

# Native American Parks Council Meeting Summary

March 18, 2025

6:00 - 8:00 PM

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB)

In attendance: Rita Waleszek Arndt (Native American Parks Councilmember), Adam Arvidson (MPRB), Carrie Day Aspinwall (MPRB consultant), Juanita Espinoza (Native American Parks Councilmember), LeMoine LaPointe (Facilitator), Thorne LaPointe (Facilitator), Marlena Myles (Native American Parks Councilmember), Emma Pachuta (MPRB)

## Summary

This is a summary of the key themes, decisions, and recommendations from the March 18, 2025 Native Parks Council meeting. The meeting focused on identifying short-term priorities, enhancing Indigenous inclusion in MPRB systems, evaluating past progress, and developing culturally responsive strategies for communication, policy-making, and storytelling.

## Key Themes

- Identified need for 'quick wins' among 14 Indigenous Action Plan (IAP) priority baskets.
- Reviewed previous evaluation findings emphasizing the value of Indigenous liaison roles and cultural learning.
- Recommended creation of a Native Parks Council newsletter to improve transparency and public engagement.
- Called for clearer structures to prevent exclusionary practices such as secret meetings or inconsistent participation.
- Strong support for using ArcGIS StoryMapping to document and share Indigenous stories, land use, and sacred sites.
- Suggested moving from individual feedback to consensus-based decision-making.
- Encouraged involvement of youth and emerging leaders, emphasizing the importance of succession planning.
- Desire to shift from reactive responses to proactive strategic integration within MPRB planning processes.

## Recommendations & Next Steps

- Develop a shared calendar to coordinate Council priorities, subcommittee meetings, and public events.
- Ensure all committees and workgroups include open invitations and documented updates for transparency.
- Expand use of Indigenous evaluation methods and secure ongoing funding for evaluation and planning.
- Launch a Native Parks newsletter and improve accessibility of MPRB web content.
- Implement digital storytelling tools like ArcGIS to support mapping of Indigenous cultural and historical narratives.

- Integrate Council members into MPRB policy, design, and planning meetings early in the process.
- Develop a consensus-based framework for decision-making and clarify roles within the Council.
- Foster community engagement by uplifting diverse voices and youth leadership in parks planning.