

Spring 2019

# GITCHI-GAMI TRAIL RIDER

A publication of the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association

## THE TRAIL IS THE THING . . .

*The trail is the thing, not the end of the trail. Travel too fast, and you miss all you are traveling for.*

~ Louis l'Amour

We are looking forward to spring—and to putting spring in our steps and wheels on our favorite trail—ensuring that we stop and check out the wildflowers in Iona's Beach Scientific and Natural Area while we travel, and craning our necks at the Trail Center in Split Rock Lighthouse State Park as we gaze up in awe at the engineering marvel of the lighthouse from the shore of Lake Superior, just steps off the Gitchi-Gami State Trail. The trail is our gateway to gawk at waterfalls and cascades, and THIS is the season to check them out. So. We agree that the trail is THE thing. We hope to see you hiking, biking, and rolling on the trail this season, immersed in the journey—not just the destination.

But let's be real. We're also interested in the end of the trail. And the beginning. And the middle. We continue to advocate for the future of the trail, and for maintaining the trail we have. Of the 89 planned miles of trail, just over 30 miles are constructed to date. Small additions to trail miles were added to the list last summer, and we look forward with great anticipation to seeing projects in Cook County near Grand Marais and Tofte converted from planned corridor to actual trail miles in 2020.

The GGTA is currently working with the community of Lutsen, stakeholders, property owners, and the North Shore Scenic Drive Council to gather some input for predesign work for a trail extension. There is an existing trail terminus on Hwy 61 at the Ski Hill Road—a gravel lot on privately owned land. We assisted the Department of Natural Resources with an application that resulted in partial funding to extend the trail into Lutsen's "town center." We're thrilled with the feedback from locals suggesting that a nicely designed trail could serve as the town's "sidewalk," resulting in positive economic impact, providing safe passage for residents and guests to natural and recreation sites, providing safe routes for workers

from residences to workplaces, closing the trail gap between the townships of Tofte and Lutsen, and helping to build Lutsen's identity. We're excited to help gather this input as DNR looks to hire an engineer for this important trail segment, to be constructed in 2021.

We continue to hear from visitors and residents that this trail is important. We hear it from folks looking to complete US Bike Route 41 (the North Star Route), we hear it from folks who live in our shore communities, and we hear it from folks looking to camp and stay and play at our wonderful North Shore state parks. We often meet with legislators to pass on this message and to encourage the state to finish what it started. We hope you'll add your voices to the choir when you have chances to call, write, or visit with your legislators.

Spring is also a time of renewal, and we invite you to attend our Annual Meeting of Members on Saturday, May 18th at 10:00 am, at the Two Harbors Federal Credit Union. We will hold elections, and we're always looking for enthusiastic people to consider a board role. It's time for the GGTA to elect a new president, and it is with great pride in our work and our passion that I will be passing the baton to someone new. We warmly invite anyone interested in having a role in the future of the trail to contact Michelle, our executive director, [info@ggta.org](mailto:info@ggta.org).

Spring is also a time when we ask area businesses to consider sponsoring our work and our annual ride (see info inside). We thank great members like you and our wonderful sponsors for supporting the future of our great trail on a great lake.

Keep pedaling!

~Tom Peterson  
GGTA President



## Trail Coordinator's Report

**W**ith the ongoing thaw from this season's long winter, we're hopefully gearing up for a warm and pleasant spring. Now might be a good time to introduce myself. My name is Oliver Liu and I am the new Area Specialist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, taking over Mark Rudningen's position. I have been with the DNR since 2015, working for the Division of Wildlife on the habitat roving crew/wildland fire team. Previously I worked as a Biological Science Technician/Park Ranger for the National Park Service out of Ashland, Wisconsin, and the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area. I earned a B.S. in Environmental Science/Biology from the University of Minnesota and Oregon State University, and an M.S. in Parks and Natural Resources Management from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. I look forward to working on the Gitchi-Gami State Trail.

There's a lot planned for the GGST in 2019. The engineering and design of the Tofte "south" segment are progressing. The engineering consultant's plans for a tunnel crossing of Hwy 61 and proposed trail corridor are expected to be completed this spring, with construction optimistically beginning by mid-2020.

In other news, a final construction schedule for the Grand Marias to Cutface Creek Wayside segment has been established, with construction beginning late this year and continuing through mid-2020. The final schedule was determined by two primary factors: an abundance of concern for the protection of the northern long-eared bat, *Myotis septentrionalis*, and the ability

to coordinate with MnDOT's planned reconstruction of Hwy 61 in the vicinity. By scheduling construction to start in November, the Parks and Trails Division can assure the best bat protection measures are implemented, and the anticipated effects of multiple construction projects on local residents and visitors can be minimized.

Remaining bonding dollars and federal aid have now been allocated for the Cutface Creek and Tofte segments, and additional funding is now being sought to cover engineering review for the Lutsen trail extension (see the President's Column on page 1).

Finally, maintenance projects this year will include replacement of some of the older faded GGST signs along existing trail segments. Of course, we will continue ongoing maintenance, working on areas in need of repair, removing hazards along the trail, and minimizing establishment and spread of invasive and noxious plant species.

It's great to be back along the beautiful North Shore, and I hope to see you out on the trails soon, however you choose to recreate!

~*Oliver Liu*

Area 2C Specialist  
DNR Parks & Trails



## Executive Director's Report

**C**alling all volunteers! President Tom and I represented the GGTA at Lake County's Volunteer Fair in March, and we were happy to connect with quite a few folks interested in opportunities to volunteer in support of our favorite trail. Just in time, we are rolling out a new volunteer opportunity! We are seeking trail lovers who would like to "Adopt a Mile of the GGST." Folks who enroll in this new program will commit to walking/biking a mile (or two) at least once a month during bike season, clearing the trail of sticks, picking up litter, and reporting damage or other issues that we can pass along to our friends at the DNR. Does having a good reason to get out on the trail appeal to you? Contact me at [info@ggta.com](mailto:info@ggta.com) or 218-529-7535 and we'll get the adoption process underway!

On May 18th, we hope you'll join us for two great events in Two Harbors. The GGTA has once again been selected to be a recipient of funds from Spokengear/Cedar Coffee Company's third annual "Yard Sale" gear swap. They are inviting folks to drop off gear to sell on

consignment with 80% of funds to go to the seller and the remaining 20% to trail groups like ours! We are thankful for this connection.

Our Annual Meeting of Members is set for the same day at 10:00 am at the Two Harbors Federal Credit Union, just across the street from the gear swap. Join us to learn what we've been up to for the past year, find out what you can do to help, and enjoy drinks and treats.

Finally, be sure to mark your calendars for our 19th Annual Bike Ride on August 17th—we're looking forward to another great day on a great trail on our great lake!

We're seeking volunteers to help at our table at the gear swap on May 18th, AND especially at the Annual Ride on August 17th. Ride volunteers will be helping with registration, working at rest stops, and assisting riders. Please contact me if you are interested. And come to the Annual Meeting to learn more!

Happy trails!

~*Michelle Pierson*

GGTA Executive Director





**19TH ANNUAL GGTA NORTH SHORE BIKE RIDE**

**The 19th Annual Gitchi-Gami Trail Association North Shore Bike Ride will take place on **Saturday, August 17**, on the Gitchi-Gami State Trail and connecting roads.**

**Starting Point:** Gooseberry Falls State Park

**Start Time:** 9:00 am to 10:00 am

**Details:** **Parking** for the ride is located in a lot inside the state park. Vehicles will need an annual state park vehicle sticker or a daily vehicle pass (a daily pass will be provided by the GGTA as part of the registration fee). **Refreshments** will be provided at rest stops and post-ride. **Mechanical, emergency and sag support** will be provided. Adult riders will receive t-shirts, and young riders will be given water bottles.

**All riders must sign waivers and wear helmets.**

**8-mile family ride option:** Follows the GGST for 4 miles from Gooseberry to a rest stop at Twin Points wayside, where there will be treats and special events for families. The ride returns on the GGST to Gooseberry.

**28-mile ride option:** Follows the GGST from Gooseberry through Split Rock Lighthouse State Park to the rest stop at the Beaver Bay Wayside, returning on the trail.

**34-mile ride option:** Also all on the GGST, from Gooseberry to the rest stop at Beaver Bay Wayside, continuing on new trail over the Beaver River and up the West Road, then up to the ridgeline and the Silver Bay rest stop. Bikers then retrace the route, returning to Beaver Bay, and back to Gooseberry.

**55-mile ride option:** Follows the GGST to the rest stop at Beaver Bay Wayside, continues on new trail over the Beaver River and up the West Road, then uphill to the ridgeline and the Silver Bay rest stop. The route then loops inland northwest on Penn Ave, joining the Lax Lake Rd north and east to Hwy 1, south to the Eckbeck rest stop and Hwy 61, then southwest to stoplight. Route returns uphill on Outer Dr/ Penn Ave (FR 11) to Silver Bay rest stop, picking up the GGST and then back to Beaver Bay and Gooseberry.

**Elevation charts** for each route can be found on the Annual Ride page on the website, [www.ggta.org](http://www.ggta.org).

**Registration** can be completed online (through secure PayPal payment) or by mail, using the form on this page.

**Members of the GGTA get a \$10 discount from nonmember ride fees.** Don't know if you are a member? Contact us at [membership@ggta.org](mailto:membership@ggta.org). Join or renew your membership by mail or online at [www.ggta.org](http://www.ggta.org). **Questions?** Contact us at [annualride@ggta.org](mailto:annualride@ggta.org).

### *Thank you, Sponsors!*

Americinn Tofte • Americinn Silver Bay • Arrowhead Electric Cooperative • Best Western Plus Superior Inn Bluefin Bay Resort • Camp 61 • Castle Danger Brewery Cedaero • Cedar Coffee Company • Cove Point Lodge Fireweed Bike Coop • Grand Maris State Bank Grand Superior Lodge • KTWL Two Harbors Community Radio • Lake Superior Dental • Lockport Marketplace Lutsen Resort • Northern Wilds • North Shore Federal Credit Union • Northshore Mining • Sawtooth Outfitters Spokengear • Thrivent Financial • Two Dogs in the Web Two Harbors Chamber of Commerce • Two Harbors Federal Credit Union • WTIP North Shore Community Radio • Visit Cook County • [YOUR BUSINESS HERE]

**REGISTRATION AND WAIVER FORM**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration by Aug 1: \$40 (**\$30 for members**)

Registration after Aug 1: \$45 (**\$35 for members**)

Riders 17 and under: : Free with paid adult

Circle shirt size: M L XL Second rider: M L XL

Options: \_\_\_\_ 8 miles \_\_\_\_ 28 miles \_\_\_\_ 37 miles \_\_\_\_ 55 miles

I agree by my entry into this event to accept its inherent risks, and absolve the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association (GGTA), its officers and employees, and all other sponsors, organizers, volunteers and associated entities, with their heirs and assigns, singly or collectively, of all blame or liability for any harm, inconvenience, injury, loss, or other misadventure suffered as a result of taking part in the GGTA North Shore Bike Ride.

Any qualified doctor or medical technician is hereby authorized to provide me medical treatment in response to an accident, injury, or illness during this event.

I give permission, without obligation or liability to me, for the use of my name, image or other record of my taking part in the GGTA North Shore Bike Ride for any promotional or publicity purposes.

I will obey traffic rules, heed officials' advice, and ride and conduct myself with due caution and respect, so as not to endanger anyone or disrupt the enjoyment of fellow cyclists, motorists or others. I agree to wear a properly fitted hard shell bicycle helmet at all times when riding a bicycle at this event.

My signature indicates that I have read this waiver and agree with its intent (**all riders must sign**):

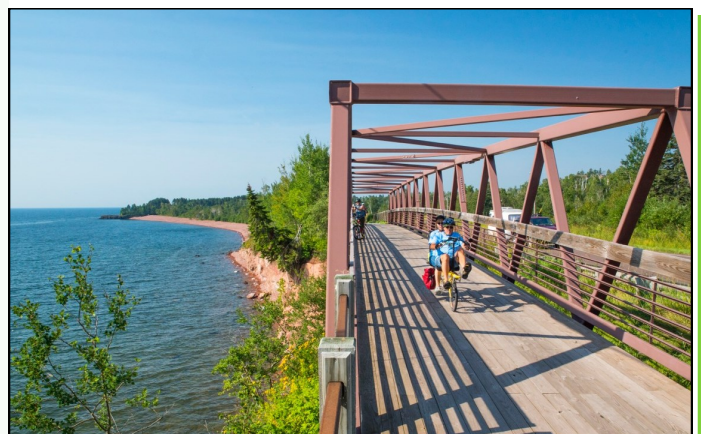
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Under 18? Sign above, and have adult sign below:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Send completed Registration and Waiver form and check for ride registration (including membership fee, if any) in the enclosed envelope.**



COMING EVENTS	DATE/TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
<b>ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS</b>	Saturday, May 18, 10:00-11:00am	Two Harbors Federal Credit Union 801 11th Street Two Harbors	Join us to learn more about our efforts to support and advocate for a great trail on OUR great lake! Elect board members and officers, find out how you can volunteer to help.
<b>YARD SALE &amp; GEAR SWAP SPOKENGear CYCLERY</b>	Saturday, May 18, 9:00am-4:00pm	ON SITE AT SPOKENGear! 1130 11th Street Two Harbors	This is a great opportunity to buy OR sell used outdoor adventure gear of all sorts, and support the GGTA while doing it! Learn more at <a href="http://www.facebook.com/spokengear">www.facebook.com/spokengear</a>
<b>DNR's SCHOOL'S OUT— CAMP OUT CHALLENGE</b>	Saturday, June 8	State Park campgrounds throughout the state	DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen challenges everyone, especially families with kids, to fill all 4500 campsites in state parks. Stay at a North Shore park and bring your bikes to ride on the GGST! See <a href="http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/schools-out-camp-out.html">www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/schools-out-camp-out.html</a>
<b>19th ANNUAL NORTH SHORE BIKE RIDE</b>	Saturday, August 17 <b>VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!</b>	All ride options begin and end at Gooseberry Falls State Park	Register with form inside this issue, or sign up online at <a href="http://www.ggta.org">www.ggta.org</a>



## Gitchi-Gami Trail Association

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### GGTA Board of Directors

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### Trail Coordinator

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