

**R.J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest
Bronk Management Unit
Mountain Bike Trail Proposal**

Trail Location: R.J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest, Bronk Management Unit
Township 107, Range 8W, Winona County, Minnesota

Trail Dimensions: Total length = 9.6 miles of single-track mountain bike trail

Trail Description: This proposal would establish 9.6 miles of trail for hiking and mountain bike use. The trail would connect to the existing Plowline Trail, which consists of a north and south loop totaling 6.5 miles.

The trail would be narrow “single track” trail, and would not be open for horse use or motorized vehicle use other than maintenance equipment. Improvement to the existing trailhead or relocation maybe required.

The trail system would be contained within the boundaries of state-owned forest lands. The proposed trails use existing roads and trails as “feeders.” The new trails would provide a number of optional routes of varying difficulty, from one point to another in the system.

The proposed trail would stay within the boundaries of the existing Plow Line Trail, and would stay entirely on state-owned land. The final alignment could be slightly different based on further field review.

The trail system is designed to create as much trail as possible while minimizing impacts to the natural environment. The trail will be designed with International Mountain Bicycling Association standards to allow for the longest path possible between any two points making use of many loops and switch backs in an effort to maximize the trail distance. The majority of trails would be developed through openings between trees, and no mature trees would need to be felled. Scrub and deadfall would be removed to a width necessary for trail maintenance.

There are no wetlands or public waters on the site. The Natural Heritage Database was reviewed and identified Oak-Shagbark Hickory Woodland, Dry Bedrock Bluff Prairie, and degraded Mesic Prairie in the project area. The trail will completely avoid the Oak-Shagbark Hickory Woodland, and Dry Bedrock Bluff Prairie areas. The trail will be routed in the vicinity of the Mesic Prairie, but care will be taken to minimize disturbance.

The new trails would be targeted at ridge top and valley floor areas where the slope of land would be minimal. This design minimizes potential for erosion and runoff, and also facilitates maintenance.

Trail construction and maintenance:

The Winona Area Mountain Bike Club proposes to construct and maintain the trail with DNR oversight. The trail would be constructed largely by hand, utilizing chain saws and weed whips. The majority of the trail would require only deadfall removal and some tree limbing. Where

possible, maintenance mowing and centerline compacting will be accomplished with an ATV pulling a mower, and by hand where the trail is not accessible by ATV. The Winona Area Mountain Bike club would like to place a portable shed at the top of the hill somewhere along the center road to store maintenance equipment. Having equipment readily available will make trail maintenance easier.

Trail Designation Process:

Minnesota Statutes, section 89.19, requires that all designations of state forest trails must be by written order published in the State Register. Before designating a forest trail, the DNR must hold a public meeting in the county where the largest portion of the forest land is located to provide information and receive comments from the public regarding the proposed trail designation. Sixty days before the public meeting, notice of the proposed forest trail designation must be published in the legal newspaper serving the county in which the lands are located, in a statewide DNR news release, and in the State Register. After the close of the comment period, the DNR will consider all comments received and develop a final proposal for designation. If approved by the DNR commissioner, the order designating the trail will be published in the State Register.

Public Review and Open House: The DNR welcomes public perspectives and comments on the proposal. Copies of the proposal, including a map, are available on the DNR website, (<http://www.mndnr.gov/input>), and at the DNR office in Rochester.

The DNR will hold an Open House on May 30, 2013 from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at the Stockton Community Center, North D Street, Stockton, MN 55988. DNR staff will present information on the proposed trail and receive public comments on the proposal at the meeting.

Written comments on the proposal may be e-mailed to Craig.Blommer@state.mn.us, faxed to 507-285-7144, or mailed to Craig Blommer, Area Supervisor, DNR Parks and Trails, 3555 9th Street NW, Suite 350, Rochester, MN 55901. For more information, or to request a printed copy of the proposal, please call Craig Blommer at 507-206-2845 or the DNR Information Center at 1-888-MINNDNR (toll free).

The deadline for comments is 4:30 PM on Friday, June 14, 2013.