

Greenway Annual Report of Activities and Achievements 2014

Favorable weather conditions for most of the year allowed Greenway users to enjoy a wide variety of outdoor activities. Cold weather and good snow conditions provided plenty of skiing, skating, sledding, and snowmobile opportunities early in the year. Minimal springtime flooding gave the opportunity for users to enjoy the trails and other amenities earlier than usual. Crews handled the cleanup from a windstorm in mid-July quickly, with little disruption to most Greenway activities.

User input continues to spur development in the Greenway. The Greenway Technical Committee reviewed requests for more unpaved trails, no-till gardens, and bicycle pump tracks, among other ideas. The committee continually works to maintain a balance of developed and natural areas for all types of users.

River access was a focal point for development this year. The nonprofit group Ground Up Adventures installed a portable boathouse structure to provide non-motorized watercraft rentals to the public. This boathouse is located in downtown Grand Forks, just north of the Sorlie Bridge. The public can now rent canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards for use on the Red River.

The new boathouse increased the need for better access to the river downtown. This fall, work began on the first phase of an ADA accessible paved trail to the river. When finished, this trail will provide easy access to the river for users of all abilities. Future plans include the installation of a connection from the trail to a dock and gangplank system.

Access to the Red Lake River was also addressed this summer. A dock was installed at the boat ramp area east of the Louis Murray Bridge in East Grand Forks.

Representatives from local fire, law enforcement, and other emergency responders are working to create a river advisory group. This group would develop a set of standards for river access during high water times, work toward a unified permit system for special events on the rivers, and improve inter-agency communication for water related events.

Red River State Recreation Area Campground news: In June, the campground celebrated the 10-year anniversary, with various special events held throughout the summer. This state campground was second in attendance for Minnesota State Parks and Recreation Areas, with an increase of 1,200 more sites rented over last season. Favorable reviews have been received from all over the United States and Canada. There are plans to add electricity to more sites.

New features were added to the Greenway this year.

No-till garden: The GF County Soil Conservation District planted a no-till demonstration garden as a pilot project near the water treatment plant. No-till gardens are designed to reduce the need for weeding. The harvest from the garden was used at the educational event and donated to local charities.

Maintenance & Management:

Road repair in Lincoln Drive Park: The road into the park was replaced this summer. The project replaced concrete from just inside the entrance of the park all the way to the boat ramp.

East Grand Forks planted 100 trees in the Greenway this spring.

Policy for advertising in the Greenway: The popularity of the Greenway has spurred discussion about the placement of advertising in some of the parks. The Greenway Technical Committee is examining how other communities handle this matter.

Promotions: The Greenway brochure got a fresh look this summer. The new brochure focuses on the balance of active and passive recreation.

In the fall, the community of Greater Grand Forks was awarded bronze level status as a Bicycle Friendly Community. This designation was awarded by the American League of Bicyclists. Community volunteers worked with city staff to submit a comprehensive summary of bicycling in Greater Grand Forks.