

Board of Directors  
and Recreational Sports Commission  
**Nominee Information Form**



Nominee's Name: Ryan Gunderson

Current Employer/Organization: City of Coon Rapids

Current Title/Position: Recreation Supervisor

Nominated For: East Metro Board Seat

**1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):**

Involved in different sections through the years. Programming and Leadership specifically. Served on two different Conference Committees for logistics and exhibit hall organization.

**2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession**

Over 20 years of work and service in the Parks and Recreation profession. 5 years in the non-profit sports industry operating youth and adult leagues and tournaments. 15 years at Coon Rapids building a Recreation Department from scratch. 20+ Years as a certified Sports official. 20 Years of Softball league director duties. Coordinated athletic and park use in Coon Rapids for over 15 years.

**3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement**

Youth Sports official and coach. Mentor young/new football officials.

**4. Education and Training**

- Degree in Sport Studies/Youth Services and Development from the University of Minnesota.
- Masters in Public Administration from Hamline University.
- MRPA's 1st Emerging Leaders Institute Participant
- Attended all MRPA Annual Conferences since becoming a member

**5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?**

I believe that all four strategic goals (Optimize, Educate, Innovate, & Lead) are important to the success and sustainability of the MRPA and profession. Leading can be most challenging as I think that takes the most extra effort and time to complete. However, leading members, communities and decision makers with data and stories will continue to move recreation programs and policy forward. I would bring my talents forward to assist in getting needed policy done at higher level to assist local agencies. Legislation around youth sports and program participation is important to me. The current board has done great job in implementing the plan and hope to be able to assist in the continuation of the plan.

**6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?**

The MRPA needs to continue to evolve into looking like the participants and communities we represent. Finding ways to support local schools, colleges and universities in attracting a diverse field of students into Parks and Recreation should be goal of the MRPA. This initiative would meet all the core values of the MRPA, especially leadership and inclusion.

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Nominee's Name: **Dan Schultz**

Current Employer/Organization: **City of Rosemount – Parks and Recreation**

Current Title/Position: **Parks and Recreation Director**

Nominated For: **East Metro Board Member**

**1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):**

MRPA Board of Directors - East Metro Region 2007 – 2013

MRPA Conference Committee 1998 (program Co-Chair)  
Co-Recipient of MRPA Meritorious Service Award

MRPA Conference Committee 2001

Attended meetings in the Administration, Programming, and Natural Resources sections

**2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession**

1989 to 1993, numerous seasonal and temporary full-time positions with the City of Apple Valley and the City of Eagan

1995 to 1999, Recreation Supervisor – City of Rosemount

1999 to current, Parks and Recreation Director – City of Rosemount

**3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement**

ISD 196 Community Education Advisory Council member

ISD 196 Community Education Advisory Council - Finance Committee Chair

Rosemount Area Athletic Association (RAAA) volunteer coach for: Football, Track, Soccer, Baseball and Basketball

Master Planning Task Force Member for Lebanon Hills Regional Park

Rosemount's 2004 Community Facilities Task Force member

Rosemount's 2016 Community Facilities Task Force Lead

Past NYSCA Chapter Coordinator and Clinician

Host City - 2007 MRPA/DNR Natural Resources Workshop

Rosemount's 2007 St. Joseph's Facilities Task Force member

**4. Education and Training**

Bachelor of Science Degree  
University of Minnesota – Minneapolis  
Major: Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies

Associate of Science Degree  
North Dakota State College of Science – Wahpeton, ND  
Major: Pre-Phy Ed, Health and Recreation

Numerous state conferences and trainings related to recreation, parks, trails, community centers and open space, etc.

**5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?**

I believe that the strategic plan priorities should be those that guide the organization into a strong future. Optimize, educate, innovate and lead are all actionable goals that as an organization we can work towards to make the MRPA as strong as possible. I feel that our organization is only as strong as the members that are involved, and I would encourage our membership to actively participate with trying to meet the goals of our strategic plan.

As an MRPA board member, I would work to make sure that our membership clearly understands what our strategic plan consists of and how each and every member can be involved to make a better MRPA. I think MRPA should be sure that each member is seeing what the Priority Actions Items are for each year. As a board member I would continue to support our park maintenance and operations members through education and other learning opportunities. Inclusion is another priority I would focus on by taking into account what we learned in our listening sessions and what we gain through communications with our members. As a board member I would continue to encourage MRPA to be a leader in the area of providing training on race, equity and inclusion to the board, our members and MRPA staff. Finally, one action item that I would definitely encourage is to have the MRPA board members involved during our conference other events and initiatives throughout the year. I feel that we can learn a lot from our members by being involved in our day-to-day offerings through MRPA

**6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?**

The opportunities that are available to our organization are many because of our talented members. If elected to the MRPA board, I will work to encourage the efforts of sharing ideas amongst professionals by supporting and promoting the many great educational offerings coordinated through the MRPA. I will also continue to see that efforts are made to connect new members with the great knowledge base that exists within the MRPA. Another area we need to focus on is strengthening our organization by increasing our membership numbers through creative partnerships with other organizations.

I feel that by providing the diverse group of professionals in the MRPA with an opportunity to share great ideas, new and old, we can all benefit. The MRPA has a strong history of bringing together dedicated professionals and I would like to see this continue.

Promoting the positive impact that parks and recreation can have on a persons' health and well-being is something that I feel we need to continue to highlight whenever possible. It was clear that during the pandemic that people really rely on recreational opportunities for an active healthy lifestyle, social outlets and as a connection to the outdoors.

Diversity, equity and inclusion are areas that I feel the MRPA should continue to strive for. Respecting and understanding our differences and supporting opportunities for everyone to partake in the organization is something I think is important for our professionals. I feel what we learn through the MRPA about this matter can be taken back and implemented in our own communities.

An ongoing challenge to be addressed by the MRPA board and membership are the finances of our organization. Strong finances are a key to any organizations success. I feel that the MRPA needs to work towards a sustainable budget while finding new and innovative revenue sources to help keep our operations viable now and into the future.

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*Please complete the information on this form and return along with a photo to the MRPA office no later than November 4, 2022. Please send to:*



Nominee's Name: Carla Kress

Current Employer/Organization: City of Shakopee

Current Title/Position: Community Engagement Coordinator

Nominated For: Board of Directors

**1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):**

TR Section Committee Chair

MRPA/NRPA - NIRI (National Institute on Inclusion) Chair

MRPA Board of Directors

**2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession**

**St. Paul Jewish Community Coordinator** - Special Needs Coordinator

**ND Parks & Recreation Dept/UND** - Project Co-Coordinator for Rural Recreation

Integration Project - 3 year grant

**MSU staff** - interim teacher - taught TR classes

**City of Eden Prairie** - Adaptive/Inclusion Recreation Coordinator/Senior Coordinator

**University of MN Recreation, Parks, Leisure Services division**- adjunct staff - taught

Recreation Inclusion class  
**City of Shakopee - Active Older Adult Coordinator/Community Engagement Coordinator**

**3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement**

MAVA - MN Alliance for Volunteer Advancement

FISH - Families and Individuals Serving Hope

City of Shakopee Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee

**4. Education and Training**

B.S. degree - South Dakota State University: Child Development/Family Relations

M.Ed. - University of MN - RPLS, emphasis: Therapeutic Recreation

**5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?**

All of them are important to the field of parks and recreation.

**Optimize:** identifying/recruiting organizations who serve and work closely with people with disabilities to become active again with MRPA: ARC, Pacer, MN Disability services. Reach out to them to become members and/or partner to provide the resources needed to support parks and recreation agencies to build an inclusive environment for people with disabilities.

**Educate:** assisting with workshops on inclusion strategies (training staff, adaptations, accommodations, budgeting); develop a resource library with the tools for members; mentoring students in the field on access for all.

**Innovate:** identifying model programs who to assist members in educating their leaders on inclusion and how to make cost effective on the budget via volunteers, family involvement, school system, etc.

**Lead:** supporting MRPA to lead and be a hub for resources on access for all in order to support our members

**6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?**

I have not been as involved in MRPA as I have in years past. I look forward to learning more about past challenges and opportunities. My hope would be to have conversations regarding the success and challenges for inclusive recreation, provide resources, training opportunities, and work alongside professionals and students so they have the tools necessary to be successful. Our role as recreation professionals is to improve the quality of life for ALL our residents.



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Nominee's Name: Tracy Petersen

Current Employer/Organization: City of Edina

Current Title/Position: Assistant Director-Recreation & Facilities

Nominated For: West Metro Board Rep

**1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):**

- Chair: Program Section (1999)
- Member: Board of Directors (2002-2006)
- Co-Chair: Emerging Recreation Leaders Institute (2007-2008)
- Co-Chair: Administrative Section (2009-2011)
- Co-Chair: Marketing Workshop (2009)
- Co-Chair: Awards Committee (2013 & 2018)
- Committee Member: Awards Committee (2010-current)
- Co-Chair: Annual Conference Program Committee (2008)
- Committee Member: Professional Development Committee (2005-2007)
- Committee Member: MRPA Investment Committee



- Member: Strategic Plan Task Force (2010)
- Committee Member: Golf Workshop Committee (2013)
- Committee Member: Emerging Recreation Leaders Institute 2 (2014)
- Committee Member: Section, Committee & Networks Review Committee (2018)
- Committee Member: Listening Session Sub-Group Committee (2022)
- Member: Leadership Development Network
- Member: Facilities Network

**2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession**

- City of Edina: Assistant Director-Recreation & Facilities (2020-Present)
- City of Shoreview: Parks and Recreation Director (2018-2020)
- City of Inver Grove Heights: Recreation Superintendent (2001-2018)
- Osseo Area Schools: Program Specialist (2000-2001)
- City of Chanhassen: Recreation Supervisor (1999-2000)
- City of Arden Hills: Recreation Supervisor (1993-1999)

**3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement**

- Minnesota Community Education Member
- NRPA Member
- Boulder Ponds Townhome Association Secretary
- City of Lake Elmo Neighborhood Safety Committee Co-Chair
- City of Lake Elmo Parks & Rec Advisory Commission
- Feed My Starving Children Volunteer
- Habitat for Humanity Volunteer
- Stillwater Schools Community Education Activity Assistant

**4. Education and Training**

- Bethel University, Bachelor of Arts; Business Management
- MRPA State Conferences
- NRPA State Conferences
- Supervisory Leadership Certificate-Dakota County Technical College
- Facility Management Certificate -University of MN
- MRPA Workshops on various topics

**5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?**

I recently served as an active committee member evaluating feedback from the MRPA listening groups that were held and assisted in a recommendation to the current Board of Directors that a consultant be hired to develop an overall organization plan to better serve members and better meet the overall future needs of our profession.

Helping ensure that the consultant plan is implemented would be my highest priority as a member of the Board of Directors. As an active board member, I would make a commitment to make certain that the consultant process and implementation is open, inclusive and transparent. I strongly believe that I could be an asset in ensuring that members' needs are heard and that as a board member, MRPA develops an organizational and staffing structure that can provide appropriate and meaningful education, resources, advocacy and financial sustainability for our association.

I want both new and experienced association members to feel like they are welcomed and that MRPA is a valuable resource to their work in their respective agencies and in their professional development. Having the opportunity to help shape a new roadmap for our association's members would get my full commitment and time.

**6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?**

Both a key opportunity and challenge for the future Board of Directors and membership would be to implement the proposed consultant plan to establish a forward-thinking roadmap for the future of the association that creates the following:

- A staffing model to best serve member's needs
- A solid, sustainable financial model and
- Establishment of key leadership performance and success indicators

Some other key areas for opportunity that relate to the association's core values include:

Leadership: Developing an organizational structure that can serve as a catalyst for growth and innovation in our professional as well as a resource for parks and recreation best practices.

Engagement: As someone who participated in the MRPA Mentorship Program, I believe there is continued opportunities to introduce new professionals and upcoming parks and recreation students to our field as well as to continue to promote and help create a more diversified association of members.

Stewardship: With a new organizational structure and staffing model, there could be more opportunities to have MRPA be the key advocacy group for parks and recreation across the state of Minnesota. It could provide opportunities for agencies to have better access to resources, communications tools, etc. that could showcase the value of the parks and recreation to key agency leaders and elected officials.

Integrity: As the association forms a new roadmap there is a great opportunity to be transparent and accountable to the membership in ensuring that members are valued,

heard and that the membership has trust in knowing the Board of Directors will follow through on the new plan that a consultant recommends.

Some key challenges that need to be addressed by the Board of Directors include:

Wellness: One of the challenges of the Board of Directors and membership will be to continue to evolve and grow with educational opportunities that are relevant, accessible and meet the needs of all levels of professionals and all entities of our membership. Key importance is keeping our networking active and strong by making sure that we provide access to opportunities for all members to be involved and welcomed.

Leadership: The Board of Directors will be faced with the task of implementing a possible new organizational plan for the association. This will require added time, effort, transparency, engagement and follow-through. It will also require the Board of Directors and membership to take a different approach and perspective that may be different from what we have been doing. It will be a challenge to create a sustainable organization that is forward-thinking, progressive and open to the changing needs facing our profession.

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**Nominee Information Form**



Nominee's Name: Greg Simmons

Current Employer/Organization: City of Golden Valley Parks and Recreation

Current Title/Position: Recreation and Facilities Supervisor

Nominated For: West Metro Region Seat – MRPA Board of Directors

**1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):**

Current Athletic Management Group Chair.

2019 Annual Conference Committee

2021 Annual Conference Committee

**2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession**

Recreation Coordinator – City of Golden Valley – 2017-2018

Sports Coordinator – City of Bloomington – 2017-2018

Recreation and Facilities Supervisor – City of Golden Valley – 2018-Current

**3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement**

MRPF Silent Auction Committee – 2017 and 2018

**4. Education and Training**

Certified Park and Recreation Professional – Certified since 2017

**5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?**

I believe the top strategic plan priority for MRPA is educate. The association should continue to be the leader in local education for all things recreation and parks related. I would help to implement this by working with MRPA staff and membership to develop ongoing education opportunities that reach all disciplines of the field.

**6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?**

The greatest opportunity and challenge to be addressed during my term in office is the implementation of action steps that were set out by the themes from the listening sessions. These themes and steps are directly related to the Association's core values of leadership, engagement, and integrity and were driven by the MRPA membership. While the implementation of some of the steps may be challenging, I believe that there are opportunities to appropriately and actively better serve all members.

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Nominee's Name: **Jenna Smith**

Current Employer/Organization: **City of Bloomington, Parks and Recreation**

Current Title/Position: **Recreation Supervisor**

Nominated For: **West Metro Region Seat**

**1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):**

2016: Served on founding Young Professional & Student Network Committee  
2017: Served on Summer Leadership Workshop Committee  
2019: Served on MRPA Annual Conference Programming Committee  
2019 - 2020: Served as Programming Section Chair  
2020 - Present: Serving on Racial Equity Advisory Committee  
2020 - Present: Serving on Mentorship Program Committee  
2021: Served as MRPA Annual Conference Digital Marketing Chair

**2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession**

2011 – 2012: Camp and Conference Center Specialist, Louisville, KY  
2012 - 2015: Special Populations Supervisor, City of Bowling Green, KY  
2015 - Present: Recreation Supervisor, City of Bloomington, MN  
2021 - Present: Events Assistant, City of St. Louis Park, MN

**3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement**

2016: Racial Equity Cohort for Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE)  
2020 – 2021: NRPA's Young Professional Network Secretary  
2018 – 2019: MRPF New Initiative Grand Committee Member  
2020 – 2022: Bloomington Parks & Recreation Racial Equity Action Team Project Manager  
2022 – Present: Bloomington Parks & Recreation Racial Equity Action Team Chair

#### **4. Education and Training**

- Bachelor of Arts – Photojournalism & Religious Studies
- Master of Science – Recreation and Sports Administration and Outdoor Leadership
- Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP)
- First Aid & CPR Instructor, American Red Cross
- ToP Certified Facilitator, Technology of Participation
- Leadership Certificate Program, National Parks & Recreation Association
- Concussion Training Certificate, Centers for Disease Control
- Youth Mental Health First Aid Certification, National Council for Behavioral Health
- Lifeguard Certification
- 2017 Intercultural Confidence/Good Vibes Workshop Attendee
- 2018 Super Staff Supervision Workshop Attendee
- 2018 Nature Play Workshop Attendee
- 2021 Spring Racial Equity Workshop Attendee
- 2021 Fall Racial Equity and Inclusion Workshop Attendee
- 2015 – 2021 MRPA Annual Conferences Attendee
- 2016 Association of Outdoor Recreation & Education National Conference Attendee
- 2017, 2019, and 2022 NRPA Annual Conferences Attendee

#### **5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?**

- To optimize: MRPA makes best use of programs and services to meet the needs of the members and the profession.
  - Implementation: I would help to implement this priority by gaining information from the membership to identify the needs of members, embracing diversity, and providing opportunities for members to stay engaged.
- To educate: MRPA provides educational opportunities for the membership to enhance the practice and profession of recreation and parks.
  - Implementation: I would help to implement this priority by working with networks, committees, and advisory boards to seek out educational opportunities and speakers to educate members on changing trends and best practices in the field.
- To innovate: MRPA utilizes information and data to proactively address change and identify opportunities.
  - Implementation: I would help to implement this priority by exploring research and feedback on successful programs and seeking out areas in which expansion is possible within the field of parks and recreation.
- To lead: MRPA stands as a voice of the profession, advocating for necessary change and support of recreation and parks.



- Implementation: I would help to implement this priority by developing processes to allow for necessary change to be implemented and share resources with the professional membership.

**6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?**

- Engaging students and young professionals
  - Opportunities: Seeking out gaps in membership from students and young professionals, addressing the question of "What is prevent you from involvement?", providing on-ramps to participation
  - Relation to Core Values: Leadership (providing professional development)
- Advancing equity
  - Opportunities: Introducing more people in the BIPOC community about the field of parks and recreation, developing stronger relationships with high schools, colleges, and universities, building a stronger presence in BIPOC communities
  - Relation to Core Values: Inclusion (supporting opportunities for all) & Engagement (seeking collaborate partnerships with community members and organizations)
- Addressing changing recreational trends
  - Opportunities: Evaluate MRPA's role in sports and recreation, enhance the association's ability to assist agencies in providing recreational opportunities
  - Relation to Core Values: Leadership (best practices and support for our customers) & Wellness (making an impact though educational and social opportunities)