

Recreation Trail Proposal and Planning Process



The Comprehensive Recreation Trail Plan establishes a consistent and step-wise planning process for the proposal and development of recreation trails. The process provides for an evaluation of trail feasibility and potential social, environmental and economic impacts. The process also provides for public consultation opportunities and formal approval from the County Board.

This is the general process for proposing and planning recreation trails on lands managed by the Crow Wing County Land Services Department.

Step 1: Preliminary Project Discussion (1-3 months)

Outcome: Completion of "Recreational Trail Development & Improvement Request" form

- This step includes preliminary trail proposal discussions between staff and interested parties. Trail project ideas may be brought forward by Land Services Department staff, Crow Wing County residents, clubs or user groups, and other interested parties that have knowledge of the area of county land where the trail may be considered and experience with the type of recreation being proposed. The Recreational Trail Development and Improvement Request Form can be found online at: <http://mn-crowwingcounty2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/2349>

Step 2: Feasibility Evaluation (3-9 months)

Outcome: Development of Trail Project Brief to include:

- map of potential trail location(s)
- summary of trail purpose and intended uses
- evaluation of trail feasibility criteria and impact assessment including environmental and community impact considerations
- identification of project partners
- estimate of trail construction timeline and costs
- description of general maintenance plan
- This step includes staff conducting an investigation of the trail proposal to evaluate feasibility and to gather preliminary information to inform further decision-making. The staff review includes evaluation of potential impacts and recommended mitigations.

Step 3: Public Consultation

Outcome: Recommendation from the Advisory Committee to Implement or Amend the Proposed Project

- This step includes staff making the Trail Project Brief publicly available (including the option of a 30-day public comment period) and presenting the Trail Project Brief to a citizen's committee for review and recommendation. The Advisory Committee is a citizen committee that provides direction on a wide range of management and land use considerations affecting the county managed lands. The committee meets quarterly with meetings open to the public.

Step 4: Project Approval (1-3 months)

Outcome: Decision from the County Board to Implement, Amend or Abandon the Proposed Project

- This step includes staff presenting the Trail Project Brief to the County Board for review and consideration, including consideration of the recommendation from the citizen's committee and any changes that were made in response to the citizen review. The presentation of the Trail Project Brief would be included in the agenda for the board meeting and the meetings are open to the public.

Step 5: Project Development (6-36 months)

Outcome: Trail Development

- This step includes further development of the trail project and will vary significantly depending on the scale and scope of the project. It is important to note that if the proposed trail is intended to be part of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Grant-in-Aid Program the 7-Step GIA Trail Proposal Review Process will be used.
- Activities within this step may include:
 - engineering or design work
 - environmental reviews and permitting
 - additional public consultation
 - grant application, funding allocation
 - promotional planning and marketing, including trail naming
 - acquisition of easements as necessary
 - development of a long-term maintenance plan or agreement
 - establishing monitoring and enforcement practices