

Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on November 14, 2023

M.L. 2022 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2024

Project Title: The Missing Link: Gull Lake Trail, Fairview Township

Project Manager: Marla Yoho

Affiliation: Fairview Township

Mailing Address: Fairview Township 11491 Gull Lake Dr SW

City/State/Zip: Brainerd, MN 56401

Phone: (218) 825-9322

E-mail: fairviewtownship@msn.com

Website: <https://www.fairviewtwpmn.com/>

Funding Source:

Fiscal Year:

Legal Citation: M.L. 2022, Chp. 94, Sec. 2, Subd. 09i

Appropriation Amount: \$1,394,000

Amount Spent: \$1,393,607

Amount Remaining: \$393

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

This project created 3.1 miles of safe access to the natural and scenic environment and an easy way to introduce activity to every age and ability. Using the road right-of-way reduced environmental impact. Additionally, environmentally friendly alternative transportation, such as e-bikes, use it to access local attractions and businesses.

Overall Project Outcome and Results

The Gull Lake Trail is a nearly complete 21-mile route along a picturesque county road that is heavily traveled by residents, tourists, and vacationers. Fairview Township lies in the middle of the route where the last section of 3.7 miles was yet to be completed. This section is the "missing link" to making the project fully functional. The Gull Lake Trail is a connecting link to the Paul Bunyan State Trail, Minnesota's 120-mile paved multi-recreational trail, and many other local and regional recreational opportunities. Without the completion of this 3.7-mile "missing link", the trail would not serve its greater recreational purpose for the area, region or state.

Fairview Township proposed to continue the trail construction that was partially funded by the LCCMR in 2022. Due to a funding shortfall, 3.1 miles were constructed instead of 3.7 miles, as originally intended.

There was also an opportunity to increase safe recreation options. Completing this trail around Gull Lake provides residents, visitors, and guests at the many resorts along this route a safe place to bike, walk, run or push baby strollers. County Road 77 has narrow shoulders and cars often surpass the 55 MPH speed limit making access to active, healthy lifestyle choices difficult.

It has still achieved the following outcomes: Expanded outdoor recreational opportunities, reduced environmental impact by using the existing road right-of-way, and provides safe access to the natural and scenic environment. The overall significance of completing this portion of the Gull Lake Trail cannot be overstated. Fairview Township, along with the other cities constructing segments of the trail, East Gull Lake, Lake Shore and Nisswa, have been working on this project since 2010. Every mile is a substantial achievement toward creating a significant recreational amenity for both residents and visitors to our area.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

Fairview Township has project information, updates, and funding sources available on its website and Facebook page, along with information about recreational opportunities and businesses along the Gull Lake Trail, trail maps, and links to adjacent trails. Local resorts are also promoting the trail in their advertising.

The ENRTF, DNR grant programs, GMRPTC and individual donors will be recognized on a wall of commemorative tiles at the town hall.

The Brainerd Dispatch will also be writing an article acknowledging the agencies who have financed this trail through their grant programs. An initial article appeared on January 28, 2023.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2022 Approved Final Report

General Information

Date: December 11, 2024

ID Number: 2022-008

Staff Lead: Michael Varien

Project Title: The Missing Link: Gull Lake Trail, Fairview Township

Project Budget: \$1,394,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Marla Yoho

Organization: Fairview Township

Office Telephone: (218) 825-9322

Email: fairviewtownship@msn.com

Web Address: <https://www.fairviewtwpmn.com/>

Project Reporting

Final Report Approved: November 14, 2023

Reporting Status: Project Completed

Date of Last Action: November 14, 2023

Project Completion: September 30, 2023

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2022, Chp. 94, Sec. 2, Subd. 09i

Appropriation Language: \$1,394,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Fairview Township to complete the Gull Lake Trail by engineering and constructing the trail's final segment through Fairview Township in the Brainerd Lakes area.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2025

Narrative

Project Summary: This 3.7-mile portion of the Fairview Township Trail is the missing link that completes the Gull Lake Trail master plan for this recreational amenity in the Brainerd Lakes area.

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

There's an amazing opportunity waiting to be realized in central Minnesota. The Gull Lake Trail, the newest regionally significant trail system in the Brainerd Lakes area, currently has 17.3 of its 21-mile route completed or under contract for construction. The remaining section of 7.8 miles in Fairview Township is the missing link to making the project fully functional. The Gull Lake Trail is a connecting link to the Paul Bunyan State Trail, Minnesota's 120-mile paved multi-recreational trail. From here, users have access to the Heartland State Trail, Blue Ox Trail and the Pillsbury State Forest trail system. Without the construction of this portion, the trail would not serve its greater recreational purpose for the area or state.

There's also an opportunity to increase safe recreation options. Completing this trail around Gull Lake will provide residents, visitors and guests at the many resorts along this route a safe place to bike, walk, run or push baby strollers. County Road 77 has narrow shoulders and cars often surpass the 55 MPH speed limit on the hilly, windy highway making access to active, healthy lifestyle choices difficult.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

Fairview Township has spent \$178,000 to complete the preliminary plans and specifications for the ENTIRE 7.8-MILES of this 10-ft wide, paved trail, and has recently completed construction of 4.1 miles of trail at a cost of over \$1,700,000.

The following tasks have been completed and submitted to Dan Golner at the DNR for the entire 7.8-miles of the trail, including the 3.7-miles to be constructed with this grant:

- Wetland delineations;
- soil borings;
- an archaeological survey and approval from the Dept of Indian Affairs;
- approval from the DNR Natural Heritage Dept;
- topographical surveys;
- County and DNR environmental approvals.

This grant will cover the partial construction of the final 3.7 miles of the Fairview Trail, as detailed under Activities and Milestones. The preliminary plans have been approved. Funds from a GMRPT grant will cover the engineering costs to complete the finalized plans and bid-specifications. We have permission from Cass County for placement in their County 77 highway ROW. A small easement lease with the DNR is being finalized and will be paid from township funds. The entire trail is truly shovel-ready.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

This project embodies and correlates to the LCCMR 2022 Funding Priority G: Land acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation. It proposes the following outcomes: Protection and/or enhancement of existing area resources and aesthetics; and connection to state, regional, and local parks and trails. It will run exclusively within the road right-of-way, lessening the environmental impact. The trail will provide safe access to the natural and scenic environment. Being ADA compliant, it offers an easy way to introduce activity to every age and ability. Additionally, environmentally-friendly alternative transportation, such as e-bikes, can use it to access local businesses.

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Central

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s):

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Acquire balance of funding; Complete plans and bid specifications; Advertise for bids and award contract

Activity Budget: \$1,000

Activity Description:

The main objective is completion of the final 3.7-miles of the Fairview Township portion of the Gull Lake Trail on the northern end of CSAH77.

Preliminary construction tasks include:

- 1) Apply for and acquire funding grants for balance of project costs;
- 2) Finalize 20-year lease contracts from State of MN- Lands & Minerals for easement in CSAH 77 right-of-way for total eight-tenths mile section on 3 parcels;
- 3) Single-source vendor, Bolton & Menk engineers create finalized 3.7-mile plans and construction specifications for bidding process;
- 4) Advertise in trade and local publications using competitive bid process and award contract to winning contractor for Summer 2023 construction period;
- 5) Sign contract for wetland replacement plan with MN Board of Water & Soil Resources and Aitkin County for Wetland Credits. Wetland delineation, Cass County Soil & Water Wetland Approval, archaeological survey, Historic preservation review reports have already been filed with the DNR in 2020. Must check on their timeliness.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Apply for and acquire funding grants for balance of project cost	December 31, 2022
Bolton & Menk engineers create finalized plan and construction specs for bid purposes (GMRPT expense)	December 31, 2022
Assure necessary DNR documents (archaeological surveys, wetland delineation, endangered species evaluation, etc) are filed	December 31, 2022
Advertise in trade publications for competitive bids and award contract for 2023 (ENRTF expense)	February 28, 2023
Finalize 20-year lease contract for 8/10 mile easement with DNR (Township expense)	March 31, 2023
Final construction approved by the township; Trail open for public use	July 31, 2024

Activity 2: Preliminary and first-stage construction of 3.7-mile final segment of Fairview Trail (Red segment on Gull Tail Location Map)

Activity Budget: \$1,393,000

Activity Description:

Milestone 1: Preliminary construction will include mobilization and rental of equipment, clearing trail easement of signs, fencing and pavement, acquisition of supplies (culverts, pipes, etc), installation of silt fence and sediment control as needed.

Milestone 2: First-stage construction will include traffic control, subgrade and common excavation, base and surface application of Class 5 aggregate, installation and connection of culverts to storm sewers, continued sediment control, stabilization of embankments, topsoil, and partial turf restoration.

Milestone 3: This Milestone is not currently funded. Funding for this portion of trail construction is dependent on outstanding grant applications. This Milestone would include paving, rock stabilization of slopes and embankments, concrete as necessary, chain link fencing and final turf restoration.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Mobilization of equipment, clearing trail site, subgrade and primary excavation, equipment rental, traffic control	July 31, 2023
Traffic control, culvert installation, silt fence and sediment control, stabilization of embankments, preliminary turf restoration	September 30, 2023
Paving trail surface, rock slope stabilization, chain link fence, sign installation, turf restoration	June 30, 2024

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jenny Gunsbury	Fairview Trail North Portion-Gull Lake Trail	Fairview Trail Committee Chair, co-grant writer	No
Josh Stevenson	Cass County	Fiscal agent for Fairview Township, Gull Lake Trail	No
Darrick Anderson	Cass County Highway Department	County Engineer	No

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

"If you build it, they will come" ...never has that phrase been more appropriate than when we constructed the first 4.1-miles of this trail. On the morning paving started, people were on the trail before the asphalt had time to cool. Residents and tourists have anticipated this trail for the last 6 years. The resorts in the area see it as a major amenity and will include it in their advertising. Explore Minnesota will include it in their brochures and trail maps. It is adjacent to the Pillsbury State Forest and will immediately benefit from its visitors. Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails also will include this trail as it promotes the connection to the Paul Bunyan State Trail network.

Signage identifying funding from the ENRTF will be posted along this segment of the trail. The ENRTF logo and verbiage will be included on the Fairview Township website and Facebook page. The ENRTF will be acknowledged in any press releases and articles the Township controls.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

Upon completion of the final 3.7-miles through Fairview Township, the Gull Lake Trail master plan will be complete, and no further work is currently anticipated. Fairview Township has a 20-year agreement in place with Cass County for trail maintenance. The associated costs and funding are accounted for in township budgets going forward.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
Personnel										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Contracts and Services										
TBD	Service Contract	Contractor and subcontractors selected through competitive bid process for primary trail construction including mobilization, clearing, grubbing, culvert and pavement removal, excavation, equipment rental, Class 5 and aggregate base, culverts and installation, traffic control, silt fence and sediment control, topsoil and partial turf restoration. Using Single-Source Engineering firm (document attached)				0		\$1,393,000	\$1,393,000	-
							Sub Total	\$1,393,000	\$1,393,000	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Capital Expenditures										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Travel In Minnesota										
							Sub Total	-	-	-

Travel Outside Minnesota										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Printing and Publication										
	Publication	Advertising for construction bids	Publication of requests for trail construction bids					\$1,000	\$607	\$393
							Sub Total	\$1,000	\$607	\$393
Other Expenses										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
							Grand Total	\$1,394,000	\$1,393,607	\$393

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
---------------	---------------------	-------------	--

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
State						
Cash	Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails	Planning & Design	Secured	\$167,280	\$167,280	-
Cash	DNR Regional Parks & Trails Program	Common Borrow, Aggregate Class 5, Wear Course	Secured	\$150,000	\$150,000	-
Cash	Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails	Wear Course, Rock Stabilized Slope, Concrete Walks, Chain Link Fence	Potential	\$979,505	-	\$979,505
			State Sub Total	\$1,296,785	\$317,280	\$979,505
Non-State						
Cash	Fairview Township Community Projects Fund	Engineering and construction costs	Secured	\$6,000	\$6,000	-
Cash	DNR Federal Recreational Trail Program	Common Excavation, Common Borrow	Secured	\$300,000	\$300,000	-
Cash	Bernick Family Foundation	Non-eligible: Wetland Credits & 20-yr lease State of MN	Secured	\$15,000	\$15,000	-
Cash	Private Donations: Brainerd Lakes Community Foundation	Non-eligible: 20-year lease with State of Minnesota	Secured	\$15,850	\$15,835	\$15
			Non State Sub Total	\$336,850	\$336,835	\$15
			Funds Total	\$1,633,635	\$654,115	\$979,520

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [6b244a73-70f.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

This map shows the entire Gull Lake Trail as it encircles the western border of Gull Lake. It also shows the eventual connections to the Paul Bunyan Trail.

Segments labeled 1 and 2 depict the Fairview Township portion of the Gull Lake Trail. The 4.1 miles of segment 2 will be under construction during the summer of 2021. The 3.7-miles of segment 1 highlights the portion covered in our grant request.

The two segments shown in the City of East Gull Lake (3) and City of Lake Shore (4) are existi...

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Fairview Board Resolution	4af867a7-b00.pdf
Cass County Resolution	82133678-91c.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Highlights along the Gull Lake Trail	e42b0573-4ff.pdf
Cass County Trail Placement Approval	d293de5b-848.pdf
Preliminary Cost Estimate	05f039fb-05d.pdf
Gull Lake Trail Cooperative Agreement	007b408b-7e1.pdf
7.8 Mile Fairview Trail Spreadsheet	64b22d99-c1d.pdf
Letters of Support Highlights	eb7c2fd3-f1c.pdf
Gull Lake Trail Location Map in color	cff4291d-ca4.pdf
Background Check Form	1d3943ca-e34.pdf
Single Source Justification Form	05909abb-58a.pdf
Budget Spreadsheet showing all funders	4b1ec2a9-2bf.xlsx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

The cost estimate for this portion of the trail was \$2,362,000 when we submitted our original application. In the meantime, costs have escalated drastically, and that construction estimate has increased to \$2,990,680.

This award of \$1,394,000 is a major step towards preliminary construction.

The activities listed in Milestone 1 include plans and bid specifications which will be covered by a \$167,280 award from the GMRPTC. The only ENRT funding in Milestone 1 is for advertising bid requests.

The preliminary construction activities listed under Milestone 2 will be covered by the ENRTF funds we have been awarded in 2022.

Since this work plan was first submitted we have been awarded \$150,000 from the DNR Federal Recreational Trail Program and \$300,000 from the DNR Regional Trail Program. In addition, we have submitted a grant application to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Commission for the final \$979,505 to complete our activities listed in Milestone 3. I have attached a copy of the entire budget for the trail with columns indicating with grant funder would be covering each item. (This was attached to the GMRPT grant application.)

We anticipate the major portion of the work would be completed by late fall of 2023 but would expect there would be a delay in final approval by both the township and Cass County engineers until the spring of 2024 when the trail has gone through a winter freeze-thaw cycle.

A Single-Source document will be submitted for the Bolton & Menk engineering firm as they have been the engineers on this project since its initiation in 2017. They are familiar with the preliminary plans, the terrain, the construction constraints during construction of the first 4.1 miles of the trail and working with the Cass County Highway engineer within their highway easement.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?

N/A

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

No

Work Plan Amendments

Amendment ID	Request Type	Changes made on the following pages	Explanation & justification for Amendment Request (word limit 75)	Date Submitted	Approved	Date of LCCMR Action
1	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 12/31/2024 New Completion Date: 09/30/2023	Anderson Brothers Construction was able to work efficiently without any weather issues or unanticipated construction constraints which made the project move along much faster than our previous trail project. Vegetation was reestablished in a timely manner. The trail is complete with signage, pavement and vegetation firmly in place. The trail is in complete use.	October 31, 2023	Yes	October 31, 2023

Status Update Reporting

Final Status Update November 14, 2023

Date Submitted: October 31, 2023

Date Approved: November 13, 2023

Overall Update

The original proposed outcome was construction of a 3.7-mile segment of a 10-ft wide paved trail, lying within the road right-of-way along Cass County CSAH 77. This would have provided the “missing link” to complete the Fairview Township portion of the Gull Lake Trail. After advertising for bids, the lowest bid came from Anderson Bros Construction at \$2,391,793. In addition, there were expenses for Bolton & Menk Engineering, soil testing, etc. With only \$2,034,000 funding in place, construction had to be limited to 3.1-miles opposed to the proposed 3.7-miles, leaving a .6-mile gap which we hope to fund in 2024.

Proposed construction plans had received approval from the Cass County and State Highway departments, all paperwork was filed with SHPO, NHIS, MIA, etc in a timely manner, and contracts were in place to purchase .4 acres of wetland credits and with the DNR for a small easement. With all of that in place, construction began promptly in June. We did not encounter any significant delays due to weather or unexpected construction issues. The trail was paved, embankments were stabilized, re-vegetation was established, and the trail was completed and in use by October.

Activity 1

1. Grants awarded: DNR FRPT \$150,000, DNR RPT \$300,000, GMRPTC \$167,280 and LCCMR \$1,394,000, plus \$25,000 private donations = total funds \$2,034,000.
2. Lease with State of MN DNR formalized June 27, 2023, allowing construction of the trail across land controlled by the DNR, but on which Cass County has, by constrictive easement, constructed a State-Aid highway.
3. Construction plans were completed and approved by Cass County and State of Minnesota Highway Engineers.
4. Bid requests published in the local paper and Bridge Tower Media (trade) with bid opening in April. Bids requested on a "base bid" plus 3 alternatives.

The lowest bid was Anderson Bros Construction. Base bid (2.3-miles \$1,344,199; plus-.27-mile \$1,665,987; plus-.53-mile \$1,870,865; plus-.6-mile \$2,291,793). With engineering costs, soil testing, permits, the final .6-miles of trail had to be held for the future.

5. All archaeological, NHIS, SHPO, Fish & Wildlife, wetland mitigation, and MIA forms were filed and approved. Wetland credits contract was approved.
6. Fairview Township Board, DNR FRPT and RPT approved construction of 3.1-mile of trail in September 2023. Trail opened to public use in September
(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 2

1. Construction began in mid-May with stump clearing, sign removal, installation of silt fence for sediment control and grading.
2. Some portions of the areas had very deep terrain, requiring large amounts of Class 5. Construction was done in three sections, with soil and borrow being removed from some areas and added to others to shape the embankments and fill the low areas. Working in sections allowed the crews to stabilize the newly graded soil with hydro seed, first quick growing and then more permanent growth, and install pavement as each area was completed. Since this trail is adjacent to a primary highway, it was essential to maintain an efficient system for run-off for rain and snow.
3. All slopes and embankments were completely stabilized. It was designed in a way where fencing was not required, with plateaus behind the trail for ease of maintenance. It was essential that this 3.1-mile section of the trail be

completed in its entirety. Fairview Township has received notice they will be awarded a GMRPTC grant to complete the final .6-mile in 2024. The Fairview Trail will be completed.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

When we wrote our last update we used the phrase “if you build it, they will come”, and that is still so very accurate. We had people walking on the class 5 before the trail was even paved.

We are making plans for a signpost at the town hall with plaques acknowledging the ENRTF, the DNR grant programs and the GMRPTC, as well as some of our more generous donors.

We have just received word from a writer for the Brainerd Dispatch that, at our insistence, they will be writing an article that just acknowledges the various agencies who have financed this trail through their grant programs. We could not have built this trail without that support!

The various grant programs funding the trail are identified on our Facebook pages and website.

The resorts in the area see it as a major amenity and include it in their advertising. Explore Minnesota will include it in their brochures and trail maps. It is adjacent to the Pillsbury State Forest and will immediately benefit from its visitors as well as its' connection to the Paul Bunyan State Trail network.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update September 1, 2023

Date Submitted: October 31, 2023

Date Approved: November 13, 2023

Overall Update

The original proposed outcome was construction of a 3.7-mile segment of a 10-ft wide paved trail, lying within the road right-of-way along Cass County CSAH 77. This would have provided the “missing link” to complete the Fairview Township portion of the Gull Lake Trail. After advertising for bids, the lowest bid came from Anderson Bros Construction at \$2,391,793. In addition, there were expenses for Bolton & Menk Engineering, soil testing, etc. With only \$2,034,000 funding in place, construction had to be limited to 3.1-miles opposed to the proposed 3.7-miles, leaving a .6-mile gap which we hope to fund in 2024.

Proposed construction plans had received approval from the Cass County and State Highway departments, all paperwork was filed with SHPO, NHIS, MIA, etc in a timely manner, and contracts were in place to purchase .4 acres of wetland credits and with the DNR for a small easement. With all of that in place, construction began promptly in June. We did not encounter any significant delays due to weather or unexpected construction issues. The trail was paved, embankments were stabilized, re-vegetation was established, and the trail was completed and in use by October.

Activity 1

1. Grants awarded: DNR FRPT \$150,000, DNR RPT \$300,000, GMRPTC \$167,280 and LCCMR \$1,394,000, plus \$25,000 private donations = total funds \$2,034,000.
2. Lease with State of MN DNR formalized June 27, 2023, allowing construction of the trail across land controlled by the DNR, but on which Cass County has, by constrictive easement, constructed a State-Aid highway.
3. Construction plans were completed and approved by Cass County and State of Minnesota Highway Engineers.
4. Bid requests published in local paper and Bridge Tower Media (trade) with bid opening in April. Bids requested on a "base bid" plus 3 alternatives.
Lowest bid was Anderson Bros Construction. Base bid (2.3-miles \$1,344,199; plus-.27-mile \$1,665,987; plus-.53-mile \$1,870,865; plus-.6-mile \$2,291,793). With engineering costs, soil testing, permits, the final .6-miles of trail had to be held for the future.
5. All archaeological, NHIS, SHPO, Fish & Wildlife, wetland mitigation, and MIA forms were filed and approved. Wetland credits contract was approved.
6. Fairview Township Board, DNR FRPT and RPT approved construction of 3.1-mile of trail in September 2023. Trail opened to public use in September .
(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 2

1. Construction began in mid-May with stump clearing, sign removal, installation of silt fence for sediment control and grading.
2. Some portions of the areas had very deep terrain, requiring large amounts of Class 5. Construction was done in three sections, with soil and borrow being removed from some areas and added to others to shape the embankments and fill the low areas. Working in sections allowed the crews to stabilize the newly graded soil with hydro seed, first quick growing and then more permanent growth, and install pavement as each area was completed. Since this trail is adjacent to a primary highway, it was essential to maintain an efficient system for run-off for rain and snow.
3. All slopes and embankments were completely stabilized. It was designed in a way where fencing was not required, with plateaus behind the trail for ease of maintenance. It was essential that this 3.1-mile section of the trail be

completed in its entirety. Fairview Township has received notice they will be awarded a GMRPTC grant to complete the final .6-mile in 2024. The Fairview Trail will be completed.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

When we wrote our last update we used the phrase “if you build it, they will come”, and that is still so very accurate. We had people walking on the class 5 before the trail was even paved.

We are making plans for a signpost at the town hall with plaques acknowledging the ENRTF, the DNR grant programs and the GMRPTC, as well as some of our more generous donors.

We have just received word from a writer for the Brainerd Dispatch that, at our insistence, they will be writing an article that just acknowledges the various agencies who have financed this trail through their grant programs. We could not have built this trail without that support!

The various grant programs funding the trail are identified on our Facebook pages and website.

The resorts in the area see it as a major amenity and include it in their advertising. Explore Minnesota will include it in their brochures and trail maps. It is adjacent to the Pillsbury State Forest and will immediately benefit from its visitors as well as its' connection to the Paul Bunyan State Trail network.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update March 1, 2023

Date Submitted: April 13, 2023

Date Approved: May 25, 2023

Overall Update

The original proposed outcome for this project was the completion of the final segment of the Fairview Township Trail, which would provide safe access for residents and visitors to state and regional parks and trails within the Gull Lake (Brainerd) area. The proposed outcome included raising sufficient funding for the completion of a 3.7-mile segment of a 10-ft wide, paved trail, which would run within the road right-of-way along Cass County Hwy 77. Although two major grant applications were unsuccessful, funding from four major sources, totaling \$2,034,000 is in place and a request for bids is currently in publication, with a bid opening date of April 27. These bids will determine what portion of the trail can be constructed at this time with the funds available. Construction is proposed to take place within the May 1 to September 30th, 2023 time frame.

Activity 1

1. Two major grant applications: Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission (\$979,505 on Budget) and Active Transportation, were not successful, but grants totaling \$2,034,000 are in place (LCCMR \$1,394,000, GMRPT \$167,280, DNR FRPT \$150,000, DNR RPT \$300,000). This falls short of the \$2,990,000 originally estimated to complete 3.7 miles of trail. Due to the need to meet timing constraints on currently procured grants, the decision was made to proceed to construct as much trail as funds will permit.
2. A lease with the State of MN for an easement was delayed due to finalization of construction specs, especially tree removal, but it is being completed now.
3. Plans and specs have been approved by Cass Cty, and are currently published in trade papers using the competitive bid process, with an OPENING DATE of April 27.
4. A contract is in place with Aitkin County Highway Dept for the replacement of .002 acres of Wetland Credits.
5. Cass County Soil & Water has approved the wetland mitigation plan for the .002 acres of wetland impacted. Archaeological surveys, historic preservation reports and natural heritage reports have been filed with the State.

Activity 2

The goal of Activity 2 is the actual construction of the trail. As mentioned previously, the construction specs have been published with a bid opening date of April 27th. As soon as the Fairview Township Board of Supervisors can review the bid abstract and approve the bid, the contract will be processed, and preliminary construction and minimal tree removal will begin. Construction is scheduled within the May 1 to September 30, 2023 time frame, weather permitting.

Dissemination

The completion of this segment of the trail has been highly anticipated. Visitors to the resorts in the area ask when the trail will be done. Aside from the Fairview Township Trail, trails are being constructed in the cities of Lake Shore, Nisswa and East Gull Lake. Local newspapers, the newsletters from surrounding cities and area websites carry articles all advising of trail construction updates. As construction starts, and again at completion, there will be news releases advising of our funding sources.