

# Byllesby Park **MASTER PLAN**

Approved December 7, 2017



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW & PROJECT PURPOSE

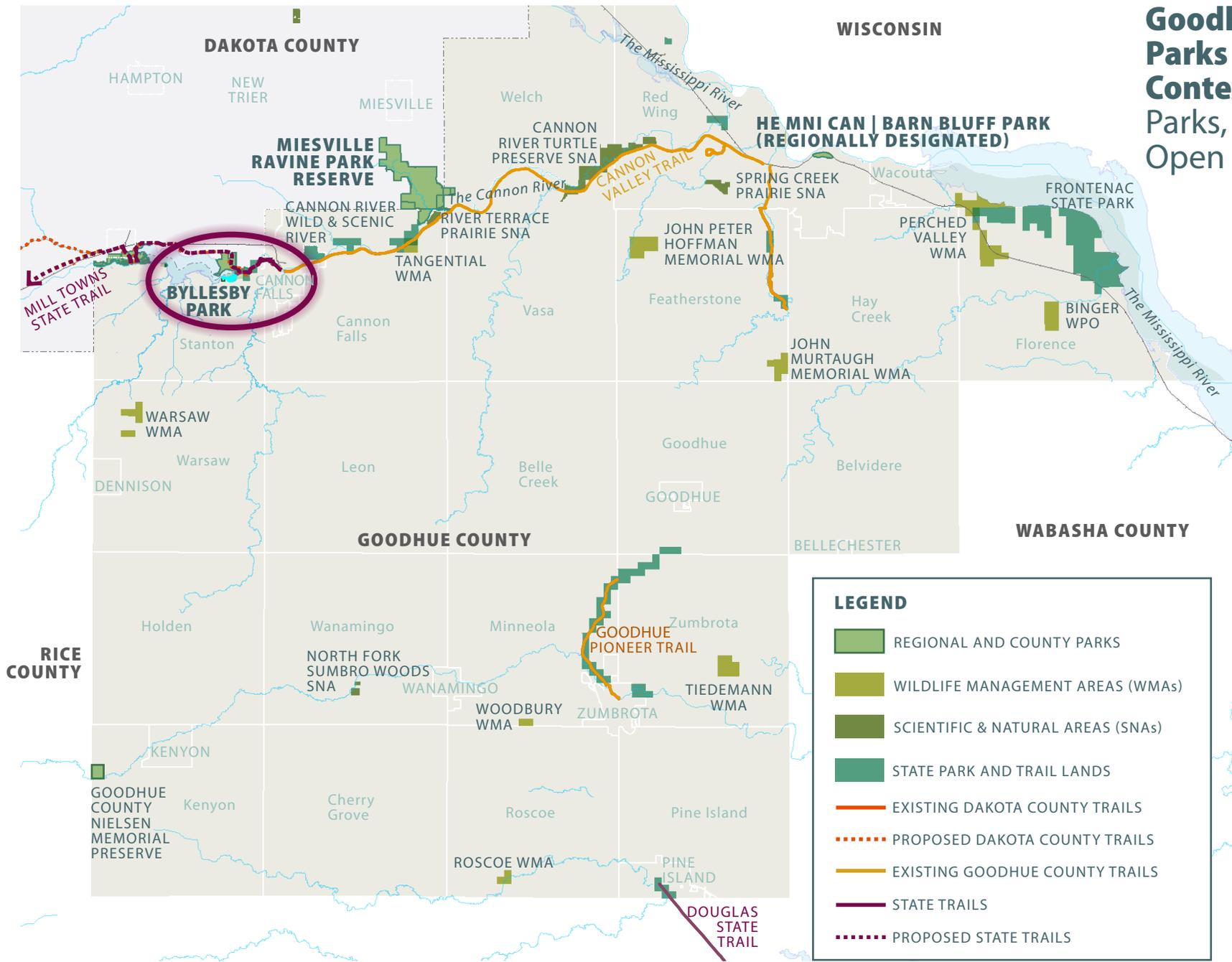
Byllesby Park is located in the northwest corner of Goodhue County in Minnesota, near the City of Cannon Falls. The park provides lake access, scenic views from lakeshore bluffs, recreation facilities, and picnic areas to its visitors. Byllesby Park includes two distinct properties along the south shore of Lake Byllesby, a reservoir of the Cannon River. The main park area encompasses 64 acres, 26 of which are yet undeveloped (part of the recently acquired Goudy Property). Popular activities include boating, fishing, swimming, hiking, picnicking, and sightseeing. The new Mill Towns Trail bridge connects the park to the north side of the river and Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park. The County also owns 12 acres of land, commonly referred to as the "Upper Lake Area," about 2.5 miles west of the main Byllesby Park. This area has an additional boat launch for fishing, picnic area, and portable toilets.

### Master Plan Purpose

This master plan has been developed in order to:

- » Create a unified vision for the future of the park
- » Plan for the next 10 to 20 years of park development
- » Guide County staff and elected officials in funding and capital improvement projects
- » Satisfy requirements for the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission in order to be identified as a regional park and qualify for Clean Water Land and Legacy Funds

# Goodhue County Parks System Context: Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces



## REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Within Goodhue County, Lake Byllesby is the largest recreational lake available for public use, other than Lake Pepin, located on a wide part of the Mississippi River south of Red Wing. In southeastern Minnesota, there are few recreational lakes, which makes Lake Byllesby a unique recreational amenity in the area.

Lake Byllesby is a reservoir of the Cannon River, which is designated a Wild and Scenic River with particularly beautiful scenery and undeveloped surroundings. The Cannon River is a popular canoe, kayak, and tubing destination.

Once the Mill Towns Trail is completed, Lake Byllesby will be at the intersection of three major trail corridors within Southeast Minnesota's trail system. From Lake Byllesby Regional Park and Byllesby Park, visitors will be able to paddle the Cannon River State Water Trail; travel along the Mill Towns State Trail to visit Faribault, Sakatah Singing Hills State Park, or even reach Mankato; or head east on the Cannon Valley Trail to Red Wing and the Mississippi River. The Goodhue-Pioneer Trail will someday provide a link from Red Wing to Pine Island, where it will tie into the Douglas Trail which extends to Rochester.

### Dakota County Lake Byllesby Park

A pedestrian and bike bridge was recently constructed as part of the Mill Towns State Trail across the Cannon River below the Byllesby Dam. This bridge connects Byllesby Park, Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park, and the Mill Towns State Trail to the Cannon Valley Trail, which broadens the park's recreational offerings beyond its borders, and also attracts visitors from a larger regional recreational corridor. The combined Dakota County and Goodhue County parks provide over 250-acres of contiguous park land, several miles of

hiking and ski trails, two miles of paved walking trails, two swimming beaches, multiple boat launches, a campground, several picnic areas, and other amenities.

### Cannon Valley Trail

A newly completed trail connection built by the Mn DNR connects Byllesby Park to the Cannon Valley Trail, a 20-mile paved, multi-use trail that follows the scenic Cannon River extending between the cities of Cannon Falls, Welch, and Red Wing. The park's connection to the Cannon Valley Trail can bring nearly 100,000 yearly visitors to Byllesby Park's doorstep. The recently completed Comprehensive Plan update for the Cannon Valley Trail lists Byllesby Park as providing facilities and recreational offerings of interest to trail users.

### Mill Towns State Trail

The Mill Towns Trail is a planned state trail that will connect Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail (which reaches Mankato) with Faribault, Northfield, and Cannon Falls along Lake Byllesby, approximately a 25-mile route. A recently completed 1.5 mile segment connects Lake Byllesby with Cannon Falls and the Cannon Valley Trail which reaches Red Wing. Other pieces of the trail are built, but the final route around Lake Byllesby has yet to be determined and constructed. The Mill Towns State Trail, combined with the Cannon Valley Trail, provides numerous regional recreation experiences and options for Byllesby Park visitors.

## GOODHUE COUNTY'S BYLLESBY PARK

### GMRPTC Classification

Special Recreational Feature Regional Park

### Total Park Acreage

76 acres

### Existing Facilities

Two boat launches

Fishing dock

Paved walking trails

Hiking trails

Playground

Parking lots

Picnic shelters (3)

Swimming beach

Lake access

Sand volleyball court



## PAST PLANNING & RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

Several past planning efforts have set the stage for this master plan document. These plans have impacted the current state of the park in multiple ways, and they will continue to impact the park in the future.

### Goodhue County Parks

The Goodhue County Public Works Department maintains and operates Goodhue County's Byllesby Park, its amenities, and its trails for recreational use. The Public Works Department is responsible for the protection and preservation of land in its natural state, while providing for high quality outdoor natural resource-oriented recreational activities.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Goodhue County Parks, Trails, and Recreation Advisory Board is to provide a quality park, trail and recreation system which strive to preserve, protect, maintain, improve and enhance the county's park land, trails, and recreational activities, on behalf of all current and future citizens of the County of Goodhue.

### 1994 Byllesby Park Master Plan

The Byllesby Park Master Plan completed in 1994 is the most recent planning document for the park.

The goals listed in the 1994 Master Plan include:

1. To develop more opportunities for family recreation at Byllesby Park
2. To develop Byllesby Park in a way that is sensitive to adjacent property owners
3. To develop the park for daytime use only and pursue enforcement of rules relating to park use
4. To pursue future acquisition of easterly properties for park development below the dam

5. To make a bike trail connection to the Cannon Valley Trail and a bike trail bridge connection to Dakota County
6. To make a future trail connection the 7.5 acre site

### Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC)

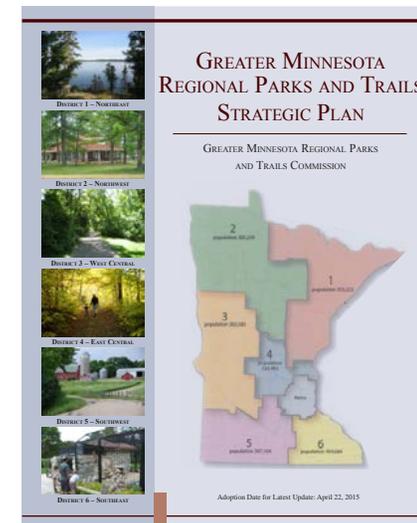
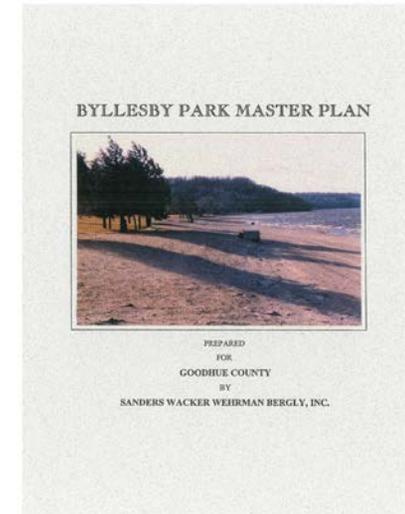
The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission was established by the Minnesota State Legislature in 2013 in order to approve designation of regional parks and trails in Greater Minnesota and to make funding recommendations to the legislature regarding park and trail projects. The funding is provided by the Minnesota Legacy Amendment Parks and Trails Fund. Goodhue County aims to attain regional park designation for Byllesby Park using this master plan. This master plan document follows the requirements set forth in the GMRPTC Strategic Plan, which was completed in 2015.

### Goodhue County Comprehensive Plan (completed in 2016)

The County Park along Lake Byllesby provides the County's only water access separate from the Mississippi River. There are many proposed expansions and extensions that will eventually provide a County wide parks and trails network.

### The Parks and Trails Objectives identified in the recent Comprehensive Plan include:

1. Enhance the trail systems in the County.
2. Support safe and responsible private trail systems.
3. Encourage development of new parks.
4. Continue development of Byllesby Park according to the park's master plan.
5. Develop a master plan for the Kenyon Park.



6. Identify and set standards for the amount of recreation infrastructure and services that the local government should strive for on a per capita basis in order to satisfy the reasonable expectations of the public.

### **Cannon Valley Trail**

The Cannon Valley Trail is a paved, multi-use, regional trail managed by a Joint Powers Board made up of representatives from Goodhue County, the City of Cannon Falls, the City of Red Wing, and local citizens. The trail is almost 20 miles long and connects the cities of Red Wing, Welch Village, and Cannon Falls. From April-November, trail riders 18 and older must have a Wheel Pass to use the trail. The Great Minnesota Ski Pass is required for cross-country skiers, as the trail is groomed in the winter. A Comprehensive Plan update for the Cannon Valley Trail was completed in 2017, and recognizes Byllesby Park as a destination of interest to trail users.

### **Mill Towns State Trail**

The Mill Towns State Trail is a legislatively authorized state trail, managed and planned by the MnDNR. The most recent master plan for the trail was completed in 2005 and identifies an alignment from Faribault to Cannon Falls. Portions of the trail have been constructed, but the full trail won't be realized for years to come. The 2005 master plan identifies plans for trailheads in both the west and east portions of Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park. It also says that a trail alignment through the park will be planned in the future in coordination with Dakota County.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

The Goodhue County Byllesby Park master planning process is closely aligned with the process outlined by Dakota County to update the 2005 Lake Byllesby

Regional Park Master Plan and to create a new Natural Resource Management Plan. The County hired a park planning consultant, Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc. to develop the master plan.

### **The goals of the planning process are to:**

- » Create a visionary and strategic plan document with maps, graphics, and an executive summary.
- » Engage with the Goodhue County Board, Park Board, staff, and public throughout the process.
- » Coordinate with Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park planning process.

The phases of the project and schedule included:

### **Phase 1: Project Organization July, 2016**

Tasks in this phase included: Collect and organize background information; tour the park and observe issues and opportunities; meet with staff and the Advisory Group to kick off the project.

### **Phase 2: Inventory and Research August-November, 2016**

The Inventory and Research phase consisted of intense community engagement activities to gather input on park issues and opportunities; compilation and analysis of background data, site observations, and community input; and preparation of an Inventory and Research Report.

### **Phase 3: Park Concepts October, 2016- September, 2017**

The Park Concepts phase was the time for the project team to develop concrete ideas, options, and recommendations for the future of the park. Community engagement activities aided the project team in decision making and concept review. Meetings were held with the Advisory Group, Goodhue County staff, and the Goodhue County Board.

### **Phase 4: Plan Development and Approvals May-September, 2017**

The assembly of the master plan document occurred during this phase of the project. The document development process involved revisions based on input from Goodhue County Staff, the Advisory Group, community members, and the County Board.

## **PUBLIC INPUT/ PARTICIPATION**

Community engagement for this project was built around a plan to engage and involve members of the Goodhue County Board, Park Board, Goodhue County staff, and the general public, including key stakeholders, such as adjacent property owners, park user groups, and local, regional, and state agencies. Below is a summary of methods used to engage each of these groups. Similar to the master planning process, the public input process was conducted concurrently with the Dakota County Lake Byllesby Regional Park master planning community engagement process.

### **Promotion & Outreach**

A variety of marketing and outreach methods were employed to contact potential park users and interested parties. The County's website hosted a page with information about the park master plan, flyers were posted and sent out, press releases noted opportunities for public engagement, and social media and email were used to alert Goodhue County residents about the planning process.

### **Byllesby Park / Lake Byllesby Regional Park Advisory Group**

A joint Dakota County and Goodhue County advisory group was assembled for this master plan project. Members included representatives from the Dakota

County Board, the Goodhue County Park Board, and key stakeholders. The Advisory Group met five times throughout the planning process in order to guide staff and consultants on important decisions, offer input on park recommendations, and represent constituents.

### Goodhue County Board of Commissioners

The Goodhue County Board was updated three times throughout the master planning project. These updates included summaries of project materials, public input, and request for approval of master plan content.

### Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder meetings were held on September 15 and 19, 2016, and again on March 30, 2017 with groups of key park planning stakeholders. The meetings were held jointly with Dakota County in order to gain insight into the issues and opportunities for both Counties' parks. The following groups were engaged:

- » Agency Water – Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Watershed Districts, Army Corps of Engineers
- » City of Cannon Falls
- » Dakota County and Goodhue County Park Operations staff
- » Dakota County Lake Byllesby Campground Hosts
- » Department of Natural Resources
- » History and Interpretation
- » Lake Byllesby Improvement Association
- » Park User Groups – cross country skiers, dog sledgers, boaters, etc.
- » Regional Recreation Providers

### General feedback from the stakeholder meetings included:

1. The Mill Towns State Trail and Cannon Valley Trail connections are essential to making Lake Byllesby a significant destination along the regional recreation corridor in the Cannon River Valley. Wayfinding within the park should highlight nearby attractions and distances to them, essentially expanding the park's program offerings outside of the park boundary. Byllesby Park should partner with other attractions in the Cannon River Valley to promote regional tourism.
2. Tourists don't see borders. Programming and facilities at Byllesby Park should complement and not compete with those at Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park. The two parks should offer a coherent set of recreational experiences and function as a single destination in the Cannon River Valley.
3. Summer use of the park is centered around lake recreation, but concerns about water quality and a lack of support facilities limit lake usage from reaching its full potential.
  - » Rental facilities and storage racks for canoes, kayaks, paddle boats, paddle boards, rollerblades, and bikes are desired.
  - » Slopes along the Cannon River downstream of the dam are too steep to support significant water access from the Goodhue County Side.
  - » Day use tie up slips would be nice, especially since boats just pull up on shore currently.
  - » Fish cleaning station
  - » The beach is popular (and less apt to experience wind and algae issues than Lake Byllesby Regional Park's beach) and could be improved/expanded.
  - » Parking lots fill up with boaters on weekends and parking overflows onto the grass.
  - » Concerns exist about safety related to too many boaters on the lake.

- » Existing pavilions are highly used. Additional picnic seating areas would be beneficial.
  - » Additional support amenities like drinking fountain, trash cans, etc. are needed
  - » Additional seating along the walking trails is desired.
4. Byllesby Park should focus on nature based recreation and community gathering. Athletic needs are being fulfilled by the City of Cannon Falls and additional facilities are not needed as part of the regional park.
  5. Night uses are not desired by adjacent property owners; however, with camping often full across the lake at Lake Byllesby Regional Park, and multi-day use of trails along the Cannon River Valley increasing, the planning process should explore camping as part of overall development concept.
  6. As a nature-based recreation park, investments in natural resource restoration should be made to improve habitat and implement best management practices for water quality.
    - » Turf replacement with native vegetation/ no-mow meadow wherever active uses aren't present
    - » Management of the forest stand between the eastern part of the park and the cliffs
    - » Native shoreline restoration where feasible
    - » The multiple needs for the reservoir are challenging to balance – dam, fisheries, birding, fishing, boating, private property owners, etc.
    - » Land use and watershed context issues affect the park. Because Lake Byllesby is set into a large agricultural watershed and is already hypereutrophic, Agency Water stakeholders stressed that expectations for water quality improvements need to be realistic, as eutrophic states are difficult to reverse.
  7. Winter park use is lackluster currently.

- » Cannon Valley Trail may be groomed for cross country skiing, so broader cross country skiing could be considered.
- » Despite snow being increasingly unreliable, winter fat tire biking has increased in popularity, and does not rely on snowy conditions the same way that cross country skiing does.

8. The Campground Hosts from Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park mentioned several desired park improvements that could be coordinated across park boundaries to benefit visitors to either park. These included: paddle/bike rental facilities and storage, a fish cleaning station, day use boat slips, and an off-leash dog area.

## Community Open Houses

The community engagement included three open house style meetings, which were promoted to the general public. The meetings included display boards of project findings in the form of text and graphics. Meeting attendees were invited to view the materials and provide input to the project team regarding park issues and opportunities, ideas for future investments, and personal experiences in the park.

### Open House #1 – Monday, September 19, 2016

The first open house was held at Cannon Falls City Hall and displayed a summary of existing conditions maps with images of potential natural resource management areas and strategies, potential interpretation methods, and potential park improvements. The 35 meeting attendees were asked to give general input on the park and respond to the display boards. Comments included:

- » Enthusiasm and approval of new trail bridge across the river
- » Desire for new facilities, such as trash cans, dog waste bags, drinking fountains, and a fish cleaning station
- » Request for expanded parking

- » Concerns about the bike trail interests being represented above local resident interests
- » Concerns about water quality
- » Desire for a visitor center, four-season building
- » Concerns about monitoring the inappropriate use of the cliffs for jumping into the lake

### Open House #2- Thursday, March 30, 2017

The second open house attracted 42 attendees to Cannon Falls City Hall where master plan concepts for both Byllesby Park and Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park were showcased. The concepts offered options for future park development related to circulation, overnight accommodations, active use areas, natural resources, and interpretation. Meeting attendees commented in person, via comment cards, and wrote on the display boards. Comments included:

- » Desire for a new trail to an overlook on the wooded cliffs above the lake as long as it's buffered from nearby properties
- » Diverse camping areas are desired to accommodate growing popularity of camping around Lake Byllesby
- » Entrance to the Goudy property along TH 19 needs to be enhanced to promote safety
- » Goudy property expansion should be buffered from adjacent property and the road
- » Boat slips are desired
- » Connection to Cannon Falls amenities and other recreational opportunities along the Mill Towns/ Cannon Valley Trails should be emphasized.
- » Parking at Byllesby Park's parking lot is often at capacity, and day users of the Mill Towns and Cannon Valley Trails should be directed to park in Cannon Falls where they can support local businesses.

### Open House #3- Wednesday, October 11, 2017

The third, and final open house was held at Cannon Falls City Hall to review a draft of the master plan. More than 20 people attended. Comments were collected at the Open House and online. Input provided included:

- » Mixed support for camping on the Goudy property
- » Desire to do away with the "scenic overlook" above the cliffs, citing concern about tree removal and the guiding principles of preserving natural and scenic areas.
- » Concern about traffic on proposed cliff trail and constructability of improvements on the cliff subgrade

## Online Engagement

The community engagement process for this master plan utilized several online feedback techniques in order to obtain input from people who don't typically attend public meetings. Two online questionnaires were developed and promoted during the master planning process to coordinate with public and stakeholder meetings. The latter questionnaire was offered in the context of a Social Pinpoint Map, where users were able to interactively explore and comment on specific areas of the master plan concepts.

## Questionnaire #1 – September/October, 2016

An online questionnaire was open for several weeks in September and October, 2016. The questionnaire asked questions about both Goodhue and Dakota County Byllesby parks. Questions included asking how often people visited the parks, summer and winter activities in the parks, why they liked or did not like the park, natural resource issues, and suggestions for park improvements. The following includes a summary of findings:

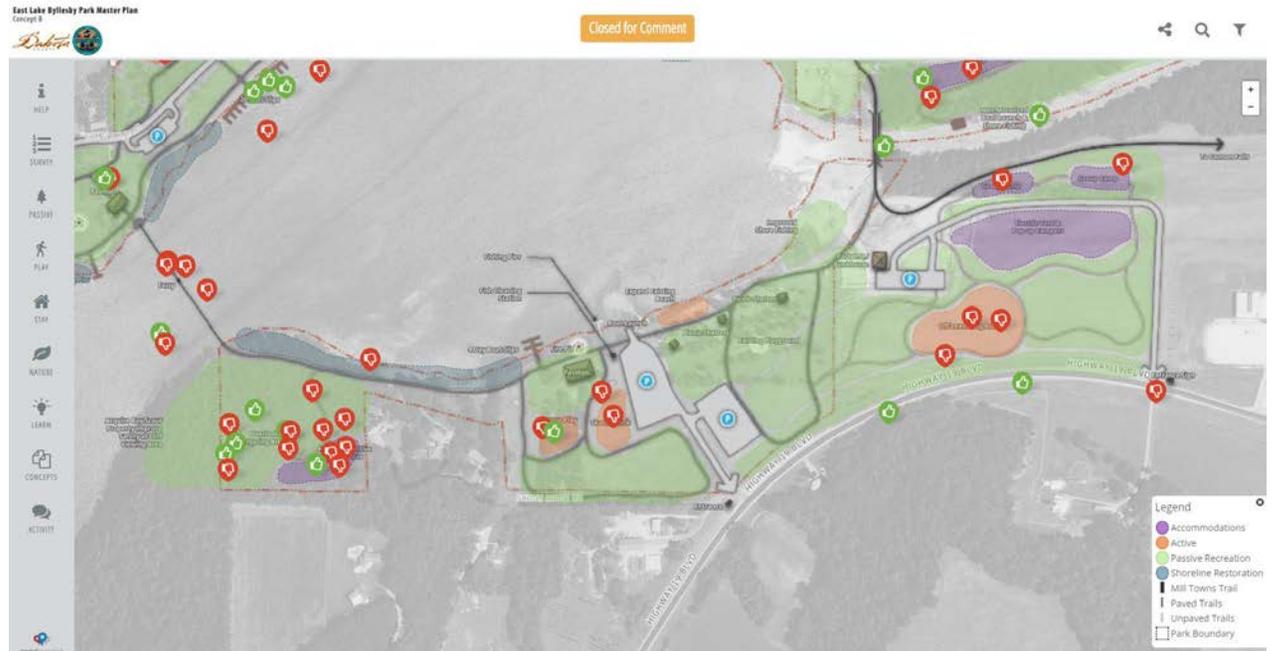
- » 207 total responses; most between the ages of 35 and 74; 98% of respondents identified their race as white
- » When asked how often users visit the parks, 54% answered “once a month or less,” 21% answered “2-4 times per month,” 18% answered “not at all,” and 7% answered “two times a week or more. No one responded that they visit the parks “weekly” or “daily.” Of the 18% of people who answered that they don’t visit the park at all, 48% said it was because they were “unaware of park location and/or facilities/programming,” 41% said the parks were “too far away,” and 24% said that “park facilities/programming doesn’t interest them.” No one commented on safety or crowding issues as reasons they did not visit the parks.
- » 75% of park users accessed the parks with a personal vehicle or camper, 13% visit by bicycle, and 6% visit on foot. Other ways to get to the park included on a charter or school bus or by boat.
- » Many summer activities were viewed as important to include in the park, with the following activities listed “very important” by the most respondents: walking, enjoying scenic views, hiking, canoeing/kayaking/paddle boarding, picnicking. Other identified important activities include: boating, playing on the playground, fishing, and swimming. Biking was an activity identified by several respondents as an important activity to have in the parks.
- » When asked about winter activities, cross country skiing was selected as the most important activity to have in the parks. Snowshoeing, winter walking on plowed trails, ice fishing, and sledding were also selected as important activities. Close behind those activities included, indoor visitor center activities, bicycling, skating, followed by dog sledding and skijoring as less important.
- » Respondents were asked how likely they would be to use certain facilities if they were added to the parks. The following facilities were ranked very likely to be used by the highest number of respondents: hiking to an overlook and along bluffs on the Goodhue County side of the lake, an expanded natural surface trail network, and an expanded paved trail network. Other facilities that were ranked as somewhat likely or very likely to be used by a large number of respondents included: access to the Cannon River below the dam; self-guided nature and history programs; a visitor center; small picnic shelters for 20 people; a larger swimming beach; a natural swimming pool; an improved bathhouse; an improved campground with more shade and privacy; and boat/paddle sport rentals; and a nature playground.
- » When asked about groups or organizations that participate in activities at Lake Byllesby, the following groups were mentioned: Northfield Senior Bike Club, Lakeville Senior Bike Club, Lake Byllesby Improvement Association, Cannon Valley Velo Club, Faribault Flyers Bike & Ski Club, Mill Towns Trail bike group, Northfield Pedalers, HHH Ranch, Minnesota Geocaching Association, CROCT, churches, birding groups, and Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts.
- » Regional recreation activities that most respondents selected as those in which they participate include: biking or walking the Cannon Valley Trail; biking or walking the Mill Towns State Trail; and canoeing or kayaking the Cannon River. Others activities listed by the next most number of respondents include: scenic drives/sightseeing, a bike/paddle loop trail experience; tubing the Cannon River; and attending local festivals.
- » The following natural resource improvements were selected by most respondents as somewhat important or very important, with Lake Byllesby water quality improvements and invasive species removal and management listed as very important by the most respondents: forest management; lake fishery management; prairie/savanna restoration; rip rap shoreline removal and shoreline restoration; stormwater management features like raingardens; buffering views of adjacent development; and enhancement of birding opportunities and bird habitat.
- » When asked how they would rate the parks’ scenic quality as part of experiencing nature, 45% of respondents selected “average quality,” while 38% selected “high quality,” and 11% selected “very high quality.”
- » When asked how they would rate the parks’ river, stream, lake, and wetland quality as part of experiencing nature, the responses were very similar to above: 45% selected “average,” 33% selected “high,” 8% selected “very high,” and 13% selected “low.”
- » The following threats to natural resource quality and experience at Lake Byllesby were identified by the most respondents as “major:” water pollution, aquatic invasive species, and herbicides/pesticides. Other threats that were identified frequently as “minor” or “major” included: terrestrial invasive species, development, extreme weather events, and air pollution.

## Social Pinpoint Questionnaire –

March/ April 2017

An interactive Social Pinpoint map and questionnaire was made available to solicit comments on the two master plan concepts. The questionnaire explored people's preferences and concerns on the topics of circulation, accommodations, park activities, passive recreation, natural resources, and interpretation. The following includes a summary of findings:

- » 400+ people visited the Social PinPoint map
- » Water quality of Lake Byllesby is important and should be taken into consideration when siting active use areas and planning for natural resource management.
- » Park amenities should be arranged to capitalize on views of the lake since those are the reason visitors come to the park.
- » Access to the wooded cliffs would open up a new and unique hiking experience to park-goers, but there are concerns about tree removal and maintaining an immersive experience with adjacent properties nearby (maintain/expand buffering and discourage trespassing)
- » Some concern that a new Goodhue County beach would be in conflict with the boat launch
- » The inclusion of an off-leash dog area somewhere on the site would be appreciated by campers.
- » Adjacent residents would like buffering of the park through native vegetation and topography.
- » There are concerns about both vehicular and boat traffic/parking with all the added accommodations and activities
- » Promote safety on cliff trails and attempt to prohibit cliff jumping



Social PinPoint maps of the two park concepts were used to solicit feedback on people's desires for the park



## Chapter 2: **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **OVERVIEW**

The current state of Byllesby Park in 2017 is described in the following chapter. The sections below represent a summary of existing conditions:

- » **Park Context:** location and importance of the park within the region
- » **Existing Park Conditions:** description of existing recreational facilities within the park today; brief history of park development
- » **Issues and Opportunities:** summary of important park issues and opportunities -- from Goodhue County staff, the Advisory Group, key stakeholders, and the public -- addressed in this master plan
- » **Key Considerations:** recommended list of decisions to make during the development of the concepts and recommendations for the master plan

## PARK CONTEXT

Located just west of the City of Cannon Falls in Stanton Township, Byllesby Park is easily accessed from MN State Highway 19 just west of Hwy 52. The park is located on the northwestern border of Goodhue County with Dakota County just to the north and Rice County to the west. Until the development of a new park in Kenyon in 2017, Byllesby Park was Goodhue County's only county park.

Lake Byllesby, which is actually a reservoir formed by damming the Cannon River, is the largest recreational lake in the far southern metro area. Because lakes are scarce here, Lake Byllesby is popular with visitors throughout the region for boating, fishing, and swimming. Both Dakota County and Goodhue County have parkland along the lakeshore, which creates the appearance of one large park.

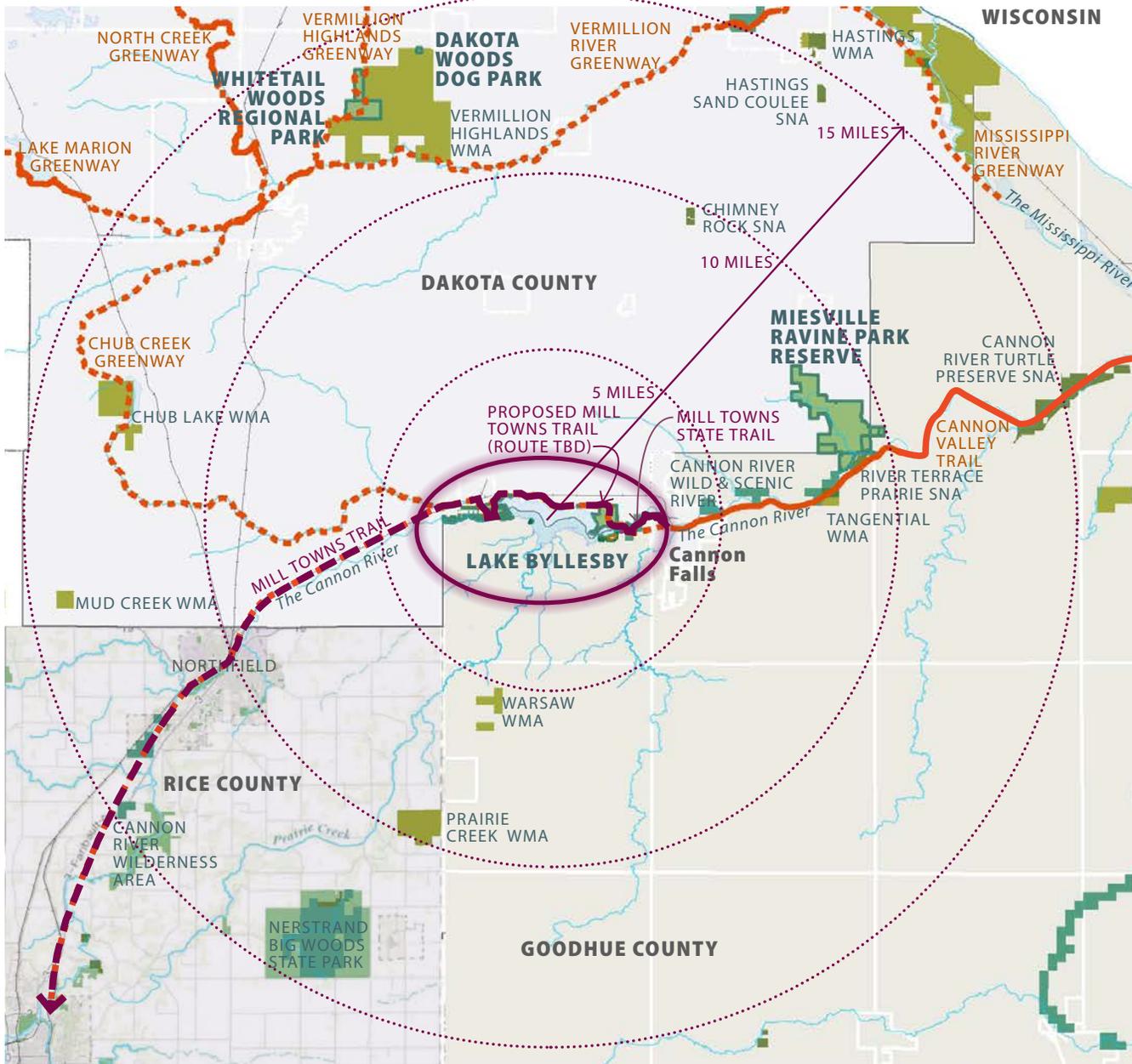
The recently constructed Mill Towns Trail bridge, located just below the dam, connects Goodhue County's Byllesby Park to Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park. In coordination with the new bridge, the City of Cannon Falls built a trail extension between the Mill Towns Trail Bridge and the Cannon Valley Trail. This connection positions Byllesby Park as a major attraction for travelers of the Mill Towns and Cannon Valley Trails. With lodging available across the lake at Lake Byllesby Regional Park, visitors can enjoy recreation in the Cannon Valley and use Lake Byllesby as their home base, exploring what the lake's two parks have to offer over the course of a day or longer.



*View of Lake Byllesby from above the dam, looking toward the swimming beach*



*Byllesby Dam from the Mill Towns Trail Bridge*



## Project Area Context: Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces within a 15-Mile Radius

Within a 15-mile radius, approximately a 20-30 minute drive of the park, there are several other recreational facilities, including: Cannon Falls city parks, Dakota Woods Dog Park, Whitetail Woods Regional Park, Miesville Ravine Park Reserve, Nerstrand Big Woods State Park, and DNR managed Wildlife Management Areas and Scientific and Natural Areas. The Cannon Valley Trail and planned Mill Towns State Trail also traverse this area and connect to Lake Byllesby. While large population growth is not expected for this area, the increasing popularity of trails and Byllesby Park's central location within the Cannon Valley's regional recreational corridor at the intersection of two major trails makes it a destination for active outdoor enthusiasts.

### LEGEND

- REGIONAL AND COUNTY PARKS
- WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS (WMAs)
- SCIENTIFIC & NATURAL AREAS (SNAs)
- STATE PARK AND TRAIL LANDS
- EXISTING TRAILS
- PROPOSED TRAILS
- STATE TRAILS

# Project Area Context:

## Recreation Types, Activities, and Programming within a 15-Mile Radius

	Activity	Cannon Falls Parks	Dakota Woods Dog Park	Lake Byllesby Parks	Whitetail Woods	Miesville Ravine	Nerstrand Big Woods State Park	Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)	Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs)
	Type	Local	County	Regional	Regional	Park Reserve	State	State DNR	State DNR
	Acres	varies	16 acres	620 acres/ 60 Acres	445 + 4,000 Acre Vermillion Highlands WMA	1,667 acres	2,884 acres	varies	varies
Passive Recreation	Nature Observation	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
	Geocaching			X	X	X	X		
	Picnicking	X		X	X	X	X		X
	Paddle Sports	X		X		X			
	Fishing	X		X		X		X	X
	Hunting					X	X	X	X
Trails	Hiking/Walking	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Cross-country Skiing				X		X		X
	Skijoring/ Dogsledding			X					
	Snowshoeing				X	X	X		X
	Horseback Riding				X				
Lodging	Tent Camping			X			X		
	RV Camping			X			X		
	Camper Cabins				X				
Active Recreation	Swimming	X		X					
	Playground	X		X	X		X		
	Sledding				X				
	Archery								
	Mountain Biking								
	Disc Golf	X							
	Horseshoes			X			X		
	Volleyball	X		X			X		
Athletic Fields & Courts	X								



# EXISTING PARK CONDITIONS

## Park Amenities & Layout

Byllesby Park is a well-maintained regional park facility with several amenities that provide a half to full day of recreation. Amenities at the park include: a swimming beach, sand volleyball court, playground, paved walking trails, three picnic shelters, grills, picnic tables, benches, paved and soft surface trails, two parking lots, two boat launches, a fishing pier, and a port-a-potty with wooden enclosure.

## Main Park

The 25-acre central portion of Byllesby Park is home to most of the park's amenities. It is connected to Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park via the new Mill Towns Trail bridge that crosses the Cannon River below the dam. Byllesby Park recently expanded to include 26 acres to the east (the former Goudy property) that have yet to be developed. This land is mostly flat, former agricultural land. Byllesby Park also includes a soft surface pedestrian trail on four acres of shoreline that travels 600' to an eight acre parcel of wooded cliffs on the park's western edge. This land is steep, with limited formal access, but offers an immersive nature experience different from anything available elsewhere in the park.

## Upper Park Area

A 12-acre property referred to as the Upper Park Area is located on the far southwestern side of the lake about 2.5 miles west (as the crow flies) of the main Byllesby Park property. This location offers a fishing boat launch, picnic benches, and portable toilets. Access to this park is off of 23rd Ave Way, which is approximately one mile east of TH 56. This park area is not handicap accessible. While considered part of the park, the Upper Park Area is not addressed in this master plan.

## Vegetation

Most of the park is covered with turf grass with shade trees scattered throughout. West of the parking lots, a two-acre stand of pines was planted years ago as a nursery, but the trees grew too fast to be transplanted. The pines now stand over 30' tall, and walking between the rows offers focused views of the lake. The western portion of the park features steep cliffs forested with pines and oaks.

The shoreline condition varies, transitioning from rip rap near the dam to a sandy swimming beach, grassy lakeshore, and finally steep, rocky cliffs with natural vegetation at the lake's edge. The northern border of the former Goudy property is owned by the DNR and has a steep, forested slope leading down to the Cannon River below the dam. The remainder of the Goudy property is a sparsely vegetated former agricultural field.

The pre-settlement vegetation along the Cannon River in this location would have been floodplain forest. Remnants of this can be seen along the lake's western edge. Above the floodplain stretched prairie and savanna habitats, except at the cliffs, which have never been developed and still feature Red and White Oak mesic mixed forest.



*Existing playground*

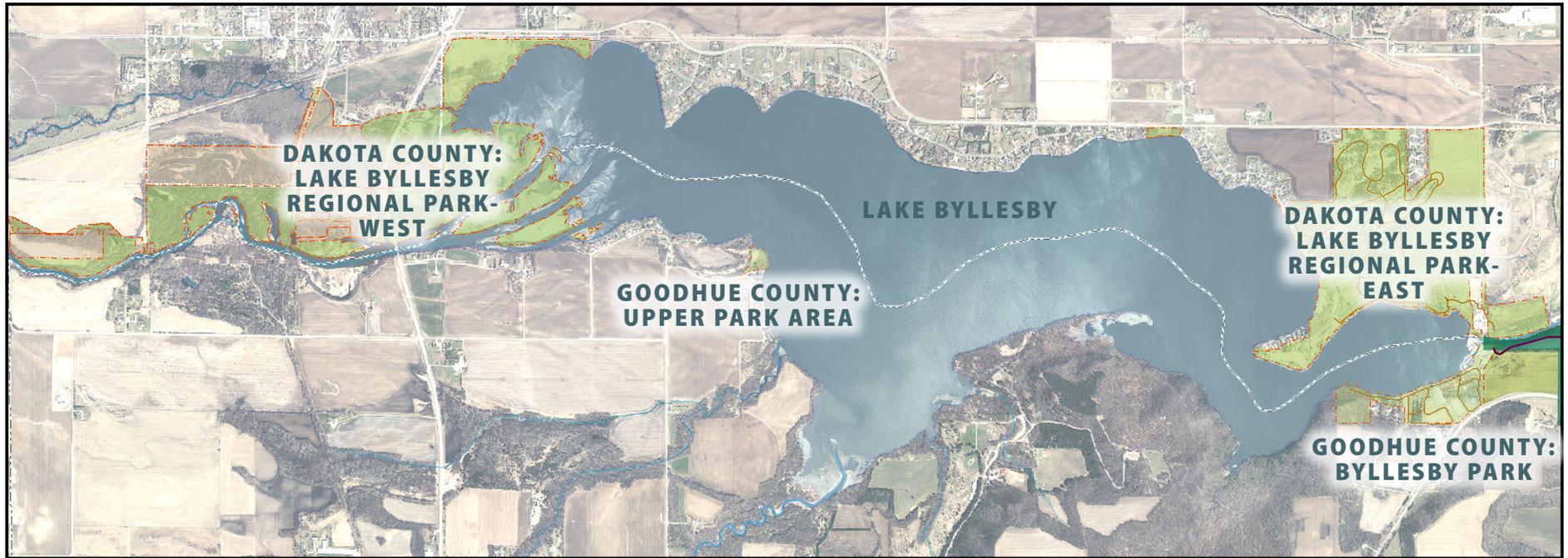


*View from the pine stand out to the Lake*



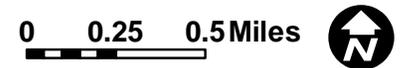
*Forested cliffs above the lake*

# Project Area: Lake Byllesby



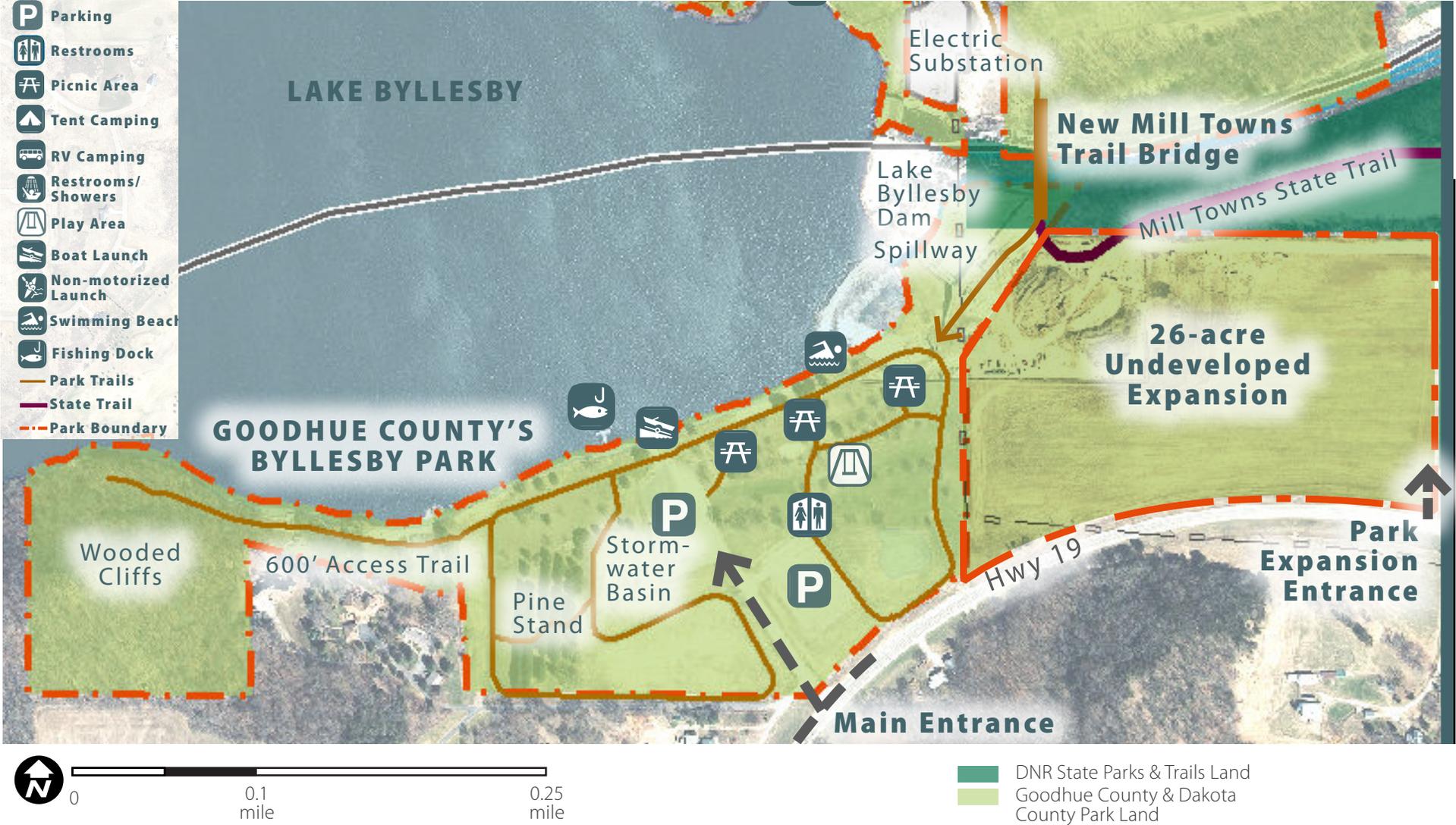
**Legend**

-  Lake Byllesby Park Boundary
-  Park Trails
-  State Trails
-  DNR State Parks and Trails Land
-  Lake Byllesby Regional Park
-  Private Property (Park Inholdings)
-  Stream



Lake Byllesby is a reservoir of the Cannon River, which was dammed in 1910. The lake is surrounded by residential properties, Goodhue County and Dakota County park land, Boy Scout-owned programming and open space, and agricultural land. Goodhue County's Byllesby Park is shown in the bottom right corner of the map, on the east side of the lake. The County also owns a 12-acre parcel on the southwestern edge of the lake, of which 2.8 acres is developed parkland. While the "Upper Lake Area," as it's known, offers lake access and a small picnic area, its relative isolation from the main park led to its exclusion from this master planning process.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS: BYLLESBY PARK



## Byllesby Lake & Byllesby Dam

The damming of the Cannon River in 1910 formed the reservoir that is now called Lake Byllesby. It varies in depth from less than 10 feet at the lake's western bay to more than 50 feet deep near the dam.

Lake Byllesby Dam is located between Goodhue and Dakota Counties. The facility was jointly owned and operated by both Counties for over 60 years. Dakota County has since acquired the dam and its operations. The dam is regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Xcel Energy buys the hydro-power electricity to distribute along its grid. The dam generates enough electricity to power approximately 2,400 homes for a year (Dakota County, 2012).

The recently opened Mill Towns Trail bridge overlooks the dam.

## History of Park Development

Goodhue County has operated Byllesby Park since they purchased it from Northern States Power Co. in 1968. On the opposite side of the lake, Lake Byllesby Regional Park has been a Dakota County recreational facility since 1970.

In 2013, Goodhue County purchased 26 acres just east of and adjacent to the existing park. The parcel had been operated as farmland and has no installed public or private utilities. The County issued an RFP of potential development options for the site in early 2016, but ultimately decided that the future of the parcel should be determined by a master planning process.

In 2016, work culminated on a pedestrian bridge over the Cannon River to the east of Byllesby Dam, uniting Byllesby Park and Lake Byllesby Regional Park into one seemingly whole regional park. The bridge is part of the Mill Towns State Trail which is connected to Cannon Falls

and, ultimately, will run from Faribault and then to Red Wing via the Cannon Valley Trail.

## Cultural Resources

It is likely that there was significant Native American occupation of the Cannon River valley before Euro-American settlement. Lithic remnants- fractured rock artifacts that included stone tools- have been found in the lake bed during draw-down events. These artifacts are preserved, submerged beneath Lake Byllesby.

The first Euro-American settlers arrived in Randolph Township in the 1850s. The railroads arrived in the late 19th Century; and, in 1910, the Lake Byllesby hydroelectric dam was built by Northern States Power and named for its founder, Henry Byllesby.

From the ways in which the river valley sustained Native Americans, to the advent of hydropower and industrialization in Minnesota, Byllesby Park has a wealth of history to explore.



*The 26-acre Goudy property expansion from Hwy 19*



*The Mill Towns Trail bridge across the Cannon River below the dam*



## Issues & Opportunities: Byllesby Park

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following lists of issues and opportunities were assembled from a variety of sources, including Goodhue County staff, the Advisory Group, elected officials, key stakeholders, and the general public.

### Byllesby Park Issues:

- » The parking lot overflows on weekends, and boat trailers park on the grass
- » The swimming beach gets lots of use – it is overcrowded at times
- » Weekends are especially busy at the park, current number of pavilions and picnic areas does not seem to be meeting demand
- » Cannon River is a wonderful recreational resource below the dam that is currently hard to access
- » There is a homeowners association that covers the entire lake that has desires that may be different from park users
- » Park use is low in the winter
- » Cliff jumpers are difficult to police

### Byllesby Park Opportunities:

#### Expand Activities and Connections

- » The recently constructed Mill Towns Trail pedestrian/ bike bridge across the Cannon River links the Goodhue County and Dakota County parks
- » A new trail connects to Cannon Falls and the Cannon Valley Trail; Byllesby Park could serve as a trailhead
- » Interest in more day use at the park – especially from bikers and canoers
- » New bridge highlights the need to improve access to the Cannon River to provide for fishing, tubing, canoeing and kayaking
- » Goodhue County is interested in partnering with Dakota County for operations and rentals at their park – Goodhue has no full time staff at their park or nearby to monitor rentals or facilities
- » Research is needed to determine if there are state grants or other funding to provide rentals at the park. Rentals could include bikes (surrey, cruiser, fat tire), kayaks, cross country skis, etc.

#### Improved Amenities

- » The current master plan includes a permanent restroom facility at the park
- » Additional pavilions and picnic sites to accommodate demand

#### Western Land and Cliffs

- » The forested cliffs to the west of the main park are unprogrammed and have limited access. The county has a trail designed that reaches the top of this property, but additional funds are needed to construct it. Further to the west is Boy Scout owned land with steep cliffs that provide long views of the lake. The park's trail is used to access this property by cliff jumpers, despite "No Trespassing" signs.

### Potential campground

- » The Goudy property to the east of the main park was purchased in 2013. 26 acres became part of Byllesby Park, while other land went to the MnDNR for the Mill Towns Trail connection. The County-owned land is vacant right now and provides an opportunity for additional activities or park amenities. The county explored a public-private partnership for a campground, but the project did not proceed. There is the potential for the County to ask the City to provide public sewer for a potential campground. The DNR-owned property has limitations on improvements and amenities, which must meet current state trail guidelines. Additional hiking trails and overlooks would be allowed.
- » Surrounding property owners are not supportive of camping. However, if camping were to be developed, they are generally more receptive to a campground with camper cabins and tents than to RVs.

### Opportunity to Generate Revenue

- » Goodhue County would like to see some revenue from the park – if a campground won't fit, then other options to generate revenue should be explored. Research is needed to determine if there is capacity for another campground in the area. The Dakota County campground does fill up on weekends in the summer and has had to turn campers away.
- » Bike, kayak, canoe, paddle board, tube, and/or ski rentals should be considered
- » Pavilion rentals

### Other

- » Potential interpretation opportunity: pine logging cleared most of the forests in the area, but the steep cliffs contain native pine trees, which were too difficult to access and clear.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following list of important considerations drew from core public values about the park from the community engagement process and was used to guide the park development concepts and recommendations:

- » Diversify and enhance activities available at the park to serve regional and local visitors. Seek opportunities to complement rather than duplicate activities with Dakota County
- » Enhance connections to Cannon Falls and Randolph, as well as the Cannon Valley Trail and Mill Towns Trail
- » Address the condition of the shoreline – decide if removing turf grass and replacing with a naturalized shoreline is feasible and sustainable
- » Evaluate how to balance preserving views of the lake with the need to buffer and transition the regional park activities from adjacent residential development
- » Address downstream access to the river for kayaking/ canoeing, tubing, and fishing
- » Identify how increased access in the western portion of the park and along the cliffs should occur
- » Continue to evaluate the opportunity for revenue generation, such as a campground on the eastern portion of the park, rentals (pavilion, bike, kayak, canoe, or paddle boat), concession area, etc.
- » Create a plan for winter recreation and park access areas
- » Develop a realistic plan for water quality in the lake – educate the public on the issues and the tasks required to solve them.



*Soft surface trail along the lakeshore on the west side of the park*



*The Main Park's Pine Grove*



Wooded cliffs in the western portion of Byllesby Park, viewed from Lake Byllesby Regional Park across the bay

## Chapter 3: **VISION, TRENDS, + PUBLIC VALUES**

### **Overview & Purpose**

This chapter sets the stage for the plan concept and initiatives. It was developed jointly among Goodhue County and Dakota County appointed and elected officials, county staff, and input from the public and stakeholders. The vision statement represents a shared vision for the combined extent of Byllesby Park in both counties. The vision says what the park will be in 10 to 20 years, while the guiding principles suggest how the vision will be achieved.

### **Vision**

*Byllesby Park is the natural-resources based park where people can explore the Cannon River Valley. Individuals, families, and groups from around the region visit the park to enjoy the lake, river, and regional trails; to play outdoors and participate in educational activities; to gather with others; and to support the stewardship of the area's wealth of natural resources.*

## Guiding Principles

### 1. Build regional connections and partnerships.

Connect Lake Byllesby to the greater Cannon Valley Region by enhancing Cannon River access points, establishing a headquarters for the Mill Towns State Trail, and providing access to the Cannon Valley Trail. Promote regional tourism by partnering with other attractions in the Cannon River Valley, improving regional awareness of the parks, and adding wayfinding within and to the park. Continue the park's contribution to local and regional economic development through collaborations with Cannon Falls and Randolph governments and businesses, including directing trail users to nearby amenities.

### 2. Create a cohesive, multi-county, regional park.

Programming and facilities at each park should complement, rather than compete with, one another by taking advantage of the unique and/or best available opportunities at each park. The two parks should offer a coherent set of recreational experiences and be operated cooperatively to function as a single destination in the Cannon River Valley.

### 3. Invest in natural resources.

Implement a range of techniques to preserve, restore, and enhance existing natural areas, improve habitat, preserve scenic views, address invasive species, and support regional water quality initiatives.

### 4. Be a full service, year-round destination.

Develop facilities, activities, and services in a flexible, welcoming manner that supports increased lake and river recreation; enables visitors to enjoy all that Minnesota seasons offer, and provides recreational, educational, and volunteer opportunities for visitors of all ages and abilities. Strive to develop in a manner that reduces impacts and buffers adjacent residential neighborhoods. Ensure safe and enjoyable use of water resources by both motorized and non-motorized users.

### 5. Offer a diversity of overnight accommodations.

The park's lakeside and natural environment make it a desirable location for multi-day visitors to the Cannon River Valley. Overnight opportunities should include a variety of RV, tent, group, and camper cabin sites that appeal to a wide range of users while being sensitively located in relationship to the natural environment and surrounding neighborhoods.

### 6. Support nature based recreation and community gathering.

Ensure facilities to support visitors, community gatherings, and users of the lake and regional trails.

## Local and Regional Demographics

Knowing who is currently visiting the park and having a realistic idea of potential future users is essential to developing a master plan that will accurately address the needs and desires of park visitors over the next decade and beyond. The following local and regional demographic information influenced the trends that became most relevant to this master plan.

### A Growing Population

The population of Goodhue County currently stands at about 49,000 residents. Goodhue's population is expected to continue to experience population growth over the next 25 years. This number is forecasted to grow to over 55,000 residents by 2045. The demand for quality park services and recreation opportunities is likely to grow in tandem with the population.

### Racial/ Ethnic Distribution

Goodhue County's population has continued to grow more and more diverse each year. Between 2000 and 2010 the growth rate in Goodhue County populations of color was over 65% higher than the national growth rate. In 2016, 7.8% of the population comprised people of color. As the population of Goodhue County changes and grows more diverse, the needs of the County parks programming and visitor services diversify and change too. Goodhue County Parks will need to address and adapt to new cultural norms and preferences of different groups.

### Children & Youth

Kids are an important part of the Goodhue County population. In 2015, residents under 18 made up more than 25% of the population. According to the Minnesota State Demographer, children will still account for more than 25% of the population by 2045. This creates an unwavering demographic that has specific needs for park services and recreation opportunities. Access to parks and age appropriate programming helps to launch kids into a healthy and active lifestyle, building good habits and fostering attachment to nature while experiencing the outdoors.

### Cost Burdened Households

Recently, Goodhue County has experienced a growth in the county poverty rate. The poverty rate almost doubled from 5% in 2000 to 9.6% in 2014. Cost burdened households are considered to be at a higher risk for sedentary lifestyle related illnesses. Park access and affordability are especially important to households with less disposable income who rely on county parks for health and recreational opportunities.

## RECREATIONAL TRENDS

Changes in the way people recreate impact the need for improvements in the park system. The following are general trends that may impact the future of Byllesby Park.



### Aging Actively

Baby Boomers already represent a large portion of the Goodhue County population. Like the rest of the state, Goodhue County is anticipating growth in Baby Boomer residents over the next couple of decades. As park visitors age, their recreation needs change. Baby Boomers will require facilities and equipment that meet their mobility needs and programming that caters to their interests and activity level. Lake-based activities like fishing, paddle sports, and swimming are well suited to park visitors requiring low impact recreation.



### Active Living

Access to parks and parks programming is becoming more and more important. The nation as a whole is experiencing a public health crisis with obesity and sedentary lifestyle related illnesses. In 2012, over 20% of Goodhue County adults were considered obese. Complicating matters, people have less time to devote to fitness because the average American works more than 46 hours/week (Minnesota's SCORP). In order to combat this, more people are developing an interest in active living through integrating exercise into their daily routines. This trend yields more demand for low cost, near home recreation options. County parks can provide outdoor activities that encourage active living and healthy lifestyles at little to no cost.



### Trail Use

Trails continue to be a high demand recreational feature nation wide. The increased interest in walking, running, and bicycling as a flexible, convenient recreational experience reflects the increased construction of trail projects in Minnesota and across the country. Positioned along a state water trail, and between state and a regional multi-use trails, Byllesby Park can provide in-demand amenities to trail users looking for a destination they can ride to, paddle to, or a place to stop and recharge.

## PUBLIC HEALTH VALUES

### Health Benefits of Byllesby Park

Mental health improvements including a greater sense of well-being, lower rates of depression, improved capacity to cope with stressful events, better focus, and a reduction of attention deficit disorder symptoms are associated with access to nature (APHA's Improving Health and Wellness through Access to Nature). Byllesby Park provides visitors with long views across the water and an opportunity to walk along the shoreline and through the woods. Lake Byllesby also offers fishing, which has been shown to decrease symptoms of PTSD ([www.riversofrecovery.org/research-results](http://www.riversofrecovery.org/research-results)). The Outdoor Foundation reports that 38% of people who fish do it as a means of relieving stress.

While fishing could be considered a form of mild exercise, Byllesby Park also promotes physical activity in other ways, with paddle sports, swimming, walking/hiking, and sand volleyball all available.

The park has multiple picnic shelters, a beach, volleyball court, and a playground- all of which provide venues for social interaction. This plan incorporates camping as well, which will offer an additional way for the park to bring family and friends together.



### Providing a Growing Twin Cities Metro with Connections to the Outdoors

With Minnesota becoming increasingly urban, access to places like Lake Byllesby and the Cannon River Valley that offer nature-based outdoor recreation in such close proximity to the Twin Cities Metro is an advantage.

With the 2014-2018 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) reporting a downward trend in traditional outdoor recreation, it is more important than ever to find ways to introduce new populations to nature-based recreation, and to incorporate new activities that offer exposure to the outdoors.

The SCORP found that participation in nature-based activities “helps to produce citizenry with an appreciation of the natural world that raises social and political support for resource conservation activities, support that may decrease as participation decreases.” Fortunately, Byllesby Park is well positioned to implement many of the SCORP’s recommendations to connect people to the outdoors, which can help to maintain the relevancy and longevity of the park system for future generations.



### In order to connect people to the outdoors, the SCORP recommends that parks:

1. Develop camping facilities that have “sites for larger groups, more separation and privacy between sites, and higher quality natural surroundings to meet expectations of current and future users. Separate tent camping and RV camping.”
2. “Design facilities that support numerous activities and proactively adapt to new and emerging nature-based recreation activities (e.g. Geocaching, pet-friendly parks and trails).”
3. “Develop group-based opportunities such as group campsites, picnic areas, and gathering spaces.”
4. Utilize marketing and cross-promoting to brand nearby outdoor recreational opportunities as a “collective network.”
5. Emphasize programming, including “expanding programs featuring new and emerging forms of outdoor recreation (e.g. geocaching, kayaking, etc).”

## ECONOMIC AND TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

The new trail bridge across the Cannon River is expected to bring more people to the park. Byllesby Park visitors and Cannon Valley Trail and Mill Towns State Trail users will now have easy access to Dakota County’s Lake Byllesby Regional Park. By branding and promoting the Cannon Valley as an active outdoor recreation destination, trail users planning multi-day trips can take advantage of the various lodging offerings around the lake. Expanded outdoor education programs, new and improved campground amenities, and additional facilities such as a visitor center, water equipment/ bicycle rental, and dog park could further attract visitors.

## GMRPTC CRITERIA STATEMENTS

The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission seeks to designate parks in Greater Minnesota as “regional parks” that have unique and compelling features which make them important as regional destinations. Some of these features could include natural landscape characteristics, unique recreational opportunities, or attractive man-made sites. The following statements and descriptions represent what makes Byllesby Park a unique and compelling destination for southeastern Minnesota.

Byllesby Park is positioned as a regional recreation hub as it sits at the confluence of the Cannon River, the Cannon Valley Trail, the Mill Towns State Trail, and provides public access to the largest recreational lake in the southern Twin Cities metro area.



### **Byllesby Park Provides a Special High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience**

Today, Byllesby Park is a popular park for boating, fishing, swimming, and other lake access activities. The County is actively pursuing expansion of park activities and services beyond lake activities with the construction of the Mill Towns Trail bridge, which connects the park to Dakota County’s Lake Byllesby Regional Park, the Cannon Valley Trail, Cannon River State Water Trail, and the future Mill Towns State Trail. Additional recreation features that are available with these connections include: bicycling, running, walking, camping, hiking, visiting local businesses in Cannon Falls, and sightseeing along the Cannon River.

The location of the park on Lake Byllesby makes it an attractive and unique feature in a region where there are few recreational lakes.



### **Byllesby Park Provides a Natural and Scenic Setting Offering a Compelling Sense of Place**

The lake itself is the prime compelling feature of Byllesby Park. Whether on the water looking back at the limestone cliffs that border the lake, on the new Mill Towns Trail bridge marveling at the dam or the Cannon River Valley, or on the shoreline looking out across the water, Lake Byllesby provides a scenic setting unmatched in the area.

Byllesby Dam is a hydroelectric dam that has been in use for over 100 years. The historic nature and unique form of the dam create a compelling feature to view and learn about during a visit to Byllesby Park.



### **Byllesby Park is Well-located to Serve a Regional Need and/or Tourist Destination**

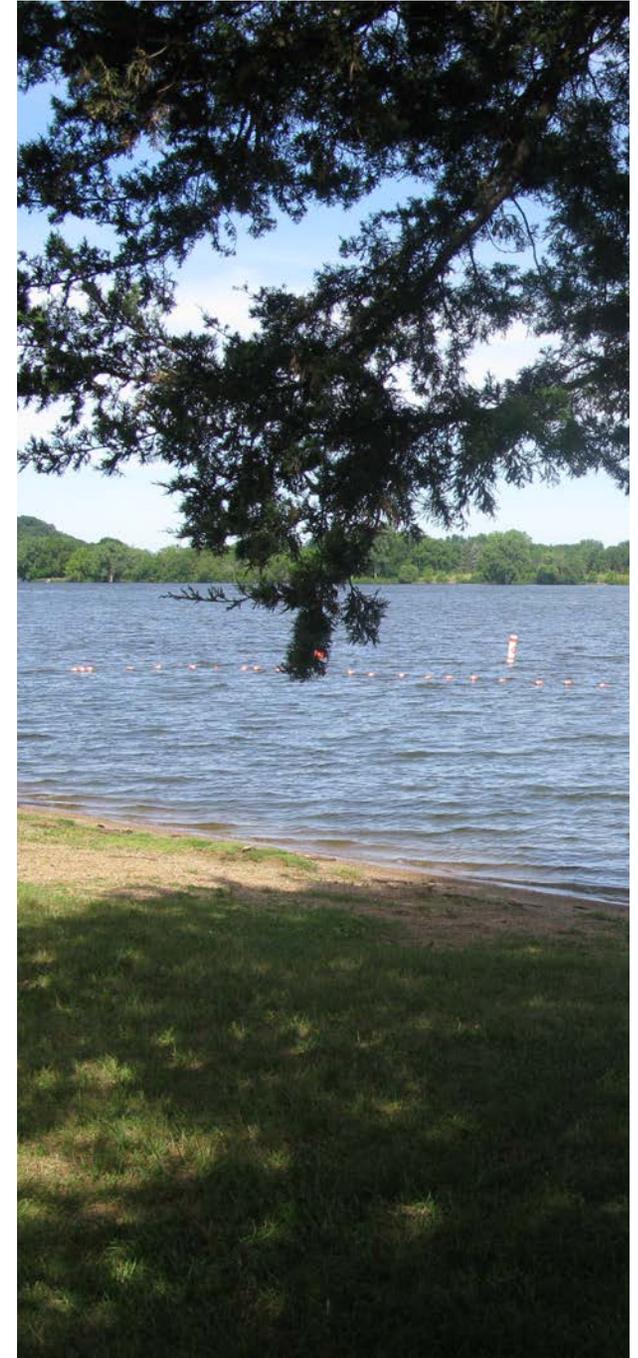
Byllesby Park is easily accessed from the Twin Cities metro area and Rochester by US Hwy 52 to State Hwy 19. The park is only a couple miles west of the city of Cannon Falls and 12 miles northeast of the city of Northfield, a bustling college town. With overnight opportunities at the Dakota County Lake Byllesby Regional Park campground, as part of future development at Byllesby Park, and in Cannon Falls and Northfield hotels, the park can serve as an attraction for tourists spending time exploring the Cannon River Valley. Trail connections to the Cannon Valley Trail and future Mill Towns State Trail provide opportunities for day long journeys in east and west directions from the park. Hiking trails in both Goodhue and Dakota County on either side of the lake provide local opportunities for exploring nature. Retail destinations in Cannon Falls also expand the opportunities at the park to serve a larger audience.



### **Byllesby Park Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region**

The recreational boating access available at Lake Byllesby is unique in the southern Twin Cities metro area and southeastern Minnesota. The lake is the main attraction at the park, which draws users from Minneapolis to Rochester and beyond. Frequent comments heard by park rangers at Nerstand Big Woods State Park, fifteen miles southwest of Byllesby, include, “where is the lake?”

Lake Byllesby’s popularity is evidenced by the full boat trailer parking lot at the park every weekend in the summer.



*Byllesby Park's Swimming Beach*



## Chapter 4: **DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN**

### **OVERVIEW**

This chapter contains the development concept, outlining the specific physical and programming improvements that will be implemented at Byllesby Park. A master plan graphic, along with a narrative description and precedent imagery will describe the desired improvements to the park. Natural resource improvements will also be described in detail in this chapter.

### **PARK DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

The development master plan for Byllesby Park improves upon the existing lake-based recreational uses in the main area of the park, while taking advantage of the opportunity for more immersive nature-based experiences by expanding hiking trails and adding nature play in the park's western half. To the east, in the recently acquired 26-acre property, camping and an expanded trail network inhabit a restored savanna, and a new park headquarters building offers Mill Towns State Trail users a place to stop before exploring all that Lake Byllesby has to offer.



## BYLLESBY PARK MASTER PLAN

### South Byllesby Bay Picnic Area

The 25 acres in the center of the park already have established uses as picnic grounds and a launching point for lake-based activities, particularly boating. In order to better accommodate the popularity of large group gatherings, the plan moves one of the existing picnic shelters west of the parking lot, and replaces it with a 150-person pavilion that includes restrooms. The leftover concrete pad is envisioned as a landscaped patio that could provide overflow seating or a place for flexible picnic activities like chalk drawing, foursquare, or hopscotch.

Parking is expanded in order to alleviate some of the pressure placed on the lot during the boating season. Four slips for boats are added in order to accommodate mid-day docking, and a new beach with a fire pit provides a place for swimming near the relocated picnic shelter.

The existing beach, which is sheltered from wind and algae blooms, undergoes an expansion that helps to accommodate visitors from across the lake who want to swim when water quality at Dakota County's beach is poor.

The underutilized field south of the parking lots is slated to become a fenced in off-leash dog area. A popular request with campers, the dog park will provide a safe place for dogs to exercise, and will likely draw visitors independent of the campground as well, as the nearest dog park is in Northfield.

The Pine Grove west of the parking lots provides a unique environment that lends itself very well to a nature play area. Kids can run down wide, tree-lined aisles, climb mounds of earth that provide new perspectives, and clamber across rope bridges slung between the trees.



The remainder of the central park grounds remain the same, except for where areas of unprogrammed lawn are proposed to be converted to natural habitat. More detail on this can be found in the Ecological and Land Resources Plan.

## SOUTH BYLLESBY BAY PICNIC AREA SUMMARY

### Short Term Development:

- » New and expanded beach areas
- » Beach fire pit
- » Relocated fishing pier
- » New fish cleaning station
- » Fenced in off-leash dog area
- » Pine Grove nature play area
- » 4 day boat slips
- » Natural surface trail through restored savanna

### Long Term Development:

- » Expanded parking
- » 150-person picnic pavilion with restrooms
- » Relocated picnic shelter

### Natural Resources:

- » Savanna restoration
- » Stormwater basin improvements
- » Buffers along Hwy 19
- » Shoreline restoration



Shoreline Restoration



Stormwater Basin



Day Boat Slips



Pavilion with Restrooms





Fish Cleaning Station



Dog Park



Beach Fire Pit

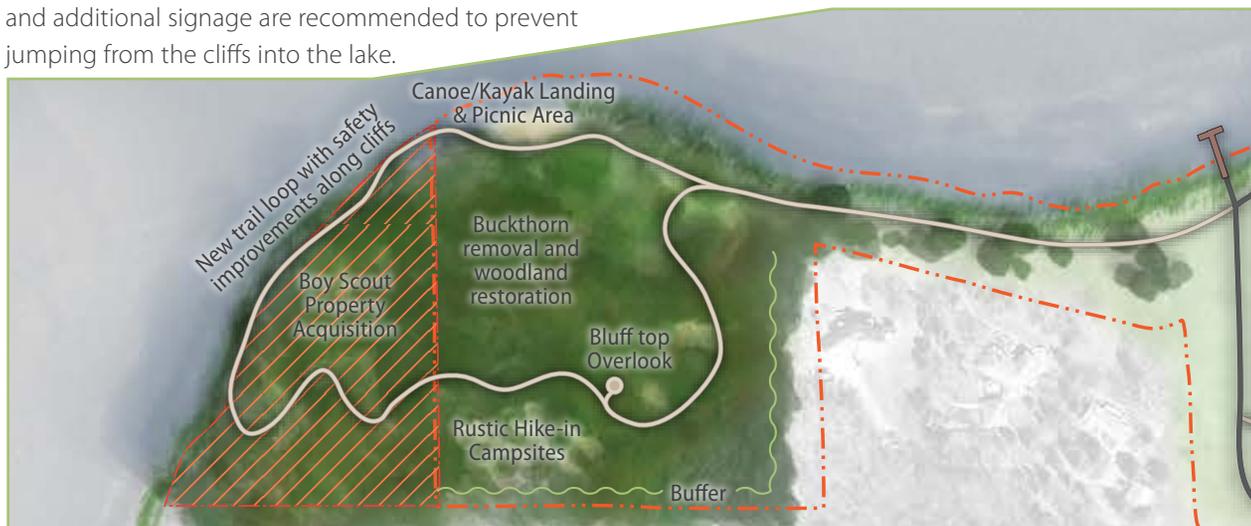


Pine Grove Nature Play Area Ideas

## Scenic Bluffs

The western third of the park is projected to expand its trail network, rewarding hikers with long views across Lake Byllesby from the top of cliffs that rise above the water. Already a quality habitat featuring red pines, red and white oaks, and spring ephemerals, the woodland will be enhanced by clearing buckthorn and planting native understory shrubs. The slopes at the top of the bluffs flatten out and present a natural gathering space that, with minimal intervention, could accommodate rustic hike-in campsites and a stargazing platform in the future, once buffers are established and logistics for campsite reservations are put in place. Care must be taken to preserve high quality tree species and habitat; all proposed construction should be staked in the field.

While a trail to an overlook will be possible without acquisition of additional property, acquiring a parcel of land currently owned by the Boy Scouts of America will make the vision for a hiking loop up the forested cliffs and back along the lakeshore a reality. County ownership will also facilitate easier monitoring and enforcement of cliff jumpers, some of whom trespass across private land to reach the cliffs. Safety measures such as cable railings and additional signage are recommended to prevent jumping from the cliffs into the lake.



## SCENIC BLUFFS SUMMARY

### Short Term Development:

- » Create Scenic Bluffs trail
- » Bluff top overlook
- » Acquisition of Boy Scout property west of current park boundary (when available)
- » Safety improvements to cliffs (when acquired)

### Long Term Development:

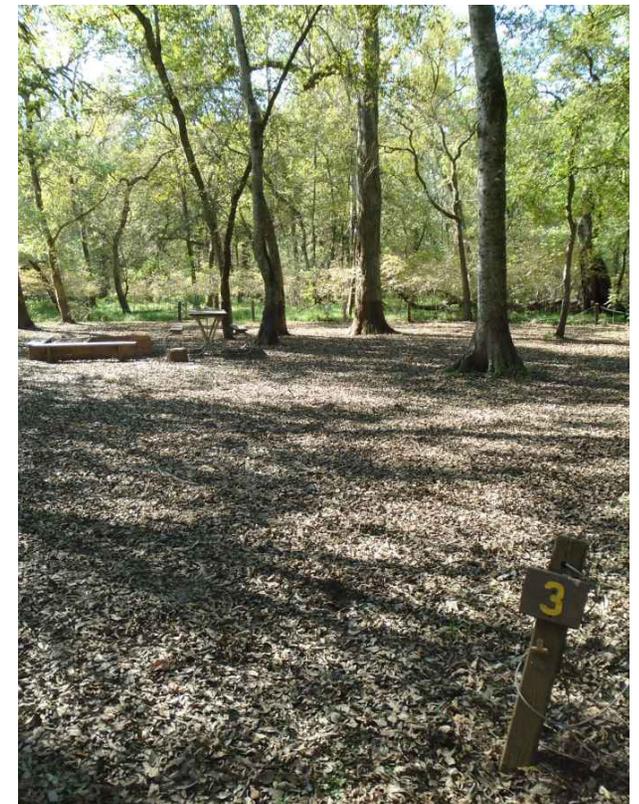
- » Rustic hike-in campsites
- » Canoe/kayak landing and picnic area
- » Scenic Bluffs trail loop (when property acquired)

### Natural Resources:

- » Buffers between park boundary and adjacent landowners
- » Shoreline restoration
- » Buckthorn removal and woodland restoration



*Buckthorn Removal*



*Rustic Hike-in Campsites*



*Cliffs on Current Boy Scout Property*



*Future Kayak/Canoe Landing & Picnic Area*



*Bluff top Views above Lake Byllesby*



*Scenic Bluffs Trail Loop*

## Savanna Campground

The newly expanded eastern portion of the park is positioned as the gateway into Byllesby Park from the Mill Towns State Trail. To capitalize on this, a new Park Headquarters is proposed. The headquarters would provide information about recreation offerings in the Cannon Valley and at Lake Byllesby, sell trail passes, and have rentals, a bike repair station, showers, and lodging resources (including an overnight staff person) for trail users and campers all in one place.

A variety of camping is proposed, including sites for pop-up campers and tents, three camper cabins, and a group site. A centrally located shower building should be sized to accommodate the full campground build out, and must be sited so that all campsites have access to showers (there, or in the Headquarters) within a 400' distance. The shower building should be designed to function as a storm shelter in case of inclement weather.



Natural Surface Trails through Restored Savanna

In order to create a pleasant environment for camping, the landscape will be restored as a savanna, where tall grasses will line new trails and give shape to campsites, and oaks will grow to provide shade.



Park Headquarters



## SAVANNA CAMPGROUND SUMMARY

### Short Term Development:

- » Gravel parking
- » Access to Cannon River (coordinate with DNR)
- » Natural surface trails through savanna
- » Shower Building
- » Camping contact station
- » Single loop of pop-up camper/ tent sites

### Long Term Development:

- » Additional pop-up camper and tent campsites
- » Group campsite
- » 3 camper cabins
- » Park Headquarters Building

### Natural Resources:

- » Buffers along Hwy 19
- » Savanna restoration



*Camper Cabins*



*Group Campsite*



*Tent Camping in Restored Savanna*

## WINTER RECREATION

Winter recreation at Byllesby Park will be minimal until a facility with four season bathrooms is installed, such as the proposed pavilion or park headquarters. In the meantime, plowing of the paved trail system will accommodate winter walking, while the natural surface trails can be used for snow shoeing, fat tire biking, or back country skiing. The adjacent 2-mile segment of the Mill Towns State Trail that connects the park to Cannon Falls is also open to those winter recreators that don't require a groomed trail, and connects to the Cannon Valley Trail, which is groomed and available to those with a Great Minnesota Ski Pass. The Mill Towns State Trail includes a parallel route for snowmobilers, which connects to state snowmobile trails in Cannon Falls. Snowmobiles must be registered or have a state trail sticker. Ice fishing is popular on Lake Byllesby, and can be accessed on both sides of the lake.

## PARK FACILITIES, AMENITIES, & SIGNAGE

Goodhue County does not have a set of design guidelines that dictate a specific aesthetic for new park facilities or amenities such as benches, receptacles, trails, or signage. As such, efforts should be made to develop a consistent standard for these items as funds are made available to implement aspects of this park master plan. Whenever possible, sustainable construction methods and materials should be utilized. Signage developed should coordinate with signage for Lake Byllesby Regional Park, the Cannon Valley Trail, and the Mill Towns State Trail with at least similar content and wayfinding logos and icons in order to maintain the feel of Lake Byllesby having one large park.

Byllesby Park should consider participating in the mobile app-based interpretation that Dakota County is developing around Lake Byllesby by providing QR codes or other links to digital content on matching graphic panels, in park materials, or on their website, and collaborating on content for self-guided interpretation like audio tours.

In order to promote Byllesby Park's existing and future park facilities and amenities, partnerships should be pursued with Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park, the Cannon River State Water Trail, Cannon Valley Trail, and Mill Towns State Trail. The park should be listed as a destination on websites and wayfinding signage along each of the trails. Lake Byllesby Regional Park and Byllesby Park should highlight the recreational amenities available at the other park on their signage and in other park information. When facilities on one side of the lake are full, visitors should be directed that they are welcome to use those in the adjacent park (i.e. campsites or boat parking).



*Ice fishing via snowmobile and OHV on Lake Byllesby*

# East Lake Byllesby Park Master Plan

## Long-term Plan

### Dakota and Goodhue Counties

# LAKE BYLLESBY REGIONAL PARK CONNECTION

## An Integrated Park Master Plan

With all that's planned at Byllesby Park, it can be easy to forget that Lake Byllesby Regional Park offers a whole other set of things to do on the north side of the lake. The master planning processes for the two parks were conducted concurrently with the aim of providing complementary amenities. This coordinated process ensured that visitors will experience Lake Byllesby as a singular park destination, rather than as two disparate park entities. Taken together, the master plan represents a more accurate picture of all the recreational options available to visitors of Lake Byllesby.



**Lilac Landing**  
Picnic tables, non-motorized boat launch, shore fishing

**Oak Savanna**  
Year-round natural surface trails, paved trail loop, oak savanna restoration

**Echo Channel**  
Unstructured interpretive nature play loop, year-round natural surface trails, parking area

**Sunset Beach**  
Non-motorized boat launch, beach building with restrooms, reduced beach to add splash pad, sand play, and volleyball courts, swimming lagoon, fire pit, picnic lawn, expanded beach parking, 3-5 lakeside cottages

**Lodge**  
Camp check-in, restrooms, concessions, emergency shelter, fire oven, great lawn area, 20 boat slips for day use and camper rental, 3-5 houseboat cabins, parking lot

**Echo Point**  
Prairie restoration, shore fishing, fishing pier, 2 sun shelters with picnic tables and fire pits, large fire pit and programming space and dock on north point, paved loop trail

**Scenic Bluffs**  
Canoe/Kayak landing with picnic area, scenic overlook, & primitive hike-in campsites. Acquire Boy Scout property to improve safety at overlook area & complete trail loop.

**North Byllesby Bay Picnic Area**  
Motorized boat launch, fishing pier, expanded interpretive playground, 150-person picnic shelter with restrooms, 75-person picnic shelter, expanded parking

**Byllesby Bay Campground**  
67 water and electric sites, 20 electric sites, 40 no hook-up sites, central restroom building, small boat trailer parking area, dump station, naturalized plantings between sites for screening and shade

**Cannon River**  
Parking area with shelter and picnic tables, 2 yurts, canoe/kayak launch on Cannon River, explore potential to expand parking lot, develop whitewater kayak area, and natural surface trails

Recommend Removal From Park Boundary

**Savanna Campground**  
Pop-up camper and tent sites, group camping, three camper cabins, shower building, park headquarters, and access to Cannon River

**South Byllesby Bay Picnic Area**  
Expanded beach, motorized boat launch, fishing pier, fish cleaning station, additional parking, beach with fire pit, pine grove nature play area, off-leash dog area, playground, 150-person picnic shelter with restrooms, three picnic pavilions, four day boat slips

- Park Boundary
- Lawn Area
- Restoration Area
- Buffer Area
- Existing / Planned Roadway
- Mill Towns Trail Alignment
- Paved Park Trail
- Natural Surface Park Trail
- Bridge
- Park Building
- P Parking Lot



## ECOLOGICAL AND LAND RESOURCES PLAN

Much of the main portion of the park is turf grass; however, very little of it is actively used for field recreation. This plan replaces some of the underutilized turf areas with dedicated uses like the dog park, and naturalizes other areas with shoreline restoration, savanna, and prairie habitats. This practice of lawn reduction eliminates some of the pollution associated with mowing and fertilizing in favor of a less intensive maintenance regime once the naturalized areas are established.

East of the parking lots, unprogrammed lawn is converted to prairie grasses lining a path that leads to the new savanna campground. An existing turf stormwater basin west of the parking lot is proposed to be seeded with mesic prairie mix to provide additional habitat and improve stormwater management. The sections of turf shoreline not used for lake access are intended to be converted into native buffer plantings. Finally, the wooded cliffs require buckthorn removal, and native shrubs should be planted to stabilize slopes and provide screening from neighboring properties. Trails, campsites, and the overlook should be sited and staked in the field to minimize disturbance and preserve trees.

In order to create an immersive environment, limit road noise, mask visual impacts, and respect adjacent landowners, screening should be implemented in several areas of the park, especially along Highway 19. Screening should be accomplished through a mix of landform berms (using soil stockpiled onsite from bridge and trail construction), and layered plantings. Species should be diverse, native, and selected based on resiliency in the face of potentially changing plant hardiness zones.

## PROGRAMMING PLAN

### Park Headquarters Building

- » Potential to include food/drink concessions and sell firewood to serve trail and campground users
- » Rent equipment from the new trail building or at adjacent kiosks, such as bikes or skis for use on the Mill Towns Trail, kayaks or paddle boards, compasses, binoculars, and other trail use items.
- » Sell Cannon Valley Trail Wheel Passes and Great Minnesota Ski Passes

### Main Park

- » Host celebrations for events at Lake Byllesby like the fishing opener
- » Speed Boat Races put on by the Twin Cities Powerboat Association
- » Water skiing shows
- » Staging for fun runs, trail rides, or races
- » Picnic shelter rental

### Savanna Campground

- » Reservation of group and individual campsites

### Scenic Bluffs

- » Future stargazing platform could host equinox, solstice, or other celestial celebrations
- » Hike-in campsite reservations
- » Potential for a small orienteering course
- » Geocaching

## MOTORIZED BOATING (MN DNR GUIDELINES)

The state's Department of Natural Resources (Mn DNR) manages surface water usage and motorized boating in Minnesota. Their recommendation is to have one "public motorized watercraft" per 20 acres of surface water, which equates to the number of parking places at public launching facilities. (Note that a separate calculation exists for private uses). According to state information, Lake Byllesby has a surface area of 1,368 acres, which equates to a maximum of 68 public parking spaces in total for the boat launches across the lake.

To ensure the safety of motorized and non-motorized lake users, this master plan recommends that boat trailers be required to park on designated, paved surfaces. Coordination between Dakota County and Goodhue County will be needed to ensure that the maximum number of boat trailer spots available is maintained. No changes to the existing distribution of boat parking are proposed. The following is the distribution of boat trailer parking:

- » 27 spots at Dakota County Byllesby Bay Boat Launch
- » 10 to 13 spots at Dakota County Campground Parking
- » 22 spots at Goodhue County Byllesby Bay Boat Launch
- » 5 spots at Goodhue County Upper Lake Boat Launch (not shown on map)

There is public concern about increased lake use and maintaining safety to avoid conflicts of motorized boats, swimmers, canoes/kayaks, and paddle boards. County Sheriffs do work together to ensure safe use of Lake Byllesby, especially when it comes to boat traffic.



## Chapter 5: **IMPLEMENTATION + MANAGEMENT**

### **OVERVIEW**

The elements in the Byllesby Park Master Plan will be implemented according to the phasing and priorities listed in this chapter, but will remain flexible to accommodate changes in funding and availability over the coming years.

Phasing indicates when the project will be implemented. The action items have been organized into short and long-term phases:

- » Short-term project should occur first, based on available resources, desire for use, or needing to happen before another project.
- » Long-term projects are those that will be completed after the short-term projects have been established. These are projects that will require significantly more time to gather resources, funds, and conduct further planning in order to be realized.

# PHASING AND PRIORITIES



PARK AREA	AMENITY	ESTIMATED COST
<b>General</b>	Landscape/Tree Buffer along Hwy 19	\$125,000
	Savanna restoration	\$50,000
	Shoreline restoration	\$65,000
<b>South Byllesby Bay Picnic Area</b>	Relocate Existing Shelter	\$15,000
	Expand Existing Beach	\$12,000
	Relocate Fishing Pier	\$10,000
	New Beach with Fire Pit, west of launch	\$35,000
	Stormwater Basin Restoration	\$6,000
	Off-leash dog area	\$75,000
	Day Boat Slips	\$40,000
	Soft surface trails	\$80,000
	Fish Cleaning Station	\$25,000
	Pine Grove Nature Play Area	\$100,000
<b>Savanna Campground</b>	Camp sites - pop-up camper/tent with unpaved access	\$120,000
	Check in station	\$51,000
	Restroom/shower/emergency shelter building with well and septic	\$265,000
	Soft surface trails	\$25,000
	Landscaping/Buffer to Mill Towns Trail	\$42,500
	Access to Cannon River (coordinate with DNR)	TBD
<b>Scenic Bluffs</b>	Soft surface trail	\$134,500
	Staircase to Scenic Overlook	\$400,000
	Scenic Overlook	\$50,000
	Buckthorn clearing and woodland restoration	\$60,000
	Boy Scout property acquisition	TBD
	Cliff Safety Improvements	\$25,000
<b>Short Term Improvements Costs</b>	<b>Short Term Improvements Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,811,000</b>
	<b>10% Contingency</b>	<b>\$181,100</b>
	<b>20% Engineering &amp; Design</b>	<b>\$362,200</b>
	<b>Short Term Improvements Total</b>	<b>\$2,354,300</b>

PARK AREA	AMENITY	ESTIMATED COST
<b>South Byllesby Bay Picnic Area</b>	Picnic Shelter with Restrooms	\$437,500
<b>Savanna Campground</b>	Camp sites - pop-up camper/tent	\$150,000
	Circle roads for campsites	\$180,000
	New roadway	\$247,500
	Camper Cabins	\$135,000
	Group Camping area	\$60,000
	Park Headquarters	\$506,500
	Parking Lot and Turnaround	\$115,500
<b>Scenic Bluffs</b>	Canoe/Kayak landing & picnic area	\$25,000
	Campsites-primitive/hike-in	\$45,000
<b>Long Term Improvements Costs</b>	<b>Long Term Improvements Subtotal</b>	\$1,902,000
	<b>10% Contingency</b>	\$190,200
	<b>20% Engineering &amp; Design</b>	\$380,400
	<b>Long Term Improvements Total</b>	<b>\$2,472,600</b>
<b>PHASING COSTS SUMMARY</b>		
	<b>TOTAL SHORT-TERM ESTIMATE</b>	<b>\$2,354,300</b>
	<b>TOTAL LONG-TERM ESTIMATE</b>	<b>\$2,472,600</b>
	<b>TOTAL MASTER PLAN COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>\$4,826,900</b>



*Shoreline along the Boy Scout Property*

## ACQUISITION

While the scenic bluffs to the west of the main park can be accessed without park acquisition, developing a loop trail along the cliffs will require acquisition of Boy Scout property. Staff will only entertain park land acquisition in the case of willing sellers, and all purchases will need to be approved by the Goodhue County Board. The primary purpose of park expansion is to improve safety by being able to add safety measures along the cliffs, and to increase the length of hiking trails. As part of the acquisition process, Goodhue County will work with the Boy Scouts to identify strategies that could be employed to ensure park users remain within Byllesby Park and do not continue into the Boy Scout's property to the south. No other property acquisition is being considered at this time.

## MN DNR COLLABORATION AND STATE LANDS

The Minnesota DNR owns the land north of the 26-acre Savanna Campground along the Cannon River. The Mill Towns Trail runs between the properties, but there is limited active use or programming on the DNR's land. If at some point river access or another park-related use is desired, Goodhue County would work with the DNR to determine how to best preserve the ecological and aesthetic function of the river corridor, while accommodating recreational use. The types of uses that could be pursued would need to be those allowed in state trail corridors. At this time, for example, camping is not allowed. If rules should change, expansion of camping options and a revenue sharing plan should be explored.

## RESEARCH PLAN

Goodhue County will participate in the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission research initiatives (visitation counts, use profiles, recreation demands, and trends surveys, etc.) as these programs are developed over time. The County may monitor park use and conduct more surveys or questionnaires in line with the physical development of elements within this park master plan.

## PARK ORDINANCES

Byllesby Park will operate in accordance with Goodhue County park ordinances and policies. See Ordinance 80-1 for a complete list of rules.

## OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

It is envisioned that management and operations will be primarily the responsibility of the Goodhue County Public Works Department, in coordination with any future volunteers.

### Management

Goodhue County establishes policies and goals for its park system and through an annual budget provides capital and operating funds for parks and trails.

### General Operations

Goodhue County staff will be responsible for the operation of Byllesby Park.

Where there are opportunities for operational partnerships, particularly where the park provides complementary services to Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park, Goodhue County will enter a mutually acceptable contractual agreement with partner agencies. Potential areas of exploration include camping operations, security, park maintenance,

and programming. When possible, the County will encourage and advocate for campground hosts and other volunteers to assist with outdoor education programs, patrol, park clean-ups and special events. Goodhue County recognizes that as facilities expand, it may need to add a dedicated park staff person.

## Maintenance

Regular maintenance activities for the park will include:

- » Mowing
- » Sweeping and blowing
- » Trash collection
- » Tree trimming
- » Winter trail clearing
- » Trail repair
- » Sign maintenance
- » Park headquarters Building repair and maintenance

## Natural Resource Management

The habitat, water quality, and aesthetic improvements offered by the introduction of more a naturalized landscape require a shift in landscape management. Maintenance workers may need, for example, plant identification training to learn how to properly manage natural areas. As restored landscapes become more common, the skills required for their proper stewardship will be increasingly in demand.

While it may require additional skills of workers (or additional contract management), natural area management can be targeted to very specific periods, making the overall time spent managing naturalized landscapes similar to or less than traditional maintenance efforts. Prairie, meadow, and savanna plantings are drought tolerant and need only to be mowed a few times per growing season. Proper timing of maintenance prevents weed species from seeding

and unwanted woody species from establishing. In addition to mowing, mulch replenishment and monthly inspections for the removal of common weeds are the primary management tasks. Developing a written management plan that prescribes specific protocol for care of parkland is suggested as additional planting and restoration occurs. Managing and preventing the spread of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species should be included in such a plan, as invasives like zebra mussels are of particular concern to water quality and recreation in the lake. Specialized management activities, like controlled burns or targeted invasive removal, may be contracted as needed. Contracted maintenance efforts should be coordinated with Dakota County's Lake Byllesby Regional Park in order to maximize efficiency and potentially reduce cost.

Management of the existing forested cliffs should involve removal of buckthorn and other invasives. While the initial effort will likely require professional attention, periodic follow-up clearing is recommended, and could be undertaken by volunteer crews, Eagle Scouts, or other interested organizations.

## Water Quality

Goodhue County will work with local watershed level efforts to improve water quality of Lake Byllesby and the Cannon River.

## Pavement Management

Byllesby Park contains both natural surface and paved trails, in addition to large parking lots. Pavement deteriorates as it ages. Regular pavement maintenance can prolong its lifespan in a cost effective manner.



*Shoreline restoration and lawn reduction would provide additional habitat and aid water quality*



*Stormwater basin would be improved with native seeding*



*A landscaped berm screening the park from Hwy 19 and adjacent properties would improve the experience for campers and park visitors*



### Enforcement and Security

Visitors will be informed of park and trail rules and regulations through strategically located kiosks and signs that address specific information about hours, trails, permitted and prohibited activities, and directions. Local law enforcement and public safety agencies will be responsible for emergency and criminal complaints within the park. Goodhue County may also explore with Dakota County the potential for Dakota County Staff to assist with security through a mutually acceptable contractual agreement.

Primitive campsites are proposed for the bluff/overlook area on the west side of the park. Given the residential homes immediately adjacent, management and security procedures and processes, including the hiring of a park staff person, should be established before this use is initiated.

### Public Awareness

Goodhue County will promote use of the park and trail through their websites, wayfinding signage, direct mail, and public events and meetings. Partnerships with local institutions, such as schools, local fitness organizations, and the Goodhue County Health and Human Services Department will encourage local residents to engage in healthy activities by using the park and trails.

### Conflicts

The existing park location is compatible with surrounding land uses, including residential neighborhoods, Boy Scout owned land, and rural agricultural land. Minor conflicts will occasionally arise from private property owners' or neighboring residents' sensitivity to park and trail recreation or maintenance uses. Goodhue County will continue to work with individual landowners to resolve these issues case by case as the park is developed and expanded.

### Public Services

There will be a need for increased public services when development of park facilities occurs. In particular, the provision of sanitary sewer and potable water will be needed for the campsites. There is the potential for public utility services from the City of Cannon Falls but currently its timing is dependent on development. Conversations between Goodhue County and the City should continue as to how this area could be served.

In order to use sustainable building materials and methods, options such as solar powered lighting, self-composting toilets or wells will be considered. Stormwater will be treated on site.

### Programming

Generally, Byllesby Park contains passive recreational amenities that allow users to choose how and when to access the park and its trails, and for how long. Given the coordinated efforts between Goodhue County and Dakota County, there may be the potential for joint programming and events. Potential programming of the park and its trails includes the following:

- » Fun runs/walks
- » Distance races
- » Senior walking groups
- » Nature walks
- » Boat Races
- » Water skiing shows
- » Fishing Opener celebration
- » Orienteering

In order to fully realize the above programming options, the County may seek to partner with the following groups or others:

- » The City of Cannon Falls

- » Friends of the Mill Towns Trail
- » Friends of the Cannon Valley Trail
- » Northfield Pedalers
- » Twin Cities Powerboat Association
- » Minnesota Orienteering Club
- » Cannon Falls School District
- » Local scouting or youth groups

## BUDGET AND FUNDING

Funding for initial capital cost and ongoing operations and maintenance costs is essential for a successful regional park. Funding will be primarily the responsibility of Goodhue County. There will be an emphasis on seeking outside funding in the form of grants.

It is anticipated that a portion of future capital projects will be well-positioned to secure regional or state funds for recreation, water quality improvements, and habitat restoration. These sources will contribute to capital construction costs. Examples of outside funding sources include:

- » Park dedication funds
- » Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission funding
- » Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- » Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funds
- » Foundations and nonprofits
- » Statewide Health Improvement Program

Funding for operating and maintaining the park and trail facilities will be the County's responsibility. Annual operating costs will be funded through their annual budget.



*Photo: Twin Cities Power Boat Association*



*Photo: Daily News*

*Partnerships can help provide programming*



## Byllesby Park Master Plan