

2005 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2007

TITLE: Best Practices for Parks and Outdoor Recreation

PROJECT MANAGER: Kathy Schoenbauer

ORGANIZATION: Minnesota Recreation and Park Association

ADDRESS: 200 Charles Street NE; Fridley, MN 55432

WEB SITE ADDRESS: For MRPA: www.mnrpa.org. For project: www.bestpracticesmn.org

FUND: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: ML 2005, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 11, Subd. 6(d).

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$ 200,000.00

Overall Project Outcome, Results, Use and Dissemination

This project was the result of the 2004 Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) Parks Study and the 2003-2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Together, both of these studies pointed toward the value and importance of better coordination and collaboration across Minnesota's outdoor recreation providers. The Best Management Practices for Parks and Outdoor Recreation grant project addressed these recommendations by engaging public and private outdoor recreation leaders to translate better coordination into concrete advice and on-the-ground action.

The project was successful in reaching a broad cross-section of professional outdoor recreation providers from city, county, state and federal agencies; private consultants; universities and non-profits. More than 1,250 professionals participated in nine events held throughout the state. These events, including a Best Practices Summit and regional workshops, provided participants with new ideas and ways of managing parks and outdoor recreation. The networking has been instrumental in better coordination and collaboration among outdoor recreation providers.

A website (www.bestpracticesmn.org) was developed during the project to enable professionals to share best practices in a wide variety areas – from facility maintenance to natural resource management to research. During the project, there were approximately 3,800 unique visitors to the website.

Prior to this project, there were no other forums for learning and collaboration at a cross-agency level. This project provided park and outdoor recreation professionals with the opportunity to learn from one another, share best practices and lessons learned. Project participants now have an enhanced set of tools in which to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

Project participants gained valuable information to work more effectively and efficiently in many areas, including, but not limited to:

- Outdoor recreation trends
- Sustaining outdoor recreation facilities for the future
- Park, open space & trail system planning
- Surface & storm water management
- Innovative financing for operations & maintenance
- Innovative financing for land acquisition & development
- Contemporary approaches to natural resource stewardship
- Strategies for getting kids and young adults outdoors
- Case studies for successful cross-agency collaboration
- Energy efficiency in parks and recreation

A detailed report of project results can be obtained by contacting Kathy Schoenbauer at keschoenbauer@comcast.net or Michelle Snider at snider@mnrecpark.org.

LCMR Final Work Program Report

Date of Report: August 14, 2007
Date of Work program Approval: July 2005
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2007

I. PROJECT TITLE: Best Management Practices for Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Project Manager: Kathy Schoenbauer
Affiliation: Project Manager
Minnesota Recreation and Park Association
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Web Page address: <http://www.mnrpa.org>

Location: Outdoor recreation providers statewide

Total Biennial LCMR Project Budget:	
LCMR Appropriation:	\$200,000.00
Minus Amount Spent:	\$179,974.65
Equal Balance:	\$20,025.35

Legal Citation: ML 2005, First Special Session, Chap. 1, Art. 2, Sec.11, Subd. 6(d)

Appropriation Language: \$100,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Minnesota recreation and park association to develop and evaluate opportunities to more efficiently manage Minnesota's parks and outdoor recreation areas.

II. and III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY

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IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: Outdoor Recreation Providers Summit

Final Report Summary:

The Best Practices for Parks and Outdoor Recreation Summit held April 4th & 5th at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum was a resounding success. Over 230 people were involved in the summit as participants, speakers, moderators, note-takers, facilitators, registrars and much more. Ninety-three percent of attendees rated the summit highly (4's and 5's on a 5-point scale, with 5 being most

positive). Representative Tingelstad kicked off the event and was followed by three well-received speakers who presented trends impacting professionals in parks and outdoor recreation. After the trends speakers there was a total of 15 breakout sessions spanning a variety of topics from Collaborating with Developers to Preserve Parks and Open Space; to Surface and Stormwater Management; to Engaging Diverse Populations. One of the final components of the summit was an Open Space Event where participants had an opportunity to define their own topics and lead diverse discussions related to parks and outdoor recreation management. Throughout the summit participants were given the opportunity to share challenges and best practices.

Following are some representative comments that touch on the range of comments received:

“The open space sessions really gathered people of similar interests together and stimulated discussion and idea sharing.”

“The marketing breakout was excellent (great speakers). The change in schedule Wed. afternoon was also great because it created more interaction.”

“There was no part of the summit that had no value. This is the best professional meeting I’ve attended in my 31 year career.”

[Most valuable] “That a meeting was dedicated toward trying to provide the ‘best’ practices available and that they will hopefully affect the whole state.”

To view the complete summit proceedings, please go to: www.bestpracticesmn.org and scroll down to the bottom of the homepage and click on “click here to check out the proceedings.”

Final Summary Budget Information for Result 1:

LCMR Budget	\$49,906.81
Minus Amount Spent	\$49,906.81
Balance	\$0.00

Result 2: Outdoor Recreation Information Exchange Web Site and Communication Tools

Final Report Summary:

The Best Practices website can be viewed at: www.bestpracticesmn.org. In addition to 85 best practices posted, presentations from the summit and each of the

workshops are all posted. This has enabled participants; plus those unable to attend event, to take advantage of the knowledge that was shared at these workshops. To date, there have been over 3,800 unique visitors to the site. The website will continue to be supported by MRPA in the future.

There is one aspect of the website we were not able to achieve due to technical difficulties. We wanted to create a listserv that would enable park and outdoor recreation professionals to query their colleagues directly. Currently MRPA members send the Executive Director a request for information from members. However, this is limited in that it requires members to go through an intermediary and it does not include park and outdoor recreation professionals who are not members of MRPA. Technical work was done to enable listserv capabilities. A group of about two dozen individuals was contacted to pilot test the new function. Pilot testing revealed a technical problem in the system. (An “out-of-office” message created a circular loop in the system). The feature was disabled as a result. Investigation revealed that the only way to move forward would be to migrate the Best Practices and MRPA websites to a new hosting service and recreate both websites. Given the expenses and time involved in this, a new hosting service has not been pursued at this point. It was a disappointment as many people had expressed interest in such a feature.

Final Summary Budget Information for Result 2:

LCMR Budget	\$58,568.34
Minus amount spent	\$55,568.34
Balance	\$3,000.00

Result 3: Outdoor Recreation Best Management Practices Field Workshops

Final Report Summary:

Following is an overview of the results of the workshops and capstone event the project hosted. Please note that presentations can be viewed on the website (www.bestpracticesmn.org.)

September 20 & 21, 2006: **The Best Practices project co-sponsored the Natural Resources Workshop** at Maplewood Community Center. The keynote speaker, Terry Gips, Alliance for Sustainability, presented to over 90 people on sustainability and the Natural Step Framework – how it can benefit you at home, work and in the community. He shared several practical steps you can take to save money, time and the environment while protecting the health and well-being of you, your children and future generations.

New this year at the Natural Resources Workshop was the **Best Practices Showcase**, where thirty-seven agencies and non-profits showcased a range of best practices benefiting parks and outdoor recreation. Examples include archery as a life sport, geocaching in parks, the new DNR Trails Manual, using technology to map terrestrial invasives, tips and tools for conducting prescribed burns in urban areas; and much more!

October 3, 2006: Twenty-eight people from city, county and state agencies participated in a training session for the **Best Practices Cross-Agency Mentoring Program** at Bunker Park Hills Regional Park in Anoka County. Ed Jones and Erika Tierney, professional trainers with the DNR, led a 2 ½ hour session that provided mentors and mentees with a framework to help guide their professional development and build the mentoring relationship.

This pilot program was a direct result of concern expressed at the Best Practices Summit about the pending “brain drain” resulting from “Boomers” retiring. A mentoring program is just one way to tap into this institutional knowledge and experience while developing future leaders.

October 11 & 12, 2006: **Best Practices Regional Workshop at Itasca State Park.** This 2-day event focused on issues of critical importance to outdoor recreation providers in northern Minnesota. There was an excellent turnout of approximately 90 people, with participants coming from city, county, state and federal agencies; as well as associations, private sector and universities. Among the highlights was the evening fireside roundtable discussion, where best practices, challenges, and opportunities facing park and outdoor recreation professionals across Minnesota were openly shared.

November 14-17, 2006: **MRPA Annual Conference.** The Best Practices project sponsored a keynote address that reached approximately 370 people. A Best Practices working session to discuss the declining involvement of youth and young adults in the great outdoors followed the keynote. The working session engaged participants in discussion to identify solutions to reverse this troubling trend. Speaker: **Ken Finch**, founder and president of Green Hearts, Institute for Nature in Childhood.

February 7 & 8, 2007: **Best Practices Southern MN Regional Workshop at the Owatonna Arts Center.** This 2-day event focused on issues of critical importance to outdoor recreation providers in southern Minnesota. There was excellent representation and participation by approximately 80 city, township, county, state and federal outdoor recreation professionals. Highlights included humorist Al Batt, energy efficiency and obesity presentations; discussions about how we pay for parks; a trails panel; great food and networking!

April 11 & 12, 2007: **Best Practices Regional Workshop at Grand Superior Lodge in Two Harbors.** The idea for this workshop was raised at the Itasca workshop as a forum to focus on issues of critical importance to outdoor recreation providers in northeastern Minnesota. Nearly 100 professionals from city, township, county, state and federal outdoor recreation agencies; academia and private consultancies participated in the event. Highlights included:

- Keynote Ken Gilbertson from UMD
- Outdoor recreation trends presentations from: Andy Holak, St. Louis County; Jim Skurla, UMD; and Tim Kelly, DNR

- Environmental Education Best Practices discussion with Amy Rager, U of MN Morris; Dawn Flinn, DNR; Molly Thompson, Sugarloaf Cove; and Steve Robertsen, US Forest Service
- Trails presentations from: Jeff Schoenbauer, Brauer & Associates; Phil Leversedge, DNR; Judy Ness, Superior National Forest; John Green, Superior Hiking Trail Association; Kevin Johnson, DNR; and Jason Peterson, DNR
- Marketing outdoor recreation presentation by Bill Hansen, Sawbill Outfitters
- Closing presentation by Shawn Perich, Northern Wilds Newspaper
- Great networking!

April 19, 2007: Richard Louv, Author of Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder Workshop. The Best Practices project co-sponsored a workshop led by author Richard Louv. Approximately 125 people attended the workshop which focused on the issue of nature-deficit disorder and the factors contributing to the problem and potential solutions that could be implemented at the community level.

May 22, 2007: Best Practices Capstone Event. This event was not part of the original work program; however, it was determined that there was a need to bring together a broad cross-section of outdoor recreation providers to determine how to address three critical issues that surfaced over the course of the Best Practices project. These issues are:

- Declining Participation in Outdoor Recreation
- Health, Wellness & Outdoor Recreation
- Energy Efficiency & Green Design

During this 1-day event held at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, experts in each area were invited to discuss strategies and solutions to challenge us to move these critical issues forward. Following the presentations, participants were asked to develop a range of actions that MRPA and its partner organizations can pursue during the following 1- 2 years. The goal of the capstone was to institutionalize best practices around each of these key issues. Details regarding the Capstone Event are provided in the attached project report.

Prior to this project, there were no other forums for learning and collaboration at a cross-agency level. This project provided park and outdoor recreation professionals with the opportunity to learn from one another, share best practices and lessons learned. Project participants now have an enhanced set of tools in which to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

Summary Budget Information for Result 3:

LCMR Budget	\$91,524.85
Minus amount spent	\$74,499.50
Balance	\$17,025.35

V. TOTAL LCMR PROJECT BUDGET:

All Results: Personnel:	\$139,630.00
All Results: Contracts:	\$13,900.00
All Results: Direct Operating Costs:	\$40,295.51
All Results: Travel:	\$6,174.49

VI. PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SPENDING

All funds expended in support of this project have been expended. There are no present or future funds currently allocated toward the project.

VII. PROJECT PARTNERS:

This project was a cooperative effort between MRPA (represented by Michelle Snider, Executive Director and Kathy Schoenbauer, Project Manager), DNR (represented by Emmett Mullin, Planner Principal), the Metropolitan Council (represented by Arne Steffereud, Planning Analyst-Parks), and the University of Minnesota (represented by Dorothy Anderson, H.T. Morse Distinguished Professor). Additional project partners include: Anoka County Parks and Recreation, Brooklyn Park Recreation and Parks, and Edina Parks and Recreation.

VIII. DISSEMINATION:

More than 1,250 professionals participated in nine events held throughout the state. These events were geographically dispersed and held in the following areas: Chaska, Maplewood, Coon Rapids, Itasca State Park, Plymouth, Owatonna, Two Harbors, Winona and St. Paul.

In addition to the events, there have been approximately 3,800 unique visitors to the website to date.

IX. LOCATION

The Best Practices events were geographically distributed around the state in the following areas: Chaska, Maplewood, Coon Rapids, Itasca State Park, Plymouth, Owatonna, Two Harbors, Winona and St. Paul.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work program progress reports were submitted in February 2006, June 2006, January 2007 and May 2007. The final work program report and associated products will be submitted by August 17, 2007.

IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS: n/a

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2005 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner (if applicable)

Proposal Title: Best Management Practices for Parks & Outdoor Recreation R-12

FINAL 8.14.07

Project Manager Name: Kathy Schoenbauer

LCMR Requested Dollars: \$200,000

- 1) See list of non-eligible expenses, do not include any of these items in your budget sheet
- 2) Remove any budget item lines not applicable

2005 LCMR Proposal Budget	Result 1 Current Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	Result 2 Current Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	Result 3 Current Budget:	Amount Spent	Balance
	<i>Outdoor Recreation Providers Summit</i>			<i>Outdoor Recreation Information Exchange Web Site and Communication tools</i>			<i>Outdoor Recreation Best Management Practices Field Workshops</i>		
BUDGET ITEM									
PERSONNEL: Staff Expenses, wages, salaries									
Project Supervisor (MRPA New Hire) \$60,122. Project Staff (DNR Emmett Mullin) \$40,488.									
PERSONNEL: Staff benefits (FICA/Medicare, retirement, health insurance @ 30% rate)									
Project Supervisor (MRPA New Hire) \$18,188 Project Staff (DNR Emmett Mullin) \$12,132									
TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$36,369.44	\$36,369.44	\$0.00	\$43,643.34	\$42,643.34	\$1,000.00	\$59,617.22	\$54,202.51	\$5,414.71
Contracts									
Professional/technical: Web Site design, management, maintenance, and evaluation	\$975.00	\$975.00	\$0.00	\$12,925.00	\$12,925.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other direct operating costs facility rental estimate speaker fees participant meals (offset by participant fees)									
Printing									
Other supplies									
DIRECT OPERATING COSTS	\$11,387.88	\$11,387.88	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$26,907.63	\$17,570.59	\$9,337.04
Travel expenses in Minnesota	\$1,174.49	\$1,174.49	\$0.00				\$5,000.00	\$2,726.40	\$2,273.60
COLUMN TOTAL	\$49,906.81	\$49,906.81	\$0.00	\$58,568.34	\$55,568.34	\$3,000.00	\$91,524.85	\$74,499.50	\$17,025.35

	Total Current Budget	Total amount spent	Balance
Total Personnel	\$139,630.00	\$133,215.29	\$6,414.71
Total Contracts	\$13,900.00	\$13,900.00	\$0.00
Total Direct Operating Costs	\$40,295.51	\$28,958.47	\$11,337.04
Total Travel in MN	\$6,174.49	\$3,900.89	\$2,273.60
Grand Total	\$200,000.00	\$179,974.65	\$20,025.35