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
Glacial Edge Trails

District
3

Location Description
Beginning at the southern city limits of Fergus Falls, in Otter Tail County, the 14.7 miles of the Glacial Edge Trails (GET) passes through the municipality ending at the northeast within 18 miles of Maplewood State Park. Approximately 2 miles of the trail are on the Otter Tail River. The GET proposal is a northward extension of the Central Lakes Trail.

Park/Trail Address

City

Park/Trail State

Zip

Latitude
46.27934679

Longitude
-96.09239101

Map of Park/Trail
Description:

Facility Website

Organization
City of Fergus Falls

Lead Contact Person
Rod Spidahl

Title
City Council, 4th Ward

Mailing Address
112 W. Washington Ave.

City
Fergus Falls

State

Zip
Regional Significance Statement

Classification
Regional Trail (Non Motorized)

Overview/Description of Park or Trail
Intersecting the western banks and glacial hills of ancient Lake Agassiz, the proposed Glacial Edge Trails reflects a rich transition zone encompassing prairie wetlands, rivers, lakes and hardwood forests. The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in Fergus Falls, with 330 acres of native and restored prairie, 28 wetlands and 3.5 miles of additional walking trails attests to the diverse wildlife, grasses, wildflowers, clean water and ecosystems to be encountered here and is just minutes off the trail. Cultural attractions include the Historic Kirkbride, a castle-like decommissioned State Hospital dating to the 1870s, the Kaddatz Art Gallery featuring inimitable landscape works by artist Charles Beck and local artists exhibits on display in the River Inn through the Lake Region Arts Council and Springboard for the Arts. The elm-canopied streets, great dining and historic downtown make this one of the top ten rated communities to visit in Minnesota. Amenities include camping at Delagoon Park, a new 27 hole, wild-land disc golf, M-State Campus and Prairie area, Kirkbride Campus/Park and 9 of 22 city parks, natural areas with 600 acres of green space to host visitors.

The proposed Glacial Edge Trails route begins at the current northern terminus of the Central Lakes Trail just southeast of Fergus Falls. The trail will parallel MN Hwy 210 and Pebble Lake Rd. as it enters the town on a separate 10 ft. bike path. As the trail enters the core urbanized area of Fergus Falls, interactions with existing streets become more frequent in places, though plans are to create the greatest separation for trail users as possible. The trail will eventually connect with the Fergus Falls Riverwalk and begin its interaction with the
scenic riverfront and corresponding river trails as its path moves west through Downtown. After meandering through Downtown Fergus Falls along the Riverwalk, the trail will enter the soon to be developed riverfront recreational area in the heart of the City. At this point, the proposed trail moves north and connects to the Minnesota State Community and Technical College Fergus Falls campus, Fergus Falls Industrial Park, and the Historic Kirkbride site. While now turning back towards the east, the trail will clip the northern edge of the City, providing vistas of nearby lakes and cutting through the scenic and geologically significant Chautauqua Channel, where a Chautauqua Channel Ice Margin Interpretive Loop will be included as part of the Glacial Edge Trail. Finally, the trail will exit Fergus Falls and connect with County Rd. No. 1, where the hope is for a future connection to Maplewood State Park and the Heartland Trail through coordination with Otter Tail County.

Total Acreage or Mileage

Acquisition and Development Status
With the direction of the Fergus Falls Port Authority, the City of Fergus Falls has submitted a grant request to LCCMR for $500,000 to be matched by the City of Fergus Falls to acquire crucial land areas now for sale along the Otter Tail River in the center of our proposed trail and eventual Regional Park Development. Access and Acquired Lands estimated at 60%

Development status

Facility Listing

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

Existing Facilities
Proposed Facilities

General Site Characteristics

Master Plan

Additional Supportive Information:

Classification Details

Regional Trail (Non-Motorized) Classification

Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation
Experience
The Glacial Edge Trails is in the hilly moraine of glacial action that created ancient Lake Agassiz and skirts a

Criteria #1 Images
dozen of the thousands of prairie wetlands and four of
the 1048 lakes for which Otter Tail County has
national recognition. The region in the heart of the
single largest grassland area in the world and is # 1 on
the 25 most important and threatened waterfowl
habitats on the continent. The Otter Tail is the true
headwaters of the Red River, part of 1/5 of Minnesota
waters flowing north to Hudson Bay and are
distinguished by the fast, clean waters and an
amazing 272’ drop in the River from 10 miles north of
Fergus Falls to the southern city limits. Two, Class 3
white-water sections lie within the five mile stretch and
100 ft. drop within city limits! This means year round
recreation and scenic vistas with especially stunning
fall colors of maple/oak/birch/aspen and ash, amazing
fishing, native wildflowers, birding, and water-oriented
recreation--14% of Otter Tail County area is water.
The trail offers unique historic views in passing directly
by the old Red River Mill and through the Kirkbride city
park grounds, allowing close up views of the
architectural style of the former Fergus Falls State
Hospital built in the 1870s, a National Historic Site.
The Glacial Edge Trails offers secure parking and
amenity access in the downtown section of Fergus
Falls (population 13,351) while also connecting the
green spaces of 7 city parks and recreation areas. The
central nexus follows two miles of trail dedicated to
river protection and trail development made possible
by a recent LCCMR grant match of $500,000.

Preserves a Regionally-Significant and Diverse
Natural or Historic Landscape
The Glacial Edge Trails along I-94 on the 34 mile
Fergus Falls Reach of the Otter Tail River has
unquestionably the most potential users of any area
on its 186 miles (p 5, Otter Tail River Master Plan,
2009, MnDNR). Just one hour from the 230,000,
Fargo, ND metro, one of the top ten fastest growing
cities in the US (Forbes), Fergus Falls is the
Minnesota Legislature designated head of the 55 mile,
Central Lakes Trail, linking to the Wobegon Trail in
Osakis, Mn and an ideal gateway to the county’s 1048
lakes and clean rivers. With 22 parks and three natural
areas, the municipality has as much green space per
person as any other municipality over 10,000 in
Greater Minnesota. Existing, municipal, federal and
local non-motorized bike and walking trails (Prairie
Wetlands Learning Center, North Country Trail, Fish
and Game Land) account for 18.9 miles and with this
proposal, bring the total to 29.5 miles in the city limits.
Fergus is one of 18 Minnesota cities to receive the
Bike Friendly Designation in 2015 (League
of American Bicyclists) and yearly hosts the Lake Alice
100, an 88-lap ride around Lake Alice in April, the

Criteria #2 Images
most compact century ride in America. The strategic importance is to extend the Central Lakes Trail through Fergus Falls to within 18 miles of Maplewood State Park (south entrance) and its 26 miles of year-round trails. By connecting the Central Lakes Trail northward in this 14.7 mile proposal, we have a 137 mile system. With the proposed 27 mile, Pelican Rapids to Perham Trail at Maplewood (2016 bonding) the reality of a 350+ mile continuous bike route is that much closer--connecting to the Heartland/Paul Bunyan Trails, a superb national attraction.

**Well-located and Connected to Serve a Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination**

Major trails, numerous historic and educational sites would be linked by this proposal. Note the regional connectivity: 1) The North Country National Scenic Hiking Trail intersecting the GET Proposal, including an additional 10 mile municipal edge loop; 2) Diminishing the gap from the Central Lakes Trail to Maplewood State Park; 3) Closer proximity to the Historic Phelps Mill County Park as well as Glendalough State Park for travelers coming east on I-94 out of Fargo; 4) The strategic role of the GET proposal in closing the final link to the Heartland Trail Extension; 5) Access to Class 3 white-water kayaking sections on the Otter Tail River in Fergus Falls and world-class small mouth bass fishing along the trail; 6) Direct GET trail connection to sites like the 150 year old National Historic Register Kirkbride Buildings (600,000 sq. ft.), over 10,000 visitors, and the Red River Mill (1919), presently planned for redevelopment, as well as Art Displays at the Kaddatz Gallery and local productions at the historic Fergus Theatre downtown; 7) Proximity to The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (USFWS) with 330 acres of native and restored prairie, 28 wetlands and 3.5 miles of additional walking trails. The Visitor Center houses a 2,500-square-foot exhibit area, the Bluestem Store, classrooms and a multipurpose meeting room, and; 8) Trail connection to M-State Fergus Falls Campus and natural prairie area.

**Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region**

The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail Master Plan states, "Relative to other areas of the state, west-central Minnesota has fewer trails of statewide significance." The 2,225 sq. miles in Otter Tail County comprise about 2.5% of the area of the State. It is noted that Minnesota has 4000 miles of bike paths and trails or 1 mile of path/trail for every 21.5 sq miles. Otter Tail county has approximately 1 mile of bike path for every 44 sq. miles. The 20 miles of Central Lakes

**Criteria #3 Images**

Trail in Otter Tail County ends on the south end of the Fergus Falls City limits, the Otter Tail County seat and its largest municipality, but this leaves a significant trail gap to the 10,279 acre Maplewood State Park with its 150 bird species, 50 species of mammals, 25 kinds of reptiles and amphibians. Maplewood has 120,000 annual visitors; most coming by automobile. This significant gap would be strategically addressed by facilitating bikers to utilize Maplewood much more readily. The only other significant bike-path, besides the existing 14 miles in the Fergus Falls city limits, is a 12 mile section of paved trail connects Battle Lake to Glendalough State Park (5 miles of trail), 19 miles from Fergus Falls. Unquestionably, this region of Minnesota is emerging as a regional recreational playground with untapped resources for one of the fastest growing Metro areas in the United States–Fargo/Moorhead. The natural resources exist, if developed, to attract national and international visitors. The recent increase in civic groups and regional partners seeking to meet this demand for connectivity and designated trails certainly highlights why Regional Designation and subsequent funding is crucial at this time. The GET proposal will have a significant and long-lasting recreational, economic and healthy-living benefit for the region and State.

### Attachments

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Rgnl Trail Classification2 Upload

AcqDev Cost Projections Upload

Ad Phasing Plan Upload

Acquisition Plan Overview Upload

Ecological Land ResPlan Upload

Programming Plan Upload
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Development Acquisition Plan Upload

Development Feature Upload

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