

Grant County 4-H Mud Puppies ATV Recreation Area Grant-in-Aid Proposal Summary

Proposer: Grant County
Grant County 4-H Mud Puppies ATV Club

Sponsor: Grant County

Project Location: Grant County, Delaware Township
NWNE Section 35, Township 128N, Range 43W

Project Dimensions:

40-acre ATV recreation area on county-owned land, including:

- 4 acres existing ATV safety park, including parking lot
- 2 miles of new trail
- ATV skills course
- ATV challenge areas

Project Description:

Grant County proposes to develop an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) recreation area on approximately 40 acres of county-owned land in Delaware Township.

Grant County owns approximately 40 acres land approximately 11 miles southwest of Elbow Lake in Delaware Township. A four-acre portion of the property is fenced and gated and is currently being used as an ATV safety park, consisting of a parking lot, ATV track, outhouse, and shelter. The remainder of the property contains a mined-out county gravel pit, mature trees, prairie grasses, maturing trees and shrubs, and an unnamed perennial stream tributary to the Mustinka River.

Grant County is applying for state off-highway vehicle (OHV) grant-in-aid (GIA) funds to develop these 36 additional acres into ATV trails, an ATV rider skills course, and challenge areas.

The ATV recreation area will be operated and managed by Grant County with assistance and support provided by the Grant County 4-H Mud Puppies ATV Club. The area will be developed and maintained following the DNR's Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines. The project will include construction of a hardened tread crossing of the tributary stream. The County has consulted with the DNR regarding construction requirements for the crossing, which does not require a public waters work permit.

The County proposes to use signage to promote safety and encourage responsible riding behavior. The south and east borders of the property will be fenced to discourage trespass onto adjacent property. To protect the stream's banks and water quality, the County will plant fifty-foot buffer strips on both sides of the creek. Except for use of the hardened tread crossing, riding in the stream would be prohibited by Minnesota law.

The area adjoining the trail corridors will remain planted in native vegetation and prairie grasses. The area will be continually monitored for non-native species, which will be removed or treated as needed. A kiosk will be erected at the trail head to provide information about local first aid and fire resources, safety, responsible riding, and other information.

The 4-H Club will perform regular trail maintenance and will routinely monitor the trails for safety and other concerns.

Project Benefits and Need:

The County believes there will be immediate and lasting public benefits of developing the area for ATV use. The County has initiated DNR ATV Safety Certification trainings in addition to ASI Training Certification, and has seven certified DNR ATV Instructors. The Grant County 4H Program intends to hold ATV club meetings and rider training courses at the recreation area once the trails are completed. The 4H program has a national ATV riding curriculum. The ATV safety training area and surrounding trails will provide the facility necessary to provide and promote ATV safety education and rider readiness for youth and adults. There is high potential for recreational use since there are no other trails nearby in west central Minnesota, and there are a number of ATV riders in the area expected to use the trails. The trail site is near two major state highways (Hwy 55 and Hwy 59), allowing easy access by the greater Minnesota public.

Administration of the trail will follow guidelines provided in the DNR's GIA OHV Program Manual, and the requirements of the sponsor, Grant County, and Delaware Township.

The trail will be monitored by the DNR Parks and Trails Area staff in Fergus Falls. Monitoring will be assisted by volunteers such as the DNR-certified ATV Safety Instructors and 4-H Club leaders, who teach and promote safe, environmentally responsible operation of ATVs through informational/educational classes and riding course instructions.

Trail Route Description:

The trail system will cover forty acres within Section 35 of Delaware Township in Grant County. The trail begins inside a fenced 4-acre park with gated access from both the parking lot going east, and the ATV track going west. To the west, there is a hilled woodlands area; to the south are scenic treed areas and more hills, and to the east there will be a hardened-tread stream crossing, more hills, and the entrance back into the parking lot.

Parking area:

There is a gravel parking lot within the existing 4-acre ATV safety park.

Anticipated Cost: Total project: \$48,871.42; grant request: \$32,316.42. There is also an additional \$500 grant for electrical, which will be used to install an electrical pole with a light and outlet.

Public Review:

The DNR invites written public comment on the proposal. The deadline for comments is September 6, 2012. Copies of the proposal are available on the DNR website, (<http://www.mndnr.gov/input>), as well as at the DNR Fergus Falls office.

Written comments on the proposal may be e-mailed to erik.anthonisen@state.mn.us, faxed to 218-739-7601, or mailed to Erik Anthonisen, Assistant Area Supervisor, DNR Parks and Trails, 1509 1st Avenue North, Fergus Falls, MN 56537. For more information, or to request a printed copy of the proposal, please call Erik Anthonisen at 218-739-7576, ext. 257, or the DNR Information Center at 1-888-MINNDNR (toll free).