

Dunton Locks Envisioning Workshop: Comments

Following are aggregated comments from the Dunton Locks Envisioning Workshop and the subsequent internet survey conducted by the county.

Activities at the Park (use):

Hiking:

- Nice, rugged trails
- On all trails sign better for dog owners to pick up after dogs.
- Great area.
- It is a beautiful site. I just don't think about using it.
- Is a ways from my home so I usually walk closer to home
- The trails have erosion issues and generally aren't well maintained. County maintenance activities have caused damage because of equipment used (tracked equipment to move trees damaged the trail)

Bird & Wildlife Watching:

- Great area for birding! Excellent.
- Great area for this: Pine to Prairie Birding Trail
- More observation areas for birds
- A couple of additional piers for wildlife watching and fishing would be great.

Biking:

- Would like to have more trails – paved
- Trail ends; should be a loop.
- Nice connector from city to Dunton
- Need additional family paved trails.
- Don't bike
- Need better Mt. bike trails
- The bike trail often needs some repair work because of bumps and holes.
- The mountain bike trails here could be much better. I suggest improving the trails and designing ONE-Way trails. The DMRA trails are great, but with traffic going in both directions on the cross-country trails, safety issues and reduced enjoyment have damaged the reputation of that area among regional enthusiasts.

Fishing:

- A couple groomed spots along N side of Muskrat lake
- Need a new dock on Sallie & Muskrat Lake
- This could be expanded.
- This activity is very important here. There is a lack of shore-fishing opportunities throughout MN, so it is critical that this use be maintained and enhanced at this park. The primary way to enhance this park's shore fishing is to protect and enhance the water quality in Detroit, Muskrat and Sallie.

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Cross Country Skiing:

- Groomed?
- I do not ski
- Don't ski
- Not long or unique enough
- If the trails aren't groomed for skiing, make them available just for snowshoeing and/or fatbiking.
- The terrain is excellent, but the flatter beginner's area should be improved on the eastern trails.

Snowshoeing:

- I do not snowshoe
- Don't snowshoe

Picnicking:

- It has a great set up and always enjoy having picnic there.
- Too much competition in DL

Events & Private Gatherings:

- Have used it a few times over the years and it is a great set up with ample parking and nice features.
- Never considered this venue.

Other:

- Trails seem to be used heavily for dog walking, which seems great & appropriate, however the poo & general clean up.
- Trail Use on Private Property ...Uses Eligible? propose move for trail use on non-county lands...
- Snowmobile trail is heavily used.
- Buckthorn is a problem in the woods north side
- Make uses compatible with uses on DNR land to the north.
- Primitive camping – yurts
- Launching for kayaking
- I don't get to Dunton much. I live 11 miles away.
- Possible Heartland connection
- Watchful wildlife (Jim Malman)
- Some quiet areas to sit in park
- I sometimes see 4 or 5 photographers using the park for professional shoots (a good thing) and nature photographers.
- The old blue dock by the VFW shelter is past it useful life. It should be replaced with a more solid dock.
- Snowmobile trail from West to Detroit Lakes.
- I just kind of forget it is there and available for use.
- The park is a great photo background for portraits.

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- I've probably run and skied the trails more than anyone else. The trail access made it much more accessible from the city. I didn't get the poison ivy and stinging nettles that I did before the paved running path was put in. Also, no longer ended up with wet shoes.
- Great bike destination which could be greatly enhanced by extending the bike trail.
- Need garbage cans and signs depicting uses allowed.
- The park is fantastic for viewing both spring wildflowers and fall colors.
- The park is a great place to take small children to explore nature.
- Great place to run. The ski team used it for many years before the DL Mt. Recreational area became a new home. At one time or another, we have done all of the activities listed above there.
- County needs to stop mowing and let the natural vegetation grow.

Facilities (use frequency):

Parking Lot - central:

- None

Parking Lot – off Hwy 59:

- Move or enlarge east parking lot
- Reconfigure with roadway for safety
- Change road to go in back of existing parking – reconfigure
- Did not know it existed
- We are typically parking near the beach or bowling alley.

Eagles Shelter:

- None

VFW Shelter:

- Utilities? service to VFW, ¾" line

Picnic Tables:

- None

Restrooms:

- Porta-potties were full, almost out of TP, & no hand sanitizer available.
- Better/more restrooms.
- Inspection of restrooms!
- They are not always available but is nice when they are.
- Would use if they were open.
- They're usually poorly maintained – e.g. no soap for handwashing.

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Hiking Trails:

- None

Biking Trails:

- Did not know the ones on the east side existed. Will explore this season.

Ski Trails:

- If groomed would possibly be used more.

Marine Tramway:

- Should be removed because of the AIS issues.
- The tramway's restoration and operation is not remotely justifiable. That is why grant applications to fix it have been rejected. It is not a "tourist attraction". It is a failed commercial venture that will could continue to be a money pit for the County. No cost benefit analysis would ever indicate that this is a viable part of this park and I would like to see the tram operation permanently discontinued.

Other:

- Donated pier in rough shape – needs repair! Safety concern.
- Don't spend money on a new tram.
- Move gate by south shelter.
- Kayak into Muskrat from E. parking area
- County dock needs to be replaced/repared.
- Need some type of landing dock – people using the lock to stop off and use restrooms.
- Pier on Muskrat needs to be replaced.
- Tram. County Board voted to operate it in 2016.
- Snowmobile trail corridor.

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Maintenance/Management:

Hiking Trails:

- Downed trees often cleared several days later. Grass on top of picnic park needs to be mowed. Nice spot for a nice picnic. Last couple years this has been neglected.
- Pretty good trails. Not sure they are really maintained other than by hikers who have worn their own path. Takes a while to remove trees that have fallen over the trail. Lots of dog poop on trails.

Biking Trails:

- Did not know that some of them existed.
- Don't use the bike trails

Overlooks & Viewsheds:

- Could be maintained better (open vistas @ benches)
- It would be nice to have more park benches at these spots.

Fishing Piers:

- The one dock is in rather tough shape.
- County pier is old and unstable. DNR pier is great.

Cross Country Ski Trails:

- Grooming?
- They were not groomed this year.

Wayfinding Signage:

- Consistent signage is needed!
- Could use better signage

Picnic Tables:

- None

Event Space:

- none

Other:

- Trash can enclosures
- Dog bags station
- Canoe & kayak access
- Adopt-a-park program
- Night lighting (solar)
- Muskrat lake pier is needing replacement

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- Need a formal agreement with private land owners allowing trail use – long term lease.
- Create a “Friends of Dunton Locks” committee to raise dollars and seek donations, maybe even land donations.

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Enforcement (adherence to use expectations):

Parking Lot - central:

- Seems to have illegal & after dark activities.
- Lack of parking on busy days at the park.

Parking Lot – off Hwy 59:

- Signage is a concern as did not even know until lately that this was even an option

Eagles Shelter:

- None

VFW Shelter:

- Garbage sometimes piles up because its not picked up after weekend events.

Picnic Tables:

- Water from the pump is horrible tasting. I think it discourages more picnic use.

Restrooms:

- Not always available
- Poorly maintained and generally not cleaned

Hiking Trails:

- Dogwalkers need to pick up poo!
- Dog POOP!
- Not much info about dog use or picking up poo.
- Horse s--t on trails.

Biking Trails:

- Hours – night biking
- Got bitten while riding bike once by dog.
- Horse s--t on trails.

Ski Trails:

- None

Marine Tramway:

- Tram operations conflict with other parks uses including fishing, walking and wildlife observation. As a person with limited mobility, I avoid the tram area because I fear tripping/injury.

Other:

- Hours of operation in relation to Heartland coming thru.

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- Efforts should be made to monitor and prevent crime and inappropriate use of bathrooms.
- We are currently in discussions with the City Commissioners regarding the tram. The tram committee has an operational plan in place which will provide for Tram operation on weekends.
- The parking lot is often used for naughtiness. Should be patrolled or electronically surveilled to minimize this.

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Signage and Wayfinding:

Parking Lot - central:

- Parking entrance, guidance
- Better entrance directions on Westside coming south on 19.
- West, better internal direction signage
- entrance clarity
- For someone unfamiliar with the park, the signage is not all that easy to follow.
- Right of way/road markings need to point to the parking lot road to the left as approaching the park and not lead into the DNR parking lot. Exiting the DNR parking lot also needs a stop sign. Public exiting the parking lot road should have the right of way.
- A map would be nice for people to see the trailhead.

Parking Lot – off Hwy 59:

- East , better internal direction signage
- Better internal signage
- Get rid of the temporary saw horses that have been there for years.

Eagles Shelter:

- None

VFW Shelter:

- None

Picnic Tables:

- None

Restrooms:

- None

Hiking Trails:

- Trail signage (distance, maps, etc)
- Distances of trails would be nice
- Existing trail signs not very helpful.
- Dog pick up stations
- More pleasing signage on all trails (not blue and safety yellow metal)
- Maybe better signage on the north trails in regard to picking up after your pooch.

Biking Trails:

- These could be made to accommodate fat bikes.
- No bike trail signage that I've seen.

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Ski Trails:

- None

Marine Tramway:

- But have never used it.

Other:

- Overall, signage needs consistency
- Central Parking lot not signed well.
- why is there a fence before So. picnic shelter
- Eagle Scouts – entry kiosk signage
- “This is where you are...” signage relative to where you are in the park. Distance = highlighted.
- Should have signs regarding dog walking ie – leashes and picking up after dogs – maybe poo bags could be provided.
- Biking trails should be one-way, with improved signage and limits on walking or other uses. Also facilities should be better able to accommodate fat-bikes, kayaks and other emerging uses.