

Birch Lake Recreation Area Expansion

Capital Budget/Bonding Bill Request

This project consists of expanding the existing Birch Lake Recreation Area to add a new 22 acre campground that will include 49 new campsites that will accommodate recreational vehicles as well as tent campers. Two restrooms and a camp office/shower/restroom facility will be constructed at the campground to serve campers. City utilities (water, sewer, electrical) will be extended to the campground and to the existing facilities in the recreation area. The Birch Lake Recreation Area sits on a 37 acre, city owned parcel located on Birch Lake. The campground will be connected to an existing paved pedestrian/bike trail that connects to the City of Babbitt and eventually to the Mesabi Trail. The campground will also connect to the new Prospector ATV trail that will serve campers looking for off trail vehicle opportunities. The City of Babbitt and the surrounded area are very limited in camping sites and the existing sites are always filled.

The existing recreation area has a beach house equipped with changing rooms, restrooms, life guard/first aid room and a concession stand. The beach area has two rafts, a water slide, a picnic area with shelters, outdoor grills, a playground area with equipment for all ages and area lighting.

The City of Babbitt has completed a total reconstruction of the boat landing area along Birch Lake. The area includes a new parking area with handicapped parking, two new docks, a new concrete boat landing ramp, a boat cleaning area and a rain garden for storm water runoff.

The Birch Lake Recreation Area is located on the shores of Birch Lake. Birch Lake is a 7,000 acre lake that is one of the most heavily fished lakes in the Tower Fisheries Management Area. The lake is 75% undeveloped and provides a BWCA experience. The BWCA is only two portages away from Birch Lake.

Birch Lake and the Birch Lake Recreation Area serves numerous tourists from all over Minnesota, the U.S. and Canada.

The total cost of this project is estimated to be \$4,400,000. The City of Babbitt is asking for \$750,000 from the bonding bill that will be matched by the City of Babbitt and local funds.