



General

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

Last Update

21 Sep 2017 02:18:05

Park or Trail Name

Soo Line Trail

District

4

Location Description

This trail begins at the Stearns/Morrison County line located 3 miles southwest of Bowlus. The facility continues as a paved (non-motorized) trail in a North Easterly direction traversing the City of Bowlus, crossing the Mississippi River at Blanchard Dam and eventually tying in to the Park and Ride Trail Head at United States Highway Number 10 approximately 3 miles north of the City of Royalton. The trail then continues as a gravel (motorized) facility traversing the small Cities of Genola, Pierz and Hillman and eventually hitting the Morrison/Mille Lacs County line on its way to its termination point at Superior Wisconsin.

Park/Trail Address

16076 83rd Street

City

Royalton

Park/Trail State

Minnesota

Zip

56373

Latitude

45.87899075

Longitude

-94.32366943

Map of Park/Trail

Description: Trail Map

[http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Map from Soo Line Master Plan Updated 09 20 17 23fc66.pdf](http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Map%20from%20Soo%20Line%20Master%20Plan%20Updated%2009%2020%2017%2023fc66.pdf)

Description: 2017 Map of Trail

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Facility Website

<http://www.co.morrison.mn.us/>

Organization

Morrison County

Lead Contact Person

Steven C. Backowski, P.E.

Title

County Engineer

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City

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State

Minnesota

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56345

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Joint Applicants**Joint Applicant #1**

City of Bowlus

Joint Applicant #2

City of Hillman

Joint Applicant #3

City of Pierz

Joint Applicant #4**Other project supporters**

The Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail is a legislatively mandated trail requiring the connection of the Soo Line Trail with the Paul Bunyan Trail at Crow Wing State Park.

Description

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

Regional Significance Statement

Traversing the county from the Stearns County line to Mille Lacs County, the trail provides recreational opportunity to the surrounding communities and connections to other valued regional destinations. Within the State of Minnesota, the SLRT has further connections to the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail in Stearns County, MN, providing passage to Fergus Falls/Central Lakes Trail (63 miles), and has a high potential to provide for east-west connection of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail, that when complete will provide a connection between Crow Wing State Park and the SLRT, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Lake Wobegon, SLRT, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi Trails into one continuous recreational route. This system would create one of the longest connected trail systems in the country.

Classification

Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-motorized)

Overview/Description of Park or Trail

The Soo Line trail is a Morrison County owned trail built on an abandoned rail road grade. This trail is an extension of the Wobegon Trail extending from Stearns County into Morrison County. The 9 mile paved non-motorized segment begins at the Stearns/Morrison County line and crosses the Mississippi River where users can experience the beauty of the wild and scenic river at the same time viewing the taming of the river with the construction of Blanchard Dam. The paved portion ends at the United States Highway 10 Park and Ride where the 27.5 mile gravel (motorized) portion begins. This portion takes the user through Crane Meadows

National Wildlife Refuge where nature abounds. The trail continues through a variety of terrain and geological formations eventually passing the user on into Mille Lacs County.

The Soo Line Recreational Trailhead is located in a regionally desirable setting within central MN, approximately 8 miles south of Little Falls, MN. The Western segment of the Soo Line Recreational Trail was dedicated in the summer of 2007 becoming one of the most remote and scenic paved non-motorized recreational trails in MN. This location is adjacent to US Highway 10 and is the division between the east and west portions of the trail; the Soo Line Recreational Trail ?? West transverses from US Highway 10 west to the Morrison/Stearns County boundary and is a paved trail that crosses the Mississippi River at the down slope of the Blanchard Dam; the Soo Line Recreational Trail ?? East transverses from US Highway 10 east to the Morrison/Mille Lacs County boundary, with the trail overall, terminating at Superior, WI. The Soo Line Recreational Trail is an important destination as it is the only pure pedestrian bridge (summertime) over the Mississippi River, connecting the east and west portions of the Soo Line Recreational Trail, with further connections to the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail in Stearns County, MN, providing passage to Fergus Falls/Central Lakes Trail (63 miles), and has high potential to provide for the east-west connection of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail, that when completed, will provide a connection between Crow Wing State Park and the Soo Line Recreational Trail, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Lake Wobegon, Soo Line, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi Trails into one continuous recreational route. Without the trail bridge, these connections would be in jeopardy. The trail bridge is parallel to the Blanchard Dam on the southern side of the dam, and is one of the few locations in the United States that Cross Rocks can be found, a popular way-point and destination for tourists. The trail bridge crosses the Mississippi River at one of the most high quality scenic portions of the river.

Total Acreage or Mileage

37

Acquisition and Development Status

Existing Park or Trail

Aquired

100

Development status

Facility Listing

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

Existing Facilities

Proposed Facilities

- Picnicking and picnic shelters
- Walking Trails (paved)
- Biking Trails (paved)
- Mountain Biking Trails (natural)
- Cross-country Skiing Trails
- Restrooms/sanitation building
- Roads and Parking Areas

Existing Facilities Other Information

Trailhead Information Kiosks

Benches along trail

Disabled Hunting Blind

ATV Trails

General Site Characteristics

The varied landscapes of the SLRT creates a unique and thoroughly enjoyable experience for users.

Traveling the trail, one will pass farm fields, wooded corridors, quiet lakes, meandering streams, as well as wetlands and waterfowl areas. Deer, wild turkey, pheasants, songbirds, and grouse are some of the wildlife that can be seen throughout.

Site characteristics upload

Description: Trail Site Characteristics

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Trail_Site_Characteristics_2000d9.pdf

Site characteristics upload

Description: Image of Site Characteristics

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Site characteristics upload

Description:

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/fishing_at_dam_0a9733.JPG

Site characteristics upload

Description:

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Master Plan

Master Plan Status:

Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available

Upload Existing Master Plan

2017 Master Plan

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Additional Supportive Information:

Classification Details

Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized) Classification

Provides a High-Quality "Destination" Trail Experience

The Soo Line Recreational Trail is located in a regionally desirable setting within central MN, approximately 8 miles south of Little Falls, MN. The Western segment of the Soo Line Recreational Trail was dedicated in the summer of 2007 becoming one of the most remote and scenic paved non-motorized recreational trails in MN. This location is adjacent to

Criteria #1 Images

Mississippi River Image

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Mississippi_River_at_Soo_Line_Trail_b86ba5.pdf

Criteria #1 Images

Soo Trail at River

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/>

US Highway 10 and is the division between the east and west portions of the trail; the Soo Line Recreational Trail West transverses from US Highway 10 west to the Morrison/Stearns County boundary and is a paved trail that crosses the Mississippi River at the down slope of the Blanchard Dam; the Soo Line Recreational Trail East transverses from US Highway 10 east to the Morrison/Mille Lacs County boundary, with the trail overall, terminating at Superior, WI. The Soo Line Recreational Trail is an important destination as it is the only pure pedestrian bridge (summertime) over the Mississippi River, connecting the east and west portions of the Soo Line Recreational Trail, with further connections to the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail in Stearns County, MN, providing passage to Fergus Falls/Central Lakes Trail (63 miles), and has high potential to provide for the east-west connection of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail, that when completed, will provide a connection between Crow Wing State Park and the Soo Line Recreational Trail, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Lake Wobegon, Soo Line, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi Trails into one continuous recreational route. The trail bridge is parallel to the Blanchard Dam on the southern side of the dam, and is one of the few locations in the United States that Cross Rocks can be found, a popular way-point and destination for tourists.

[15-014D/](#)

Criteria #1 Images

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/typical_paved_section_of_Soo_Line_16be7e.JPG

Criteria #1 Images

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Criteria #1 Images

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/typical_gravel_section_211c47.JPG

Criteria #1 Images

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Criteria #1 Images

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Well-located (i.e., Convenience of Access/Adequate Length) to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination

This trail more than adequately provides at least an hour of outdoor recreation opportunity, and connects to other trails and facilities that can provide at least an hour of recreation in total. While the west portion of the Soo Line Recreational Trail proper extends to the Morrison-Stearns County border, it provides approximately 20 miles round-trip alone, with further connections to the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail in Stearns County, MN. These trails currently provide further passage to Fergus Falls/Central Lakes Trail (100 miles) to the northwest, and 28 additional miles to the southeast to St. Joseph, with a proposed extension to Waite Park and St. Cloud, MN. Additionally, maintaining this connection has high potential to provide for the east-west connection of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail, that when completed, will provide a connection between Crow Wing State Park and the Soo Line Recreational Trail, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Lake Wobegon, Soo Line, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi Trails into one continuous recreational route.

Criteria #2 Images

Trail Map

[http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Map from Soo Line Master Plan Updated_09_20_17_680d1c.pdf](http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Map_from_Soo_Line_Master_Plan_Updated_09_20_17_680d1c.pdf)

Criteria #2 Images

2017 Trail Map

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Enhances Connectivity to Regional Destinations

The Soo Line Recreational Trail West, is a paved trail available to pedestrians, in-line skaters and bicyclers during the spring, summer and fall seasons, and available to non-studded snowmobiles, cross-country skiers, and Fat-Bikers as long as there is adequate snow of 3"+, throughout the winter season. This trail provides the public natural high quality recreational opportunities, attracting regional clientele from multiple communities (communities within Morrison County: 16 cities and 30 Townships), drawing tourists, generating economic impact from outside the local area through visitors from outstate Minnesota. The 14 foot wide quiet, forested trail is mostly through wooded terrain with an occasional farm and wetland. This ten-mile section starts at US Hwy 10 just north of Royalton, where there is a parking lot and trailhead, runs approximately ten miles over the trail bridge which crosses the Mississippi River parallel to the Blanchard Dam, through the City of Bowlus, ending at the connection to the Lake Wobegon Trail between Bowlus and Holdingford at the Morrison and Stearns County line. The Blanchard dam and bridge over the Mississippi is the most breathtaking portion of the trail. The City of Bowlus has a restored train depot with bathrooms and parking. Additionally, the trail is also close to the City of Little Falls and Charles Lindbergh State Park and has very high potential to connect to the future Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail.

Criteria #3 Images

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/blanchard_dam_2efb4a.JPG

Criteria #3 Images

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Criteria #3 Images

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/connection_to_wobegon_trail_75a501.JPG

Criteria #3 Images

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within a Region

This ten-mile section starts at US Hwy 10 just north of Royalton, where there is a parking lot with restroom facilities and trailhead, runs approximately ten miles over the trail bridge, which crosses the Mississippi River parallel to the Blanchard Dam, through the City of Bowlus, ending at the connection to the Lake Wobegon Trail between Bowlus and Holdingford at the Morrison and Stearns County line. The City of Bowlus has a restored train depot with bathrooms and parking. Additionally, the trail is also close to the City of Little Falls and Charles Lindbergh State Park. The trail provides a high quality, traffic-free, motorized-vehicle free, recreational opportunity available to pedestrians, in-line skaters and bicyclers during the spring, summer, and fall (available to cross-country skiers, Fat-Bikers and non-studded snowmobiles as long as there is adequate snow of 3"+ during the winter months), not otherwise available within a reasonable distance.

Criteria #4 Images

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/mississippi_river_at_dam_cff3da.JPG

Criteria #4 Images

<http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/>

Attachments

Doc Name	Description	Url
Location Map	Location map added from general tab	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/1432234150678-sooline_south.pdf
Location Map	Location map added from general tab	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/1432234656190-SooLineTrail.pdf
Master Plan	Master plan added from master plan tab	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/1432239945647-Park & Ride 20 Year Plan.doc
Resolution	County Support Resolution	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/1432240287578-Trail Resln.pdf
Additional Attachment	Updated MasterPlan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Soo Line Master Plan Updated_10-12_17_0bdf22.pdf
Existing Master Plan	2017 Master Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Park Trail Map	Trail Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Map from Soo Line Master Plan Updated_09_20_17_23fc66.pdf
Park Trail Map	2017 Map of Trail	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Site Characteristics Upload	Trail Site Characterisitcs	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Trail Site Characteristics_2000d9.pdf
Site Characteristics Upload	Image of Site Characterisitcs	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Rgnl Trail MNclassification1 Upload	Mississippi River Image	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Mississippi River at Soo Line Trail_b86ba5.pdf
Rgnl Trail MNclassification1 Upload	Soo Trail at River	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Rgnl Trail MNclassification2 Upload	Trail Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Map from Soo Line Master Plan Updated_09_20_17_680d1c.pdf
Rgnl Trail MNclassification2 Upload	2017 Trail Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/

Additional Attachment	Existing Master Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Soo Line Master Plan Updated_09_20_17_54344d.pdf
Additional Attachment	2017 Trail Masterr Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Maintenance Operations Plan Upload	Trail Operations/Maintenance Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/OM Plan_ee7d69.pdf
Maintenance Operations Plan Upload	2017 Master Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Site Map Upload	Soo Line Trail Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Map from Soo Line Master Plan Updated_09_20_17_4ace41.pdf
Site Map Upload	2017 Trail Master Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Regional Map Uploads	Lake Wobegon Trail Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Lake Wobegontrailfinal14_ff8b0f.pdf
Regional Map Uploads	Stearns County	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Additional Attachment	2017 Trail Master Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Additional Attachment	ATV Club Agreement	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/ATV Club Agreement_a50a30.pdf
Additional Attachment	Trail Maintenance	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
Development Feature Upload		http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/bridge_28e02e.jpg
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Rgnl Trail MNclassification4 Upload	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/mississippi river at dam_cff3da.JPG
Rgnl Trail MNclassification4 Upload	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
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Additional Attachment	Morrison County Trail Designation Resolution 2018-031	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/Trail Regional Designation Signed Resolution_78a4d0.pdf
Additional Attachment		http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/applications/15-014D/
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