

**Mississippi River Northwoods Trail  
PROPOSED TRAIL DESIGNATION APPLICATION SUMMARY**

**Township 46 Range 30 (Oak Lawn Township) sections 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, & 35  
Township 45 Range 29 (Oak Lawn Township) section 3**

**Crow Wing County Land Services**

**March 16, 2016**

**Summary of Trail Proposal:**

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club submitted a “Recreation Trail Development and Improvement Request” to designate, as multiple use recreation trails, 11.5 miles of the existing 35 miles of forest trails within 2,000 acres of Crow Wing County managed public forestland commonly known as the Mississippi River Northwoods (MRNW) area. The proposed designation occurs on trails with existing motorized use and includes no plans to develop new trails, widen existing trails, or change existing uses. Historically, the MRNW area has been open to motorized use while providing recreational access for hunting and fishing as well many other uses for many years.

If approved by both Crow Wing County and the State of Minnesota, maintenance of this existing, but currently undesignated multiuse trail segment would be paid for through the MN DNR Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Grant-In-Aid (GIA) program and the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club. One trail head parking area is proposed, located approximately 1/2 mile north of State Highway #210. The proposed designation would be open to motorized recreation use from May 1<sup>st</sup> thru October 31<sup>st</sup>. Consistent with state law, ATV use for purposes of big game hunting will be allowed, including off-trail riding for purposes of retrieving a deer or installing a portable deer stand.

**Scope of Project:**

The proposed trail designation encompasses 11.5 miles of more than 35 miles of existing motorized roads and trails within the county managed public forestland bordering the Mississippi River. Currently all existing trails are open for multiple uses. The proposal includes no plans to develop new trails, widen existing trails, or change existing uses. No parts of the proposed designated recreational trail run on a local, county, or state public road right-of-way.

**Summary of Trail Purpose and Intended Uses:**

This proposal would achieve the Crow Wing County Board’s stated policy goals of achieving “diverse recreational opportunities that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, while preserving the County’s high quality natural areas and open space.” And, it has been evaluated by professional County natural resource managers consistent with the process identified in the Crow Wing County Comprehensive Recreation Trails Plan that was approved by the County board on February 14, 2012. Designated uses on trail segments may include licensed highway vehicles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles (OHMs), and all forms of non-motorized recreation uses. Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) will not be allowed on any part of the proposed recreation trail system.

### **Proposed Trail Development Plan:**

The following steps will be taken prior to official recognition as a GIA funded recreation trail system:

- 1.) Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club secures local government unit sponsor (Crow Wing County).
- 2.) Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club obtains GIA funding through the State of Minnesota to develop and maintain a recreation trail on county administered lands.
- 3.) Crow Wing County issues the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club the trail permit.
- 4.) Trail surfaces on existing forest trails within the trail system are rehabilitated (i.e., hardened, shaped, graded, etc.) to a sustainable and safe condition by the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club.
- 5.) Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club installs appropriate safety and regulatory signage as per “Forest Access Signing and Placement Guidelines (2005)”. Also, the club will install amenities at picnic and parking areas (i.e., grills, picnic tables).
- 6.) Crow Wing County Land Services and the Minnesota DNR create brochures and other paper and electronic literature for trail use (i.e., safety, informational, advertising).
- 7.) Mississippi River Northwoods Trail officially recognized as a GIA recreation trail system and has statewide significance as such.

### **Trail Signage Plan:**

The County will utilize the MN DNR signage guidelines as identified in the “Forest Access Signing and Placement Guidelines (2005)”. Safety and regulatory signage will provide useful and necessary information to trail users. The information kiosk at the trail head will inform users about safe, responsible, and legal recreation trail use practices.

All trails will be identified for the intended uses to ensure users have a safe experience and the natural resources are protected.

All posts, hardware, and signs will be paid for by GIA funding and the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club. Signs will be provided by the MN DNR. All signs will be installed by the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club.

### **Enforcement:**

Currently, both the Crow Wing County Sherriff’s Office and DNR Conservation Officers respond to and enforce violations in the Mississippi River Northwoods area. The Sheriff’s Office receives funds to monitor County recreation ATV use from the Off-Highway Vehicle Safety Enforcement Grant provided by the State of Minnesota. If the proposed recreation trail is approved by Crow Wing County and receives GIA funding, it will be periodically patrolled by Conservation Officers and the Sherriff’s Office based on trail user counts and incidences reported. Also, the Minnesota DNR’s Trail Ambassador’s Program will be initiated. Ambassador volunteers are responsible for greeting fellow outdoor enthusiasts, educating trail users, giving minor aid in emergencies, and providing useful information about responsible OHV use on public lands. Additionally, Ambassadors provide valuable trail user data to the County and State. An information kiosk at the proposed trail head will inform trail users about safe, responsible, and legal recreation trail use practices. As part of the

Comprehensive Recreation Trails Plan’s “Trail Monitoring and Enforcement Plan”, the proposed recreation trail will be tracked on an annual basis by the Sherriff’s Department for recreation related complaints and incidents. Also, on a weekly basis, Crow Wing County will review Conservation Officer reports from the Minnesota DNR. And, as per the Comprehensive Recreation Trails Plan, a number of other measurables will be tracked on the proposed trail including:

- Review of Trail Ambassador Reports
- Meetings with DNR and enforcement partners regarding trail management coordination
- Tracking of Public Feedback and Trail User Comments
- Specialized Seasonal Trail Enforcement
- Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Trail Maintenance Agreements and Management
- Specialized Seasonal Trail Monitoring

Based on the monitoring information generated from those reports and meetings, Crow Wing County will re-align, make use changes, or temporarily or permanently close portions of the trail at any time.

**Proposed Trail Maintenance Plan:**

NOTE: All maintenance will be performed by the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club.

April – October: Trails are monitored and cleared of deadfall and debris as needed.

July - September: Where necessary, trails are mowed to improve visibility and reduce fire hazards.

May – October: Signage is inspected and/or replaced for user safety and enjoyability.

May – October: General maintenance and monitoring of the trail surface including blading, grading, dust control, and/or resurfacing as needed.

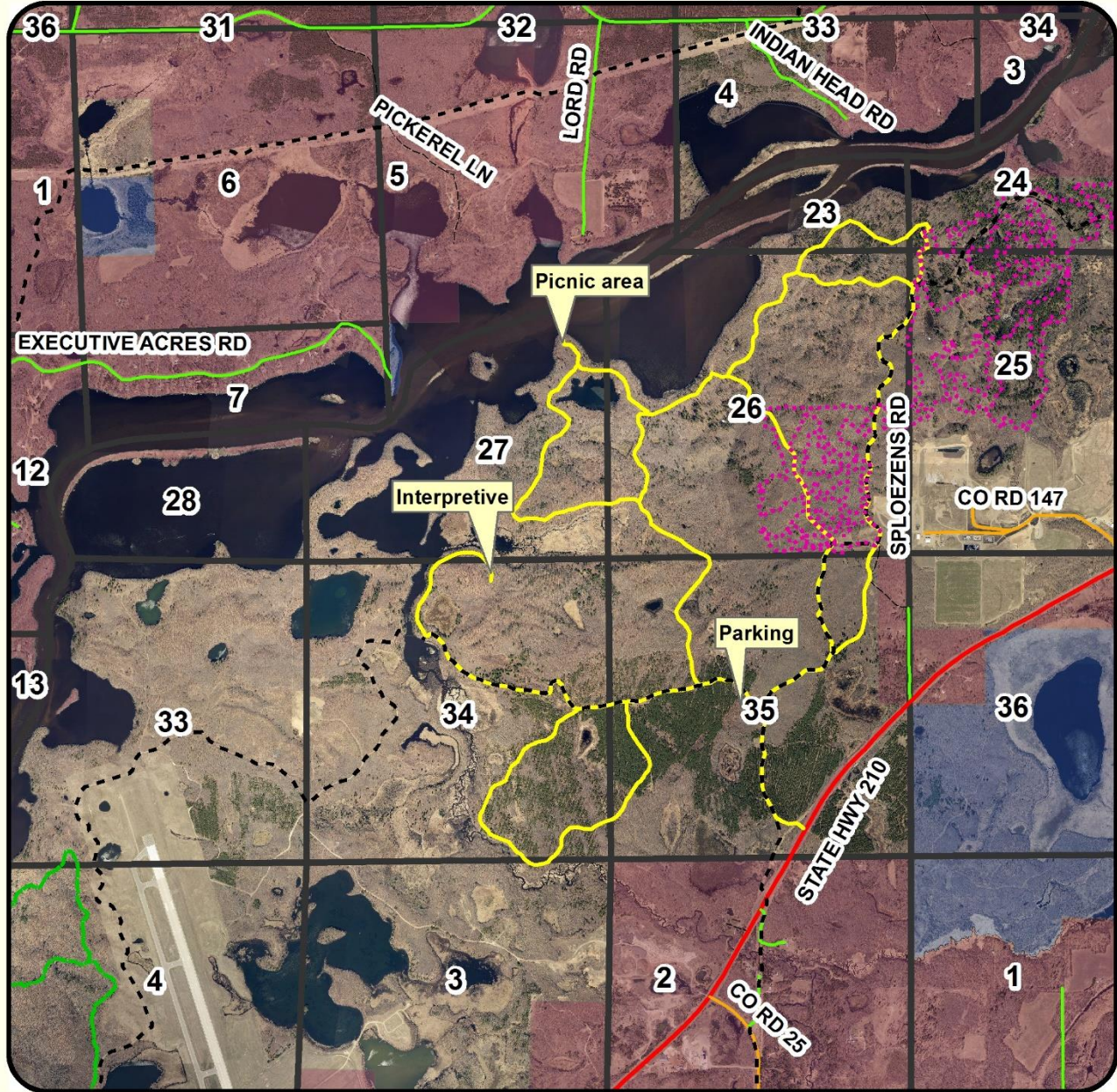
The proposed trail maintenance plan schedule is identified below:

**Trail Maintenance Plan Schedule** (*ie. mowing, dust control, clearing, signage, blading etc.*)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Clearing				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Mowing							X		X			
Signage					X	X	X	X	X	X		
General Maintenance					X	X	X	X	X	X		



# Mississippi River Northwoods Trail Recreation Trail Proposal



0 1,100 2,200 4,400 Feet



**Legend**

- Northwoods Trail Proposal
- Existing Designated Recreation Trails**
- Type**
- - - Cross Country Skiing
- - - OHM
- - - Snowmobile
- Sections
- County
- Private
- State (DNR)

1 inch equals 0.49 miles

Crow Wing County  
Public Land Management  
322 Laurel Street, Suite #12

For non-legal, reference use only

218-824-1115

6/17/2015

Crow Wing County Coordinates (projection) ArcGIS 10.1