

# Miller-Black Bear Area GIA ATV Trail Proposal Project Summary

**Proposer:** Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club

**Sponsor:** Crow Wing County Land Services

**Project Location:** T47, R29 (Wolford Township) sections 19, 20, 25, 29, 30, 31, 36  
T46, R29 (Irondale Township) sections 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13

**Project Dimensions:** Total of all trail segments = 19.3 miles, including:  
18.6 miles on existing off-highway vehicle trail or forest road  
0.7 miles of new trail  
Two trailhead/parking areas

**Anticipated Project Cost:** Total estimated cost: \$26,387  
Grant requested: \$17,402

## Project Description:

Crow Wing County Land Services Department and the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club propose to use state off-highway vehicle grant in aid (GIA) funds to develop and maintain an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail in the Miller-Black Bear Area, northwest of the City of Crosby. When complete, the trail would be a little over 19 miles long. Nearly the entire trail alignment is currently open to ATV use. In many trail segments, the current allowed motorized uses include highway licensed vehicles, off-road vehicles (ORVs), all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles (OHMs), and all forms of non-motorized recreation. The existing uses would still be permitted after GIA trail funding. Less than a mile of the trail will be on new alignment. The majority of the trail crosses forest land managed by Crow Wing County, with about 3 miles on DNR forest lands.

If approved by both Crow Wing County and the DNR, trail development and maintenance would be funded through the state Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) GIA program and the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club. The GIA program reimburses administration, acquisition, and development costs up to 65% , and maintenance costs up to 90%. Two trailhead/parking areas are proposed. The first area is a field near Cole Lake to the west of County Road #30 in Wolford Township. The second trailhead will be at the Section 6 Mine Pit Lake, off Iverson Road, in the City of Trommald. The majority of the trail is currently open to motorized recreation from May 1 through October 31, subject to closures as necessary to prevent trail damage.

The proposed trail area encompasses over 4,000 acres of county-managed public land and approximately 400 acres of state forest bordering the Mississippi River to the west. Currently, there are over 25 miles of existing trails open for motorized use on county forest land in the Miller-Black Bear Area. No proposed trail segments run on local, county, or state public road rights-of-way. The proposal does not include plans for a connector trail to other motorized recreation trails.

## Trail Design:

The majority of the GIA trail will use existing trail corridor. The trail will be shaped and maintained to drain rainfall and storm water runoff. The treadway will be graded and brushed seasonally to manage

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 if needed, including 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. The proposal does not involve new wetland or public water crossings.

Natural resources managers from the Crow Wing County Land Services Department will flag any portions of the trail requiring construction or improvement. Under County oversight, members of the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club will construct new trail segments and rehabilitate trail surfaces where needed on existing forest trails. The Club will develop and maintain the trail to ensure a safe, sustainable, and enjoyable trail for all users.

The Club also will install amenities at picnic, scenic, and parking areas (i.e., toilets, grills, picnic tables). Crow Wing County and the DNR will share monitoring responsibilities, supplemented by volunteers with the DNR's Trail Ambassador program.

**Trail Signing:**

The Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club will install appropriate safety and regulatory signing per the DNR's 2005 "Forest Access Signing and Placement Guidelines." Signing will provide useful and necessary information to trail users in a consistent manner.

All trails will be signed for the intended uses to ensure users have a safe experience and the natural resources are protected. Junction trail maps will be provided by, installed, and maintained by the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club.

Signing will be paid for by GIA funding and the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club.

**Enforcement:**

Currently, both the Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office (for state laws and county ordinances) and DNR Conservation Officers (for state laws) respond to and enforce violations such as reckless driving and driving while intoxicated in the Miller-Black Bear Area. The County Sheriff's Office receives state OHV Safety Enforcement Grant funds to monitor OHV recreation use in the County. If the proposed trail system is approved by Crow Wing County and receives GIA funding, it will be patrolled by Conservation Officers and the Sheriff's Office. Also, the Minnesota DNR's Trail Ambassador Program can provide volunteer Trail Ambassadors to greet fellow recreationists, educate trail users, provide minor aid in emergencies, and provide information about responsible OHV use on public lands. Ambassadors also provide valuable trail user data to the County and the State.

**Trail Maintenance Plan:**

All maintenance will be performed by the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club following the schedule below.

April – October:	Trails are monitored and cleared of deadfall and debris as needed.
July – September:	Where necessary, trails are mowed to improve visibility and reduce fire hazards.
May – October:	Signage is inspected and/or replaced for user safety and enjoyability.
May – October:	General maintenance and monitoring of the trail surface, including blading, grading, and/or resurfacing as needed.

The proposed trail maintenance plan schedule is depicted below:

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

**Public Review:**

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department invited public comment on the proposed trail in November and December of 2012, and received and responded to approximately 100 comments. The comments and responses are available on the Crow Wing County website.

The DNR routinely offers the public a 30-day opportunity to review and comment on new GIA trail proposals as part of its 7-step GIA review process. The DNR invites written public comment on the Miller-Black Bear Area GIA ATV trail proposal from August 13, 2013 to September 16, 2013. Copies of the proposal are available on the DNR website ([www.mndnr.gov/input](http://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 [Sam.Johnson@state.mn.us](mailto:Sam.Johnson@state.mn.us), faxed to 218-327-4263, or mailed to Sam Johnson, Parks and Trails Acquisition and Development Specialist, 1201 East Highway 2, Grand Rapids, MN 55744. For more information, or to request a printed copy of the proposal, please call Sam Johnson at 218-999-7921 or toll free at 1-888-MINNDNR. **The deadline for comments is 4:30 PM on September 16, 2013.**

After the close of the comment period, the DNR will compile a summary of the comments received and provide it to Crow Wing County Land Services for consideration.