



GITCHI-GAMI TRAIL RIDER

A publication of the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association

Fall 2017

President's Message

MOMENTUM: GEARING UP FOR GITCHI-GAMI TRAIL PROJECTS

If you were a fly on the side of the road in the mid-1990's, you might have heard some buzz about building a trail—a great trail—on our Great Lake. A group of forward-thinking resort owners got together and started putting out the word. They were interested in building a paved trail for non-motorized use along the shoreline of Lake Superior.

One of these early great minds was our own Bill Blank. Bill has served on the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association board since the beginning. He has served in many volunteer roles on our nonprofit's board, most recently as president, and has now passed that baton on to me. Bill remains an active board member. For that, and for his many years of service, we are indebted. Thanks, Bill, for all you've done and that you continue to do to bring safe, scenic cycling, hiking, and rollerblading to our area. Bill loves this trail, and he loves the idea of a completed trail. This is a vision he and I and many others have in common. I've long been a part of the GGTA, and I'm honored to begin serving the board as its president.

When we think of a completed trail linking Two Harbors to Grand Marais, including six state parks, three state Scientific and Natural Areas, numerous state waysides, and all the wonderful places to stay, eat, and drink, we can't help but be excited to see it all come to fruition. But, like Rome, a great trail on a Great Lake won't be built in a day. We celebrate the great strides we've made this year, including trail construction projects linking the communities of Beaver Bay and Silver Bay, successful applications for more funding in

Lutsen, reconstruction in Temperance River State Park, and the recent designation of Minnesota's US Bike Route 41—The North Star Route, from St. Paul to Grand Portage, which uses our trail and Highway 61 shoulders as its alignment from Duluth to Canada. Although there is no funding tied to this designation, it will help MnDOT to develop more trail in its right-of-way, offering USBR41 riders the safest experience possible.

As we look out our windows upon the natural beauty of the North Shore this fall and winter, we'll also look forward to trail projects coming this spring. The DNR will be kicking off a major trail construction project in Cook County, linking Grand Marais to Cutface Creek State Wayside, and we'll be there to tell you about it. And as it is with all trail projects, forward progress happens only when we push ahead—in our case, pushing ahead on the pedals to garner more funding for future trail projects. We'll continue to advocate for trail support, and we hope you'll lend your support of our work by joining as a member, renewing your membership, or perhaps joining our board—our team of dreamers. One segment at a time, this vision, this dream of a connected North Shore, will become a reality.

Keep pedaling,

Tom Peterson,
GGTA President



Trail Coordinator's Report

The 2017 summer construction season was a busy one along the Gitchi-Gami State Trail corridor! We're happy to report that a reconstruction and rehabilitation project on the trail in Temperance River State Park wrapped up in early August. A short segment of trail in the park had been suffering from condition issues; artesian springs were the culprit. These issues have been mitigated, and we're hearing from folks riding on the newly repaired segment that it is a great improvement!

And we are thrilled to announce that a long-time gap between two existing trail segments linking the communities of Beaver Bay and Silver Bay is NO LONGER a gap! If you've driven on Highway 61 this summer and fall, you've likely also noticed that there has been a major construction project on the bridge over the Beaver River in Beaver Bay. Our partners at MnDOT are wrapping up this project, which involved shifting the driving lanes to accommodate the Gitchi-Gami Trail on the inland side of the bridge with a separated bike/pedestrian lane. MnDOT also

supervised a project to tie in the bridge to the existing segment of trail that ended at the Beaver Bay Wayside, and brought the trail from the northeast side to the current terminus at the intersection of West Road and Hwy 61. We thank all our partners for their great work, and we thank the communities of Beaver Bay, Beaver Bay Township, Silver Bay, and Lake County for their support of the project. Closing this gap in 2017 is significant; we now have a 17+ mile segment of continuous trail connecting communities, state parks, and other resources.

2018 will see the beginning of more trail construction, too! The DNR has hired contractors to begin engineering of a trail segment connecting Grand Marais to the Cutface Creek State Wayside, and to begin planning to close the one-mile gap in the Town of Tofte, which will connect the Schroeder to Tofte segment to the west with the Tofte to Lutsen segment to the east.

*Mark Rudningen,
DNR Trail Development Specialist*

A short segment of trail in Temperance River State Park reopened on August 6. The newly reconfigured trail addressed trail conditions caused by artesian springs and reduced the grade of the hill in one area.



A segment of our trail along the West Road in Beaver Bay Township has finally been paved, connecting two existing trail segments. The trail has been placed on the river side of the West Road, with a curb separating the trail from motorists.



MnDOT is putting finishing touches on their project connecting trail over the Beaver River Bridge in Beaver Bay.



Thanks to our partners at PedalMN, the Beaver Bay Wayside/GGST trailhead now features a bicycle repair station!



MnDOT redesigned the surface of the bridge to accommodate bikers and pedestrians on the inland side.

Executive Director's Report

Greetings from the Gitchi-Gami Trail ~

If you've received a letter or an email from me, you may have noticed my go-to closing phrase is "Happy trails." Well, right now, we do have a lot to be happy about! You'll notice in this issue of the *Trail Rider* that this summer's construction projects on the trail mean we'll have more trail to ride next cycling season. Now that's something to be happy about!

Also, we're delighted to report that our legislative representatives have been very supportive of trail projects, and their hard work in the 2017 session resulted in funds being allocated to trail work coming our way in the 2018 construction season. We offer profound thanks to Representative Ron Ecklund and Senator Tom Bakk for their work in support of the trail. The DNR's application for federal funds to plan trail from the current terminus at Ski Hill Road into the town of Lutsen was successful; this year we'll be working with the DNR to advocate for matching dollars for this important project. Connecting residents and visitors to our incredible state parks, state waysides, nature areas, recreation sites, and communities is what we are all about.

2017 Annual Ride in Review. What do you call it when you put together 144 riders, 19 volunteers, sunny skies, 87 PB&J sandwiches, 74 pickle wedges, a super-sweet t-shirt design, and an abundance of snacks and smiles? I'd call it a really successful 17th Annual North Shore Ride event! We reconnected with many familiar riders, but also had a chance to talk about the trail and its future with riders new to the trail. We hope you'll mark your calendars and join us on August 18, 2018, for our 18th Annual North Shore Bike Ride. We're excited that this year's trail work will mean no more gravel on our 37- and 55-mile ride options next year!

2017 Bike Your Park Day. On Saturday, September 30, some GGTA supporters hit the trail early to take part in Adventure Cycling's annual "Bike Your Park Day."

The weather was crisp and sunny, and we had a great time highlighting the important role trails can have in connecting people to our parklands. Will you join us next year?



2018 Advocacy and Trail Promotion. In the coming months, the GGTA will continue to garner support for projects on the trail to help continue this year's momentum. As Tom, our new GGTA board president says, we just have to keep pedaling! Your individual membership and business support are ways you can help us show our legislators that trail completion is something people want to see happen.

Do you want to become more involved? Our board is actively seeking new members. We're especially interested in finding someone who has web skills to join our team and help us keep our website an up-to-date and information-rich resource for those looking to explore the shore on a bike! If you, or someone you know, would like to learn more about board membership, please send me a note on email, or give me a call! Happy trails,

Michelle Pierson,
GGTA Executive Director

Gitchi-Gami Trail Association

1130 Eleventh Street
Two Harbors, MN 55616

Board of Directors

Tom Peterson, President, Two Harbors
Bruce Martinson, Vice President, Schroeder
Chad Pierson, Treasurer, Duluth
Bill Blank, Lutsen
Dan Cruikshank, Two Harbors
Rod Garver, Duluth
Anne McKinsey, Lutsen/Minneapolis
Mark Sandbo, St. Paul

Ex Officio

Ginny Storlie, Cook County Commissioner
Pete Walsh, Lake County Commissioner

Trail Coordinator

Mark Rudningen, MnDNR
mark.rudningen@dnr.state.mn.us
218-834-1437

Executive Director

Michelle Pierson, ARDC, Duluth
mpierson@ardc.org
218-529-7535

Bike it. Hike it. Like it. Support it!

Are you one of the many generous Minnesotans who donate to your favorite causes on "Give to the Max Day" —November 16 this year—maybe doing all of your year-end tax-deductible donations on that day? Please consider adding a GGTA membership contribution to your donation list. You can access our GiveMN page by searching for "ggta" at the "donate" link on the website, www.givemn.org.

OR you can send your contribution in the envelope enclosed in this newsletter. **OR** you can go online to the Membership page on our website, www.ggta.org. Remember that if you join the GGTA or renew your membership now, you will get the members-only discount for next year's annual ride. **OR**, if you're a business, please consider becoming a business member, whose support will be recognized in our publications, website, and all ride publicity.

The GGTA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so all contributions are tax-deductible. Help us to continue to advocate for and build a great trail on a Great Lake!



Sharing the Gitchi-Gami story . . .

The Zehnder Family joined us once again for our 17th annual North Shore Bike Ride in August. This adventuresome family knows that a family who bikes it together, likes it together!

The Zehnders are part of a three-generation crew who make it a point to join us for our annual ride each year. Parents Heather and Collan look forward to spending time with their kids and Heather's parents, camping, exploring the shore, and enjoying the ride.

This year, Heather and 9-year-old son Zach completed our 28-mile ride, while Collan biked the 37-mile ride, and Grandpa Keith biked the 55-mile ride. The youngest Zehnder, 7-year-old Jameson, joined in his first-ever ride event, biking the four miles from Gooseberry Falls State Park to our new rest stop at Iona's Beach. It's pretty remarkable, as he'd only learned to ride the day before our event! You go, Jameson! When we asked him how his ride went, he said: "It was AWESOME! I loved all the turns and hills!" Thanks for joining us again this year, Zehnders, and we'll see you on the shore for our 18th annual ride on August 18, 2018!



Paul Sundberg Photography



Gitchi-Gami Trail Association

1130 Eleventh Street
Two Harbors, MN 55616

