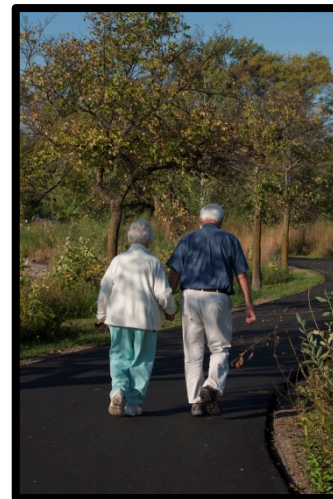
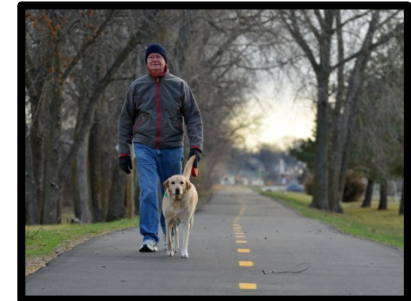




# The McLeod County Trails Plan

*Adopted  
May 3, 2016, by the  
McLeod County Board*

Prepared by the McLeod County Trails Committee  
and the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission



# McLeod County Trails Plan

## ~ Cover Photo Credits ~



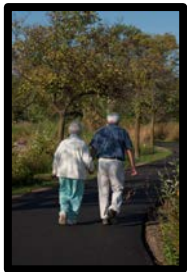
*Keith Bangasser & Family*



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*Stahl's Lake Park Singletrack  
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# McLeod County Trails Plan

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# Chapter One: ~ Introduction to the McLeod County Trails Plan ~

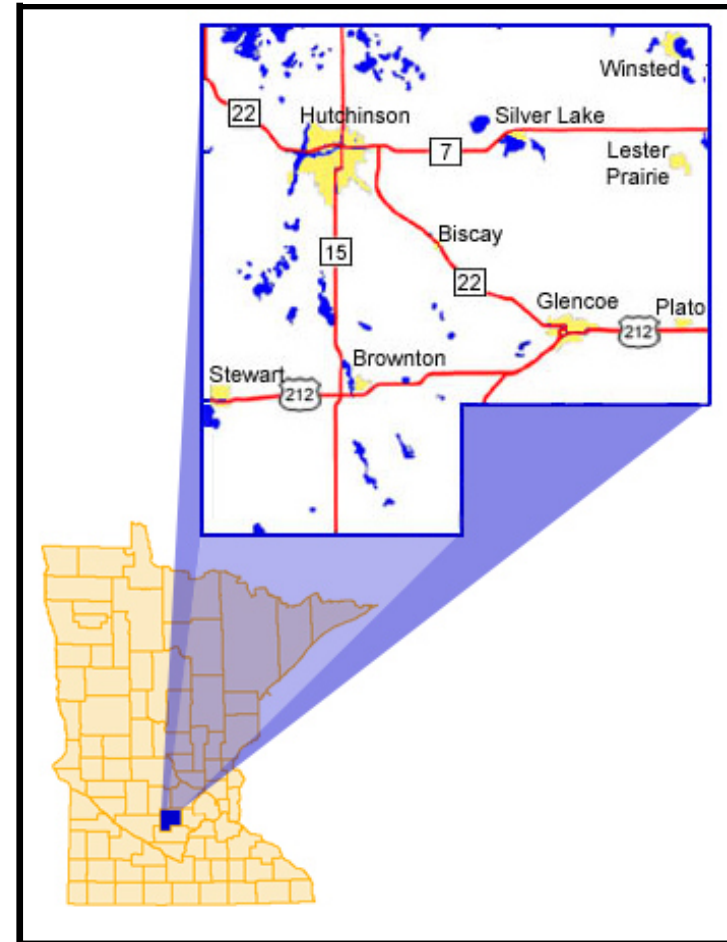
## A. Chapter Highlights

Chapter One provides an introduction to the McLeod County Trails Plan, including sections on the purpose of the plan, the benefits of having trails, a description of the planning process, and an overview of the key trail stakeholders. Overall, the McLeod County Trails Plan represents a commitment on behalf of the County and its various stakeholders to collectively develop and implement a plan to guide trail decisions in the County over the next 20 years.

## B. A Brief Description of McLeod County

McLeod County is situated in south-central Minnesota, approximately 40 miles west of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. The County shares borders with Meeker and Wright Counties to the north, Carver County to the east, Sibley County to the south, and Renville County to the west. The County has 9 cities and 14 townships. The City of Glencoe serves as the county seat. Other cities include Biscay, Brownton, Hutchinson, Lester Prairie, Plato, Silver Lake, Stewart, and Winsted. Figure 1A shows the location of McLeod County within Minnesota. Chapter Two of this plan provides a more detailed profile of McLeod County.

Figure 1A:  
McLeod County, Minnesota



## C. Purpose of the Trails Plan

The McLeod County Trails Plan represents a commitment on behalf of the County and its various stakeholders to collectively develop and implement a plan to guide trail decisions. The plan has been written to cover approximately 20 years (2016-2036), however, it has been designed so the implementation section (Chapter Five) can easily be updated when needed. This will become important as items are implemented and new priorities develop in the future.



*Photo by Heart of Hutch*

*The primary purpose of the McLeod County Trails Plan is to guide development and maintenance of a county-wide network of trails to serve the needs of residents and visitors.* In addition, this trails plan accomplishes the following:

1. Establish a Vision for McLeod County's trails.

2. Establish a Mission Statement for McLeod County Trails Plan.
3. Profile the existing network of trails in and near McLeod County.
4. Identify key destinations and points of interest.
5. Engage stakeholders to assist with identifying issues, ranking priorities, and successfully implementing trail projects.
6. Identify trail needs, including safety features, trail amenities (i.e., parking, benches, etc.), maintenance, and future trail extensions.
7. Recognize the importance of promoting the use of trails through advertising, tourism, and economic development.
8. Establish the county's goals, objectives, and policies for making trail decisions.
9. Identify priority projects to be implemented with stakeholders.
10. Understand potential funding sources, including grants, stakeholder agreements, and creative funding opportunities.

## D. The Many Benefits of Trails

Trail development and use have become increasingly popular as communities embrace the numerous benefits of having a quality trail network. The following sections highlight some of the main benefits of having trails.

### Recreational Opportunities and Healthy Lifestyles

Trails provide excellent opportunities for recreation and healthy lifestyles. Increased physical activity has long been associated with numerous health benefits, including preventing heart disease, diabetes, cancer and depression. Furthermore, overweight and obesity problems have infinite additional negative health impacts. A variety of sources indicate that approximately 35-40% of Americans are considered obese (*World Health Organization, Global Status Report, 2014*). Providing opportunities for individuals and families to use trails are cited as one part of the solution towards addressing this dilemma (*refer to the text-box on the right*).

### Transportation Options

Access to trails can be a viable option for many people to use as a mode of transportation. Although walking, biking, or riding a snowmobile to or from work or school are not viable options for

*Walking, Biking...and National Security:  
America's military needs healthier recruits from Minnesota*  
[www.missionreadiness.org](http://www.missionreadiness.org)

*Mission: Readiness* is a nonprofit, nonpartisan national security organization of more than 500 retired generals, admirals and other senior retired military leaders who work to ensure continued American security and prosperity into the 21st century by calling for smart investments in the upcoming generation of American children. They have authored a number of publications, including three in Minnesota, targeting the need for children to tackle obesity through routine exercise. Following are some of their concerns and recommendations:

- *The problem?* 69% of Minnesota's young adults are unable to join the military, with being overweight the #1 reason. Obesity rates among children have more than tripled within three decades.
- *The Research?* Sidewalks and safe street crossings, bike paths, traffic-calming devices, and similar infrastructure is linked to increased levels of walking and biking and greater overall physical activity.
- *The Solution?* Increased funding for safe routes to schools; support testing the effectiveness of different walking/biking programs; and, use long-term community planning to engineer safe options for walking/biking.

many people, the ones who want to do this simply need access to trails. Developing a ‘safe trails network’ is usually the key component when commuters make the decision to use it rather than driving. In addition, having adequate trail access offers an economical option for some low-income families.

### Tourism and Economic Benefits

A well-established trails network increases opportunities for residents and visitors to spend money locally while they are using the trails. During Minnesota’s warm weather months, nearly 1.5 million cyclists, inline skaters, and walkers use the State’s nationally recognized city, county, and regional trails (*Parks & Trails Council of MN*, [www.parksandtrails.org](http://www.parksandtrails.org)).

According to *American Trails* ([www.americantrails.org](http://www.americantrails.org)), 90% of trail users will be local, spending approximately \$17 per day per user on the local economy (i.e., gas, water, snacks, etc.). The remaining 10% of trail users will be non-local, spending up to \$104 a day. The additional expenditures can be accounted for with increased travel expenses (i.e., hotels, restaurants, etc.).

Trails also feed the local economy by supporting the retail establishments who are targeted to trail users, such as those selling bicycles, snowmobiles, ATVs, and even hiking shoes. The rental of trail use equipment can also have a large economic impact to local retailers.

### *The Economic Impact of Recreational Trail Use In Different Regions of Minnesota (2009)*

In 2008, the Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association (MRTUA) embarked on a survey of its members to create a profile of trail users, their expenditures and their economic impact on local economies. The results showed that Minnesotans spend approximately \$2.5 billion annually on trail use (*U of MN Tourism Center*).

### *Consumer Spending at Minnesota Trails (2008)\**

Walking/hiking	\$1,425,613,000
Bicycling	\$427,478,000
Snowmobiling	\$172,816,000
ATV/OHV	\$154,139,000
Running	\$120,745,000
Horseback riding	\$49,853,000
Cross-country skiing	\$41,083,000
In-line skating	\$30,115,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,421,842,000</b>

\*Does not include equipment expenditures, which totaled an additional \$839 million in 2008. Trail use and equipment expenditures generated approximately \$206 million in state and local taxes. An estimated 42,906 full- and part-time jobs were supported by these trail use expenditures.

## Stakeholder Cooperation

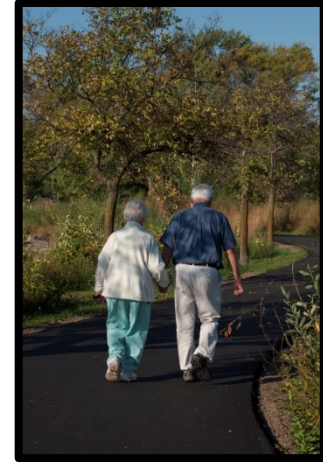
Trails plans are great opportunities for stakeholders to cooperate on identifying local trail needs and issues. Most importantly, trail plans help establish a guideline for how stakeholders can get involved in properly implementing the plan. These activities can include grant writing, raising funds for local match, finding sponsors for trail amenities, and assisting with trail maintenance. In addition, stakeholders can also play a large role in organizing and providing education on trail safety.

## Quality of Life

Combining all of the benefits together, trail plans can help residents build a strong *sense of community*. Having a quality trail network helps people take pride in their community, which often leads to people wanting to help take part in ensuring its success. Regular trail users are often the people who are trying to resolve local issues. They also are the ones who help to form user-groups, not only for social reasons, but also to establish a stronger collective voice.

Business leaders have admitted that quality-of-life indicators have become increasingly important where businesses are located. The eBay Company “is very concerned with retention of its employees and wants them to have the quality of life that they want in terms of housing costs, educational opportunity,

access to the environment - a space where they can live, work, and play” (Marty Weil, *Area Development*, Dec/Jan 09). The traditional model of locating businesses primarily examined access to transportation, skilled labor, and adequate housing. Although these considerations are still very important, increasingly businesses are examining quality-of-life indicators, such as having nice trail amenities, prior to making important business decisions.



## E. The Planning Process

The McLeod County Board made the decision to create a county trails plan in March 2015. Shortly after, the county signed a contract with the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission to help facilitate the planning process and to develop the plan. In addition, the County Board created a McLeod County Trails Committee by appointing 11 members. Each commissioner appointed two members with the 11<sup>th</sup> member being chosen to represent McLeod County’s townships. Table 1A provides a list of the people who were selected to serve on the committee. Figure 1B shows McLeod County’s Commissioner Districts.



**Table 1A:  
McLeod County Trails Committee**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Representing</i>
Bill Arndt	District 3
Mary Behrens	District 4
Jon Christensen	McLeod Townships
Steve Cook	District 3
John Gillard	District 5
Tony Hausladen	District 1
Dean Nissen	District 5
Tim Olson	District 4
Chris Schultz	District 1
Kyle Strobel	District 2
Lawrence Winter	District 2

***Vision and Mission Statements***

The McLeod County Trails Committee held its first meeting on May 7, 2015. The meeting took place at the McLeod County Fairgrounds located in Hutchinson. The committee agreed to meet approximately every three to four weeks until the trails plan was finalized.

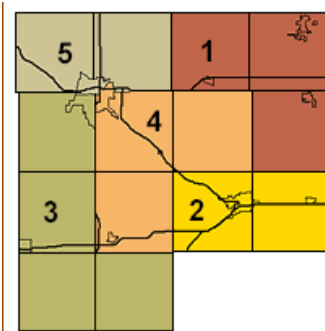
At the beginning of the planning process, the Trails Committee developed the following Vision and Mission Statements to help guide the development of the trails plan:

**McLeod County Trails Plan  
~ Vision Statement ~**

“Fostering multi-use trails while respecting property rights.”

**Figure 1B:**

**McLeod County’s Commissioner Districts**



**McLeod County Trails Plan  
~ Mission Statement ~**

“McLeod County will work with various stakeholders to develop and maintain a trail system in a fiscally responsible manner that accommodates a variety of uses; provides recreational, health and wellness, transportation and economic benefits; and recognizes the importance of safety, connectivity, and respecting the interests of neighboring property owners.”

## F. Key Trail Stakeholders

There are a vast amount of stakeholders who play a role in the future of McLeod County's trail network. These include both local and state-level agencies, organizations, user-groups, communities, and devoted individuals. This section of the plan briefly describes McLeod County's key trail stakeholders.

### Local Stakeholders

*Residents* are the foundation of all key stakeholders in McLeod County. They are not only the people who use local trails the most, they also play a large role in maintaining trails, making trail enhancements, and lobbying for more trail amenities and new trail segments. They are also the people most affected by trail decisions. Their tax money helps pay for trails, and landowners ultimately are impacted by trail decisions.

### *McLeod County Trails Committee*

The McLeod County Board appointed a steering committee to oversee the development of the McLeod County Trails Plan in April 2015. The nature of this committee will be reassessed after the plan has been adopted to determine if they will continue to meet as needed to help advise the county on important trail priorities and decisions.

### *McLeod County Parks*

The McLeod County Parks Superintendent is responsible for overseeing the operations of all the county parks. McLeod County has six county parks totaling 571 acres. Two parks are regional facilities which allow overnight camping. The other four parks are day parks. The six county parks officially open May 1st and close October 1st with the hours of 7:00 a.m. to sunset each day.

### *Local Communities*

Collectively the nine cities located in McLeod County are key stakeholders in successfully developing and implementing the McLeod County Trails Plan. Although technically they only have jurisdiction within their respective corporate boundaries, the decisions they make largely impact the trail decisions being made countywide. Furthermore, when communities join together with other stakeholders to lobby for specific trail enhancements, they increase their odds of being successful. Although each community plays a significant role in the future of McLeod County's trails, the following civic organizations directly influence trail decisions:

*Glencoe Parks and Recreation*

*Lester Prairie Parks and Trails Committee*

*Hutchinson Parks/Recreation/Community Education Board*

**Local User Groups**

The **Crow River Sno Pros** groom and maintain over 150 miles of snowmobile trails in McLeod County, Minnesota, including the Luce Line and the Dakota Rail trails. The club was founded in October 1986 and is still going strong. Club meetings are held at the Major Avenue Hunt Club every first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. For more information, please visit the following website:

[www.crowriversnopros.org](http://www.crowriversnopros.org)

The **Hutchinson Drift Riders** are another local snowmobile club and have been around for nearly 50 years. Although there is not a lot of information about the group online, the **Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association (MnUSA)** provides a contact link off their website at:

[www.mnsnowmobiler.org](http://www.mnsnowmobiler.org)

The **Crow River Wheelers** is an ATV club located in McLeod County. The Club’s Mission Statement is ‘To advance the sport of ATVing through education of its members and the general public of the positive aspects of ATV use, encourage its members to always ride responsibly and in accordance with all state and local laws, and promote a positive image though community service.’ The club meets every third Tuesday of the

month. Meetings are currently held at the Main Street Sports Bar in Hutchinson at 7:30 p.m. For more information, please visit the following website:

[www.crowriverwheelers.org](http://www.crowriverwheelers.org)

The **Hutchinson Area Mountain Bike Association (HAMBA)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advocacy of mountain biking in and around Hutchinson. HAMBA has been instrumental in developing mountain bike trails in Stahl’s Lake County Park NW of Hutchinson and the “terrain park” at Tartan Park in Hutchinson. HAMBA also supports the Hutchinson School District mountain bike team. For more information, contact Outdoor Motion in Hutchinson (a local bike shop) or visit the group’s Facebook page.



Source: [www.facebook.com/Hutchinson-Area-Mountain-Bike-Association-308062922608909](https://www.facebook.com/Hutchinson-Area-Mountain-Bike-Association-308062922608909)

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The **Friends of the Luce Line West** is a recently formed group (2015) whose mission is to “*Work with other stakeholders to improve, maintain and promote the Luce Line State Trail*”.

Their vision is that the Luce Line will be valued for its recreational, health and community benefits. Anyone who shares the

vision and mission of the organization and who wants to maximize the benefits of the trail is welcome to join.

[www.friendsoftheluceline.org](http://www.friendsoftheluceline.org)



Based in Hutchinson, **Heart of Hutch** is a group of people of all ages who want to inspire positive change in habits, behaviors and attitudes across the community. Their guiding principles are to Eat Smart, Move Naturally and Connect Wholeheartedly”.

Heart of Hutch works with a variety of groups on activities that use local trails.



<http://heartofhutch.com/>

The **McLeod County Riders 4H Club** has a central focus on the horse program and horse related activities. Members participate in many different project areas. You do not need to own a horse to become a member of the McLeod County Riders 4-H Club. For more information, visit one of the following websites:



[www3.extension.umn.edu/county/mcleod/4-h](http://www3.extension.umn.edu/county/mcleod/4-h)

[www.facebook.com/McLeod-County-Riders-4-H-Club-145242478899700](https://www.facebook.com/McLeod-County-Riders-4-H-Club-145242478899700)

The **Hutch Tigers Cycling Club** is a member of the Minnesota High School Cycling League. They are dedicated to instilling the passion of mountain bike riding and racing into the youth of Hutchinson. The club is open to 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls in the Hutchinson areas.



[www.huchtigerscycling.org](http://www.huchtigerscycling.org)

## Regional Stakeholders

### Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Healthy Communities

MMS HC is a collaboration between organizations and individuals partnering to promote health and well-being in our communities. This collaborative serves as the Community Leadership Team for MMS CHS's Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grant, from the Minnesota Department of Health. For more information, please visit the following website:

[www.mmshealthycommunities.org](http://www.mmshealthycommunities.org)

### Trailblazer Transit

The Minnesota Department of Transportation provides Trailblazer Transit with funding to operate a transit system in Sibley, McLeod, and Wright counties. Trailblazer Transit is a general-public transit system that provides transportation to people of all ages for almost any reason. Trailblazer provides an enhanced demand response service, also known as Dial-A-Ride service, and contract transit service for larger organizations.

Public transit has increasingly played a role in supporting trail users in a variety of ways, including transporting bicycles and by providing bike racks at designated transit stops. For more information on Trailblazer Transit, please visit:



[www.trailblazertransit.com](http://www.trailblazertransit.com)

### Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

The mission of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) is to provide technical assistance to government, businesses and local organizations; administer state and federal programs, and coordinate multi-jurisdictional activities to maintain or enhance the quality of life in Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville counties. MMDC can also provide grant writing assistance for future trails projects. For more information on MMDC, visit:



[www.mmrhc.org](http://www.mmrhc.org)



### Three Rivers Park District

The Minnesota State Legislature established the Three Rivers Park District as an independent, special park district in 1957 for Hennepin County, the most populous county in the state of Minnesota. They manage almost 27,000 acres of park reserves, regional parks, regional trails and special-use facilities, and the park district's assets benefit the metro area and state. One of the regional trails that Three Rivers helps to manage has a connection to McLeod County: the Dakota Rail Regional Trail extends 44 miles from Wayzata in Hennepin County, through Carver County, and through Lester Prairie to Hutchinson in McLeod County (refer to Figure 1C). Three Rivers manages the eastern 13 miles of the Dakota within Hennepin County from Wayzata to St. Bonifacius. The Hennepin and Carver County sections are paved (26 miles), but the 18 miles in McLeod County is not.



### Statewide Stakeholders

The **Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)** is the State's main agency dedicated to supporting a multimodal transportation system that maximizes the health of people, the environment, and Minnesota's economy. This includes not only planning for roads and bridges, but also facilitating the discussion on numerous trail issues as they directly or indirectly relate to transportation. Bicycle and pedestrian safety are two key areas that MnDOT focuses on in its day-to-day activities.



**Figure 1C: Dakota Rail Regional Trail**



*Note: The Dakota Rail Regional Trail is profiled in more detail in Chapter Two of this plan.*

#### *MnDOT's Safe Routes to School Program*

To increase opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to school safely, the 2005 federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, provided funding for Safe Routes to School programs in all 50 states. SRTS was created to help reverse the alarming nationwide increase in childhood obesity and inactivity. The program has been successful in Minnesota in delivering numerous benefits to local communities. SRTS projects have assisted with reducing traffic congestion, enhancing crosswalks, and helping pay for some trail improvements if it is shown they will help get students to/from school safely. For more information on Safe Routes to School, visit:

[www.dot.state.mn.us/mnsaferoutes/resources](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/mnsaferoutes/resources)



### Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

The DNR is charged with a number of responsibilities surrounding trails, including maintaining one of the finest systems of state parks and trails in the country. They also help fund trail projects and play a role enforcing safety regulations.

### State Water Trails



Water trails are recreational routes on waterways such as rivers and lakes that have public access points and campsites for canoeists, kayakers and other boaters. Minnesota has the first and largest water trails system in the nation. The DNR and its partners manage more than 4,500 miles of mapped paddling routes on 32 rivers and Lake Superior. The South Fork of the Crow River, which flows through McLeod County, is one of the State's Water Trails (profiled in Chapter Two). For more information on the State's Water Trails, visit:

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails)

### Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)



MDH is also a key stakeholder as it plays a large role in promoting physical activity. The department's mission is "To protect, maintain and improve health of all Minnesotans." To accomplish this, they partner with MnDOT and other agencies to develop and implement a number of health-related initiatives. These include partnering on the development of the State's Pedestrian Plan and the State's Bicycle System Plan (*see the following text box*), among numerous other collaborations.

#### *State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans*

MDH and MnDOT are co-leading the development of the State's first Pedestrian System Plan. For more information on State's Pedestrian Plan, visit:

[www.dot.state.mn.us/peds/plan/index.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/peds/plan/index.html)

In addition, MDH also provided assistance with the development of the State's Bicycle System Plan. For more information on State's Bicycle System Plan, visit:

[www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/system-plan/index.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/system-plan/index.html)

## Chapter One: Introduction

MDH also oversees the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), aimed at decreasing the percentage of Minnesotans who are overweight or use tobacco. Meeker McLeod Sibley Healthy Communities is the local SHIP collaborative (refer to page 1-10 of this chapter). SHIP works upstream to prevent these conditions by partnering with hundreds of schools, communities, clinics, and employers. The goal is to increase access to healthy choices by implementing smoke-free policies and other structural changes that make it easy for people to be physically active and eat right. To learn more about SHIP and/or the Minnesota Department of Health, visit:

[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)



### Explore Minnesota Tourism

Minnesota's vast amount of trails provides a great destination for residents and people visiting the state. Explore Minnesota Tourism helps connect people to where they want to be and what they want to experience. Not only do they provide links to trails and facilities, they also importantly provide information about hotels, restaurants, and local events. Explore Minnesota should be contacted to help promote all future trail events in McLeod County. For more information on Explore Minnesota, visit:

[www.exploreminnesota.com](http://www.exploreminnesota.com)

### Pedal Minnesota

Launched in 2012, Pedal Minnesota aims to get more people on bikes in Minnesota because bicycling has



a positive impact on the state, including benefits to individuals, communities, the environment and the economy.

### Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota



The Parks & Trails Council is a grassroots organization working on behalf of Minnesota's parks and trails since 1954. Fueled by contributions, the Parks & Trails Council has helped add more than 10,000 acres of land to key areas within the state's network of parks and trails. The organization has become one of the state's most powerful voice for parks and trails due to relationships with community groups, legislators and local governments throughout the state. For more information on the Parks and Trails Council, visit:

[www.parksandtrails.org](http://www.parksandtrails.org)

### Statewide User Groups

There are a vast amount of statewide user groups who are organized on behalf of their sport and/or hobby. The following groups are likely to directly benefit from McLeod County's trail network.

#### Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

The Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN) was launched in 2008 with major contributions from five members of the Minnesota bicycle industry including Quality Bicycle Products, Penn Cycle, Erik's Bike Shop, Park Tool, and Dero Bike Racks. Membership has grown to over 1,000 with 130 communities represented throughout Minnesota. BikeMN has identified the following four program areas:



1. **Advocacy** for bicycle friendly laws, policies, projects and programs.
2. **Education** of drivers and bicyclists using a national curriculum.
3. **Encouragement** of biking through events and promotions.

4. **Technical Assistance** to businesses and communities to be more bicycle friendly.

For more information on the Minnesota Bike Alliance, visit:

[www.bikemn.org](http://www.bikemn.org)

#### Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association



Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association (MnUSA) was organized in 1978 to protect, preserve and promote the sport of snowmobiling throughout Minnesota through favorable legislation and programs. Through the years, MnUSA has become a state and national leader in recreational support. Minnesota today enjoys over 22,000 miles of snowmobile trails because of combined efforts of local snowmobile clubs, state and federal leaders, Department of Natural Resources and snowmobile volunteers. For more information, visit:

[www.mnsnowmobiler.org](http://www.mnsnowmobiler.org)



### **Minnesota Horse Council**

The Minnesota Horse Council, a non-profit corporation, encourages and supports equine-related activities, concerns and education. Founded in 1935, the Council began as a vehicle for horse owners and exhibitors to coordinate horse activities with the Minnesota State Fair Board. Since then, the Minnesota Horse Council has evolved into an umbrella organization uniting and supporting equine activities throughout the state. One key function they perform is to fund and improve horse trails throughout Minnesota through their Trail Blazers group. For more information, visit:

[www.mnhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mnhorsecouncil.org)



### **Minnesota Nordic Ski Association**



The Minnesota Nordic Ski Association (MNSA) works closely with Minnesota cross country ski trail administrators, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the legislature on all issues and funding associated with cross country ski trails in Minnesota. MNSA also promotes education, recognition, involvement, and competition of cross country skiing. For more information on MNSA, visit:

[www.mnnordicski.org](http://www.mnnordicski.org)



## Chapter Two: ~ McLeod County Profile ~

### A. Chapter Highlights

The purpose of Chapter Two is to profile McLeod County, including information regarding the county's demographics, transportation network, and existing parks and trails. The demographics section of the chapter includes population and household projections. This information predicts that McLeod County will continue to gain residents by 10% over the next 20 years (also refer to Appendix A).

### B. Demographics

McLeod County's population data since 1960 is presented in Figure 2A. Notice the county has steadily gained residents every decade, with the 2010 population reported at 36,651. The single largest increase in population occurred between 1960 and 1970, when the county grew by 3,261 people.

Figure 2B shows how the county's households have grown as the county's population has increased. According to the 2010 Census, McLeod County had 36,651 people living in 14,639 households. This represents an average household size of 2.5 people per household.

Figure 2A: McLeod County's Population since 1960 (U.S. Census)

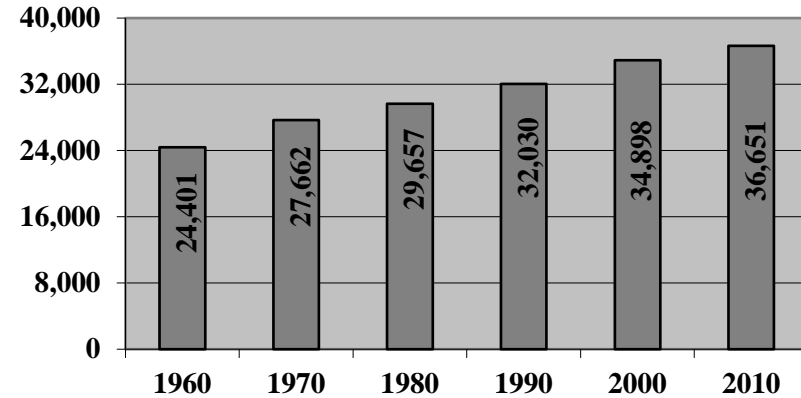


Figure 2B: McLeod County's Households since 1960 (U.S. Census)

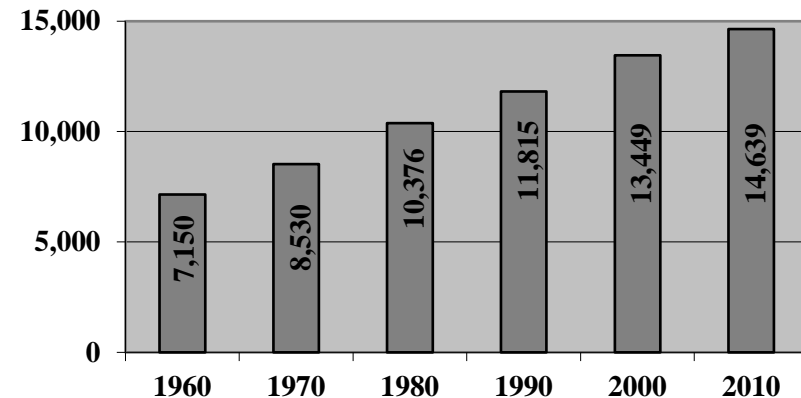


Table 2A: Population of McLeod County's Cities and Townships since 1970 (U.S. Census)

Area		Year					40 Year Change	Percent Change
		1970	1980	1990	2000	2010		
<b>Cities</b>	<i>Biscay</i>	105	114	113	114	113	8	7.6%
	<i>Brownton</i>	688	697	781	807	762	74	10.8%
	<i>Glencoe</i>	4,217	4,396	4,648	5,453	5,631	1,414	33.5%
	<i>Hutchinson</i>	8,031	9,244	11,523	13,080	14,178	6,147	76.5%
	<i>Lester Prairie</i>	1,162	1,229	1,180	1,377	1,730	568	48.8%
	<i>Plato</i>	303	390	355	336	320	17	5.6%
	<i>Silver Lake</i>	694	698	764	761	837	143	20.6%
	<i>Stewart</i>	666	616	566	564	571	-95	-14.3%
	<i>Winsted</i>	1,266	1,522	1,581	2,094	2,355	1,089	86%
<b>Total Cities</b>		<b>17,132</b>	<b>18,906</b>	<b>21,511</b>	<b>24,586</b>	<b>26,497</b>	<b>9,365</b>	<b>54.7%</b>
<b>Total Townships</b>		<b>10,530</b>	<b>10,751</b>	<b>10,519</b>	<b>10,312</b>	<b>10,154</b>	<b>-376</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>
<b>McLeod County</b>		<b>27,662</b>	<b>29,657</b>	<b>32,030</b>	<b>34,898</b>	<b>36,651</b>	<b>8,989</b>	<b>32.5%</b>

Table 2A presents population data for McLeod County's cities and townships since 1970 (*note: the townships are grouped together*). Hutchinson is the largest city in the county, with a reported 2010 population of 14,178, followed by Glencoe (5,631), Winsted (2,355), and Lester Prairie (1,730). The smallest community in the county is Biscay with 113 residents, followed by Plato (320), Stewart (571), Brownton (762), and Silver Lake (837).

Overall, the total population of McLeod County's cities has increased by 9,365 people (55%) since 1970, while the population of its townships has decreased slightly by 376 people (-3.6%). As a whole, the county's population grew by 33%. Notice that Winsted grew the most by percentage of new residents, with an 86% growth rate. This was followed by Hutchinson (77%), Lester Prairie (49%) and Glencoe (34%).

Chapter Two: McLeod County Profile

Table 2B: Population Estimates and Projections for McLeod County

Area		Year					20 Year Change	Percent Change
		2010	2014*	2020	2025	2030		
<b>Cities</b>	<i>Biscay</i>	113	104	117	117	118	5	5%
	<i>Brownton</i>	762	735	824	837	850	88	13%
	<i>Glencoe</i>	5,631	5,552	6,035	6,229	6,423	792	19%
	<i>Hutchinson</i>	14,178	14,124	16,050	16,857	17,663	3,485	43%
	<i>Lester Prairie</i>	1,730	1,692	1,721	1,785	1,849	119	10%
	<i>Plato</i>	320	312	335	334	333	13	4%
	<i>Silver Lake</i>	837	813	856	873	890	53	8%
	<i>Stewart</i>	571	557	524	512	500	-71	-11%
	<i>Winsted</i>	2,355	2,308	2,589	2,726	2,864	509	40%
<b>Total Cities</b>		<b>26,497</b>	<b>26,197</b>	<b>29,049</b>	<b>30,270</b>	<b>31,490</b>	4,993	29%
<b>Total Townships</b>		<b>10,154</b>	<b>9,745</b>	<b>10,096</b>	<b>10,036</b>	<b>9,977</b>	-177	-2%
<b>McLeod County</b>		<b>36,651</b>	<b>35,942</b>	<b>39,145</b>	<b>40,306</b>	<b>41,467</b>	4,816	17%

\*2014 estimates provided by the State Demographer’s Office. 2020, 2025, and 2030 projections based upon historical growth. Future growth rates may be more or less than historical rates.

In addition to the Census information, the Minnesota State Demographer’s Office annually provides population and household estimates for each city and county. Table 2B shows the 2014 estimates broken down by cities, townships (grouped together), and the county. Based upon this information, it was estimated the county slightly lost population since 2010, with a 2014 estimate of 35,942 residents.

Table 2B also provides population estimates for the years 2020, 2025, and 2030. These estimates are based upon each jurisdiction’s historical growth since 1960. The projections suggest that McLeod County will gain approximately 4,816 new residents by the year 2030, representing a 17% rate of growth. All of the net growth is anticipated to take place in cities rather than in the townships. This does not mean, however, that all townships will lose population.

C. McLeod County’s Transportation Network

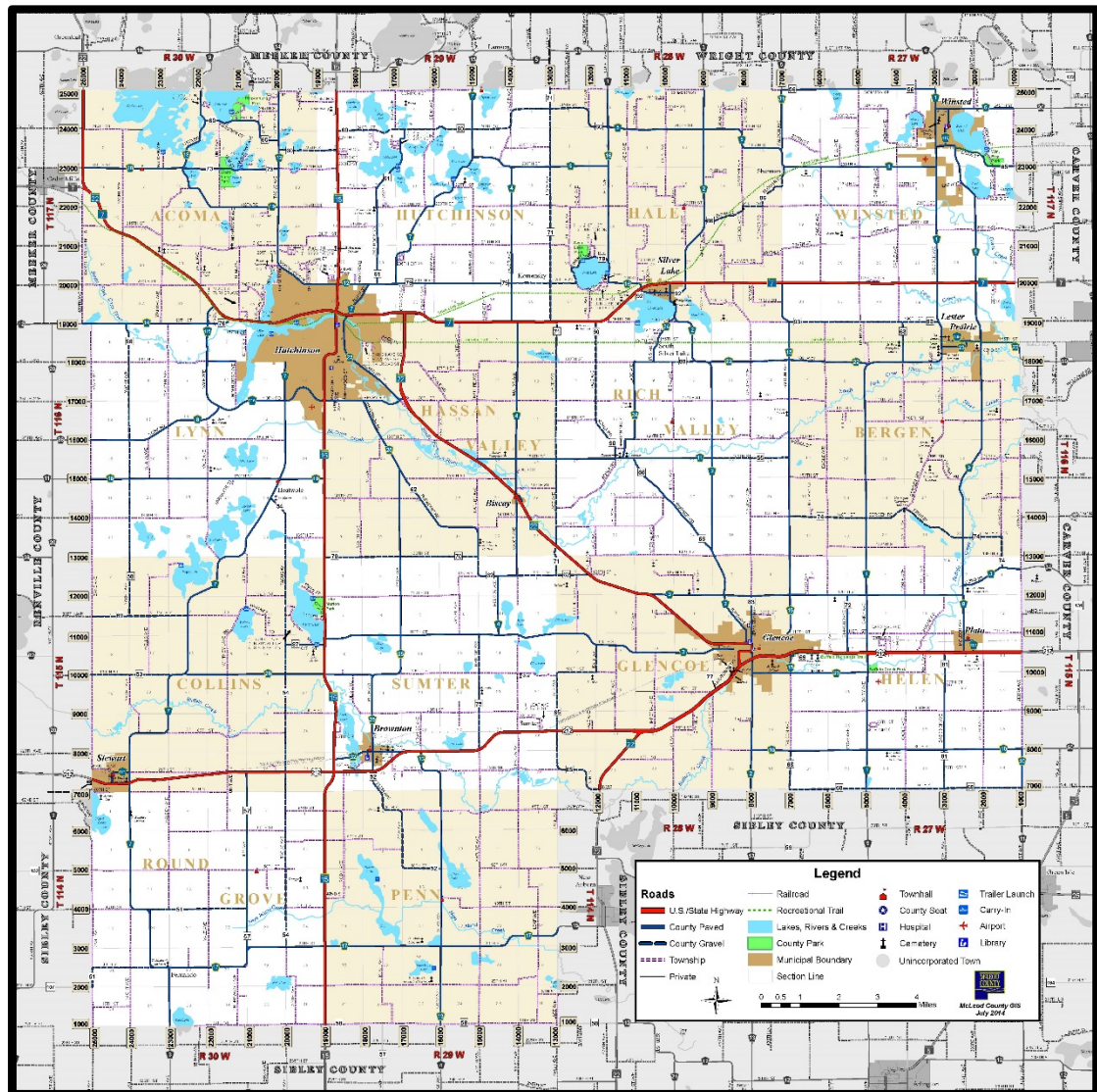
Map 2A: McLeod County’s Major Roads

McLeod County is well served by an extensive roadway network, which connects the county with the rest of the region and the State. McLeod County has a well-balanced mix of city, township, county, and state roadways, nicely spaced throughout the area (refer to Map 2A).

McLeod County’s major roadways include:

- U.S. Highway 212
- Mn State Highway 7
- Mn State Highway 15
- Mn State Highway 22

*Note:* Please visit [www.co.mcleod.mn.us](http://www.co.mcleod.mn.us) to view additional county maps.



**Functional Classification System**

Functional classification is the grouping of streets and highways into classes or systems according to the character of service they are intended to provide. McLeod County’s Functional Classification is shown in Map 2B (finalized in September 2015).

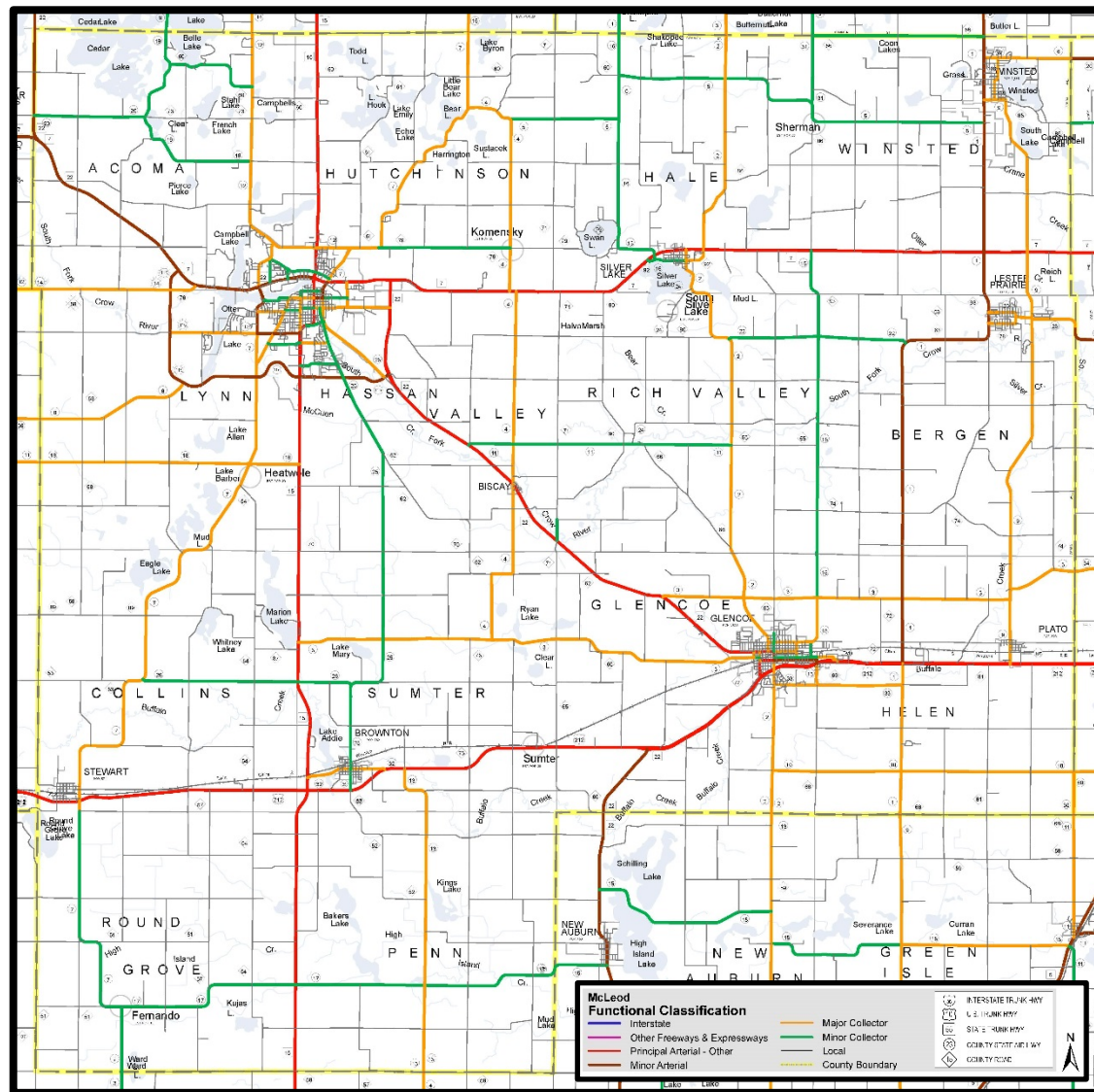
**Arterial roads** generally provide the fastest method of travel and typically have low accessibility from neighboring roads.

**Collector roads** are the second most common and are used as a connection between local roads and arterial roads. They provide a balance between access and mobility.

**Local roads** are the most common roads by far, but are also the slowest for travel.

*Note: Please visit [www.dot.state.mn.us](http://www.dot.state.mn.us) for more information on the County’s Functional Classification System.*

Map 2B: McLeod County’s Functional Classification (2015)







### **Luce Line State Trail**

The Luce Line State Trail is a 63 mile long former railroad grade (refer to map 2D) which is developed for biking, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, snowmobiling, and skiing. The limestone surfaced trail runs from Plymouth 30 miles west to Winsted. From Winsted to Hutchinson the trail is paved, from Hutchinson to Cedar Mills it is crushed granite, and Cedar Mills to Cosmos it is natural (mowed grass). There is a parallel treadway for horseback riding from Plymouth to Hutchinson. Snowmobiles are allowed on the trail west of Stubb's Bay Road in Orono.



**Permits** – Horseback riding and cross-country skiing require state trail passes. Snowmobiles need a trail use registration. No other fees or passes are required to use the trail.

**Winsted** – The Luce Line currently follows city roads through Winsted, but the city is working with the DNR to complete the trail through the city. The trail by Winsted Lake provides lovely scenery, wildlife viewing opportunities and access to WM May Park.



*Photo by Herald Journal*



**Silver Lake** – Parking is available on the north side of Highway 7 and bike rentals are available at Molly's Café.

**Hutchinson** – The Luce Line Trail is the backbone of the city's extensive local trail system. The trail runs through many city parks as it parallels the South Fork of the Crow River and Otter Lake. This offers a variety of other recreation opportunities including fishing, camping, playgrounds, picnicking, and water craft rentals (*Photo by Heart of Hutch*).



Chapter Two: McLeod County Profile

Map 2D:  
Luce Line State Trail



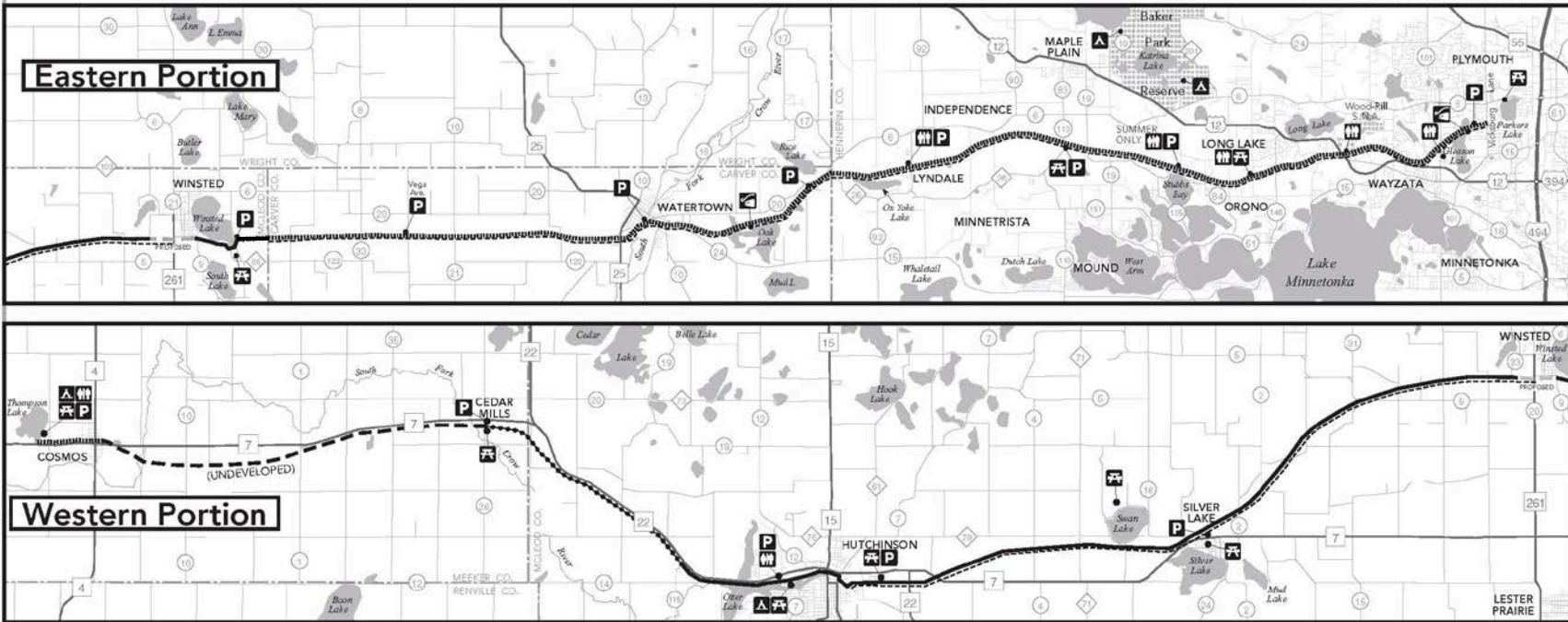
Trail Distances in Miles	8	7	19	29	37	44	51	63
Vicksburg Lane Trailhead	1	13	23	31	38	46	56	
Wakefield - Conroy Rest Area	12	22	30	37	44	56		
Stubbs Bay Road Trail Access	10	18	25	32	43			
Watertown	8	15	22	33				
Winsted	7	14	24					
Silver Lake	7	15	17					
Hutchinson	10							
Cedar Mills								
Thompson Lake (near Cosmos)								

**MAP EXPLANATION**

	Crushed Limestone		Parking
	Crushed Aggregate Base		Picnic / Rest Area
	Adjacent Horse Trail		Campground
	Undeveloped		Toilet
	Paved (Asphalt)		Shorefishing

Scale in Miles: 0 1 2 3 4 5

© 2015, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

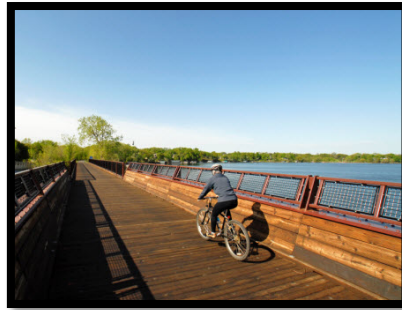


For more information on the Luce Line State Trail, including an interactive map with information on surface type, parking, and rest-rooms, please visit: [www.luceline.com](http://www.luceline.com)



### **Dakota Rail Regional Trail**

Sections of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail, which extends westward from the Minneapolis suburbs situated along Lake Minnetonka, have been opening since June 2009. The trail occupies the former Dakota Rail corridor, which ran for a total length of 44 miles to Hutchinson, Minnesota, before being abandoned in 2001 (refer to Maps 2E & 2F). That same year, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRRA), Carver County and McLeod County jointly purchased the corridor with the goal of establishing a rail-trail.



The trail is paved for 26 miles from its eastern terminus in Wayzata westward through Hennepin and Carver County to the Carver/McLeod County line. Cities along this portion of the trail include Orono,

Minnetonka Beach, Spring Park, Mound, St. Bonifacius, Mayer, and New Germany. From the county line the trail is rough gravel in McLeod County to Hutchinson, except for the

1.3 mile section into Lester Prairie that was recently improved through the efforts of local residents. This section was officially opened on September 12, 2015.



*Lester Prairie Dakota Rail Trail Grand Opening*

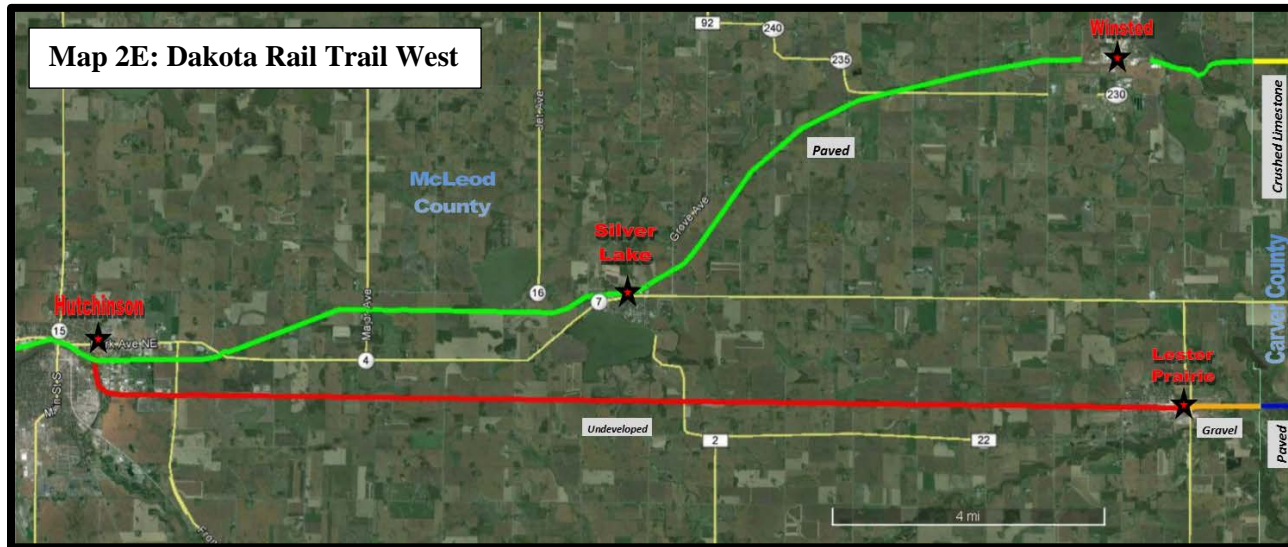
*Photo Source: Herald Journal*

**Future Trail Needs** – Deciding what to do with the undeveloped portion of the Dakota Rail Trail from Lester Prairie to Hutchinson has been one of the key topics discussed throughout the development of the McLeod County Trails Plan. While it is apparent that some people may like to see the trail remain undeveloped or simply improved with gravel, improving the Dakota Rail Trail with a paved surface was the number one project identified in comments on the trails survey. The first step in deciding what should be done would be to develop a McLeod County Dakota Rail Trail Master Plan. The master plan would help identify various issues and solutions. Just as importantly, the plan would provide cost estimates to develop the trail and identify potential funding opportunities. Having a master plan in place is also a requirement to be eligible for some grants.

*For more information visit:*

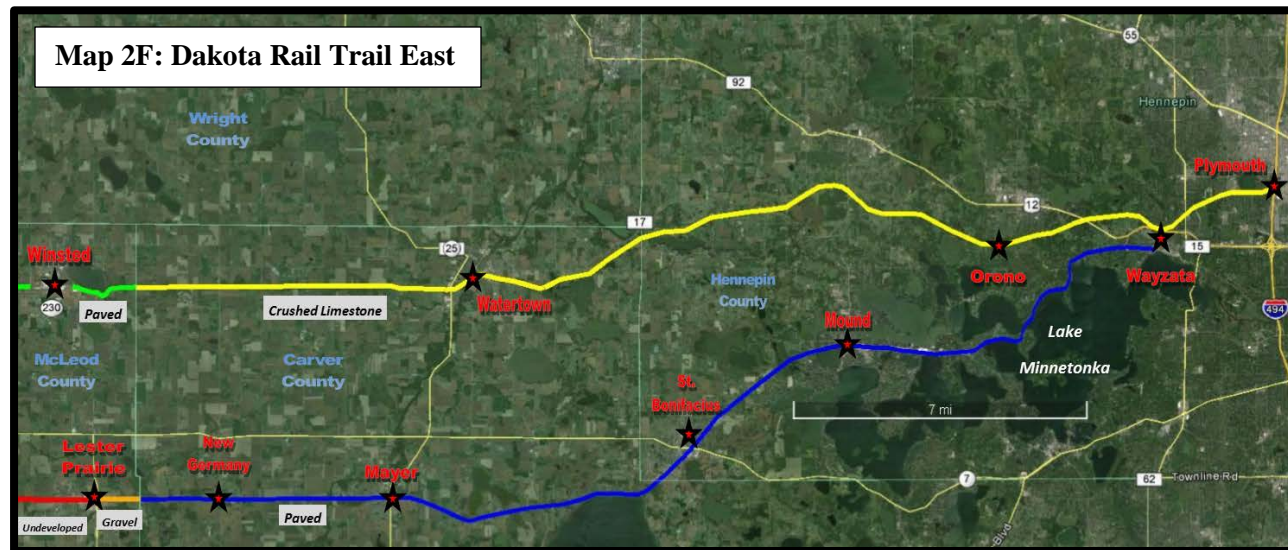
[www.trailink.com/trail/dakota-rail-regional-trail.aspx](http://www.trailink.com/trail/dakota-rail-regional-trail.aspx)

## Chapter Two: McLeod County Profile



Map 2E shows the 18 mile undeveloped portion of the Dakota Rail Trail and its proximity to the Luce Line Trail, from the McLeod/Carver border to Hutchinson (notice the newly graveled portion east of Lester Prairie).

Map 2F shows the Dakota Rail Trail east of Lester Prairie, which is paved for 26 miles from the McLeod/Carver County line to Wayzata. Paving the undeveloped section in McLeod County would create a combined 44 mile paved trail. This would lend itself to several looping opportunities between the Dakota and Luce Line Trails. Also, a second direct connection from McLeod County to the west metro/metro trail system would be created (the Luce Line is the other).



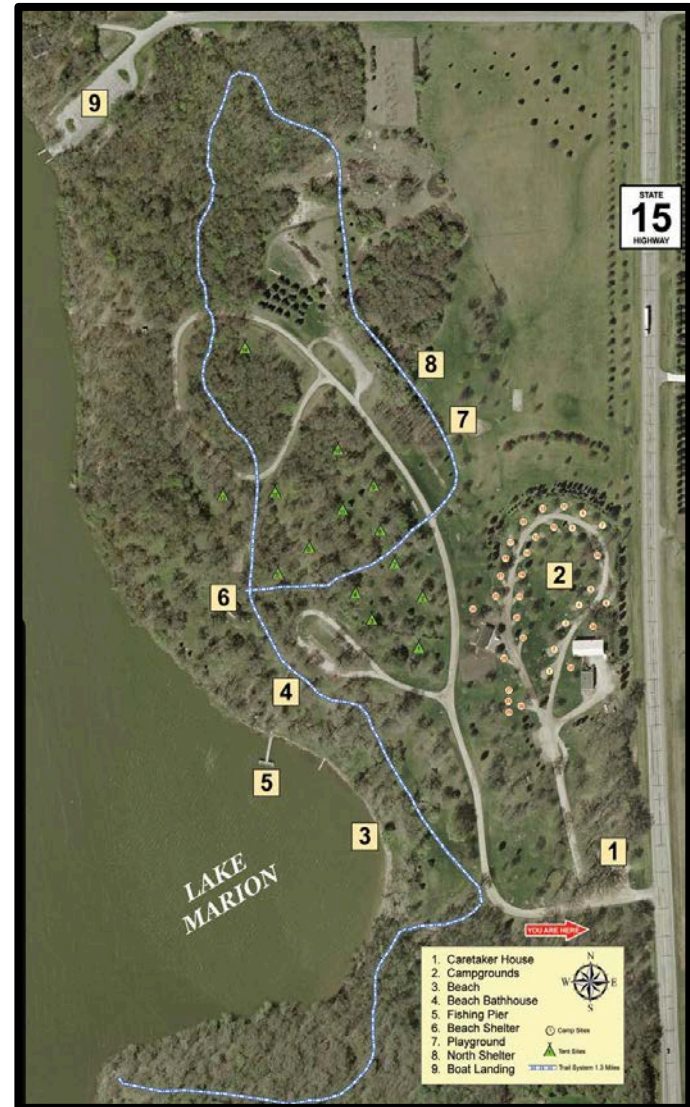


**Lake Marion Regional Park**

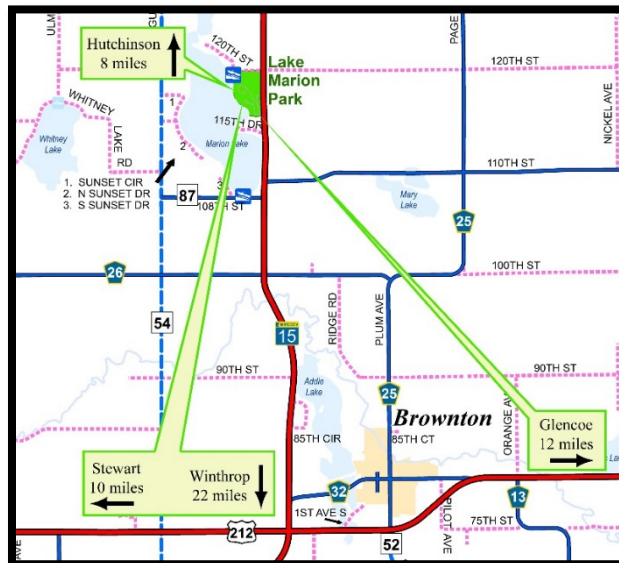
This 86-acre regional park is located on the shores of Lake Marion near the City of Brownton (refer to Map 2G). The park is approximately eight miles south of Hutchinson along State Highway 15. The park offers visitors a 1.3 mile red-rock hiking trail, campground, showers, fishing pier, beach, playground, two picnic shelters, and a boat landing (refer to Map 2H).



Map 2H: Lake Marion Regional Park Aerial



Map 2G:  
Lake Marion  
Regional Park  
Location



**Piepenburg Regional Park**

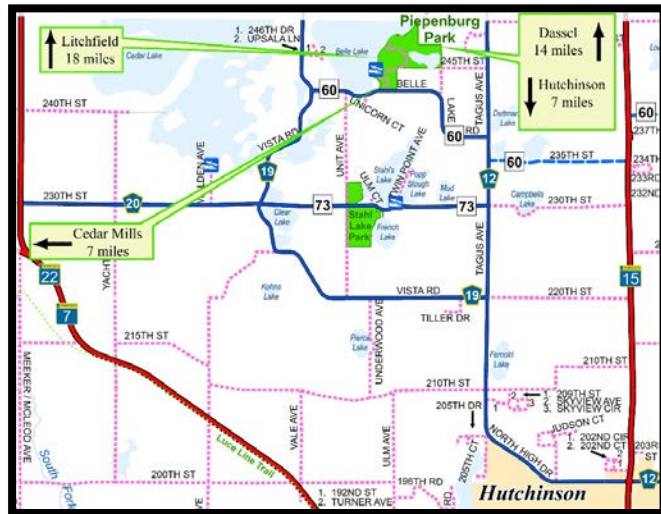
This regional park is located on the forested southeast corner of Belle Lake in Acoma Township (refer to Map 2I). The park is located off County Road 60 approximately seven miles NW of Hutchinson.



The park offers visitors three miles of red-rock hiking trails, a campground, showers, fishing pier, beach, playground, two picnic shelters, and a boat landing (refer to Map 2J).

**Map 2J: Piepenburg Regional Park Aerial**

**Map 2I: Piepenburg Regional Park Location**

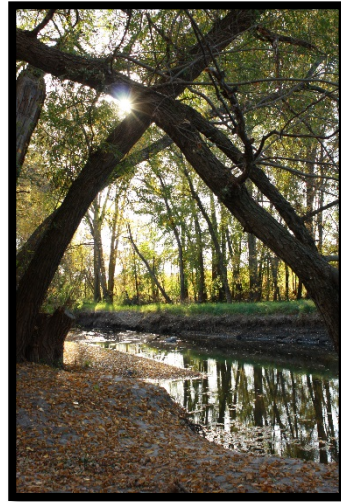


T



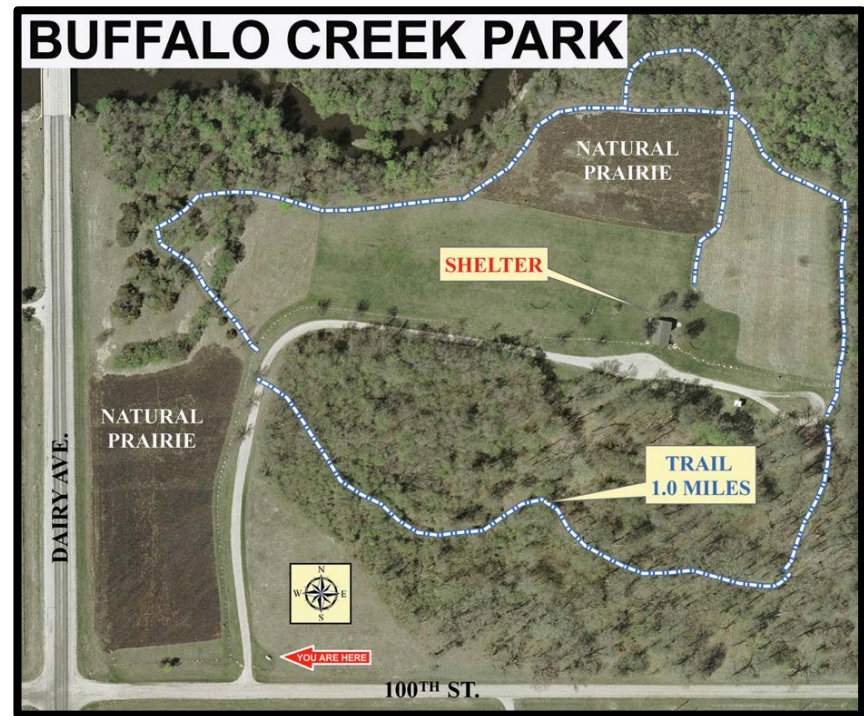
**Buffalo Creek County Park**

This park is located three miles east of Glencoe just south of U.S. Highway 212 (refer to Map 2K). As the name suggests, the heavily wooded banks of Buffalo Creek create a scenic waterway flowing through the park (the photo to the right was taken by Melody Ruehling along Buffalo Creek).



Buffalo Creek Park features a one-mile wooded hiking trail, a picnic shelter and two natural prairie restorations (refer to Map 2L). No camping is available.

Map 2L: Buffalo Creek Park Aerial



Map 2K: Buffalo Creek Park Location



**Stahl's Lake County Park**

This park is located adjacent to French and Stahl's Lakes approximately five miles northwest of Hutchinson (refer to Map 2M). The park is located off County Road 73, approximately 1.5 miles south of Piepenburg Regional Park.



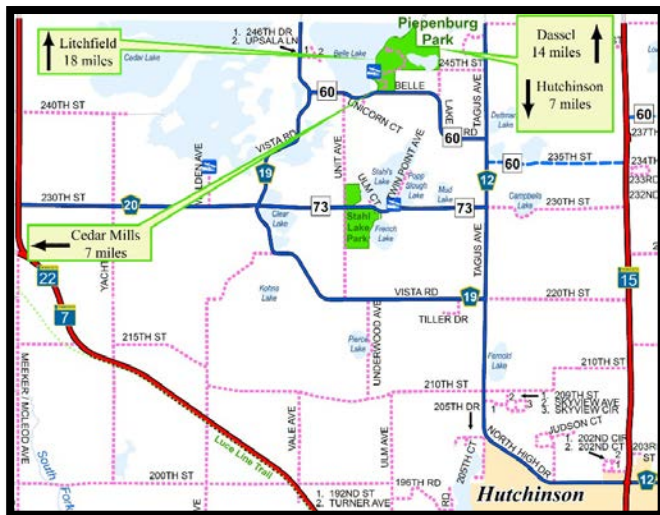
The park has 1.8 miles of hiking and ski trails, and 3.5 miles of single track with obstacles for mountain biking and a picnic shelter (refer to Map 2N).

**Map 2N: Stahl's Lake Park Aerial**



*Southern portion of Stahl's Lake Park*

**Map 2M: Stahl's Lake Park Location**





**Swan Lake County Park**

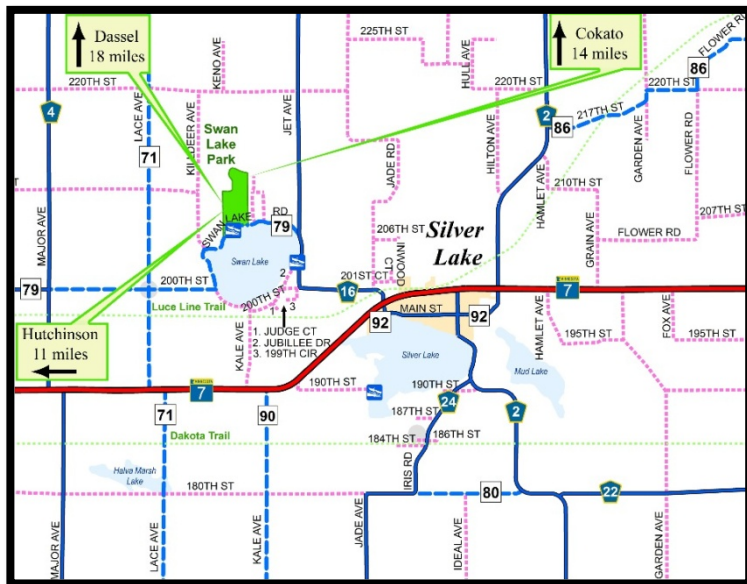
This park is located on Swan Lake 1.5 miles northwest of Silver Lake (refer to Map 20). The park is located off State Highway 7 one mile north along County Road 16. The park has a 1.5 mile hiking trail system and a picnic shelter (refer to Map 2P).



**Map 2P: Swan Lake Park Aerial**



**Map 20: Swan Lake Park Location**





**William May County Park**

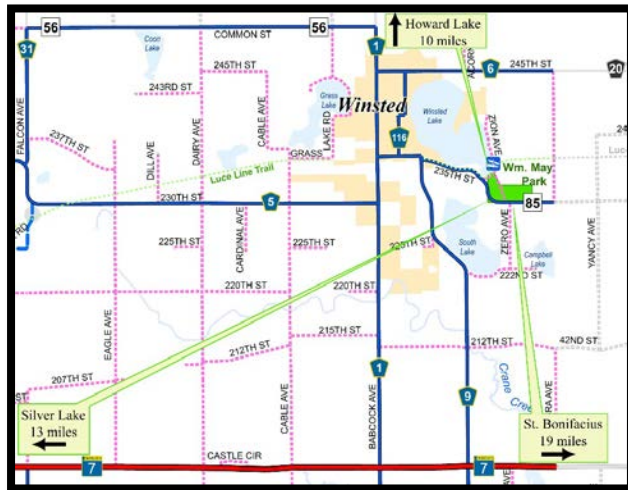
This park is located a half mile southeast of Winsted (refer to Map 2Q). The park is located off County Road 85 near Winsted Lake. (the photo to the right was taken by the Herald Journal).



The 71-acre park has a one mile trail system and picnic shelter (refer to Map 2R). It also has a William May Civil War Monument. In the winter, approximately 12 cross-country ski trails are cleared and tracked by locals.

**Map 2R: William May Park Aerial**

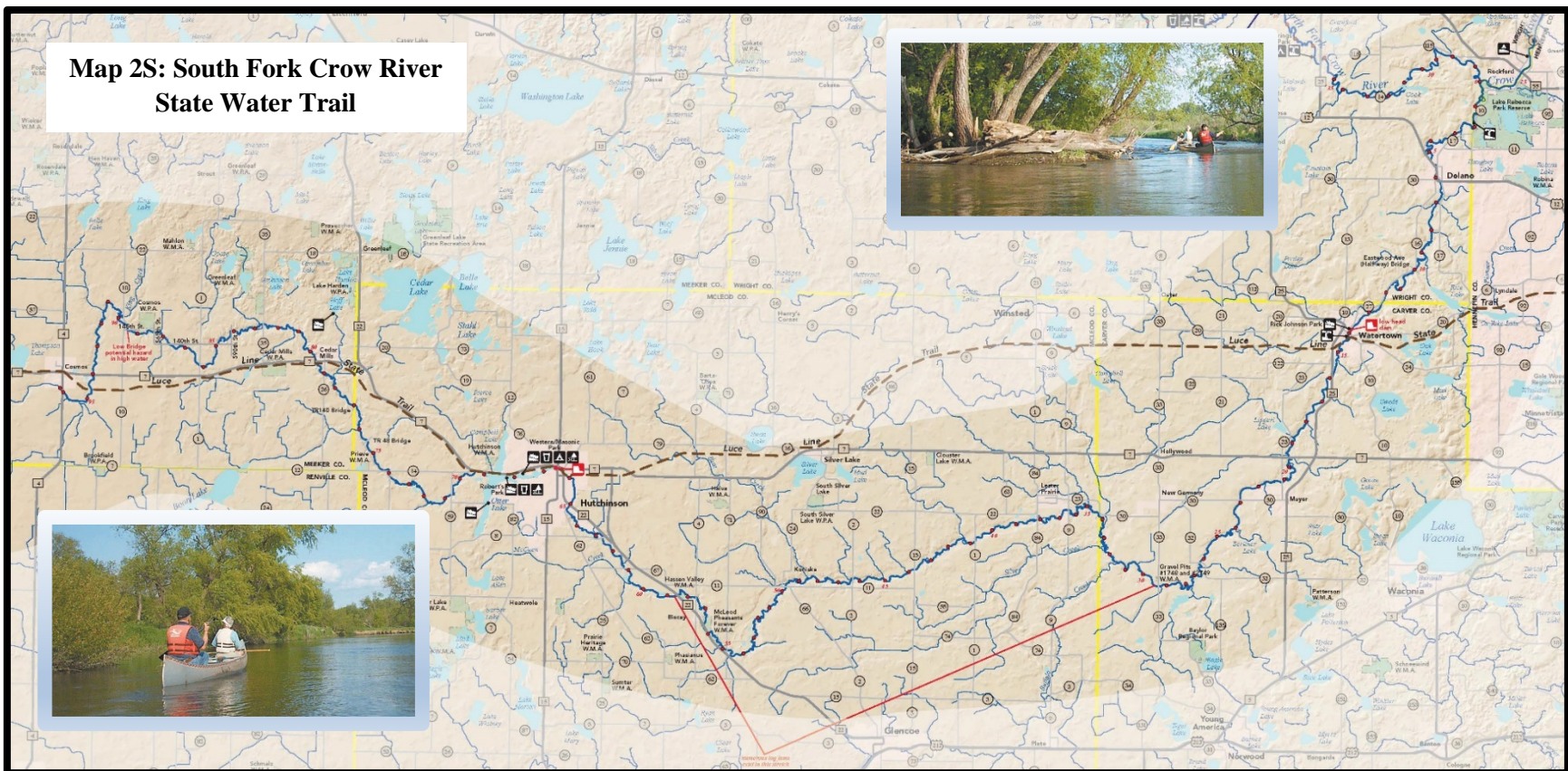
**Map 2Q: William May Park Location**



**South Fork Crow River State Water Trail**

This river runs eastward from Little Kandiyohi Lake to Rockford, where it converges with the North Fork to form the Crow River State Water Trail (refer to Map 2S). The water trail runs through woods and patches of prairie.

The water current is normally gentle and is considered family-friendly near Hutchinson, Delano and Rockford. The Luce Line State Trail makes it possible for canoeists and kayakers to use bicycles to shuttle back to their cars.



For more information, visit: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/southforkcrowriver](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/southforkcrowriver)



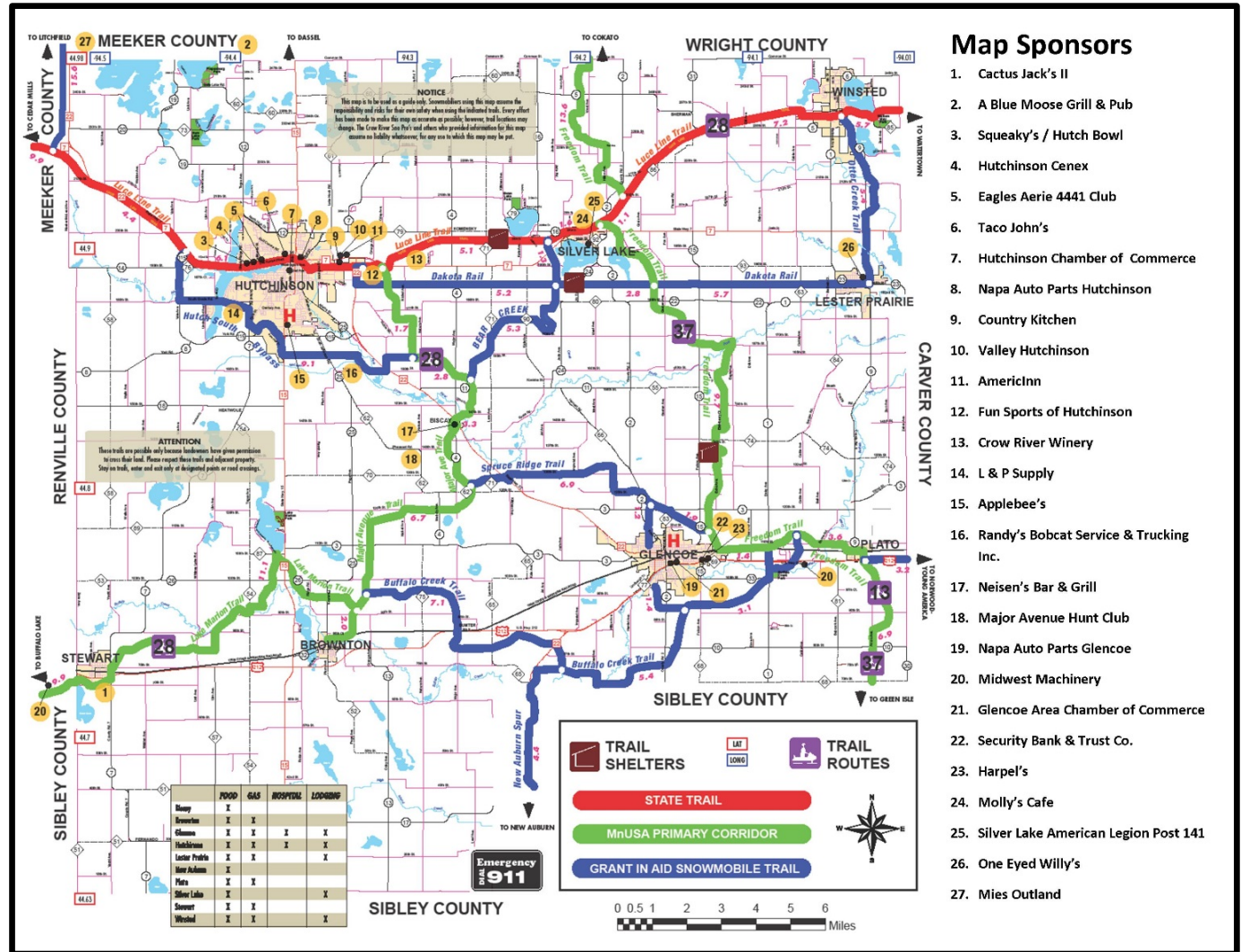
**Snowmobile Trails**

McLeod County is fortunate to have a large snowmobile user-group called the Crow River Sno Pros. They groom and maintain over 150 miles of snowmobile trails throughout the county, including the Luce Line and Dakota Rail trails (refer to Map 2T). The Sno Pros are also involved with providing snowmobile safety training and serve as the host of the Annual Vintage Sled Show and Swap Meet at the McLeod County Fairgrounds. For more information, visit the following website:

[www.crowriversnopro.org](http://www.crowriversnopro.org)

*Note: At this time, no additional snowmobile trail segments were identified by the various stakeholders throughout the planning process.*

Map 2T: McLeod County's Snowmobile Trails



**State Trails**

In addition to having access to the Luce Line State Trail in northern McLeod County, the Glacial Lakes and the Minnesota Valley State Trails are about an hour away by car.

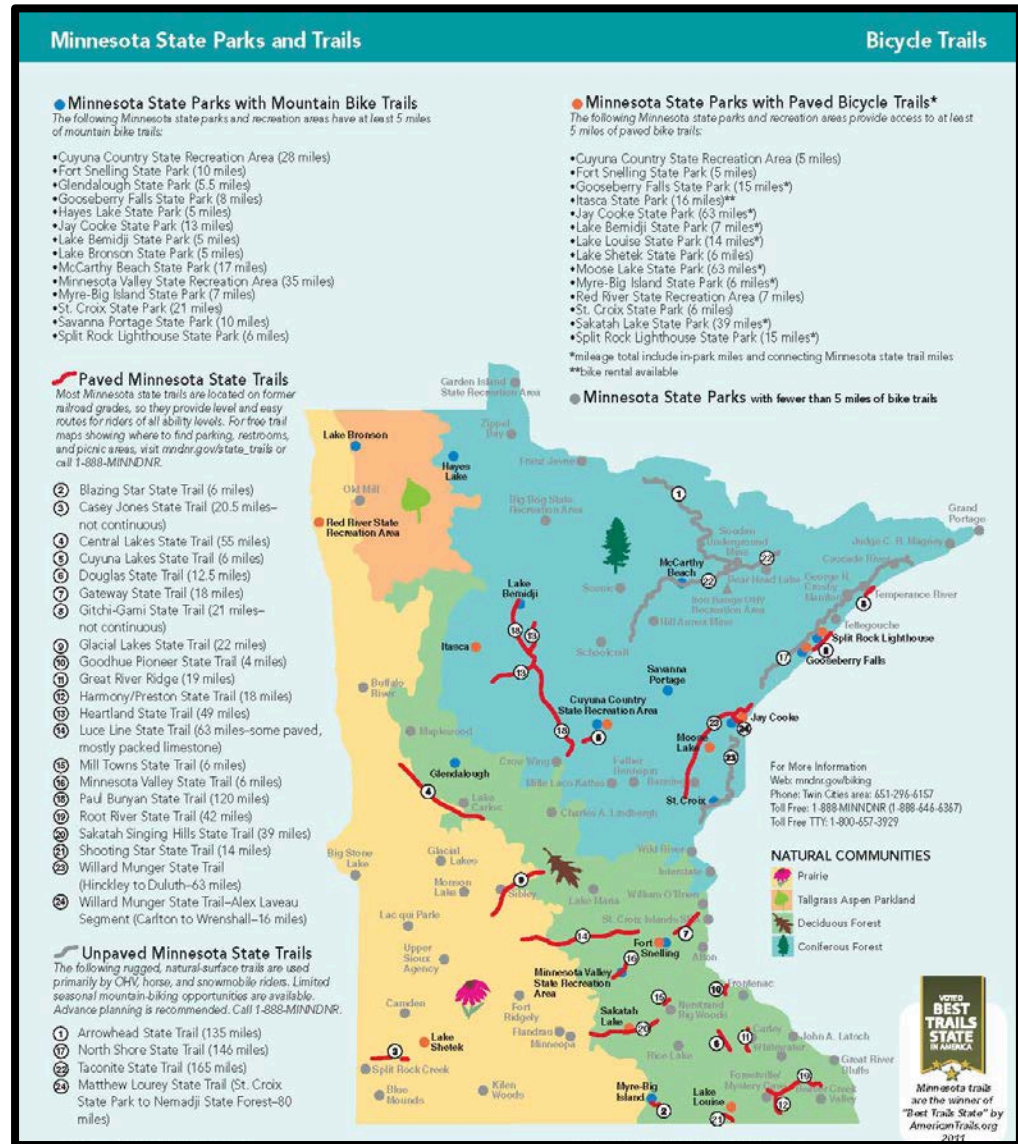
**Glacial Lakes State Trail** - The trail is generally level and wheelchair accessible. This trail is paved for 22 miles between Willmar, Spicer and New London to the Kandiyohi/Stearns County line. Popular for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, and in-line skating. Winter uses include snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

**Minnesota Valley State Trail** – This multi-use trail is ideal for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking, and snowmobiling. The trail is paved from Shakopee to Chaska and a natural surface trail runs from Chaska to Belle Plaine, paralleling the Minnesota River.

Overall, Minnesota maintains 28 State Trails (refer to Map 2U). For more information, visit:

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_trails](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_trails)

Map 2U: Minnesota’s State Trails



### **Horseback Trails**

Minnesota has over 1,000 miles of horseback riding trails, mostly found in the state's parks and forest land. In addition, some of the state trails shown in Map 2U (Minnesota's State Trails) are designated for horseback riding. McLeod County is fortunate the Luce Line State Trail offers a parallel treadway for horseback riding adjacent to the paved trail. In addition, horseback riding has been allowed along the undeveloped portion of the Dakota Rail Trail in McLeod County (refer to Map 2E shown earlier in this chapter).



*Luce Line Horseback Riding  
~ Photo by Chuck Sterling ~*

Legislation was passed in 2006 requiring the purchase of a horse pass to ride on state trails. The annual horse trail pass costs \$21 for individuals 16 years of age or over. No pass is required for riders age 15 or under. For more information on horseback riding in Minnesota, please visit the following website:

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/horseback\\_riding/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/horseback_riding/index.html)

### **Cross-Country Ski Trails**

Cross-country skiing has evolved from a means of hunting in the Nordic climates, to both a competitive sport and popular recreational choice of outdoor winter enthusiasts. When there is enough snow on the ground, cross-country trails can be found at Stahl's Lake and William May County Parks.



*Cross-Country Skiing at  
William May County Park  
~ Photo by Starrla Cray ~*

Similar to horseback riding, people age 16 or older require the purchase of the Great Minnesota Ski Pass in order to cross-country ski on state trails. The passes are sold in daily (\$6), annual (\$20), and three-year (\$55) durations. For more information on cross-country skiing in Minnesota, visit:

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/skiing/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/skiing/index.html)



## Chapter Three: ~ Local Trail Issues and Opportunities ~

### A. Chapter Highlights

In order to gauge public opinion on local trail issues and potential projects, McLeod County implemented an online trails survey and held a public open house. Chapter Three provides a summary of the survey results (Section B) and the information collected at the open house (Section C). In addition, Section D provides a summary of the key issues/debates regarding trails in McLeod County.

### B. McLeod County Trails Survey

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) assisted McLeod County with implementing an online survey designed to give the public the opportunity to provide input on local trail issues. The survey was set-up through Survey Monkey, Inc., a company that specializes in allowing surveys to be designed and administered online through a web link. The survey and web link was promoted by using local media sources, including newspapers and radio stations, through a press release inviting the public to participate (refer to the text box).

The press release was delivered to all local media sources on October 26, 2015. As the press release indicated, the survey remained opened until November 20, 2015. Overall, the survey contained seven questions, including six trail-related questions

#### NEWS RELEASE

A McLeod County Trails Survey has been developed and is currently available online at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/McLeodTrails>

The purpose of the survey is for citizens to provide comments on local trail use, issues and potential projects in McLeod County. Your answers will remain confidential and will aid in the development of the McLeod County Trails Plan, which is currently being developed. The survey will only be administered online and is available until November 20, 2015. Please visit a public library if you need access to a computer. For questions on the survey or the McLeod County Trails Plan, please contact MMDC Community Development Director Matthew Johnson by email at [communityplanning@mmdc.org](mailto:communityplanning@mmdc.org).

and one asking the respondents to provide their zip-code. Three hundred forty-two surveys (342) were completed, including 338 online participants and four surveys that were completed at the public open house (refer to Section C). The results are summarized on the following pages. In addition, Appendix B contains a copy of the written responses. It should be noted that multiple responses from the same computer (IP address) were not allowed.

**McLeod County Trails Survey**

**Question 1 Results:**

**Question 1:** Which types of trails would you or someone in your household use in McLeod County? Please check all that apply...

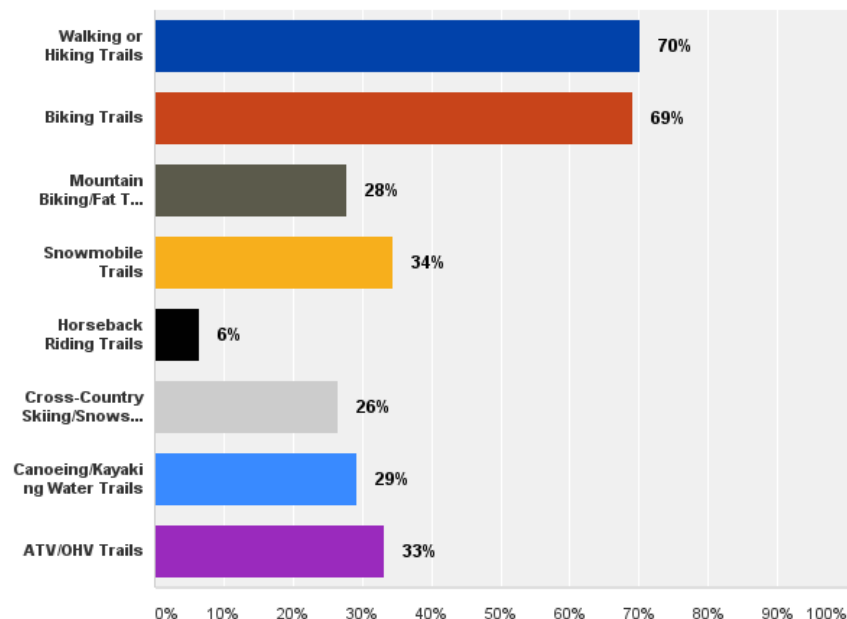
- Walking or Hiking Trails
- Biking Trails
- Mountain Biking/Fat Tire Bikes (off-road paths)
- Snowmobile Trails
- Horseback Riding Trails
- Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trails
- Canoeing/Kayaking Water Trails
- ATV/OHV Trails

Other (please specify)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Q1 Analysis:** 314 of the 342 respondents (92%) provided an answer to Question 1 on the survey. The results are summarized in Figure 3A. Walking or hiking trails (70%) and biking trails (69%) were the two highest types of trails selected. These were followed by snowmobile trails (34%), ATV/OHV trails (33%),

**Q1 Figure 3A:**

Answered: 314 Skipped: 28



canoeing/kayaking water trails (29%), mountain bike/fat tire trails (28%), and lastly, horseback riding trails (6%). Thirty-four of the 342 respondents (10%) provided a written response to the ‘Other’ category (refer to Appendix B).

***“It would be great to expand Stahl’s Lake Bike Trail”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

**McLeod County Trails Survey**

**Question 2 Results:**

**Question 2:** On average, how often do people in your household use trails?

Please select the best answer...

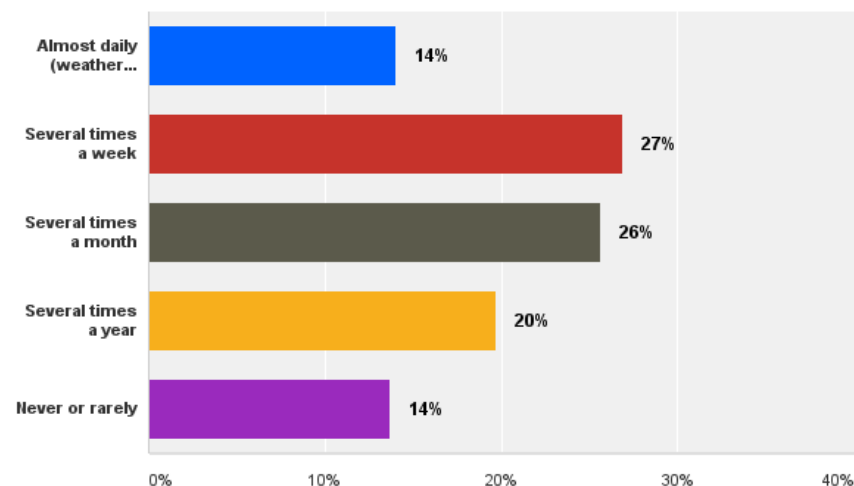
- Almost daily (weather permitting)
- Several times a week
- Several times a month
- Several times a year
- Never or rarely

Other (please specify)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2 Analysis:** 335 of the 342 respondents (98%) provided an answer to Question 2 on the survey. The results (shown in Figure 3B) follow a normal bell-curve pattern, with approximately 14% of the respondents using trails daily and 14% never or rarely using trails. Of the remaining respondents, 27% indicated they use trails several times a week, 26% indicated they use trails several times a month, and 20% indicated they use trails several times a year.

**Q2 Figure 3B:**

Answered: 335 Skipped: 7



Twenty-eight of the 342 respondents (8%) provided a written response to the ‘Other’ category (refer to Appendix B).

***“I would use OHV trails a minimum of one time a week”***  
*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Couple of times a day, walking our dogs even in the snow or rain! In nice weather, even on our bikes too!”***  
*-Unknown survey respondent*

**McLeod County Trails Survey**

**Question 3 Results:**

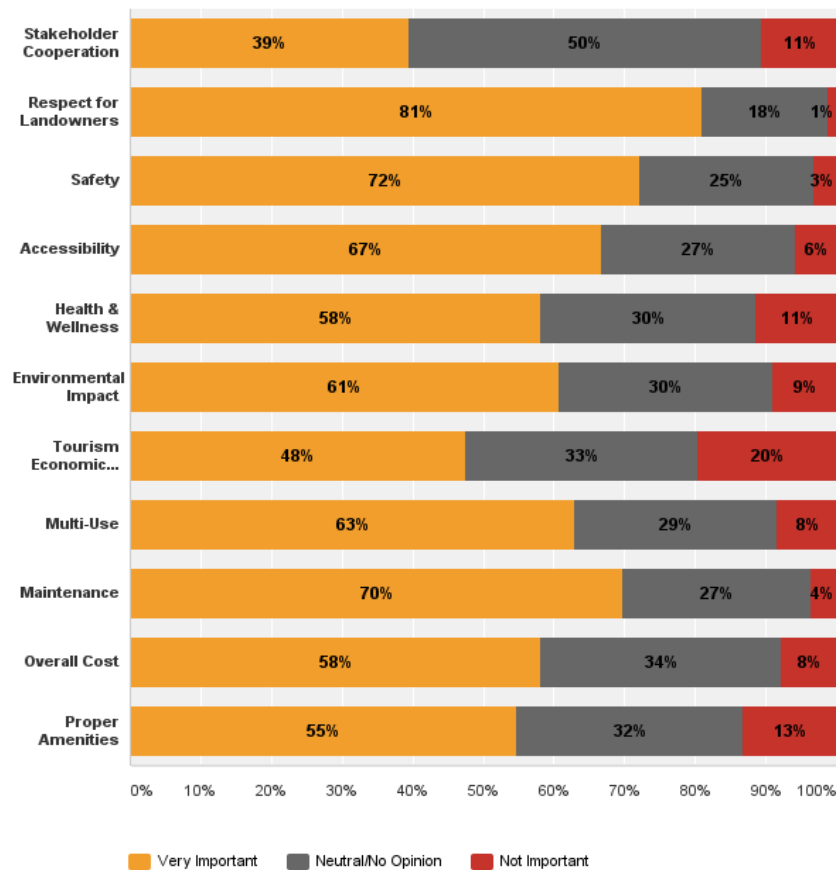
**Question 3:** When developing trails in McLeod County, *how important* are the following considerations?

<i>Consideration</i>	<i>Very</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Not</i>
Stakeholder Cooperation?			
Respect for Landowners?			
Safety?			
Accessibility?			
Health & Wellness?			
Environmental Impact?			
Tourism & Economic Development?			
“Trails should be multi-use if possible...”			
Maintenance?			
Overall Cost?			
Proper Amenities (parking, toilets, benches, signage, garbage, etc.)?			

**Q3 Analysis:** 324 of the 342 respondents (95%) provided an answer to Question 3 on the survey. The results are presented in Figure 3C. Respect for landowners was the most important consideration (81%), followed by Safety (72%) and Maintenance (70%). Tourism/Economic Development (20%),

**Q3 Figure 3C:**

Answered: 324 Skipped: 18



Proper Amenities (13%), Health & Wellness (11%) and Stakeholder Cooperation (11%) received the highest “not important” responses.

**McLeod County Trails Survey**

**Question 4 Results:**

**Question 4:** In general, who should help pay for trail costs?

Please check all that apply...

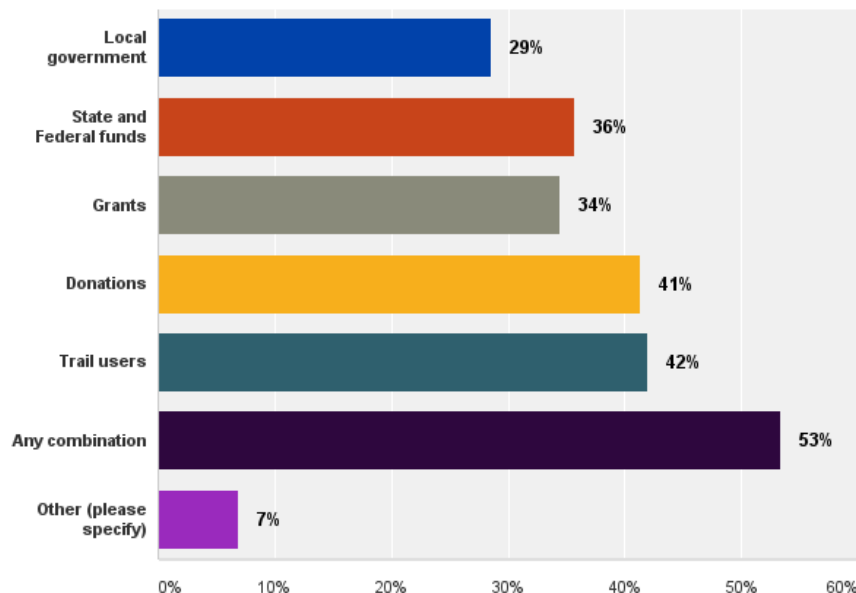
- Local government (cities and counties)
- State and federal funding
- Grants
- Donations (families, groups, businesses, etc.)
- Users of the trails
- A combination of any or all of the above

Other (please specify)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4 Analysis:** 322 of the 342 respondents (94%) provided an answer to Question 4 on the survey. The results are summarized in Figure 3D. The majority of respondents (53%) indicated that “A combination of any or all [funding sources]” would be acceptable. The next highest response was Trail Users (42%), followed by Donations (41%), State and Federal Funds (36%), Grants (34%) and Local Government (29%).

**Q4 Figure 3D:**

Answered: 322 Skipped: 20



Twenty-two of the 342 respondents (7%) provided a written response to the ‘Other’ category (refer to Appendix B).

*“Grants aren’t free and end up spending county money to maintain” -Unknown survey respondent*

*“I don’t believe users should pay a trail pass. I think that discourages use and limits the benefit...”*

*-Unknown survey respondent*



**McLeod County Trails Survey**

**Question 5 Results:**

**Question 5:** What trail projects would you like to see developed in McLeod County? For example, new trails, new types of trails, parking areas, toilets, etc.? Please provide a brief answer...

**Q5 Analysis:** 236 of the 342 survey respondents (69%) provided a written response to question 5 on the survey. Twenty-eight of the respondents (8%) voiced their opinion that no more trails were needed. The remaining 208 written comments provided a wide variety of trail project suggestions. The suggestions ranged from wanting specific trail segments to wanting more trail amenities, such as toilets and rest areas. The full copy of the written comments appears in Appendix B. Some of the variety of statements are highlighted below:

***“Finish the Dakota Rail to Hutchinson.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“More mountain bike trails or expansion....”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“More ATV Trails.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“New Trails to Luce Line to the Dakota Trail.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Trails from towns leading to county parks.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Make sure there is parking, toilets, garbage pickup, etc. for those already implemented.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Preserve snowmobile trails.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Trail between Lester Prairie and Winsted.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“A place to rest every so often and bathrooms to use.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Cross country ski trails.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Lighting on the trails.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“I would like to see more hiking trails and horse trails in the county parks.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

**McLeod County Trails Survey**

**Question 6 Results:**

**Question 6:** Do you have any additional comments regarding trails in McLeod County? Please provide a brief answer...

**Q6 Analysis:** 174 of the 342 survey respondents (51%) provided a written response to question 6 on the survey. Thirty-two respondents (9%) voiced their opinion that no more trails were needed. The remaining 142 written comments were overall complimentary of the need for trails. The full copy of the written comments appears in Appendix B. Some of the more common themes are highlighted below:

***“I think trails are important for a variety of reasons!”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“There isn’t much cross country skiing or mountain biking.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Trails and other similar amenities make McLeod County a wonderful place to live.”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

***“Best investment in public health!”***

*-Unknown survey respondent*

**McLeod County Trails Survey**

**Question 7 Results:**

**Question 7:** Please enter your zip code. Thank you for your participation!

**Q7 Analysis:** The results of question 7 on survey are shown in Table 3A. Approximately half of the respondents (49%) came from the Hutchinson area, followed by Lester Prairie (10%), Glencoe (7%), Silver Lake (7%), and Winsted (5%).

**Table 3A: Survey Respondent’s Zip Code**

<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>General Location</b>
55312	6	Brownton
55325	1	Dassel
55331	1	Shorewood
55334	1	Gaylord
55336	24	Glencoe
55350	169	Hutchinson
55354	35	Lester Prairie
55355	4	Litchfield
55370	2	Plato
55381	23	Silver Lake
55385	2	Stewart
55395	16	Winsted
55396	1	Winthrop
55397	1	Norwood Young America
55530	1	Elk River

### C. Trails Plan Public Open House

To solicit general comments about trail issues in McLeod County, and to provide an update on the county's draft trails plan, a public open house was held at the Silver Lake Auditorium on November 12, 2015. The open house took place from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. with approximately 25-30 participants (a sign in sheet was used but not everyone signed their name). A copy of the news release (shown in the text box to the right) was sent to all local media sources on October 12, 2015.

Staff from the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission facilitated the event. A short presentation was given that highlighted the overall planning process. Copies of the goals, objectives and policies from *draft* McLeod County Trails Plan were circulated and discussed. In addition, participants were encouraged to complete a paper copy of the McLeod County Trails Survey if they had not had the opportunity to do so online. This yielded an additional four completed surveys.

After the presentation, an open conversation regarding trail issues in McLeod County lasted for approximately 75 minutes. Some of the following comments were made and discussed (*all comments will remain anonymous*):

*“The Luce Line should not have been paved over the gravel roads.”*

#### NEWS RELEASE

The McLeod County Trails Plan Committee is hosting a public open house on November 12, 2015, to gather public input on trail issues in McLeod County. The open house will take place from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Silver Lake Auditorium, located at 320 East Main Street in Silver Lake, Minnesota. The meeting will allow citizens and stakeholders to identify and discuss trail issues and potential future projects. For questions or to submit your comments in writing, please contact MMDC Community Development Director Matthew Johnson by email at [communityplanning@mmrdc.org](mailto:communityplanning@mmrdc.org).

Open House Date: November 12, 2015

Reason: McLeod County Trails Plan Open House

Time: 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Location: Silver Lake Auditorium

*“Safety should remain a top priority.”*

*“Off-road trails are by far the safest option available.”*

*“Put no parking signs [for trail access] on township roads.”*

*“I would like an OHV park in McLeod County.”*

*“Thank you for creating a county trails plan.”*

## D. Summary of McLeod County's Major Trail Issues

When developing new trails, there are a variety of interests and concerns that need to be considered as part of the planning process. Some may be from a use perspective and others may be more financial in nature. This section of Chapter Three profiles three subjects that should be discussed as new trails are being considered in McLeod County.

### **Who is going to pay for the trail?**

The overall cost of establishing and maintaining trails are usually the most controversial issue in trail projects. Although extensive grant funding has taken away most of the up-front costs, grant-seekers normally have to provide a match and agree to maintain the trail. Of course, it is also said that “grants aren’t free” and that public funding is normally generated from taxes.

In Minnesota, trail enthusiasts point out that many grant funds are earmarked exclusively for trail projects. This is true of the funding opportunities created through Minnesota’s Clean Water & Legacy Amendment and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. These types of grants will ultimately end up helping pay for trail projects, so locals want to be able to competitively seek these funds.

Stakeholder groups have increasingly championed local trail projects. Although their roles can vary, it is common for them to take the lead on raising money, writing grants, and agreeing to assist with maintenance responsibilities. In addition, individuals and businesses have increasingly been willing to provide time and/or money to help trail initiatives. Although these efforts typically only help to cover a fraction of the costs, the local buy-in often helps to secure other forms of funding.

It is also important to be mindful of the benefits of trails. They are much more than simply a way to provide recreation. They provide economic development, health benefits, and a strong sense of community. They also provide a means for transportation, which helps minimize other transportation costs.

The debate over ‘*who is going to pay for it?*’ helps to justify having an updated trails plan in place so local priorities can be targeted over projects that arise on short notice. The harsh reality is that while some trail projects simply are not important enough to justify financial support, others are a great investment into the community.



### **On or Off-Road Bicycle Trails?**

Cost is at the heart of the debate about having bicycle trails located along roadway shoulders versus building them off-road. There are other reasons, such as the lack of suitable land and respecting private property rights, but most on- or off-road trail decisions are based upon the costs associated with developing and maintaining the trail.

Safety should be a driving factor helping to justify trail route decisions. Some roadways are suitable for on-road trails, while others simply are not safe. Two factors normally influence this decision: the normal traffic volume along the roadway and the quality of the roadway's shoulder. A third consideration to take into account is the normal amount of truck traffic.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts are routinely kept by jurisdictions along major roadways. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) conducts traffic counts along State and U.S. highways, while the McLeod County Highway Department maintains data on county roads.

The width of the roadway's shoulder and whether it is paved or gravel also should be examined prior to making on- or off-road trail decisions. In order to help determine suitable roadways for bicycle trails, the MnDOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual was published in 2007. Table 3B (4-2 as numbered in the original document) displays the Bikeway Design Selection for Rural



*Examples of on and off-road bicycle trails. Both types have their pros and cons, and both have their suitable locations. Photos used by permission from Heart of Hutch.*

Roads. The table prescribes bike lane types (i.e., paved shoulder, shared lane, etc.) based upon roadway type (2- or 4-lane) and motor vehicle speed. Another variable that could be added to local decisions would be to examine how curvy the roadway is, with more curves needing larger shoulders in order to provide additional safety.

Finally, as decisions are made, it should be noted that off-road trails will see greater use due to the higher sense of safety they provide. Some riders simply will not use road shoulders. This is also a concern for families.

**Table 3B: Bikeway Design Standards for Rural Roads**

<b>Motor Vehicle ADT (2 Lane)</b>		<500	500-1,000	1,000-2,000	2,000-5,000	5,000-10,000	>10,000
<b>Motor Vehicle ADT (4 Lane)</b>		N/A	N/A	2,000-4,000	4,000-10,000	10,000-20,000	>20,000
<b>Motor Vehicle Speed</b>	25 mph	PS = 4 ft* or SL	PS = 4 ft* or SL	PS = 4 ft* or WOL	PS = 4 ft*	PS = 4 ft*	Not Applicable
	30 mph	PS = 4 ft* or SL	PS = 4 ft* or WOL	PS = 4 ft*	PS = 4 ft*	PS = 6 ft	PS = 6 ft
	35 - 40 mph	PS = 4 ft* or SL	PS = 4 ft* or WOL	PS = 6 ft	PS = 6 ft	PS = 6 ft	PS = 8 ft
	45 mph and greater	PS = 4 ft*	PS = 4 ft*	PS = 6 ft	PS = 8 ft	PS = 8 ft	SUP or PS= 10 ft
<p>* See discussion in Section 4-3.1 regarding rumble strips on 4-foot shoulders.                      PS = Paved Shoulder, SL = Shared Lane, SUP = Shared-Use Path, WOL = Wide Outside Lane</p>							

Source: MnDOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual (2007)

**Trail Maintenance**

Maintaining trails has become as important as establishing the trail. Proper trail maintenance is a safety issue and also helps keep trail users and adjacent landowners in harmony. The National Park Service nicely summarizes its importance:

“The objectives of trail maintenance are to: provide for user safety, access, and convenience, protect adjacent resources, and preserve trail investment. Maintenance begins immediately following trail construction and is a continuous process” (*North Country Trail Handbook for Trail Design, Maintenance & Construction, 1998*).

Proper trail maintenance involves being proactive with a number of activities including the following subcategories:

**Trail Maintenance-Vegetation:**

- A. Brushing/clearing areas
- B. Remove fallen trees/branches
- C. Hazard tree removal/tree trimming
- D. Slope revegetation/stabilization
- E. Back slope grooming
- F. Scenic area/vista maintenance
- G. Noxious weed control

**Sign Maintenance:**

- H. Proper Signage
- I. Sign repair/rehabilitation
- J. Sign replacement
- K. Mile markers/Emergency Management

**Drainage Maintenance:**

- L. Cleaning/repairing structures
- M. Replacing culverts
- N. Installing needed structures

**Structure Maintenance:**

- O. Bridge repair
- P. Cribbing/retaining wall repair
- Q. Barrier/guardrail repair
- R. Step repair
- S. Fence/gate repair
- T. Shelter/restroom repair

**Surface Maintenance:**

- U. Grading (i.e. on gravel)
- V. Slough and slide removal
- W. Slump repair

### ***Chapter Three: Issues and Opportunities***

- X. Filling erosion ditches
- Y. Grubbing rocks/roots/stumps
- Z. Spot surfacing and repair
- AA. Surface replacement (similar material)
- BB. Removing loose materials/rocks

#### ***Litter Clean-up:***

- CC. Garbage removal
- DD. Ensuring proper receptacles placement

Local jurisdictions and funding agencies are increasingly using ‘maintenance agreements’ prior to approving financing. These officially identify the ‘who, what, when, and where’ of trail maintenance issues. Having these in place has been identified as a priority with the McLeod County Trails Committee for future trail projects. In addition, the Committee has expressed the desire to develop a checklist of local trail conditions. The ‘checklist’ would be submitted annually to the Parks Department and would help to identify priority repairs.



# Chapter Four: ~ Goals, Objectives and Policies ~

## A. Chapter Highlights

The purpose of Chapter Four is to communicate the Goals, Objectives and Policies regarding trail development and issues in McLeod County. The foundation established by the County’s Goals, Objectives and Policies will help guide important decisions related to trail issues and opportunities over the next twenty years. Collectively they represent the long-term plan to accomplish the county’s Vision of “Fostering multi-use trails while respecting property rights.”

## B. Definition of Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goals, Objectives and Policies can be referred to as the heart of the McLeod County’s Trails Plan. Specifically, they are defined as follows (also refer to Figure 4A):

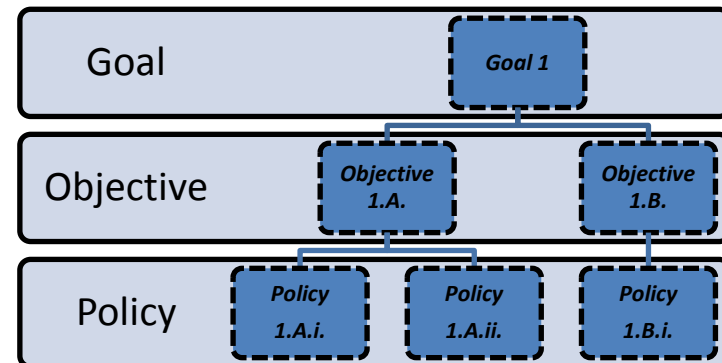
**Goals** are broad statements that describe the county’s ambition to achieve a desired result. Goals help shape the conversation on what the Trails Plan wants to accomplish over the duration of the plan. ‘Having a Safe Trails Network’ is an example of a Goal.

**Objectives** help achieve goals by outlining measurable outcomes. There can be more than one objective for each goal.

For example, the goal of ‘Having a Safe Trails Network’ can have a corresponding objective that identifies the desire to ‘increase safety at trail crossings.’ To measure this, the county could examine accident data to help pinpoint where additional safety measures are needed.

**Policies** help achieve the objectives by guiding decisions. Continuing with the goal of ‘Having a Safe Trails Network,’ and the objective of ‘increase safety at trail crossings,’ a number of policies can be developed that communicate the need for proper signage, adequate lighting, and well-marked trail crossings. The specific details of what constitutes proper signage can be left vague, however, the important guideline is the signage should be examined at all trail crossings to ensure they are well marked.

**Figure 4A:**  
*Goals, Objectives and Policies Hierarchy*



## C. Goals, Objectives and Policies

The following Goals, Objectives and Policies were identified and articulated throughout the development of the McLeod County Trails Plan. Initially, the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission identified the draft language by reviewing other county trail plans from across Minnesota and the United States. The McLeod County Trails Committee then customized the language by reviewing and editing the draft to fit McLeod County’s needs. Stakeholder input was then sought along with public feedback. The end result is a comprehensive list of Goals, Objectives, and Policies designed to shape trail decisions in McLeod County over the next twenty years.

### *Goal 1: Stakeholder Cooperation*

“Use strong stakeholder cooperation to make trails decisions that are both fiscally responsible and respectful of landowners.”

#### *Goal 1 Priorities:*

- ✓ Stakeholder cooperation
- ✓ Respectful of landowners
- ✓ Minimize and resolve conflict
- ✓ Fiscally responsible
- ✓ Focus on implementation priorities

**Objective 1.A.** To ensure that all appropriate stakeholders are engaged in the planning, design, implementation and maintenance of trails.

**Policy 1.A.i.** Planning and coordination with all stakeholders, including landowners, should be completed before making important trail decisions.

## Chapter Four: Goals, Objectives and Policies

*Policy 1.A.ii.* The pros and cons of major trail issues should be identified prior to making important trail decisions.

*Objective 1.B.* To facilitate fiscally responsible trail decisions.

*Policy 1.B.i.* Trail expenditures should be collaborated with stakeholders as much as possible.

*Policy 1.B.ii.* Projects should be prioritized based upon use, cost-effectiveness, safety, connectivity, and opportunities.

*Policy 1.B.iii.* Grants and alternative forms of funding should be proactively identified.

*Policy 1.B.iv.* Maintenance agreements should be developed with stakeholders prior to the initial investment and updated as needed.

*Policy 1.B. v.* The county should develop a trails fund that could be enhanced/supplemented with stakeholder funds.

***Goal 2: Accessibility and Safety***

“Facilitate the development and maintenance of a safe and user-friendly trail system that accommodates a variety of uses.”

***Goal 2 Priorities:***

- ✓ Safe environment (i.e., crossings, lighting, signage, education, maintenance, etc.)
- ✓ Multi-use trails when feasible
- ✓ Adequate access including A.D.A. accessibility
- ✓ Adequate trail amenities

***Objective 2.A.*** To establish a safe environment for trail use.

***Policy 2.A.i.*** Make safety a top priority in making trail decisions.

***Policy 2.A.ii.*** Safety enhancements (i.e., adequate signage, lighting, visibility, maintenance, etc.) should be a high priority at trail crossings.

***Policy 2.A.iii.*** The use of mileage markers along trails should be encouraged in order to be user-friendly and to improve emergency response.

***Policy 2.A.iv.*** Mn/DOT’s Bikeway Facility Design Manual should be used as a foundation for making safety recommendations.

***Policy 2.A.v.*** Promote safety by providing educational resources regarding the rules, regulations and etiquette of trail use.



## Chapter Four: Goals, Objectives and Policies

**Policy 2.A.vi.** Proper trail maintenance should be provided for safety and to promote use.

**Objective 2.B.** Trails should be multi-use to the extent they don't jeopardize safety and other priorities.

**Policy 2.B.i** Multi-use trails should be paved to make them more user-friendly, improve safety and accommodate the widest amount of users and uses.

**Policy 2.B.ii** Non multi-use or limited-use trails should have surfaces best suited to their needs.

**Objective 2.C.** To provide adequate access to trails while respecting public and private property rights.

**Policy 2.C.i.** Ensure that public access points to trails are spaced properly to minimize conflict with landowners.

**Policy 2.C.ii.** Trail facilities shall strive to meet or exceed federal and state Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) design standards.

**Policy 2.C.iii.** Ensure that trail crossings are properly maintained.

**Policy 2.C.iv.** When feasible, trail maps and similar trail information should highlight where trail access points are located.

**Policy 2.C.v.** Trail access points should be prioritized on existing public land and transportation infrastructure.

**Policy 2.C.vi.** Develop and promote information on the importance of using official public trail access points.

## Chapter Four: Goals, Objectives and Policies

**Objective 2.C.** To ensure trail segments have adequate amenities.

**Policy 2.C.i.** Work with stakeholders to identify needed amenities along each trail segment. Priority trail amenities include adequate parking, benches, proper signage, repair stations, and access to rest rooms.

**Policy 2.C.ii.** Develop a process for residents and stakeholders to volunteer, monitor, and sponsor trail amenities, such as an Adopt-a-Trail program and trail bench dedications.



### ***Goal 3: Transportation and Connectivity***

“Enhance the county’s transportation system by providing trail connectivity to important local and regional destinations.”

#### ***Goal 3 Priorities:***

- ✓ Enhance the existing transportation network
- ✓ Prioritize linking key destinations (cities, parks, nearby trails, points of interest, etc.)

**Objective 3.A.** To incorporate trails planning into all forms of transportation planning (i.e., roads, bridges, transit, etc.).

**Policy 3.A.i.** When feasible, transportation decisions should incorporate priority trail needs.

## Chapter Four: Goals, Objectives and Policies

**Policy 3.A.ii.** Bicycle needs (i.e., bike racks, bike carriers, etc.) should be considered when making transit decisions.

**Objective 3.B.** To establish trail connections between McLeod County’s important local and regional destinations.

**Policy 3.B.i.** High-priority trail segments (refer to Map 5) should be targeted during implementation.

**Policy 3.B.ii.** Important local and regional destinations shall include connecting existing trails, communities, parks, key points of interest, schools and business districts.

### ***Goal 4: Healthy Lifestyle and Environment***

“Encourage healthy lifestyles by increasing opportunities for recreation and physical activity while enjoying the county’s natural resources.”

#### ***Goal 4 Priorities:***

- Healthy lifestyles
- Recreational opportunities
- Enjoy the county’s natural resources

**Objective 4.A.** To promote increased trail use as a valuable investment in people’s overall health and quality of life.

**Policy 4.A.i.** The development of local bike sharing programs should be encouraged.

**Policy 4.A.ii.** Partner with health and wellness groups and other stakeholders to implement and promote programs and events to increase trail use.

## Chapter Four: Goals, Objectives and Policies

**Objective 4.B.** To enjoy the county’s natural resources by ensuring that trail design and use minimize the impact to the environment.

**Policy 4.B.i.** Trail facilities and improvements should have minimal environmental impact.

**Policy 4.B.ii.** Work with stakeholders to make trail enhancements where needed.

**Policy 4.B.iii.** Work with stakeholders to raise awareness regarding important environmental issues.

### ***Goal 5: Tourism and Economic Development***

“Strengthen the awareness of the county’s trails network through an effective promotional campaign.”

#### ***Goal 5 Priorities:***

- ✓ Trail resources (i.e., maps, website, kiosks, etc.)
- ✓ Tourism (i.e., events, marketing, advertisements, etc.)
- ✓ High quality trail amenities

**Objective 5.A.** To ensure that high quality trail resources are available to the public.

**Policy 5.A.i.** Private/public partnerships should be used to develop trail resources, such as maps and informational kiosks.

**Policy 5.A.ii.** Develop and maintain a link on the county’s website ([www.co.mcleod.mn.us](http://www.co.mcleod.mn.us)) devoted to trail information.



## Chapter Four: Goals, Objectives and Policies

**Objective 5.B.** To promote economic development and trail use through events, tourism, and marketing.

**Policy 5.B.i.** Work with stakeholders to promote key trail events.

**Policy 5.B.ii.** Work with stakeholders to establish directional signage to inform users where they are in proximity to services and key destinations.

## Chapter Five: ~ Implementation Plan ~

**Table 5: McLeod County's  
Priority Trail Projects**

*~ Please refer to Map 5 and the corresponding text ~*

*Note: The order is not meant to indicate a ranking of projects.*

### A. Chapter Highlights

Chapter Five identifies the priority trail projects that potentially could be implemented in McLeod County over the next 20 years. The list of priority projects are profiled in Section B. Potential funding sources are described in Section C. Finally, Section D outlines a few action steps that should be followed in order to properly implement the McLeod County Trails Plan.

### B. Priority Trail Projects

Throughout the planning process, a number of potential trail projects were identified from a variety of sources. The sources included comments received from the McLeod County Trails Survey, comments made at the Public Open House, and projects discussed during the Trails Committee meetings (note: refer to Chapter Three for more information on the survey and the open house). The list of McLeod County's potential priority projects is found in Table 5 and displayed on Map 5. Please keep in mind this is not a list of projects McLeod County is committing to pay for, but rather a list of potential projects the county is likely to support as the various stakeholders work out the project details (i.e., financing, maintenance, etc.). Due to the unknown timing of the projects, cost estimates are not provided.

- A. Dakota Rail Trail (*Lester Prairie to Hutchinson*)
- B. Silver Lake Trail (*Central Luce Line/Dakota Rail Loop*)
- C. Glencoe - Dakota Rail Trail
- D. Winsted – Lester Prairie Trail (*Eastern Luce Line/Dakota Rail Loop*)
- E. Lake Marion Park-Hutchinson Trail
- F. Stahl's Lake - Piepenburg Park Trail
- G. Glencoe – Plato Trail
- H. Luce Line West Trail Improvements
- I. Hutchinson – Glencoe Trail
- J. OHV/ATV County Park
- K. Expand Mountain Bike Trails

## Map 5: McLeod County's Priority Trail Projects

Note: Please refer to the corresponding text for a project description. Letter icons only represent the general trail location. County support is dependent upon securing financing and maintenance agreements.



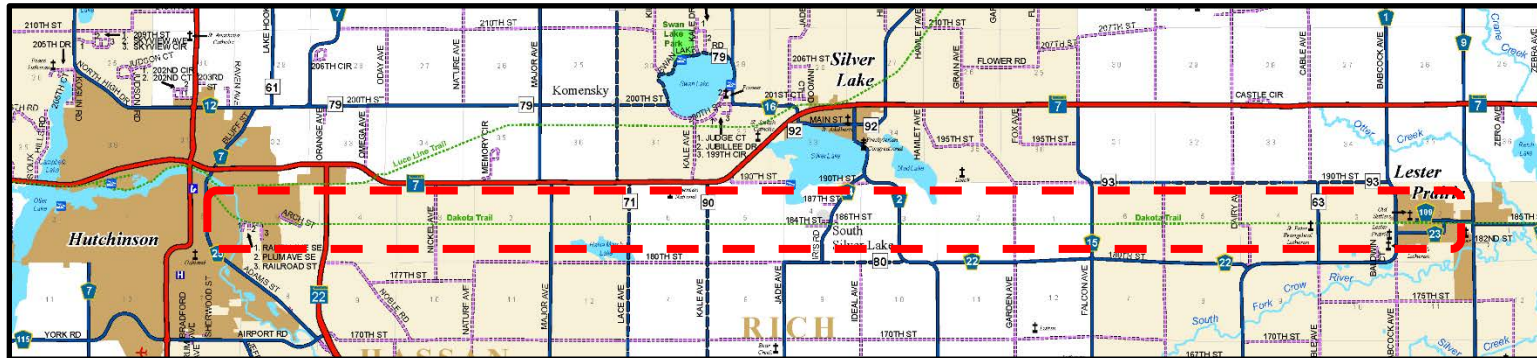
- A** Dakota Rail Trail
- B** Silver Lake Trail
- C** Glencoe - Dakota Rail Trail
- D** Winsted – Lester Prairie Trail
- E** Lake Marion Park-Hutchinson Trail
- F** Stahl’s Lake - Piepenburg Parks Trail
- G** Glencoe – Plato Trail
- H** Luce Line West Trail Improvements
- I** Hutchinson – Glencoe Trail

### Unmapped Projects

- J** OHV/ATV Park – *This project is not mapped due to the unknown location.*
- K** *Expand mountain bike trails (where appropriate).*

 **Dakota Rail Trail**

*Map 5A: Dakota Rail Trail*



Throughout the planning process, clearly the number one potential trail project discussed was finishing the Dakota Rail Trail from the Carver County line to the City of Hutchinson. The first step in this process would be to develop a master plan for the trail. By doing so, the potential new trail project would become eligible for funding through the Minnesota’s Parks and Trails Fund, which was created in 2008 when Minnesota’s voters passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (referred to as the ‘Legacy Amendment’).

Master trail plans normally identify the location, surface type (i.e., paved vs. gravel), and estimated costs associated with developing a trail. In this case, the location along the abandoned Dakota Railroad makes developing the master plan less complicated.

**Project Highlights**



**Location:** Between Lester Prairie (McLeod County line) and Hutchinson along the abandoned Dakota Rail corridor.

**Distance:** Approximately 18 miles.

**Notes:** In order to be eligible for Minnesota’s Parks and Trails Fund (funding from the Legacy Amendment), a master plan would need to be developed for the trail segment. Phase 1 of the project could potentially be gravel with Phase 2 eventually paving the trail. *All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.*



**B Silver Lake Trail**

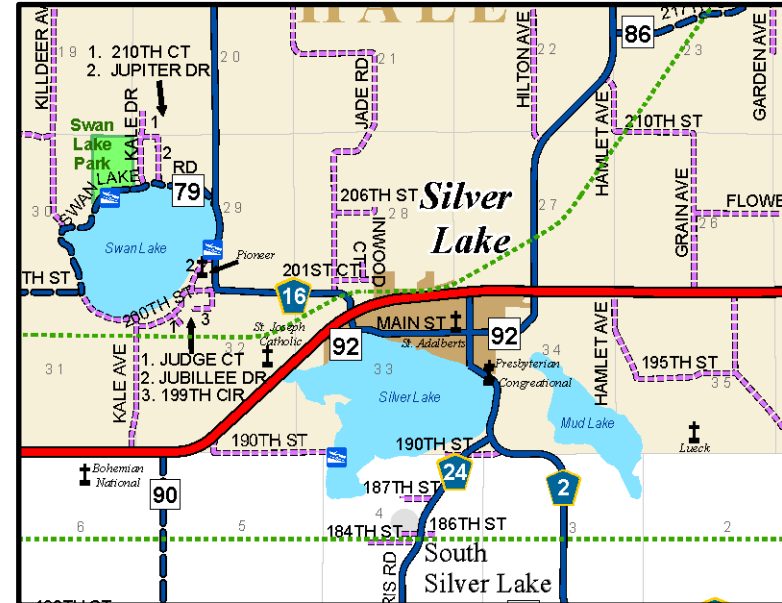
The City of Silver Lake is currently updating its comprehensive plan and has unofficially expressed interest (without city council approval) in connecting the Luce Line and Dakota Rail Trails. Eventually the new trail could also loop around Silver Lake, which is approximately 472 acres in size with a maximum depth of 10.5 feet. Although the City of Silver Lake ultimately is the key stakeholder involved with developing this project, support from numerous stakeholders would need to be sought in order for the project to be successful. This is primarily due to a portion of the trail needing to be located outside of the city’s corporate limits.

**Project Highlights**

**Location:** Creating a connection between the Luce Line and Dakota Rail Trails through the City of Silver Lake and adjacent to the lake.

**Distance:** Approximately 1.25 miles.

**Map 5B: Silver Lake Trail Corridor**  
 (Note: the location of the trail has not been identified)



**Notes:** Phase 1 could connect the Luce Line Trail into the community, with Phase 2 eventually providing a connection to the Dakota Rail Trail. It would also be nice to someday have a trail around the lake. *All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.*

**C** Glencoe - Dakota Rail Trail

Connecting McLeod County’s two largest cities, Hutchinson and Glencoe, with a trail was regularly discussed throughout the planning process. Although the ‘obvious route’ would follow State Highway 22, high average daily traffic counts would greatly jeopardize and/or prevent a trail from safely being established along the shoulders of the roadway. The concept of connecting the communities by establishing a trail north of Glencoe to Silver Lake emerged. Due to ‘low’ average daily traffic counts and acceptable shoulder widths, County Road 2 or 15 could be used to establish the trail. Using the shoulders on County Road 1 should also be explored, especially since the roadway would provide a connection to the Buffalo Highlands Trail and Buffalo Creek County Park.

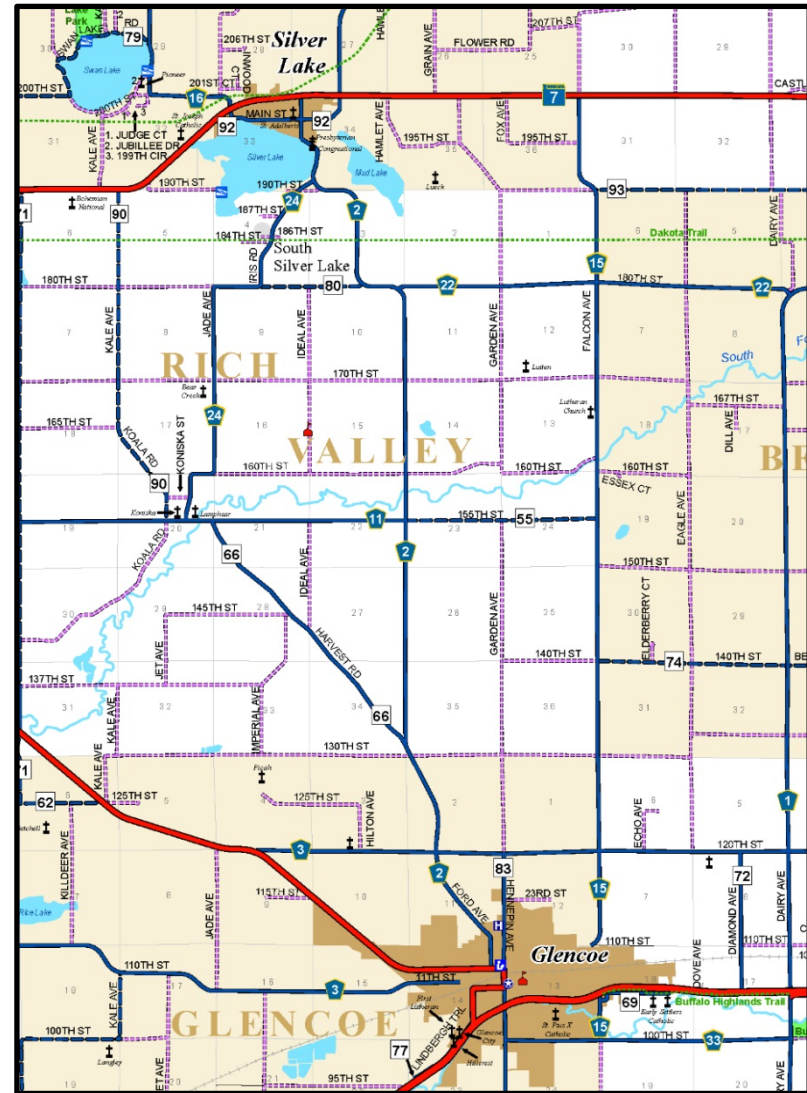
**Project Highlights**

**Location:** North of Glencoe to the City of Silver Lake and the Dakota Rail/Luce Line Trails.

**Distance:** Approximately 8 miles.

**Notes:** The County could decide to establish two trail segments using County Roads 1, 2, and/or 15 (select the best two routes). *All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.*

**Map 5C: Glencoe to Dakota Rail Trail Corridor**  
 (Note: the location of the trail has not been identified)



**D** Winsted - Lester Prairie Trail

Establishing a trail connection between the cities of Winsted and Lester Prairie would create an eastern trail loop connection between the Luce Line and Dakota Rail Trails. Although the exact trail location has not officially been discussed, two options would be County Road 1 and County Road 9. County Road 1 has a wide shoulder, but higher traffic volume. County Road 9 has less traffic, but no shoulder. With either option, the safety of crossing Highway 7 would be a main concern. It would also be ideal to have either connection provide access to the Williams May County Park.

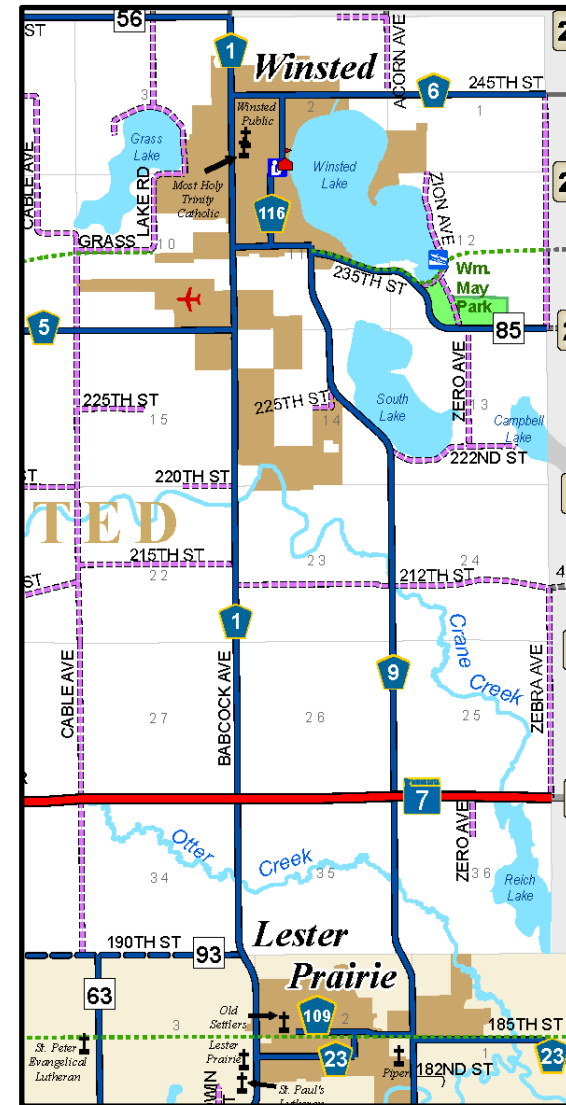
**Project Highlights**

**Location:** Trail between Winsted and Lester Prairie connecting the Luce Line and Dakota Rail Trails.

**Distance:** Approximately 5 miles.

**Notes:** No trail location has been discussed. The City of Lester Prairie is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan and unofficially has expressed interest in this project. *All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.*

**Map 5D: Winsted – Lester Prairie Trail Corridor**  
 (Note: the location of the trail has not been identified)



**E Lake Marion County Park – Hutchinson Trail**

Establishing a trail connection between Lake Marion County Park and Hutchinson would greatly improve the public’s access to trails in southwestern McLeod County. Residents living in the cities of Stewart and Brownton would thereafter only be located approximately 3-5 miles away from the County’s network of trails. Although all options should be explored, being located adjacent to State Highway 15 would provide a direct connection between the city and the county park.

**Project Highlights**

**Location:** Trail between Lake Marion County Park and the City of Hutchinson.

**Distance:** Approximately 5 miles.

**Notes:** No trail location has been discussed. *All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.*

**Map 5E:**  
**Lake Marion – Hutchinson Trail Corridor**  
*(Note: the location of the trail has not been identified)*





**F Stahl's Lake Park - Piepenburg Park Trail**

Stahl's Lake and Piepenburg County Parks are located approximately 1.5 miles apart in northwestern McLeod County. This presents a good opportunity to provide a trail connection between the two locations. Providing safe access along and/or across County Road 60 is one of the key planning issues. In addition, Stahl's Lake Park is divided into a 'north half' and 'south half' by County Road 73. When the roadway is reconstructed, placing a culvert under the roadway would allow trail users to safely access both parts of the park.

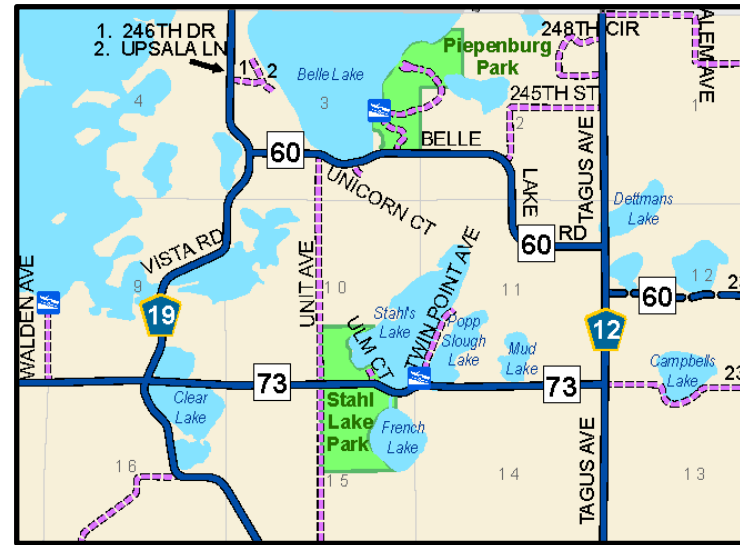
**Project Highlights**

**Location:** Northwestern McLeod County between Piepenburg Park (Belle Lake) and Stahl's Lake Park (Stahl and French Lakes).

**Distance:** Approximately 1.5 miles.

**Notes:** No official trail location has been discussed, however, some nearby property owners have previously been open to the idea of a trail linking the parks. *All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.*

**Map 5F:**  
**Stahl's Lake – Piepenburg Parks Trail**  
*(Note: the location of the trail has not been identified)*



**G** Glencoe - Plato Trail

Establishing a trail connection between the cities of Glencoe and Plato has been discussed for many years. One of the original concepts was to continue the Buffalo Highlands Trail all the way to Plato. Currently, this does not look like a feasible project. More recently, the concept of using the shoulders along County Roads 9, 15, and 120<sup>th</sup> Street has been unofficially discussed. The trail project would be a large asset to the Glencoe-Silver Lake School District due to the middle and high schools being located in northeastern Glencoe.

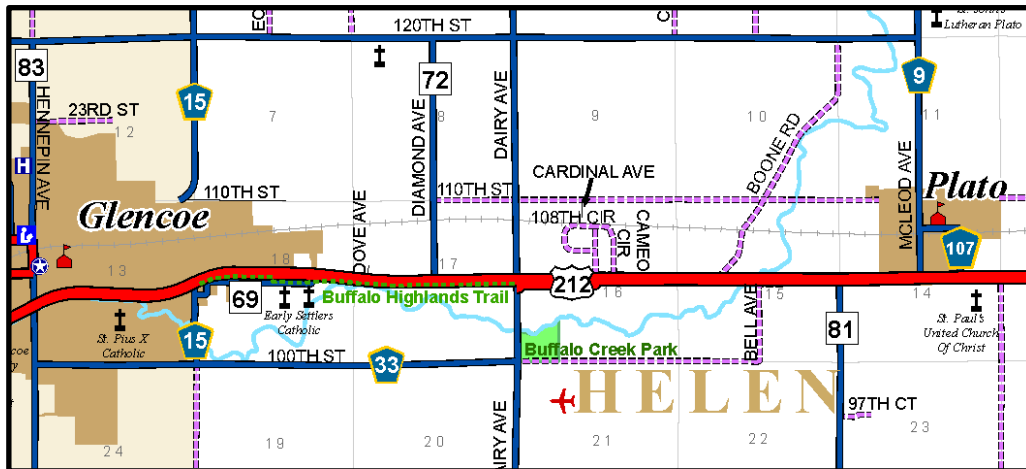
**Project Highlights**

**Location:** Trail between Glencoe and Plato.

**Distance:** Approximately 5 miles.

**Notes:** No specific trail location has been decided upon, however, using existing roadway shoulders may be the best short-term option. *All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.*

**Map 5G: Glencoe – Plato Trail Corridor**  
 ~ Note: the location of the trail has not been identified



## Luce Line West Trail Improvements

The western portion of the Luce Line State Trail extends from the City of Hutchinson in McLeod County to the City of Cosmos in Meeker County. The trail is paved from Hutchinson to County Road 115, when it turns to crushed granite continuing on to the City of Cedar Mills. The remaining from Cedar Mills to Cosmos is currently natural (mowed grass in the growing season). Phase 1 is to establish a safe trail loop back to the City of Hutchinson by paving the shoulders of County Road 115 and South Grade Road SW. This would establish a great trail loop connection to the City of Hutchinson’s extensive trail system.

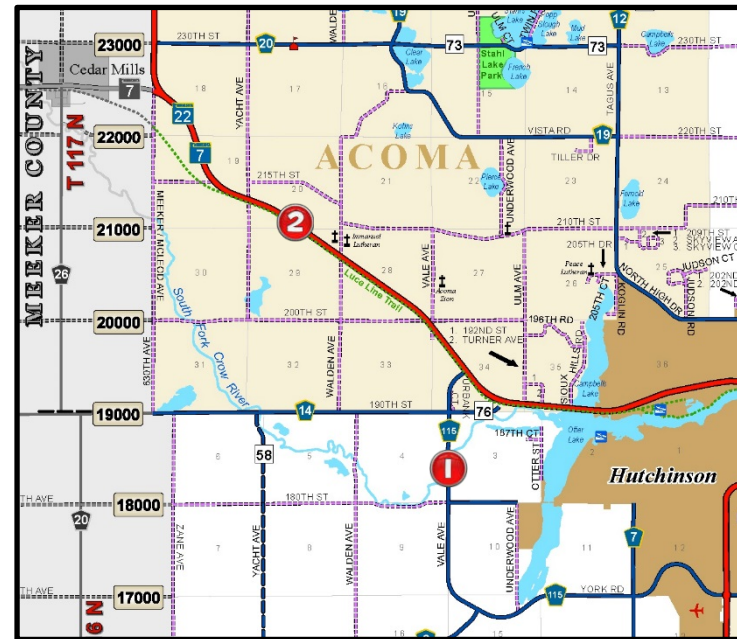
A second Luce Line West Trail project (Phase 2) consists of working with the DNR and other trail stakeholders to identify potential needed upgrades along the trail to the City of Cedar Mills in Meeker County.

### *Project Highlights*

**Location:** Phase 1 – Paving the shoulders of County Road 115 and South Grade Rd SW.  
Phase 2 – Luce Line west of Hutchinson at County Road 115 to the City of Cedar Mills.

**Distance:** Phase 1 – Approximately 2 miles.  
Phase 2 – Approximately 5 miles.

Map 5H: Luce Line West Improvements



**Notes:** The paving of the shoulders along County Road 115 can be timed with future planned roadway upgrades and/or maintenance. *All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.*

## **I** Hutchinson – Glencoe Trail

Connecting McLeod County’s two largest cities, Hutchinson and Glencoe, with a trail was regularly discussed throughout the planning process. Although the obvious route would follow State Highway 22, high average daily traffic counts would greatly jeopardize and/or prevent a trail from safely being established along the shoulders of the roadway. As a result, this project represents the county’s long-term desire to work with MnDOT to develop an off-road trail the next time State Highway 22 is reconstructed. The trail would also connect the City of Biscay to the county’s trail network. Besides being a more direct route connecting Hutchinson to Glencoe, this trail could provide several looping opportunities between Hutchinson, Biscay, Glencoe and Silver Lake, if a trail from Glencoe to the Dakota Rail Trail and Silver Lake is completed.

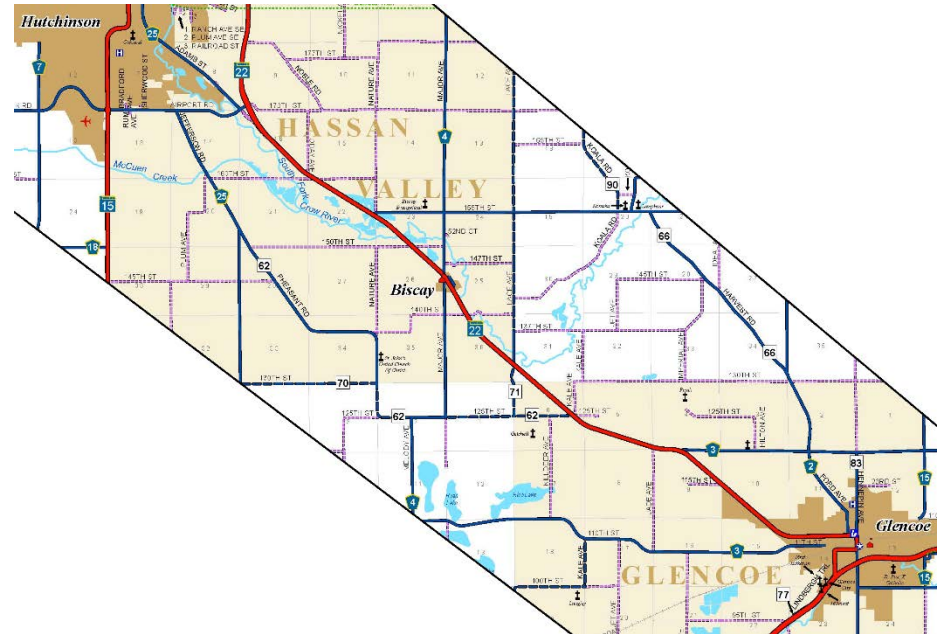
### *Project Highlights*

**Location:** Trail between Hutchinson and Glencoe.

**Distance:** Approximately 12 miles.

**Notes:** The timing of this project could coincide with MnDOT’s plans to make improvements to State Highway 22 (no plans exist at this time). ***All projects are dependent upon securing funding and developing a maintenance agreement.***

**Map 5I: Hutchinson –  
Glencoe Trail Corridor**





## **J** McLeod County OHV/ATV Park

Throughout the planning process used to develop the trails plan, members of the McLeod County Trails Committee discussed the feasibility of creating an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail to connect to the recently created Meeker County OHV Park (*refer to the text box to the right*). As the idea progressed, rather than develop an OHV trail, the idea of working with stakeholders to identify a suitable location for an OHV park emerged. Any OHV park that would be established would provide the opportunity for OHV and All-Terrain Vehicle (ATVs) users to ride trails locally. The key to the success in these types of projects is to have local user-groups help champion the effort. Through reclamation, a number of abandoned gravel pits in the county could become ideal candidates for this type of park.

### ***Project Highlights***

**Location:** Unknown, however, there are a number of abandoned gravel pits in the county that would serve as an ideal location. Since the real value of the land has been exported through mining, a ‘low-cost’ alternative should be available.

**Size:** Ideally 20+ acres would be required at a minimum.

**Notes:** The local Crow River Wheelers ATV club was instrumental in developing the Meeker County OHV Park.

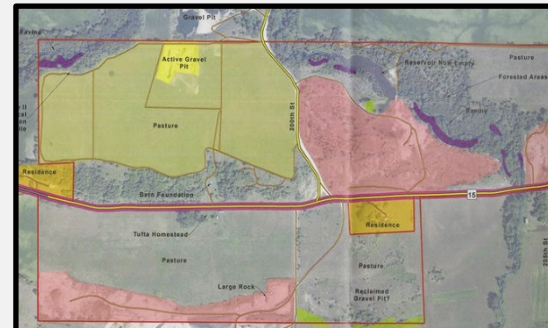
### **OHV/ATV Parks... Growing in Popularity**

The demand for safe places to use Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) in and around McLeod County is at an all-time high. In response to this demand, Meeker and Renville Counties have responded. On June 27, 2015, the Meeker County OHV Park held its grand opening. Narrow and winding trails travel through this 40-acre parcel of woods near Darwin, showcasing oak, elm, ash and maple trees. There is a youth training area on site, as well as a shelter and restroom facilities. The Meeker County Park is maintained by Crow River Wheelers and provided by Meeker County.



***Meeker County OHV Park***

Neighboring to the east, Renville County approved (in December 2015) spending \$129,929 to complete a two-phase study to potentially support the development of the Minnesota Valley OHV Park (shown below). The 272-acre site is located in Sacred Heart Township near the Minnesota Valley.



***The Proposed Minnesota River Valley OHV Park***

## **K** Expand Mountain Bike Trails

Mountain and fat-tire biking has become an increasingly popular sport in the McLeod County area. This project represents examining county parks for opportunities to add new mountain and fat-tire biking trails or enhance existing trails for biking use. Adding to the 3.5 miles of trail at Stahl's Lake County Park would make a good facility better and make it even more attractive to users. Some of the existing natural/grass trails in other county parks could potentially be upgraded, but minimizing potential conflicts with other trail uses would need to be considered. Developing a quick and easy park plan or map for each facility may systematically help to determine each park's best long term needs. Finally, similar to an OHV/ATV park, there may be an opportunity to establish a mountain biking park on a new site of sufficient size by working with stakeholders.

### *Project Highlights*

**Notes:** Although no specific project details have been discussed, the McLeod County Trails Committee could be asked to weigh in on how to enhance the existing mountain bike trails network. The Hutchinson Area Mountain Bike Association (HAMBA) played an integral role in developing the mountain bike trails at Stahl's Lake Park and could also help with new trails. A similar planning process could also take place for the county's cross-country ski and horse trails.



*Stahl's Lake County Park*

*Photo's: Stahl's Lake Park – Singletrack Facebook Page*

## C. Potential Funding Sources

Trail projects in McLeod County will ultimately need to rely on a variety of stakeholders and funding sources in order to be properly implemented. From securing grants to developing maintenance agreements, the success of projects will be an ongoing effort. This section of the plan identifies some potential funding sources for trail projects.

### **Donations (time and money)**

Individuals, families, businesses and user groups have increasingly been willing to donate time and/or money towards trail projects. From paying for trail benches and volunteering to pick up garbage, to sponsoring rest areas and raising money to build trail segments, volunteers have made a number of trail projects become a reality.

A couple ideas emerged from the McLeod County trails planning process. The first was the idea of developing a McLeod County Adopt-A-Trail Program that would allow volunteers, families, businesses and user groups to assist with a variety of trail needs. The second idea was to develop a McLeod County Trails Fund where interested parties could provide donations. The donations could be trail and/or project specific or could simply help with general trail projects.

### **User Fees**

Some trail use justifies charging users nominal fees for trail access. While it is acceptable for people and groups to pay for the use of facilities, such as renting buildings or paying for camping, it is not common for local governmental units (LGUs) to collect money for bicycle and/or pedestrian trail use. The one main exception to this is that some LGUs charge for annual or daily park permits, which provide access to trails and the park's other amenities.

The State of Minnesota also charges a fee for **off-highway vehicles** (OHVs) to be registered, including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles (OHM), snowmobiles, boats (including canoes and kayaks). All non-residents of Minnesota must also purchase a trail pass to ride on state or grant-in-aid trails. The fees collected help subsidize education, maintenance, enforcement, and safety training.

People age 16 or older are also required to purchase an annual Great Minnesota Ski Pass to **ski** on groomed trails in Minnesota state parks or forests. The annual pass costs \$20 or \$55 for three years.

Since 2007, trail passes are required for **riding horses** on all land administered by the Department of Natural Resources, including state parks, state recreation areas, state trails and state forests. The revenue collected goes into a dedicated fund enabling users

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to assist directly with the operation and maintenance of state horse facilities. Specifically, the legislation states:

*"...the fees are appropriated to the commissioner of natural resources for trail acquisition, trail and facility development, and maintenance, enforcement, and rehabilitation of horse trails or trails authorized for horse use, whether for riding, leading, or driving, on lands administered by the Commission of the DNR."*

### Local Government Match

Most trail projects are not completely covered by grants. To be competitive on securing grant assistance, local governmental units commonly are required to match grant dollars by up to 25% of the total project costs. In addition, developing a long-term maintenance plan is normally a funding requirement.

Identifying stakeholders who are willing to share costs and/or perform maintenance responsibilities has become an increasingly popular way for local governmental units to justify funding and their overall commitment to trail projects. Fortunately user groups who are promoting local projects usually have the capacity to help out where and when it is needed.

### Grants

According to the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, last year over \$7 million was granted to communities and organizations across Minnesota to acquire, develop, construct, and renovate parks and trails (*2015 Resource Guide: Grants for your Park or Trail*). Although securing grant money has become increasingly competitive, one of the main benefits of developing the McLeod County Trails Plan was because many funding sources require projects to be identified in a locally adopted plan. Furthermore, having a project identified in an official plan usually allows the project to objectively score higher in the grant review process. This section of the plan highlights some of the main sources of grants that fund trail projects. It should be noted that grant funding details periodically change, and that new funding sources occasionally become available.

#### Federal Recreational Trail Program

[www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails)

**Program Goals & Priorities?** To provide funds for trail activities and facilities that support a wide variety of motorized and non-motorized trail activities. Special consideration is given to projects involving urban youth worker programs, such as the Minnesota Conservation Corp.



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**Who can apply?** All projects must be sponsored by a unit of government. Preference is given to projects that have a local trail partner organization.

**Eligible projects?** Acquisition and development for new trails; contracted maintenance on existing trails; development of permanent trailside facilities; and purchases of equipment. Priority projects for 2015 included trail linkages, trail rehabilitation, trail signs to increase safety, trail grooming equipment, and single-track mountain biking trails.

**Level of assistance?** The maximum grant is \$150,000, with the average grant ranging from \$30,000 to \$85,000. Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement. The grantee must cover at least 25% of the total project cost (50% for equipment purchases over \$75,000). Funding for 2015 was approximately \$1.7 million.

**Source of funds?** Grants are funded by a portion of federal excise taxes on off-highway recreation fuel, which is deposited into the Federal Highway Trust Fund and appropriated to each state. States are required to use 40% for diverse recreational trail use, 30% for motorized use, and 30% for non-motorized use.

**The review process?** The Minnesota Recreation Trail Users Association reviews grant priorities, applications, and recommends projects to be funded. Selected projects are then

reviewed and approved by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

### Local Trails Connection Program

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails\\_local.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_local.html)

**Program Goals & Priorities?** To accelerate the acquisition and development of local trail connections between where people live and significant public resources (e.g., historical areas, parks, other trails). This program is not intended to create significant new trails.

**Who can apply?** All local units of government. Trail organizations and/or user groups may apply, but only in coordination with a local unit of government.

**Eligible projects?** Land acquisition from willing sellers; trail construction and/or restoration; permanent trailside improvements (e.g., drainage, parking, bathrooms); ADA compliance projects; contracted maintenance; bridge construction and restoration. Projects within state park boundaries or wilderness areas are not eligible for funding.

**Level of assistance?** Grants range from \$5,000 to \$150,000. Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement. The grantee must cover at least 25% of the total project cost.

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**Source of funds?** Grants are funded primarily by the Minnesota State Lottery. Every year, the State Lottery returns 6.5% of gross sales to the state as a payment “in lieu of” sales tax. From these proceeds, state law dictates 2.2% is spent on local trail grants. These dollars are divided between the Local Trails Connection Program and the Regional Trail Program. In some past years, state bond sales and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund have also been used to fund local trail grant programs.

**The review process?** The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reviews all applications and makes final funding decisions. Priority is given to projects that provide significant connectivity, with consideration also given to trail length, amount of use, and quality of natural and cultural resources.

### Regional Trail Grant Program

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails\\_regional.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_regional.html)

**Program Goals & Priorities?** To accelerate the acquisition and development of long-distance, regionally significant trails outside of the seven-county metropolitan area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington).

**Who can apply?** All local units of government (e.g., cities, counties, townships) outside of the seven-county metropolitan area are eligible to apply. Trail organizations and/or user groups

may apply, but only in coordination with a local unit of government.

**Eligible projects?** Land acquisition from willing sellers; trail construction and/or restoration; permanent trailside improvements (e.g., drainage, parking, bathrooms); ADA compliance projects; contracted maintenance; bridge construction and restoration. Projects within state park boundaries or in state trail corridors are not eligible for funding.

**Level of assistance?** Grants range from \$5,000 to \$250,000, with the average grant ranging from \$100,000 to \$170,000. Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement. The grantee must cover at least 25% of the total project cost.

**Source of funds?** Grants are funded primarily by the Minnesota State Lottery. Every year, the State Lottery returns 6.5% of gross sales to the state as a payment “in lieu of” sales tax. From these proceeds, state law dictates 2.2% is spent on local trail grants. These dollars are divided between the Local Trails Connection Program and the Regional Trail Program. In some past years, state bond sales and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund have also been used to fund local trail grant programs.

**The review process?** The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reviews all applications and makes final funding decisions. Priority is given to projects that develop trails of

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significant length, projects that are expected to have high usage, and projects that provide a unique and interesting connection to the outdoors.

### **Outdoor Recreational Grant Program**

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/outdoor\\_rec.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/outdoor_rec.html)

**Program Goals & Priorities?** To provide funds to local governments for acquiring parkland and developing, or redeveloping, outdoor recreation facilities.

**Who can apply?** All cities, counties, townships, and recognized tribal governments are eligible. The applicant must be the current or intended owner and manager of the property to be acquired and/or developed.

**Eligible projects?** Acquisition, development, redevelopment, and/or rehabilitation of outdoor recreation facilities, including but not limited to: boat/canoe access sites, campgrounds, fishing areas, skating rinks, nature areas, picnic shelters, playgrounds, sports fields and courts, swimming areas, splash parks, and non-motorized trails within a park boundary.

**Level of assistance?** Grants range from \$5,000 to \$100,000, with the average ranging from \$35,000 to \$65,000. Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement. The grantee must cover at least 50% of the total project cost.

**Source of funds?** Grants are funded with federal dollars from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON). Since 1965, LAWCON has provided matching grants to federal, state, and local governments for outdoor recreation projects. Income for LAWCON is primarily from fees paid by companies drilling for oil and gas in the Outer Continental Shelf.

**The review process?** The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reviews all applications and, if necessary, conducts site visits. Applications are judged based upon consistency with the strategic directions identified in the 2014-2018 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, including connecting people to the outdoors, acquiring land, taking care of what we have, and coordinating among partners. Additionally, proposed projects are judged based upon the local match, project readiness, site quality, and facility design.

### **Greater Minnesota Legacy Grants**

[www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/parks-trails-fund](http://www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/parks-trails-fund)

**Program Goals & Priorities?** To assist in the acquisition, development, improvement, or restoration of regionally significant parks and trails outside the seven-county metropolitan area.

**Who can apply?** All local units of government outside the seven-county metropolitan area are eligible to apply.

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**Eligible projects?** Land acquisition for development of trails or outdoor recreation facilities; development, redevelopment or rehabilitation of existing trails or outdoor recreation facilities; and protection or restoration of natural resources within parks and trails. Projects must be within a designated regional park or trail in Greater Minnesota.

**Level of assistance?** There is no minimum or maximum request. Applicants are not required to provide a match, but projects with non-state cash contributions will receive additional consideration. Past grants have ranged from \$20,000 to \$1.5 million.

**Source of funds?** Grants are funded by the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment, which was passed by voters in 2008. The Legacy Amendment increased the state sales tax 3/8 of one percent and dedicated 14% of new revenues to a Parks & Trails Fund. A portion of the Parks & Trails Legacy Fund supports regional parks and trails in Greater Minnesota.

**The review process?** The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Commission receives, reviews, and evaluates all applications. Projects are selected based upon criteria in the Parks & Trails Legacy Plan, the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan and Funding Program, the availability of a non-state cash match, and the project's overall quality, readiness, and design.

### Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

[www.dot.state.mn.us/map-21/tap.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/map-21/tap.html)

**Program Goals & Priorities?** To support alternatives to automobile transit, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, environmental mitigation, and safe routes to schools.

**Who can apply?** Local governments; regional transportation authorities; transit agencies; natural resource and public land agencies; school districts, local education agencies, or schools; and tribal governments are all eligible to apply.

**Eligible projects?** Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for non-motorized forms of transportation, including: sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, light and other safety-related infrastructure, ADA compliance, and conversion of abandoned railroad corridors into trails. Per Minnesota rules, engineering activities and the purchase of right-of-ways are not eligible.

**Level of assistance?** Grants are recommended to range from \$100,000 to \$1 million. The grantee must cover at least 20% of the projects total cost. Approximately \$13 million is expected to be available annually.



**Source of funds?** Grants are funded by the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund for Federal-Aid highways, of which 2% is reserved for transportation alternatives and appropriated to each state. The Minnesota Department of Transportation allocates Minnesota's share of these federal funds to each of the eight Area Transportation Partnerships based upon population.

**The review process?** Applicants must first submit a Letter of Intent to their regional Area Transportation Partnership. For McLeod County, interested parties should contact the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission ([www.mmrdc.org](http://www.mmrdc.org)). The letter of intent process coaches the applicant through the grant process, helps the applicant balance effort with the likelihood of receiving funds, and ensures the full requirements of federal funding are understood. Following the Letter of Intent, full applications are received, evaluated, and selected by each Area Transportation Partnership's committee. Projects are evaluated on their connection to statewide and regional plans, their connection to safe routes to school, their transportation purpose, and the feasibility of being completed on schedule.

### **Mini-Grants**

In addition to the grants already provided, there are a number of smaller grants regularly offered through various stakeholders, each with a unique focus. The following 'mini-grants' could assist with implementing the McLeod County Trails Plan:

### **MRPF New Initiative Grant Program**

[www.mnrpa.org/mrpf](http://www.mnrpa.org/mrpf)

**Synopsis:** Up to \$2,000 is awarded to spur innovation in parks and recreation services at a local, regional, or state-wide level that ultimately could have state-wide impact. The program is intended to allow agencies to try new programs and services that demonstrate innovation in parks and recreation services and have future applicability for other agencies at a local, regional, or statewide level. Ineligible projects include capital improvements, funding for existing programs and services, full-time personnel, and on-going expenses. Grants are funded by charitable contributions to the Minnesota Recreation and Park Foundation.

### **Explore Minnesota Grants**

[www.exploreminnesota.com/industry-minnesota/ways-to-get-involved/grants](http://www.exploreminnesota.com/industry-minnesota/ways-to-get-involved/grants)

**Synopsis:** Grants are offered to Minnesota non-profit organizations formed for the primary purpose of tourism promotion and to scenic byway groups incorporated as a non-profit organization. Grants are to be used for marketing and promotional projects or to conduct research to help in this endeavor. Grants range from \$250 to \$8,000. Applicants with organizational budgets less than \$100,000 are required to match grant funds 1:1 or 2:1 if greater.

**Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants**

<http://legacy.mnhs.org/grants>

The program supports history programs and projects to preserve significant historic and cultural resources. While not specifically intended for park and trail projects, the Minnesota Historical & Cultural Heritage Grants Program is applicable to parks and trails that preserve and/or promote historic and cultural resources. The average grant ranges from \$5,000 to \$30,000 with no local match.

**PeopleForBikes Community Grants**

[www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/community-grants](http://www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/community-grants)

The PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program provides funding for important and influential projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling in communities across the U.S. These projects include bike paths and rail trails, as well as mountain bike trails, bike parks, BMX facilities, and large-scale bicycle advocacy initiatives. Average grants range from \$4,500 to \$8,000 with 50% local match required.

**National Trails Fund**

[www.americanhiking.org/national-trails-fund](http://www.americanhiking.org/national-trails-fund)

American Hiking Society’s National Trails Fund (NTF) offers “hiking trail improvement” grants to active member

organizations of our Hiking Alliance. Once a year, Alliance Members have the opportunity to apply for a grant (value between \$500 and \$5,000) in order to improve hiking access or hiker safety on a particular trail. No local match is required.

**Advocacy Advance Grants**

[www.advocacyadvance.org/grants](http://www.advocacyadvance.org/grants)

Rapid Response Grants help state and local organizations take advantage of unexpected opportunities to win, increase, or preserve funding for biking and walking. Thanks to support from REI, these grants are for short-term campaigns that will increase or preserve investments in active transportation in communities where program choices are being made on how to spend federal, state, and local funding. Average grants range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 with no local match required.

**Rails-to-Trails**

[www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org)

Since 1986, Rails-to-Trails (RTC) has helped communities across the country convert abandoned railroads to multi-use trails. In 2015, RTC launched a new grant program to support organizations and local governments implement trail projects. They are currently offering \$85,000 per year for five years to qualifying projects.

## D. Plan Administration

The future success of the McLeod County Trails Plan rests on how successful stakeholders are in being organized, securing funding, and agreeing to stand behind the projects they are promoting. In addition, the McLeod County Parks Department and other key county staff will play a large role in helping to facilitate projects. Finally, the County Board will ultimately need to support trail projects by appropriating funds and/or agreeing to the terms of the various funding mechanisms.

In addition, the following list of implementation steps should be followed in order to properly implement the McLeod County Trails Plan:

1. **Continue County Trails Committee** – The McLeod County Trails Committee was originally set up in 2015 to assist with the development of the county’s first Trails Plan. Continuing with a similar type of committee would be valuable to the County, as the members could help sort out priority trail projects on an ongoing basis. They could also assist with identifying and mitigating any trail issues. Of course the County Board would ultimately have the final say on all of the major trail issues, but the Committee could take care of the vast majority of the fine details. Similar to the Trails Plan Committee, the County Board could appoint the members and meetings would only be held as needed.
2. **Develop a sample Maintenance Plan** – County staff should become familiar with and/or customize a model ‘Maintenance Plan’ procedure to be followed in trail projects. The main idea is to create a comprehensive list of maintenance issues that should be addressed, and more importantly, identify which stakeholders are responsible for implementing them.
3. **Trail Condition Report** – Related to maintenance, the county should work with stakeholders to develop a Trails Condition Report. These reports could be completed by stakeholders and/or volunteers and collected by whoever is responsible for performing maintenance on the trail. The County Parks Department could also play a role in collecting the reports.
4. **Develop a Master Plan for the Dakota Rail Trail** – Throughout the planning process, finishing the Dakota Rail Trail from the Carver County line to Hutchinson was identified as the highest priority project. Completing this 18 mile section would connect McLeod County’s portion of the trail to the paved 26 miles of trail in Carver and Hennepin Counties, thus creating a 44 mile paved regional trail. The next step is for McLeod County to develop a master plan for the trail.

## Chapter Five: Implementation Plan

5. ***Establish a Trails Fund*** – It was identified in the planning process to explore the possibility of establishing a ‘Trails Fund’ in McLeod County. The fund could receive an annual allocation in the county budget. With funds collected over time, a Trails Fund could provide the local match for grants and help fund new trail development, maintenance needs and/or the purchase of trail amenities. The fund could also serve as a collection place for donations and/or funds raised through trails events. Donations could be targeted for a specific project or be available for general trail needs.
6. ***Develop an Adopt-a-Trail Program*** – These types of programs are similar to Minnesota’s Adopt-A-Highway Program. This would allow volunteers and/or sponsors to actively participate in performing maintenance on a specific trail segment. The highway program focuses entirely on picking up litter. A customized local trails program, however, could also cover items such as mowing, tree trimming, and signage.
7. ***Trail Use & Enforcement*** – Trail users should be informed of rules and regulations in a variety of ways. Kiosks and signs should be strategically located to provide specific information about allowable trail uses, permitted and prohibited activities, directions, and required fees or permits. Printed and web based materials and maps could also provide similar

information. The McLeod County Sheriff’s Office would also be responsible for enforcement, responding to emergencies, and dealing with criminal activities.

8. ***Keep Table 5 and Map 5 Current*** – This Plan was created with the intent of being able to periodically update Table 5 and Map 5 as needed. Collectively they identify the county’s priority trail projects. Future updates could be screened by the Trails Committee and/or county staff prior to be voted on by the County Board. This will allow the map to be updated without having to revise the entire Trails Plan.



*For more information regarding the McLeod County Trails Plan, please contact the McLeod County Park’s Department at (320) 484-4334 or visit the following website:*

[www.co.mcleod.mn.us](http://www.co.mcleod.mn.us)



**Appendix A:**  
**McLeod County**  
**Demographics**



## U.S. Census Quick Facts

### QuickFacts


#### McLeod County, Minnesota

QuickFacts provides statistics for all states and counties, and for cities and towns with a population of 5,000 or more.

ALL TOPICS <input type="button" value="v"/>	MCLEOD COUNTY, MINNESOTA
<b>People</b>	
<b>Population</b>	
Population estimates, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	35,932
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2015)	36,651
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2015, (V2015)	-2.0%
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	36,651
<b>Age and Sex</b>	
Persons under 5 years, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	6.1%
Persons under 5 years, percent, April 1, 2010	6.7%
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	23.6%
Persons under 18 years, percent, April 1, 2010	25.3%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	17.8%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, April 1, 2010	15.3%
Female persons, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	50.3%
Female persons, percent, April 1, 2010	50.1%
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>	
White alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	97.1%
White alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	95.9%
Black or African American alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	0.7%
Black or African American alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	0.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	0.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	0.3%
Asian alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	0.7%
Asian alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	0.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	Z
Two or More Races, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	0.9%
Two or More Races, percent, April 1, 2010	1.0%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (b)	5.6%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, April 1, 2010 (b)	4.9%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	91.9%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, April 1, 2010	92.8%
<b>Population Characteristics</b>	
Veterans, 2010-2014	2,814
Foreign born persons, percent, 2010-2014	3.4%
<b>Housing</b>	
Housing units, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	15,715
Housing units, April 1, 2010	15,760
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2010-2014	76.1%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2010-2014	\$151,400
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2010-2014	\$1,329
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2010-2014	\$468
Median gross rent, 2010-2014	\$696
Building permits, 2015	45
<b>Families and Living Arrangements</b>	
Households, 2010-2014	14,727
Persons per household, 2010-2014	2.42
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2010-2014	88.3%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2010-2014	5.8%
<b>Education</b>	
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2010-2014	91.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2010-2014	18.9%
<b>Health</b>	
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2010-2014	6.2%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	6.3%
<b>Economy</b>	
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2010-2014	69.4%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2010-2014	64.1%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	39,647
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	223,302

Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	1,882,467
Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	260,061
Total retail sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	501,430
Total retail sales per capita, 2012 (c)	\$13,908
<b>Transportation</b>	
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2010-2014	22.2
<b>Income and Poverty</b>	
Median household income (in 2014 dollars), 2010-2014	\$56,234
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2014 dollars), 2010-2014	\$27,330
Persons in poverty, percent	▲ 7.9%
<b>Businesses</b>	
Total employer establishments, 2014	965
Total employment, 2014	15,818
Total annual payroll, 2014	647,564
Total employment, percent change, 2013-2014	0.2%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2014	2,376
All firms, 2012	3,006
Men-owned firms, 2012	1,527
Women-owned firms, 2012	1,074
Minority-owned firms, 2012	61
Nonminority-owned firms, 2012	2,811
Veteran-owned firms, 2012	274
Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012	2,512
<b>Geography</b>	
Population per square mile, 2010	74.6
Land area in square miles, 2010	491.47
FIPS Code	27085

▲ This geographic level of poverty and health estimates are not comparable to other geographic levels of these estimates

Some estimates presented here come from sample data, and thus have sampling errors that may render some apparent differences between geographies statistically indistinguishable. Click the Quick Info  icon to the left of each row in TABLE view to learn about sampling error.

The vintage year (e.g., V2015) refers to the final year of the series (2010 thru 2015). Different vintage years of estimates are not comparable.

- (a) Includes persons reporting only one race
- (b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories
- (c) Economic Census - Puerto Rico data are not comparable to U.S. Economic Census data

- D Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information
- F Fewer than 25 firms
- FN Footnote on this item in place of data
- NA Not available
- S Suppressed; does not meet publication standards
- X Not applicable
- Z Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

QuickFacts data are derived from: Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, Current Population Survey, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits.

**ABOUT US**

Are You in a Survey?  
<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/are-you-in-a-survey.html>  
 FAQs (<http://ask.census.gov/>)  
 Director's Corner  
<http://www.census.gov/about/leadership.html>  
 Regional Offices  
<http://www.census.gov/regions/>  
 History  
<http://www.census.gov/history/>  
 Research  
<http://www.census.gov/research/>  
 Scientific Integrity  
<http://www.census.gov/about/policies/quality-assurance.html>  
 Census Careers  
<http://www.census.gov/about/census-careers.html>  
 Diversity @ Census  
<http://www.census.gov/about/diversity-networks.html>  
 Business Opportunities  
<http://www.census.gov/about/business-opportunities.html>  
 Congressional and Intergovernmental  
<http://www.census.gov/about/cong-gov-affairs.html>  
 Contact Us  
<http://www.census.gov/about/contact-us.html>

**FIND DATA**

QuickFacts  
<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>  
 American FactFinder  
<http://factfinder2.census.gov/>  
 Easy Stats  
<http://www.census.gov/easystats/>  
 Population Finder  
<http://www.census.gov/popfinder/>  
 2010 Census  
<http://www.census.gov/2010census/>  
 Economic Census  
<http://www.census.gov/econ/census/>  
 Interactive Maps  
<http://www.census.gov/geography/interactive.html>  
 Training & Workshops  
<http://www.census.gov/mso/www/training/>  
 Data Tools  
<http://www.census.gov/data/data-tools.html>  
 Developers  
<http://www.census.gov/developers/>  
 Catalogs  
<http://www.census.gov/mp/www/cat/>  
 Publications  
<http://www.census.gov/library/publications.html>

**BUSINESS & INDUSTRY**

Help With Your Forms  
<http://bhs.econ.census.gov/bhs/>  
 Economic Indicators  
<http://www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>  
 Economic Census  
<http://www.census.gov/econ/census/>  
 E-Stats  
<http://www.census.gov/econ/estats/>  
 International Trade  
<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/>  
 Export Codes  
<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/schedules/b/>  
 NAICS  
<http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>  
 Governments  
<http://www.census.gov/govs/>  
 Local Employment Dynamics  
<http://leh.ces.census.gov/>  
 Survey of Business Owners  
<http://www.census.gov/econ/sbo/>

**PEOPLE & HOUSEHOLDS**

2020 Census  
<http://www.census.gov/2020census/>  
 2010 Census  
<http://www.census.gov/2010census/>  
 American Community Survey  
<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>  
 Income  
<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/>  
 Poverty  
<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/>  
 Population Estimates  
<http://www.census.gov/popest/>  
 Population Projections  
<http://www.census.gov/topics/population/projections.html>  
 Health Insurance  
<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/health/insurance/>  
 Housing  
<http://www.census.gov/topics/housing.html>  
 International  
<http://www.census.gov/population/international/>  
 Genealogy  
<http://www.census.gov/topics/population/genealogy.html>

**SPECIAL TOPICS**

Advisors, Centers and Research Programs  
<http://www.census.gov/about/partners.html>  
 Statistics in Schools  
<http://www.census.gov/schools/>  
 Tribal Resources (AIAN)  
<http://www.census.gov/aian/>  
 Emergency Preparedness  
<http://www.census.gov/topics/preparedness/>  
 Statistical Abstract  
[http://www.census.gov/library/publications/series/statistical\\_abstracts.html](http://www.census.gov/library/publications/series/statistical_abstracts.html)  
 Special Census Program  
<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/specialcensus.html>  
 Reorganization and Linking Data  
<http://www.census.gov/about/adrm/data-linkage.html>  
 Fraudulent Activity & Scams  
<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/are-you-in-a-survey/fraudulent-activity-and-scams.html>  
 Recovery Act  
<http://www.census.gov/recovery/>  
 USA.gov  
<http://www.usa.gov/>  
 BusinessUSA.gov  
<http://business.usa.gov/>

**NEWSROOM**

News Releases  
<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases.html>  
 Release Schedule  
[http://www.calendarwiz.com/calendars/calendar-cens1sample&cid\[\]=31793](http://www.calendarwiz.com/calendars/calendar-cens1sample&cid[]=31793)  
 Facts for Features  
<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features.html>  
 Stats for Stories  
<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories.html>  
 Blogs  
[http://www.census.gov/about/contact-us/social\\_media.html](http://www.census.gov/about/contact-us/social_media.html)  
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<https://twitter.com/uscensusbureau>  
  
<http://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/subscriber/new>

**Population, Housing Units, Area, and Density: 2010 - County -- County Subdivision and Place**  
**2010 Census Summary File 1**

NOTE: For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf>.

Versions of this table are available for the following years:  
**2010**  
**2000**

Geography:  ▼

1  
-  
56  
of  
56

Geographic area	Population	Housing units	Area in square miles			Density per square mile of land area	
			Total area	Water area	Land area	Population	Housing units
McLeod County	36,651	15,760	505.53	14.06	491.47	74.6	32.1
COUNTY SUBDIVISION AND PLACE							
Acoma township	1,149	437	34.79	3.30	31.49	36.5	13.9
Acoma township	1,149	437	34.79	3.30	31.49	36.5	13.9
Bergen township	1,006	381	35.29	0.19	35.10	28.7	10.9
Bergen township	1,006	381	35.29	0.19	35.10	28.7	10.9
Biscay city	113	47	0.08	0.00	0.08	1,401.2	582.8
Biscay city	113	47	0.08	0.00	0.08	1,401.2	582.8
Brownton city	762	349	0.39	0.00	0.38	1,983.3	908.4
Brownton city	762	349	0.39	0.00	0.38	1,983.3	908.4
Collins township	473	216	35.60	1.34	34.27	13.8	6.3
Collins township	473	216	35.60	1.34	34.27	13.8	6.3
Glencoe city	5,631	2,424	3.23	0.01	3.22	1,749.3	753.0
Glencoe city	5,631	2,424	3.23	0.01	3.22	1,749.3	753.0
Glencoe township	495	214	33.40	0.14	33.26	14.9	6.4
Glencoe township	495	214	33.40	0.14	33.26	14.9	6.4
Hale township	942	387	35.46	1.24	34.22	27.5	11.3
Hale township	942	387	35.46	1.24	34.22	27.5	11.3
Hassan Valley township	693	270	33.38	0.07	33.31	20.8	8.1
Hassan Valley township	693	270	33.38	0.07	33.31	20.8	8.1
Helen township	863	329	35.11	0.03	35.08	24.6	9.4
Helen township	863	329	35.11	0.03	35.08	24.6	9.4
Hutchinson city	14,178	6,393	9.03	0.42	8.60	1,648.0	743.1
Hutchinson city	14,178	6,393	9.03	0.42	8.60	1,648.0	743.1
Hutchinson township	1,220	468	34.30	2.08	32.23	37.9	14.5
Hutchinson township	1,220	468	34.30	2.08	32.23	37.9	14.5
Lester Prairie city	1,730	704	0.86	0.00	0.86	2,011.2	818.4
Lester Prairie city	1,730	704	0.86	0.00	0.86	2,011.2	818.4
Lynn township	550	231	33.01	1.24	31.77	17.3	7.3
Lynn township	550	231	33.01	1.24	31.77	17.3	7.3
Penn township	315	131	36.09	1.43	34.66	9.1	3.8
Penn township	315	131	36.09	1.43	34.66	9.1	3.8
Plato city	320	146	0.35	0.00	0.35	924.8	421.9
Plato city	320	146	0.35	0.00	0.35	924.8	421.9
Rich Valley township	694	284	36.19	0.12	36.07	19.2	7.9
Rich Valley township	694	284	36.19	0.12	36.07	19.2	7.9

Geographic area	Population	Housing units	Area in square miles			Density per square mile of land area	
			Total area	Water area	Land area	Population	Housing units
Round Grove township	251	119	36.12	0.68	35.44	7.1	3.4
Round Grove township	251	119	36.12	0.68	35.44	7.1	3.4
Silver Lake city	837	379	0.38	0.00	0.38	2,219.2	1,004.9
Silver Lake city	837	379	0.38	0.00	0.38	2,219.2	1,004.9
Stewart city	571	261	0.81	0.00	0.80	709.7	324.4
Stewart city	571	261	0.81	0.00	0.80	709.7	324.4
Sumter township	535	203	35.73	0.73	35.00	15.3	5.8
Sumter township	535	203	35.73	0.73	35.00	15.3	5.8
Winsted city	2,355	1,017	1.92	0.01	1.91	1,234.4	533.1
Winsted city	2,355	1,017	1.92	0.01	1.91	1,234.4	533.1
Winsted township	968	370	34.02	1.03	32.99	29.3	11.2
Winsted township	968	370	34.02	1.03	32.99	29.3	11.2
PLACE							
Biscay city	113	47	0.08	0.00	0.08	1,401.2	582.8
Brownton city	762	349	0.39	0.00	0.38	1,983.3	908.4
Glencoe city	5,631	2,424	3.23	0.01	3.22	1,749.3	753.0
Hutchinson city	14,178	6,393	9.03	0.42	8.60	1,648.0	743.1
Lester Prairie city	1,730	704	0.86	0.00	0.86	2,011.2	818.4
Plato city	320	146	0.35	0.00	0.35	924.8	421.9
Silver Lake city	837	379	0.38	0.00	0.38	2,219.2	1,004.9
Stewart city	571	261	0.81	0.00	0.80	709.7	324.4
Winsted city	2,355	1,017	1.92	0.01	1.91	1,234.4	533.1

X Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

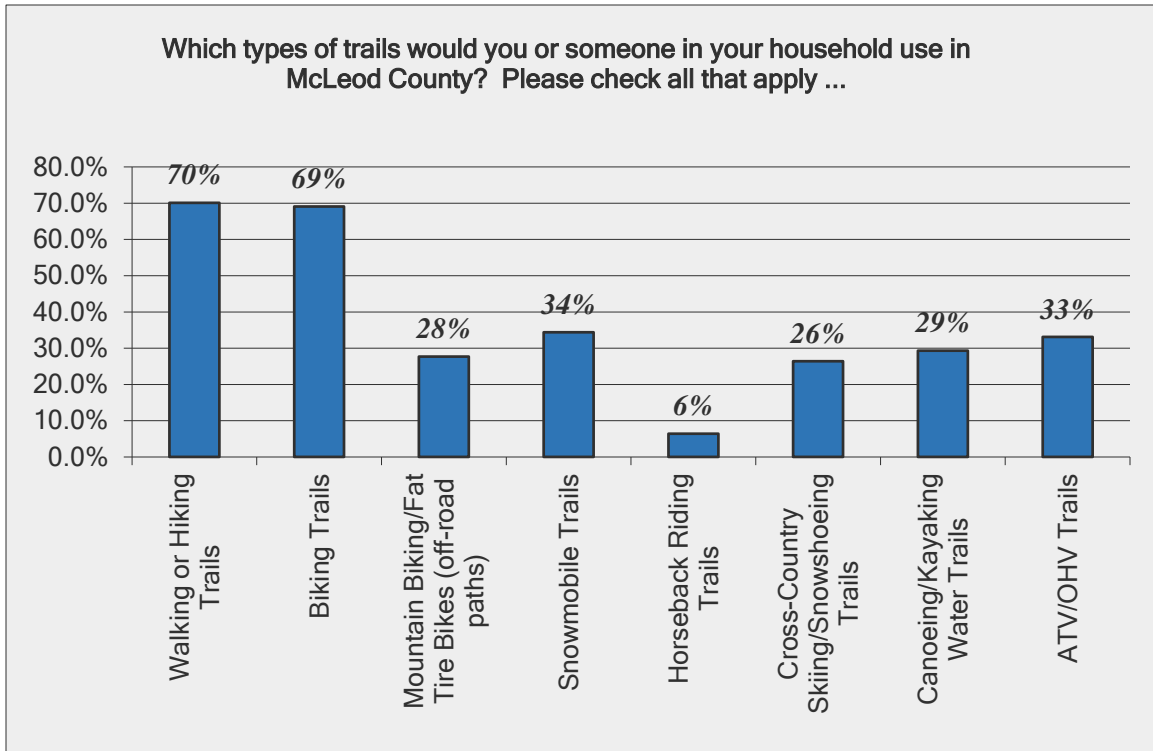
Census 2010 Summary File 1, Geographic Header Record G001.



**Appendix B:  
McLeod County  
Trails Survey**

# McLeod County Trails Survey Results

## Question 1:



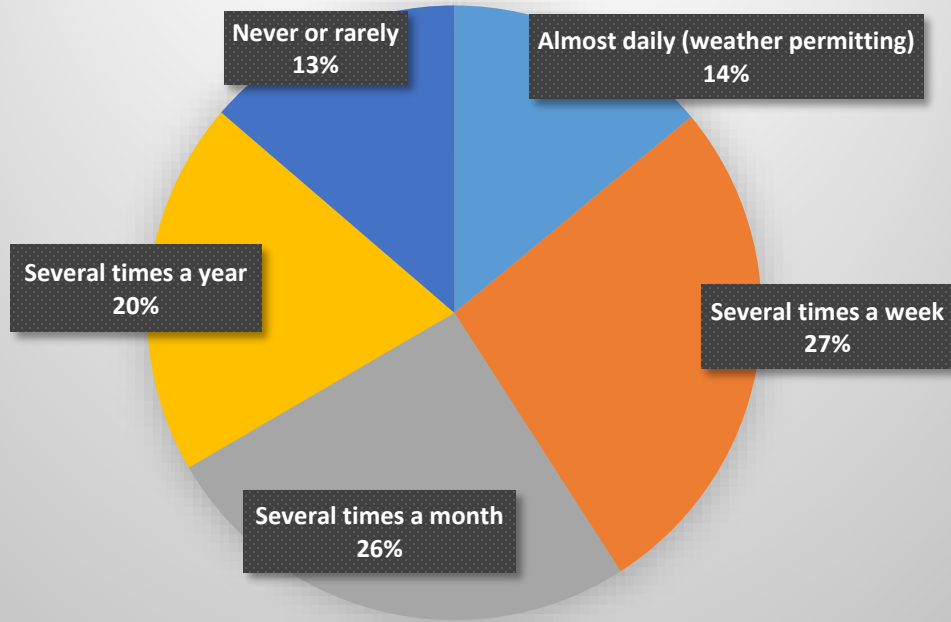
Question 1 Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Walking or Hiking Trails	70.1%	220
Biking Trails	69.1%	217
Mountain Biking/Fat Tire Bikes (off-road paths)	27.7%	87
Snowmobile Trails	34.4%	108
Horseback Riding Trails	6.4%	20
Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trails	26.4%	83
Canoeing/Kayaking Water Trails	29.3%	92
ATV/OHV Trails	33.1%	104
Other (please specify)		33
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>314</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>28</b>

*Question 1 Written Responses:*

<b>Number</b>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>
1	I love snowmobiling and cross country skiing- just no gear yet.
2	It would be great to expand Stahl's Lake Bike Trail
3	Would use them in winter too if snow was cleared
4	Nature trails through scenic areas
5	ROADWAYS
6	none
7	None of the above
8	wouldn't use
9	NONE, I belong to health club and exercise there year around
10	None
11	none
12	Quit wasting our money
13	None. We never use the trails
14	No one in this household would make use of any trails whatsoever. None! Why isn't that an option above? Oh, and "Water Trails"?!!! Really? Is that what
15	you call them? Might you mean river or stream? Or are you suggesting we fund the creation of rivers and streams?
16	none of the above
17	Only Snowmobile
18	none
19	None
20	None of the above
21	My husband and I walk on the sidewalks. We do not need a paved trail.
22	non tared trails
23	None we are too old
24	Wheelchair accessible trails
25	Dog trail/park
26	No one in our family will use any type of trail in McLeod County.
27	None. Quit spending money on trails!!!
28	running trails (could be same as mountain bike trails)
29	none
30	we no longer use trails in mc leod county
31	Born Learning Trails - (United Way Sponsored?)
32	Paved trails for longboarding (Skateboarding)
33	None, please do not build or pave any more trails

**Question 2:**

**On average, how often do people in your household use trails? Please select the best answer ...**



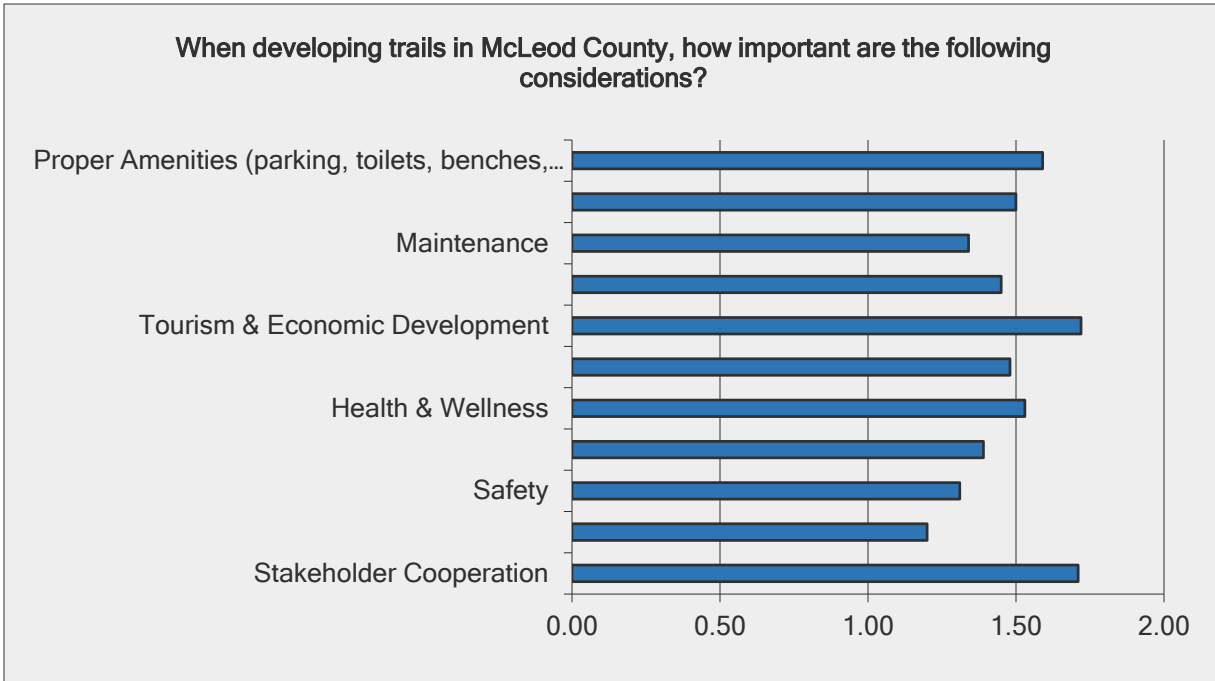
Question 2 Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Almost daily (weather permitting)	14.0%	47
Several times a week	26.9%	90
Several times a month	25.7%	86
Several times a year	19.7%	66
Never or rarely	13.7%	46
Other (please specify)		28
<b>answered question</b>		<b>335</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>7</b>

*Question 2 Written Responses:*

<b>Number</b>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>
1	I would use OHV trails a minimum of one time a week.
2	ATV trails
3	Again, we are frequent users of the trails within Hutchinson but have no interest in biking outside of town.
4	Please do not build or pace any more trails
5	Couple of times a day, walking our dogs even in the snow or rain! In nice weather, daily on our bikes too!
6	We used the trail significantly more before the paving. It feels like this trail now is a BIKE ONLY trail.
7	we don't use trails
8	none
9	Quit spending money on trails. Who is paying for the maintenance????
10	Never use
11	Every Winter
12	Never use
13	snowmobile
14	I repeat, we walk on the sidewalks and sometimes the street.
15	In biking season
16	Every good snowmobiling riding during the winter season.
17	ATV / OHV Trails are a rare commodity in central Minnesota. Other than the Meeker County OHV Park.
18	in winter only if snow fall is good
19	If there were more ATV trails I would use trails more.
20	FOR SNOWMOBILING IN THE WINTER. AND ATVING IN THE SUMMER
21	Pending on time of year. Several times a month to several times a week.
22	Snowmobile in winter, ATV and horse summer
23	Never use
24	Quit wasting our money.
25	If McLeod County has extra money to spend, how about a subsidy for my health club dues that I use year around
26	I used to walk the Dakota Rail until the DNR killed all the vegetation I used to love to look at.
27	never
28	I would like to increase this. It is so much easier now to bike the paved trail that I plan to do so more often.

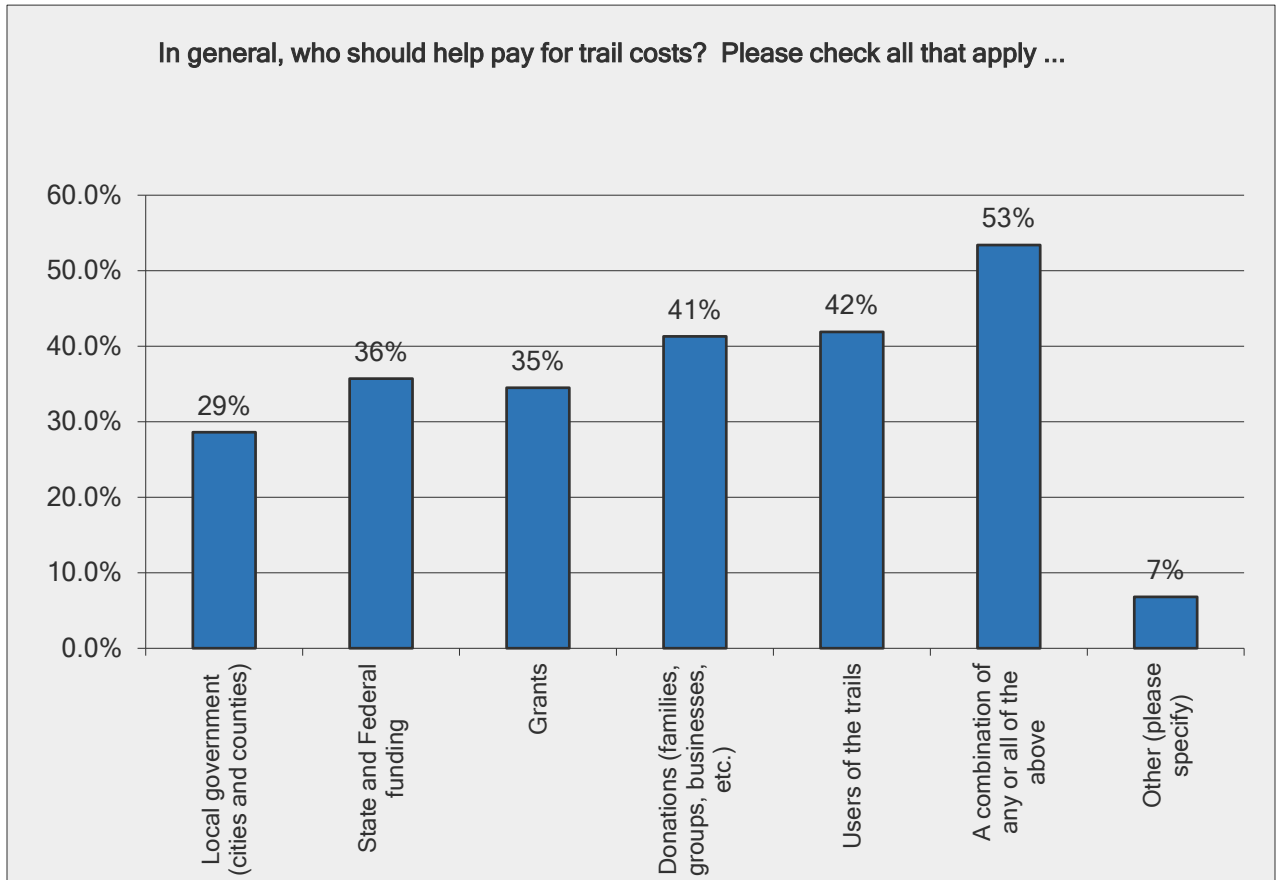


**Question 3:**



Question 3 Answer Options	Very Important	Neutral/No Opinion	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Stakeholder Cooperation	119	151	32	1.71	302
Respect for Landowners	256	56	4	1.20	316
Safety	225	77	10	1.31	312
Accessibility	207	85	18	1.39	310
Health & Wellness	177	93	35	1.53	305
Environmental Impact	188	94	28	1.48	310
Tourism & Economic Development	148	102	61	1.72	311
Trails should be multi-use if possible	194	88	26	1.45	308
Maintenance	216	83	11	1.34	310
Overall Cost	181	106	24	1.50	311
Proper Amenities (parking, toilets, benches, signage, garbage, etc.)	169	99	41	1.59	309
<i>answered question</i>					<b>324</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>18</b>

**Question 4:**



Question 4 Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Local government (cities and counties)	28.6%	92
State and Federal funding	35.7%	115
Grants	34.5%	111
Donations (families, groups, businesses, etc.)	41.3%	133
Users of the trails	41.9%	135
A combination of any or all of the above	53.4%	172
Other (please specify)	6.8%	22
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>322</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>20</b>

*Question 4 Written Responses:*

<b>Number</b>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>
1	Trails are wants, not needs. Grants and federal /state money should not be wasted on a few select bike riders. Wake up America, let's focus this effort on real problems in our community.
2	No more trails, we need to eliminate our debt not add to it!
3	No tax dollars
4	Why do I pay for a trail that now is really just for bikers? It is dissapointing to me that we have now excluded groups like the equine and snowmobiles that actually already pay for this.
5	we do not want trails
6	shouldn't have any
7	The people who use them!
8	Quit spending money on trails!!!
9	No user fees or tax payer dollars
10	Stop spending money on non-essentials
11	All OHV's pay license tabs and fuel tax to fund trail expense. the luce line is a state trail it should not have been payed for by county or city money ( almost 1.5 million dollars ) city, county, state and federal dollars is still TAX PAYER MONEY... ther will not be enough economic return to pay for paving trails. if I am wrong prove it to me.....
12	
13	If you're fantasy is to develope new trails within the city or county it should be that city or county paying for it. It is fiscally irresponsible to expect the general fund of our broke government to pay for trail upgrades. If the user funds can't pay, they need to concentrate their efforts on
14	developing a system that will allow users to fund the trails. Snowmobilers have done this for years. It's time to quit stealing from the general fund to provide tarrred nature trails to users who are not paying for it anyway.
15	No taxpayer dollars
16	No one. Quit wasting our money.
17	dont do it at all
18	I don't believe users should pay a trail pass. I think that discourages use and limits the benefit that residents, visitors, our communities and the county will receive.
19	It is hard to say without knowing what money is out there, slated for such projects and what the total project cost is.
20	any willing party
21	Walkers and bikers need to pay!

*Question 5:*

**What trail projects would you like to see developed in McLeod County? For example, new trails, new types of trails, parking areas, toilets, etc.? Please provide a brief answer...**

Question 5 Answer Options	Response Count
	238
<i>answered question</i>	<b>238</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>104</b>

- 1 Finish the Dakota Rail Trail to Hutchinson
- 2 Dakota Rail to Hutch, a short link between the Luce Line and Dakota along Hwy. 22, a trail developed in eastern McLeod Co. connecting north to south (i.e., Winsted to Plato along C Rd 1 or C Rd. 9)
- 3 Connection in Winsted for the Luce line
- 4 need 4wheeler trails, so they dont have to be on the road.
- 5 new trails, finish trail between Glencoe and Plato, parking area.
- 6 Dakota trail to Luce Line to complete loop
- 7 Connecting the Luce Line Trail with the Dakota Trail
- 8 The great northern trail needs to be graveled or paved all the way to Lester Prairie. It is paved from Lester Prairie East.  
Parking by otter lake bridge for trial use and or fishing use. Wheel age type use payment, we have been other place where you need a sticker type pass to use and I think that is appropriate and a fair way to use.
- 9
- 10 ATV
- 11 Gravel trails staying gravel!
- 12 Atv tails
- 13 Explanation of the mountain bike trail at Stahls Lake Park.
- 14 Mountain Biking Trails
- 15 Stahls Lake mountain bike expansion
- 16 Expanding stahls trail system
- 17 More mountain bike trails , expansion of existing ones (Stahls ).
- 18 Expansion of mountain biking trails possibly at Stahls park and continuation of the Dakota Rail trail to Hutchinson for summer multi-use.
- 19 More mountain bike trails. Add signs at Stahls parks for kids and family's to make more user friendly. Maybe a addition to stahls or adding another location! Swan lake park maybe.  
Mountain bike trails. Maybe an expansion of stahls.
- 20
- 21 Atv trails either similar to the new one operated by the Crow River Wheels in Meeker county or a longer ditch type trail
- 21 Mt. Bike trails
- 22 Mountain bike trails and xc ski trails
- 23 More horse back riding trails for all the people that own and have horses in McLeod County.
- 24 Walking and or hiking trails. Biking trail would be OK. Have parking. Toilets would be nice if they can be maintained.

- More groomed cross country ski trails - currently only Stahls, and not groomed very often.
- 25 -Expansion of mtn bike trail at Stahls Lake into grassland area  
-Miller Woods has signage for cross country skiing, but it is not groomed.
- 26 The Dakota County Trail should be developed and paved and connected to the Luce Line Trail in Hutchinson  
I think Biffs and trash cans would be nice, but probably expensive. I would like to see invasive species removed around existing trails and possibly some new plants installed to keep the view beautiful along the trails.
- 27
- 28 Trail From the Luce Line in Silver Lake to the Dakota Rail Trail
- 29 Paving the Dakota Trail as far as we can go toward Hutchinson for bike use. Also to have a side path for snowmobiles.
- 30 Connect the Dakota to the Luce line, Please. Can you fix the trails in the areas of Winsted ? Needs to be connected better make it safer.
- 31 William May Park (county park 3) should have gravel trails throughout the park and there should be a paved trail from the park to the Luce Line trail.
- 32 The Dakota Rail Trail for bicycle use between Lester Prairie and the Carver County Line.
- 33 Finish Dakota trail from Carver line to Hutch. Paved.
- 34 Paved bike trails and groomed cc skiing trails
- 35 New trails. Try to connect all cities.
- 36 ATV OHV trails are not available in the county to my knowledge.
- 37 Extension of Dakota Trail to Hutchinson
- 38 new trails
- 39 It would be great to see the Dakota trail linked in to the Luce Line creating a nice loop to ride out of Hutchinson.
- 40 Development of another mountain bike trail in another park-Swan lake or William May.  
Development of Dakota trail for biking.
- 41 Paved for biking, roller blading, walking and running.
- 42 I would like to see the Piepenberg Park trail groomed for cross country skiing and/or expanded for more snowshoeing. It is an awesome untapped resource.
- 43 More public access points on the Crow  
mountain bike trail expansion at Stahls lake, paving of the Dakota Rail line to connect with the luce line should be #1 priority
- 44
- 45 Green Leaf area to be more useable. A groomed/maintained cross country ski trail.
- 46 Off leash dog park. You should require all dogs to be current with vaccinations and be licensed.  
Could also charge an annual fee for use to help cover costs.
- 47 I would like to see a trail around Swan Lake. I think Swan Lake is a very popular lake, and with the park on the north end, adding a trail to the park would be great.  
surface, class five, or paving
- 48 connect trails together
- 49 festivals, activities to make use & promote use of trails, maybe similar to Quilts Along the Trail in Osakis, MN.
- 50 There should be a trail around Swan Lake connecting the Luce Line to County Park #2 and or Silver Lake to County Park #2
- 51 More trails away from traffic
- 52 As roads are rebuilt I'd like to see wider shoulders along popular routes for road bicyclers. Stahls Lake park has become a popular place for mountain bikers, hopefully it can continue to fill that niche.
- 53 I thought a trail was going to be made around Glencoe... if this is true I would like to see this done.
- 54 mountain bike trail at Stahls Lake Park



- 55 We have enough trails already
- 56 If money were no object, parking areas, new usable trails, accesses, etc for some different options.
- 57 None
- 58 We are excited about the paving of the luce line trail. A connection to the Dakota Trail in Lester Prairie would be wonderful. County Road 9 would be a perfect connectors get route.
- 59 The Dakota Rail Trail and the extension of the Luce line to the west county line.
- 60 Parking areas
- 61 None at this time. I only use the local trail in town.
- 62 New trails
- 63 The biggest oppportunity is paving the Dakota Rail trail.
- 64 dakota line developed like to see off road ttrail to Biscay
- 65 ATV trails!
- 66 more accessible north-south trails, trails connecting to nearby towns
- 67 Paving of Dakota Trail.
- 68 Parking areas, toilets
- 69 finish the trail system in Glencoe.  
parking and toilets for horseback use of Luce Line trail (none now as horses not allowed anywhere in Hutch City limits). Something at the West end of Hutch would encourage more use and could be paid for at least partially by state Horse pass \$'s. MN Trailriders association has info on financial impact of adding such facilities. Developing horse trails (and ski trails which often use the same path) in McLeod would be appreciated. We go elsewhere to ride and ski at other county parks and our \$'s for gas, etc. goes with us.
- 70
- 71 Paved trail from Hutchinson to Lake Marion
- 72 Continue connecting existing trails and access points.
- 73 Dakota trail development with bituminous surface.
- 74 Dakota rail - NOT paved
- 75 N/A
- 76 I am not an ATV owner but I can guess there are not many ATV trails around here. Where they do have them it appears they are heavily used.
- 77 dakota trail from lester prairie to hutchinson should be paved
- 78 possibly some loop trails so you don't have to ride one way all the time. example a loop out to Piepenberg circling to Stahl Lake and than back to Hutch.  
The Dakota Regional Trail from the county line to Hutchinson. Work with the DNR and Winsted to close the severance of the Luce Line State Trail in Winsted. Safe connections between the two trails.
- 79 Pave the shoulders along County Rd 115 and South Grade Rd to provide a safe connection from the Luce Line Trail to the City of Hutchinson's trail system. A Highway 22 trail between Hutch and Glencoe someday. Luce Line paved to Cedar Mills.
- 80 New trails to connect Luce Line and the Dakota trail. From Winsted to Lester Prairie. A Trail around Winsted Lake into the town of Winsted
- 81 Extension of the Dakota  
Trails from towns leading to the county parks
- 82 I would love to see canoes and kayaks be made available for rent at Winsted Lake. This is done in Hutchinson already, and it is a wonderful service.
- 83 Complete Dakota rail trail through Lester Prairie and beyond to silver lake and Hutchinson.
- 84 As a Lester Prairie property owner, it's absolutely embarrassing that McLeod County didn't react more proactively when Carver County was finishing their end of the Dakota Rail trail. To have a beautiful trail "end" in the middle of nowhere doesn't reflect well on the community. I appreciate the efforts of

local citizens to get the trail "useable," but tonight, I saw a bicyclist riding on Co Rd 23/30 parallel to the gravel trail. What the citizens don't realize is, the serious bikers, the ones riding near Mayer/Waconia/Lake Minnetonka, do not drive \$5000 Cannondale bikes on gravel. There is still a big safety issue with that trail. Finishing this portion of the trail thru Lester Prairie all the way to Co RD 1, SHOULD BE A PRIORITY.

- 85 Continue Dakota Trail to Hutchinson
- 86 I would like to see more hiking trails and horse trails in the county parks
- 87 connect the Dakota Rail to Hutchinson
- 88 Would like to see Dakota rail trail paved up to CR 1 in Lester Prairie along with parking available.
- 89 winsted canoe rentals
- 90 The Dakota Trail to Hutch
- 91 ATV trails in gravel pits. I know that there is funding available for this project.
- 92 expansion of Dakota trail west
- 93 connecting trail from Dakota to Luce Line
- 94 Dakota Regional Trail through Lester Prairie. I would like to see a permanent building by Central Park with permanent toilets, bike rack, pop machine, etc. There is plenty parking on the street. Paved trail.
- 95 Dakota regional trail-pave it and take West of Lester
- 96 TRAILS THAT DO NOT TAKE AWAY FROM CURRENT EXISTING TRAFFIC LANES!!!
- 97 Id like to see the Dakota trail tarred to Lester prairie, silver lake, and Hutchinson.  
Finish the Luce line paving through Winsted.
- 98 Would like to see more back country / wooded area snowmobile trails as opposed to straight line trails on old RR tracks and ditches.
- 99 To complete the Dakota rail trail to Hutchinson
- 100 None
- 101 Pave the Dakota trail
- 102 More connections to the county park systems if possible. connecting communities if possible.
- 103 More mountain bike trails or expansion to the 1 that is done.  
Walking/hiking/Biking
- 104 ATV trails  
snowmobile trails
- 105 Paving of trails so that bikes and others can use them.  
no more paved trails - there is currently plenty.
- 106 Make sure there is parking, toilets, garbage pickup,etc. for those already implemented.
- 107 Dakota  
Link up town centers, for instance Glencoe to Silver Lake, Winsted to Lester Prairie, Lester Prairie to
- 108 Plato, etc. We have some good connections from Winsted to Silver Lake to Hutch, other trails/locations would be good to help bring visitors to some of the smaller towns.
- 109 same requirements for use for all using such as snowmobiles same cost for bikers walkers joggers skaters
- 110 completion from lester prairie to hutchinson or even further on.
- 111 Tail connecting Luce Line Trail & Dakota (?) Trail in Silver Lake Area. Develop parking, picnicking area and restroom facilities.
- 112 Dakota Trail completion.
- 113 More 4 wheeler trails
- 114 Dakota trail
- 115 All of the above are important to have a good trail.

- 116 parking, toilet facilities other than portable facilities
- 117 PORTA-POTTIES
- 118 walking and bike
- 119 bike trail from Lester Prairie to Hutchinson
- 120 Extending the Dakota trail from Carver County to Hutchinson to connect up with the Luce Line
- 121 McLeod county has no business paving another bike trail. Lets see how the Luce Line trail is used and how much development (or expenses) come from this.
- 122 None. Enough of this spending on trails.
- 123 Trail connection between Luce Line and others like Dakota trail. Extend pavement or limestone of Dakota Trail and the Luce Line west of 115. Signage and toilets along trails.
- 124 stop all trails
- 125 parking-it is important that we don't have people parking along the side of highways.
- 126 None. Quit wasting our money.
- 127 We don't have lakes here in McLeod, but we do have a few rivers, and creeks. Lets make some trails by them and incorporate some hills into those paths.
- 128 None. What we have is more than enough.
- 129 No such development is needed.
- 130 NOTHING! Keep taxes low in McLeod.
- 131 maintain existing trails only, no pavement because maint costs are too high and it doesn't allow horses, snowmobiles ATV
- 132 Snowmobile and ATV users are an asset to the community. Bicyclists are a liability. Please allow the assets to continue to create their own solutions and urge the liabilities to start paying their own way.
- 133 Dakota
- 134 Fix the bridges on the Dakota Rail Trail first before spending money to pave the trail.
- 135 More ATV trails. Development of the current trails we have. Multi-purpose trails are a must.
- 136 Everybody needs to be able to us them.
- 137 Atv trails
- 137 Toilets and parking are necessary. Paving not needed.
- 138 ATV TRAILS FROM SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES TO THE OHV PARK NORTH OF HUTCHINSON
- 139 ATV TRAILS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- 140 Atv
- 141 ATV trails, parking. ATVs are becoming more popular. In Northern MN, they are used as a regulator means of transportation. Turn the Dakota rail into an ATV and Snowmobile. Particularity since the Soo Line is paved.
- 142 None! Are you kidding? Is there no end to the amount of other people's money you dream of spending? I am not against having to pay taxes, but I am incensed at the childlike eagerness so many have to waste sinful amounts of taxpayer money on their petty concerns.
- 143 atv trails
- 144 Dakota Regional Trail, Specifically from Carver County to Hutchinson
- 145 I don't think we need to develop any more trails around the Hutchinson McLeod County area using taxpayers dollars. We could invest our tax money into better community projects like a better rec center that will allow for Hutchinson to host tournaments of volleyball and basketball.
- 146 ATV trails
- 147 Leaving them dirt and making them atv accessable
- 148 Now that the Luce Line has been paved, I don't think any other paving of trails is necessary.

- 149 None
- 150 Trails ok--but maintain them--NO paving-
- 151 none. what happened to the trail to nowhere east of glencoe
- 152 none
- 153 OHV Trails are non existent in the McLeod County area. Some Counties have adopted the ordinance to allow OHV's on County Roads.
- 154 none
- 155 Think a few extra rest areas might be nice.
- 156 None
- 157 Stop spending money on special interest projects. Our economy is weak.
- 158 I'd like to see the Luce Line trail continued on to the west to connect with the next town.
- 159 More mountain biking trails and cross country ski trails.
- 160 Mountain bike trails
- 161 I prefer natural base trails. It is relaxing to experience nature without feeling the hard concrete or blacktop underneath.
- 162 Make a link to Luce at Winsted. connect Luce to other trails
- 163 preserve snowmobile trails
- 164 none of the above we have enough
- 165 none
- 166 connect trails to parks
- 167 Dakota Trail from Carver County Line to Hutchinson, connections between the Dakota and Luce Line, more mountain biking trails. Would be nice to pave the shoulders on 115 and South Grade Rd so Luce Line users have a safe way to loop around back the the city trail system.
- 168 More Non-paved snowmobile trails.
- 169 Lighting on the trails. Especially the Luce line
- 170 ATV Trails
- 171 n/a
- 172 Accessable trails
- 173 toilets, new types of trails.
- 174 New trails linking communities-no dead ends
- 175 garbage cans and benches
- 176 Unisex one stall bathrooms for handicapped and wheelchairs. Also a few benches
- 177 Picnic areas, nice indoor restrooms, snack bar at trail heads and/or along trail
- 178 Fenced dog park as an amenity.
- 179 None! Quit spending money on trails!
- 180 Paving of the Dakota Rail into Hutch.
- 181 Possibly some cross country ski trails close.
- 182 Cross country ski trails (other uses in the summer) with a warming barn/toilet facility, mile markers on the Luce Line trail
- 183 Connection of Luce Line to Dakota Trail. It WILL get busier which I won't like as much, but aren't the trails supposed to get used & enjoyed a lot?
- 184 Pave Dakota Rail Trail from McLeod County line into Hutchinson for biking. Also pave a link between the Luce Line and Dakota Rail Trail.
- 185 paved trails into other counties/areas
- 186 Cost justify what we have done to date before we plow more taxpayer \$\$\$ in.

- 187 A challenging mountain biking trail which could be used for competitions; XC ski / off road running trails 5 to 15 miles long; Trail connections to other regional trails for extended bike rides
- 188 Tear up the paved trails.
- 189 Leave the Dakota as is for snowmobiles, possibly atv use  
I use the trails almost daily. The only thing I've ever complained about was lack of lighting on some parts of the trail. With it getting dark very early half of the year, I feel that I can't use the trail after 5 or 6 p.m.
- 190 We have what I wanted. If we could connect a snowmobile trail from our area up north maybe would be nice.
- 191 A place to rest every so often and bathrooms to use
- 192 nothing, the taxpayers have enough to pay just to survive
- 193 Make the loop back to Hutchinson
- 194 Atv trails.
- 195 none
- 196 Stop! you are ruining the good things that we had going in this community. Stop trying to make this into the Metro. I live here to stay close to nature not Tar.
- 197 New trails
- 198 parking areas/toilets
- 199 new ATV/OHV trails
- 200 The existing toilets should be left open year round. I see many people in the campground part of the Luce Line every day. Had to go and the doors are locked. More lights. It gets dark early and I see others walking and biking when it is pitch black.
- 201 Additional biking trails.
- 202 Stop wasting taxpayer money on any of the trails for a small special interest group. Who is pushing for trails when the general public doesn't want them?
- 203 Forget about trails and take care of the seniors.
- 204 Dog friendly trails with trash cans to dispose of poo bags. Make sure surfaces are paw safe; wont burn or harm paws with sharp rocks and no harmful chemicals used near trails.
- 205 Born Learning Trails for young children, perhaps a couple 'Little Libraries' with benches along the way, public use bike programs, definitely restrooms, benches and picnic spots along the way
- 206 Atv trails, more snowmobile trails
- 207 I would like to see the Luce Line paved West to Cosoms, MN. I also think Hutch could become a hub for biking if the Dakota Rail trail is paved Lester Prairie. I would like to see some more wooded walking trails. I great place would be the DNR property just West of Hutchinson on highway 7.
- 208 Expansion of Stahl's Lake County Park Mountain Bike to enable hosting of high school mountain bike races.  
trail to new GreenLeaf State Park
- 209 Connection to Dakota Trail.  
Paved shoulders on Hutchinson Bypass, too dangerous now.
- 210 Be able to have high mountain biking school races
- 211 Expand Stahls park mountain bike trail system. More mountain/fat bike trails.
- 212 A new mountain bike trail
- 213 More trails around Glencoe and Plato. Expand Stahl's so a Mountain Bike race could be hosted there for High School/Middle School teams.
- 214 Water connectivity from various lakes and rivers. Pontoon access and not just canoe/kayak.
- 215 Expanding stahls county park trails



- 216 I would like to see the paving stop. The horse trail where the Luce Line used to be is a joke.  
None, stop this nonsense, we have Isis over here in the US waiting to spring Paris like attacks on us
- 217 and we are worried about developing more trails!! Someday the hundreds of miles of MN trails will lay in ruins when our economy finally crashes.
- 218 None
- 219 None!! We have more than enough trails for the hand full of users that I have witnessed using the paved trail past my place.
- 220 Connection between the trails in Lester Prairie and Winsted - it would complete a loop from western metro.
- 221 Luce Line Trail to Cedar Mills
- 222 none
- 223 Hutchinson to 212 snowmobile trail.
- 224 I would like to see Stahl's Lake trail expanded to be able to house a High School Cycling Event. This would bring a lot of revenue to the area and would give families places to ride / walk / ski, etc.
- 225 More biking/walking trails with parking areas,etc.
- 226 We really need to focus on fixing county roads and bridges that are used 12 months of the year.
- 227 Toilets, running water at new Trail Head downtown Winsted  
Atv trails. Your missing thousands in revenue with residents leaving to northern Minnesota or even out of state. I'm talking fuel, hotels and restaurants. There are plenty of walking trails including roadways, luce line and sidewalks. My question is why would anyone turn another rail road into a walking trail that goes through bug infested areas with cities miles apart
- 228
- 229 No new paved trails no one uses!
- 230 Pave the trail between Lester prairie and new Germany!
- 231 A trail along Hwy. 22, from Glencoe to Hutchinson  
More Atv trails as we are very behind Wisconsin. This brings a lot of revenue due to folks traveling through towns that the trails connect to. All these bicycle trails are fine, but paving them runs it for any other useage, and is ridiculous. Non paved trails work for mountain bikes.
- 232
- 233 Snowmobile trails
- 234 None
- 235 Rail trail from L.P. to Cosmos: walking, running, rollerblading, rollerskiing, & biking. With, some lights(solar powered), benches and porta-potties.
- 236 Inter connected trails between communities.
- 237 OHV Trails
- 238 Trail between Lester Prairie and Winsted

*Question 6:*

**Do you have any additional comments regarding trails in McLeod County?  
Please provide a brief answer...**

- 1 Trails are important for a variety of reasons!
- 2 I think we are doing well in the Hutch area...and there is the Luce Line in the north. We need to develop in other areas, even if it is only a short distance or connection.
- 3 Don't pave over township roads with trails
- 4 The luce line clearly brings pl to hutchinson, offering more options off if this trail and adding the dakota trail finished would be amazing
- 5 I would like to see the Great Northern Railway path graveled or paved.
- 6 Stop ruining COUNTRY trails by paving them!
- 7 There is currently a lack of off-road cycling trails in the county.
- 8 My family of 4 uses trails all over and love to have them close to home so we don't have to travel so far.
- 9 There aren't many to comment on. Make some more
- 10 They could use a lot more of the county land they own to make trails. Like out by Piepenburg park and some of the other county parks.
- 11 Swan lake park trail closed so early. Not sure why.
- 12 Currently, the Luce Line Trail is centerpiece of trails for McLeod County. The development of trails should branch off of the Luce Line and/or connect to the Luce Line
- 13 I would just say that the trails should lead somewhere. It is a shame that the Glencoe trail didn't make it all the way to Plato. I think there would be a lot more use if it connected the two towns. Also, it would be nice if some of the blight issues along the trails were rectified. I know that this is difficult to do.
- 14 Complete the Luce line thru WInsted
- 15 Rest areas along trail at intervals. Love the new trail love what it can do for the businesses along the trails.
- 16 I think we have a good a start. Let's keep it up!
- 17 Good location for a 4 wheeler trail would be around Creekside.
- 18 Happy to see the Luce Line paved--use it 3-4 times/ week and I see many more others using it now that its paved
- 19 some great trails, but could use more variety of trails. I am on the Luce line daily. Would like to see others developed.
- 20 I would love to see expansion on the trails at Stahls Park. I use them for hiking, biking and snowshoeing and I see they are very heavily utilized and could use a little more space.
- 21 We should expand our trails system. I believe the "na" sayers are actually in the minority
- 22 big opportunity to create a paved trail loop by paving the dacota trail. This would provide a substantial positive economic impact for our county
- 23 There isn't much for cross country skiing nor mountain biking.
- 24 As previously stated, would like to see the trails (especially down by the river) cleared of snow in the winter so they could be used then.
- 25 Nice to see paved trail & people using it, promoting fitness.
- 26 lots of people walk ride bike and use the road around Swan Lake, however the road is not safe for pedestrians and auto traffic in the current config
- 27 Trails and other similar amenities make McLeod County a wonderful place to live. I'm proud to live in a place where public and private entities work together to make the community strong.

28 development of a comprehensive trail system should be a County priority and the County should be  
responsible for maintenance efforts/costs

29 Natural rock surface trails are the most usable by all users

30 Doesn't need to be fancy, but usable to more than just snowmobilers

31 Please don't waste any more money on trails.  
Is there a master trail plan in place?

32

Thank you for asking for input on this subject.

33 The trail systems provide an alternative mode of transportation. I like to see attention paid to non  
motorized vehicals, walkers, runners and other public uses.

34 I do not think that they have to be paved.

35 I think the trail systems are wonderful and provide to all age groups

36 We want more!

37 Like to intregate trail to north of Hutchinson to lakes

38 The County needs to step up regarding trails and start managing and maintaining trails for the residents of  
McLeod County.  
as regular horseback users of the Luce Line in McLeod County we would like to see the DNR commit to

39 maintaining the separate treadway through regular mowing. Lack of maintenance in other counties with  
separate treadways on the Luce Line has made use impossible at times

40 All users should help pay for trails - snowmobilers do now w/ registration fees. Walkers, in-line skaters,  
bikers, etc. should also contribute.

41 I would like to see a maintenance plan before any more trails are improved. I believe our trail system is  
currently adequate and that we don't need asphalt on every single trail.

42 Glad to see work on this issue.

43 Must have long-term plan for maintaining existing trails

44 I think it's very important to account for the maintenance of the trails when figuring out who pay upfront  
and who will continue to pay in the future

45 Connectivity is very important. Segmented trail systems limit use and make maintenance more difficult.

46 just look how popular the luce line is already

47 I like the idea that we are trying to organize something

48 Trails are important for their health and wellness benefits, improved safety and economic benefits. They  
are a valuable amenity that improves the quality of life in our region for people of all ages.

49 Thank you for paving the Luce Line trail from Hutch to Winsted or end of McLeod.

50 The paved Luce Line is great – I wish it extended along the gravel road west of Winsted, though, so that I  
wouldn't have to load my bike into the car to get to the trail.

51 Pave more of Dakota rail trail.  
When making decisions, PLEASE remember that bicyclists ARE NOT the almighty. Too many times  
their needs trump needs of ATV/Horsing/Snowmobile riders needs. Bicycling is a 6 month season. We  
need to make these trails usable the other 6 months of the year as well.

52

53 Paving the Luce Line was a waist of time.  
trails bring people to communities. I think trails are important for the health and safety (keeps people  
from having to use roads) of a community

54

55 Thank you for all the work everyone has done for trails in McLeod county to this point.

56 We wasted a lot of Money paving the Luce Line trail

57 Best investment in public health!

58 I would like to see the Dakota Regional Trail continue to Hutchinson and also connect with Luce Line  
Trail.

- 59 TRAILS SHOULD NEVER ALTER THE FLOW OF VEHICLE TRAFFIC! EX. CHANGING A 2  
WAY TRAFIC ROAD TO A ONE-WAY SO A PEDESTRIAN LANE CAN BE ADDED!
- 60 clean the brush along the dakota
- 61 My opinion is the County should take the lead, and work with the communities.
- 62 I love Stahls Park for Mountain biking! Needs more signs for young riders. If looking for samples check  
Mankato and Cuyuna parks
- 63 To have the Walking/hiking/Biking trail paved.
- 64 The Dakota Rail Regional Trail runs thru my land. Landowners are not shown respect or courtesy by  
trail users or the DNR. My preference is to not develop the trail west of Lester Prairie.
- 65 Trails are very important for our community!
- 66 leave the unpaved trails as they are, especially those in the country. Leave nature as intended.  
If you're going to build a trail, don't do it cheaply, use asphalt for walking/bike trails. I live next to the
- 67 Luce Line and almost never see horses, maybe once every other year, not worth it to have trails for  
horses, they can walk in ditches, etc.
- 68 biggest waste of tax dollars in the county
- 69 Luce Line Paving wonderful - would like to see safety address in accessing trail.
- 70 I think McLeod County residents should be proud of their trail system. We must continue to move  
forward.
- 71 All users of the trails should pay a fee for usage like snowmobiles and horseback riders
- 72 It is a good part to the community to have access to the trails for good healthy individuals.
- 73 Progress is being made
- 74 PLEASE FINISH LUCE LINE TRAIL
- 75 The Luce Line trail is enough, until (or if) this proves itself.
- 76 Trails are not an economic benefit to our county. Spend money on creating jobs for people.
- 77 Very grateful that Luce Line has been paved through Hutch to Winsted. Usage will continue to grow.  
Trails should be accessible to all. User fees would not be a good idea.
- 78 stop wasting money
- 79 The trails were fine without paving. Everyone needs to prioritize how money is spent. We waste way  
too much money on FUN.
- 80 Yes. Quit wasting our money.
- 81 I use the trail in Meeker County a lot. It's the one on HWY 12 just east of Darwin. It's a long drive from  
Glencoe, so something like that closer would be great!
- 82 We have spent way too much money on trails.
- 83 Taxes are to be levied for the common good. If taxes are used for trails, the benefits are only for those  
who use them, certainly a minority, unlike roads & bridges & police & fire protection.
- 84 I tend to think that paving is not a cost-effective plan for trails, plus it limits the trails uses.
- 85 We don't need to develop more trails!
- 86 The existing trails are great as they are revitalized railroads but this is a rural area and we should not be  
"building" or taring bike trails.
- 87 Please keep the Crook and Arndt show from continuing to spend everyone's money for their own  
interests.
- 88 Fix the bridges on the Dakota Rail Trail first before spending money to pave the trail.
- 89 Snowmobile trails should not be paved
- 90 If more trail projects are consider the monies should come from individuals or users of the trails.
- 91 TRAILS SHOULD BENIFIT EVERYONE NOT ONLY BICYCLERS
- 92 Paving Luce line was the wrong decision

93 Turn the Dakota rail into an ATV and Snowmobile trail. Particularity since the Soo Line is paved. Two paved trails next too each other lacks common sense. Also note, in Northern MN, ATV trails bring in money to local businesses as they require fuel, maintenance, stay at hotels, and eat at restaurants. In addition, a vast majority of Northern MN cities except them as a normal means of transportation with no issues. Manufactures are now also designed them for a normal means of transportation in which multiple states already allow.

94 The expense keeps creeping up, which is rough on me a very infrequent, potential user of the trail. I'd rather donate at the trailhead instead of getting dinged in my taxes.

95 Your trail concerns are so trivial, yet so expensive. I am sick of being forced to support the needless fantasies of others! I have 3 jobs and I'm supposed to be retired! Go find something productive to do. do not tar any trails.

96 charge a license fee for bicycles to ride on any trail.

97 The think McLeod County should be more progressive in funding trails. Especially around the smaller communities

98 Stop investing money into something that does not entise people to live here or visit here. Trailled do not bring people to town.

99 STOP PAVING TRAILS

100 There is no need to blow a ton of tax payers money on paving anymore trailers leave them dirt so they don't wreck it in the winter for snowmobile the minute you pave it the snow melts off them to fast and no one can ride them and if you leave it dirt make it so you can ride atvs and utvs on it instead of only giving the selfish bikers whatever they want

101 Now that the Luce Line has been paved, I don't think any other paving of trails is necessary.

102 Stop spending money. We don't need any more trail, or paving. Give the money back to tax payers.

103 If you pave--the snowmobiler still has to find another trail---Use the \$\$ to fix the roads.

104 i have heard how trails bring in money to the community but they are comparing trails in the metro or brainerd area, we are NOT the metro or brainerd area. lets compare with other trails, i don't think there will be a return on tax payer money

105 waste of resources

106 Why pay for additional trails, when the Federal & State funding is available for such projects?

107 what a waste of money!!!!!!!!!!

108 I think every person that uses the trail system should help maintain it. The bicycles should be license just like a snowmobile.

109 Enough has been spent already, cost is too much

110 I don't believe that paved trails will make Hutch a tourist attraction! Paving trials in s waste of money and only benefit a few. Grant equal taxpayer dollars, so how does that bring taxes down?

111 I would like to see stop sign for the people to stop for our driveway. The trail goes across our driveway and I think the people should have to stop. We farm so we have lots of tractors, trucks hauling grain and other large equipment going through. We need signage on the township road Garden Ave N. NO PARKING ON ROAD. The farm equipment doesn't fit through when there are cars parked on the road.

112 paving was unfortunate

113 Since the Luce Line was paved outside of city limits, I have seen more bikes use the unpaved section than the blacktop. What a waste of money. No wonder why governments are looking for revenue - priorities go unfunded while lightly used trails to nowhere receive millions of dollars.

114 They are very expensive and they should be paid for by the people that use them.

115 The paved Luce trail is great.

116 No more lets pay for what we have first

117 Have others pay for them other than McLeod County



118 They are important health and wellness amenities and help get people out into nature. I won't ride on roads because I don't feel safe so having access to trails is important because of the increased safety they provide. Having more in McLeod County will just enable me to do more locally.

119 One Tar Trail is enough!

120 As highways are rebuilt, trails should be added along the outside edge of ditch right-of-ways in some areas, such as from Glencoe to Stewart, CR15 from Glencoe to Dakota Rail Trail, Lester Prairie to Winsted, etc.

121 Focus on multi-use; if single use is done, funding should come mostly from users (through use permits) or donations and fund raising! The residents of the city do not want to pay for a dog park if they aren't going to use it, likewise, I don't want to pay for a horse trail that I will never use! Too much focus has been on bike trails, enough already!

122 Tax snowmobilers they are hard on the trails and we will need more maintenance, it should be for walkers joggers and bikers

123 Please take all sorts of users into consideration. Not everyone bikes...or owns the bike shop.

124 I think you know my answer! Quit spending money on trails!

125 Only have used trails in Hutchinson town limits. They were very nice aside from some maintenance problems on a few.

126 LOVE the paving on Luce Line! I now ride safely on a trail with no distracted drivers to worry about. I feel much safer and my family doesn't worry!

127 Multi-purpose trails for all  
snowmobile, atv, biking, walking

128 I'm very happy to see the completion of the Luce Line project. Our household will use that trail a lot! Continued efforts on more projects like that are appreciated by our community.

129 need more of them

130 These trails were "sold" to the public as a never ending revenue source into the Hundreds of Thousands of dollars. to date, while on the trail, you may at best encounter a number of bikers you can count on one hand. NONE of which are paying to use. What a debacle.

131 Do more surveys instead of assuming what tax dollars should be spent on.

132 I think the the parks and trails are wonderful. It is was attracted me to Hutchinson.

133 More tared trails for wheelchairs and bikes

134 Listen to the poeple! Stop spending on the frills when we can't even support grocery stores and are looking at possibly even loosing more industry.

135 Paving Luce Line trail was/is a waste of money, in my opinion. There's definitely better ways to spend that money (again, IMO).

136 very important to our city and all the buisnesses

137 Good job so far! Thank you!

138 The money spent on trails should be used for road repair & improvements as there is a shortage of funds for that. We should be more worried about jobs than trails. Who's going to pay for trails if 600 people lose their job at HTI? How is Hutch going to survive the tax storm with additional trails and unnecessary spending being added to these trails? No one knows for sure how much money has been spent on the Luce Line trail. Costs have been hidden from the public. What agenda does the former Hutch mayor have when he knows the Luce Line trail will not generate economic revenue? Do not spend any additional tax money to develop the Dakota trail! The Luce Line trail is a nightmare for the landowners.

139 It would also be great if we had a dog park.

140 Would like to see trails connecting towns--Hutchinson to Glencoe, Hutchinson to Litch, Glencoe to Silver Lake and/or Lester Prairie, etc.

- 141 Paved trails only benefit the people that don't pay a fee to use them. Snowmobiles and Atv's pay a registration fee to use trails.
- 142 Thank you for finally paving the Luce Line. :)
- 143 Thanks for the trails we already have. Hutch Tigers Cycling really appreciates the trails. [www.hutchtigerscycling.org](http://www.hutchtigerscycling.org)
- 144 Promote the Friends of the Luce Line to garner more private support.
- 145 Expand the Stahl's Lake area for biking and walking
- 146 Luce line and stahls park are very nice and I'm grateful I am able to use them.
- 147 No tax dollars used to pay for them
- 148 A snowmobiler has to hve a registration sticker and a trail sticker to be on the trail. So should a biker, hiker or rollerblader. All users should pay the same! the snowmobile club is who cleaned up the trail so far.
- 149 Connecting the trails to cover more distance would help keep bikes off the roads where automobile drivers are not good at sharing the roads.
- 150 Luce Line should never have been tared!
- 151 Let's ask the users of the trails to pay for them.
- 152 Stop this nonsense, spend our hard earned tax \$\$ on roads, bridges, infrastructure. Spend this money on projects that benefit the majority of McLeod Cty taxpayers.
- 153 We should not waste ANY taxpayer dollars on frivolous things like trails. The money should be used for more important things like roads and bridges.
- 154 When is Government going to start listening to the people. 77% of people do not support local spending on trails. (Hutchinson Leader poll Dec 2 2012)
- 155 This is great family activity to go biking on McLeod County Trails.  
the trails have caused tens of thousands of dollars of damage to field tiles from tree roots to farmers along the trail. trespassing,littering and vandalism have been an issue. potential crimes in secluded rural areas with the lack of security and policeing. the trail cuts through many farms and building sites backyards making it very accessible to criminals. the dnr has not been controling noxious weeds especially thistles, the mature seeds are flying in the wind before they get to them!
- 156 We already have the Luce line trail that has been black topped. The Dakota rail doesn't need to be.
- 157 Snowmobiles aren't accepted on tar, plus the snow melts faster. Our license fees have paid for new bridges and upkeep to get the Luce line useable from the old rail road days. Now that it is tarred we can't use it.
- 158 A huge mulimillion investment has already been spent on Luce Line. Lets take 2 to 3 years to see how much use it gets. How about some automated counters to actually RECORD usage?
- 159 Thanks for tarring the Luce Line. It is great to see so many people using the trail whom before could not use it - wheelchairs, strollers, roller blades
- 160 Should be open to ATV/Snowmobile
- 162 More snowmobile trails
- 163 I think instead of think of the Dakota they should use the money in other ways such as our roads . Also since the snowmobile comity has to pay for a trail license for the up keep of the trails I think the bikers should as well for the up keep up of seal coating and what not.
- 164 This is a long term investment in our county's scenic enjoyment & positive health benefits to constituents.
- 165 Good location for OHV could be around Creekside
- 166 No paving over gravel roads. Put no parking signs on township roads.
- 167 Cut trees on farm lines.
- 167 Too dangerous to ride bicycles on the shoulders of roads. Off road trails are by far the safest option available.

*Question 7:*

*Please enter your  
zip code?*

<i>Zip Code</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>General Location</i>
55312	6	Brownton
55325	1	Dassel
55331	1	Shorewood
55334	1	Gaylord
55336	24	Glencoe
55350	169	Hutchinson
55354	35	Lester Prairie
55355	4	Litchfield
55370	2	Plato
55381	23	Silver Lake
55385	2	Stewart
55395	16	Winsted
55396	1	Winthrop
55397	1	Norwood Young America
55530	1	Elk River