eekhoff - District 5
Ike Case - At Large
OPEN - Youth At-Large
Thomas P. Gruendemann - At-Large
Dave Fischer - At-Large
Randy Kramer County Board Chair
Greg Snow - 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.

2022 Committee Highlights

- Recommended 2022 Parks Archery Hunt.
- Recommended 2022 Woodcutting Program.
- Recommended Lake Allie Campground Host receive a 50% discount.
- Reviewed Parks Ordinance and recommended updates.

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 four 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.

The primary focus of the maintenance crew is to maintain the current conditions 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 signage at Skalbekken.
- Cleaned up, regraded, and seeded grass where the Mack Lake cabin was.
- Cleaned, verified, and made trails at Mack Lake.
- Cleaned up flooded timbers at Mack Lake.
- Assisted with camping reservations.
- Ordered road signage to better direct motorist on Highway 212 to Skalbekken.
- Cut, split and supplied wood at parks for campers.
- Re-mulched plants and flower beds in all of the parks.
- Attended the Willmar Outdoor Expo.
- Attended Farm Fest
- Attended the Renville County Fair.
- Held the first Annual Parks Outdoor Education Day at Birch Coulee.
- Fixed and stained picnic tables and benches.
- Cut trees along park roads and trails.
- Cleared trees along the road at Skalbekken to make it safer for guest when they leave.
- Cut native grass areas at Beaver Falls, Skalbekken, and Vicksburg.

- Stained the walking bridge at Birch Coulee
- Stained horse ties and manure bunkers at Skalbekken.
- Stained campsite posts at Birch Coulee, Beaver Falls, and Vicksburg.
- Painted shelters at Birch Coulee and Skalbekken.

Contracted Work

- Groomed winter trails at Beaver Falls and Skalbekken.
- Road/embankment repair at Skalbekken from a flood event.
- Tree trimming services at Skalbekken.
- Removal of dead trees and stump grinding at Lake Allie.
- Removal of dead trees and stump grinding at Mack Lake.
- Installation of a dump station at Birch Coulee.

Upper MN Valley Trail Riders Association

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

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

Between 11 different outings there was 95 total volunteer hours.

Grants

- **Minnesota Trail Riders Association** - \$5,000 for park style grills and material for in the horse camps and on trails at both Beaver Falls and Skalbekken horse camps.
- **SHIP Partner Grant** - \$3,000 for materials to build benches for on walking trails. Staff is building these the winter of 2022 and will install the spring of 2023.

Donations Received in 2022

- **Jason Vagle**- \$300 in memory of Madison Vagle
- **Scheer Family**- Park Bench in Vicksburg to be placed by the boat landing in memory of Lance Scheer.

2022 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. Parks with electric and/or water have different rates.

The rates for 2022 are shown below:

- Rustic Camping all parks \$20 per night
- Birch Coulee Electric
 - \$25 per night
 - \$140 Weekly
 - \$450 Monthly
- Lake Allie Rates
 - \$27 Nightly
 - \$150 Weekly
 - \$550 Monthly
 - \$1630 Seasonal



2022 Data Collected from Camping Permits

<u>Park</u>	<u>Total Income</u>	<u>Nights Stayed</u>	<u>Shelter Reservations/ Large Events</u>	<u>New Guest in Reservation System</u>
Lake Allie	\$29,027	1740	1	58
Beaver Falls	\$7,423	376	5	87
Birch Coulee	\$8,067	369	6	33
Vicksburg	\$5,369	264	6	53
Skalbekken	\$4,200	222	1	56
Mack Lake	\$430	20	0	10
Firewood	\$320			
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$54,837</u>	<u>2991</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>297</u>

Parks Marketing/Communications

(In partnership with the Renville County EDA)

- **Central Community Transit (CCT):** Continued advertising on two CCT busses.
 - Bus Routes are in Olivia area and Litchfield area (*Photo Below: Bus wrap artwork*)



- **Minnesota Trail Riders Association Newsletter:** Advertised in five Issues per year that are distributed to 1,000 subscribers throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North and South Dakota

- **Facebook:** Weekly posts promoting Renville County Parks. 1,190 Followers

- **Renville County Parks Rock:** In partnership with Renville County Human Services, local law enforcement, and schools, continued the kindness-spreading treasure hunt for kids and families. Approximately 200 rocks were painted by school children during child abuse awareness month, with inspirational messages and themes. The rocks were hidden throughout the parks to draw in visitors. (*Photo Right: Students pose with their painted rocks, human services staff, and law enforcement.*)



- **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.



- **Farm Fest:** Attended Farm Fest, located in Redwood County, and shared a booth with the EDA to promote Renville County.
- **Renville County Fair:** Had a "selfie station" with a grilling prize package and parks backdrop to interact with attendees (*Selfie station was also used at the Spring Outdoor Expo and Farm Fest*). 500+ email addresses were collected from registrants and placed in database for marketing Renville County Parks and tourism. (*Photo Left: Stephanie Koenen and Natasha Dallmann from Human Services pose at the selfie station.*)

- **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 first annual Renville County Parks Outdoor Education Day. 150 students from Prairie Lutheran and Renville County West (RCW) schools attended the event, which was held at Birch Coulee County Park. Partners included the EDA, Extension Office, Sheriff's Office, Environmental Services Office, Public Works, GIS, SWCD, Master Gardeners, Historical Society, and RAPAD. *(Photo right: Students learned about wildlife in Renville County from Ethan at the Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District).*

