

# Southwest Minnesota Trail Corridor Plan Update

## December 2014

(With reviewed prioritized list of projects 4-2015)



In 1971, leaders gathered to unveil a map of the Casey Jones Trail. From l to r: Dale Johnson, president of Lake Wilson Community Club; (unidentified person); Pat Long, Pipestone Recreation Director; Sen. John L. Olson and Dick Kahnk, mayor of Lake Wilson



# SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN

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## PREFACE

In early 1999, there was an interest expressed by several counties and the Southwest Minnesota Economic Development Professionals in trails planning as an opportunity to enhance tourism and economic development in Southwest Minnesota. Due to the initial interest, the Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC) began researching the issue and set aside some transportation planning time to assist in the development of a regional trails plan. In 2008 and 2009, interest was again expressed by regional county officials to update the plan and include other elements such as regional prioritization and more detail on certain planned trail segments. In January 2010 the update was adopted by the SRDC.

Part of the adoption process was to identify when updates to the plan or prioritized list should occur. The Plan is reviewed every two years, if little activity has occurred, no update process is implemented. Since 2010, a new federal transportation act was passed, a created a program called Transportation Alternative Program (TAP). More emphasis is placed on a transportation relationship as well as project deliverability.

As in the original 2000 Regional Trail Corridor Plan and the 2010 update, each County Board will be requested to appoint up to two representatives; in addition each state aid city was formally requested to appoint up to two representatives to the steering committee. The steering committee, as well as other interested individuals throughout the nine county area and beyond have provided input in and direction for the development of the 2014 Regional Trail Corridor Plan.

The 2014 Regional Trail Plan Committee members are:

Redwood Falls	Jim Doering	
Marshall	Bob Byrnes	Preston Stensrud
Worthington	Diane Graber	Dwayne Haffield
Cottonwood County	Jim Schmidt	Tom White
Jackson County	David Henkels	Rose Schultz
Lincoln County	Vince Robinson	Teresa Schreurs
Lyon County	Rick Anderson	Tim Amick and Brook Wyffels
Murray County	Jim Jens	Dave Thiner
Nobles County	Bob Wieme	Mike Woll
Pipestone County	Jerry Remund	Bill Johnson
Redwood County	Ted Suss	Mike Salmon
Rock County	Mark Sehr	Jody Reisch

In addition, City and County Staff throughout the Region played an active role in the 2014 Plan development.

Thank you to each and everyone one of you who came to meetings, reviewed documents, submitted comments and suggestions. Annette Bair, SRDC Physical Development Director.

The 2014 Update includes revised sections and new elements as follows:

### Introduction

Definitions. Added definitions for: ADA, Trails of State & Regional Significance (Minnesota Parks and Trails Legacy Plan definitions) and definitions for sub Regional and local trail.

Resources. Updated and added information about trail and green corridor issues, such as: Related programs, e.g., Active Living, Green Step City, Complete Streets, and Safe Routes to Schools.

### Prioritized list of Trail Projects. Updated list

Appendix A. Inventory. Updated.

### Appendix B. Local Plans – updated to reflect new trails and planning efforts

- Trails heads – areas that are used to access trails or potential trails. The original plan was revisited, and a revision of existing and proposed Trail heads was completed.
- Existing Trails - local trails (in a community) or more regional in nature. These could be on the shoulder of a road or bike route in a community, or off road trails. The inventory was updated.
- Planned Trails – are trails that will have either planning or be developed within a ten year time frame. A list and description of these trails / corridors were identified.
- Potential Trails – these are the corridors that are beyond a ten year planning / development horizon. They may be the corridors to a larger networks of trails, or they may be a local trail a community would someday like to have in place, but is not likely to occur in the near future unless an opportunity arises – such as land becomes available, or a bridge is replaced that allows for pedestrian bicycle access.
- Analysis of Planned Trails. Selected corridors, in the Planned Trail category, will have more detail to identify some specific areas that may require special attention.
- Added School districts and Scenic By-way information.

Appendix D. Resource Documents – was updated.

## VISION

The vision for trails in Southwest Minnesota is to establish a network of trails in Southwest Minnesota for multiple users.

## INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Minnesota Regional Trails Plan Update confirms the vision, stated above, of the original 2000 Plan. This Plan examines alternative non-motorized transportation modes, primarily walking and bicycling, and recommends actions to improve access and mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians; and has developed a methodology for regional prioritization of projects requesting funding in various phases of trail planning through design and construction. In addition, the plan addresses safe routes to school and scenic by-ways as Transportation Alternative Program eligible projects. This plan is an element of the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan.

Developed through a grass roots process involving local officials and citizen input, this plan provides guidance for land-use decision-makers at the state, regional and local level.

While primarily focusing on walking and bicycling, it is recognized that there is an established network of snowmobile trails throughout the region. This network will be identified and considered when planning any other type of trail.

History of Trails in Southwest Minnesota. In 1978, the Southwest Regional Development Commission developed a comprehensive Regional Guide that identified the resources within the Region. At that time, the Regional Guide identified sixty miles of snowmobile trails, forty-three miles of hiking trails, 40 miles of multi-use trails, twenty-nine miles of horse trails, seven miles of nature trails, and one mile of bike trail. Table 1 identifies the trail mileages by type in 1978.

The 1978 Comprehensive Guide documented proposed state trails in the Region:

The Casey Jones Trails from Pipestone to Lake Shetek;

The Des Moines River Trail, from Heron Lake through Windom, Kilen Woods, and Jackson to the MN/IA border; and

The Minnesota River and Bluffs Trail along the northern border of Redwood County.

**Table 1. 1978 Trail mileage by trail type for each County in the SW Region<sup>1</sup>**

County	Trail Miles					
	Horse	Snow	Hiking	Bike	Multi-use	Nature
Cottonwood	1	1	2	-	1	-
Jackson	-	5	5	-	5	-
Lincoln	-	-	3	-	-	-
Lyon	8	9	10	-	9	1
Murray	2	18	3	-	3	1
Nobles	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pipestone	13	18	13	-	13	2
Redwood	5	5	3	1	5	3
Rock	-	4	4	-	4	-
Total miles	29	60	43	1	40	7

<sup>1</sup> Source: 1978 SRDC Comprehensive Regional Guide.

In addition to the land trails, the 1978 plan also identified where water trails would and could be used. Where most of the rivers and streams in southwest Minnesota tend to be shallow and intermittent, the Minnesota, and the Des Moines River in the vicinity of Windom maintain enough water flow to support state canoeing for the full season. The Minnesota, Des Moines, and Cottonwood Rivers are designated as canoeing and boating routes by Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 85.32. Other rivers in the Region, such as the Redwood, Rock and Yellow Medicine can be used for water activities for a part of the season, but do not consistently maintain enough flow for later summer activities.

From 1978 to 1999, there was a significant increase in trail mileage in the Region, particularly snowmobile trails. From 1999 to 2010 there was also an increase in trail mileage. Overall, there has been approximately 725 miles of trails added since 1978. By comparing the trail mileages by type from the 1978 to the 1999 inventories, we find that there have been the following changes in trail mileages:

<u>Trail type</u>	<u>1978 to 1999</u>	<u>1999 to 2010</u>	<u>2010 to 2014</u>
Snowmobile:	+ 671 miles	+ 25 miles	756 miles
Horse:	- 4 miles	+ 38 miles	38 miles
Hiking	+ 55 miles	+21 miles	173 miles
Bike	+ 48 miles	+ 26 miles	210 miles

The increased mileage in snowmobile trails can be largely attributed to highly active snowmobile clubs in Southwest Minnesota. Cross - country skiing was not identified in the 1978 inventory, but appears to have some popularity, with 22.8 miles of ski trails in the Region. With the 2010 Plan update, we found that there has been an increase of snowmobile, horse, biking and hiking trail mileage in southwest Minnesota. Tables 2 and 3 present the 1999 and 2010 inventory of trail mileage by type in Southwest Minnesota.

**Table 2. 1999 Trail mileage by trail type in Southwest Minnesota<sup>2\*</sup>**

County	Trails Miles				
	Ski	Horse	Snow mobile	Hike	Bike
Cottonwood			125	6.75+	5.0
Jackson	1.5		103.3	5.9	8.0
Lincoln	3.0	5.0	5.0	1.0	
Lyon	7.5	15.3	42.85	22.7	21.98
Murray	3.0		100	13.4	8.0
Nobles		2.5	165	3.95	3.95
Pipestone	14.71		114.41	23.01	12.41
Redwood	3.5	2.2	29.0	9.9+	1.5
Rock	2.0		47.0	22.5	7.0
Total miles	35.23	25.0	731.56	108.11+	67.84

<sup>2</sup> Sources: 1996 Minnesota DNR Minnesota Registry of Public Recreational Trail Mileages, Local input 1999, Internet search October 1999, City Plans.

**Table 3. 2014 Trail mileages by trail type in Southwest Minnesota<sup>3\*</sup>**

County	Trail Miles				
	Ski	Horse	Snow mobile	Hike	Bike
Cottonwood			125	13.1	6.0
Jackson	1.5		103.3	17.7	20.3
Lincoln	3.0	5.0	6.5	9.4	101.5
Lyon	7.5	15.7	42.95	47.1	31.4
Murray	3.0		100	14.1	8.8
Nobles		2.5	165	8.3	7.9
Pipestone	14.71	12.41	137.41	31.9	23.5
Redwood	3.5	2.2	29.0	20.6	9.4
Rock	2.0		47.0	25	7.0
Total miles	35.2	37.6	756.16	173.1	209.8

\* Inventories for Tables 2 and 3 are incomplete. Some trails are multi-use and mileage may reflect doubles miles in categories (ie bike miles and hike miles)

## DEFINITIONS

**ACTIVE LIVING** – is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routine.

**ADA – AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.** ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities in a variety of areas. These areas include employment, government, public accommodations, any commercial facilities, transportation and telecommunications.

**ATP – AREA TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP** – created by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to emphasize greater public involvement in the preparation of transportation plans and programs. The SRDC participates in two of the eight ATP’s, ATP 7 and 8 (MnDOT District areas – Mankato and Willmar). Each year the ATP’s develop an Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) which cover a minimum four-year period. ATIPs include all projects seeking federal transportation funds. Including projects eligible for Transportation Alternatives funds (TAP).

**BICYCLE** – Every device propelled solely by human power upon which any person may ride, having two tandem wheels except scooters and similar devices, and including any device generally recognized as a bicycle though equipped with two front or rear wheels. (MN 169.01 Subd. 51) (Considered a vehicle by MN Statute 169.01 Subd. 2, MN 169.222 Subd. 1).

**BICYCLE FACILITIES** - A general term denoting improvements and provisions made by public agencies to accommodate or encourage bicycling, including parking facilities, bikeways, bikeways maps and shared roadways not specifically designated for bicycle use.

**BICYCLE LANE (BIKE LANE)** - A portion of a roadway or shoulder designed for exclusive or preferential use by people using bicycles. Bicycle lanes are to be distinguished from the portion of the roadway or shoulder used for motor vehicle traffic by physical barrier striping, marking, or other similar device. (MN 169.01 Subd. 70)

**BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN LANE** - A portion of a roadway designated for the preferential or exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians.

<sup>3</sup> Sources: 1996 Minnesota DNR Minnesota Registry of Public Recreational Trail Mileages, Local input 1999, Internet search October 1999, City Plans.

**BICYCLE NETWORK** - A continuous system of bikeways and roadways in a region or municipality.

**BICYCLE PATH (BIKE PATH OR OFF-ROAD BIKEWAY)** - A bicycle facility designed for exclusive or preferential use by people using bicycles and constructed or developed separately from the roadway or shoulder. (MN 169.01 Subd. 9)

**BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN PATH (SHARED OR MULTI-USE PATH)** - A path designated for the preferential or exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians.

**BICYCLE ROUTE** - The term "bicycle route" means a roadway or shoulder signed to encourage bicycle use. (MN 169.01 Subd. 62)

**BICYCLE TRAIL** - A bicycle route or bicycle path developed by the commissioner of natural resources under MN 85.016. (MN 169.01 Subd. 71) In this Plan a Bicycle Trail may also have the same meaning as a Bicycle Lane, Bicycle path, or Bicycle Route as previously defined.

**BIKEWAY** - A bicycle lane, bicycle path, or bicycle route, regardless of whether it is designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or is to be shared with other transportation modes. (MN 169.01 Subd. 72)

**COMPLETE STREETS** – The term “complete streets “ does not have a singular definition. A Complete Street in a rural community is any street one feels safe walking and bicycling upon (via trail, sidewalk or the street itself). Trails, sidewalks, and low volume and slower speed roadways make a community more walkable and pedestrian friendly. Trails and sidewalks help to connect areas of the community that may have higher traffic volumes and speeds. Creating a safer and more convenient space to walk and bicycle will help to create a health more livable and sustainable community.

**CROSSWALK** - That portion of a roadway ordinarily included with the prolongation or connection of the lateral lines of sidewalks at intersections or any portion of a roadway distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surface. (MN 169.01 Subd. 37)

**DESIGNATED SHARED STREET OR HIGHWAY** - Any street or highway designated as a bikeway and recommended for use by bicyclists and characterized by basic signage and the absence of striping or marking for bicyclists. Traffic calming measures may be implemented to maximize their usefulness and safety.

**GROUP A –ADVANCED OR EXPERIENCED BICYCLISTS.** The FHWA Design Bicyclists comprised of experienced riders who can operate under most traffic conditions. (on-road, signed)

**GROUP B – BASIC BICYCLISTS** - The FHWA Design Bicyclists comprised of casual or new adult and teenage riders who are less able to operate in traffic without provisions for bicycles. (bicycle lanes, shoulders and signed)

**GROUP C – CHILDREN** - The FHWA Design Bicyclists comprised of pre-teen riders who roadway use is initially monitored by parents and eventually are accorded independent access to the roadway system. (off-road)

**PEDESTRIAN** - Any person afoot or in a wheelchair. (MN 169.01 Subd. 24)

**RAIL TRAIL** – Trails built within abandoned or active railroad rights-of-way. The right-of-way is that land which includes the railroad grade, the portion where the rails and ties are located as well as land on both sides of the grade.

**ROADWAY** - That portion of a highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel. exclusive of the sidewalk or shoulder. In the event a highway includes two or more separate roadways, the term "roadway" as used herein shall refer to any such roadway separately but not to all such roadways collectively. (MN 169.01 Subd. 31)

**SERVICES** – A business that provides some type of service to the trail user. In the Services Inventory, the list will include Bicycle Repair/Rental Shops, Campgrounds, Convenience Stores, Grocery Stores, Hotels/Motels, and Restaurants.

**SECONDARY ATTRACTION** – Services or additional sites, advertised at the trailhead, that are accessible to the trail user.

**SHARED STREET OR HIGHWAY** - Any roadway upon which a bicycle lane is not designated and which may be legally used by bicycles whether or not such facility is specifically designated as a bikeway.

**SIDEWALK** - That portion of a street between the curb lines, or the lateral lines of a roadway, and the adjacent property lines intended for the use of pedestrians. (MN 169.01 Subd. 33)

**SHOULDER** - That part of a highway which is contiguous to the regularly traveled portion of the highway and is on the same level as the highway. The shoulder may be pavement, gravel, or earth. (MN 169.01 Subd. 73)

**STREET OR HIGHWAY** - The entire width between boundary lines of any way or place when any part thereof is open to the use of the public, as a matter of right, for the purposes of vehicular travel. (MN 169.01 Subd. 29)

**STIP** – State Transportation Improvement Program. A four year program of projects identified for federal transportation funds. In Minnesota, projects are identified by Area Transportation Partnership (ATP's) in an Area TIP (or ATIP); these projects are submitted to the State for review and eligibility under federal guidelines and merged into a draft STIP.

**TAP** – Transportation Alternative Program, under a federal Transportation law, [MAP 21](#) (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century), the TAP program was created. It combined three former funding categories into one: Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School, Scenic By-Ways.

**TRAIL CORRIDOR** - The general area for a route or path between two desired trailheads.

**TRAILHEAD** - A location where a trail can be accessed.

**TRAILS OF SIGNIFICANCE - STATE, REGIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEFINED:**

TRAIL OF STATE OR REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE The 2009 Minnesota State Legislature passed a law requiring establishment of “a proposed definition of parks and trails of regional significance” as a component of the 10 and 25 year Minnesota parks and Trails legacy Plans. The following draft park and trail criteria are based on existing definitions used by the Metropolitan Council that were established in early 1970's, and by the DNR administered regional park and trail grant programs that were established in late 1990's and early 2000's. These definitions have been used to qualify regional facilities for state funding, and they establish that regional parks and trails provide nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities. In addition, input from the state planning effort is being used to inform the definitions. These criteria recognize the unique role parks and trails of regional significance play in Minnesota's outdoor recreation system, both for their recreational benefits as well as their economic impacts. More broadly, they recognize regional significance is accepted nationally as distinct from local, state, or federal significance. The final version of these criteria will be published in the Minnesota Parks and Trails Legacy Plan in February 2011.

Criteria for Statewide or Regional Significance<sup>4</sup> Projects funded under this program must be of regional or statewide significance. To be considered of regional or statewide significance, a trail should be:

1. Located in a regionally desirable setting. This includes attractive landscapes, important destinations, and/or high quality natural areas.
2. A destination itself, providing a high quality recreational opportunity. This means the trail should be developed and maintained to include easy access, secure parking, access to drinking water and other necessary services, wide enough or designed in such a way to avoid user conflict, and address safety.
3. Long enough to provide an hour of outdoor recreation opportunity, or connect to other facilities that can provide an hour of recreation in total. For example, bicyclists often travel 9 mph, equestrians 4 mph, hikers 2 mph, and skiers 3 mph.
4. Accommodating as many trail user types as possible.
5. A trail link to an existing trail of regional or statewide significance. This includes providing connections between significant trails, or connecting communities to these trails.

TRAIL OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE<sup>5</sup>

1. Regionally desirable setting: The trail is located in a regionally desirable setting. Criteria include attractive, unusual, and/or representative landscapes, important destinations, or high quality natural areas.
2. High quality opportunity and use: The trail serves as a destination, providing high quality recreational opportunities, attracts a regional clientele (multiple communities), potentially may draw tourists, and generates an economic impact from outside the local area. The trail should be developed and maintained to include easy access, secure parking, access to drinking water and other necessary services, and is wide enough or designed in such a way to avoid user conflict and provide a safe experience.
3. Adequate length: The trail provides at least an hour of outdoor recreation opportunity, or connects to other facilities that can provide at least an hour of recreation in total.
4. Connections: The trail currently or potentially will link to an existing trail of regional or statewide significance. This includes providing connections between significant trails, or connecting communities/ community facilities to these trails. The regional trail cannot be entirely contained within a regional park unit.

TRAIL OF SUB REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE is a trail that connects (is a spur) to the State and Regional Trail System, identified by the State Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, and has a higher priority from the Southwest Regional Development Commission perspective than a trail of local significance.

TRAIL OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE. Local Significance Trails are those that are used primarily by residents in the area they are located and they are not part of a larger network of existing or planned trails. Local trails are recognized as important to the areas they are sited. They provide access to local destinations, such as schools, businesses, parks as well as provide pedestrian and/or bicycle circulation and the opportunity for active and healthy living.

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<sup>4</sup> PARK AND TRAIL LEGACY GRANT PROGRAM Trail Legacy Grants 10-6-2009

[http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/grants/recreation/pt\\_legacy/trail\\_criteria.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/grants/recreation/pt_legacy/trail_criteria.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> This definition is in draft form and will be finalized February 2011. Reference to the 7 county Metro area was deleted from the SW Region's definition.

**TRAIL OR PATH** - A facility, paved or unpaved, that is designed for the mobility of motorized or non-motorized travel. There are six types of on-road trails: bicycle lanes, combination bus/bicycle lanes, shared lanes, wide curb or wide outside lanes, shoulders, and traffic calmed roadways. An off road facility may be physically located either within or outside the roadway right-of-way, and may be referred to as “multi-use trails” or “shared use” paths and “greenways”. Off road facilities (paths) serve both a transportation and recreation function, and can provide continuous routes for commuting or recreation trips, access to destinations not otherwise available.

A facility, paved or unpaved, that is designed for the mobility of motorized or non-motorized travel.

A trail is most often considered to be on or near a road. There are six types of on-road facilities for bicycle traffic:

1. *Bicycle lanes.*
  - One way facilities carrying bikes in the same direction as adjacent motor vehicle traffic. Minimum width is 1.2 m, where there is curb and gutter; the minimum width should be 1.5m.
  - Two-way bike lanes located on the same side of the roadway tend to promote bike travel against the flow of motor vehicle traffic. These should only be used for short connections under specific conditions.
2. *Combination Bus/Bicycle Lanes.* The mixing of bikes and buses may be acceptable if the average speed and volumes are low, preferably less than 30 km/h.
3. *Shared Lanes.* Shared lanes are streets and highways with no special provisions for bicyclists. Shared lanes are often 3.6 m in width with no shoulder and require cars to pass by crossing the center lane. In residential areas with low volume vehicle traffic and average speeds of less than 40 km/h they are normally adequate. Shared lanes are not typically signed.
4. *Wide curb or wide outside lanes.* Located at the rightmost through traffic lane, favored by Group A (experienced) bicyclists who are not intimidated by high traffic volumes and speeds.
5. *Shoulders.* The minimum width of 1.2 m is considered adequate to accommodate bicycle traffic in Group A and B. These facilities are not signed.
6. *Traffic calmed roadways.* Typically urban local or collectors that are used as routes for bicycles and pedestrian networks. Traffic calming reduces the dominance and speed of motor vehicles.

A path is often described as an off-road facility, but may physically be located either within or outside the roadway right-of-way. Paths may also be referred to as “multi-use trails” or “shared use” paths and “greenways”. Paths serve both a transportation and recreation function, and are a significant generator of bicycle use. Paths can provide continuous routes for commuting or recreation trips, access to destinations not otherwise available.

- Two way paths are shared use (bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, etc) facilities with traffic in both directions. One-way paths, located on both sides of a road have the same application.

**TRAIL SURFACE TYPES** - Paved trails are hard surfaced trails usually surfaced with concrete or asphalt. Non-paved trails have pervious surface that have a variety of surface types: dirt, gravel, gravel with a geosynthetic fabric base, bark, grass etc.

**TRAIL USERS BY ACTIVITY** - The following are non-motorized trail users: Bicyclists, In-Line Skaters, Infrequent/casual Cross-Country Skiers, Walkers, Hikers, Backpackers, Equestrian.

Trail Users By Activity:

- Bicyclists:
  - Bike Trail Cyclists including: Recreational Riders, Fitness Bicyclist, non-competitive Event Bicyclist, Transportation Cyclist, Family Bicyclist
  - The Mountain Bicyclist
  - Racers including: Road racers, Mountain Bike Racers
  - The Long Distance Bicycle Tourer
  - The Road-only cyclist
  - The BMXers
  - The casual recreational bicyclist
  - Commuters
- In-Line skaters
  - The recreation skater
  - The fitness skater
  - The competitive / aggressive skater
  - Roller hockey player
  - Racers
  - Event Skaters
- Infrequent/casual Cross-Country Skiers
  - Recreational Trail Skiers including: Trail destination skiers, Family/social skier, The racing / event skier, Fitness skier
  - The skiing backpacker
  - The local skier
  - Infrequent skiers
- Walkers, Hikers, Backpackers
  - The trail destination hiker
  - The overnight backpacker
  - The organizational backpacker
  - The event hiker
  - The fitness walker
  - The snowshoer
  - The causal and infrequent hikers/walkers
- Equestrian
  - Recreation Trail Riders including: Mobile Trail Riders, Local Trail Riders, Carriage Drivers
  - Event Rider
  - Private Property riders
  - Utilitarian
  - Infrequent

**TRAFFIC CALMING** - Physical and other measures used on a street or highway to reduce the dominance and speed of motor vehicles.

**VEHICLE** – Every device in, upon, or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, except devices used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks. (MN 169.01 Subd. 2)

**WATER TRAIL** - A water course that is specifically designated for recreational activities such as canoeing.

**WIDE CURB LANE OR WIDE OUTSIDE LANE** - The right-most through traffic lanes that are substantially wider than 3.6 m.

## **BENEFITS OF TRAILS**

Trails can provide a wide array of benefits ranging from health to a more connected community to economic development. Trails can help to promote a more active lifestyle. Active Living is about fostering an environment that makes it safe and convenient for children and adults to walk, bike and be physically active on a daily basis. Creating a healthy community depends on the physical design of the community, along with a number of other variables.

Walking and biking have increased in popularity in the United States as a form of recreation and exercise. Not only do trails benefit the personal and social aspects of life, but there are economic benefits as well.

A May 2010 inventory of recreational experience opportunities in southern Minnesota identifies participation rates and recreational experience motivations.<sup>6</sup> Recreation activities in which southern Minnesota residents most frequently participate are walking / hiking, boating, and swimming. Biking has the seventh highest participation rate at 26%. The top three reasons for participating in recreation for southern region survey respondents were: to view the scenery, to get away from the usual demands of life and to be close to nature.

### **Economic Benefits**

Building a more walkable community and connecting destinations with trails can increase the quality of life in the community and is an economic development strategy. Trails and a better quality of life can help to attract people to move to southwest Minnesota and retain our current residents. As the population grows, demand for goods and services increase and entrepreneurs grow existing businesses and start new businesses.

A healthy community may also attract businesses to the area. “Based on national estimates, the overall financial burden of obesity in Minnesota in 2006 was estimated at \$2.8 billion.”<sup>7</sup> The medical costs associated with obesity nationally were estimated at \$147 billion in 2008. This translates into a \$1,429 higher yearly medical cost for people who are obese over those of normal weight.<sup>1</sup> The obesity rate in Region 8 was 28.4 percent in 2009.<sup>8</sup>

It has been shown that communities that support trails and respond to the needs of trail users have seen stimulation in their local economies. Tourists that are attracted to the trails may go into the towns to eat, shop, and stay overnight. The newly revitalized economy can create jobs for residents and increase public revenue. Economic benefits can also be seen by the increased property values of homes near trails. When bicycles are substituted for car trips, the social, health, and environmental benefits can translate into large economic benefits.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> **Minnesota’s Network of Parks & Trails An Inventory of Recreation Experience Opportunities in Minnesota: South Region Profile**, May 2010 <http://ccl.design.umn.edu/documents/SouthRegionRecreationInventory05-26-10forweb.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.minnesotamedicine.com/PastIssues/December2012/theobesitychallenge.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <http://diabetes-obesity.findthebest.com/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/whatwedo/TrailLink%2007%20program\\_Economic%20Develop.pdf](http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/whatwedo/TrailLink%2007%20program_Economic%20Develop.pdf)

An economic report on recreation trail use in Minnesota, published in November 2009<sup>10</sup> identified walking/hiking as by far the most common activity on trails, with an estimated 134 million person-days spent on ten trails studied in 2008. Bicycling was the second most common activity, with 30 million person-days, and running was third with 27 million. In the 38 county Southern region, walking/hiking was the most popular trail activity with 26 million person-days, bicycling second (6.5 million) and running third (5.7 million). Among the ten trail user groups studied, walkers/ hikers accounted for the highest consumer spending level, with an estimated \$1,425 million spent statewide. Total spending by all ten studied user groups was the highest in the northeast region (\$628 million), followed by metro (\$523 million), northwest (\$372 million), the southern (\$370 million), and central Minnesota (\$275 million). For this study, the southern region covers a large area, which includes some well developed trails in the Mankato and southeast areas. As the trail system develops in southwest Minnesota, the economic impact for the southern area can only grow.

The pattern of trip spending among trail users in southern Minnesota showed a 50% share in walking/hiking compared to 59% statewide and bike riding at 24% of the spending, compared to 18% statewide. New equipment purchases, storage and maintenance and related upkeep costs also added \$167 million to the southern Minnesota trail user spending.

A National Bicycling and Walking Study: 15 Year report was recently released by the Federal Highway Administration. The study discusses trends and outcomes in bicycling and walking since 1994. A summary of economic benefits indicates the annual cost of operating a car is \$9055 and can account for 18% of a household's income. Owning and operating a bicycle is \$120 annual and walking is free. The report further states "Many communities are even using bicycle and walking facilities to revitalize businesses and bring new economic life to downtown areas."

### <sup>11</sup>Spending Behavior

- A 1992 National Park Service study found that on average 135,000 visitors at Iowa's Heritage Trail spent \$9.21 a day, 170,000 visitors at Florida's St. Marks Trail spent \$11.02 a day, and California's Lafayette/Moraga Trail received \$3.97 from each of its 400,000 visitors. This equals more than \$1.2 million annual revenue from each trail. (*The Impacts of Rail – Trails, p. ii*)
- Before the Root River State Trail in Lansboro, Minnesota opened, there was only one place to stay overnight, now there are 13. (*Daoust p. 8*) A year after the Root River State Trail opened the town of Lansboro's food and drinking receipts increased 84% and lodging receipts in Fillmore County increased eightfold between 1986 and 1992. (*Brandt*)
- A study by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources found that 69% of the landowners adjacent to the existing Heartland and Douglas Trails said the trails have benefited the local economies. (*Living Along Trails*)
- The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reflects that total annual expenditures for outdoor recreation will increase from \$1.82 billion in 1985 to more than \$2 billion by the year 2000. Sixty eight percent of the 1985 dollars were spent on food, lodging and

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<sup>10</sup> Economic Impact of Recreational Trail Use, in Different Regions of Minnesota  
<http://archive.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2010/other/100415.pdf>, published November 2009

<sup>11</sup> National Bicycling and Walking Study: 15-Year Status Report: [http://drusilla.hsrb.unc.edu/cms/downloads/15-year\\_report.pdf](http://drusilla.hsrb.unc.edu/cms/downloads/15-year_report.pdf), Federal Highway Administration, published in May 2010.

transportation. (*Significance of Outdoor Recreation Expenditures to the State and Regional Economies of Minnesota, p. 17*)

- According to a DNR survey of Paul Bunyan State Trail usage, 52 percent of trail users were out-of-town visitors, with 48 percent being area residents. The survey found that the out-of-town visitors spent, on average \$33 per person per day. Area residents spent an average of \$3.50 per person per day. The total estimated to have been spent in the three-month period by all trail users on gas, food, lodging or equipment rental was nearly \$1.5 million— 80 percent of which came from those who live more than 100 miles away from the Brainerd area.
- In Dunedin, Florida, there was a 35% storefront vacancy until the Pinellas Trail was built in 1990. There are now no store vacancies in the downtown area. (*NBPC Technical Brief, p. 1*)
- Hotel rooms along Wisconsin's Elroy-Sparta State Park Trail are booked a year in advance during the peak-use seasons. (*NBPC Technical Brief p. 1*) In 1988, users of this trail spent \$25.14 per day for trip-related expenses which added up to annual trail user expenditures of more than \$1.2 million, (*Economic Impacts of Greenways, p. 5-5*)
- A 1989 study found that \$620 million is spent annually in California for recreational activities which generate about \$400 million in personal income and 22,800 jobs. (*Economic Impacts of Greenways, p.2-4*)
- A study by NordicGroup international found that an estimated \$241 million Canadian dollars was spent on the sport of snowmobiling in 1991 by the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Members alone. (*The Benefits of Parks and Recreation, p. 66*)

### **Property Values**

- The National Park Service conducted a study in cooperation with Pennsylvania State University in which 3 trails were looked at for their effects on property values. It was found that between 87% and 97% of those surveyed claimed a trail either had no effect or increased their property values. Also, 89% of real estate professionals consulted thought a trail had either a positive effect or no effect on resale value. (*The Impacts of Rail-Trails, p. II-13-III-15*)
- A study of two Minnesota rail-trails found that 87% of homeowners adjacent to the trail felt that the trail had either increased the value of their home or had no effect on it. (*The Impacts of Rail-Trails, p. I-5*)
- In 1987, the Office of Planning in Seattle conducted a study on nearby property values and crime rates. The study was conducted on the Burke-Gilman Trail, 9.9 miles of which run within the city of Seattle. Results showed that property near but not directly adjacent to the trail was worth about 6% more than property elsewhere. Homes immediately adjacent to the trail were found to have lower burglary and vandalism rates than the surrounding neighborhood average. (*The Impact of Rail-Trails, p. I-6*)

### **Monetary Savings**

- Monetary savings to the general public have been calculated to be at least \$.05 to \$4.22 for every bicycle mile traveled from lowered air pollution, oil imports, and congestion. Additional savings come from such things as a lessening of the greenhouse effect and a lowered risk of oil spills. (*Plan B, p. 11*)
- Transportation by bicycling saved Minnesotans more than \$24 million in out of pocket expenses in addition to an estimated \$7 to \$30 million in taxes and other savings in 1989 alone. (*Plan B, p. 11*)

### **Personal and Social Benefits**

The world is becoming more computerized and oriented around objects such as the television and the telephone. Studies have shown that people do not interact as much as they used to. The studies show that memberships in civic organizations have dropped and it is becoming easier to isolate yourself from social interactions (*Bowling Alone*). A benefit that trails can provide is an opportunity to be outside and to associate with your family or neighbors. The world is also becoming more fast-paced and hectic. It is increasingly important for our mental health to take a break from the complex technological side of our modern-day lives and experience a degree of solitude. The pressures people endure in today's world can lead to heart attacks, depression, and other illnesses. It has been shown that those who are able to escape for a long weekend or even during a lunch break tend to be more productive when they are back at work or school. There are many other personal and social benefits gained by trail systems although some may be difficult to measure. Some of the other personal and social benefits that arise from trails are listed below.

### **Health Benefits**

Inactivity is a leading health issue in the United States. Inactivity can lead to obesity and a number of long-term health effects. In the past quarter-century, obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other complications have been directly linked to reduced activity levels and poor eating habits. Trails and a more pedestrian friendly community help to promote a healthier lifestyle. A smart design can make it more convenient to walk and bike in the community, which can create a positive health impact along with a positive environmental impact. Being more active can help to reduce the health risks associated with inactivity

- Regular, moderate exercise has been proven to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, colon cancer, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, and depression. Regular exercise can reduce the risk of injury or disability. It increases muscular strength and flexibility which leads to a greater range of movement in the later years of life. (*Healthy People 2000, p. 94*) The beauty of exercising via trail recreation is that it incorporates fitness into everyday routines - commuting to work, running errands, exercising the dog, or spending time with family and friends.
- A study of 12,000 men from 1973 to 1984 found that those who participated in moderate, regular physical activity could reduce the risk of heart attacks. (*Walking Minnesota, p. 23*)

- A 1989 study found that the benefits of regular physical activity include: improved cardiopulmonary function, lowered blood pressure, increased bone mineral content, increased muscle strength and joint flexibility, and an improved psychological well-being. (*The Benefits of Parks and Recreation*, p. 25)
- Studies have found that the risk of osteoporosis for women is reduced when physical activity has been incorporated into their lifestyle. The average bone density of physically active women is 25.6% higher than the average of women in low-activity groups. Walking can maintain and sometimes, improve the amount of bone mass in the hip, spine, and legs. (*Walking Minnesota* p. 25)

### **Safe Corridors for Recreational Use**

- Trails can separate recreationalists from traffic which is essential in congested areas. Separation from busy areas is important for people at beginning skill levels of skating and biking and for the safety of children. By carefully designing safe corridors, the chances of accidents can be reduced.
- A study on the attitudes of property owners adjacent to the Lafayette/Moraga Trail, slightly northeast of San Francisco, California, found that 92% of the owners used the trail and 90% were either "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with it. More than 60% reported to have "not experienced the slightest problem," 92% felt the trail had either improved or had no effect on the quality of their neighborhoods. (*The Impact of Rail-Trails*, p. 1-6)

### **Community Togetherness and Civic Pride**

- Community recreation can build strong families and promote cultural and ethnic harmony. Relationships between communities can become closer as people work together to secure funding for acquisition, development, and maintenance of trails, and in producing marketing or tourism publications. Communities can be physically tied together with trail systems. Trails can link residential areas to schools, commercial areas, water bodies and parks. A social interconnectedness can develop by linking towns or areas of a town together. Trails can also create civic pride and this is shown by the signs many towns place advertising the trails in the area. Many communities with trails advertise themselves as the "Gateway to the \_\_\_\_\_ Trail" or "Home of the \_\_\_\_\_ Trail."
- Two cities in California, Davis and Palo Alto, have proven that commuting to work and around town by bicycle can be accepted by American society. In Davis, there are 30 miles of bicycle lanes for 100 miles of streets and about 20 miles of separate bicycle paths, on which 25% of trips in the community are made by bicycle. In Palo Alto, the city government paid its employees 7 cents for every mile traveled by bicycle. There is a "Leave Your Car at Home Day" every month, and there are amenities such as bicycle lockers, racks, bicycle bridges, and lighted cycle paths to promote bicycle use. Many companies in Palo Alto also attempt to boost bicycle commuting. For example, Xerox provides towel service, showers, and bicycle parking, and pays employees a dollar a day for traveling to work by bicycle. Because of this promotion, 20% of its employees commute by bicycle, which is the highest bicycle commuter rate nationwide. (*Worldwatch Paper 90*, p. 37-38)

- Local governments can promote bicycling effectively by creating an official bicycle advisory council. The council can ensure that all transportation improvements consider bicyclists' needs, new or rebuilt roads and bridges include safe access for bicycles, and that new building developments include bicycle parking and showers for commuters. Also, specific parts of downtown areas can be devoted to bicycles and a percentage of all transport spending allocated to bicycle facilities. (*Worldwatch Paper 90, p. 43-44*)

### **Concerns**

- Many landowners, especially farmers, have perceived problems with trail development. Studies show that the anticipated problems that are voiced most frequently are: vandalism, trespassing, littering, stealing, and loss of privacy. However, once the trail is constructed and in use, many landowners discover that these problems rarely occur. (*Mazour, p. 76-81*)
- Along the Luce Line Trail in west central Minnesota and Root River Trail in southeast Minnesota, 80% of the landowners indicate that the trails have not increased the rate of violent crime, 76% feel secure about their safety on their property, and 81% feel that the trail users cause either few or no problems. (*Mazour, p. 84*)

### **Trail User Characteristics**

A study conducted in 1990 on the 16-week summer season use of trails focused on user characteristics. Two trail segments were compared: the Root River Trail in Southeast Minnesota and the Munger Trail in Northeast Minnesota. There were 18,900 users on the Root River Trail; 81% rode bicycles. The Munger Trail had 42,320 users; 75% rode bicycles. The average distance from home that the average Root River Trail user traveled was 82.2 miles. Duluth area residents accounted for a large number of Munger Trail users, so when the local users were removed from the base user data, it was found that the average trail visitor came 102 miles from home to use the trail. The study results indicated that trail use continues to increase each year for both trails. (*The Economic Impact of Recreational Trails*).

A 2008 study, the Profile of 2008 Minnesota Recreational Trail Users, conducted by the University of Minnesota Tourism Center, detailed who uses Minnesota's recreational trails, including demographic information such as users' average age, sex, and educational background.<sup>12</sup> Some of the findings of the study included:

- Education: Post graduate degree was most often reported by cross-country skiers and runners as the highest education level attained. A college degree was most often reported by horseback riders, bicyclists, walkers/hikers, and snowmobilers; and ATV users most often reported vocational or associate degrees.
- Age: The average age of trail users was in 40's and 50's.

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<sup>12</sup> Profile of 2008 Minnesota Recreation Trail Users, Published September 2009 [http://www.tourism.umn.edu/prod/groups/cfans/@pub/@cfans/@tourism/documents/article/cfans\\_article\\_132056.pdf](http://www.tourism.umn.edu/prod/groups/cfans/@pub/@cfans/@tourism/documents/article/cfans_article_132056.pdf),

- Motivation: The primary motivation for Minnesota recreational trail users is a combination of aesthetics, fitness, and as an escape. Nature related experiences was reported to be important to all trail user groups.
- Sources of conflict: The most frequently observed conflicts were litter on the trail and hearing other users on the trail; however, the conflicts that interfered the most with the recreational experience were litter on the trail, and rude or discourteous users.

### **Environmental Benefits**

We live in a society where it is common to have two or more cars in one household. We are having a difficult time coming to realize that we are harming the environment by driving to work every day or running errands around town. Construction of trails can promote bicycling and walking to perform our everyday duties. Much information is available about the benefits of bicycling, which are discussed in this section. Other potential environmental benefits from trails include plant and wildlife habitat protection, corridors for wildlife movement, protection of water bodies and sensitive areas from sedimentation and erosion, protection of historic areas, and security of abandoned railway corridors for future options.

### **Pollution Prevention**

- It is estimated that in 1991, walking and bicycling trips replaced 18 billion miles of car trips in the United States. (*NBPC Technical Brief, p. 4*)
- Cars, trucks, and buses are major sources of noise, water, and air pollution. In urban areas, carbon monoxide emissions can be as high as 90% of all emissions. (*NBPC Technical Brief, p. 4*) A trail system in which people could bike or walk to work could reduce the amount of pollution being released into the atmosphere.
- A report by the World Health Organization and the United States Environment Program estimates that up to half of the world's cities have harmful levels of carbon monoxide and one-third have either marginal or unacceptable concentrations of lead. Nearly everyone who lives in a large city is exposed to hazardous air pollution. Also, car-induced air pollution is a factor in the reduction of the ozone layer. (*Worldwatch Paper 90, p.14*)
- Every 100 miles traveled on a bike instead of in a car keeps 4.2 pounds of carbon dioxide pollutants out of the atmosphere. In 1989, Minnesotans who bicycled kept more than 130 million pounds of pollutants out of the atmosphere. (*Plan B, p. 14*)
- A 1980 Great Britain study concluded that if just 10% of car trips of less than 10 miles were made by bicycle, the country would save 14 million barrels of oil a year. In the Netherlands, a campaign to promote bicycle use for trips within a 5-kilometer radius of home was calculated to save each person \$400 a year in fuel costs. (*Worldwatch Paper 90, p. 20*)

### **Resource Protection**

- Often, vegetation within railroad rights of way has been undisturbed or minimally disturbed resulting in remnant examples of native plant communities (*Mazour, p. 9*). Preserving and managing these communities is compatible with trail uses. Acquisition of cropland or

pasture land for a trail corridor allows for the re-establishment of native vegetation. This creates additional habitat and allows for the genetic movement of plants.

- Trails can serve as wildlife corridors connecting larger blocks of habitat. Trails connect existing parks, open spaces, and undeveloped land and, at the same time, allow for the preservation of plants and wildlife. The Fox River Trail in Illinois created a home for the endangered black-crowned night heron. Because of the preserved trail corridor, the species has a better chance of survival. *(NBPC Technical Brief, p.4)*
- Vegetation within a trail right-of-way can serve to protect the water quality of an adjacent lake or stream by capturing pollutants before they enter the water.

Vegetation also acts as a buffer to keep soil particles from eroding into the water, which would cause sedimentation and water quality problems.

### **Historical Preservation**

- Preservation of abandoned railways as trail systems can protect historic landmarks that are part of the railway and early American history. The Minuteman Bikeway runs through the towns of Lexington, Arlington, and Bedford, Massachusetts, and is part of the route marched by British soldiers in 1776. The trail is also of great historic importance because it was the famous route Paul Revere rode to warn of the coming of the British. *(NBPC Technical Brief, p. 4)*

### **Transportation Benefit**

- Trails and safe areas to walk and bicycle provide an opportunity for alternative forms of transportation. Active Transportation refers to human powered transportation. Active transportation is part of a multimodal transportation solution that helps to connect people to where they need to go. Having complete streets in a community is critical in promoting a more active lifestyle and creating an environment that promotes active transportation.

## TRAILHEADS AND TRAIL CORRIDORS

Often, there are combinations of reasons that motivate people to travel. These are called push factors. Typical push factors include health pursuits, friends and relatives, curiosity, escape, adventures, rest and relaxation, challenge, social interaction, pleasure, professional development, business and culture. The Border to Border Trail Study identified the close alignment of the push factors listed in another study, Benefits of Leisure.

Once visitors have the urge to travel (push factor), pull attractions influence where they decide to go. Pull attractions tend to be places or events, and can include: natural, scenic, and historic areas; cultural, entertainment, and educational events, attractions; meetings, and facilities; sports events and participation facilities; wildlife; and religious sites. Southwest Minnesota offers many of these pull attractions. The Trailheads identified by the Steering Committee were viewed as locations to access trails, as well as pull attractions for visitors.

The Regional Trailhead and Potential Corridor Map was developed in 2000 and refined in 2010 through a public process. The Regional Steering committee was formed with the assistance of the nine County Boards designating representatives to bring local input in to the regional forum. These representatives served as ambassadors from their respective counties to identify existing and potential trails, trailheads and regional trail corridors with potential for non-motorized or multi-use trail development. The trailheads and corridors identified in this plan had a higher regional priority for planning and development than isolated stand-alone projects in the 2000 Plan. The 2010 Plan identifies a Regional Priority method focused on projects requesting funding (Appendix C).

There are three Legislatively Designated State Trails within the Southwest Region<sup>13</sup>: Minnesota Statute 85.015 Sub. 2 (Casey Jones Trail) Sub. 22 (MN River Trail,) and Sub. 27 (Des Moines River Valley Trail). The 2000 Regional Trail Corridor Plan identified several trail segments which are now part of the legislatively designated trails. The 2010 Regional Trail Corridor Plan utilized the legislatively designated trails as the backbone trail network in SW MN.

### **Subd. 2. Casey Jones Trail, Murray, Redwood, Pipestone, and Rock Counties.**

(a) The trail shall originate in Lake Shetek State Park in Murray County and include the six-mile loop between Currie in Murray County and Lake Shetek State Park. From there, the first half of the trail shall trail southwesterly to Slayton in Murray County; thence westerly to the point of intersection with the most easterly terminus of the state-owned abandoned railroad right-of-way, commonly known as the Casey Jones unit; thence westerly along said Casey Jones unit to Pipestone in Pipestone County; thence southwesterly to Split Rock Creek State Park in Pipestone County; thence southeasterly to Blue Mounds State Park in Rock County; thence southerly to Luverne and Schoneman Park in Rock County, and there terminate. The second half of the trail shall commence in Lake Shetek State Park in Murray County and trail northeasterly to Walnut Grove in Redwood County; thence northeasterly to Redwood Falls in Redwood County to join with the Minnesota River State Trail.

(b) The trail shall be developed as a multiuse, multiseasonal, dual treadway trail. Nothing herein shall abrogate the purpose for which the Casey Jones unit was

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<sup>13</sup> State trail language as of January 1, 2010

originally established, and the use thereof shall be concurrent. The Casey Jones Trail is a trail of State/Regional Significance.

Subd. 22. **Minnesota River Trail.** The trail shall originate at the entrance to Big Stone Lake State Park and extend along the Minnesota River Valley to connect to the Minnesota Valley Trail at the city of Le Sueur. The trail shall include a loop between Fort Ridgely State Park and the cities of Redwood Falls and Sleepy Eye. A segment shall be established connecting the cities of Granite Falls and Montevideo. The Minnesota River Trail is a trail of State/Regional Significance

Subd. 27. **Des Moines River Valley Trail, Jackson, Cottonwood, and Murray Counties.** The trail shall originate in Jackson County at the Minnesota-Iowa border and connect with the Dickinson Trail in Mini-Wakan State Park in Iowa. To the greatest extent possible, the trail shall follow the Des Moines River Valley, extending northwesterly through Jackson County to Kilen Woods State Park, through Cottonwood County, and into Murray County. The trail shall terminate at Casey Jones Trail in Murray County. The Des Moines River Valley Trail is a trail of State/Regional Significance.

Minnesota State Trails must have a Master Plan<sup>14</sup> completed and approved by DNR before trail development can occur. Currently, there are approved Master Plans for the Casey Jones Trail and the Minnesota River Valley Trail. Excerpts from these Plans are included in the applicable county sections in Appendix B to describe the trails alignment, planned facilities, or access to existing facilities.

The following pages identify, on a regional basis, Bike / Pedestrian Trails, Snowmobile Trails, and Water Trails in the Region, as well as Scenic Byways and School Districts<sup>15</sup>. A detailed inventory of the trails by type in Southwest Minnesota is located in Appendix: A - Inventory of Trails.

The following maps are included:

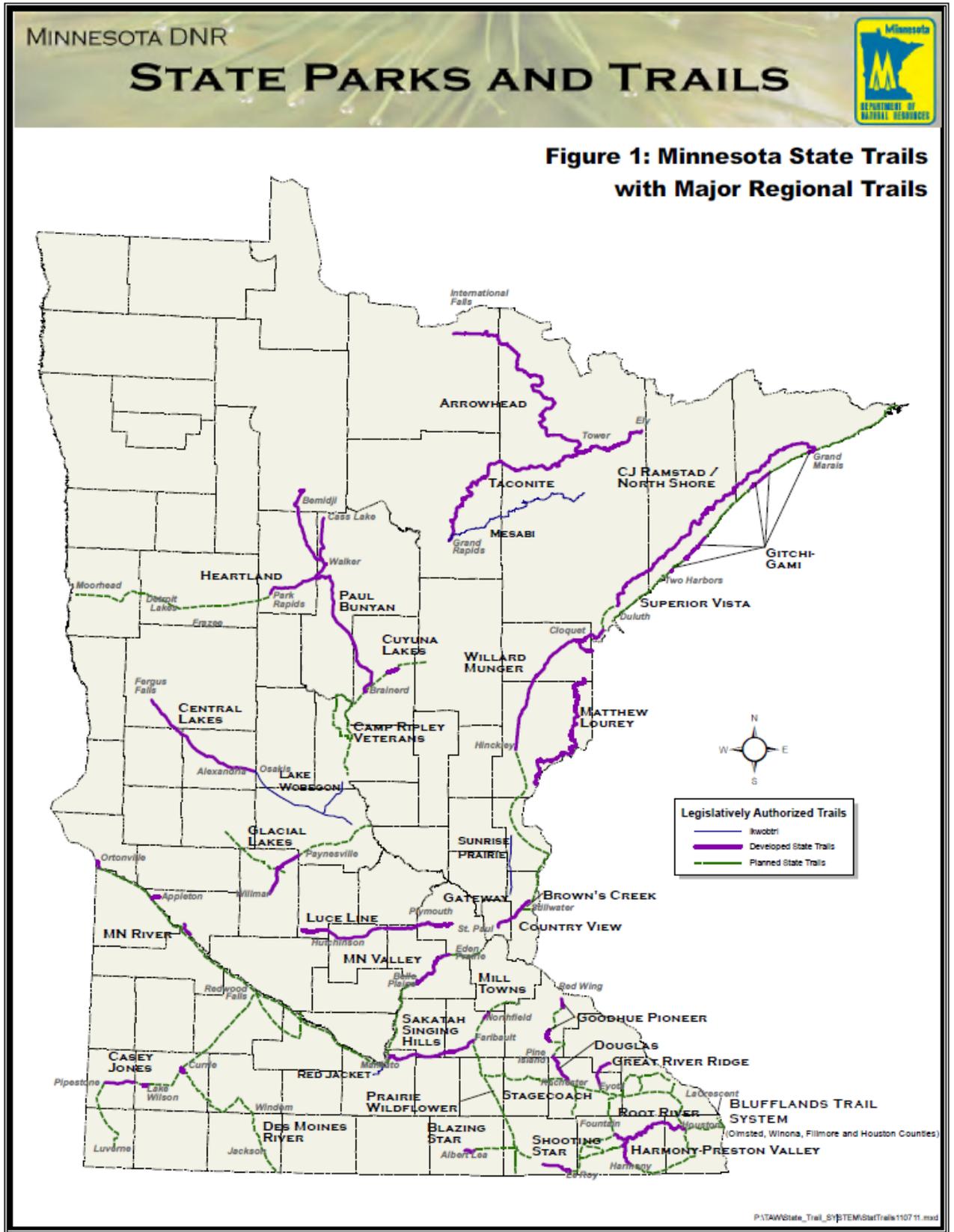
- Minnesota State Trails Map
- 2010 Southwest Minnesota Trail Corridor Map. This is a new map for the 2010 Plan
- 2010 Southwest Regional Trail Map with Potential Corridors and Local/Regional Trails, and Gateways to other trails.
- A Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) State Trail system Map
- DNR Snowmobile Trail Map
- A DNR Public Bicycle Trailhead map.
- A DNR Public Hiking Trailheads map.
- A DNR Public Horse Trailhead map.
- A DNR Snowmobile Trailheads map.
- A DNR Cross-Country Ski Trailheads map.
- Scenic By- Ways
- School Districts

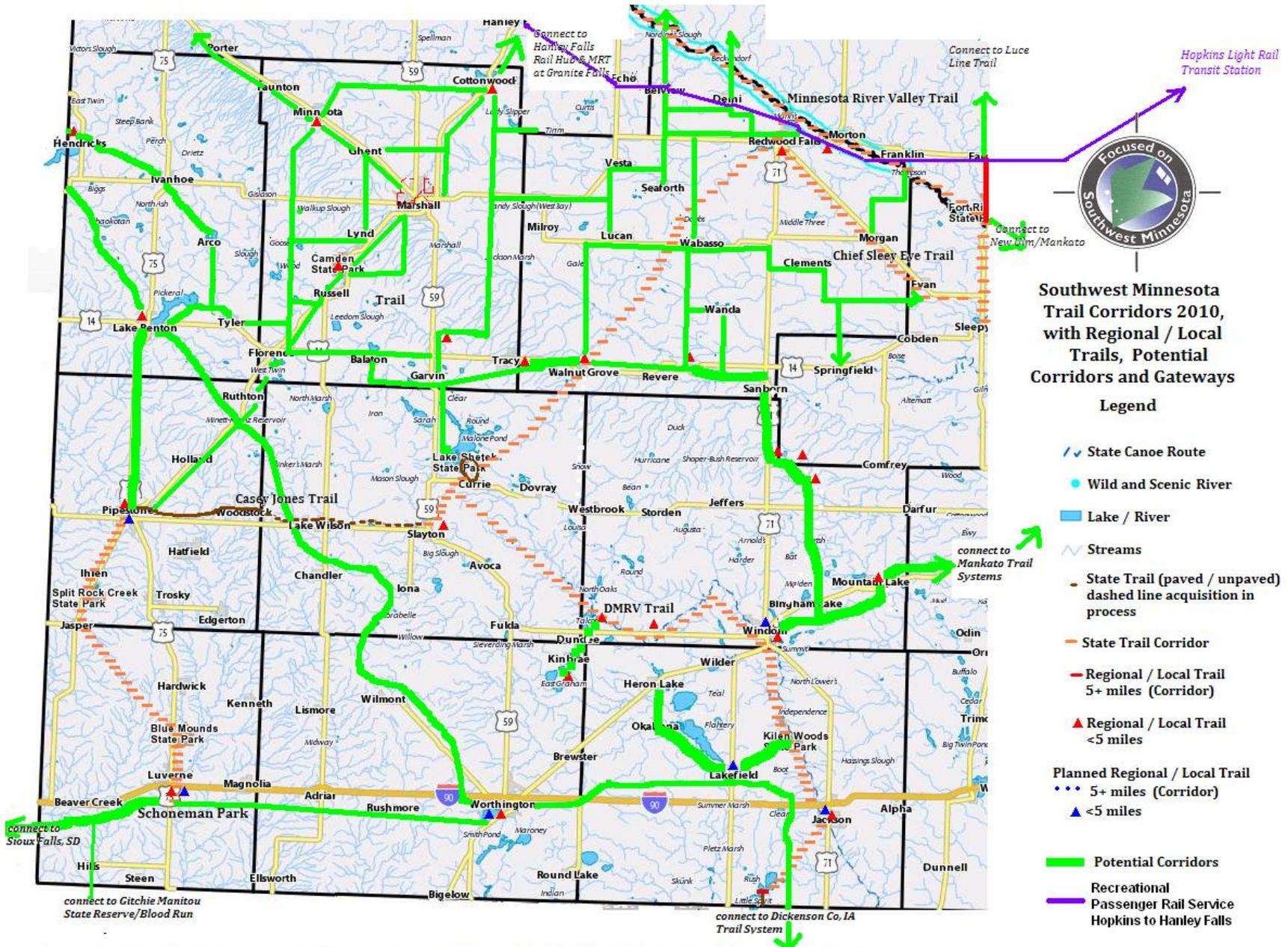
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<sup>14</sup> Minnesota DNR maintains Trail Master Plans [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_trails/master\\_plans.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_trails/master_plans.html)

<sup>15</sup> Scenic By-Ways and School Districts were added because Safe Routes to School and Scenic By-ways are eligible under the Transportation Alternatives Funding (TAP)

Minnesota State Trails Map





base map source: [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/landview.html?layers=lakes+roads+bdry\\_munipy3](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/landview.html?layers=lakes+roads+bdry_munipy3) and Regional Committee input

## EXISTING AND POTENTIAL TRAIL HEADS BY COUNTY

Existing & potential trailheads on a State or Regional or Subregional Trail Corridor

\* Local Trail

### COTTONWOOD

- Dutch Charlie County Park
- Fish Lake\*
- Heritage Village (City of Mountain Lake), Gateway to parks and trail systems from the east (Mankato Trails – Sakata trail, Minnesota River trail, Red jacket Trail, South Route Trail, Minneopa State Park)
- Jeffers Petroglyphs
- Mountain Lake (lake)
- Mountain Park County Park\*
- Pat’s Grove County Park
- Redrock Falls County Park
- Talcot Lake County Park
- Windom (DMRV Trail)
- Mound Park, Brown County
- USFW Office east of Windom

### JACKSON

- Anderson County Park (DMRV Trail)
- Brown County Park (DMRV Trail)
- Robertson County Park\* (DMRV Trail)
- Community Point County Park
- Fish Lake\*
- Fort Belmont – (DMRV Trail)
- Heron Lake (city)
- Jackson (DMRV Trail)
- Kilen Woods State Park (DMRV Tr)
- Sparks Park (Lakefield)
- Okabena
- Round Lake (lake)\*
- Sandy Point County Park
- Mini Wakan Park (Mn/IA border, beginning of Des Moines River Trail and Gateway to Dickenson County Iowa trails / Spirit Lake Iowa)

### LINCOLN

- Lake Hendricks at Hendricks
- Hole in the Mountain Park at Lake Benton
- Lake Shaokatan County Park
- Stoney Point Park at the east end of Lake Benton lake
- Norwegian Creek Park at Lake Benton
- Midwest Center for Wind Energy
- Picnic Point County Park at Lake Shaokatan
- Anderson Park on Lake Stay Park in Arco
- Gilson Field Campground at the north end of Ivanhoe

### LYON

- Camden State Park
- Cottonwood (Connection to Granite Falls and Gateway to Luce Line and Glacial Lakes Trails)
- Garvin Park
- Marshall
- Minneota
- Taunton
- Tracy

### MURRAY

- Fulda \*
- End-O-Line Park (Currie) (Casey Jones Tr)
- Forman Acres County Park\*
- Lake Shetek State Park (Casey Jones Tr)
- Lake Wilson(Casey Jones Tr)
- Marsh’s Landing\*
- Slayton (Casey Jones Tr)
- Valhalla Island on Lake Shetek\*
- Hadley – Summit Lake (Casey Jones Tr)

## TRAIL HEADS BY COUNTY (continued)

### NOBLES

- 59/60 Travel Information Center
- Bigelow\*
- Fury's Island
- Indian Lake\*
- Lake Bella
- Lismore\*
- Maka Oicu
- Midway County Park\*
- Ocheda Lake\*
- Okabena Lake
- Org
- Round Lake (city)\*
- Sunrise Prairie Park
- Worthington
- Dundee
- Kinbrae

### PIPESTONE

- Pipestone (Casey Jones Tr)
- Veterans park – future a kiosk planned for in 2010
- Highway 23 Trailhead for Casey Jones State Trail
- Edgerton – some walking trails\*
- Jasper Quarry\*
- Pipestone National Monument (Casey Jones Tr)
- Split Rock State Park (Casey Jones Tr)
- Woodstock –(Casey Jones Trail)

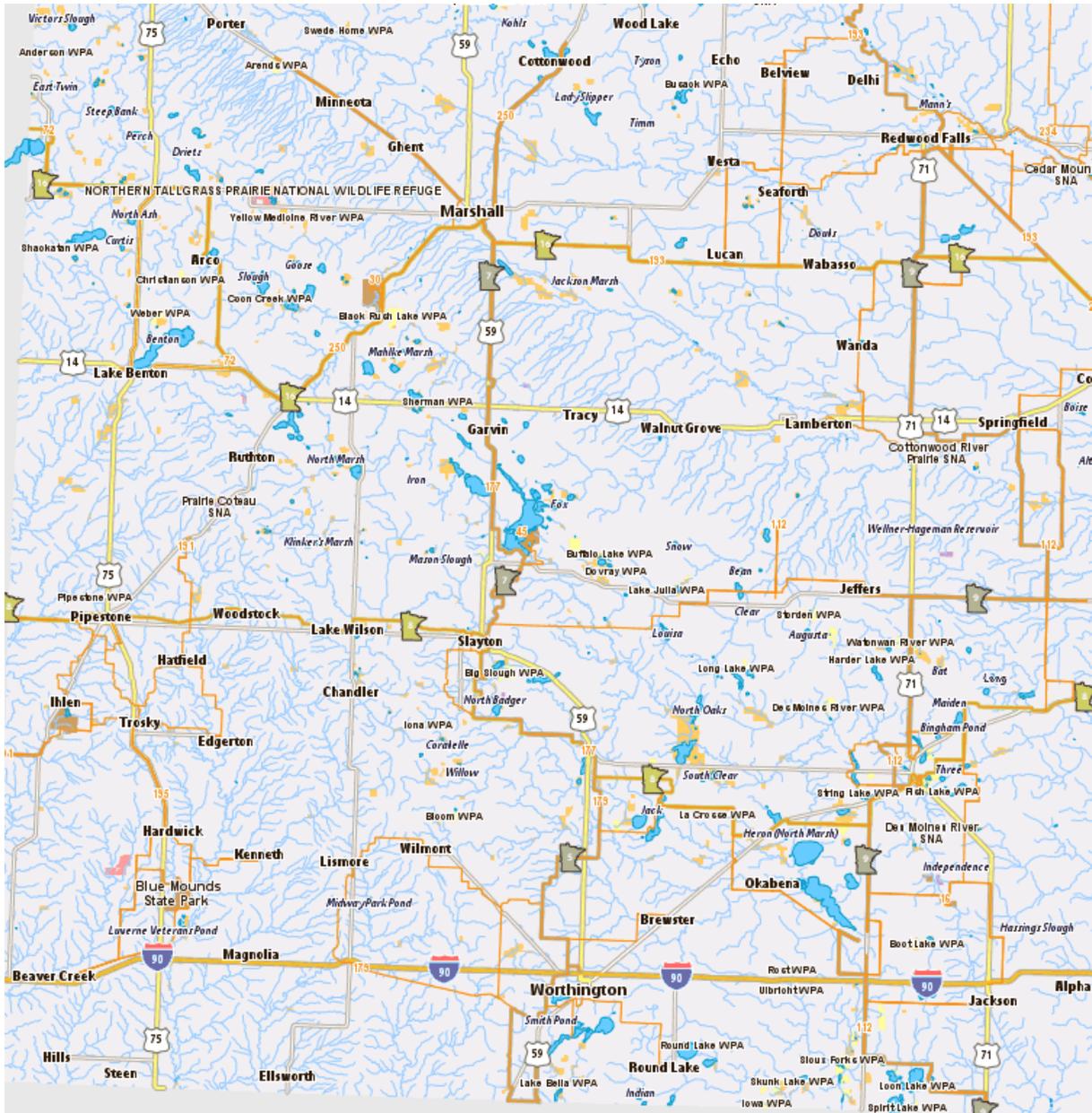
### REDWOOD

- Alexander Ramsey Park (Redwood Falls)\* (MN River Valley Trail and Casey Jones Trail)
- Belview
- Gold Mine Lake
- Lamberton\*
- Lower Sioux Interpretive Center\*
- Plum Creek Park\* (Casey Jones Tr)
- Sanborn
- MN River Access North of Redwood Falls- Gateway to the Minnesota River Valley Trail)
- MN River Access South of Redwood Falls
- Scenic Byway
- Vesta
- Walnut Grove\* (Casey Jones Tr)

### ROCK

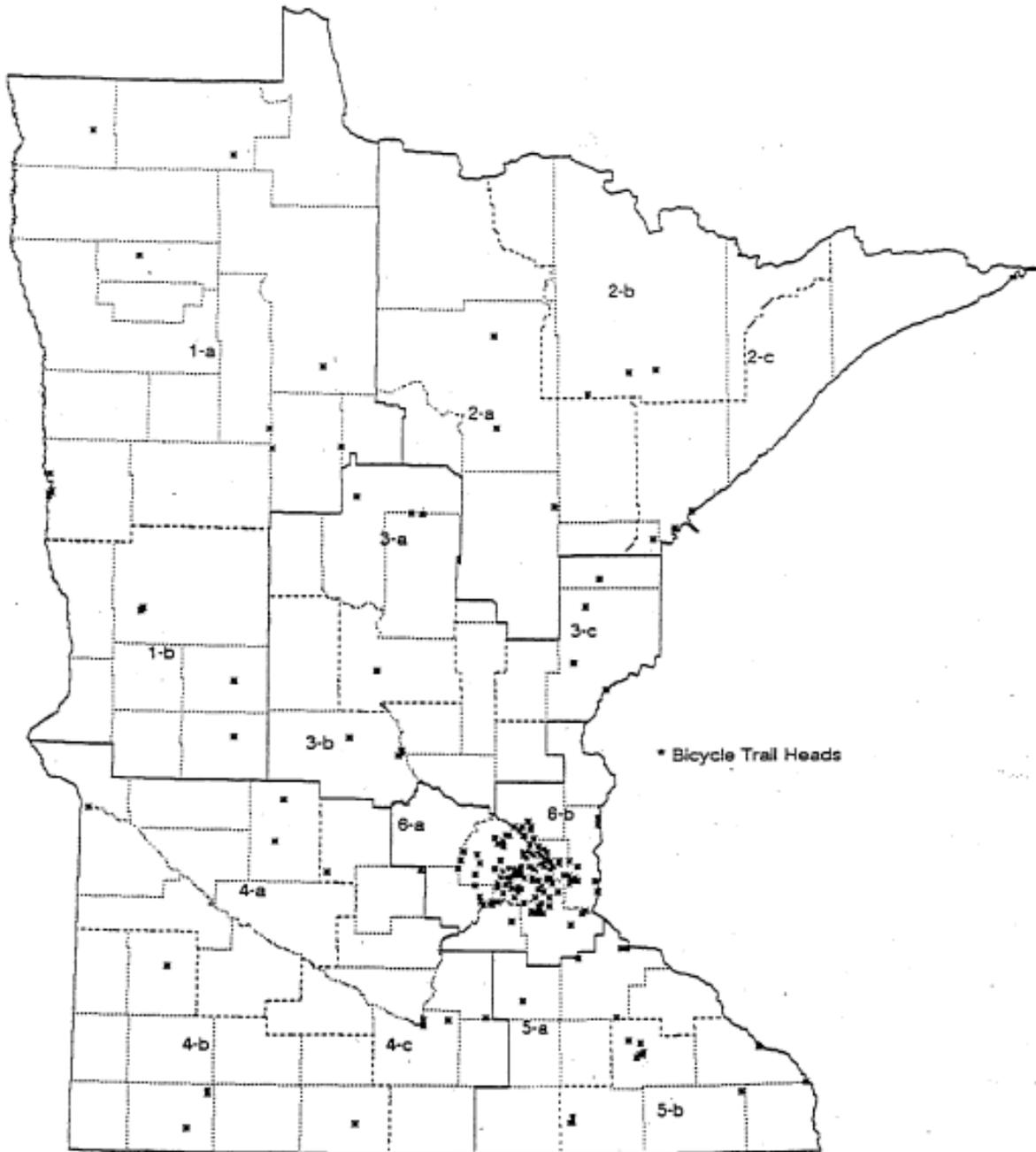
- Blue Mound State Park (Casey Jones Tr)
- Hills Gateway to Gitche Manitou State Reserve/Blood Run, Iowa\*
- Beaver Creek Gateway to Valley Springs, Brandon, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota Trail System)
- Schoeneman Park (Luverne) (Casey Jones Tr)
- Redbird Field (Luverne)

# DNR Snowmobile Trail Map – 2013-2014 Season



Source: [http://dnr.state.mn.us/snowmobiling/interactive\\_map/index.htm](http://dnr.state.mn.us/snowmobiling/interactive_map/index.htm)

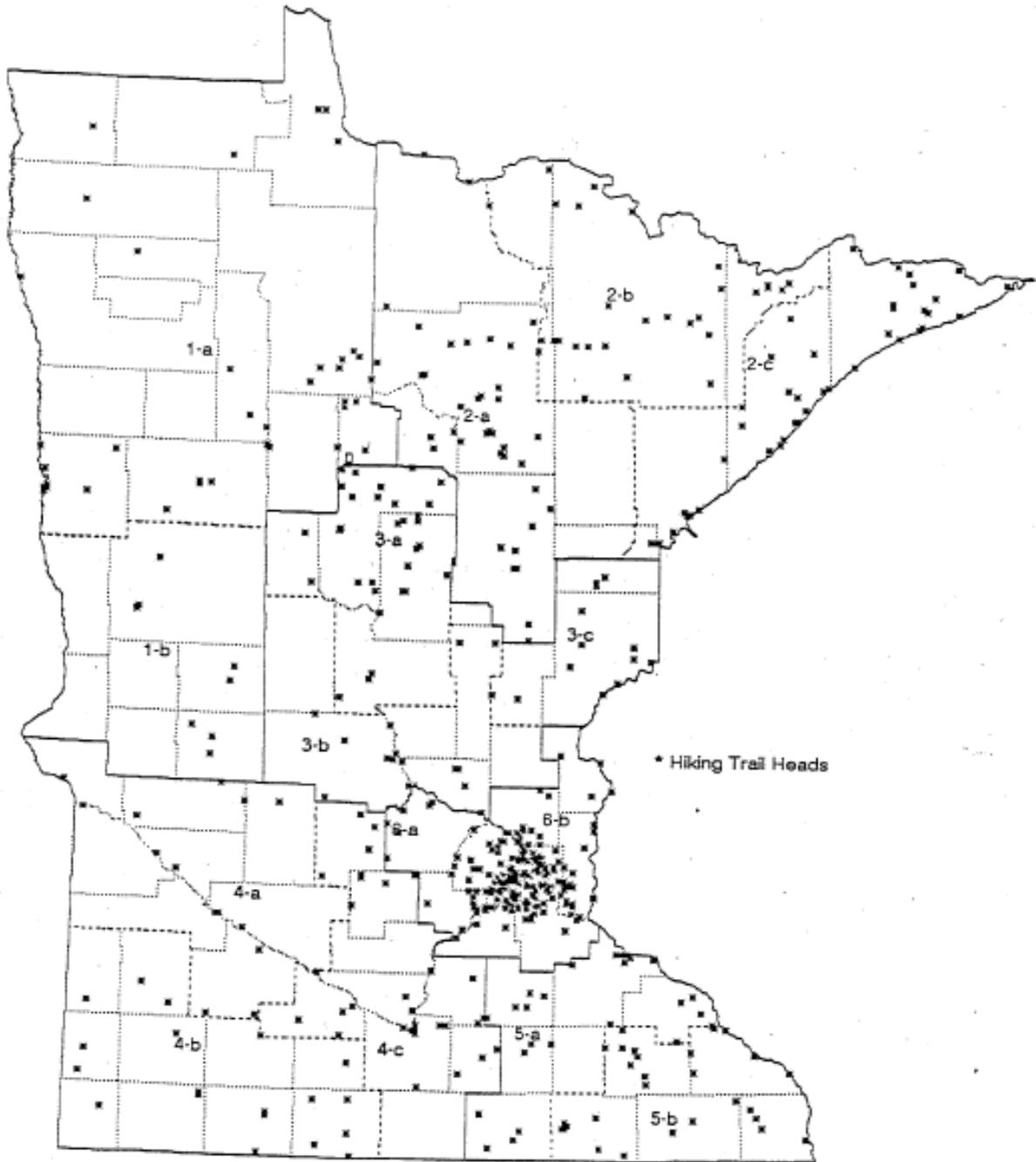
## Public Bicycle Trail Heads



Source: DNR - MIS/GIS Section - RECFAC Data Base, July 1, 1996

Note: Base map includes DNR Trails & Waterways Unit Region/Area boundaries and county lines.

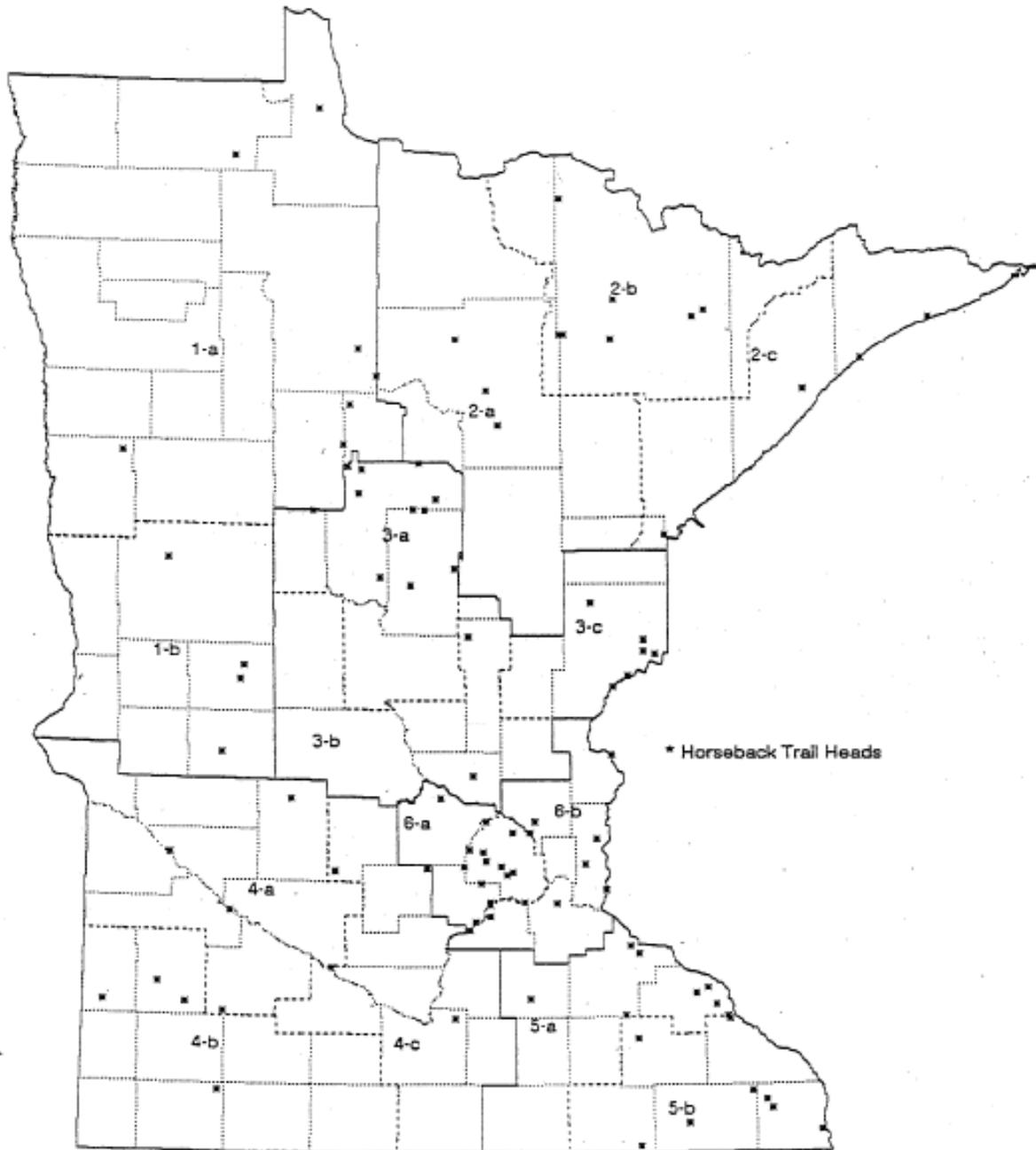
# Public Hiking Trail Heads



Source: DNR - MIS/GIS Section - RECFAC Data Base, July 1, 1996

Note: Base map includes DNR Trails & Waterways Unit Region/Area boundaries and county lines.

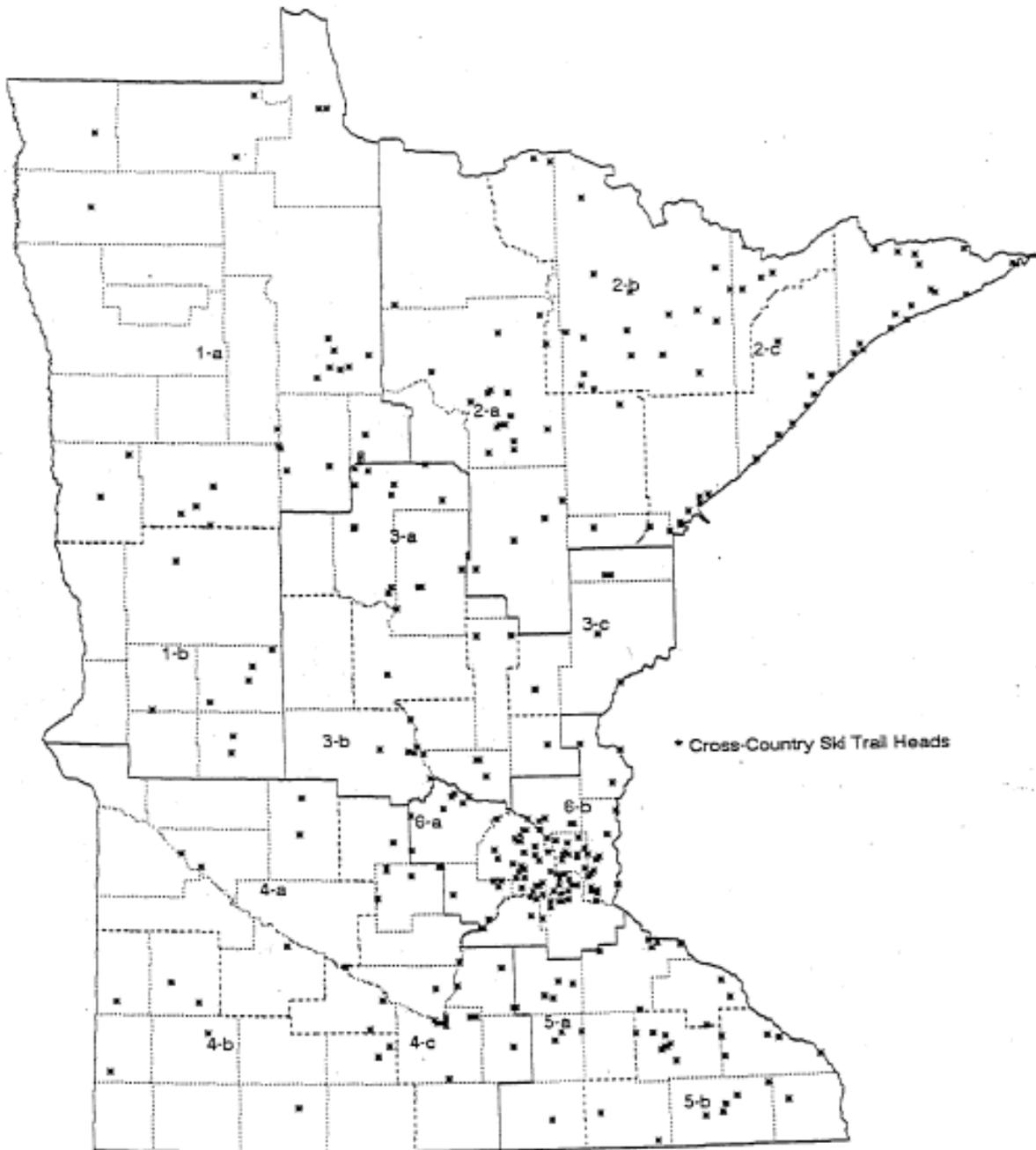
# Public Horse Trail Heads



Source: DNR - MIS/GIS Section - RECFAC Data Base, July 1, 1996

Note: Base map includes DNR Trails & Waterways Unit Region/Area boundaries and county lines.

## Public Cross-Country Ski Trail Heads



Source: DNR - MIS/GIS Section - RECFAC Data Base, July 1, 1998  
Note: Base map includes DNR Trails & Waterways Unit Region/Area boundaries and county lines.

## SCENIC BY-WAYS IN REGION 8

Minnesota Scenic Byways are roads that pass through 21 transportation corridors that feature many of Minnesota's finest cultural, historic, natural, recreational, archaeological and cultural locations and landscapes. Grass root organizations have nominated these byways for byway designation and engage in planning. Conservation, preservation and marketing activities to ensure a quality byway experience for visitors and residents.

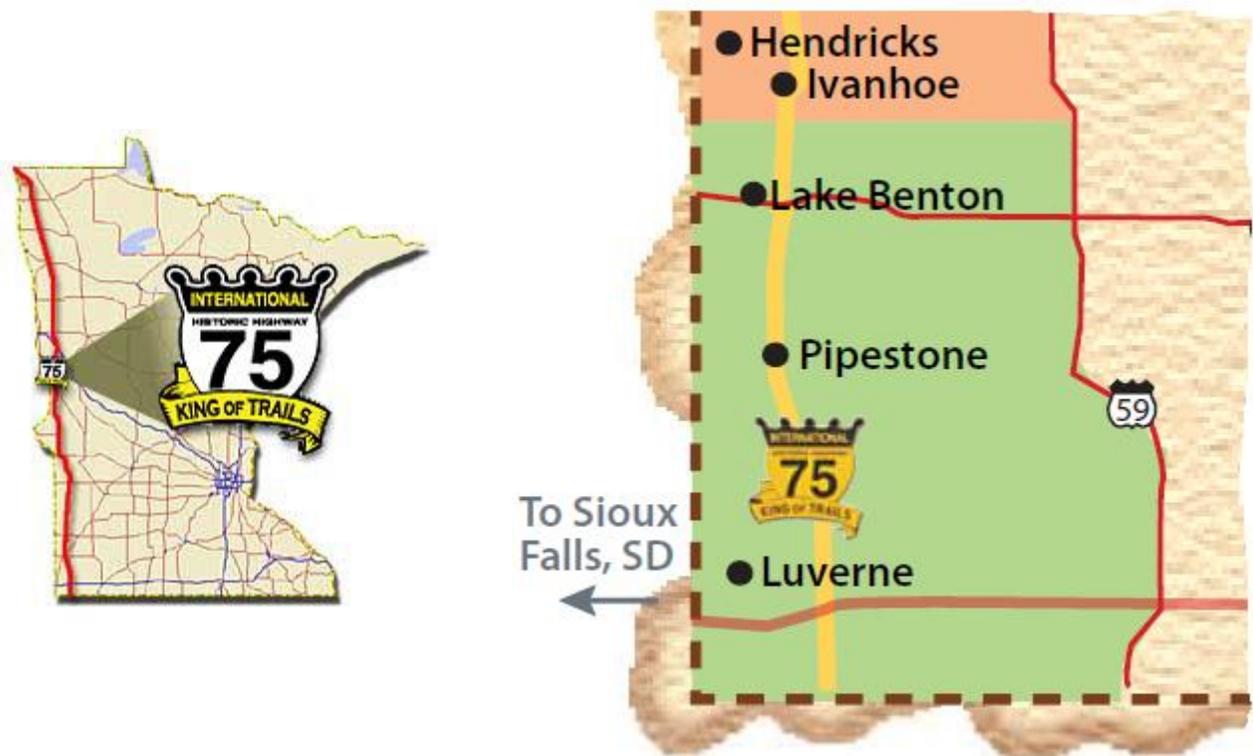
Four state agencies, including the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Historical Society and Explore Minnesota Tourism, partner with grass root organizations and with local units of government on byway projects.

Eight Minnesota Byways are also designated as National Scenic Byways under the National Scenic Byways Program, Managed by the Federal Highway Administration.

There are two scenic byways in southwest Minnesota, the "King of Trails" (KT) is a state Scenic By-Way and the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

The "**King of Trails**" (KT) crosses the entire United States, beginning in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and ending at the Gulf of Mexico in Galveston, Texas and was dubbed the King of Trails 90 years ago. The Minnesota portion, stretches 414 miles along the state's western border <http://www.highway75.com/>.

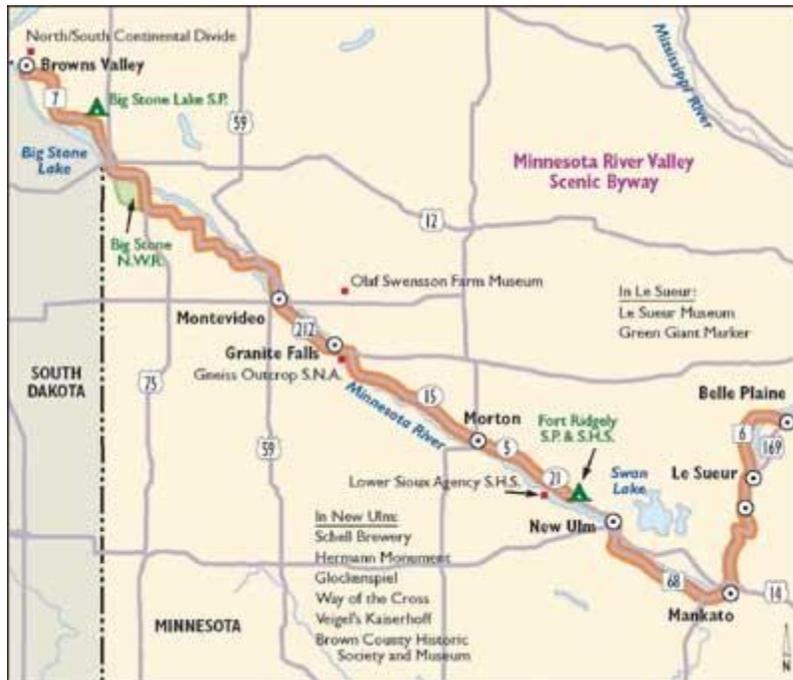
The King of Trails is just as important for its history. Once a Native American trail used to gather food and seek shelter, the trail became well-used when settlers happened upon it. After vehicles needed it for trading, the trail was paved and made into a part of America's highway system. Today, locals and travelers alike find the unique beauty of the surrounding prairies as beautiful as the lakes and mountains in other parts of the state.



**Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway** <http://www.mnrivervalley.com/> is located along the **Minnesota River**, Redwood County is one of the Counties along the River.

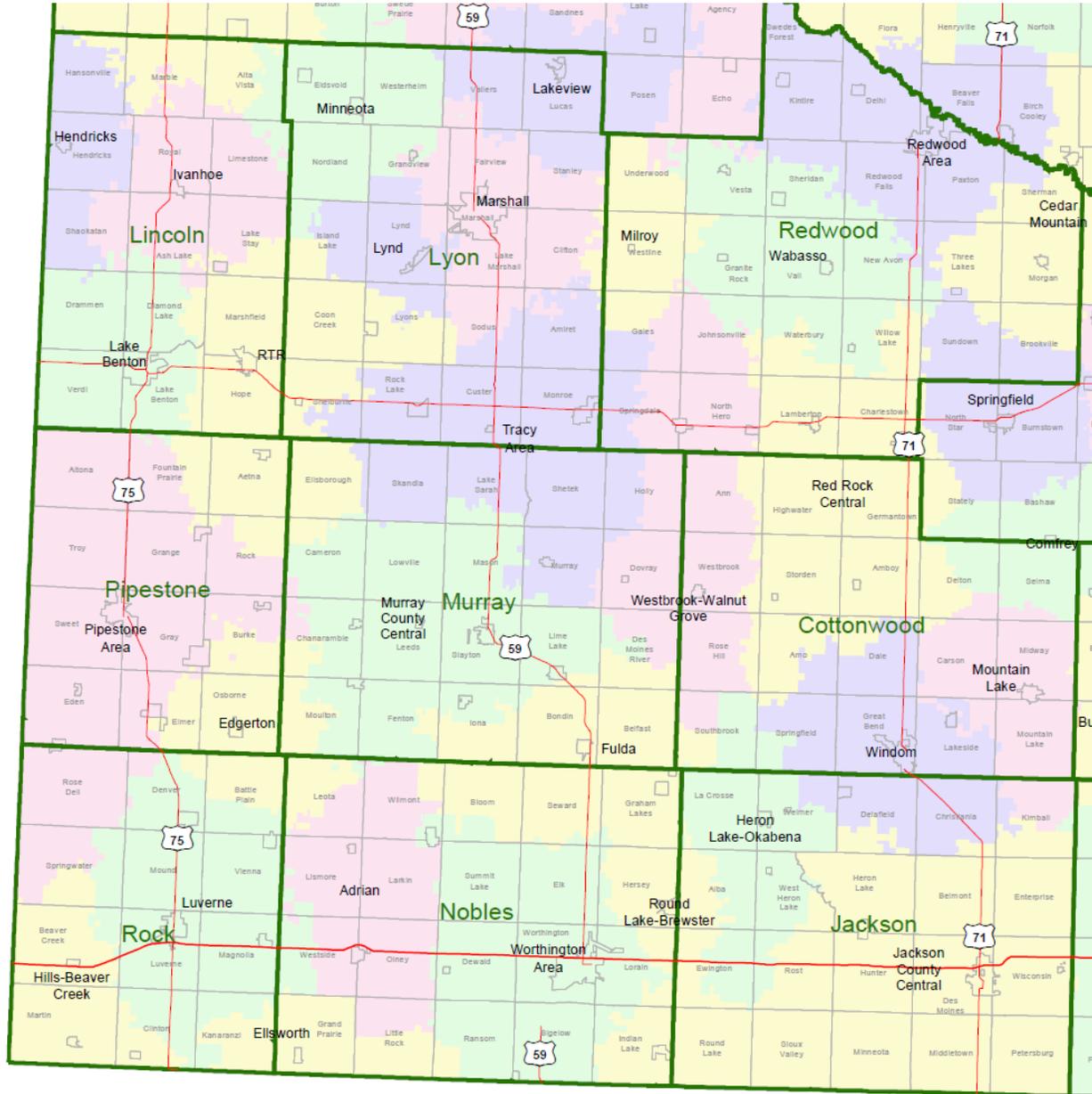
The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway was fully designated in 1996 by Minnesota State Scenic Byway Commission.

The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance was formally organized as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation (according to Minnesota Statute Chapter 317A) in February 1997. The Alliance continues to meet monthly to "promote and develop the scenic byway along the Minnesota River.



# SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN REGION 8

There are 28 School districts in Region 8. School Districts are eligible for funding Safe Routes to School through both the Transportation Alternatives Program (federal funds) and the Safe Routes to School (state funds).



## **TRAIL PLANNING PROCESS.**

The following identifies a basic trail planning process from concept to construction.

### **PHASE I—Basic Concept**

Clarify, identify and research the need and desire for a trail or route, including:

- Beginning and ending Points (trailheads). No specific route should be identified at this time.
- Surface type.
- Targeted trail users.
- Attractions between the trailheads.
- Is it part of or complimentary to a local, regional or state trail plan?
- Has it been identified in a planning process?
- What are the benefits and costs of the proposed project?
- Consider barriers that would affect the trail users you are targeting. When barriers are determined to be relevant to particular market segments, strategies to address the barriers must be developed. Types of barriers include:
  - Physical Barriers—land use related.
  - Social Barriers—local opponents to the project.
  - Financial Barriers.
  - Recreational Barriers—expense, lack of time, lack of skills, lack of travel companion, poor health, and security (safety, crime).

### **PHASE II—Marketing the Concept**

Education Component/Local Support of Project

Identify Allies - Who does the proposed project affect?

- Examples: landowners, businesses, units of government, funding sources, regulatory agencies, user organizations or associations, opponents and proponents, road jurisdiction representatives (township, city, county, state)
- Who will engineer and design the project?
- The engineer needs to be cognizant of trail design standards. There are standards developed by both DNR and MnDOT.
- Who will sponsor the project?
- Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the project?

### **PHASE III—Identification of Alternatives**

- Identify and assess alternatives.
- Identify potential conflicts with the alternatives.
- Are there any other trails in the area that need to be avoided?
- Are there any other trails with which to coordinate?
- Are there environmental issues (wetlands, Wildlife Management Areas, etc.)?
- Safety—is there a current safety problem that this proposed project will resolve? Will this project create any safety issues?
- Any other conflicts (i.e. need for right-of-way acquisition, trail development or surface type would prohibit current or future users)?
- Identify a draft budget for each alternative.

### **PHASE IV—Narrowing the Focus**

- Bring alternatives into a public process for feedback.
- Review feedback to select a preferred route.
- Hold another public meeting to identify the preferred route and get additional feedback.
- At this point, the sponsor needs to decide whether to go forward with the project or not.
- If the project is proceeding, prepare a draft of preferred route/preliminary engineering design and drawings, and a refined budget.

### **PHASE V—Pursue Funding**

- Solicit funding from local clubs, organizations, associations, businesses, units of government, and public and private grants

### **PHASE VI—Implementation of Project**

- Funding has been acquired
- Implementation process begins for the project
- Final Plans are completed

## **SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL PLANS**

The Southwest Regional Development Commission supports the development of SRTS Plans which may identify Infrastructure Projects to make the environment safer for walking and biking to school. While not always identified in the Local Plans section of this Plan specifically, the established SRTS planning process has a strong involvement of the school, parents, city, county and others. The process vets options other than infrastructure improvements.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans are community plans to promote an active lifestyle for all residents. The focus of SRTS plans are teaching children pedestrian and bicycle safety, making the environment safer for children to walk and bicycle to school and around the community, and promote a healthy lifestyle. The SRTS plan encourages children and the community as a whole to walk, bike, and be more physically active. By promoting a more active lifestyle, there are a number of positive externalities that include: reduced traffic congestion near schools and in the community, better air quality around schools and in the community, and an overall healthier community.

The SRTS planning process is a comprehensive approach designed to identify the existing conditions so the SRTS team can determine goals to improving pedestrian and bicycle safety in the community, while promoting an active lifestyle. SRTS Plans use the five E's to create an effective strategy for addressing the current issues. The five E's are: evaluation, engineering, education, encouragement, and enforcement. Effective action plans utilize all 5 E's in formulating strategies to increase walking and bicycling to school. The strategies usually include implementation of several things, which may include change in policies (city / school / busing), signage, implementing education and new programs such as a walking school bus, to higher cost infrastructure improvements.

The Safe Routes to School Planning process involves a core team of people in the community with the common goal to increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school. The team is comprised of community members with diverse backgrounds and interests. The team has Champions and stakeholders. Champions are two to four people dedicated to leading and coordinating the teams efforts in building an effective SRTS Program. Champions might be PTA/PTO Representatives, Principals, Teachers, Local Bike / Pedestrian Advocates, School District / School Board representatives, regional coordinators, etc; Stakeholders represent interests in the school and community and can share insight into policies and help shape the SRTS program. This group is often comprised of parents, teachers, students, school administrators, municipal officials, law enforcement, businesses, engineers, planners, county officials, and advocates of interest groups.

Development of the Plan, involves a visioning process; an assessment of issues and barriers; surveys of both students and parents are conducted and results analyzed; a walking / bike audit and neighborhood meeting is held; strategies and action steps are developed for community input; the draft plan is developed for community review and input; and the Plan is adopted by the School District.

### **Benefits of a Safe Routes to School Plan and its implementation**

- Funding for infrastructure– MnDOT requires that the project or the need for a project be outlined in a plan. Without the planning to support the project, the application will not be competitive. Infrastructure funding includes: Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding, and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).
- Enables a city to identify and address the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in regards to walking, biking, and active living.
- Helps to identify where the city is in regards to active transportation and where the city would like to go.
- An Active Living Plan would provide guidance for the promotion of active living

- Implementation of policies and infrastructure improvements enable communities to become more connected and safer for all users
- Research has shown that implementation of SRTS Plans help kids arrive to school focused and ready to learn
- SRTS programs have been found to increase bicycling and walking for not only children, but for the whole family

Planning is an important step in gaining traction, prioritization, and implementation. Effective planning could help to make community efforts more effective and will hopefully have a larger impact. Active Living Plans and Safe Routes to School Plans are two avenues for identifying and outlining projects to help make a community more pedestrian friendly.

Schools that have Safe Routes to School Plans or are in the process of Developing Safe Route to School Plans are:

- Jackson County Central, Riverside Elementary, City of Jackson (2013).
- Jackson County Central, JCC Middle School and Pleasantview Elementary, City of Lakefield (2013).
- Windom Area Schools, Middle School and Winfair Elementary, City of Windom (2014).
- Southwest Star Concept , High School / Middle School and Elementary School ( to be completed in 2015).
- Worthington School District, Middle School and Prairie Elementary School, (to be completed in 2015).

## RESOURCES

**Government Agency Coordination.** The creation of a trail cannot take place in a void with only one entity working to complete the task. Many different stakeholders must work together in trail planning and funding efforts. There are basically three levels of involvement for trails planning: federal & state, regional, and local or “grassroots.” This section will describe how the different groups and agencies can work together to attain the same goal.

**Local:** There needs to be a desire to have a trail be placed within a certain area. Trail planning needs to start at the local level to be successful.

Local Public Involvement, grassroots organizations—The whole process starts with the public involvement. An expression needs to be made that a trail is wanted in a particular area.

Municipalities—Municipalities can show their support in many ways, such as pass a resolution of support, or financially support the project.

The Private Sector—Employers and retailers can also support trails in many ways. An example would be to provide sidewalks and bike racks for the trail users to easily access the business. The private sector can also be a source of financial support.

**Regional:** The regional agencies or groups can provide further coordination, support and/or technical assistance to the local, grassroots organizations.

Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC)—The SRDC supports all nine counties in southwest Minnesota with resource assistance and legislative advocacy.

Counties—The counties need to communicate amongst each other, especially when talking about trails that will cross or end at the county boundary line. The County Engineer will be one of the key players in any trail project. Trails may be able to be installed in conjunction with planned road construction. County Boards are often Ditch Authorities and can assist in decisions that may affect the ditch system. Counties can also be a source of financial assistance.

Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (6W)—Region 6W borders Lincoln, Lyon and Redwood counties to the north. It will be important to communicate with this Commission when planning trails that will be connecting to the north.

Mid-Minnesota Regional Development Commission (6E) —Region 6E borders Redwood County to the northeast. When contemplating trails along the Minnesota River, they will be an important player.

Region Nine Regional Development Commission—Region 9 borders Redwood, Cottonwood, and Jackson Counties on the east. When planning new trails to run to the east or connect to trails running into the region from the east, they will be an important organization with which to communicate.

Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board—This organization has developed a Guidance Document that encompasses the Minnesota River Basin which covers about one third of the southwest Minnesota region. Their Guidance Document can be used to further substantiate trail planning.

Minnesota River Valley Trail—Montevideo to Wegdahl. This paved trail system begins with a well-developed system within the city of Montevideo and extends to the village of Wegdahl. The trail is planned to be extended into the city of Granite Falls. This organization will be a good partner when planning trails in the northeast part of the region.

Iowa Trail related organizations and agencies—Iowa borders Rock, Nobles and Jackson counties on the south. Trails do not necessarily have to stop at state boundaries. The Iowa Great lakes Trail in

Dickenson County, Iowa already connects to the Loon Lake Trail in Jackson county, MN. Relations will need to be maintained among the two states to properly plan a network of trails.

South Dakota Trail related organizations and agencies—South Dakota borders Lincoln, Pipestone and Rock counties to the west. When contemplating trails that will run to the west, it will be important to keep the South Dakota parks as well as the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization trail planning initiatives in mind.

Redwood Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA)—Redwood, Lyon, Lincoln, Pipestone, Cottonwood, Brown, Yellow Medicine and Murray Counties.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)—There is a SWCD in each county. They can provide further resource assistance.

**Federal and State Level:** This level will come into play primarily as a funding source and a guiding hand. If funding is secured through the federal or state level, these agencies may also be an enforcement agency on environmental issues. This is not an all inclusive list, but the most common departments that are involved in trail planning are:

United States Fish and Wildlife Service—When utilizing federal funds, this agency needs to be contacted to ensure that all the environmental laws are being adhered to. They can also act as a funding source.

Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)<sup>16</sup>—The function of the LCCMR (formerly LCMR) is to make funding recommendations to the legislature for special environment and natural resource projects, primarily from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. These projects help maintain and enhance Minnesota’s environment and natural resources. The LCCMR developed from a program initiated in 1963. Since 1963, over \$650 million has been appropriated to more than 1,300 projects recommended by the Commission to protect and enhance Minnesota’s environment and natural resources.

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)—Trail development may be able to be incorporated into planned road construction projects. MnDOT and the County Engineer will be the source to get traffic counts for trails marked along roads. Consult MnDOT staff to plan trail crossings of state roads. The MnDOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual provides trail design guidance.

Federal Surface Transportation Act.<sup>17</sup> MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141), was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012. Funding surface transportation programs at over \$105 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2013 and 2014. Communities across America access the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds (formerly Transportation Enhancements (TE) from the federal government to expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, protect the environment and includes the former separate programs of Safe Routes to School, Scenic Byways. The Federal Recreational Trails Program is operated through the Department of Natural Resources.

The Minnesota State Legislature—Is a potential funding source, primarily for bonding funding for trail acquisition and development. The legislature also has the authority to designate state trails.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)—Will provide technical assistance and be a potential funding source. There are four DNR divisions that one may need to work with: the Division of Fish and Wildlife to identify and avoid or buffer sensitive sites of biological value; the Trails and Waterways Unit to develop and manage “State Trails” as defined by statute; the Division of Parks and Recreation, which manages state park trails; and the Division of Waters, which manages Public Waters.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.lccmr.leg.mn/>

<sup>17</sup> See the National Transportation Enhancement Clearinghouse for eligible activities <http://www.enhancements.org/index.asp>. In Minnesota Transportation Enhancement Applications are processed through the Area Transportation Partnerships (ATP’s).

Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission was established in 2013 to undertake system planning and provide recommendations to the legislature for grants funded by the parks and trails fund to counties and cities outside the seven-county metropolitan area for parks and trails of regional significance. [Minnesota Statutes, 85.536](#).

The Minnesota Historical Society – manages state historical sites and reviews impacts to historic and archeological sites.

The National Park Service – Consult staff when connecting to the Pipestone National Monument. In addition, the Rivers, trails and Conservation Assistance Program provides free planning assistance to local projects anywhere in the state.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities – Staff and students may provide planning, mapping, or development assistance.

US Army Corps of Engineers - The Corps may be an actor when dealing with navigable waters or impacts to wetlands.

**Private and Other.** There are various private entities, including church organizations, individuals, and other profit or non-profit corporations and foundations which may become involved in trail planning. Other entities may include: Chambers of Commerce, School Districts, the Prairie Ecology Bus Center, Health Care Facilities / Alliances, and Utility companies.

#### **Resource Documents:**

- Technical Guidance for Bikeways – on MnDOT website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/design.html>
  - [Mn/DOT Bikeways Facility Design Manual](#)
  - [MnDOT Bicycle Modal Plan](#)
  - [Mn/DOT Highway Project Development Process](#) – Note, a potential project would be advised to discuss a project proposal with the District Planner or State Aid engineer.
  - [MnDOT Road Design Manual](#)
  - [Traffic Control](#) See chapter 9 for Traffic Controls for Bicycle Facilities and chapter 6, figure 6D-1 for Pedestrian Accessibility Considerations in Temporary Traffic Control Zones Check List.
  - [ADA Tool Kit](#)
  - Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials - This AASHTO guide can be ordered from the AASHTO bookstore. ([AASHTO](#)) 1999
  - [FHWA's Roundabouts: An Informational Guide](#)
  - [FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety](#)
  - FHWA Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access [Part 1: Review of Existing Guidelines and Practices](#)  
[Part 2: Best Practices Design Guide](#)
  - [Federal Highway Administration Guidance](#)
  - [Environmental Justice](#)
  - [Minnesota State Aid Rules](#)
  - [Characteristics of Emerging Road and Trail Users and their Safety](#)

- Bridges (LFRD Bridge manual) : Bridges with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations that cross rivers and interstates and other high volume roads create a connected bicycle and pedestrian network.
- [More About Pedestrian Design Guidance](#)
- **Complete Streets:** <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/>
- **Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP):** <http://www.health.state.mn.us/ship/>
- **Safe Routes to School** <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/index.html>
- **Parks and Trail Council of Minnesota** <http://www.parksandtrails.org/>
- **Traffic Volumes** are available on the MnDOT Website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/traffic/data/html/volumes.html>.
- The **University of Minnesota Tourism Center** posts all their research on their website and may be a valuable resource for specific trail-related research: <http://www.tourism.umn.edu>
- The **Explore Minnesota Tourism** industry website contains a large amount of tourism-related research which may be valuable background information for trail planning activities: <http://www.industry.exploreminnesota.com> (research and reports).
- **Minnesota Communities for a Lifetime** <http://www.mnlifetimecommunities.org>
- **Scenic Byways Program** <http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants/>
- **State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation plan (SCORP)** <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/scorp/index.html>

## TRAIL FUNDING SOURCES

Please note that this list is not inclusive, and funding sources are ever changing. Also see Appendix D.

Department of Natural Resources [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)

- **DNR Recreation Grant Programs** <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/index.html>
  - [Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program](#)
  - [Outdoor Recreation Grant Program](#)
  - [Regional Park Grant Program](#)
  - [Shooting Range Development and Rehabilitation Program](#)
  - [State Park Road Account Program \(SPRA\)](#)
  - [Local Trail Connections Program](#)
  - [Regional Trail Grant Program](#)
  - [Federal Recreational Trail Program](#)
- **DNR Grants-in-Aid (GIA) Programs**
  - [All-Terrain Vehicle Grants-in-Aid \(ATV GIA\) Program](#)
  - [Cross Country Ski Trail Grants-in-Aid \(GIA\) Program](#)
  - [Four-Wheel Drive Vehicle Grants-in-Aid \(GIA\) Program](#)
  - [Off-Highway Motorcycle Grants-in-Aid \(GIA\) Program](#)
  - [OHV damage account](#)

- [Snowmobile Grants-in-Aid \(GIA\) Program](#)
- Habitat Improvement Programs
- Land Conservation Programs
- Water Recreation Programs

Minnesota Department of Transportation: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/>

- Transportation Alternative Program (more details in appendix D)
- Community Roadside Landscaping Partnership Program
- Native Wildflower and Grass Establishment Program
- Native Tree and Shrub Establishment Program
- Historic Bridges Program
- State Rail Banking Program
- Safety Rest Area Program

USDA Rural Development [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)

- Community Facility Guaranteed Loans (will fund "youth related recreational facilities"?)
- Community Facility Direct Loans and Grants (will fund "activity centers for the handicapped, schools, libraries and other community buildings")
- Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (will fund "tourist and recreation facilities, community facility-type projects ...")
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Under USDA

Minnesota Initiative Funds: Loans and grants for rural development

Minnesota Council on Foundations: Resource information on Minnesota foundations and corporate giving programs

Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR):

Pull Tab and Other Local Sources

Farmers Home Administration (FMHA)

There are three Class I railroads in the Region that have foundations that support community involvement along their corridors, and may be a partner in Active Living / SHIP initiatives.

- BNSF Community Support foundation <http://www.bnsf.com/>
- Canadian Pacific Railroad has a community investment program <http://www.cpr.ca/en/in-your-community/community-investment/Pages/default.aspx>
- Union Pacific Community-Based Grant Program:  
<http://www.up.com/aboutup/community/foundation/grants/index.htm>

## **REGIONAL TRAIL CORRIDOR PLAN, REQUEST FOR CHANGE PROCESS**

- STEP 1.** A unit of Government with jurisdiction located within the Southwest Region submits a written request to the RDC. The request is to include:
- A written description of the requested change.
  - The reason for the request (change justification). This is to include the conditions that have changed.
  - The proposer is asked to identify how the proposed change will interact with other trail users and trails, transportation modes, and land uses.
  - If the request for change is a local trail project:
    - A proposed timeline for completion is to be included.
    - Map(s), if applicable, identifying the location of the proposed trail.
    - Has the request for change gone through a local planning process such as City, County, and/or Township Governing Board approval, Capital Improvements Plan, and/or Land Use or Comprehensive Land Use Plan?
- STEP 2.** Region staff reviews the request and develops a staff recommendation on how the change affects the Regional Trails Plan. The staff review will include:
- How will the request affect the entire Regional Plan?
  - Does the request for change tie into the overall vision of the Regional Plan?
  - Is the request for change the inclusion or revision of a local project?
    - Has the local project addressed: user safety, interaction with other trails and modes of transportation, and land uses.
  - Documentation of contact with the jurisdiction if needed to clarify any issues.
  - Contact with all applicable units of government to see if they are aware of the proposed project.
  - Staff recommendations.
- STEP 3.** Region staff will bring the request to the SRDC Transportation and / or the Land Use Committees for review and recommendations. A press release of the meeting agendas will be sent to the news media.
- STEP 4.** The Committee will make recommendations and there will be one of three outcomes:
- The request for plan modification is recommended for approval.
  - The request for plan modification needs more clarification; the Committee will instruct staff to contact the unit of government for more information. After clarification, the committee will make a recommendation.
  - The request for plan modification is not recommended for approval.
- STEP 5.** SRDC Staff will incorporate any changes the committee has recommended for approval into a revised draft plan.
- STEP 6.** The draft plan is brought before the Board of Directors/Full Commission at their next regular meeting for review and approval.
- STEP 7.** Region staff notifies the unit of government of Region decision.

## 2014 REGIONALLY PRIORITIZED LIST OF TRAILS IN SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA

A full list of projects considered for 2014 project prioritization is located in Appendix C

Please note, points are as the committee members designated. Clustered together were Des Moines Trail, Casey Jones Trail and the Minnesota River Valley Trail.

Points	Adjusted points	County, location	Trail Name & Segment (begin & end)
125	125	Cottonwood, Jackson, Murray	<u>Des Moines River Valley Trail</u> ; trail connecting Jackson, Cottonwood and Murray County along the Des Moines River
50	175	Jackson	<u>Des Moines River Valley Trail</u> ; trail serves as a spine from which other trail radiate, connecting Ashley Park and Dann's Island Park
100	100	Jackson, Jackson	Dewey Street Path; path along the east side of Dewey Street
100	100	Nobles	Southern Lakes Connection; trail corridor connecting Lake Ocheda, Lake Bella, and Indian Lake in Nobles County with Iowa Lake in Iowa and Round Lake in Jackson County
85	85	Lincoln, Lake Benton	Hole-in-the-Mountain County Park Trail Extension; a 1.5 mile trail from Hole-in-the-Mountain County park to the City of Lake Benton
85*	85-135	Murray	<u>Casey Jones Trail</u> ; from Rock County through Pipestone and Murray Counties to Redwood County
85*&***	120-170	Pipestone	<u>Casey Jones Trail</u> ; Pipestone to Woodstock / Murray County line ** add 35 unduplicated points from entire corridor
50*&***	135-185	Pipestone	<u>Casey Jones trail</u> ; within Pipestone *** add 85
25* & ***	110-160	Redwood	<u>Casey Jones Trail</u> ; Redwood Falls to the Lucan ***add 85
15* & ***	100-150	Redwood	<u>Casey Jones Trail</u> ; Plum Creek to Walnut Grove *** add 85
10 * & ***	95-145	Pipestone	<u>Casey Jones Trail</u> ; Split Rock Creek Park to Pipestone *** add 85
75	75	Redwood, Redwood Falls	Phase I Trail extension, Northwood Drive going south along CSAH 101 to E/W frontage road along TH 19/71
50	50	Lyon, Marshall	Marshall to Canby Corridor; trail corridor connecting Marshall, Ghent, Minneota, and Taunton to Canby
50	50	Murray	Fulda Loop; trail that makes a loop along TH 59 & around First Fulda Lake
50	50	Lincoln, Pipestone Rock	Corridor from Lake Benton to Pipestone to Luverne
35	35	Redwood	<u>Minnesota River Valley Trail</u> ; trail connecting Chief Sleepy Eye Trail, Lower Sioux Indian Community, & Redwood Agency using CSAH 2 alignment
10	10	Redwood	<u>Minnesota River Valley Trail</u> ; trail connecting Vicksburg, Morgan, and Dakota Ridge
15	15	Redwood	<u>Minnesota River Valley Trail</u> ; TH 71 to Vicksburg, connects with Redwood Falls Ramsey Park and Franklin
25	25	Cottonwood, Windom	Windom Municipal Recreational Trail; extend 1.4 mile paved trail to 3 miles in park
25	25	Murray	Shetek to Tracy Connection; trail connecting Lake Shetek to Tracy
25	25	Murray	Buffalo Ridge Corridor; trail connecting Murray County to part of the corridor traversing along Buffalo Ridge
25	25	Rock, Luverne	Phase III; trail originating at U.S. Highway 75 and Gabrielson Road that connects the to the Rock County Fairgrounds, Rock River, and the Blue Mound Ave Trail, completing the loop
25	25	Rock, Hills	Safe Routes to School Trail; a trail or sidewalk leading to the school from a residential/ commercial area of town
10	10	Lincoln	Norwegian Creek Park to Hole-in-the-Mountain Co Park; trail corridor

\*add 50 for any part of Casey Jones once it put as a regional trail and not a state trail (4-2015 revised list)

Blank