

Park Criteria for Regional or Statewide Significance

Parks of regional significance must meet the first two criteria described below. The other criteria listed below help further define parks of regional significance.

1. **Natural Resource Based Settings and Range of Activities Offered:** The park should provide a natural setting and offer outdoor recreation facilities and activities that are primarily natural resource based. Examples include camping, picnicking, hiking, swimming, boating, canoeing, fishing, and nature study. A related measure is the range of these activities accommodated within the park (e.g., a park with a beach, campground and boat launch facilities is more likely to attract a regional clientele than a park with only one of these facilities).
2. **Use:** Evidence that the park serves at least a regional clientele (multiple communities). Other related factors may include evidence that the facility currently or potentially may draw tourists and generate economic impact from outside the local area.
3. **Size:** The park should be significant in size. In southern Minnesota, a park of 100 acres is significant. In northern Minnesota, the acreage is generally larger. There are exceptions to this criteria based on use characteristics, special features, and other variables.
4. **Special Features:** Unique or unusual landscape features, historically significant sites, or parks containing characteristics of regional or statewide significance.
5. **Scarcity of Recreational Resources:** The park provides public natural resource based recreational opportunities that are not otherwise available within a reasonable distance. Examples include water-based activities, such as swimming, fishing and boating; interpretive nature trails; public campgrounds; etc.

Trail Criteria for Regional or Statewide Significance

Trails of regional significance must meet the first two criteria described below. They should also address the other criteria, not to be understood in isolation, but in their aggregate.

1. **Regionally desirable setting:** The trail is located in a regionally desirable setting. Criteria include attractive, unusual, and/or representative landscapes, important destinations, or high quality natural areas.
2. **High quality opportunity and use:** The trail serves as a destination, providing high quality recreational opportunities, attracts a regional clientele (multiple communities), potentially may draw tourists, and generates an economic impact from outside the local area. The trail should be developed and maintained to include easy access, secure parking, access to drinking water and other necessary services, and is wide enough or designed in such a way to avoid user conflict and provide a safe experience.
3. **Adequate length:** The trail provides at least an hour of outdoor recreation opportunity, or connects to other facilities that can provide at least an hour of recreation in total.
4. **Connections:** The trail currently or potentially will link to an existing trail of regional or statewide significance. This includes providing connections between significant trails, or connecting communities / community facilities to these trails.
5. **Scarcity of Trail Resources:** The trail provides a high quality recreational opportunity not otherwise available within a reasonable distance.