

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Designation Application

General Section

Designation Application #: 15-050D Date Submitted: 06/30/2015

Park or Trail Name: Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail

District #: 3 Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 46.5560 Longitude: -95.9498

Location Description:

The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will be located in the rolling hills and farmland of north-central Otter Tail County, connecting the cities of Perham to Pelican Rapids with a midway connection through Maplewood State Park. The Trail will be an independent alignment that will provide recreation opportunities for visitors and residents in Pelican Rapids and Perham as well as visitors to Maplewood State Park and the area's resorts. Several popular lakes in the area including Little McDonald Lake will be accessible from the trail. In addition, users will be able to experience the breathtaking vistas along the Maplewood Ridge.

Lead Applicant Organization: Otter Tail County

Lead Contact First Name: Charles Last Name: Grotte

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Joint Applicant #1 Organization:

Joint Applicant #2 Organization:

Joint Applicant #3 Organization:

Joint Applicant #4 Organization:

Describe other project supporters:

The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail has several supporting organizations including PartnerSHIP4Health, the West Central Initiative, the City of Perham and the City of Pelican Rapids. In addition, the following communities, organizations and agencies have publicly identified their support for the proposed trail: City of Pelican Rapids City of Perham Perham Area Chamber of Commerce Perham Economic Development Authority Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Division

Description Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized)

Total proposed length motorized (mi):
27.18

Total proposed length non-motorized (mi):

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will provide an exciting pedestrian connection between the Cities of Perham and Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State Park. Currently, residents and visitors to north central Otter Tail County have limited access to off-road, paved trails that support bicycle and pedestrian mobility and connect with one of the state's premier parks, Maplewood State Park. The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will expand multi-modal transportation and recreation access to vital recreation and employment sites in Otter Tail County, providing economic development, safety, and mobility benefits. There are two local trails that the regional trail will connect including The City of Pelican Rapids's trail that extends along the east side of State Highway 59 from 5th Avenue to the Lake Region Power Cooperative near Lake Region Avenue. And, in Perham, the regional trail will connect with the City's new Wildflower Trail that extends east along County Road 34 from Coney Street to West Main Street. The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will provide direct access to the growing communities of Perham and Pelican Rapids, but it will be an asset for the entire region. Residents in Erhard, Dent, and Vergas will not be far from the trail and will be able to connect to it from local connections. The community of Erhard is only 3.6 miles south of the trail corridor along Highway 59 while Dent lies only 2.8 miles south along County Road 35. Vergas is four miles north of the regional trail corridor along County Road 35. All three communities could develop signage to create local connections to the regional trail. The North Country Scenic Trail (NCT), a national hiking trail that extends 4,600 miles from the eastern New York to Lake Sakakawea State Park in central North Dakota, passes through northwestern Otter Tail County. The NCT is a single-track hiking trail that does not provide recreation opportunities for biking or horseback riding, but it will create exciting trail connections to the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail in Maplewood State Park. The NCT is not fully developed in Minnesota. Two segments in western Minnesota are operational, through Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and through Maplewood State Park. The trail will be developed as an independent alignment with a 10-foot-wide paved surface with two-foot turf clear zones on both sides. The trail will be non-motorized, except during the winter, when segments of the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail may be open for snowmobiles by a permit issued through Otter Tail County. The exact location will depend on connections to existing snowmobile routes.

What is the Acquisition and Development Status?

- New Park or Trail (no land acquired or developed)
- Existing Park or Trail
 - Land Acquisition
 - Status:
 - Percentage of Land Acquired:
 - Development Status

- No Development
- Some Development, but more Proposed
 - New Facilities Proposed
 - Existing Facilities to be Upgraded
- Fully Development

Facility Listing Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized)	
Non-Motorized	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
	Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail
Motorized	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
	Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Trailheads will be available for winter use by snowmobiles

Master Plan Status Section

Master Plan Status: Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available

Describe Other Supportive Information:

The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail Master Plan was completed in 2014 in partnership with the following organizations: PartnerSHIP 4 Health, the West Central Initiative, the City of Perham and the City of Pelican Rapids. In addition, the following communities, civic groups and agencies provided several of the letters of support are attached to this application, including The Cities of Perham and Pelican Rapids, the Perham Area Chamber of Commerce, the Perham Economic Development Authority and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Division. During the master plan process two open houses were held in Perham and two in Pelican Rapids to provide the public with an opportunity to share ideas and concerns for the trail plan. One additional public meeting was held in Fergus Falls to present the final plan. Between 150 and 200 people attended the open houses and public meeting to learn about the project and to provide comments. Throughout the master plan process, Otter Tail County officials heard from residents and visitors why they support the development of the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail. Their reasons varied from providing a safe place to bicycle to offering an alternative way to travel to Maplewood State Park.

Classification Details Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized)

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality "Destination" Trail Experience: The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will provide users with a high-quality recreation opportunity in one of Minnesota's most scenic landscapes. North-central Otter Tail County receives a high number of tourists and visitors and seasonal residents who visit Maplewood State Park, stay in one of several lakeside resorts or return each summer to stay with family and friends. During the master plan process, resort owners, community leaders and area residents spoke of the desire to have a recreational trail that would provide people with a safe place to walk and ride their bicycles. The Trail will provide a much anticipated destination for these activities in a highly scenic area. Not only will the trail be a destination itself but it will serve as an alternate access to Maplewood State Park from Perham and Pelican Rapids by providing an off-road trail that will connect to existing and planned trails in the park.

Criteria #2 Well-located to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will be over 27 miles long and will link two growing communities with a state park and several popular area lakes, providing a convenient and highly anticipated recreation opportunity in a popular tourist area. The Trail will connect with existing local trail systems in Perham and Pelican Rapids extending the opportunity for local residents to safely commute into town for work and school. The proposed trail route will provide a new and safe way for people to travel by bicycle or foot between Perham and Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State Park. Providing an off-road connection to state parks has been very popular and has increased visitor numbers in parks such as Glendalough State Park where the new Glendalough Trail connects the City of Battle Lake with the park. The City of Perham, with a 2013 population of 3,087 is a regional business center with a large hospital, regional employers such as Arvig and KLN Family Brands (Tuffy's Dog Food, Barrel Fun snacks, Kenny's and Nut Heads candy). The City of Pelican Rapids has a 2013 population of 2,463 and is home to several major businesses including Jennie-O Turkey and Lake Region Electric Cooperative. As the anchor communities of north-central Otter Tail County, Perham and Pelican Rapids will enhance the regional draw of the proposed Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail. The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will attract users because its length of 27 miles and its connectivity to two communities and Maplewood State Park will allow for long periods of uninterrupted activity. Trail users are drawn to opportunities for long-distance recreation and the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will provide users with sufficient mileage to provide well over three hours of continuous activity.

Criteria #3 Enhances Connectivity to Other Regional and State Level Trails within the Region, and Connects to Regional Destinations: The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will enhance the connectivity to regional destinations including the Cities of Perham and Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State Park, one of Minnesota's crown jewels in the state park system. Currently, there are no non-motorized options for getting to Maplewood State Park. The Trail will provide residents and visitors to these communities with the opportunity to walk or bicycle to the Park through a scenic landscape that is dotted with lakes, hardwood forest ridgelines and agricultural fields. The Trail will also provide park visitors with a way to travel to Pelican Rapids and Perham on a safe, off-road trail. The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will connect to existing roads and trails in Maplewood State Park. The park master plan calls for expanding a network of paved trails that will allow visitors to walk or bicycle through the park on a system that will connect directly with the Perham to Pelican Rapids

Regional Trail. Only the DNR can plan and develop trails through state parks and it is beneficial that the Maplewood State Park Master Plan identifies trail connections to neighboring communities. In addition, Park officials strongly support the efforts of Otter Tail County to develop the Trail because it will enhance the connections between the Park and nearby communities.

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within a Region: The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will fill a gap in the region's recreational opportunities by providing residents and tourists with an independent, off-road facility to exercise, commute to work and recreate with their families. The nearest State Trail or regional trail that offers a similar experience is the Central Lakes State Trail that extends from Oaskis to Fergus Falls in the southern part of Otter Tail County. North-central Otter Tail County is a highly regarded tourist destination. Visitors are drawn to the area's lakes, diverse recreation opportunities, scenic beauty and the popular Maplewood State Park. The Cities of Perham and Pelican Rapids are developing local trail systems because their residents and visitors are seeking safe places to bicycle and walk that are not on roads and that provide a location to exercise, commute and recreate. The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail will connect with both of these local trail systems extending the options for all trail users and allowing people to travel to Maplewood State Park. Central Otter Tail County is a very scenic location, which is evidenced by the fact that a popular driving route through was developed throughout the area. The Otter Trail Scenic Byway meanders through the same landscape of the proposed Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail. Otter Tail County would like to provide visitors and residents with a new, non-motorized option for recreating in this highly scenic landscape during the spring, summer and fall seasons, and with a snowmobile trail that connects with the existing network of existing winter trails.

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)

Type	Description
Master Plan	Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail Master Plan document approved in 2014
Location Map	Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail Location Map
Letters of Support	Perham Chamber of Commerce Letter of Support
Letters of Support	Perham Economic Development Authority Letter of Support
Letters of Support	Department of Natural Resources Letter of Support
Resolution	Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners Resolution of Support
Master Plan	Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail Master Plan document approved in 2014
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