

LCMR WORK PROGRAM 1993

I. Project Title: Agassiz Recreational Trails (A.R.T.)
Program Manager: Curtis Borchert, District Manager
Agency Affiliation: Norman County Soil and Water Conservation District
Address: Box 60, Twin Valley, MN, 56584
Phone: (218) 584-5169

A. Legal Citation: M.L. 93 Chpt. 172, Sect. 14 Subd. 10(g)g
Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$ 650,000.00
Balance: \$ 448,867.66-June-30,1995
End Balance: \$ 0.00 December 31, 1995

Appropriation Language: [10(q)] This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the commissioner of natural resources for a contract with the Agassiz Recreational Trail Joint Powers Board to plan, purchase, and develop Agassiz recreational trails and improve up to five local parks.

"The project is extended to December 31, 1995; on that date the appropriations cancel and no further payment is authorized, Minnesota Laws 1995, Chap. 220, Sec. 19, Subd. 19."

B. LMIC Compatible Data Language: N/A
C: Status of Match Requirement:
Match Required: N/A
Funds raised to Date: N/A

II. Narrative:

The first priority of the A.R.T. Joint Powers Board will be to purchase 452 acres/35 miles of abandoned railroad bed, at a cost of \$122,518.00. The second priority will be to develop the purchased and donated land for a total of 564 acres/47 miles, at an estimated cost of \$474,882.00. The third priority will be to upgrade four local parks for better utilization by trail users, at an estimated cost of \$52,600.00. This will be the start of the Agassiz Recreational Trails. The trail will link the diverse educational and recreational opportunities along the main trail located in Clay, Norman, Polk and Red Lake counties of Northwest Minnesota.

III. Statement of Objectives:

Objective A. Purchase trail property from the Burlington Northern Railroad and private landowners.
Objective B. To develop Agassiz Recreational Trails for basic use.
Objective C. Improve the educational, recreational, and economic development opportunities for the four county area.

IV. Objectives:

A. Title of Objective: Purchase trail property from the Burlington Northern Railroad and private landowners and develop A.R.T. for basic use.
A.1. Narrative:
The A.R.T. Joint Powers Board will negotiate with Burlington Northern Railroad and private individuals to purchase the property. Burlington Northern is asking \$300.00/acre, \$200 above the value of crop land next to the railroad.
A.2. Procedures:
The first step will be to purchase the land from Burlington Northern Railroad and private individuals.

A.3. Budget: July 1, 1994
a. Amount budgeted: \$122,518.00
b. Balance: \$ 127,139.65-June-30,1995
\$ 9,276.62 transferred to B.3
End balance: \$ 0.00 December 31, 1995

A.4. Timeline:
7/93 1/94 6/94 1/95 6/95
Purchase A.R.T. trails

A.5. Status:
July 5, 1993--The Agassiz Recreational Trails Joint Powers Board started to negotiate with Burlington Northern, but it did not work out. We asked LCMR staff for assistance.

August 6, 1993--At the suggestion of LCMR staff, we hired the DNR Bureau of Real Estate Management as consultants for the appraisal and purchase of property from Burlington Northern Railroad. We followed their procedures in the appraisal and negotiation for the property.

October 7, 1993--DNR appraiser and private appraiser did onsite appraisal of Ulen to Fertile segments.

Oct 7-Dec 14, 1993--Norman County SWCD staff compiled maps requested by private appraiser. (ASCS-aerial photo, soil survey, GIS-National Wetland Inventory maps, GIS-1989 landuse, GIS-Soil Classification, GIS-Soil Productivity Index)

Dec. 1-Dec. 14, 1993--Norman County SWCD staff photocopied all the deeds for DNR title opinion, to be completed by DNR staff.

It is anticipated that DNR will start to negotiate with Burlington Northern in January 1994, with the property being purchased by February 1994.

January to March 1994--The 12 mile segment from Fertile to Red Lake was completed by the Fertile Snowmobile Club. This is for snowmobiles only. There were no LCMR funds planned or used for this segment.

January 1 to March 18, 1994--DNR reviewed and developed the title opinion.

March 21 to April 8, 1994--Local review and strategy development.

April 11 to May 12, 1994--DNR negotiated with Burlington Northern.

May 13, 1994--The ART JPB met face to face with Burlington Northern and negotiated an agreeable price.

May 20, 1994--The ART JPB received the purchase agreement.

May 25, 1994--The ART JPB signed and returned the purchase agreement.

July 9, 1994--The Twin Valley Field Office was assigned ten AmeriCorps staff people; two staff people to assist with the ART trail and three to assist with expanding the ART trail regionally. The other five people will work on conservation activities in the area. These are federally funded college students as part of President Clinton's program to assist college students with funding for their education. This is a three year renewable program.

July 26, 1994--Burlington Northern signed the purchase agreement. We anticipate closing on August 19, 1994.

August 1 to August 26, 1994--The Norman County Attorney reviewed all paper work and found no major problems.

August 29, 1994--The Agassiz Recreational Trails Joint Powers Board closed with Burlington Northern Railroad.

October 14, 1994--The deed was recorded in Norman County.

November 4, 1994--The deed was recorded in Clay County. The deed included 1/2 mile of active track in the City of Ulen. This will require additional legal action.

November 17, 1994--The deed was recorded in Polk County. When the deed was recorded it was found that a deed was recorded on November 15, 1994 for a 1/2 mile of property just south of Fertile MN. The land was purchased in 1991 by a private individual but it was never recorded. The description and the BN representative was the same on both deeds. This will require additional legal action.

April 18, 1995--The Joint Powers Board received the corrected deed. The new deed corrected the previously recorded deed from November 4 and November 17, 1994. They are negotiating with BN. The board wants a statement added to the deed that if the live tracks become abandoned it will revert back to the trail.

December 26, 1995--The ART Joint Powers Board has not received the corrected deed from Burlington Northern stating that if the live tracks become abandoned it will revert back to the trail. At this time the Joint Powers Board still owns 1/2 mile of the active railroad track in the city of Ulen.

Work Program Amendment was required by LCMR after land was purchased. The amendment shows the purchase price, the changes in construction and the amount remaining for the park upgrades.

A.6. Benefits:

This area of Northwest Minnesota has lost an economic resource in the form of the railroad. We will regain this economic development resource in the form of tourism. If this project is not completed, the railroad bed resource will be lost as the land will be reverted back to farm land. This area of Minnesota needs an economic boost. The trail will provide this boost.

B. Title of Office: To develop Agassiz Recreational Trail for basic use.

B.1. Narrative:

On the upper treadway, the rails, ties, bridges and most of the rock have been removed. The development will be to remove the remaining rock and dispose of it. The 12 areas where holes have been pushed through the railroad bed for farm drainage will be repaired with culverts. The areas that have small trees and weeds growing will be cleared and grubbed. The entire railroad bed will be scarified, adding class 5 base gravel for uniformity, and repacking to a relatively smooth surface. On the lower treadway, this area will be cleared and grubbed and where necessary the grass will be reestablished. The signs will be installed and the trail opened for basic use. There will be hard surface handicap accessible trails in Ada and Ulen. The Trail has been designed with assistance from Soil Conservation Service to meet approved standards. If funding remains after negotiations and letting of bids, these funds will be transferred to the park segment of this appropriation.

B.2. Procedures:

The entire area will be surveyed and designed by SWCD and SCS technicians. These plans will be submitted to DNR for review. When the design has been approved the project will be let on bid. The project will be completed in sections.

ITEMIZED LIST BY SEGMENT

B.2.A. Ulen Segment

(estimated construction cost of \$32,224)
.5 miles of 10 feet wide bituminous trails

B.2.B. Ulen to Syre Segment

(estimated construction cost of \$65,395)
7 miles of 10 feet wide class 5 gravel base
7 miles of 10 feet wide grass base

B.2.C. Syre to Twin Valley Segment

(estimated construction cost of \$111,558)
6 miles of 10 feet wide class 5 gravel base
6 miles of 10 feet wide grass base

B.2.D. Twin Valley to Gary Segment

(estimated construction cost of \$95,382)
8 miles of 10 feet wide class 5 gravel base
8 miles of 10 feet wide grass base

B.2.E. Gary to Fertile Segment

(estimated construction cost of \$122,396)
10 miles of 10 feet wide class 5 gravel base
10 miles of 10 feet wide grass base

B.2.F. Ada Segment

(estimated construction cost of \$47,927)
2 miles of 10 feet wide bituminous trail

B.2.G. There is 1 mile within Twin Valley and 1/2 mile within Gary where the trail will follow city streets.

B.3. Budget: July 1, 1994

a. Amount budgeted: \$474,882.00

b. Balance: \$ 384,128.01 June 30, 1995

\$ 9,276.62 transferred from A.3

\$ 47,100.00 transferred from C.3

End balance: \$ 0.00 December 31, 1995

B.4. Timeline:

	7/93	1/94	6/94	1/95	6/95	12/95
B.4.A. Develop Ulen segment			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
B.4.B. Develop Ulen to Syre segment			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
B.4.C. Develop Syre to Twin Valley segment			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
B.4.D. Develop Twin Valley to Gary segment			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
B.4.E. Develop Gary to Fertile segment			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
B.4.F. Develop Ada segment			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX			XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Fertile to Red Lake Falls segment completed			XXXXXX			

B.5. Status:

August 24, 1994 We received approval from LCMR to start construction on the ART trail.

September 5 to September 23, 1994--The call for bids on the 4 segments of the main line of the ART trail were sent to the media.

September 26, 1994--Bid openings trail
The bid was opened for the B.2.B. Ulen to Syre Segment (estimated construction cost of \$65,395) with low bid of \$59,034.30.

The bid was opened for the B.2.C. Syre to Twin Valley Segment (estimated construction cost of \$111,558) with a low bid of \$33,010.00 not including pipes.

The bid was opened for the B.2.D. Twin Valley to Gary Segment (estimated construction cost of \$95,382) with a low bid of \$70,593.10 not including pipes.

The bid was opened for the B.2.E. Gary to Fertile Segment (estimated construction cost of \$122,396) with a low bid of \$90,885.00 not including pipes.

October 11, 1994 Construction started, it was extremely wet and until the 26 of October only dewatering efforts took place. On the 26 of October the rock removal started.

October 18, 1994--The construction ground breaking ceremony was held.

October 24, 1994 The call for quotes on 6 of the 12 pipe locations were sent to the local contractors.

November 14, 1994 quotes on the pipe structures were opened with the low quote of \$21,641.00 being accepted by the board. The pipes will be; 6 pipes in section B.4.C.

December 2, 1994 the construction season ended for 1994 with the ground freezing. There were 10 miles of rock removal completed.

May 25, 1995 Quotes on the pipe structures were opened with a quote of \$29,249.80 being accepted by the board. The pipes will be, 1 pipe in section B.4.B, 1 pipe in section B.4.C, and 4 pipes in section B.4.E

June 7-23, 1995 6 pipes were placed in section B.4.C, and 4 pipes in section B.4.E. There is a small amount of fill that is needed to complete these pipes, they are at 95% complete. We are waiting for approval from the Dept. of Transportation for one pipe in section B.4.C along State Highway 113.

June 7, 1995 Work on the trail bed started for the 1995 construction season. We had a very wet spring and work is still going very slow.

June 30, 1995 There are 16 more miles of rock removal completed at this point, 5 miles remaining. We anticipate completion of the trail by August 18, 1995, weather permitting.

July 11, 1995 1 pipe was placed in section B.4.B.

July 13, 1995 Gravel placement on the trail was started.

July 20, 1995 Rock removal of the trail was completed.

October 10-20, 1995 Seeding and mulching was completed on the trail.

October 19, 1995 Ground preparation began in Ada for the asphalt trail.

October 23-November 17, 1995 Safety signs were put up along the trail.

October 26, 1995 Ground preparation began in Ulen for the asphalt trail.

October 26, 27, 1995 Asphalt was placed and completed in Ada.

October 28, 1995 Asphalt was placed and completed in Ulen.

November 21, 1995 1 pipe was placed in section B.4.C.

Grade preparation for graveling was started in early June and continued until August.

Construction checks were ongoing throughout the whole project.

The trail was accessible on December 1, 1995. The grand opening for the trail will be on National Trails Day which is June 1, 1996.

AMERICORPS

October 11, 1994 The two AmeriCorps people started. They have worked on the following projects for the trail.

The ground breaking ceremonies.

Developed a video introduction to AmeriCorps and their work on the trail

Developed an introductory brochure for the trail.

Worked on grants.

Received a \$200.00 grant from Polaris to develop a color brochure of the trail.

Submitted 35 grant inquiries to private foundations.

The AmeriCorps members have assisted in obtaining \$40,000.00 to construct the Twin Valley Heritage Center/Art gallery/information rest area for ART on Highway 32 in Twin Valley.

Installed safety signs along the trail.

The AmeriCorps program was approved for three members for 1996 to work on ART promotion and development.

Participated in the National Trails Day which was held on June 3, 1995. This consisted of a picnic, mountain bike giveaway and horse and wagon tours of ART. Senator Roger Moe gave a speech on his support for the trail.

Received \$500 from Polaris for 1996 for printing up the brochures.

Promoted the trail through floats in local parades.

Working with cities on promoting ART.

Included ART in a tourism promotion for area counties.

Helped the SWCD apply for a grant for upgrading the East Agassiz Conservation Park which is located along the ART.

Produced a promotional map of ART.

B.6. Benefits:

The major users of the upper treadway trail from B.2.B., B.2.C., B.2.D. and B.2.E. during the summer will be walkers/hikers, bikers, bird watchers, native prairie researchers and for educational activities, the lower treadway will be used for horseback riders. Winter use on the upper treadway will be for snowmobiling, and the lower treadway will be used for snowshoeing and skiing. Sections B.2.A. and B.2.F., which are handicapped accessible, will be used for walking/hiking, biking, bird watching, educational activities, and native prairie research in the summertime. Winter use will be for skiing, snowshoeing, sledding and hiking.

At this time, the Northwest Minnesota area does not have recreational trails. The construction funds will allow development of the trail. With the construction of this trail the whole project becomes functional. Completion of this trail will enable us to expand the trail laterally.

C. Title of Objective: Improve the educational, recreational, and economic development opportunities for the four county area.

C.1. Narrative:

If funding allows, four parks will be upgraded for better utilization by local people and the users of the Agassiz Recreational Trails. This will provide the educational, recreational and economic development opportunities in Northwest Minnesota.

C.2. Procedures:

Each city will be responsible for the development of their park. The City of Ada will develop 10 overnight camping units. The City of Twin Valley will develop 20 overnight equestrian and 15 year-round camping units. The City of Ulen will develop a winter recreation park.

C.2.A. The development of the City of Ada's Park; (estimated cost is \$22,600)

restrooms
sewer, electricity and water hook-ups
signs

This segment was in the original proposal which included the segment from Ada to Felton, which was later dropped. This part of the original segment can still be developed which will enable us to expand the trail in other directions.

C.2.B. The development of the City of Ulen's Park; Ulen's park will be financed if there are any funds left over from the Twin Valley and Ada parks.

C.2.C. The development of the City of Twin Valley's Equestrian units; (estimated cost of \$5,000)

restrooms

C.2.D. The development of the City of Twin Valley's camping units; (estimated cost of \$25,000)

restrooms
campsites
sewer, electrical and water hook-ups

C.3. Budget: July 1, 1994

a. Amount budgeted: \$52,600.00
b. Balance: \$52,600.00 June 30, 1995
\$47,100.00 transferred to B.3
End balance: \$ 0.00 December 31, 1995

C.4. Timeline:

7/93 1/94 6/94 1/95 6/95 12/95

C.4.A. Develop the City of Ada's 10 overnight camping units. xxxxxxxxxxxx
C.4.B. Develop the City of Ulen's winter recreation park. xxxxxxxxxxxx
C.4.C. Develop the City of Twin Valley's 20 overnight equestrian units. xxxxxxxxxxxx
C.4.D. Develop the City of Twin Valley's 15 year-round camping units. xxxxxxxxxxxx

C.5. Status:

No development is allowed at this time.

After completion of the trail, \$5,500.00 was used for C.4.C.

C.6. Benefits:

The major users of the parks will be the people using the Agassiz Recreational Trail, local folks, tourists, family and school reunion attendees and local club members.

The development of these parks will allow for better utilization of the parks by local people and users of the A.R.T. trails.

V. Evaluation:

The A.R.T. project started as a combined effort to restore wetlands and develop 9 miles of horse back riding trails east of Twin Valley. With each planning meeting the trail increased in scope and size. As the project was submitted to the LCMR there was 103 miles of trails and four parks. At the time of submitting this work program, one of the parks had to be dropped and a 17 mile stretch of the trail south of Ada had been sold to private landowners and is lost to trail use. But, two additional parks to the north of the main trail have been requested, along with 53 additional miles of trails going into Pennington County.

This project is the basis to start a trail system in Northwest Minnesota. It is not on the DNR trail system. There is a tremendous interest in developing trails for this area and connecting them into the DNR routes to the east. We will be working with the DNR, area economic development organizations, state tourism agencies and local clubs to promote the use of the A.R.T. trails and local parks.

In order to measure the success of the project, we will collect input from knowledgeable sources to find out how many people are using the new trails, what economic benefits have come into the area, and how many educational activities have been accomplished. This will take some time and footwork after the project is up and running.

VI. Context:

A. There are no connecting trails in the four county area. Each city has developed parks and small trail systems for the local people. The DNR has many wildlife areas along the unique beach ridge area. The A.R.T project will connect these existing areas. As the trails become a reality, additional recreational and educational parks will be planned.

B. The A.R.T project will be the basis to develop a starting point for a regional trail system in Northwest Minnesota.

C. Each of the cities along the main trail have developed parks and small trail systems for the local people to use. The high cost to purchase the abandoned railroad bed is the limiting factor in obtaining a connecting regional trail system. We have not used LCMR funding in this area for trail development. As areas to the north and south are developed they may request additional LCMR funds. The main A.R.T trail will not require additional LCMR funding. It will have to survive with local support.

VII. Qualifications:

1. Program Manager-Curtis D. Borchert
 - a. Curtis Borchert is the District Manager of the Norman County Soil and Water Conservation District. He is responsible for carrying out the policies established by the Board of Supervisors for the efficient administration of the business of the District. Duties include coordinating administration of all departments and developing the annual budget, annual report and the annual plan of action. Curtis supervises employees engaged in various projects. He plans long range programs to provide the Board with a comprehensive view of problems and operations, alternative solutions and the assessment of long-range impact of present decisions. He serves as the Districts technical expert in various program areas. Curtis has five years of experience dealing with both state and federal programs and the administrative requirements that each possess.
 - b. Curtis is a 1985 graduate from North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND., with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture Education and a Minor in Composite Science.
2. Cooperators/Other Investigators-Robert E. Platt
 - a. Bob Platt has owned and operated a small business in Ada for 32 years. For 16 years Bob has been a member of the Ada City Council where he has worked with city, county, and state funded projects. He is also chairman of the Street Committee, which he has served on for 10 years, has been on the Airport Authority Board for 18 years, and is a member of the Norman County Rod and Gun Club. Realizing a need for outdoor environmental education for students, Bob developed an outdoor classroom at his farm for all sixth grade classes in the county in 1981. The past 11 years this project has had enthusiastic response from the area public schools.

VIII. Reporting Requirements: Semiannual status reports will be submitted no later than January 1, 1994, July 1, 1994, January 1, 1995 and a final status report by June 30, 1995. Due to the extension, a final status report will be on December 31, 1995.