

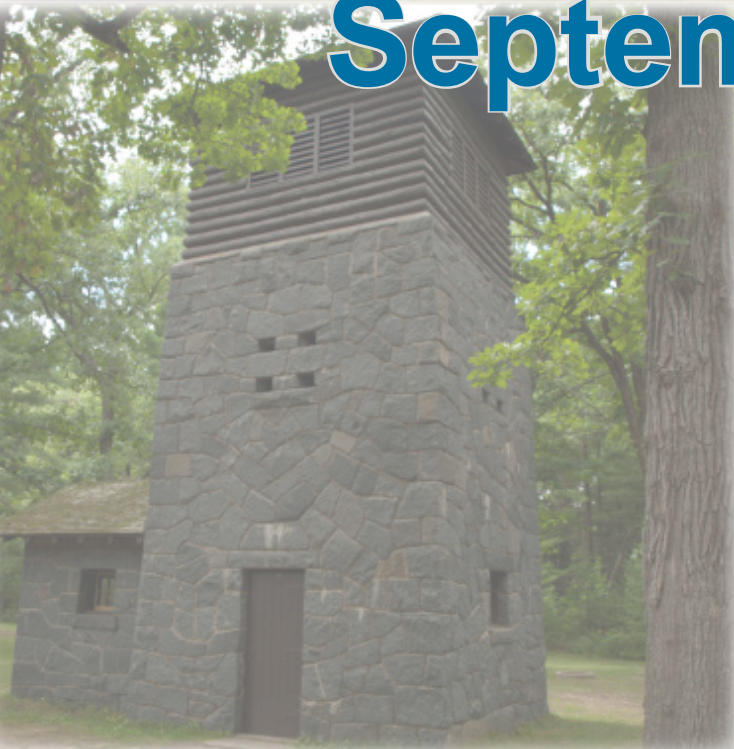


Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail

Master Plan

DRAFT

September 2012



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Trails Division would like to thank all who participated in this master planning process. Many individuals and groups in trail communities have been working for many years to help establish this trail. Members of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail Committee and the Project Steering Committee (see below) played a leading role in these efforts and continues to do so. Many DNR staff, city, county, state and federal officials, trail association members and local citizens contributed their time and energy to the planning process as well.

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CAMP RIPLEY/VETERANS STATE TRAIL

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Executive Summary

Trail Alignment and Development

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail is a legislatively authorized state trail which will connect the Paul Bunyan State Trail in the Crow Wing State Park and the Soo Line Regional Trail near Little Falls, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Lake Wobegon, Soo Line, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi trails into one continuous recreational route. These links also provide an opportunity to connect local trail systems in Central Minnesota as well as the communities of Baxter, Brainerd, Pillager, Randall, Little Falls and Fort Ripley.

For purposes of this plan, the trail has been divided into six primary planning segments. The segments are Crow Wing State Park to the City of Pillager, the west side of Camp Ripley from Pillager to Randall, the south side of Camp Ripley from Randall to MN 371 and south to Little Falls, MN 371 to the Crow Wing State Park, the Little Falls Area, and from Little Falls to the Soo Line Regional Trail. Since the alignment has not been determined, criteria for location of the trail are provided, along with alternative trail alignment options being considered for each planning segment. Trail alignment options were developed through an iterative process with the Project Steering Committee and vetted through a public and local agency involvement process.

Recommended/Allowable Trail Uses

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail is proposed to be a multi-use trail accommodating both motorized and non-motorized trail users. However, the limitations of width, land use restrictions, and sensitive resources dictate that not all uses may be accommodated at all times on the entire length of the trail. In many segments, the alignment options have been identified as multi-use at this stage. Further study will be needed to determine how motorized and non-motorized uses can be accommodated. In other segments, some alignment options have been identified as "motorized only." These options were identified in areas where there are known constraints to abutting motorized and non-motorized uses.

The trail will accommodate the range of uses found on most state trails, including bicycling, hiking and walking, dog walking, running/jogging, in-line skating/skate skiing, equestrian uses, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and environmental education/interpretation. In addition, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) will be accommodated in most segments, as mentioned above. Certain segments of the trail may also be able to provide public access to waterways, for such uses as fishing and canoe launching, where appropriate.

Additional alternative trail alignments will be pursued as necessary to accommodate proposed uses. Trail development will be accessible to people with disabilities wherever possible.

Trail Management

Trail cross-section examples were developed to illustrate a multi-use paved trail, gravel surfaced ATV trail and a natural surface equestrian track. Buffer areas

between side-by-side multi-use trail alignments will likely be needed to ensure safety and a pleasant experience for all users.

The plan contains recommendations for maintenance, enforcement, and interpretation of natural and cultural resources. Trail maintenance is critical to provide and sustain the quality experience trail users expect and appreciate. The plan recommends that an adequate level of enforcement be provided via a multifaceted approach, to help maintain a safe and secure trail environment. It is also a goal to encourage trail users to understand and obey trail rules, respect other trail users and respect adjoining properties.

Natural and Cultural Resources

The ecological value of the trail corridor will be enhanced wherever possible through intensive resource management. The vegetation within the trail right-of-way will be managed to provide a healthy diversity of native woodland, wetland, and prairie communities for wildlife habitat and for the enjoyment of trail users and adjoining landowners. Native flowers, grasses, trees and shrubs that are consistent with the natural plant communities of the area will be planted and managed. Areas disturbed during construction will be seeded with native plants. Cultural resources will be preserved and managed for interpretive purposes. Some native plant community management may include cooperative efforts with adjacent land owners. Trail users will have opportunities to experience the history of the region through existing historical and proposed interpretive sites.

Public Involvement

Public involvement in the planning process has been extensive, with three well-attended public open houses, monthly meetings of the Project Steering Committee, and additional presentations to city and county boards and agencies and to recreation organizations. Public comments are summarized in Appendix B.

Implementation

The CRVST study area covers a very large area and therefore, it is unlikely that funding for the entire trail will become available all at one time. Funding will likely come from a variety of sources at different times throughout the trail development process. To address this, trail segments have been designed to be implementable in stages, with defined end-point for each segment. Planning-level cost-estimates have also been developed to give local governments and trail supporters a tool for prioritizing trail development.

1. Planning Process, Vision and Goals

Study Process Overview

Through the grass roots effort of the Little Falls Visitors and Convention Bureau, the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail (CRVST) received its official state trail designation in 2009. The CRVST is envisioned to be a true multi-use trail, providing direct motorized and non-motorized recreational use linkage from the Soo Line Trail south of Little Falls to Crow Wing State Park and numerous other recreational use trails, such as the Paul Bunyan State Trail and the Mississippi River Trail.

In 2011, local trail advocates joined together with the counties of Cass, Crow Wing, and Morrison, surrounding communities and townships, Region 5 Development Commission (RDC), the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the National Park Service to initiate a trail corridor study. Counties, cities and the RDC contributed to the hiring of Bolton & Menk, Inc., as consultants for the study. The study's primary purpose was to identify trail alignment options, planning cost estimates and a trail implementation plan.

Soon after the initiation of the corridor study, DNR involvement was sought in order to coordinate the corridor study process with DNR's master plan process, as required for state trails. DNR representatives became active participants in the CRVST corridor study, leading to a combination corridor study/master plan development process. Consultants and DNR staff collaborated on meeting materials, open houses, and identification of potential trail alignments. This plan, therefore, incorporates most of the material developed for the corridor study, along with additional information on trail management, trail communities, and natural and cultural resources.

The corridor study/ master planning process included the following major tasks:

- Development of an agency and public involvement process that encouraged meaningful participation opportunities for stakeholder involvement, education and discussion.
- Technical analyses and research to inventory existing trail facilities and user needs and expectations.
- Development of a trail vision and goals and objectives to lead the identification and evaluation of trail alignment alternatives.
- Identification and evaluation of general trail alignment locations for both motorized and non-motorized trail uses.
- Development of study recommendations and next steps to implement the recommended trail plan.

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail Corridor Study began in August 2011 and was complete by April 2012. The master plan process began concurrent with the corridor study; the draft master plan was released for public review in June 2012. All comments received have been carefully considered in revisions to the plan.

Why Plan for State Trails?

Master planning for state trails is conducted in order to satisfy the requirement of Minnesota Statutes, Section 86A.09, which requires that a master plan be prepared for state trails. The planning process is intended to:

- Provide a unifying vision for trail advocates who are working to secure a trail alignment and funds for development and maintenance of the trail.
- Guide the development, management, maintenance and operation of the trail so that quality recreational, transportation and healthful exercise opportunities are provided.
- Provide a forum for open public discussion concerning trail use and trail development options, trail maintenance and management issues, and trail operations and enforcement needs.
- Support partnerships and processes that will help execute the plan and contribute to providing quality trail opportunities.
- Assess the projected impacts of trail development on natural, cultural and historic resources in the area as well as the impacts on local communities.

The State and Regional Context:

The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan

The trail master plan is being developed within the context of a major statewide planning effort: the *Parks and Trails Legacy Plan; A 25-Year Long-Range Plan for Minnesota*, completed in early 2011. The plan was mandated by the Minnesota Legislature to help guide how funds from the Clean Water Land and Legacy Act (the "Legacy Amendment") should be spent for parks and trails of regional significance. The Legacy Plan process has helped to identify those parks and trails in Central Minnesota that meet "state and regional significance" criteria, and has provided a method for identifying and addressing the recreational needs and preferences of each region.

The Legacy Plan includes recommendations for DNR to partner with:

- Transportation interests such as MnDOT and regional and local transportation authorities to support access to parks and trails as well as expand opportunities to develop new trails, enhance trail use, and increase access to transit
- Tourism, chambers of commerce, and other local tourism providers, who play a key role in providing information about park and trail opportunities
- Grant-in-aid groups and local communities that are actively promoting outdoor recreation opportunities.

Other relevant recommendations include:

- Development of parks and trails that can accommodate varying forms of transportation, including walking, biking, and ATV riding.
- Placing a priority on park and trail development in densely settled and rapidly growing parts of the state.

Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Process

Agency coordination and public involvement were key components to the successful development of the corridor study/master plan. All project partners remained involved throughout the year-long process. Figure 1 illustrates the public and agency involvement process used for the corridor study. The master plan process builds on the same basic framework, but gives the DNR primary responsibility for completing and approving the master plan.

Figure 1: Public and Agency Involvement, Trail Corridor Study



* Includes Cities of Little Falls, Randall, Pillager, Baxter & Brainerd

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) was organized consisting of representatives from Crow Wing, Morrison, and Cass Counties, the City of Little Falls, the DNR, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Camp Ripley, the National Park Service, Region 5 Development Commission, and the CRVST Trail Committee. The responsibilities of the PSC included:

- Guiding the overall study direction
- Discussing study progress
- Reviewing and providing input on technical analysis
- Reviewing and discussing public input
- Reviewing and considering study recommendations

Public Open Houses. Three public open houses were held at critical study milestones. The purpose of the public open houses was to provide opportunities for public input at key points in the study. The first public open house was held on November 15, 2011 at the Morrison County Courthouse in Little Falls. The purpose of the open house was to introduce the study to the public and to receive input on issues and concerns within the study area. A Citizen Survey was also distributed at this meeting to gather the public’s input on the draft trail vision and goals,

identification of trail uses and to provide an opportunity to suggest potential trail alignments.

A second public open house was held on March 22, 2012 at City Hall in Baxter. The purpose of this open house was to solicit public input on potential trail alignment options. A presentation was given describing the trail alignment development process and reviewing alignment options for each segment of the study area. Attendees were given a comment form to provide input on each of the alignment options and to allow an opportunity to suggest additional trail alignments if desired.

The third public open house was held on June 7, 2012 at the Morrison County Courthouse in Little Falls. The draft plan was available for review and planning staff presented an overview of the master plan process and typical steps in trail development.

Field Survey. A survey of the entire legislatively authorized Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail study area was conducted on September 21, 2011 by PSC members. Seventeen points of interest were noted within the trail study area and 11 of these sites were visited by the PSC. Key features at each of these points of interest were noted and PSC members identified potential issues, constraints and opportunities for trail connections within these areas. The field survey provided an opportunity for the PSC to understand the study area and potential destination/connections important for consideration in the development of CRVST trail alignments.

Local Community Meetings. In January and February 2012, consultant staff held individual meetings with representatives from the Cities of Little Falls, Randall, Pillager, Baxter, Brainerd and Cass County. Community representatives attending these meetings included a range of city/county staff, elected officials, business owners, and interested citizens. The purpose of these meetings was to get local input on the desired location of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail connection to or through their community, to discuss potential local trail connections to the state trail, and to discuss local attractions for state trail connection within their communities. These meetings also included a discussion of motorized (ATV and snowmobile) trail use and/or any limitations through each community as well as a discussion of their thoughts on the demand for equestrian trail use. Information from these meetings has been integrated into the community profiles in Section 3.

Newspaper Articles. Prior to each public open house, a press release and news article were printed in the *St. Cloud Times*, *Brainerd Dispatch* and *Morrison County Record*. The purpose of the news articles was to provide notice of the upcoming public open house meetings and to provide general study information and status to the general public. The news articles were especially useful given the large study area, which precluded the use of individual mailings.

Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail Website. The CRVST Committee had developed a website prior to the initiation of the Corridor Study. Therefore, a "Corridor Study" page was added to the CRVST website (www.crvtrail.com) in order to provide study information, progress and next steps, as well as to advertise public involvement opportunities for the corridor study. This provided the opportunity for the public to receive updates on study progress and meeting dates.

Trail Authorization

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail Corridor Study was designated by the Minnesota Legislature in MN Statute 85.015, Subd. 28 in 2009 as follows:

This trail shall originate at Crow Wing State Park in Crow Wing County at the southern end of the Paul Bunyan Trail and shall extend from Crow Wing State Park westerly to the City of Pillager, then southerly along the west side of Camp Ripley, then easterly along the south side of Camp Ripley across to the east side of the Mississippi River, and then northerly through Fort Ripley to Crow Wing State Park. A second segment of the trail shall be established that shall extend in a southerly direction and in close proximity to the Mississippi River from the southeasterly portion of the first segment of the trail to the City of Little Falls, and then terminate at the Soo Line Trail in Morrison County.

The study area for the CRVST corridor study and master plan followed the legislative authorization and is shown in Figure 2.

Outdoor Recreation Act

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail is one of the legislatively authorized state trails in the Minnesota State Trail System (see Figure 3). State trails are one unit of the state's outdoor recreation system established by the Legislature. In 1975, the Minnesota Legislature enacted the Outdoor Recreation Act (ORA) (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 86A.05, Subdivision 4 and Chapter 85.015). This act established an outdoor recreation system comprised of eleven components or "units" classifying all state-managed recreation lands. The ORA requires that the managing agency prepare a master plan for the establishment and development of each unit. This plan fulfills this mandate. The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail meets the following criteria established for state trails in the ORA:

- a. *A state trail shall be established to provide a recreational travel route which connects units of the outdoor recreational system or the national trail system, provides access to or passage through other areas which have significant scenic, historic, scientific, or recreational qualities or reestablishes or permits travel along an historically prominent travel route or which provides commuter transportation.*

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail will link state and county parks, historic downtowns, a multitude of state and regional trails, and numerous natural areas. It will pass through areas with significant scenic and historic qualities, and will closely follow the historic travel route of the Mississippi River and subsequent road and rail corridors.

- b. *No unit shall be authorized as a state trail unless its proposed location substantially satisfies the following criteria:*
 1. *permits travel in an appropriate manner along a route which provides at least one of the following recreational opportunities:*
 - (i). *travel along a route which connects areas or points of natural, scientific, cultural, and historic interest;*

CAMP RIPLEY/VETERANS STATE TRAIL

There is a rich diversity of natural, scientific, cultural and historical resources along the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail corridor, as illustrated by the sampling below:

(ii) travel through an area which possesses outstanding scenic beauty;

The trail will be situated in and near the Mississippi River Valley, crossing numerous landscapes and ecological regions and offering striking contrasts between the wooded rolling hills west of the Mississippi and the broad plains to the east.

(iii) travel over a route designed to enhance and utilize the unique qualities of a particular manner of travel in harmony with the natural environment;

The trail will afford bikers, hikers, and wildlife enthusiasts a way to safely enjoy the scenery and cultural and natural amenities by separating slower-paced trail users from faster-paced highway users. ATV riders and other modes will be buffered from each other with vegetation, grade changes or other techniques.

(iv) travel along a route which is historically significant as a route of migration, commerce, or communication;

The proposed trail corridor traverses an area shaped by successive eras of settlement and transportation, from riverboat, horse and oxcart to the era of the railroads. The Mississippi River was the major corridor of transport for native peoples, fur traders, early explorers and settlers. The historic Red River oxcart trails between the Selkirk settlements near present-day Winnipeg and Saint Paul crossed the corridor, as well as the military road that connected the original Fort Ripley with Point Douglas at the confluence of the Mississippi and Saint Croix rivers.

While the trail search corridor generally does not follow former railroad routes, it crosses many such routes and links small communities created or shaped by the railroads in the late 1800s.

(v) travel between units of the state outdoor recreation system or the national trail system; and

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail will link Crow Wing and Charles A. Lindbergh state parks. It will connect the Paul Bunyan State Trail in Crow Wing State Park and the Soo Line Regional Trail near Little Falls, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Lake Wobegon, Soo Line, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi trails into one continuous recreational route. It will provide a scenic route paralleling and providing access to the Mississippi River, a designated State Water Trail.

- 2. Utilizes, to the greatest extent possible consistent with the purposes of this subdivision, public lands, rights-of-way, and the like;*

Public land will be used when trail development is compatible with management objectives of the administering agency. A portion of the trail is expected to follow the edge of the Camp Ripley Military Reservation. State, county, and township road rights-of-way may also be used.



3. *Provides maximum potential for the appreciation, conservation, and enjoyment of significant scenic, historical, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trail may pass; and*

Overlooks and interpretive facilities are proposed to increase trail users' appreciation and understanding of the natural and cultural resources of the area. Plant community restoration projects, wildlife habitat improvement projects, and development of environmental education information are all projects that could benefit trail users.

The trail corridor can be a corridor for both habitat protection and recreation, across landscapes developed for agricultural, military training, commercial, and residential use. The ecological value of the corridor could be enhanced by working to restore healthy native plant communities.

4. *Takes into consideration predicted public demand and future uses.*

The master plan evaluates and uses current research on existing trail use, demand for trail opportunities, demographic data and recreational trends. Current demographic data is taken into account, as well as information gathered at public workshops and through other avenues of public participation.

Guiding Principles for Sustainable Trails

Guiding principles for ecologically sustainable trails, developed by DNR, provide the underlying rationale for actions related to protecting, restoring, and managing natural environments associated with trail development. There are seven core principles:

- Avoid sensitive ecological areas and critical habitats.
- Develop trails in areas already influenced by human activity.
- Provide buffers to protect sensitive ecological and hydrologic systems.
- Use natural infiltration and best practices for stormwater management.
- Provide ongoing stewardship of the trails and adjoining natural systems.
- Ensure that trails remain sustainable.
- Formally decommission and restore unsustainable trail corridors.¹

Applications of these principles will minimize the impact of trails on natural resources and sensitive ecological systems. Importantly, the strict application of these guiding principles has to be balanced against the need to locate trails where they will be of high recreational value to the targeted users, who often want to be close to nature, enjoy beautiful scenes, and observe wildlife. This is an important consideration and underscores the need for resource managers, trail designers, and other interested individuals to work together to determine which values are the most important for any given trail alignment.

¹ MN DNR, *Trail Planning, Design and Development Guidelines*, 2007.

Vision and Goals for the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail

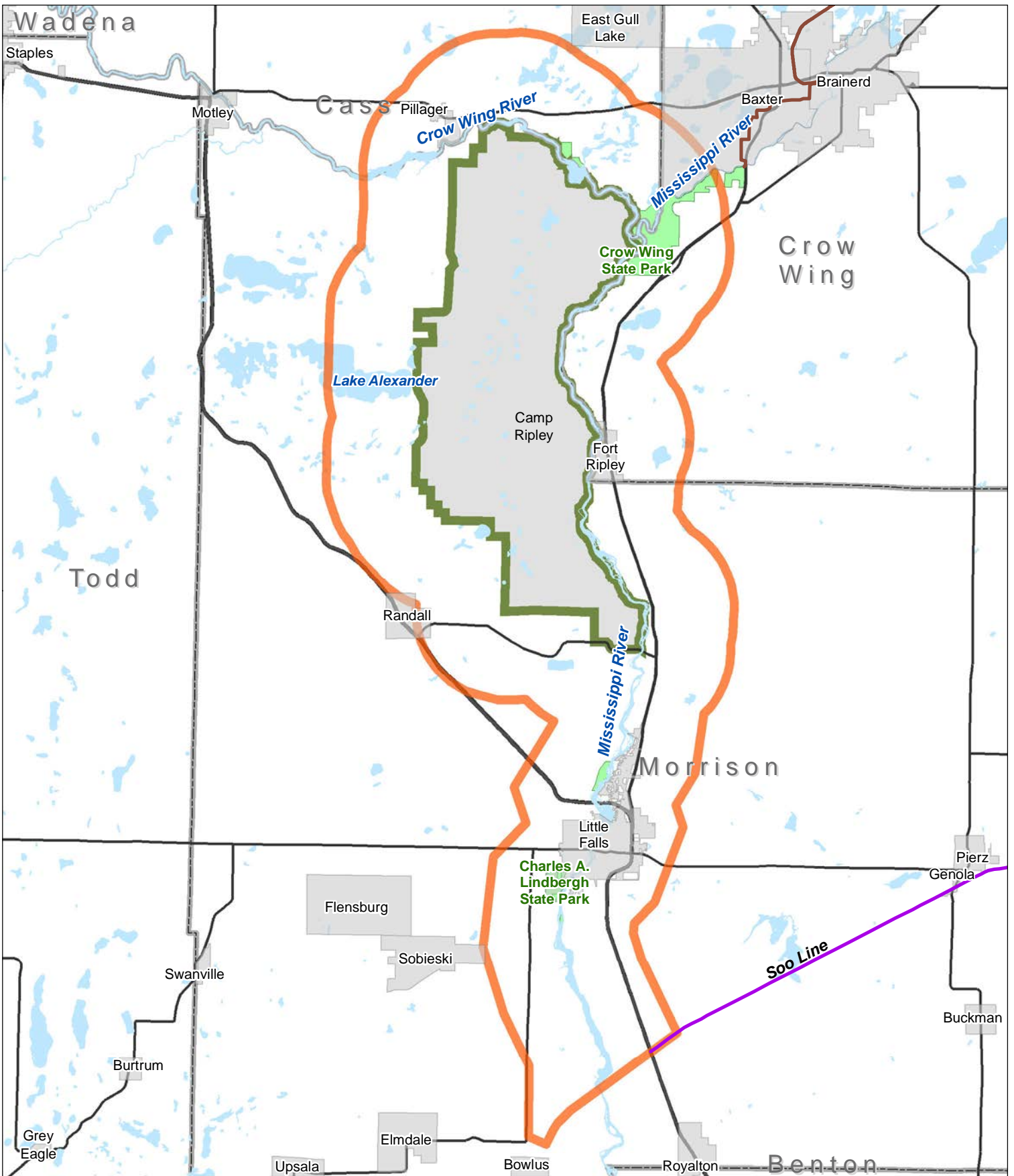
Vision

The CRVST will be a multi-use trail that will link the Paul Bunyan State Trail to the Soo Line Regional Trail and will serve as a section of the Mississippi River Trail. Trail users will experience a diversity of landscapes including pine moraines, prairies, hardwood forests and wetlands. The trail will connect users to the region's natural, historic, cultural and scenic resources thereby creating an interest and passion for their conservation and protection. The trail will connect and revitalize central Minnesota communities near and surrounding Camp Ripley, and along the Crow Wing and Mississippi Rivers, by promoting economic development within the area, improving quality of life, and promoting healthy living for residents.

Goals

The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail:

1. Will serve many different types of users throughout all seasons of the year;
2. Will promote economic growth in the area by attracting visitors, attracting and retaining businesses, increasing tourism and linking tourist attractions;
3. Will provide a fun, safe, recreational resource for residents of all ages and interest, thereby benefiting their health and improving their quality of life;
4. Will serve as an alternate means of transportation in the region, connecting rural areas to town centers, commercial districts, parks, and schools, and reducing vehicle trips, thereby improving the environment;
5. Will connect to existing and future trail networks, complete a missing link in the regional/state trail network of this area, provide a new link between cities and townships, and connect local, county and state parks, trails and conservation areas;
6. Will showcase the unique cultural themes of the area, including but not limited to oxcart trails, early Crow Wing town settlements, Fort Ripley ruins, honor/remembrance of veterans, Camp Ripley, Charles A. Lindbergh, etc.;
7. Will increase the awareness of the unique natural, historic and cultural resources along and within proximity of the Crow Wing and Mississippi Rivers; and,
8. Will preserve and protect these natural and environmental resources.

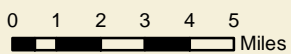


Legend

- Paul Bunyan State Trail
- Regional Trail
- Trail Search Corridor
- State Park
- City Boundaries

Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail

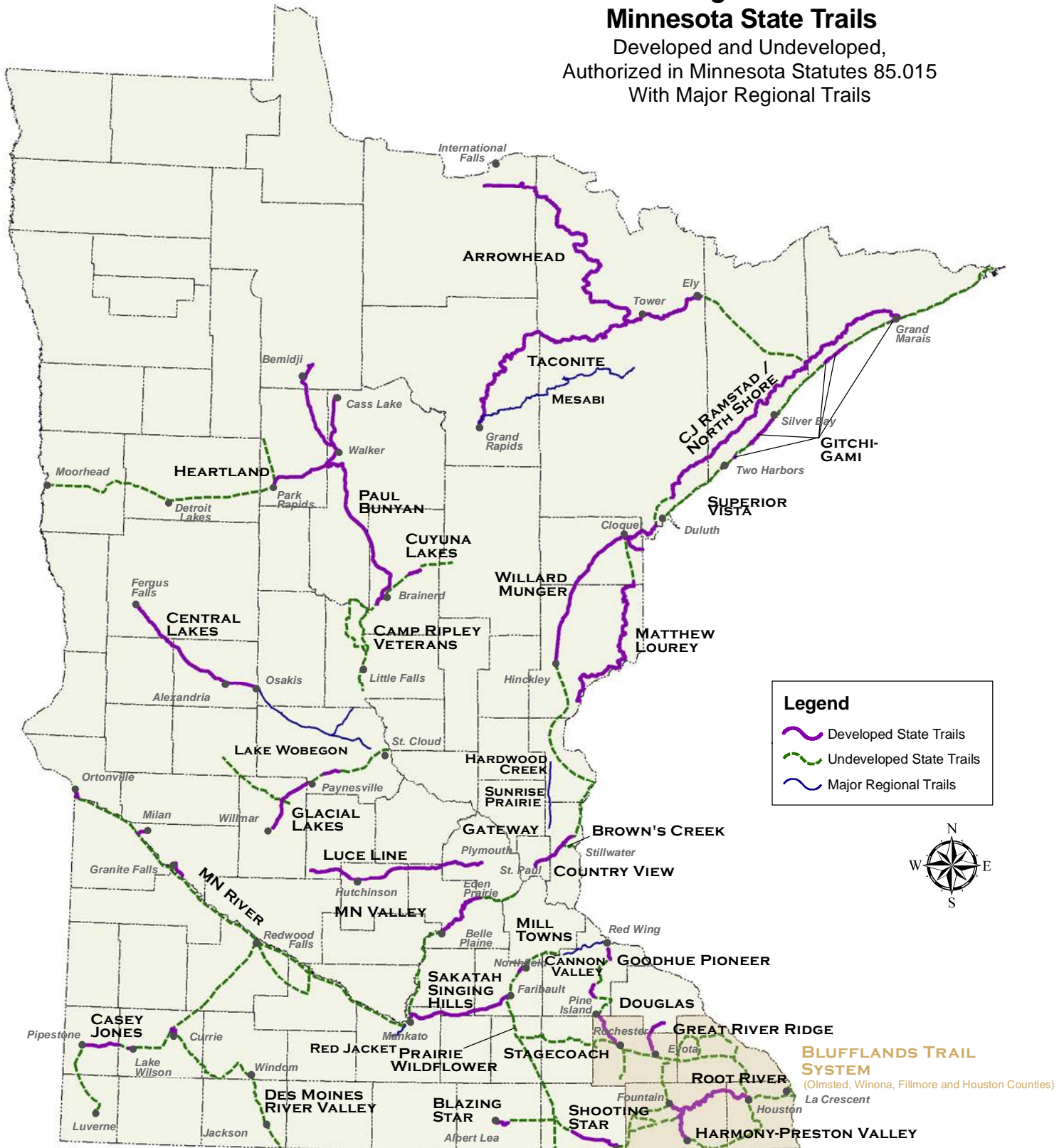
Figure 2: Study Corridor Overview



STATE PARKS AND TRAILS



Figure 3:
Minnesota State Trails
Developed and Undeveloped,
Authorized in Minnesota Statutes 85.015
With Major Regional Trails



2. Recommended Trail Uses

The CRVST is proposed to be a multi-use, multi-seasonal trail. However, the limitations of width dictate that not all uses can be accommodated at all times on the entire length of the trail. For example, dual treadways would be necessary to accommodate both biking or in-line skating and equestrian uses or ATV uses. Landowner agreements, land acquisitions, and trail width are examples of factors or limitations that will dictate whether a dual treadway is possible or not, and what uses may be accommodated.

The following are the recommended trail uses: bicycling, hiking and walking, dog walking, running/jogging, in-line skating/skate skiing, equestrian uses, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ATV and environmental education/interpretation. Hunting will be allowed in accordance with Minnesota Rules, except where discharge of firearms is regulated by community ordinances. Trail development will take accessibility into consideration wherever practical. Certain segments of the trail may provide adequate access to rivers or streams for fishing and/or canoe launching.

Bicycling. Bicycling is the number one activity by numbers of summer users on state trails. The length of the trail, the variety of landscapes, and the connections to tourist attractions make this trail appropriate for recreational and touring cyclists of all ages and abilities. The trail will add approximately 70 to 80 miles to the state inventory of about 600 miles of paved state trails. Bicycling is recommended as a use along the entire length of the trail.

Hiking and Walking. On state trails, hiking or walking is second only to bicycling as popular low-impact cardiovascular fitness activities on state trails. Grades are likely to be moderate throughout the majority of the trail route, making it suitable for most people to walk and hike. Hiking and walking are recommended as uses on the entire length of the trail. (The use of electric wheelchairs, electric mobility scooters and similar devices is considered equivalent to walking.)

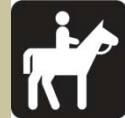
Running and Jogging. Many people use the state trails for running and jogging. In addition to individuals who regularly use the trails for exercise, local school track and cross-country teams will be able to use this scenic trail for training purposes. Running and jogging are recommended uses along the entire length of the trail.

In-Line Skating / Skate Skiing. In-line skating levels of use have declined, but it remains a popular sport. This activity requires a paved trail with a smooth, wide surface, and is a recommended use on paved segments of the trail.

Dog Walking. Dog walking is allowed along the entire length of the trail so long as dogs are leashed and owners properly dispose of pet wastes. State trail rules require all pets to be attended and restrained by a leash of not more than six feet in length.

Horseback Riding. Equestrian uses may be accommodated on some sections, where practical and desired, by developing a separate, natural surface treadway, or on a natural surface shoulder of a paved treadway.

ATV Riding. This trail will be somewhat unique among Minnesota State Trails in that it will accommodate both non-motorized and motorized summer use. It is anticipated that Class I and II ATV use would be allowed on segments of the trail corridor that can accommodate such use, either adjacent to or separate from non-motorized uses. Snowmobiles may share the use of the ATV alignments in some areas.



CAMP RIPLEY/VETERANS STATE TRAIL

Snowmobiling. Snowmobiling will be accommodated wherever feasible and desired, which may include using a separate treadway from the paved treadway. Although, snowmobilers are interested in connecting to the same communities as the summer trail users, the actual alignments for the two treadways will not necessarily be parallel or in the same corridor. Snowmobilers are most interested in securing a permanent alignment, whether seasonal or year-round, that provides a safe, high quality riding experience.

Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing. Cross-country skiing may be able to be accommodated in some sections, where practical and desired, however, it is not likely to be a high-use activity. Cross country skiers typically enjoy loop trails, rather than long, linear trails. Trail grooming may also be an issue with the lack of consistent, sufficient snow cover during the winter months.

Hunting. State trails allow hunting within the trail right-of-way during the legal hunting season, except where restricted by local ordinance. The current rule states: “No firearm or bow and arrow shall be discharged within the trail at any time, except for the purpose of lawful hunting during the period from September 15 to March 30 only. No rifle, shotgun with slug, or bow and arrow shall be discharged upon, over, or across the trail treadway at any time” (MN Rules 6100.3600).

Communities may restrict firearms or bow and arrow discharge, or trapping, by ordinance. These ordinances take precedence over state trail rules.

Environmental Education/Interpretation. Use of the state trail for environmental education, both for individual trail users and formal groups, is encouraged. Schools or organizations that wish to use a trail can work with DNR staff on specific projects. Interpretive displays on the environment and history of the trail can enhance the trail users’ experience. Nature photography is another popular activity.

Accessibility. The trail will be accessible to people with disabilities wherever possible. Grades in excess of 5% may be unavoidable in some locations where the trail must match a parallel transportation corridor or where one of the exceptions in the Federal accessibility guidelines is met.

Fishing Access. Fishing is a popular activity along the Mississippi and Crow Wing Rivers. Depending upon the location and conditions of the trail corridor right-of-way, this activity may be accommodated from the trail where practical.

