

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Designation Application

General Section

Designation Application #: 15-093D Date Submitted: 06/29/2015

Park or Trail Name: Lake County Mountain Bike Trails

District #: 1 Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 47.2140 Longitude: -91.4200

Location Description:

Out of the Lake County Comprehensive Trail Plan, 5 areas have been identified for potential mountain bike trails. The trails are mainly in the southern half of Lake County.

Lead Applicant Organization: Lake County

Lead Contact First Name: Nate Last Name: Eide

Mailing Address: 601 3rd Ave

City: Two Harbors State: MN Zip: 55616

Phone: 218-834-8340 Email: nate.eide@co.lake.mn.us

Joint Applicant #1 Organization:

Joint Applicant #2 Organization:

Joint Applicant #3 Organization:

Joint Applicant #4 Organization:

Describe other project supporters:

Lake County has been in discussions with both COGGS, the Duluth mountain bike club and Superior Cycling Association, the Cook County bike club. While no formal action has been taken, all parties agree that coordinating efforts is important. We also all agree that more trails makes the region more attractive at a national level.

Description Section

Regional Significance Statement:

Classification: Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)

Total proposed length (mi):

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

Lake County is seeking a regionally significant designation for our proposed mountain bike trails in

multiple locations in the southern half of Lake County. Lake County manages 165,000 acres of land, most of which is in the southern half of the county. Of this land, 5 areas have been identified in the Lake County Comprehensive Trail Plan as having high potential for destination quality mountain bike trails. Because of the terrain, scenic views and access, each area contains hundreds, if not thousands, of acres that will enable world class purpose built mountain bike trails. The desired length of trails for one area would be 10 miles; with a goal of over 25 miles to be considered a true destination trail. Trail cost estimates are \$16,000 - \$22,000 per mile with greater expenses for boardwalks, bridges, and constructed turns. These trails seek to build on the momentum of mountain bike trails being built in Duluth and Grand Marais. With high quality trails in Lake County, the gap between current trails, Northeastern Minnesota stands to be a world class destination for mountain bikes. The local tourism industry would benefit greatly by being part of a world class destination. Local residents, both young and old, would benefit by having a place to exercise and enjoy the outdoors. Should funding become available, Lake County would work with mountain bike trail planners to plan a very high quality and sustainable trail system. Trail priorities would be developed with the help of the trail planner. It is unlikely that all potential areas will include trails, at least in the near future.

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 (Non-Motorized)	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
Natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use, Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail, Picnic shelters at trailhead, The existing facilities are at the Demonstration Forest area.	Natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use, Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Picnic shelters at trailhead

Master Plan Status Section

Master Plan Status: Existing Master Plan is Available (but needs to be updated to meet strategic plan)

Describe Other Supportive Information:

Master plan completed but needs to be updated to meet this application's requirements.

Classification Details Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality "Destination" Trail Experience: Each of these areas that will contain the trails were chosen for their high quality outdoor experience for mountain bikers. The terrain is varied enough to provide a range of trails for beginner all the way to advanced riders. Many of the areas provide spectacular views of Lake Superior and/or vast panoramic views. Most of the trails will be away from roads and should provide a wilderness type experience. The trails will be built using sustainable designs that are ride-able by a wide variety of skill levels. Beginner style trails will provide those new to mountain bikes a place to learn and practice. More advanced trails, looping off beginner trails, will draw mountain bikers from across the country and allow local residents a chance to continue developing their skills. Additionally, these trails could be utilized in the winter for fat-biking opportunities, a growing activity across the region.

Criteria #2 Well-located to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: These areas are situated near population centers of Lake County. They are close enough to these areas to provide easy access to the local residents of Two Harbors, Silver Bay and Beaver Bay, which comprise more than half the County's population. They are also close to or directly adjacent to regionally significant campgrounds of Gooseberry Falls State Park and Split Rock State Park. It is clear that the State Parks in the County are the primary recreational attraction. In fact, Gooseberry Falls, Tettegouche and, Split Rock Lighthouse State Parks are among the top five most-visited of the 67 state parks in Minnesota, accounting for a total of over 1.1 million annual visits. The Split Rock Lighthouse State Historical Site is located within Split Rock Lighthouse State Park located along the shores of Lake Superior. Two Harbors and Silver Bay provide tourist amenities of lodging and dining. A bike shop, being built in 2015, will provide necessary supplies to bikers. These areas are also situated in a gap between two current mountain bike destinations of Duluth and Grand Marais. Tourists could spend an extended amount of time on the North Shore and experience many hours and miles of high quality mountain bike trails. Additionally each area is large enough with enough Lake County Land to provide many hours on many miles of purpose built single track trails.

Criteria #3 Enhances Connectivity to Regional Destinations: Two of the areas, Buck Mountain/Split Rock and the Lake County Demonstration Forest, are directly connected existing facilities. The Buck Mountain/Split Rock area is directly adjacent to Split Rock State Park. Split Rock State Park has a connection with the Gitchi-Gami Bike Trail. This State Park has also opened up trails for winter fat-

biking. The Lake County Demonstration Forest area is currently an area with hiking trails. Some of these trails need minimal work to make them ride-able by bike. The area also offers trail expansion opportunities. All areas except the Buck Mountain/Split Rock area are connected by the Lake County Regional Trail. This trail is a multi-use trail that will provide excellent "two-track" off-road access to dedicated mountain bike trails. If all areas were fully developed, it would be difficult to ride all four areas in one day making it a unique cycling experience. Trails in Lake County also help to bridge a gap between current Duluth and Cook County mountain bike trails. Right now, the drive from Duluth to Grand Marais is roughly 2 hours. With more trail opportunities between the two, tourists will be more likely to stay longer and be drawn to an area with many high quality riding opportunities. These trails could help make the region a world class mountain bike destination.

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within a Region: There is a definite gap of mountain bike trails in Lake County. As mentioned above, Duluth, 30+ miles away, and Grand Marais, 80+ miles away, are the closest mountain bike trails. This is critical for two reasons. (1) First, local residents have to travel quite a distance to experience high quality purpose built mountain bike trails. Lake County was ranked very low, 82nd of 87 counties, in the state for health (County Health Rankings.org). Having trails for local residents to use will provide a place for excellent exercise opportunities. (2) Second, having trails in Lake County helps further the North Shore as a world class mountain bike destination. Having multiple trail options with many days of riding is very desirable to any trail user, especially mountain bikers. The vast amount of public land, beautiful scenery, cool summer temps, well established tourist amenities, and local mountain bike momentum are all key ingredients for a "world class" status!

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)

Type	Description
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Master Plan	Master plan added from master plan tab
Other	Map showing gap in mountain bike trails in Northeastern MN.
Location Map	undefined
regional_map	Parks and Trails within 30 Miles of the Future Lake County Mountain Bike Trail System
regional_map	Mountain Bike Facilities within the Northeast Region of Minnesota
site_map_uploads_2	Proposed Lake County Mountain Bike Trail System Locations
site_map_uploads_2	Proposed Lake County Mountain Bike Trail Site Information
site_characteristic_images	Panoramic Shot of Railroad Corridor from Proposed Mountain Bike Development Area
site_characteristic_images	Bikers on a Potential Doubletrack Trail Development Area