

Information Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: March 5, 2026

Topic

Understanding Minnesota's Climate: Observations, Trends, and Projections – A Presentation by Kenny Blumenfeld, Minnesota State Climatology Office

District(s), Member(s): All
Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stats. §§ 473.145 and 473.147
Staff Prepared/Presented: Emmett Mullin, Manager (651-602-1360)
Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Parks and Trails

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

Background

Met Council staff welcome Kenny Blumenfeld, Senior Climatologist, to the March 5, 2026 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting for his presentation, "Understanding Minnesota's Climate: Observations, Trends, and Projections." The purpose of the information item is to create a shared understanding of Minnesota's changing climate and its implications on the Regional Parks and Trails System and Regional Parks and Trails Policy.

Dr. Kenneth ("Kenny") Blumenfeld is a climate scientist who grew up in Minnesota with a love for storms, blizzards, and being outside. He works for the Minnesota State Climatology Office (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources) where he provides the state's agencies, communities, and Minnesotans with up-to-date scientific information about Minnesota's changing and variable climate. Kenny enjoys talking to Minnesotans about their weather and is a year-round bicycle commuter who also likes hiking, camping, and sharing adventures with his wife and sons.

Kenny's work has ties to multiple Metropolitan Council regional goals, but especially "We lead on addressing climate change" and "We protect and restore natural systems." Among other topics, his presentation will discuss how Minnesota's climate is becoming warmer and wetter. This has impacts on natural systems, outdoor recreation, and how people go about their day-to-day lives.

Kenny presented to the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee in September 2024, and presented to staff from Regional Park Implementing Agencies and the Met Council via a "lunch and learn" in January 2025. His presentation will be followed by an update on the Regional Park Implementing Agency-Council Climate and Natural System workgroup.