

## Parks and Recreation

Future land use and development decisions need to consider the necessary infrastructure that will enable growth, protect community character and natural systems, and sustain Scandia as a community over time. Parks and recreation amenities and programs are a critical element to sustaining the community. Park, recreation, and open space goals need to be integrated with Scandia's land use, transportation, and economic goals. This section summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Plan and the regional park and recreation needs identified by the Metropolitan Council.

## The 2006 Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Plan

In 2006 New Scandia Township completed and adopted the Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Plan. This document describes the current state of, and recommended improvements for, the City's existing "green infrastructure." The Plan includes a detailed inventory of existing green infrastructure, summaries of public and stakeholder priorities that affect the City's investments in and maintenance of its green infrastructure, planning priorities for meeting current and future park and recreation needs, and recommendations for specific parks, trails, and land acquisition to address existing needs or shortfalls.

### Stakeholder Perceptions

The resident survey (conducted in 2004) and the visioning discussion conducted with City officials and other stakeholders (also in 2004) illustrate the perceived needs and priorities for parks, recreation, trails, and open spaces. The resident survey showed an extremely strong interest in protecting the City's open space amenities, which include both the natural systems portrayed on the Open Space Plan map and the rural character associated with agriculture. Residents reported greater participation in individual recreation activities (jogging, biking, fishing) than team or organized activities. The Plan did not report, however, any distinction between adult and youth preferences.

The visioning discussion addressed how the different components of Scandia's green infrastructure interrelate. The visioning process included an identification of issues, listing of opportunities, and a number of recommendations. The recommendations for each section of the Plan are summarized on the following page (see Figure 17 - *Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Recommendations*).

### Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure refers generally to those systems that allow for and sustain growth within the community, and improve the quality of life for existing and future residents. Green infrastructure is typically based on natural systems rather than the constructed systems that comprise "grey infrastructure" – roads, water and wastewater, energy and telecommunications, and other engineered systems. Green infrastructure includes some constructed infrastructure that is based on or works with natural systems, such as active recreation parks, trails, and works in conjunction with some built systems, such as stormwater management and conveyance systems that supplement the natural stormwater system.

**Figure 17 - Parks, trails, open space, and recreation recommendations**

**Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation  
Visioning Session Recommendations**

**Park System Plan**

1. Focal point of Scandia Community Center Park as central hub of parks network throughout Township.
2. Consider land acquisition to the south of Community Center to enlarge park and preserve area of high ecological value.
3. Increase active recreation at Scandia Elementary School area.
4. Identify where and what kind of park acquisition is desirable.
5. Identify appropriate use of existing parks.

**Trail System Plan**

1. Opportunity to revisit Olinda Trail North as part of trail system.
2. Locate connection to Gateway Trail.
3. Locate equestrian trails, other special-interest user group trails.
4. Identify locations for trailheads and rest stops.

**Open Space System Plan**

1. Locate trails along ecologically-valued areas.
2. Develop conservation easements.
3. Designate some lakes as strictly non-motorized use.
4. Maintain minimum buffer around natural areas if development occurs.
5. Protect stream corridors; link to promote preservation of open space.
6. Develop conservation policies relative to Wind in the Pines Park.
7. Promote public awareness of value of open space.

**Recreational Facilities System Plan**

1. Develop partnerships with local and regional Recreation Facilities (e.g. adjacent school districts, and local city governments).

**Source:** 2006 New Scandia Township Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Plan

**Park, Trail, Open Space, and Recreation Plan Maps**

The Plan includes separate sections for parks, trails, open space, and recreation. The issues and recommended actions are identified on a series of four maps that describe search areas for new acquisition or improvements, issues for future planning, and inventories of existing facilities.

Future Needs

The Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Plan identifies general criteria that can be used to identify potential gaps in park and recreation programmatic needs and criteria for ensuring adequate park infrastructure as the City develops. Most of these criteria are based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommendations for the number or acres of specific facilities based on the population of a city, or a minimum distance to certain types of facilities.

The NRPA standards are, however, merely a starting point for Scandia. The characteristics of Scandia’s population (age profile, household types, income levels) and the character of Scandia’s neighborhoods are considerably different than the typical city envisioned when the NRPA standards were created. For instance, Scandia is now quite rural compared to most cities, and will continue to have significant areas of rural character for the next 20 years. The ideal distance to particular types of facilities (such as ball parks and similar athletic fields) may be longer for Scandia than a typical city because of the number of low density neigh-

borhoods removed from the village area. Similarly, parks intended to serve a population within walking distance, (such as tot lots or playgrounds) may serve fewer households than would otherwise be ideal for those areas of Scandia that are targeted to remain at low densities. Furthermore, Scandia could use the park service area concept as a minimum geographic unit within which to provide a minimum level of park or recreation facilities, regardless of population.

Recreational facilities are another category typically evaluated by population (number of facilities per 1,000 people). Using the NRPA standards, the Plan calculated a list of potential recreational facilities needs to be considered as Scandia grows (see Table 25 - Recommended recreational facilities).

Table 25 - Recommended recreational facilities

Recommended Recreation Facilities					
Facility	Existing Township Facilities	Existing School Facilities	Proposed Standard Per 1,000 People	Add. Needed Year 2005	Total Add. Needed 2005-2020
Archery Range	0	0	1/50,000	0	0
BMX Track	0	0	---	0	0
Baseball	0	0	1/6,000	0	0
Basketball	1 Hoop	4 Half-court	1/5,000	0	1
Boat Landing	1 (3)	0	---	0	0
Canoe Rack	0	0	---	0	2
Community Facility	1	0	---	0	0
Disc Golf	0	0	---	0	1
Ice, Arena- Indoor	0	0	1/15,000	0	0
Ice, Hockey- Outdoor	1	0	1/3,500	0	1
Ice, Pleasure-Outdoor	1	0	1/5,000	0	0
Ice, Warming House	1	0	---	0	1
Picnic Shelter	1 (1)	0	1/5,000	0	0
Pool- Indoor	0	0	---	0	0
Pool- Outdoor or Beach	(1)	0	1/20,000	0	0
Skateboard Park	1	0	---	0	0
Sliding Hill	0	0	1/15,000	0	0
Softball-Youth	3 (1)	3*	1/1,800	0	0
Softball-Adult	1	0	1/5,000	0	0
Tennis Courts	2 (2)	0	1/3,000	0	0
Volleyball	0	0	1/6,000	0	1

Note: Numbers in parentheses represent National, State or private facilities.

Source: 2006 New Scandia Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Plan

*Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System Statement*

The Metropolitan Council created a Regional Parks System Statement for New Scandia Township in 2005. The System Statement identifies what regional park issues need to be addressed in the City of Scandia's comprehensive plan. No new regional parks are planned in Washington County by 2030, and no recent changes to the existing regional park system (which could require adjustment of the City's land use maps) are noted in the System Statement.

The System Statement describes the two existing regional parks, Big Marine Park Reserve and William O'Brien State Park. Other public and private recreational areas are noted in the System Statement, including local parks and fields, county-owned land, the Falls Creek Scientific Natural Area, and the planned Glacial Hills Trail at the City's southeast border with Maine on St. Croix (see below). The City's park priorities, identified in the 2006 Comprehensive Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Plan, address Scandia's regional park assets and recommend steps to enhance their functional use by managing land use, further developing City and regional trail systems, and adding new recreational amenities in or near these regional parks.

The Metropolitan Council's 2005 Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program identified several priority acquisitions in 2006-7 to expand Big Marine Park Reserve, and a project scheduled for 2010-11 to develop a campground and related facilities in Big Marine Park Reserve. These investments will likely result in increased use of Big Marine Park Reserve and will enhance the recreational value of trail connections or other local park and open space efforts connecting to the Reserve.

While not in Scandia's System Statement, the Glacial Hills Trail in Marine on St. Croix is identified as running close to Scandia's southeast border. The System Statement for Marine on St. Croix describes the Trail as follows:

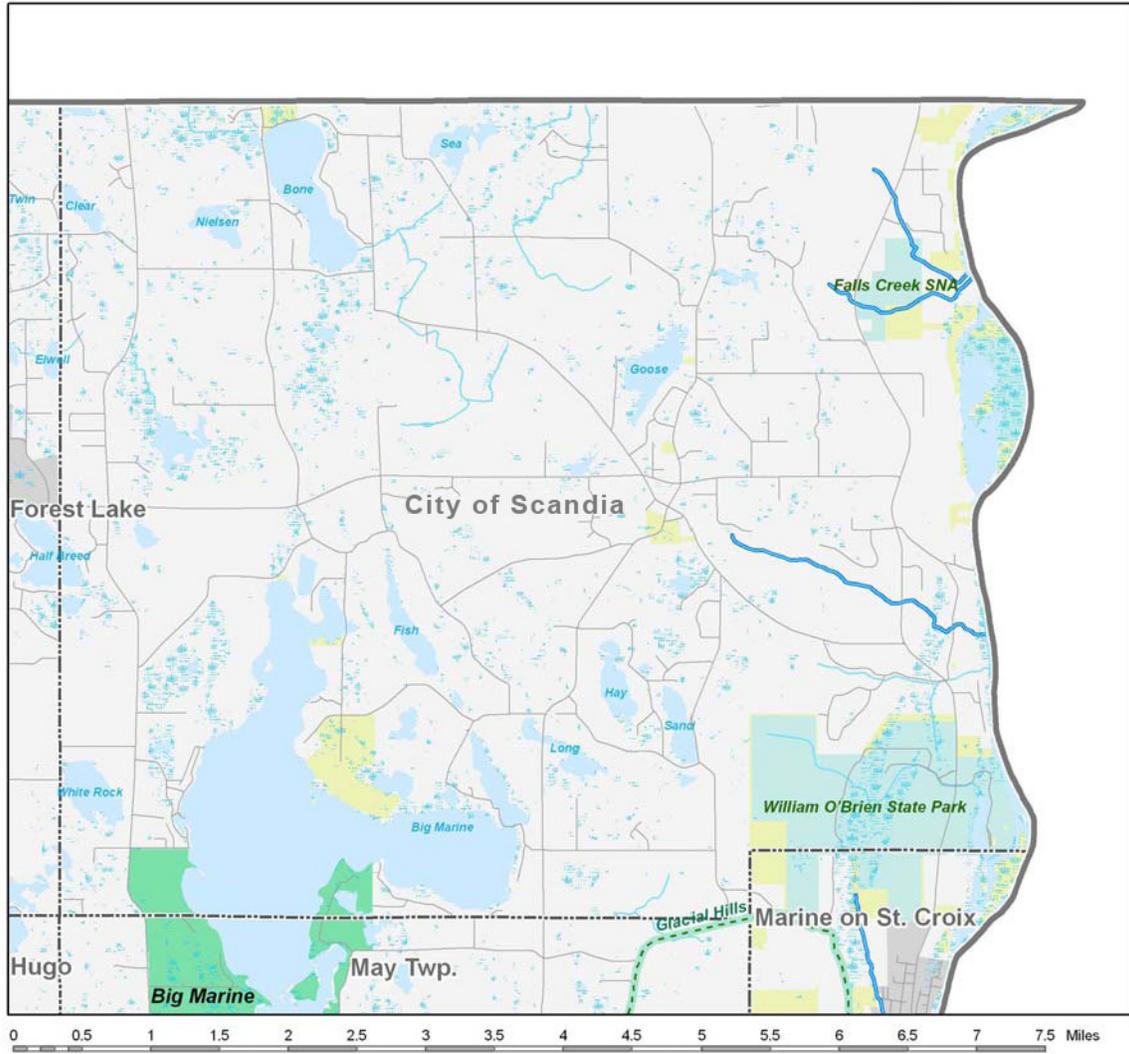
**Glacial Hills Regional Trail** – This proposed regional trail will connect the Central Anoka County Regional Trail to the west with Big Marine Park Reserve to east. The proposed trail is partially located within the City of Marine on St. Croix. This proposed trail does not have an approved master plan yet. The county will conduct a master planning process for this trail in the future. The county will include the city and others in this process. The general alignment of the trail as shown in Figure 2 should be acknowledged in the city's comprehensive plan.

Although not in Scandia's System Statement, this proposed regional trail should be considered as Scandia examines potential trail connections between William O'Brien State Park and Big Marine Park Reserve (a trails goal described in the City's Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Plan).

The proposed Gateway Trail is also not included in Scandia's System Statement. The trail ended several miles south of Scandia when the System Statement was completed. A major extension of this regional trail is being mapped as this Plan is in process. The trail will extend into the village area, and ultimately run through Scandia and connect to regional trails running far north. The Gateway Trail is a major addition to Scandia's recreation system as discussed in the 2006 Trails Plan. Map 19 - *The Regional Parks System Statement Map*, is provided on the following page.

Map 19 - The Regional Parks System Statement Map

# Parks System Statement Map, City of Scandia



<p><b>Regional Park Search Areas *</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Boundary Adjustment</li> <li> Recognition of Regional Status</li> <li> New Unit</li> <li> Completing the System</li> </ul>	<p><b>Regional Trail Search Corridors *</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Boundary Adjustment</li> <li> Recognition of Regional Status</li> <li> New Unit</li> <li> Completing the System</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parks and Preserves</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Federal Land</li> <li> Private Non-Profit</li> <li> Regional</li> <li> State Land</li> <li> Local and County Land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Wetlands (NWI)</li> <li> Lakes and Major Rivers</li> <li> Minor Rivers and Streams</li> <li> Trout Streams</li> <li> 2020 MUSA</li> <li> TLG Street Centerlines (2005)</li> </ul>
<p>* Search areas (parks) and corridors (trails) as shown are for planning purposes only and are not indicative of specific proposed park boundaries or trail alignments.</p> <p>Proposed boundaries within park search areas pending master plan approval are highlighted  in yellow</p>		<p><b>Regional Trails</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Existing</li> <li> Planned</li> <li> Proposed</li> <li> State Existing</li> </ul>	

Source: Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System Statement, July 2005

*Green Infrastructure Priorities*

The Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Plan identified a number of priority actions and investments to meet the Plan’s goals. The following priorities were identified in each section of the Plan, either in the text or on the Plan map.

*Park Priorities*

**Park System Plan, Goal 3, Points 6 and 7:**

6. Continue to require that plans for each new residential, commercial, and industrial subdivision include provisions for the dedication of parks (or cash in lieu of land) to meet the anticipated recreation demand caused by the development. Periodically review and update the dedication requirement as necessary.
7. Scandia should consider requiring a reasonable portion of any proposed subdivision be dedicated to the public, or preserved for public use as parks, playgrounds, trails or open space, according to Minnesota Statutes 462.358, subdivision 2(b). The City should review each development proposal individually to determine how it best accommodates Scandia’s Comprehensive Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Plan.

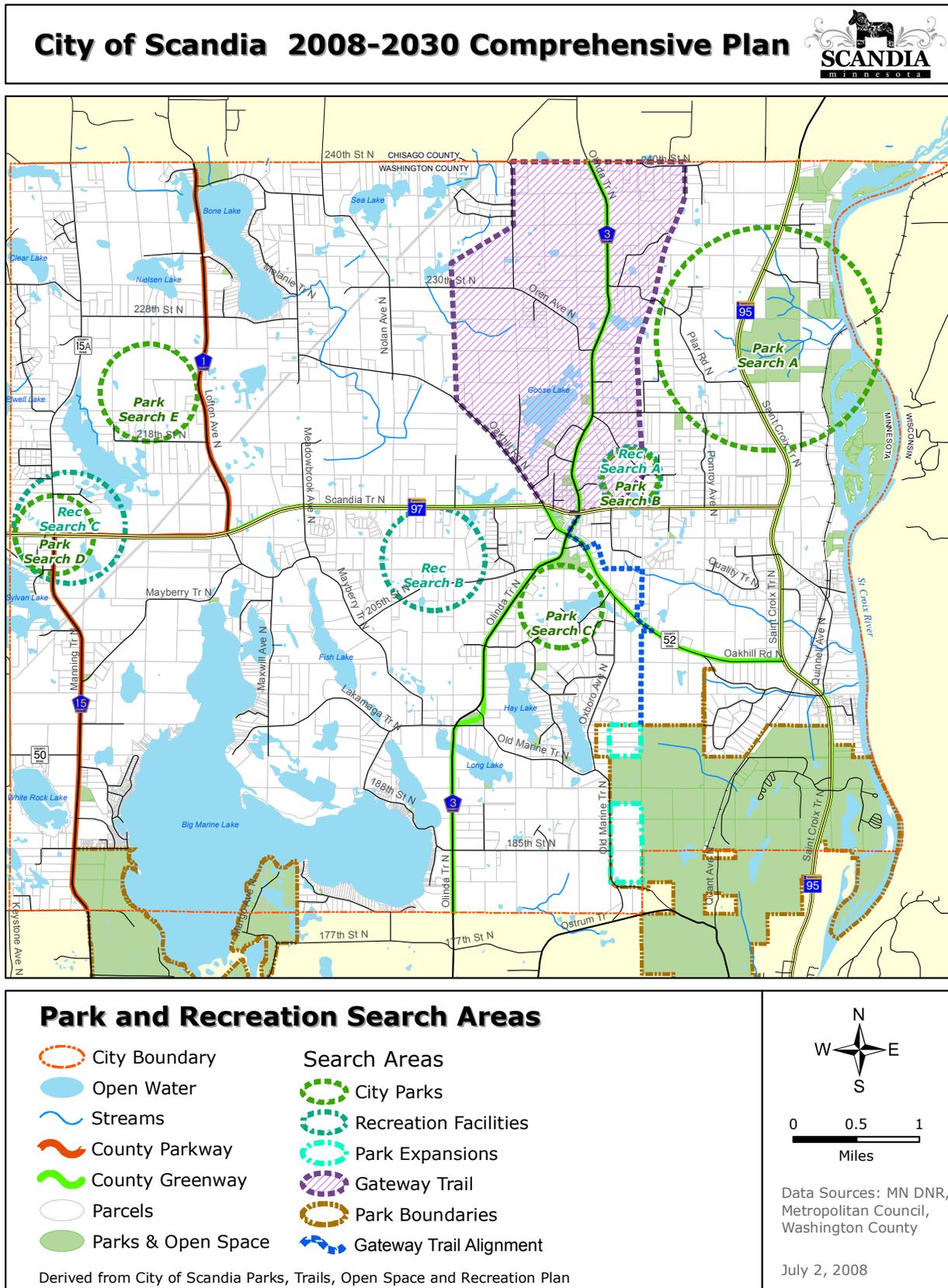
**Park Search Areas** - Park Search Areas are displayed on Map 20 - *Park and Recreation Search Areas*.

1. **NSPS-A:** Located near the Falls Creek SNA and Wind in the Pines Park, acquiring parkland in this area would serve as a buffer to protect and preserve these public lands for their scenic and ecological significance.
2. **NSPS-B:** Located east of the Scandia Fire Hall and Maintenance Building site, this area may be used for trails, interpretive features and/or new recreation facilities, including disk golf.
3. **NSPS-C:** Parkland acquisition in the area south of the Scandia Community/Senior Center would encourage the preservation of significant open space, which exhibits high ecological value.
4. **NSPS-D:** This park search area includes the northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the intersection of State Highway 97 and Manning Trail.
5. **NSPS-E:** Park search area five is located between Manning Trail and County Road 1 north of German Lake. Parkland acquisition in this area would serve to preserve this open space rich in ecological diversity.

**Additional Information from Park System Plan Map**

- Expansion of William O’Brien State Park
- Expansion of Big Marine Park Reserve

Map 20 - Park and Recreation Search Areas



Recreation Facility Priorities

**Recreation Facility Search Areas** - Recreation Facility Search Areas are shown on Map 20 - Park and Recreation Search Areas.

1. **NSRS-A:** Located directly adjacent to the east side of the Scandia Fire Hall and Maintenance Building site north of CSAH 97, this site could include trails, interpretive elements and explore the feasibility of implementing a disc golf course.
2. **NSRS-B:** Located just west of the Scandia Elementary School, this site is identified as an expansion of the school’s current facilities in partnership with the City.
3. **NSRS-C:** The intersection of State Highway 97 and County Road 15/Manning Trail could be considered for potential acquisition toward recreation facility improvements.

**Additional Information from Recreation Facilities Plan Map**

**Proposed Fishing Piers**

- Bone Lake Park
- Big Marine Lake
- Goose Lake

**Proposed Canoe Racks**

- Goose Lake
- Log House Boat Landing at Copas

**Other recreation recommendations**

- Explore the potential of implementing disk golf as an appropriate fit to the recreation needs of Scandia residents. Disk golf is considered one of the fastest-growing sports in Minnesota.
- Provide trails to all City recreational facilities.
- Improve existing and create new lake access points.

Trail System Priorities

**Overall Trail System Plan**

Create a trail system to provide recreation opportunities for Scandia residents and visitors, and establish trails links to the village center, parks, neighborhoods and the Scandia Elementary School.

**Trail System Specifics (Goals 5, 6 and 7):**

**Goal 5:** The City supports the establishment of a public, multi-use, non-motorized trail such as the Gateway Trail Extension or other trails that the City might establish on its own as part of a program of providing outdoor recreational amenities and community-wide trail linkages that serve the health and welfare of the City’s residents. The Gateway Trail Extension is planned to connect the Gateway Trail at Pine Point Park to Taylors Falls. The exact location will be determined by willing landowners and the opportunity to use park and trail dedica-

tions as part of new developments. A formal route extending into the village area is being mapped as this Plan is in process.

**Goal 6:** Identify a search area for a trail connection between William O'Brien State Park and Big Marine Park Reserve.

**Goal 7:** Consider potential non-motorized trail connection when/if the abandoned Soo Line railway corridor from White Bear Lake to Wisconsin through Scandia becomes available.

### **Additional Information from Trails Plan Map**

#### **Proposed City Trailheads (from Trails Plan Map)**

- Wind in the Pines Park
- Lion's Park at Hay Lake
- Scandia Community/Senior Center
- Intersection of Oak Hill Rd. N and State Hwy 95
- Big Lake School Area

## *Open Space Priorities*

### **Conceptual Open Space Corridor Plan**

The objective of the Open Space Plan in the Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Plan is to identify green corridors that preserve and enhance important open space. These green corridors would link fragmented open space and promote trail and wildlife corridors, respectively, while preserving the rural character of the community. Scandia should use this plan as a general guide to work with the public to promote green corridors and ensure that they are preserved or enhanced as development occurs. These proposed corridors do not necessarily reflect public acquisition of land; the vast majority of this land would likely remain private.

The Open Space Plan Map also includes rare natural features of a variety of types. They are largely located along the St. Croix River, although a few are scattered throughout the rest of the township, particularly near Big Marine Lake.