
General

This section provides the basic information about the park or trail and the organizations responsible for it.

Last Update

17 Apr 2017 07:27:16

Park or Trail Name	District
Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System	1

Location Description

The Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System is located on the Sawtooth Mountain ridgeline above Lake Superior in Cook County. The existing system includes 15.5 miles of trail, currently existing in two clusters at Britton Peak in Tofte Township and at Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais. A planned connection between these trail clusters will utilize the North Shore's ridgeline to create a 150+ mile mountain bike trail system in Northeastern Minnesota.

Park/Trail Address	City
Park/Trail State	Zip
Latitude	Longitude
47.73932336	-90.65505981

Map of Park/Trail

Facility Website

www.superiorcycling.org

Organization

Cook County

Lead Contact Person

Jeff Cadwell

Title

County Administrator

Mailing Address

Cook County Courthouse, Administrator's Office
Room 1800, 411 W. 2nd Street

City

Grand Marais

State

Zip

Minnesota

55604

Phone

218-387-3687

Email

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Joint Applicants

Joint Applicant #1

Joint Applicant #2

Joint Applicant #3

Joint Applicant #4

Other project supporters

The Superior Cycling Association, which coordinates and supports the development of mountain bike trails in Cook County, is the strongest supporter of the Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System and works with multiple entities (i.e. USDA Forest Service, City of Grand Marais, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, North Superior Ski and Run Club, Sugarbush Trail Association, Visit Cook County, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, etc.) in trail planning, development, and programming related to cycling facilities in the area. Lake County, Cook's neighboring county, has also showed support for Cook County mountain biking development efforts.

Description

This section provides the basic information about the park or trail and the organizations responsible for it.

Regional Significance Statement

Classification

Special Recreational Feature Park

Overview/Description of Park or Trail

Currently existing as 15.5 miles of trail at two trail clusters centered at Britton Peak in Tofte and Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais, the Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System is a planned, 150+ mile, purpose-built mountain bike trail system traversing Cook County along the Sawtooth Ridgeline above Lake Superior's North Shore. To incorporate clusters, loops, and a County-wide mountain bike trail connector (proposed North Shore Traverse Trail), the system will utilize Cook County's large tracts of public land within the Superior National Forest, in an area noted for its historic connections to nature-based tourism in Minnesota and a culture of recreation-driven adventure. On public land with a ridgeline lending itself naturally to mountain bike recreation and featuring vast vistas of Lake Superior, the future Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System will offer incredible opportunity for a mountain bike destination unparalleled in size and type among a unique wilderness location in the context of the Arrowhead Region, Minnesota, and the Midwest.

As Cook County is a tourism economy driven by outside visitors (who contribute to a 3-4 million visitor count along the North Shore annually), the mountain bike trail system would expand the County's current consumer market to the millennial generation, offering significant economic benefits to the tourism destination of Cook County. The scale of the mountain bike system will serve as a selling point for these visitors. Spanning 150+ miles upon completion and including multiple trail types (i.e. gravity trails, flow trails, etc.), the trail system will

be a diverse network that can accommodate multiple skill levels (from beginner to advanced) and will require return trips to explore the system in its entirety. Development of the trail system will also coincide with development of other Cook County recreation areas, including a proposed recreation area called Sawtooth Bluff in Grand Marais; the partnership to create destination recreation areas will also enhance the possibilities for Cook County's strong and dedicated tourist populations.

Within easy access of multiple state-level recreational facilities (i.e. Judge C. R. Magney State Park, Cascade River State Park, Temperance River State Park, George Crosby Manitou State Park, and the Gitchi-Gami State Trail), the mountain bike trail system will also be well-connected to encourage use. In addition, programming efforts aimed toward special mountain bike events, year-round use, and especially youth ridership will also provide popularity of the facility.

Total Acreage or Mileage

Acquisition and Development Status

Development status

Facility Listing

This section provides an overview of existing and proposed site facilities and general site characteristics .

Existing Facilities

- Mountain Biking Trails (natural)

Proposed Facilities

- Mountain Biking Trails (natural)

Proposed Facilities Other Information

Trail Signage, Trailhead Facilities (Kiosks, Bike Repair Stations, Parking, etc.)

General Site Characteristics

Master Plan

Additional Supportive Information:

Classification Details

Special Recreational Feature Park Classification

Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience

Set on the unique topography of Lake Superior's ridgeline, the Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System travels within an area filled with adventure, connecting

multiple trail clusters and providing access to numerous "destination" facilities - state parks (Temperance River State Park, Cascade River State Park), trails (Gitche-Gami State Trail, Superior Hiking Trail, North Shore State Trail), and more - which are set entirely within the Superior National Forest. With a rolling and diverse terrain, the current trail system is built for recreationists year-round, but in combination with other amenities contributes to an estimated annual North Shore visitor count of 3-4 million people.

Built and maintained by a dedicated user group in partnership with the USDA Forest Service, the mountain bike system is currently diverse and serves as a destination for a growing number of residents and tourists alike. These visitors travel time and again from all corners of Minnesota and beyond to experience a landscape that easily lends itself to an exciting and unique mountain bike facility.

Though fragmented in its current form, the system serves its regional audience well through its facilities. However, enhancements aimed at creating one unified system traversing the North Shore would elevate such an experience. Connecting communities, state parks, trails, and more while offering 150+ miles of designated mountain bike trails, the future of the Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System will only enhance the future of a growing facility seemingly meant to treat its users to a uniquely northern Minnesota experience.

Provides a Natural and Scenic Setting Offering a Compelling Sense of Place

The Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System's place among forested, rock-cropped land that parallels the vast vista of Lake Superior provides a compelling sense of place unto itself, but it is the interspersed historical and cultural features ingrained into Cook County's natural ridgeline features that further enhance the place hosting Cook County's trail system. These features include the Cross River Heritage Center in Schroeder, Tofte Town Park, the historic Lutsen Mountains Resort, and Lighthouse Point in Grand Marais, among others. These features would all be accessible via the mountain bike trail system's ample community connections. On top of these, the rich association of natural resources to Cook County's history (mining, logging, and fishing) make experiencing the Superior National Forest firsthand a glimpse into historic Cook County itself.

Well-located to Serve a Regional Need and/or Tourist Destination

The natural features of Cook County have made the

area surrounding the proposed Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System a tourist destination since early development in the 1800s, when wealthy individuals would travel up Lake Superior's shoreline to camp and hunt in the north woods. Given this history of inherent tourism and the resulting development of established connections between communities through roads and trails, all of Cook County serves as a regional tourist destination, but Cook County's only designated city - Grand Marais - serves as its centerpiece as a well-established regional tourist center. Hosting a year-round population of 1,340 people in a rather low-density region, the city lends itself as a travel destination contributing to the 3-4 million yearly North Shore visitors.

To the existing Pincushion Mountain Trail System, which currently serves as the easternmost arm of the Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System and is the proposed site for the Sawtooth Bluff development, the bike ride from Grand Marais is about two miles. Once the trail system is expanded, this would only serve as one of several entrances into the mountain bike trail system within Cook County, which would also draw tourists from state parks, communities, and other area facilities stretching along the ridgeline above Lake Superior.

Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region

The Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System is truly a one-of-a-kind feature in the Northeast Region of Minnesota. While mountain bike trails exist in this region, due to the availability of large tracts of public land, a mountain bike facility of unparalleled size and type can be created in the rural wilderness environment of Cook County that is not possible to create in other areas, like the urban environment used in the creation of Spirit Mountain in the City of Duluth. In fact, one of the only nearby facilities that could be comparable is located at Split Rock Lighthouse State Park, and this trail runs eight miles, is situated more than 30 miles from the nearest segment of Cook County singletrack trails, and is not purpose-built for mountain biking.

Other mountain bike facilities in the region include opportunities to ride along gravel roads or snowmobile trails, but these roads and trails are also not purpose-built for mountain biking. In turn, they do not adequately meet the need or offer significant potential for hosting world-class mountain bike events, which are desired among Cook County residents and visitors. The Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System

would fulfill this gap in service and offer a recreational option which has potential not yet fully realized in northeastern Minnesota.

Attachments

Doc Name	Description	Url
Photo	Existing Britton Peak Mountain Bike Trails	1461085713681-Britton Peak 1.jpg
Photo	Existing Britton Peak Mountain Bike Trails	1461085731580-Britton Peak 2.JPG
Photo	Existing Britton Peak Boardwalk	1461085761985-Britton Peak 3.JPG
Photo	Existing Britton Peak Boardwalk, Considering Cedar Roots and Rock	1461085816547-Britton Peak 4.JPG
Photo	Existing Pincushion Mountain Mountain Bike Trails	1461085843570-Pincushion Mountain 1.JPG
Photo	Existing Pincushion Mountain Mountain Bike Trails	1461085857558-Pincushion Mountain 2.jpg
Photo	Existing Pincushion Mountain Mountain Bike Trails With Views of Lake Superior	1461085892828-Pincushion Mountain 3.jpg
Photo	Existing Pincushion Mountain Mountain Bike Trail Berm	1461085912554-Pincushion Mountain 4.JPG
Regional Map	State- and regional-level parks and trails within 30 miles of the Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System	1461614627332-Nearby Parks and Trails.jpg
Public Involvement Photos	Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System Steering Committee Meeting Summaries (including visioning session)	1461617155445-Meeting Summaries CCMTBTS.pdf
Public Involvement Photos	News Release for Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System Public Visioning Session	1461617217057-Public Visioning Session Set for Cook County Mountain Bike Trails.pdf
Feature Uploader 14	As an existing facility, trails at Britton Peak will be expanded to Carlton Peak.	1461617656390-4-20-16 Britton2.jpg
Feature Uploader 9	With existing trails, the Pincushion Mountain facilities will be expanded into the Sawtooth Bluff recreation area, connecting to the school and including multiple recreational facilities.	1461617739702-4-20-16 Pincushion2.jpg

Development Plan Overview Uploads	Overview Map Showing Conceptual Cook County Mountain Bike Trail System	1461617830376-DesiredConnecti on_withLakeCounty.jpg
Acquisition Plan Overview Uploads	Map highlighting public land available for use	1461617936426-ExistingSystem.jpg
Site Map Uploads 2	Existing mountain bike trail system in Cook County	1461617989720-4-20-16_Existing System.jpg
Regional Demographic Photos	Gitchi-Gami State Trail 2015 Trail Count Study Report	1461769320193-Gitchi Gami State Trail Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Project.pdf
Public Health Photos	2014 County Health Rankings	1461769354833-2014 County Health Rankings.pdf
Economic Development Photos	The Economic Impacts of Active Silent Sports Enthusiasts (Berard et al., 2014)	1461769415411-The Economic Impacts of Active Silent Sports Enthusiasts - Berard et al..pdf
Economic Development Photos	Go Cook County - Cook County Economic Analysis	1461769472004-Go Cook County.pdf
Recreational Trends Photos	2008 Minnesota Northeast Region Report - Davidson-Peterson	1461769556195-2008 Minnesota Northeast Region Report - Davidson-Peterson.pdf
Recreational Trends Photos	Outdoor Recreation Participation Report, 2013	1461769622221-Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2013.pdf
Regional Map	Mountain Bike Singletrack Trail Systems in Northeastern Minnesota	1461786734832-RegionWideSingletrackTrails.jpg
Ad Phasing Plan Photos	Interim Mountain Bike Routes	1461789449678-Interim Mountain Bike Trails.jpg
Development Plan Overview Uploads	Cook County Mountain Bike Trail Implementation Checklist	1461789575780-Cook County MTB Trail Implementation.xlsx
Site Characteristic Images	Mountain Bike Trail at Britton Peak in Tofte	1461791784918-Site Characteristics - CCMBTS.JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Berm at Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais	1461791813767-Site Characteristics - CCMBTS (2).JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Britton Peak Trails in Tofte	1461791879559-Site Characteristics - CCMBTS (4).JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Till-Ta-Whirl at Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais	1461791927491-Site Characteristics - CCMBTS (5).jpg
Site Characteristic Images	View of Lake Superior from Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais	1461870061237-Site Characteristics - CCMBTS (3).jpg

Resolution	Cook County Resolution in Support of Application	1461875642315-Cook County Resolution in Support.pdf
Location Map	Location map added from general tab	1461941119510-Existing System.jpg
Economic Development Photos	Cook County Comprehensive Trails Plan	1461944437441-Cook County Comprehensive Trails Plan_Final with Fixed Format-4.19.16.pdf
Site Characteristic Images	Criteria #1 - Singletrack Trails at Britton Peak in Tofte	1461961452056-Criteria Images - #1.JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Criteria #1 - Mountain Bike Trail Map at Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais	1461961486983-Criteria Images - #1 (2).jpg
Site Characteristic Images	Criteria #2 - Singletrack at Britton Peak Trails in Tofte	1461961550108-Criteria Images - #2.jpg
Site Characteristic Images	Criteria #2 - Boardwalk at Britton Peak Trails in Tofte	1461961576128-Criteria Images - #2 (2).jpg
Site Characteristic Images	Criteria #3 - Bridge at Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais	1461961609654-Criteria Images - #3.JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Criteria #4 - Mountain Biker on Britton Peak Trails in Tofte	1461961649191-Criteria Images - #4 (2).JPG
Site Characteristic Images	Criteria #4 - Boardwalk at Britton Peak in Tofte	1461961677008-Criteria Images - #4.JPG
Letters Of Support	Letter of Support from Cascade Vacation Rentals	1461962186468-Cascade Vacation Rentals Letter of Support.pdf
Letters Of Support	Letter of Support from the Cook County Chamber of Commerce	1461962205154-Cook County Chamber of Commerce Letter of Support.pdf
Criteria 1 Photos	Singeltrack Trails at Britton Peak in Tofte	1463146530486-Criteria Images - #1.JPG
Criteria 1 Photos	Mountain Bike Trail Map at Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais	1463146551208-Criteria Images - #1 (2).jpg
Criteria 2 Photos	Singletrack at Britton Peak Trails in Tofte	1463146583943-Criteria Images - #2.jpg
Criteria 2 Photos	Boardwalk at Britton Peak Trails in Tofte	1463146599995-Criteria Images - #2 (2).jpg
Criteria 3 Photos	Bridge at Pincushion Mountain near Grand Marais	1463146619292-Criteria Images - #3.JPG
Criteria 4 Photos	Mountain Biker on Britton Peak Trails in Tofte	1463146634671-Criteria Images - #4 (2).JPG
Criteria 4 Photos	Boardwalk at Britton Peak in Tofte	1463146649160-Criteria Images - #4.JPG
