



## SPECIAL PARK DISTRICTS FORUM JUNE 10-13 DETAILED AGENDA



# Welcome!

We will officially kick off the 2024 Special Park Districts Forum Monday evening with a Welcome Gathering sponsored by JotForm featuring appetizers, bar, lawn games and more! If possible, plan to arrive early to participate in one of the pre-forum activities including golf, river rafting, bike riding, footgolf or nature-inspired art.

Each day will start with breakfast at the hotel from 7 - 8 a.m. with information and day-of announcements at 7:30 a.m. Buses will leave the hotel at 8:15 a.m. Our helpful staff will be available each morning in the hotel lobby to provide assistance and answer any questions.

After breakfast, we will head out to explore and experience the parks. Attendees will be transported by bus to all session locations, and lunch will always be provided out in the parks. Some days we will stay together as a full group and others we will provide options to explore specific sites based on your interests and focus areas. You will be asked to select your preferred session option, when applicable, during registration.

Evenings will end with dinner at one of our park locations and a hospitality room at the hotel. Please note that dinner on Wednesday is on your own - we will have information on surrounding restaurants, activities, and transportation options available at the hotel.

Thursday evening wraps up the 2024 Special Park Districts Forum with our celebration dinner and the passing of the talking stick, plus a few surprises. This will be a night that no one wants to miss!

# Monday, June 10

## Special Park Districts Forum Check-In & Pre-Forum Activity Registration

### Marriott Southwest Hotel Lobby

Check in, enjoy breakfast, and register for pre-forum activities!

**Time:** 7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

## Explore the Mighty Mississippi

### Mississippi Gateway Regional Park

Hop aboard a raft for a trip down the Mississippi River. The three-hour voyage will include a stop at an island for snacks, wildlife viewing and an overview of the river's role in Minnesota's history. Enjoy lunch at nearby River Park at the end of the rafting trip. The afternoon will be spent back at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park as we dive into a rivers study.

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Cost:** \$75

**Max Participants:** 20

## Golf Outing

### Baker National Golf Course

Enjoy 18 holes of golf at Baker National Golf Course, a nationally recognized 18-hole Championship Course (Golf Digest 4-Star Rated). This course participates in The First Tee, a program dedicated to providing affordable and accessible golf opportunities for youth and is also an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. Following golf (lunch provided at the turn), refreshments will be served at the clubhouse and an overview of our golf enterprise and maintenance operations will be presented.

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Cost:** \$95

**Max Participants:** 24

## Suburbs to City: Best of the Twin Cities Bike Tour

### Three Rivers Regional Trails

The Twin Cities is known as one of the most bikeable metro areas in the U.S. Join this 36-mile bike ride and explore the regional trail network across two award winning park systems - Three Rivers Park District and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Participants will tour paved trails along the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, Minnehaha Falls, the Mississippi River, Downtown Minneapolis, University of Minnesota campus and other key destinations! Trails are generally flat with a few small hills. Lunch and a brewery stop will be provided during the ride. There will be a rest stop halfway through the 4-hour ride and other stops along the route with restrooms and water.

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Cost:** \$60

**Max Participants:** 15, with a 5-rider waitlist



# Monday, June 10

## Experience Art & Nature Silverwood Park

Immerse yourself in the natural beauty and creative atmosphere of Silverwood Park, nestled along the serene shores of Silver Lake, and just minutes from downtown Minneapolis. This unique destination is a regional center for the arts and the environment, dedicated to showcasing visual, performing, and literary artists through art galleries and self-guided trails.

Participate in a range of activities, including guided tours of the public art and natural history along the trails, a nature-inspired art activity and a forest bathing program. Learn about the park's many amenities: including a coffee shop, spacious banquet facility, shoreline fishing and formal gardens. We will end the day on a sweet note, with ice cream social, featuring treats from MN Nice Cream. Silverwood Park promises an unforgettable experience where nature and art intertwine harmoniously, captivating art enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

**Time: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

**Cost: \$75**

**Max Participants: 25**



## FootGolf Baker National Golf Course

Try the exciting game of FootGolf on our 9-hole Evergreen Course! FootGolf is played by kicking a soccer ball to a hole using the same basic rules as golf. The soccer ball and hole are proportionate in size to a golf ball and a golf hole. After the game, enjoy lunch, brews and board games on the patio followed by an overview of our golf operations from our Enterprise and Maintenance departments.

**Time: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

**Cost: \$60**

**Max Participants: 28**



## Special Park Districts Forum Check-In Marriott Southwest Hotel Lobby

Check in for the Forum at the Marriott Southwest Hotel.

**Time: 12 p.m. - 7 p.m.**

## Welcome Gathering Marriott Southwest Hotel Patio

We are excited you're here and look forward to celebrating with everyone at the Welcome Gathering, the official kickoff to the 2024 Special Park Districts Forum! A special thank you to JotForm for sponsoring this evening of fun and networking. Join us for appetizers, bar, music and lawn games!

**Time: 6:30 p.m.**



# Tuesday, June 11

## **Special Park Districts Forum Check-In & Breakfast** **Marriott Southwest Hotel Lobby, Lake of the Woods Ballroom**

Check in, enjoy breakfast, and get an overview of the day's activities.

**Time: 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.**



## **Morning Session Option 1: The Legacy of Outdoor Education**

### **Lowry Nature Center, Carver Park Reserve**

Nature-based education is a cornerstone at Three Rivers and there is no better place to learn about our commitment to learning and inspiring curiosity than a visit to Minnesota's first public nature center. Hear how the nature center got its start, take a tour of the building, and learn about some of the amazing programs that Lowry is known for, including summer camps and maple syruping. Also, take a trek out into one of the Park District's restored prairies to learn all about our osprey reintroduction and search with a naturalist for some of the small, six-legged animals that call the prairie home.



## **Morning Session Option 2: Mountain Biking at Three Rivers Park District**

### **Monarch Singletrack, Carver Park Reserve**

Three Rivers Park District features four distinct singletrack trail systems totaling over 50 miles of excitement for off-road cycling enthusiasts. Hear about the history of mountain biking at the Park District and tour parts of our newest trail, Monarch Singletrack. Learn about the evolution of trail design, lessons learned and our approach to the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of operating a singletrack trail system. Of course, there will be opportunities to ride the trail and hit the features.



## **Lunch**

**Pavilion, Gale Woods Farm**



## **After Lunch: Outdoor Fun on the Farm**

### **Gale Woods Farm**

Tour Gale Woods Farm, a working, educational farm, and see how we cultivate connections between farming, nature and healthy communities. Visit the barn, gardens, orchards and animals on pasture while you observe programs and explore the sustainable and regenerative farming practices used at the farm.



# Tuesday, June 11

## Afternoon Session Option 1: Behind the Scenes of Three Rivers Park District

### Baker Park Reserve

Learn about who and what keeps Three Rivers running and explore our campground operations. Spend time at the Baker Operations Center at your own pace; ask questions and meet the people behind the scenes making sure our parks are running smoothly. Explore one of our carpentry shops, view a variety of equipment maintained by our mechanics and learn how our maintenance staff cares for over 27,000 acres of parks and trails.

Take a 10-minute walk over to Baker Campground (shuttle options will be provided) to learn about our various camping options, and amenities, as well as the daily ins and outs of operating a 200+ site campground. You will also have the opportunity to shoot archery and learn about our overnight program center, the Baker Outdoor Learning Center, and their offerings.

## Afternoon Session Option 2: Landscape Structures Tour

### Delano, Minnesota

Landscape Structures (LSI) is an industry leader in creating inspiring play experiences for all, and they just happen to be located in our backyard! Join us for a tour of their state-of-the-art headquarters and manufacturing facilities. Throughout the tour you'll witness cutting-edge production methods, where their fusion of lean manufacturing practices, kaizen techniques and an empowered workforce drives remarkable operational advancements. Most importantly, you'll see how LSI's employee ingenuity, teamwork and pursuit of excellence to produce playground products with the highest quality, best design, and most play value.

## Dinner

### Baker Park Reserve on Lake Independence

At Three Rivers, our 35 lakes, 18 streams and 14 beaches don't monitor themselves. During dinner, take a 'dive' into what we do to maintain them. Join our water quality team at Lake Independence for an evening pontoon ride, walking tour and water surveying experience. Learn about one of Three Rivers' shoreline stabilization projects, our water collection practices, aquatic plant diversity, and survey techniques for aquatic invasive species through hands-on examples.

## Hospitality Room

### Lake of the Woods Ballroom, Marriott Southwest Hotel

Snacks and beverages will be provided.

**Time: 8 p.m. - 12 a.m.**



# Wednesday, June 12

## **Special Park Districts Forum Check-In & Breakfast Marriott Southwest Hotel Lobby, Lake of the Woods Ballroom**

Check in, enjoy breakfast, and get an overview of the day's activities.

**Time: 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.**

## **Morning Session: The Jewel of Three Rivers: Crow-Hassan Park Reserve**

### **Crow-Hassan Park Reserve**

This morning is all about natural resources! Join Wildlife and Forestry staff as they showcase the District Nursery, where all the native vegetation planted in the Park District is grown and prepared for planting. Then, take a walking tour of the Crow-Hassan prairie, a 1,200-acre, fire-managed complex that provides the highest quality prairie in the Twin Cities. Natural Resources staff will showcase and discuss many facets of their operations such as tree planting, climbing, and rigging, oak wilt management, prairie restoration, prescribed burns, sensitive species re-introduction and management, and wetland management.

## **Lunch**

### **Riverbend Group Camp, Crow-Hassan Park Reserve**

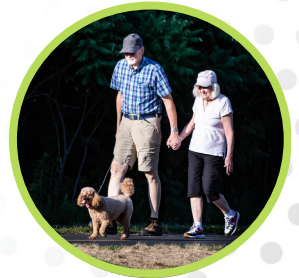
## **Afternoon Session Option 1: 5,000 Acres of Fun Elm Creek Recreation Area, Elm Creek Park Reserve**

The largest park in Three Rivers, Elm Creek Park Reserve truly offers something for everyone. Get a behind-the-scenes tour of the wide variety of amenities available in the park, including the chlorinated swimpond and pump house, chalet, disc golf course and multi-use trail system. Stopping by the play area, you'll see some Landscape Structures equipment in action, and finally, get a peek into our winter recreation operations, highlighting Elm Creek's snowmaking for cross-country and downhill skiing, snowboarding and snowtubing.

## **Afternoon Session Option 2: Celebrating the Big Year of Bugs**

### **Eastman Nature Center, Elm Creek Park Reserve**

For 50 years Eastman Nature Center has offered a variety of insect themed programs to school groups, adults, and families. Explore the different ways we engage audiences through hands-on activities, sharing information in an intentional way. You will participate in learning stations and then pick a focus area to go more in-depth with your learning.



# Wednesday, June 12

## Afternoon Session Option 3: Building from the Ground Up

### Mississippi Gateway Regional Park

Experience the redevelopment of Mississippi Gateway Regional Park, the most significant capital project in the Park District's history. This remarkable \$40 million investment is set to open in 2026. See how it will enrich the community and help people connect with nature and the Mississippi River. Learn about the important role partnerships and community engagement played in developing the plan, see where we are at in the construction process, and hear about key features that will be included such as the Treetop Trail, Mini-Mississippi play feature and more. Plus, get an up-close look at how we operate a recreational run-of-the-river dam and take a walk over the river to see the stunning views of the Mighty Mississippi and surrounding nature.

## Dinner

### Dinner On Your Own

Options for local restaurants, breweries, and things to do will be available at the information table at the hotel or with your bus host.

## Hospitality Room

### Lake of the Woods Ballroom, Marriott Southwest Hotel

Snacks and beverages will be provided.

**Time: 8 p.m. - 12 a.m.**



# Thursday, June 13

## **Special Park Districts Forum Check-In & Breakfast Marriott Southwest Hotel Lobby, Lake of the Woods Ballroom**

Check in, enjoy breakfast, and get an overview of the day's activities.

**Time: 7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.**

## **Morning Session: Nature Play**

### **Richardson Nature Center, Hyland Park Reserve**

Richardson Nature Center is a gateway to stunning natural beauty located just minutes from the city. You will experience how we connect visitors to nature through equally engaging facilities, staff, and natural environments. All attendees will have the opportunity to do both stops while at Richardson.

Stop 1: Discover the past, present, and future of this beautiful facility on a staff-led tour. Explore colorful, interactive murals depicting the habitats and wildlife of Hyland Lake Park Reserve and observe local artist Chris Tully adding to the displays. Meet Richardson's resident raptors, reptiles, and amphibians, learn about our solar roof, enjoy "rocking chair birding" in the Wildlife Viewing Room, and sample honey from Richardson's own honeybees.

Stop 2: Visit the Nature Exploration Area to observe one of Richardson's early learning programs for children and their caregivers. Watch how naturalists create an inclusive environment and foster physical, social and emotional development through free play and natural materials and enjoy a half-mile hike to the Turtle Basking Pond and a restored tallgrass prairie that is frequently home to the endangered rusty-patched bumblebee.

## **Lunch**

### **Bryant Lake Pavilion, Bryant Lake Regional Park**

## **Afternoon Session Option 1: Connecting Communities**

### **Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail**

The Park District's 175-mile Regional Trail Network connects numerous communities and regional parks, while also meeting a critical need in the greater Twin Cities bicycle transportation system. Learn more about how this multi-use trail system is operated and maintained, plus hear the plans for expansion over the next several decades. During this 6-mile bike ride, participants will see the economic growth occurring around this robust system as we explore the region's newest light rail project while riding the Park Districts' most visited regional trail corridor. Bikes and helmets will be provided.



# Thursday, June 13

## Afternoon Session Option 2: A Day at the Beach Bryant Lake Regional Park

With 10,000 lakes, summer in Minnesota is often enjoyed on the water. This is your chance to experience all that lake life has to offer. Paddle a canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddle board, wet a line, and do some fishing with our Outdoor Recreation School or just relax on the beach. Looking for something away from the water, throw a flying disc at Bryant Lake's premier 18-hole disc golf course or simply go for a walk on one of the park's trails.

## Optional Hotel Stop Marriott Southwest Hotel

Buses will be going back to the hotel for a quick stop before dinner.

## Dinner: Embrace the North Hyland Hills Ski Area

Get the true Minnesota experience and embrace winter at the 2024 Special Park Districts Forum closing event. Help us celebrate all things winter recreation, featuring activities themed around downhill skiing, snowboarding, tubing, cross-country skiing, ice fishing and more. Snow recreation in June? Anything's possible! Warm up with a drink, sit down for dinner, take time to connect with those you've met throughout the week and hear from the team from Oakland County, Michigan about the 2025 Forum. This is an evening you won't want to miss and are sure to remember!

We look forward to  
seeing you at the  
2024 Special Park  
Districts Forum!



