

July 1, 1993
LCMR Final Status Report

1. Superior Hiking Trail - Recreation 14

Program Manager: Tom Peterson
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A. M.L.91 Ch 254 Sec.14 Art1 Subd.3(b) Appropriation: \$400,000
Balance: \$ 0

This appropriation is to the commissioner of natural resources for planning and administrative assistance and a grant to the Superior Hiking Trail Association for planning, development, and limited use of easement acquisition. The use of conservation corps resources is strongly encouraged. Up to \$80,000 is available to the commissioner for planning and administrative assistance. Available federal and private money is appropriated.

II. Narrative

The objective of the Superior Hiking Trail Association is to develop and maintain a 250 mile hiking/backpacking trail between Duluth and Grand Portage State Park on the Canadian border. This LCMR appropriation will provide 100 miles of trail that will make the Superior Hiking Trail a continuous 230 miles.

The Department of Natural Resources will be responsible for implementing trail construction under a cooperative agreement with the Superior Hiking Trail Association.

III. Objectives

A. Trail Administration: Trail Coordinator

1. Narrative: The construction of a long distance hiking/backpacking trail requires planning, coordination, and supervision. The trail coordinator will be responsible for alignment selection, landowner negotiation, construction supervision that insures a quality product in conformance with safety standards and the trail plan adopted by the Superior Hiking Trail Association.

2. Procedures: The trail coordinator will, with the Superior Hiking Trail Association and the Department of Natural Resources, plan the route the trail will take and flag it on the ground, contact and negotiate with all landowners along the preferred route, insure that interagency coordination is ongoing, including local, state, and federal agencies, administer all contracts, while providing a liaison role to the Superior Hiking Trail Association.

3. Budget:

a. Amount Budgeted: \$80,000
b. Balance: \$ 0

4. Timeline: July91 Jan92 June92 Jan93 June93

Plan alignment
Landowner negotiation
Contract administration
Construction

5. Status: The trail coordinator reports regularly to the Superior Hiking Trail Association in addition to serving on committees, writing in the Newsletter and updating maps. Cooperative projects have been initiated and completed with cities, counties and the U.S. Forest Service, including the Bridge over the Devil Track River. Construction and labor contracts were negotiated and administered. Five work crews supervised. Not all landowner negotiation was successful in this time period. The Superior Hiking Trail Association, along with a contract with the MCC, will undertake all future efforts at coordination of this project.

6. Benefits: The role the trail coordinator provides is that of continuity and coordination among local, state, and federal agencies involved. The trail coordinator insures that the trail is built to the standards of the Superior Hiking Trail Association and the Department of Natural Resources.

B. Grand Marais to Canadian Border: 60 miles

1. Narrative: The goal of this objective is to develop a quality hiking/backpacking trail between Grand Marais and Grand Portage State Park on the Canadian Border. This segment will also Link Judge Magney state park with the other parks on the shore. The trail will include a 25 mile segment crossing the Grand Portage Indian Reservation.

2. Procedure: The development of the trail will require the cooperation and agreement with the Grand Portage Reservation, the identification of the preferred route, the construction of the treadway, and the construction of facilities including bridges, parking lots, and campsites.

3. Budget:

a. Amount Budgeted: \$200,000
b. Balance: \$ 0

4. Timeline: Jul91 Jan92 Jun92 Jan93 Jun93

Cooperative agree-
ment

Plan alignment

Treadway Const-
ruction

Facility Const-
ruction

5. Status: 50 miles are complete and 45 miles are open for use. 10 miles of high quality trail have been built on the Grand Portage Reservation but remain closed to the public. It appears that the completion and opening of the Reservation segment of trail will be undertaken by the Band itself. Notable accomplishments include a major bridge over the Devil Track River and trail linking Judge Magney State Park. Partially because of Federal Land Exchanges in the Hoveland area, trail is routed on county roads for five miles. These road miles are not considered completed trail by the SHTA. Volunteer efforts and alternative funding continue to move the trail off the road. Cooperative effort with the Minnesota Rovers is ongoing to link the Superior Hiking Trail with the Border Route Trail completely off road. A road link currently exists.

6. Benefits: The benefits of a quality trail include a quality experience for the trail user, both for backpacking and day use. The trail offers access to the diverse terrain of the Lake Superior region both for State residents and visitors. This provides a recreation attraction for the resort industry. This, the longest continuous trail in the midwest, complements the state park trail system by linking all eight state parks on the north shore.

C. Little Marais to Schroeder: 15 miles

1. Narrative: The goal of this objective is to develop a quality hiking/backpacking trail between Little Marais and Schroeder. At the present time, this constitutes a "gap"

in the continuous trail between Castle Danger and Grand Marais. Completion of this section will connect Crosby-Manitou state park with the five other state parks currently on the trail alignment. A portion of the original gap was completed in 1990 as a result of shifting resources from the section between Two Harbors and Castle Danger.

2. Procedure: Trail development will involve the identification of a preferred alignment, agreement with landowners along this route, the construction of the treadway and the construction of facilities, including bridges, parking lots, and campsites.

3. Budget:

a. Amount Budgeted: \$40,000
b. Balance: \$ 0

4. Timeline: Jul91 Jan92 June92 Jan93 June93

Landowner agree-
ment

Plan alignment

Treadway Const-
ruction

Facility Const-
ruction

5. Status: 12 miles of trail treadway have been completed. All rivers bridged. The land exchange necessary to secure the final 3 miles of alignment has not yet taken place. Volunteer effort and alternative funding will ultimately complete this section of trail.

6. Benefits: The benefits of a quality trail include a quality experience for the trail user, both for backpacking and day use. The trail offers access to the diverse terrain of the Lake Superior both for state residents and visitors and provides a recreation attraction for the resort industry. Completion of this section of trail will fill the "gap" and provide for a continuous trail between Castle Danger and Grand Marais.

D. Knife River to Castle Danger: 20 miles

1. Narrative: The goal of this objective is to develop a quality hiking/backpacking trail between Knife River and Castle Danger. This will allow access of the trail from Two Harbors, the largest population center on the north shore north of Duluth. Completion of this objective will result in a 230 mile continuous trail on the ridgeline above Lake Superior between Knife River on the south and the Canadian border on the north.

2. Procedure: Trail development will include landowner negotiation and agreement, identification of the preferred route, construction of the treadway, and the construction of facilities including bridges, parking lots, campsites, and signing.

3. Budget:

a. Amount Budgeted: \$80,000
b. Balance \$ 0

4. Timeline: Jul91 Jan92 June92 Jan93 June 93

Landowner agree-	
ment
Plan alignment
Treadway Con-	
struction
Facility Con-	
struction

5. Status: 12 miles complete between Two Harbors and Castle Danger but grand opening of this section will not take place until late Summer, 1993. Bridges built over Crow, Encampment, and Silver Creek. Volunteer efforts continue to secure alignment and build trail between Two Harbors and Knife River.

6. Benefits: The benefits of a quality trail include a quality experience for the trail user, both for backpacking and day use. The trail offers access to the diverse terrain of the Lake Superior region both for State residents and visitors and provides a recreation attraction for the resort industry. This segment will continue the trail south through Two Harbors.

IV. Evaluation:

The success of trail development on the ridgeline above Lake Superior will be judged by the growth of the Superior Hiking Trail Association (now at 1400 members), the participation in association organized events, and the responses solicited at guest registers located on the Split Rock River, Bean Lake, Carlton Peak, Lake Agnus, Lookout Mountain, and Devil Track River. Success will also be measured by the use of the trail in marketing attempts by the recreation industry in the area. Ultimately, this project will be evaluated by the ability of the Board of Directors to manage and maintain the trail so as to continue to offer a quality experience for both the day user and the backpacker.

V. Context:

- A. Trail built as a result of this project will complement and complete previous work.
- B. This 90 miles will add to the 140 miles already complete and fill in the gaps.
- C. Prior to LCMR funding, no long distance hiking trail existed in Minnesota or the Midwest. Previous LCMR grants provided 140 miles of quality trail, this funding will provide for a continuous trail of 230 miles.
- D. Ridgeline Hiking Trail \$156,000
- E. Superior Hiking Trail \$400,000

VII. Reporting Requirements:

Semiannual status reports will be submitted not later than Jan. 1, 1992, July 1, 1992, Jan. 1, 1993, and a final status report by June 30, 1993.