



**City of Duluth - Parks and Recreation**

411 West First Street • Duluth, Minnesota 55802  
218-730-4309 • [www.duluthmn.gov](http://www.duluthmn.gov)

*For more information contact Kelli Latuska,  
Public Information Officer at 218-730-5309*

DATE: 1/10/2025

SUBJECT: Duluth Parks and Recreation receives Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association's "Best of the Best" Award

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

## **Duluth Parks and Recreation receives Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association's "Best of the Best" Award**

[DULUTH, MN] The City of Duluth's Parks and Recreation team was awarded the Tommy Johnson Award on Friday, January 10, during the Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association's Annual Awards Ceremony. The award recognizes the City's Youth on Trails program for its innovative approach to expanding kids' access to mountain biking in Duluth.

The Tommy Johnson Award is presented to the highest scoring recipient of MRPA's "Award of Excellence" recipients. The successful "Award of Excellence" project or initiative that is selected best exemplifies the characteristics and values that Tommy Johnson was known for; innovation, futuristic, revolutionary and/or creative with ideas and initiatives that help establish future trends, philosophical change, sharing of new resources, and new exciting concepts.

"It is an honor to receive both an Award of Excellence and the Tommy Johnson Award, recognizing the high-quality recreation services our staff provide to the community," said Parks and Recreation Manager Jessica Peterson. "A great program rarely happens on its own, and Youth on Trails clearly showcases how close collaboration with other departments and community groups leads to big wins for Duluth."

In July of 2024, the City of Duluth was presented with an Award of Excellence for Parks and Recreation's Youth on Trails initiative. At that time, Michelle Snider, MRPA Executive Director, shared, "A major goal of the Awards of Excellence program is to increase public awareness and appreciation of the excellent parks, trails, and recreation services available in Minnesota."

The Youth on Trails mountain biking program was developed by Duluth Parks and Recreation in collaboration with community organizations thanks to a \$167,783 grant awarded by the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission, through the Connecting People to the Outdoors Small Grant fund, which is sourced from the Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. This funding was used to develop a mobile fleet of mountain bikes, balance bikes, trikes, and safety equipment, and it supports a team of certified mountain bike instructors to lead programming across the city's park and trail system. The Youth on Trails program reduces financial, geographic, and social barriers to participation in mountain biking in Duluth that

traditionally prevent or reduce youth's participation in this growing lifetime activity.

For additional information and a link to a previous press release on this topic, click here:  
<https://duluthmn.gov/media/websubscriptions/93/20240716-93-7852.pdf>

###



Parks staff with award