

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Designation Application

General Section

Designation Application #: 14-019D Date Submitted: 07/30/2015

Park or Trail Name: Lake Wobegon Trail

District #: 4 Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 45.6329 Longitude: -94.5916

Location Description:

The Lake Wobegon Trail starts in St. Joseph, MN and extends to Osakis, MN. All but 8 miles of the Lake Wobegon Trail occurs in Stearns County. The head of the trail is located about 1 hour and 15 minutes northwest of the Twin Cities just off of Interstate 94.

Lead Applicant Organization: Stearns County

Lead Contact First Name: Ben Last Name: Anderson

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Joint Applicant #1 Organization:

Joint Applicant #2 Organization:

Joint Applicant #3 Organization:

Joint Applicant #4 Organization:

Describe other project supporters:

Description Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)

Total proposed length (mi):

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

The Lake Wobegon Trail is regionally significant because starts in St. Joseph, MN and runs west-northwest to Sauk Centre, MN. The total length of the Lake Wobegon Trail is 54 miles in Stearns County, eight miles of the trail occurs in Todd County. The Lake Wobegon trail is a corridor that connects greater Minnesota residents to multiple cities and sightseeing attractions via biking and hiking. If you were to continue west in Todd County the Lake Wobegon Trail connects to the Central Lakes trail which would eventually take you to Fergus Falls, MN; total mileage of 103 miles if you were to start in St. Joseph and

bike to Fergus Falls. The Lake Wobegon Trail also has a branch that heads north from Albany, MN to the Morrison County line and then connects to the Soo Line Trail which will take you to Little Falls, MN. Currently, the Stearns County Parks Department has partial funding to extend the Lake Wobegon Trail 3.2 miles from St. Joseph, MN into Rivers Edge Park Waite Park, MN. The ultimate goal is to extend the Lake Wobegon Trail all the way into St. Cloud, reaching the Mississippi River. This would provide the opportunities for the City of St. Cloud and the other cities in the greater St. Cloud area to connect their trails to the Lake Wobegon Trail. The facilities provided by the Lake Wobegon Trail include trail heads in each city that the trail travels through. Typically, the trailheads offer a bathroom and some signage advertising the city and its amenities. It is estimated that the cost to extend and develop the Lake Wobegon Trail from St. Joseph, MN to the Mississippi River is roughly \$1,000,000 per mile and the total project length is estimated to be around seven miles. It is estimated that Stearns County Parks Department spends roughly \$160,000 annually on operations, maintenance and programming for the Lake Wobegon Trail.

What is the Acquisition and Development Status?

- New Park or Trail (no land acquired or developed)
- Existing Park or Trail
 - Land Acquisition
 - Status: In progress
 - Percentage of Land Acquired: 95
 - Development Status
 - No Development
 - Some Development, but more Proposed
 - New Facilities Proposed
 - Existing Facilities to be Upgraded
 - Fully Development

Facility Listing Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
Camping is available at multiple locations along the trail but the are run by other government or private entities., Picknicking and picnic shelters, Walking Trails (paved), Biking Trails (paved), Swimming, Fishing Piers, Play areas, Restrooms/sanitation building, Roads and Parking Areas, Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks,	Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail, Picnic shelters at trailhead

Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail, Picnic shelters at trailhead	
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Master Plan Status Section

Master Plan Status: Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available

Describe Other Supportive Information:

There are multiple documents that can be used to fulfill this requirement. They are available as a hard copy upon request.

Classification Details Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality "Destination" Trail Experience: The Lake Wobegon Trail travels through the scenic farmland landscape of central Minnesota. While riding on the Wobegon Trail one can expect to see rolling hills that contain old growth forests, prairies, rivers and farmland. The majority of the Lake Wobegon Trail is built on old railroad corridor. As you ride through the country side, one gets the sense of what the landscaped looked like prior to European settlement and also how the landscape has changed since their arrival. The Lake Wobegon Trail provides convenient access, continuity, secure parking and easy access for support vehicles. The trail has continuity because it follows an old railroad corridor. Each trail head has a parking area that is well lit and located in an open area so that vehicles can be seen by the general public. The Lake Wobegon Trail does not have any gates that block the entrance of the trail at road intersections and thus there is adequate access for support vehicles. The Lake Wobegon Trail consists of a 10 foot wide, bituminous surface and has a minimum of a two to three foot shoulder which allows adequate space for bikers and pedestrians to stop and still be out of the way of other trail users.

Criteria #2 Well-located to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: The Lake Wobegon Trail is located in Central Minnesota and directly serves the tri-county populations of Stearns, Sherburne and Benton Counties. The total population of these three counties is 280,000 people. The trail is also located about 1 hour and 15 minutes from the Twin Cities. The population in the greater St. Cloud area has been continuously growing over the past few years and this trend is predicted to continue. The Lake Wobegon Trail is currently 54 miles in length and connects to both the Central Lakes Trail and the Soo Line Trail. Future development has the trail connecting to the Dairyland and the Beaver Island Trails.

Criteria #3 Enhances Connectivity to Regional Destinations: Currently, the Lake Wobegon Trail does not extend into the City of St. Cloud. However, some project funding has been secured for the extension of the trail into the City of Waite Park. This extension is an important step in completing the "Saintly Seven" which ultimately connects the Lake Wobegon Trail to the City of St. Cloud and to the Mississippi River. It is planned by the surrounding cities such as Sartell, Waite Park, St. Augusta and Sauk

Rapids to connect their city trails to the Lake Wobegon Trail. Stearns County Parks also plans to connect the Dairyland and Beaver Islands Trails to the Lake Wobegon Trail.

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within a Region: Currently, the greater St. Cloud area does not have easy access to the Lake Wobegon Trail. People who wish to use the trail must either ride their bikes on road shoulders or pack up their bikes in a vehicle and drive to the trail. The Lake Wobegon Trail extension into St. Cloud will alleviate this issue, especially once the cities surrounding St. Cloud also connect their local trails to the Wobegon Trail. Ultimately, without the Lake Wobegon Trail extension the greater St. Cloud area is largely unconnected to a regional bike trail.

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)

Type	Description
Other	Feasibility Study for Stearns County Rails with Trails
Master Plan	Lake Wobegon Trail
Other	Lake Wobegon Trail Extension Feasibility Study
Other	Lake Wobegon Trail Planning Study
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Location Map	Location map added from general tab