

**Itasca County GIA ATV Trail Proposal
Bigfork to Balsam, Wilderness Wheelers ATV Club
Project Summary**

Sponsor: Itasca County

Proposer: Itasca County
Wilderness Wheelers ATV Club
Jef Fisher, Trail Administrator

Project Location: Itasca County
T61N, R26W, Sections 26, 27, 35, 36
T60N, R26W, Sections 2, 11, 14, 23, 24, 25, 26
T60N, R25W, Sections 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36
T59N, R25W, Sections 1, 12, 13
T59N, R24W, Sections 16, 17, 18, 21, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36

Project Dimensions: Total of all trail segments = 25 miles, including:
14.2 miles existing forest routes
4.0 miles state forest road
2.8 miles US Forest Service road
3.3 miles County road right-of-way or shoulder
0.7 miles new state forest trail

Project Description:

This proposal would establish a 25-mile long grant-in-aid (GIA) all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail in the George Washington State Forest and Chippewa National Forest in Itasca County.

The proposed trail would be open to class 1 and class 2 ATVs, and would be located on county road shoulders or road rights-of-way, US Forest Service (USFS) roads, township roads, state forest roads, and state forest routes. ATV use is currently allowed on state forest routes in the George Washington State Forest, which is classified “managed” for motorized use. The USFS roads, numbered 2182 and 3979, are open to OHV use, as indicated on the Chippewa National Forest 2011 Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) number 19930240. Approximately 0.7 miles of new trail will be constructed on state forest land. The proposed trail will connect to the Balsam ATV Club’s Little Moose Trail to the southeast.

Trail Design:

The majority of the trail uses existing corridors. Along county roads, some segments of the trail will be routed out of the right-of-way onto the road shoulder to avoid wet areas. The trail will be shaped and maintained to drain rainfall and storm water runoff. The treadway will be graded and brushed seasonally to reduce the encroachment of woody vegetation. Water quality and erosion control best management practices described in the DNR GIA manual, and the DNR’s 2007 publication “*Trail Planning, Development and Design Guidelines*” will be employed, including using rolling grades and broad-based dips, placement of gravel or crushed stone where needed, and vegetating side drainage areas. Water bars and tread hardening also may be used to limit

erosion. Sediment traps and fences will be employed as needed during construction on the 0.7 miles of new trail.

The trail will require several wetland crossings totaling 267 feet in length (.05 miles). The crossings will be accomplished with boardwalk approximately 10 feet wide, and will total approximately 11,500 square feet or 0.26 acres. Any necessary wetland permits will be obtained prior to construction.

Itasca County will sponsor and manage the trail. Members of the Wilderness Wheelers ATV Club will perform trail construction, and on-going operations and maintenance to ensure a safe, sustainable, and enjoyable trail for all users. Up to 65% of development costs and up to 90% of maintenance and insurance costs are eligible for reimbursement through the Minnesota Trail Assistance (Grant-In-Aid) program. The sponsor, club, and the DNR will share monitoring responsibilities, supplemented by volunteers with the DNR's Trail Ambassador program.

Grant-in-aid funding will provide a designated ATV trail in northern Itasca County, connecting the City of Bigfork to the Balsam Trail Blazers ATV Club trail. Businesses and the campgrounds along the route will benefit from use of the trail system. Portions of the trail will also be open to non-motorized uses such as mountain bikes, horses, hunting, and hiking.

Public Review:

The DNR invites written public comment on the proposal from November 5, 2012 to December 7, 2012. Copies of the proposal are available on the DNR website (www.mndnr.gov/input) as well as at the DNR Grand Rapids Parks and Trails office.

Written comments on the proposal may be e-mailed to Andrew.brown@state.mn.us, faxed to 218-999-7915, or mailed to Andrew Brown, Assistant Area Supervisor, 1201 East Highway 2, Grand Rapids, MN 55744. For more information, or to request a printed copy of the proposal, please call Andrew Brown at 218-999-7922, or the DNR Information Center at 1-888-MINNDNR (toll free).