

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Designation Application

General Section

Designation Application #: 15-119D Date Submitted: 06/30/2015

Park or Trail Name: Gull Lake Trail

District #: 2 Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 46.4615 Longitude: -94.3602

Location Description:

Multi-use 10 footpaved trail along the public road right-of-way (including part of the utilities right-of-way) on CSAH 77 around the south, west and northern shores of Gull Lake, traveling through 4 communities (East Gull Lake, Fairview Township, Lake Shore and Nisswa) and two counties (Cass and Crow Wing). Trail starts at Gull Lake Recreational Area in East Gull Lake and ends in Nisswa at Paul Bunyan Trail.

Lead Applicant Organization: City of Lake Shore

Lead Contact First Name: Teri Last Name: Hastings

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Joint Applicant #1 Organization: City of East Gull Lake

Joint Applicant #2 Organization: City of Nisswa

Joint Applicant #3 Organization: Fairview Township

Joint Applicant #4 Organization: Cass County

Describe other project supporters:

Crow Wing County

Description Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized)

Total proposed length motorized (mi): Total proposed length non-motorized (mi): 21

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

The communities of East Gull Lake, Fairview Township, Lake Shore and Nisswa, along with the counties of Crow Wing and Cass, seek to develop a 21 mile, multi-use paved trail along and in the right-of-way of the west side of CSAH 77, wrapping around Gull Lake. The 10 foot wide Gull Lake Trail will utilize both a designated trail corridor and side-of-road design to provide safe access to resorts, golf courses and fine

dining in the heart of the Brainerd Lakes Area vacationland region. While this trail will be a multi-use trail, it is anticipated that the primary usage will be by walkers, bicyclists or rollerbladers. The Gull Lake Trail starts at the Gull Lake Recreational Area in the City of East Gull Lake, along the southeast shores of Gull Lakes. The trail travel south along Cty Rd 70, then follows CSAH 77 west along the south end of Gull Lake, traveling past Cragun's Resort and Madden's on Gull Lake, to reach Fairview Township along the west. Fairview Township's planned route will continue to follow along the west side of CSAH 77 and continue north through the City of Lake Shore past the Gull Lake Narrows' bridge and by the Gull Lake Narrows boat access and fishing pier. Finally, the trail would follow along CSAH 77, turn north on Lower Roy Lake Road along Grand View Lodge's The Pines Golf Course, turning onto Hazelwood Drive to end at the new Nisswa Lake Park & Recreational Area (NLPRA). The NLPRA offers a safe route through a pedestrian tunnel under State Highway 371 to Nisswa's downtown district and onto the Paul Bunyan Trail, a rails to trails path that travels through downtown Nisswa. This is a critical connection to the primary trail artery through Central Minnesota, which offers 130+ miles from Brainerd to Bemidji. An additional connection by Crow Wing County from East Gull Lake's Pine Beach Road (CSAH 77) could tie the Gull Lake trail to a southern portion of the Paul Bunyan Trail, off Wise Road just north of Brainerd, or, East Gull Lake's south-reaching trail along County Road 18 could match up with Sylvan Township and eventually, the City of Baxter, which also links to the Paul Bunyan Trail. A Gull Lake trailhead facility at the south end of the city of Lake Shore will also offer a sanctuary-like location for those riding the complete Gull Lake Trail route, or a convenient starting point for others. Within this 80-acre site owned by Cass County, the trailhead facility will house a parking lot, restrooms, a picnic shelter, bike tune-up station and an additional trail loop. Phase 1, the 4.3 miles in East Gull Lake, is already complete. Timing of the Phase 2 of this trail project, a 3.9 mile segment, is being led by the reconstruction of CSAH 77, which is a part of Cass County's 5-year capital improvement Plan (CIP) and is tentatively slated for 2017-18. Phases 3-5 will follow as funding becomes available.

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 Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more)	Proposed Facility List Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail, Picnic shelters at trailhead
Motorized	
Existing Facility List Asphalt paved trail, 10 foot wide	Proposed Facility List Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Picnic shelters at trailhead

Master Plan Status Section

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

Describe Other Supportive Information:

Master Plan is a working document. Appendices of the Master Plan are included as attachments in the Attachments tab. The cooperative agreement between the 6 jurisdictions is included in the attachments.

Classification Details Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized)

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality "Destination" Trail Experience: The Gull Lake Trail design, utilizing both a designated trail corridor and side-of-road route along the west side of CSAH 77, will maintain the rural and scenic aesthetics that bring residents and visitors alike by the thousands to the area. The paved, 10 foot wide trail will travel aside mature trees and feature a wide variety of birds and wildlife, while also providing convenient connections to great dining and lodging. While this trail will be a multi-use trail, it is anticipated that the primary usage will be by walkers, bicyclists or rollerbladers. The popularity of Gull Lake already makes the existing roadway a favorite drive, especially during peak fall colors. The route connects everything from a stately log structures that are on the National Registry of Historic Places to unique natural features, such as wetlands, to magnificent lakeside homes. The trail encompasses forests, lakes, vistas and rolling topography. In some sections of the trail, the utility right-of-way will be used, which is already cleared of trees, rather than removing the canopied trees that are a feature that has made this road famous and well photographed. It is also the intent of the trail design to add features such as landscaping and flowers that enhance the beauty of the region. Benches and picnic tables will be strategically placed along the trail, providing shady resting spots and

scenic views -- sharing the character and beauty of the region to all travelers. Trail route signage will direct trail users to historical locations, archeological features and point out public water access points on Gull Lake and Lake Margaret, with picturesque overlooks.

Criteria #2 Well-located to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: Four communities and 2 counties encompass the Gull Lake area: the city of Nisswa in Crow Wing County, the city of East Gull Lake, Fairview Township and city of Lake Shore in Cass County. The Brainerd Micropolitan Statistical Area (defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as including both Cass and Crow Wing Counties), was ranked as the fourth fastest growing micropolitan area in the Midwest, and ranked 28th in the nation. Gull Lake is the largest lake of the Gull Lake Chain's seven interconnected waterways. The Gull Lake Chain is rated as one of the top recreational lakes not only in Minnesota, but the United States. The Gull Lake area also represents the heart of the Brainerd Lakes Area vacationland community, accounting for nearly HALF of the lodging rooms for the entire region. The population of Gull Lake communities increases two to three times during the summer months, with a large influx of seasonal residents and vacationers. The majority of these visitors reside in the Twin Cities metro area, with additional draws from Fargo/Morehead, Chicagoland and Iowa. This region is also experiencing an increase in its year round population as baby boomers are reaching their retirement age and choosing to relocate or stay at their seasonal home. The Gull Lake Trail offers safe access to the popular tourist town of Nisswa, the State Paul Bunyan Trail -- adding an additional 100+ miles of potential trails to walk or ride, Pillsbury State Forest, and the Gull Lake Dam Recreational Area -- complete with boat ramp, public swimming beach, campground and a dam controlled by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Criteria #3 Enhances Connectivity to Other Regional and State Level Trails within the Region, and Connects to Regional Destinations: The Gull Lake Trail will start at the Gull Lake Recreational Area in the City of East Gull Lake, along the southeast shores of Gull Lakes, wrapping along the south, west and north shores of Gull Lake and reaching to Nisswa at the new Nisswa Lake Park & Recreational Area (NLPR). The NLPR offers a safe route through a pedestrian tunnel under State Highway 371 to Nisswa's downtown district and onto the Paul Bunyan Trail. An additional connection by Crow Wing County from East Gull Lake's Pine Beach Road (CSAH 77) could tie the Gull Lake trail to a southern portion of the Paul Bunyan Trail, off Wise Road just north of Brainerd, or, East Gull Lake's south-reaching trail along County Road 18 could match up with Sylvan Township and eventually, the City of Baxter, which also links to the Paul Bunyan Trail. The Gull Lake Trail offer safes, a natural and scenic access to this popular tourist region, as well as making critical connections to forests and parks, golf, and water. Forests and Parks: * Pillsbury State Forest * city of Nisswa City Park * city of Lake Shore's Fritz Loven Park * Mount Ski Gull Golf: * The Gull Lake area is home to some of the best golf courses not only in the state, but in the nation. Collectively, the courses at Cragun's, Madden's and Grand View Lodge are known as one of the World's Top Golf Destinations. Water: * Minnesota DNR's Gull Lake Narrows Boat Access and Fishing Pier * the new Nisswa Lake Park and Recreational Area on Nisswa Lake * the Gull Lake Dam Recreational Area * more than a dozen public water access points on Gull Lake and Lake Margaret.

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within a Region: Based primarily in a rural setting, the communities around Gull Lake do not offer any sidewalks, and southern Cass County currently does not

have any regional trails. Southern Cass County is an un-served part of Greater Minnesota. By supporting the Gull Lake Trail, the surrounding communities of Sylvan Township and the city of Pillager in Cass County would also be in close proximity to a safe trail that connects to provide many miles of recreational opportunities.

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)

Type	Description
Other	Appendix 2 of Gull Lake Trail Master Plan
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Resolution	Joint Applicant #2 Organization added from general tab
Resolution	Resolution from city of Lake Shore (lead agency)
Location Map	Map of project and appendix 1 of Master Plan
Other	Cooperative Agreement and Appendix 3 of Gull Lake Trail Master Plan
Other	East Gull Lake Trails map and Appendix 4 of Gull Lake Trail Master Plan
Other	Lake Shore maps and Appendix 5 of Gull Lake Trail Master Plan
Letters of Support	Letters of Support for Gull Lake Trail project
Master Plan	Master plan added from master plan tab