
Our Mission: Providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation and the cooperation of dedicated people

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the June 25, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves agreement that will provide funds to assist homeless

The Washington County Board of Commissioners amended an agreement June 25 with the state Department of Human Services to provide the county with \$187,222 to assist those who are homeless.

The money will be used during the next two years to fund outreach services through the county's Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST), as well as manage, administer, and monitor the Housing Support program in Washington County. Outreach services help connect those experiencing homelessness to services and housing in the community with grants and support services to find and maintain independent living in the community.

The money will also be used to continue to fund a policy analyst, and approximately \$30,000 a year will be dedicated to HOST for staffing costs. No local match or additional staff are being requested with the grant.

Contact: Sarah Tripple, Community Services Planning and Program Manager, 651-430-6480

County will receive state compensation for cost of implementing motor vehicle registration, licensing system

Washington County will receive almost \$400,000 from the state to compensate it for the extra costs of implementing the MNLARS system at its deputy registrar offices.

A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow

The County Board accepted the grants June 25, and approved liability releases.

The 2019 Legislature authorized the state to compensate deputy registrars for costs related to the MNLARS, or Minnesota Licensing and Registration System, implementation that began in 2017. To be eligible for the state grants, the county was required to approve agreements accepting the compensation.

Washington County is eligible for grants for its three deputy registrar offices:

- Forest Lake, \$133,117.72;
- Stillwater, \$106,664.89; and
- Woodbury, \$157,751.94.

Contact: Jennifer Wagenius, Property Records and Taxpayer Services, 651-430-6182

County Board declares July as Park and Recreation month in Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioner proclaimed July as Park and Recreation month in Washington County June 25.

The U.S. House of Representatives has designated July as Park and Recreation Month, and the County Board followed suit.

Parks and trails play a key role in maintaining the county's quality of life by contributing to the health of residents while contributing to economic and environmental well-being. Park and recreation programs build healthy, active communities that aid in the prevention of chronic disease, provide therapeutic recreation for those who are mentally or physically disabled, and improve the mental and emotional health of residents.

Washington County recognizes the benefits derived from park and recreation resources by offering the first Tuesday of each month as a Free Tuesday in Washington County Parks, which offers free entrance into Washington County Parks. Free vehicle permits are also given to veterans with a service-related disability and county residents who qualify for cash assistance.

Washington County is home to eight parks, two regional trails, and the Historic Courthouse in Stillwater, which is part of Washington County Parks. The parks encompass 4,382 acres of public land, and received more than 1.7 million visits in 2018. The visitors enjoyed amenities such as the

Lake Elmo Swim Pond in Lake Elmo Park Reserve, and beaches at Big Marine Park Reserve, Square Lake Park, Point Douglas Park, and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.

The parks also have modern, rustic, and group campgrounds at Lake Elmo Park Reserve and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park, which had 4,651 camping reservations in 2018. The county's two regional trails encompass 24 miles of paved trails and 73 miles of turf trails for biking, hiking, skiing, and horseback riding. The parks also feature boat launches and fishing piers, along with play structures in most of the larger parks.

The Historic Courthouse welcomed 9,100 visits in 2018, and is hosting an exhibit Spokes and Folks, recounting the history of biking in the county, and celebrating the trails that serve residents and visitors alike.

Programs sponsored by the parks include fitness and birding hikes, paddleboarding, yoga, archery, and campfire programs, and one-day events, such as the ice cream social at the Historic Courthouse and the Bluegrass Festival at Lake Elmo Park Reserve.

In addition to providing recreation, the parks also have protected and restored natural resources. County staff work to enhance native plant communities and ensure wildlife diversity. Recent improvements to natural resources included:

- 25 acres of prairie seed production plots planted last fall in Lake Elmo Park Reserve;
- Butterfly Landing at Pine Point Regional Park; and
- 65 acres of buckthorn and garlic mustard removed/controlled at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

July 2 is Free Tuesday in Washington County Parks, when no vehicle permit is required and visitors may visit any Washington County Park for free.

Contact: Alex McKinney, Parks Manager, 651-430-4364

County Parks receive awards for park, trail, programming

Washington County Parks were recognized by the Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) Awards of Excellence Program for the Point Douglas Regional Trail, improvements to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, and programs offered to Girl Scouts at the Historic Courthouse.

The County Board acknowledged the awards June 25, which were presented by MRPA committee member Jared Flewellen. Representatives from Kimley Horn, South Washington Watershed District, and Stonebrooke Engineering, Inc., who worked on the two parks projects were also present.

This is an annual program that recognizes agencies or organizations in Minnesota for outstanding achievements in parks, recreation, and leisure service. The awards recognize programs, projects, or initiatives that were implemented or received substantial revisions in 2018.

The Point Douglas Trail is a 2.5-mile segment of the trail completed in 2017. The trail starts at Point Douglas Park, and extends under Highway 10 on its way to Prescott, Wis., and then runs back west along the backwaters and main channel of the Mississippi River, providing vistas of the river and the railroad track that runs along the river. Most of the trail is along bluff land, and has a tree canopy. The trail continues to the south at Highway 61 over the bridge towards Hastings. From there, trail users are connected to downtown Hastings and the Dakota County regional trail system.

Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park consists of 515 acres of hills and heavily wooded ravines with occasional clearings of prairie and old field. The reconstruction completed in spring 2018 included a road project on County Highway 19, or Keats Avenue, that relocated the park entrance from the frontage road to Highway 19, and a new park circulation road, four parking lots, and improvements to pedestrian paths. The trail network was improved with the addition of a new soft surface trail loop on the north half of the park. The park has about five miles of trails, which are a combination of turf, minimum maintenance, and a 1.2-mile paved trail.

The project also restored native landscape, and removed invasive species growing in the park. The goal of the project is to protect the ravine against erosion from local flash floods while maintaining park use. The new park circulation road also incorporates an updated lake outlet to accommodate water flow from the local area and from the Central Draw Storage Facility Overflow Project, overseen by the South Washington Watershed District.

In the programming area, Washington County Parks offers tours and programs at the Washington County Historic Courthouse in Stillwater designed to meet Girl Scout requirements for specific badges or awards. All programs include a tour of the historic courtroom, the 1900s county jail, and exhibit rooms. All Girl Scout programs are council-sponsored and fulfill badge requirements; badges are distributed at the end of the program.

Contact: Sandy Breuer, Parks Director, 651-430-4371



Washington County Parks staff with county commissioners and Jared Flewellen, representing the Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association, commending the parks on the development of the Point Douglas Regional Trail.



Washington County Parks staff and project partners with county commissioners and Jared Flewollen, representing the Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association, commending the parks on the renovations and additions to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.



Washington County Parks staff and county commissioners and Jared Flewollen, representing the Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association, commending the parks on its Girl Scouts program at the Historic Courthouse.

County will work with MnDOT to update traffic signals at 10th Street, I-694 in Oakdale

Washington County will work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to upgrade traffic signals at the County State Aid Highway 10, or 10th Street, ramps at Interstate 694 in Oakdale, after the County Board approved an agreement with MnDOT June 25.

The proposed project includes the addition of Flashing Yellow Arrow capability for left turns, pedestrian “countdown” signals, and pedestrian ramp and push-button improvements in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). An additional trail connection will be constructed from the west ramp intersection to the retail parking lot southwest of the intersection.

The agreement between MnDOT and Washington County sets out the project cost share and long-term maintenance responsibilities for the intersection. MnDOT's cost is capped at \$216,000.

The county will advertise for bids for the project in late summer. Work could be done in December, if the upgrade to the I-694/I-94/I-494 project does not impact the schedule.

Contact: Mitch Bartelt, Engineer II, 651-430-4349