

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Designation Application

General Section

Designation Application #: 16-010D Date Submitted: 04/29/2016

Park or Trail Name: Red Lake River Corridor

District #: 2 Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 47.8928 Longitude: -96.3086

Location Description:

The trail follows the Red Lake River from its mouth at Red Lake through Pennington, Red Lake and Polk Counties, to its confluence with the Red River of the North. It connects the cities of Thief River Falls, St. Hilaire, Red Lake Falls, Crookston, Fisher and East Grand Forks.

Lead Applicant Organization: Red Lake River Corridor Joint Powers Board

Lead Contact First Name: Shannon Last Name: Stassen

Mailing Address: 124 North Broadway

City: Crookston State: MN Zip: 56716

Phone: (218) 281-1232 Email: sstassen@crookston.mn.us

Joint Applicant #1 Organization: Cities of Thief River Falls, St Hilaire, and Red Lake Falls

Joint Applicant #2 Organization: Cities of Crookston, Fisher and East Grand Forks

Joint Applicant #3 Organization: Polk, Red Lake and Pennington Counties

Joint Applicant #4 Organization: Red Lake Watershed District

Describe other project supporters:

Local Public Health in Polk, Red Lake and Pennington Counties Riverland Tourism Association Economic Developers University of Minnesota Extension, Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership Northwest Regional Development Commission

Description Section

Regional Significance Statement: The Red Lake River traces a landscape rich in natural and cultural history. It travels the through three major biomes of the North American continent, each with distinctive plants and animals. It traverses lands occupied by Glacial Lake Agassiz for millennia, leaving behind deep, rich soils and beach ridge features. Ojibwe and later French lived in the region for generations. The Old Crossing Treaties, signed at Huot, enabled passage and settlement in 1864.

Classification: Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized)

Total proposed length motorized (mi): 175

Total proposed length non-motorized (mi):

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

The Red Lake River Corridor experience can best be understood as a composition of land, water, and people. As the river travels to the west the composition of the physical landscape, waterscape, and cultural landscape types change in nature. The change in character is the result of the variety of compositions present as one proceeds through the Red Lake River experience. The experience of these relationships tell a story of time, people, land, and water that is truly unique to this region of the state. The 175 mile Red Lake River Corridor Trail provides a variety of river experiences and has a number of communities on the river, therefore a segment strategy was developed for the trail. Canoeists can travel the entire length of the river or select a shorter route using segments. Segments are based on landscape characteristics, historic sites, community locations, river slope and vegetative cover. The segments are depicted on the attachment, RLRCsegmentDescriptionMap. The river trail serves paddlers, especially in the segments above the lake plain, and both paddlers and small motor boats in the lower reaches. Each of the communities provides opportunity for land/water interface activities. Birders and fisherman enjoy the water from shore. Bikers and hikers can follow community-scale trails in many of the communities. There are campgrounds, picnic areas, swimming pools and playgrounds. Winter activities include cross country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing and snowmobiling. In each community, it is a short walk to cafes, shops and libraries. A listing of city and county parks, and the amenities at each is included in attachment RLRCcityParks. These public lands are important points of access to the river. The existing facilities provide river access in the communities, and a connection between the water trail and adjacent parks and trails. There is a need for additional river access points upstream and downstream of communities to enable more day-use of the river. Further, there is a need for trailheads at the land/water interface to provide signage and interpretation as well as parking, bathrooms and shelter. Trail development goals align with community development and public health. Many partners share a common goal in promoting an active lifestyle and offering amenities that support it. The Red Lake River Water Trail offers a low cost, accessible option for those seeking a healthy activity and enjoying abundant wildlife and scenic landscapes. Each community hosts celebrations and events that feature the Red Lake River and activities, providing a foundation of programming. The Red Lake River Water Trail benefits from the long standing existence of the Riverland Association, providing marketing and promotion of the Water Trail and activities associated with the region and river. The reach of this organization includes the upper Midwest and Manitoba. This broad partnership will be strengthened with the designation of the Red Lake River Corridor as a regionally significant trail, and more complete master planning efforts to follow.

What is the Acquisition and Development Status?

- New Park or Trail (no land acquired or developed)
- Existing Park or Trail

- Land Acquisition
Status:
Percentage of Land Acquired:
- 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 (Motorized and Non-Motorized)	
Non-Motorized	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
<p>Camping-cross-section of camper types, Electric/water/sewer RV sites, Electric/water campsites, Non-electric campsites, Group campsites, Tent only sites, Camper Cabins, Picknicking and picnic shelters, Walking Trails (paved), Hiking Trails (natural), Biking Trails (paved), Mountain Biking Trails (natural), Cross-country Skiing Trails, Horseback Riding Trails (natural), Swimming, Lake Access for power boats, Canoeing Facilities, Fishing Piers, Visitor Center, Nature Center/Interpretation Trails, Play areas, Outdoor Amphitheater, Dog Parks, Archery/Shooting ranges, Climbing (natural/man-made), Zip Lines, Restrooms/sanitation building, Roads and Parking Areas, Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Asphalt paved trail (less than 10 feet), Aggregate surfaced trail (10 feet or more), Aggregate surfaced trail (less than 10 feet), Aggregate surfaced trail, Natural-surfaced trail - user created, Natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use, Underdeveloped natural-surfaced trail - user created, Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail, Picnic shelters at trailhead, , Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Trailhead parking, Trailhead restrooms, Picnic shelters at trailhead, See attached files: The existing access points to the Red Lake River are in several communities. See spreadsheet of existing and proposed facilities by community as well</p>	<p>Camping-cross-section of camper types, Electric/water/sewer RV sites, Electric/water campsites, Electric campsites, Non-electric campsites, Group campsites, Tent only sites, Camper Cabins, Picknicking and picnic shelters, Walking Trails (paved), Hiking Trails (natural), Biking trails (paved), Mountain Biking Trails (natural), Cross-country Skiing Trails, Horseback Riding Trails (natural), Swimming, Lake Access for power boats, Canoeing Facilities, Fishing Piers, Visitor Center, Nature Center/Interpretation Trails, Play Areas, with an outdoor theme, Outdoor Amphitheater, Dog Parks, Archery/Shooting ranges, Climbing (natural/man-made), Zip Lines, Restrooms/sanitation building, Roads and Parking Areas, Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Aggregate surfaced trail (10 feet or more), Aggregate surfaced trail, Designated natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific us, Natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use, Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail, Picnic shelters at trailhead, Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Aggregate surfaced trail (10 feet or more), Natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use, Trailhead parking, Trailhead</p>

as maps of segments with existing and proposed facilities.	information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail, Picnic shelters at trailhead
Motorized	
<p style="text-align: center;">Existing Facility List</p> <p>Underdeveloped natural-surfaced trail - user created, Trailhead parking, See attached files: The existing access points to the Red Lake River are in several communities. See spreadsheet of existing and proposed facilities by community as well as maps of segments with existing and proposed facilities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Proposed Facility List</p> <p>Designated natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use, Trailhead parking, Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Picnic shelters at trailhead, See attached files: The existing access points to the Red Lake River are in several communities. See spreadsheet of existing and proposed facilities by community as well as maps of segments with existing and proposed facilities</p>

Master Plan Status Section

Master Plan Status: Existing Master Plan is Available (but needs to be updated to meet strategic plan)

Describe Other Supportive Information:

Several components of the Master Plan are complete and are attached. The Joint Powers Board will be completing the Master Plan in the coming weeks. The attached segment maps are taken from planning materials. The full document can be accessed at this url:
<http://www.changinglandscapes.umn.edu/publications/red-lake-river-corridor>. Additional materials posted at <http://www.redlakerivercorridor.org>

Classification Details Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized)

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality "Destination" Trail Experience: The Red Lake River Water Trail Provides unique features, significant distance and access to services located at several communities along its 175 mile corridor for both paddlers and boaters. Traveling the Red Lake River offers an opportunity to experience the three major biomes of the North American Continent. Each of these biomes has distinctive plants, animals and landscapes. The river begins at the Lower Red Lake in a coniferous forest near the western edge of the coniferous forest biome of pine, spruce and some aspen. It flows westward through the deciduous forest biome of oak, aspen and red maple. The landscape flattens as the grassland biome begins. The river winds back and forth through the tall grass prairie which continues beyond the Minnesota/North Dakota border. Elm and cottonwood trees are found along the banks of this stretch of the river. Plant and animal communities are particularly diverse at the points where biomes meet each other. The water trail provides a variety of river experiences for a variety of skill levels and ages. From fast water, rock rapids areas to very slow meandering areas, this water trail has something for every water enthusiast. Anglers enjoy a variety of species to choose from,

including Channel Catfish of significant size. Motorboating, a variety of paddling options and tubing all are featured along the Red Lake River. Historic Old Crossing Treaty Park near Huot offers one of the five campgrounds along the Red Lake River. Each of these campgrounds includes a boat ramp and additional boat ramps are available at strategic locations along the river. Several carry-in locations exist as well for paddling access. Six communities along the Red Lake River provide river facilities and recreational resources for users of the water trail. Each segment between communities offers attractive features for users.

Criteria #2 Well-located to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: The Red Lake River Water Trail is well located to serve both a larger regional population living along the river and to serve as an excellent tourist destination. The following communities are located along the Red Lake River: Thief River Falls, St. Hilaire, Red Lake Falls, Crookston, Fisher and East Grand Forks. Three of these communities have a population of approximately 8000 and the aggregate total population served by these six communities represents a large portion of the total population in Northwest Minnesota. Each of these communities provides services for river travelers such as food, supplies and in most cases, lodging facilities. Boaters have access at approximately 10 boat landings along the water trail. Anglers will find fishing tackle, bait, gas and other essentials within most river communities. Paddlers will find outfitting services and replacement equipment in the larger communities. The Water Trail offers an ideal experience for those seeking a remote, natural experience for all seasons of the year. A large segment of the water trail is accessible for both motorized and non-motorized aspects even in years of low water across the state. From the Beach Ridge east of Crookston to East Grand Forks the river slows dramatically and is still passable in low flow times. Fishing is good here with Channel Catfish, pike, walleye, small mouth bass, drum and goldeye available. Fishing with a motorboat is recommended along this segment of the trail because of the distance between access points. Ice fishing, snowmobiling and cross country skiing are very popular along the Water Trail throughout the winter months, making the Red Lake River a year round attraction and amenity. The region is a traditional get-away for travelers from southern Manitoba, as well as Minnesota and North Dakota.

Criteria #3 Enhances Connectivity to Other Regional and State Level Trails within the Region, and Connects to Regional Destinations: The Red Lake River Water Trail provides connectivity to several trails of significance and regional destinations. Both residents and travelers will benefit from increase access of both motorized and non-motorized activities along the water trail as they coordinate their activities with other local attractions. Travelers experiencing the Red Lake River will also have a wide array of options to choose from to enhance their experience. Both Thief River Falls and Crookston are located along the Pine to Prairie Birding Trail which runs from central Minnesota into Manitoba. Travelers from around the world come to experience birding and other wildlife, many times in wetlands associated with the Red Lake River. Glacial Ridge, the largest prairie and wetland restoration in North America, is located adjacent to the water trail as well as Rydell National Wildlife Refuge. Features include and Interpretive Center, natural and paved trails and 24,000 acres of public land. The King of Trails Highway 75 Scenic Byway bisects the water trail at Crookston and brings many travelers to the region. The Prairie Passage Scenic Byway is a 600 mile trail that passes through five states and bisects the Red Lake River Water Trail at Crookston. East Grand Forks and the "Grand Cities" area is a retail shopping hub for the region and attracts many Canadian tourist each year. Red Lake Falls features Voyagers View

campground and river tubing along with the Bottineau Trail, a paved multi-use trail in a very scenic area. Thief River Falls is known for its outdoor activities such as hunting, birding and river activities. Seven Clans Casino also attracts many guests each year. Many tourist destinations already exist along the Red Lake River Water Trail and its enhancement will provide a synergistic effect for each amenity. Clearly, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. .

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within a Region: The Red Lake River Water Trail offers many excellent trail experiences but also has much room for growth and improvement. The Water Trail is still underutilized for its capacity and many gaps remain that limit its potential currently. The efforts of the Red Lake River Corridor Joint Powers Board along with funding from a variety of sources will address the following gaps to improve access for both motorized and non-motorized use. We will increase the total number of access points along the Water Trail to provide an option for shorter excursions. Some segments of the trail are recommended for motorized transport only because of the distance between access points. A gap exists in the understanding of the public that the Water Trail is available for use during all seasons of the year. A documented need for increased physical activity throughout Minnesota and in particularly in NW Minnesota exists and leads to health issues in our population. Increased access to the Water Trail is a step toward improving this condition. A gap in understanding and acceptance of the river exists in our region. For many years the river was seen as destructive and dangerous. Through education and outreach efforts, we can reverse this perception and encourage users of all ages and abilities to enjoy the Water Trail. Finally, communities that embrace the river and capitalize on its assets will become more vibrant and livable for residents. The economic impact extends not only to tourism but attracting and retaining people to core businesses in NW Minnesota and the greater communities. These core business are big job creators so there there is added benefit.

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)

Type	Description
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Other	Description of segments of the Red Lake River Corridor
Other	spreadsheet of existing and proposed facilities
Letters of Support	Compiled set of 7 letters of support
Other	Narrative version of existing and proposed facilities
Master Plan	Segment maps High Landing to St Hilaire
Master Plan	Segment maps St Hilaire to East Grand Forks
site_characteristic_images	Red Lake River Region
regional_demographic_photos	Polk, Red Lake, Pennington Demographics
public_involvement_photos	Health in all Policies Framework