



# PARKS & TRAILS

## COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA

June 23, 2025

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources  
Centennial Office Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
658 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155

### Re: Letter of Support – Proposal ID: 2026-287 Minnesota State Trails Development

Dear Members of the LCCMR,

The Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota (P&TC) strongly supports the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' application for Minnesota State Trails Development grant funding through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). This grant would support three vital trail projects: a **4.2-mile connection** from the **Glacial Lakes State Trail** in New London to **Sibley State Park**, a **1.6-mile segment** of the Minnesota Valley State Trail from Lyndale Avenue to Nine Mile Creek in Bloomington, and a **bridge over the Pomme de Terre River** for the Minnesota River State Trail.

P&TC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to acquiring, protecting, and enhancing critical land for the public's use and benefit. Since 1954, and with the support of 3,000 plus members, we have helped add nearly 10,000 acres to Minnesota's parks and trails. We are a proud supporter of all three of these trails, and we have been working collaboratively with the MnDNR, the Sibley State Park Improvement Association (SSPIA), and other local partners for the past 15 years to connect Sibley State Park to New London. During that time, P&TC used our Land Acquisition Fund to acquire 154 acres of land in the southeast corner of the park where a portion of the trail was recently built. We also partnered with SSPIA to clean up 123 tons of trash and to begin initial prairie restoration on what is now one of the most spectacular prairie bike trail segments in the state.

This connection will provide a **safe route for students** from the New London–Spicer campus to Sibley State Park and leverage existing infrastructure, including a pedestrian tunnel that was funded through state bonding under Hwy. 71. We urge the LCCMR to recommend full funding for this proposal. These trail developments promise long-term benefits: healthier residents, stronger communities and tourism, expanded recreational access, and preserved natural landscapes.

Sincerely,

Brett Feldman  
President, Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota



275 EAST 4TH STREET, SUITE 250 • SAINT PAUL, MN 55101-1626  
PARKSANDTRAILS.ORG • INFO@PARKSANDTRAILS.ORG

Agenda Item: 11

**Sibley State Park Improvement Ass'n.**  
NEW LONDON, MINNESOTA 56273

June 21, 2025

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources  
Centennial Office Building, 1st Floor 658 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
email:lccmr@lccmr.mn.gov By email and overnight delivery

Re: Proposal ID 2026-287, Activity 2  
LCCMR Funding Category: Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of the Sibley State Park Improvement Association (SSPIA), I thank you for considering Proposal 2026-287 that includes \$4 million in ENRTF funds, necessary to complete a 4.2-mile trail segment and connect Sibley State Park (SSP) and the Glacial Lakes State Trail (GLST). By adding these funds to the \$3.1 million already authorized by a 2023 bond appropriation, the long-sought trail segment would be completed. We are excited about the possibility.

The southeastern segment of the Glacial Lakes State Trail includes more than 29 miles of continuous paved trail that weaves through a topography of tall grass prairie, scattered woodlands, and glacial lakes from Paynesville to Willmar. The GLST is a big draw for tourists who walk, cycle, rollerblade, bird watch, hunt, ride horses, and snowmobile. Completing this final 4.2 mile spur would connect Sibley State Park (which hosts 250,000 visitors each year) to the GLST at New London. In turn it would offer exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities and a safe biking and walking route for students at the New London public schools. The trail completion will enhance significantly our area as a tourist destination, building new economic opportunities for the communities of New London, Spicer, Willmar, and Paynesville.

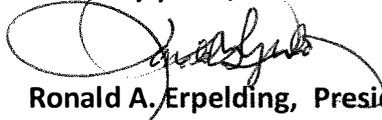
An extraordinary three mile trail segment within Sibley State Park has already been completed to its terminus at a tunnel under U.S. Hwy 71 and County Road 40 that goes nowhere. The remaining 4.2-mile segment to fill the gap is "shovel ready" with land acquisition, design engineering, and planning & specifications completed. A joint powers agreement is already in place between MN DNR and Kandiyohi County, with county funding

and a 2025 work schedule to extend the current County Road 40 culvert to accommodate the trail over the Middle Fork of the Crow River and establish a new water trail parking area. And, with this new segment, we will at long last utilize the tunnel.

The LCCMR's recommendation of this project on the final list of 2025 projects is of the utmost importance to our part of Minnesota. I have attached ten letters of support from county, city, school, and civic organizations that indicated support for the trail in our 2023 bond appropriation effort. Their support is even stronger now.

As the Project Manager Kent Skaar has written: "This trail segment represents a priority for the community of New London, Kandiyohi County and the MNDNR and a critical safety improvement for pedestrians/bicyclists that currently travel between New London and the State Park." We appreciate and thank you for your positive consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald A. Erpelding", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Ronald A. Erpelding, President,  
Sibley State Park Improvement Association  
1806 Upper Trentwood Circle NE  
Willmar, MN 56201

cc: Rep. Dave Baker with enclosures to: [rep.dave.baker@house.mn.gov](mailto:rep.dave.baker@house.mn.gov)

Sen. Andrew Lang with enclosure to: [sen.andrew.lang@senate.mn.gov](mailto:sen.andrew.lang@senate.mn.gov)



Health and Human Services Building  
Suite 2020  
2200 23rd Street NE, Willmar, MN 56201-9423  
Phone 320-231-6215 Fax 320-231-7899

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners for the 4.2 mile extension of the Glacial Lakes Trail. This project will ensure completion of the multi-year effort to connect Sibley State Park to New London.

The citizens of Kandiyohi County and surrounding communities discovered how important it is to have exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities during these times of COVID-19. This trail system will provide a safe biking and walking route for our citizens.

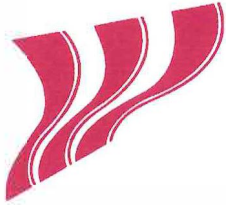
Following are a few reasons why the extension is important to our community:

- ✦ Will connect the community to the park and the existing 22-mile segment of the state trail
- ✦ Enhance tourism for the community and the park
- ✦ Offers economic opportunities for all the surrounding communities

This project is ready to go, with the land acquisitions complete, the design and engineering already funded and a joint powers agreement with the City of New London has been entered, to construct the critical river crossing necessary for construction.

Sincerely,

George "Corky" Berg  
Kandiyohi County Chairman



**WILLMAR**

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

333 SW 6TH ST  
WILLMAR, MN 56201  
320-235-4913  
FAX 320-235-4917

February 9, 2022

Sibley State Park Improvement Association  
1806 Upper Trentwood Circle NE  
Willmar, MN 56201

Dear Sir/Madam,

The City of Willmar fully supports the Glacial Lakes Trail extension from Sibley State Park to New London. Research has shown that investments in quality of life and place, such as the extension of this trail system, add great value to a healthy, local economy. The Cities of New London, Spicer and Willmar are all connected by the Glacial Lakes Trail and annually during the month of May encourage everyone to come out and ride the trail during the Mayor's Bike Ride Event. This proposed extension will provide an additional link to something that has been in the works for a long time.

Kandiyohi County is fortunate to have many natural amenities that draw people to the area. Enhancing the trail system throughout the County not only increases the quality of life for residents, it also entices future employers and employees to want to make Kandiyohi County their place of business and home.

The City of Willmar strongly encourages the Sibley State Park Improvement Association to continue improving Kandiyohi County with the Glacial Lakes Trail extension. We all look forward to riding the trail one day soon.

Best regards,

Leslie M. Valiant  
Willmar City Administrator  
[lvaliant@willmarmn.gov](mailto:lvaliant@willmarmn.gov)  
320.214.5160



P.O. Box 656 • 217 Hillcrest Avenue • Spicer, Minnesota 56288  
PH: 320.796.5562 • Fax: 320.796.2044 • [www.explorespicer.com](http://www.explorespicer.com)

February 2, 2022

To Whom it May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of the City of Spicer for the 4.2 mile extension of the Glacial Lakes Trail. This project will ensure completion of a multi-year effort to connect Sibley State Park to New London and the Glacial Lakes Trail that continues to Spicer.

Following are a few reasons why the extension is important to our community:

- Offers exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities
- Will connect the community to the park and the existing 22 mile segment of the state trail
- Enhance tourism for the community and the Park
- Offers economic opportunities for all the surrounding communities

This project is ready to go, with the land acquisitions complete, the design and engineering already funded and a joint powers agreement with Kandiyohi County has been entered, to construct the critical river crossing necessary for construction.

Sincerely,

Dennis Baker, Mayor  
City of Spicer



# *City of New London*

CITY ON THE POND  
20 FIRST AVENUE S.W.  
PO BOX 252

NEW LONDON, MN 56273

(320) 354-2444 PHONE

(320) 354-4001 FAX

Email : [trudie@cityofnewlondon.us](mailto:trudie@cityofnewlondon.us)

[www.newlondonmn.net](http://www.newlondonmn.net)



MAYOR – JOHN BERGMAN  
ADMIN/CLERK/TREAS – TRUDIE GUPTILL

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

KELLY ASCHE  
JOHN DAHL  
ERIK HATLESTAD  
STEVE SLOMINSKI

February 2, 2022

To Whom it May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of the City of New London for the 4.2-mile extension of the Glacial Lakes Trail. This project will ensure completion of a multiyear effort to connect Sibley State Park to New London.

Following are a few reasons why the extension is important to our community:

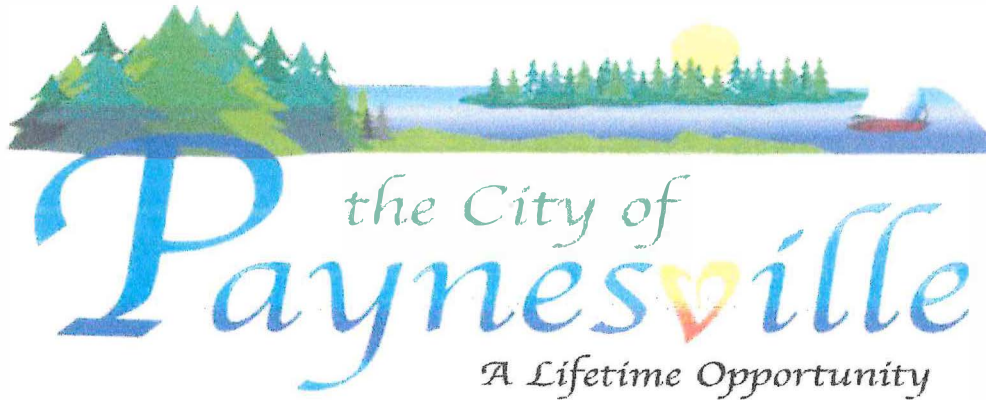
- Offers exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities
- Will connect the community to the park and the existing 22-mile segment of the state trail
- Enhance tourism for the community and the Park
- Offers economic opportunities for all the surrounding communities

This project is ready to go, with the land acquisitions complete, the design and engineering already funded and a joint powers agreement with Kandiyohi County has been entered, to construct the critical river crossing necessary for construction.

Sincerely,

John Bergman, Mayor  
City of New London





March 14, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Paynesville supports the extension of the Glacial Lakes Trail from New London to Sibley State Park. The 4.2 mile connection will attract additional tourist to the area, which already hosts more than 250,000 visitors each year. The Glacial Lakes Trail, which spans more than 38 miles from Cold Spring to Willmar, is a vital to tourism in the surrounding communities, including Paynesville.

We have also been working on connecting the Lake Koronis Recreation Trail to the Glacial Lakes Trail. Together with New London and the surrounding communities, we are excited about working together in offering a wide range of outdoor activities to our respective communities and visitors.

In addition, expansion of the trail will support local businesses and create new business opportunities. All told, building safe and sustainable outdoor amenities support thriving communities.

Thank you in advance for your support of this trail extension.

Sincerely,

Tariq Al-Rifai  
City Administrator and  
Economic Development Director



# New London-Spicer

## Community Schools

To: Minnesota House of Representatives, Minnesota Senate, Governor Walz

Re: Glacial Lake State Trail

From: Independent School District #0345, New London-Spicer

Date: February 28, 2022

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of the New London-Spicer School District for the 4.2-mile extension of the Glacial Lakes Trail. This project will ensure the completion of a multiyear effort to connect Sibley State Park to the Glacial Lakes Trail system which will provide the following benefits statewide and locally.

- Provide safe routes to school for our students.
- Offer outdoor recreation opportunities for all residents of the state of Minnesota.
- Will connect the community to the park and the existing 22-mile segment of the state trail.
- Enhance tourism and economic growth for the region and state park.

This project is "shovel ready," with land acquisitions complete, the design and engineering already funded and joint powers agreements with New London-Spicer and Kandiyohi County have been agreed upon to commence and complete construction. We strongly support the completion of this project and are hopeful you will too.

With Highest Regard,



Lucinda Dahlberg  
Board Chair

Mark Peterson  
Vice Chair

Cherrish Holland  
Secretary

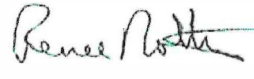
Jeff Vetsch  
Treasurer



Nancy Wehseler  
Director



Susan Lange  
Director



Renee Nolting  
Director





February 9, 2022

Sibley State Park Improvement Association  
1806 Upper Trentwood Circle NE  
Willmar, MN 56201

Dear Sibley State Park Improvement Association,

Firstly, here at the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission, we would like to thank you for beneficial land acquisitions you have completed at Sibley State Park over the years. Secondly, thank you for working on the continuation of the Glacial Lakes Bike Trail.

Sibley State Park is designated as a destination park and attracts thousands of visitors each year, making it one of Minnesota's top 10 visited state parks. In addition, it hosts part of the Glacial Lakes Bike Trail. This trail already connects the cities of Willmar, Spicer, New London, Hawick up to the Kandiyohi and Stearns County line. Along this segment of the trail are two parking access areas, including a park and ride parking lot in Hawick. In addition to this 7.5 miles of paved trail run from Roscoe to Cold Spring. The convenient access to this trail is a huge attraction.

The completion of trail improvements and expansion in the park in 2020 and 2021 created a new segment of trail that guides visitors through the scenic prairie of Sibley. However, this trail ends abruptly at the tunnel that travels under Highway 71. The continued development of this trail will complete the connection of this beautiful trail system from the park to New London. Visitors at the park would now have recreational opportunities and access to the City of New London, which would have meaningful economic benefits to the community.

We ask that you please continue the work to complete this project for the benefit of Minnesotans of West Central and greater Minnesota and also those who travel to our state to enjoy the many cultural, economic and natural resources we offer.

In appreciation,

Aaron Backman

Executive Director of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC



February 1, 2022

Sibley State Park Improvement Association  
1806 Upper Trentwood Circle NE  
Willmar, MN 56201

RE: Glacial Lakes State Trail Extension

Dear Sibley State Park Improvement Association,

As the Executive Director for the Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, I am writing you today to convey my support of the Glacial Lakes State Trail extension. Specifically, the pursuit of securing funding to complete the remaining 4.2-mile segment to fill the gap between Sibley State Park and the City of New London.

This project is ready to go. Three miles of trail within Sibley State Park has been completed, the tunnel under US Highway 71 is built, the land for the project has been acquired and design and engineering have been funded and are underway. The time is now to finish the project and complete the remaining 4.2 miles.

When completed, this extension will support major improvements to the Glacial Lakes State Trail. It will connect Sibley State Park to the communities of New London, Spicer, Willmar, and beyond, creating a network of trail opportunities for visitors and residents alike. It will provide enhanced year-round access for hikers, bikers, snowmobilers, and others seeking outdoor recreational opportunities in the Willmar Lakes Area. Our area hotels, resorts, restaurants, and businesses will see increased revenue and our communities will benefit from this economic development.

Completion of this extension is critical to Kandiyohi County's success in bringing travel and tourism back to pre-pandemic levels. Thank you for your consideration of including the Glacial Lakes State Trail extension in the bonding bill

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Fischer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Beth Fischer, Executive Director  
Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Email: [bfischer@willmarlakesarea.com](mailto:bfischer@willmarlakesarea.com) | Phone: 320-235-3552

February 16, 2022

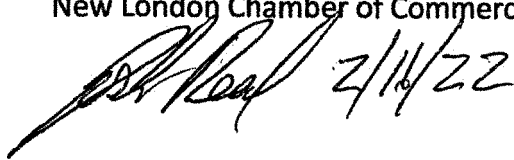
Greetings

We write in support of bonding money for the extension of the Glacial Lakes Trail from New London to U.S. 71, where it would connect to the recently completed trail in Sibley State Park. The trail extension is important link to tourism in the New London Spicer Area. Tourism is the second leading economic industry in Kandiyohi County, and the main business of the Northern Area of the county.

Access to the outdoors, good schools, safe communities and broadband are crucial to attracting young people to a community. And a growing community, with outdoor amenities, will sustain, the new and existing businesses in our area.

Thank you for the work you do in the district. And thank you in advance for your support of the funding for this extension.

Josh Reed, President  
New London Chamber of Commerce.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Reed", followed by the date "2/16/22". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.