

Milwaukee Road Corridor Study

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Technical Appendix C

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Title: TRANSCRIPT OF TELEPHONE SURVEY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT
OFFICIALS ALONG SELECT RECREATIONAL TRAILS
ON FORMER RAILROAD GRADES

By: STAFF OF THE DNR
TRAILS PLANNING SECTION
TRAILS & WATERWAYS

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Department of Natural Resources

TRANSCRIPT OF TELEPHONE SURVEY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT
OFFICIALS ALONG SELECT RECREATIONAL TRAILS ON FORMER RAILROAD GRADES,
SURVEY CONDUCTED BY DNR STAFF DURING SEPTEMBER 1979

List of Law Enforcement Officials Contacted

Elroy-Sparta Trail

Juneau County: County Sheriff, Richard Tyler (608/843-1271)
Monroe County: County Sheriff, Ray Harris (269-2117)

Douglas Trail

Olmsted County: County Sheriff, Von Wald (507/285-8306)
Goodhue County: County Sheriff, Dale Groat (388-8261)

Heartland Trail

Hubbard County: County Sheriff, Larry Johnson (218/732-3331)
Cass County: County Sheriff, Louis Chalick (547-1424)

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

DNR

Interviewer: This is an interview with Mr. Richard Tyler, who is sheriff of Juneau County in Wisconsin. His jurisdiction thus includes portions of the Elroy-Sparta Trail.

First, Mr. Tyler, maybe you could just tell me how large your staff is, and how long you've served as its head and so forth.

Sheriff: Well, I've been in law enforcement in that area for approximately 10 years: two years with the DA's office, and I've been sheriff for Juneau County since January first of 1979.

Interviewer: I see, and how large is your jurisdiction?

Sheriff: Just to give you an idea, its about 720 square miles.

Interviewer: And the Elroy-Sparta Trail runs right through the county?

Sheriff: Yes, it does curtail part of our county on the southwestern portion.

Interviewer: Have you received any complaints from landowners who live along the trail about people using the trail?

Sheriff: No, we have not to my knowledge.

Interviewer: But you've been in charge there just this past year?

Sheriff: Yes.

Interviewer: And in that time you haven't received any calls. Do you know if they received calls prior to that time?

Sheriff: To my knowledge, it's just been very minimal if anything has even come across from the trail.

I was chief in a community just south of Elroy for 10 years and I've been in law enforcement for about 14. It's very minimal if anything ever does come from that trail.

Interviewer: What I had been getting at was whether the trail increased your workload to any great extent; but, it sounds as if it just hasn't really affected it at all.

Sheriff: No, there is an effect on cyclists on the roadways naturally leading to the bicycle trail.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Sheriff: I mean, in particular, traffic has increased into the area.

Interviewer: But, it hasn't caused any serious problems?

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: OK, and your staff has been able to deal with that increase in traffic.

Sheriff: Oh, definitely.

Interviewer: Have you noticed a difference in usage during the summer or winter months?

Sheriff: Summer months are a lot heavier.

Interviewer: Well, is it your office, your deputies that would be dealing with any problems occurring in that area or is there another law enforcement official I should be contacting, too?

Sheriff: It is our department as well as it is the city of Elroy. And that's Chief Robert Tyler. And it (the trail) does, it is directly connected with their city limits.

Interviewer: Is that a relative?

Sheriff: Yes, he's my brother.

Interviewer: As far as you know he hasn't had any problems with it either.

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: How would you characterize the people using the trail?

Sheriff: I would characterize them as very courteous, they're quite a good group. Sometimes whole families get involved and it's a good atmosphere all the way around. We also have many bicycle groups that use the trail, and they also use certain highways designated in our county for use in conjunction with the bike trail.

Interviewer: Alright, fine. Mr. Tyler, as long as you have had so little contact with the trail, I don't have any other questions unless there's something you would like to add.

Sheriff: No, I think that economically, it boosts the area. I don't know how else to characterize it. I think that it offers a family outing; college students use it; young children use it; elderly people use it. I think it's a worthwhile project, I really do.

Interviewer: Great, and you just haven't heard of serious cases of trespassing or property damage?

Sheriff: No, we have not, if nothing else, sometimes you may get dogs coming from the farm area onto the trail and things like that; but we have not had problems; it's been a pleasant experience all the way around.

Interviewer: OK. Thank you very much. I won't take any more of your time.

This is an interview with Ray Harris, Sheriff of Monroe County, Wisconsin.

Sheriff: We have a staff of a sheriff's and traffic department of probably 23 or 24 people. Now, out of that 23 or 24 persons, about 8 or 9 of those would be tied up inside.

Interviewer: Ok. How long have you been its county sheriff?

Sheriff: Since 1970.

Interviewer: Is your jurisdiction all of Monroe County?

Sheriff: Right.

Interviewer: Have you received calls from the landowners?

Sheriff: We've had some trespassing complaints, we've had problems with juveniles drinking, some vandalism, but nothing real serious. Some hunting complaints.

Interviewer: Any crop damage?

Sheriff: I don't remember any crop damage.

Interviewer: How about fires?

Sheriff : No.

Interviewer: Have you had any other kinds of calls regarding the trail, e.g., did trail users block traffic at highway crossings?

Sheriff: No, we've had lost bikers. Actually the bikers normally are from out of the area. It's used the majority of the time by people from outside the area. Those people come here for the explicit purpose of biking and they create no problems or very few problems if any. They ride their bikes and camp at the campsites. It's alot of family outings.

Interviewer: So you could say the trail hasn't increased your workload so much?

Sheriff: No, not that much, we've had to do some policing out there.

Interviewer: Did you ever have to hire people for your staff?

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: Is your staff adequate enough to deal with the incidents along the trail? Have you had to call in other sheriffs?

Sheriff: No, we work very closely with our DNR here and we always work close with them, and between their organization and ours, we haven't had any problems with anything like that.

Interviewer: If there was an increase in the workload, was it in the

early years or was it as time went on?

Sheriff: I think it was as time went on, because we're getting more usage.

Interviewer: Ok, are there more problems in the winter months or the summer months?

Sheriff: I would say, golly that's hard to answer because they use it for snowmobiling in the winter.

Interviewer: Right.

Sheriff: Snowmobilers tend to trespass more.

Interviewer: Do you hear about it more?

Sheriff: Yes, I guess in the winter.

Interviewer: How about hunting?

Sheriff: Very few hunting complaints. Usually if there's a hunting complaint it's a kid - pheasants or something like that.

Interviewer: How would you characterize the trail users?

Sheriff: Very good people, 99% of them are ordinary, hard working people coming down to relax for the weekend, and enjoy the bike trail, the scenery, and whatever else is there for them to see.

Interviewer: Ok, one last question. Do you have any additional comments or advice to any other law enforcement agencies who are located near railroads that are about to become trails? What specifically we're aiming at here - we have a proposal to designate the Root River Trail as a bicycling trail - it's an abandoned Milwaukee Road corridor.

Sheriff: The only advise that I would possibly have for them on a bike trail like that is to make sure they coordinate any large numbers of people coming in because undoubtedly you're going to have to notify somebody of an emergency message if you've got 75 miles of trail, and they tell you this guy came in on Friday and he's out on the trail you've got to know if he's here, you don't know whether he's here or not. We've run into that.

Interviewer: What do you do in a situation like that?

Sheriff: Well, the only thing we can do then is put a squad on the trail and have him start checking the bikers.

Interviewer: Ok.

Sheriff: As far as major problems, we haven't had any - in fact, it's brought a lot of revenue into the area. They have

an annual bike-a-rama here and it's a big deal with a lot of bikers.

Interviewer: That's great.

Sheriff: People just flock in here.

Interviewer: This is an interview with Sheriff Von Wald from Olmsted County and the Douglas Trail goes through this county. Sheriff Von Wald, could you tell me what your general experience with the trail has been?

Sheriff: Well, in order to tell you specifically I'd have to check our file. But, my recall is that they (complaints) have been very minimal. I have not personally used the trail, but it is used considerably by the residents and most enjoy it very much.

Interviewer: How long have you served as sheriff in that county?

Sheriff: Well, I've been in the department here 22 years. I've been sheriff nine years, and I was at the dedication of the trail. I think Governor Anderson was down here that day, if I recall.

Interviewer: That's what I was wondering, if you had been sheriff the entire time since the trail was installed.

Sheriff: Yes, I have, and I was on the department before that.

Interviewer: Is your jurisdiction quite large?

Sheriff: Olmsted County is 660 square miles, but I think that is the northwest part of our county. Pine Island is the north end of the trail. That's just about the end of my county.

Interviewer: I did just speak to the Goodhue County sheriff. Pine Island just goes into his county I guess, and he did say generally what you said that they've had very few

Sheriff: calls regarding the trail. Some of the residents along the trail: sometimes they might be annoyed, but not to the point where they would file a formal complaint. You say you've done some checking, and you know I guess that the concerns before the advent of the trail were that these trails go through remote areas. And the possibility of vandalism or trespassing problems disturbing livestock you know was a concern. I guess I have no personal knowledge of any complaints. It is possible that in my file, or in our files, there may be reports of some problems but I'm not aware of them. If you'd like I would check the files to see if there are any problems that were formally complained about as a result of the trail.

Interviewer: OK, I'd appreciate it. Maybe we could just continue with a few general problems first; then you could just call me back if there's anything special that you come across. As I interviewed people along the trail, there were a few complaints of trespassers and also on the Douglas Trail of people driving cars or motorcycles down the trail.

Sheriff: I think we've had a few complaints of that.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you can respond quickly enough to those calls to be effective?

Sheriff: Yes, well, it's difficult to apprehend someone in violation of the trail because although we have a patrol, by the time we respond, very often they're gone. There are so many places they can get off and on, that that's a problem. By the time we get there, I guess in order to make an apprehension... OK, I've got another call here. Why don't I check my files and if I find anything significant, I'll give you a call back maybe tomorrow morning.

DNR

Interviewer: This is an interview with Dale Groat, Goodhue County Sheriff and the Douglas Trail goes through just a corner of your county, doesn't it Mr. Groat?

Sheriff: Right.

Interviewer: What has your general experience with it [the trail] been? Have you had to answer many complaints?

Sheriff: No, complaints have been very, very few in regards to any trails that we've had in the county. However, we do not have an established trail route, per se, throughout the entire county; but the complaints that we have received have been very, very minimal and not very much of a problem really. With us we just haven't had that much of a problem.

Interviewer: Have you been county sheriff for as long as the trails been in existence?

Sheriff: Well, yes. I've been in here since January of 1975, as sheriff, but I've been in the department 18 years prior to that. So it's about 22 years going on 23 years that I've been here, and the complaints that we receive primarily are in the winter time regarding snowmobiles, and what we would call renegade snowmobilers not those from established snowmobile clubs, you understand, which are normally very good and are not out there to cause any problems to the landowners. But, it's that one party that's going to go out and crash through gates and fences and run over seedlings and so forth that are going to cause the problem for all the other snowmobilers and give them a bad light.

Interviewer: So it's trespassing, crop damage, property damage. Have you had any cases of theft?

Sheriff: Yes,

Interviewer: Also snowmobilers or is that a year-round complaint?

Sheriff: Well, we've had thefts where it's been traced to use of snowmobiles from various rural homes and buildings. But it isn't that widely used technique in our county, and last winter of course snowmobile usage was down in our county compared to previous years. I would assume that it was due to the fact that it was such a severely cold winter. Now if we have a mild winter like they predict this year, we may have more of a problem with this.

Interviewer: Because people will be using the trails more. well, can you estimate for me about how many calls you receive from landowners along the trail?

Sheriff: Last winter?

Interviewer: Yes.

Sheriff: I would say probably no more than a dozen at most. It was down. These were primarily, I believe there were two of them that were thefts; others were careless operation and people had damage to property.

Interviewer: But, nothing so severe as fire, or anything like that?

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: How about in the summer? Do you get just half a dozen calls in the summer or not even that?

Sheriff: Well, summer months, especially during hunting season is when we have more of our complaints you know, of trespassing. But whether that has to do with trails or not, I don't know.

Interviewer: Have you generally been able to deal with these calls so far? Your staff is large enough and your jurisdiction is small enough so....?

Sheriff: Well, of course, it's never been insurmountable problem at all, but our staff is not large enough and we do have a large area.

Interviewer: How large is your staff and your jurisdiction?

Sheriff: Our staff? Well, there are 29 in our department. However, we only have 12 actual patrolmen. But, you must remember that they are working 24 hours a day around the clock, so we only have about 2 patrolmen on the road at a time. We have a sizable county here with 40,000 population, and about 1,500 miles of roads. So, when you talk about two people covering an area such as that, it becomes quite difficult especially when they have to take care of all the emergencies and anything else that comes up. Their duties are established day-by-day, anything else is actually over and above, you know.

Interviewer: Is there another law enforcement agency in this area I should be dealing with also? Or would most of the calls come to your office?

Sheriff: Most of it comes to our office. We have 764 square miles in the county and most of the law enforcement agencies are smaller towns without too many men to serve them in law enforcement. So we're called upon a great deal to do much of their work for them, and they in turn do some of ours. If they have problems like complaints of a snowmobiler just outside of town and we're tied up on something else they'll go out there and take care of it or stand by until we get there.

Interviewer: You eventually answer all those calls.

Sheriff: Eventually, yes.

Interviewer: Well, the trail hasn't increased your workload to the extent that you've added more personnel just because of the trail.

Sheriff: No. We do have a snowmobile not an established snowmobile patrol but we do have a snowmobile that we utilize for emergency cases such as lost children or someone that's injured back in the woods. So we do have that, and most of our regular patrol are trained in the operation of it and first aid to go out and take care of the situation.

Interviewer: Have you ever had any emergencies along the trail?

Sheriff: Oh yes, we've had, not too many of course, but we get a broken leg or something once in awhile or someone falling off a snowmobile or hit a tree or whatever the case may be and we've hauled them out of the woods.

Interviewer: What about less serious problems? I was wondering if the trail has caused traffic problems, for instance, trails users blocking traffic at highway crossings, or maybe you've had problems at trail parking lots, or campsites.

Sheriff: No, we really haven't had too many problems there at all. Some of our main complaints are about young people using snowmobiles and not being properly licensed and traveling on sides of the roadway or crossing roadways; and we've had a few of them hit by cars in the past several years. Nothing that's really blocked the roadways at all.

Interviewer: Have you had many complaints that people have been driving along the trail in motorcycles or cars? I've had a few complaints from local adjacent landowners that I've spoken to along the Douglas trail. The ones I've spoken to have said that generally they're not sure that there's any point to calling the police because there are so many places to get off the trail they don't think anyone could get there in time to catch the people anyway. Have you had any such calls?

Sheriff: Well, the Douglas trail of course is way down in the other end of our county ...

Interviewer: Yes, that's the one I'm trying to get a sense of.

Sheriff: We're up in the northern end of the county here although we do contract with the city of Pine Island which is down in that area for law enforcement. So, our men are down in that area mainly in the latter part of the day or evening, and they do check that out frequently. But as far as availability, they also have charge of the entire county so oftentimes they're not "Johnny-on-the-spot"; and, of course, this is a problem for many law enforcement agencies. They'd like to be in the right place at the right time, but due to a lack of manpower and so forth it's almost impossible to do so unless you're accidentally there.

Interviewer: So, as far as the Douglas trail is concerned, the Pine Island police are as likely to answer those calls as you would be?

Sheriff: Yes, well, the Pine Island police is actually our department now. They're our men, they're under contract to us; and we provide the law enforcement for them so it would be our men that would be answering the calls down there. It could be anyone of the men that are on the road that's happened to be on the shift. As far as the Douglas trail goes, we have not received that many complaints from the public down there. Whether or not it was worth training them in for that reason, I don't know but, generally we haven't had much of a problem.

Interviewer: Have you noticed a pattern to the complaints were there more complaints during the first couple of years of the trail's existence and less now, or have you noticed an increase or any other kind of pattern?

Sheriff: Well, I would say that at the beginning of the year everyone wants to get out there; and early in the season, they're used more frequently. The only other time they're used after that would be primarily by clubs that go out with maybe 25 to 50 or more in a club and camp out.

Interviewer: Are there sites along there for them to camp legally or have you had complaints?

Sheriff: No, we have none, we haven't received any complaints on that at all.

Interviewer: It sounds as if you'd characterize the trail users generally as pretty law-abiding; the clubs, anyway you said certainly are good.

Sheriff: The clubs have been very law-abiding and will call us and let us know that they'll be out. We find that we receive a lot of cooperation from the clubs. They know very well that we have a shortage of manpower so therefore they do have their own people within the club that police their own group and this helps a great deal. We find once in a while that they will call us or [a renegade] somebody or that was harassing them. Or maybe there was some damage and they want to let us know that it wasn't them, and they'll attempt to find out who it was and so forth. So generally, the clubs are pretty good. Once in a while they'll get a little over zealous on some of these beer runs, poker runs I guess they call them.

Interviewer: Poker runs?

Sheriff: Well, that's where they go from one tavern to another "and from one town to another. I really don't know the basic function of them but whoever gets there first or last or whatever it is has to buy the beer or something like that. Some of the clubs do that and they'll advertise it once in a while, so you might want to check into that. That's quite popular, by the way.

Interviewer: Do any other thoughts come to mind about the trail? It certainly sounds as if your connection with it has been minimal.

Sheriff: Yes, it has, been. Oh we've attended a few of the club meetings our department has, and they established a format of rules and regulations of how they should operate. And they do call upon us once in a while to meet with them and answer any questions they may have pertaining to the laws and regulations of the trails and the snowmobiles.

Interviewer: You haven't met with summer groups such as bicycle groups?

Sheriff: Well, bicycle groups we meet with every once in a while pertaining to youth primarily. We touch on trails when we meet with the youth on bicycle safety of course. But, I don't believe we've been asked to attend any other meetings... We do have bike-a-thons quite frequently, and we do assist in traffic patrol of those: we have a couple of those coming up now.

Interviewer: Along the Douglas Trail?

Sheriff: No, they would be along streets and highways. I don't believe they use trails at all for that.

Interviewer: Well good, unless you have anything else to add, I can't think of any other special questions I have to ask you.

Sheriff: I can't think of anything else. Are they trying to promote usage of these trails more so special emphasis is on that now through the state?

Interviewer: Well, there are other areas in the state that are being considered for trails and the purpose of these surveys I'm doing is to get a sense whether people on existing trails are satisfied with them, if the problems they suspected would have occurred, or if they just haven't; and that's why I wanted to talk to both landowners and law enforcement officials.

Sheriff: Most of our complaints come from landowners like I mentioned before, where they go across the property and cause damage to property but we don't receive too many of those really. We've got law abiding citizens in our county. We plan on keeping it that way!

DNR

Interviewer: This is an interview with Larry Johnson, Hubbard County sheriff. Mr. Johnson you were just about to tell me what your general experience with the Heartland Trail has been.

Sheriff: Well, it helps the tourists in the area and it's a good snowmobile trail and it's quite frequently used in the summertime for a bicycle trail.

Interviewer: Have you had to answer many calls on the trail?

Sheriff: No, very few, I don't think we have over six calls a year on people misusing the trail.

Interviewer: An what kinds of complaints are those usually?

Sheriff: Oh, it'd be when someone with a motorized vehicle or motorcycle or something like that is taking a short cut somewhere.

Interviewer: But nothing more serious like theft, or fire or anything like that?

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: How about complaints regarding property damage or crop damage?

Sheriff: None whatsoever. Not in the last year that I've been in.

Interviewer: Is that how long you've been sheriff?

Sheriff: Yes. In January, I took over as sheriff.

Interviewer: Were you one of the staff before that though?

Sheriff: Yes, I was a chief deputy four and a half years ago and I quit to go over as chief of police in Park Rapids.

Interviewer: I see, so you've been in the area for the entire time the trail's been in existence?

Sheriff: Yes, I've been in law enforcement for 10 years in Hubbard County.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your staff is large enough to deal with any complaints you might get along the trail?

Sheriff: So far, yes.

Interviewer: Do you notice a pattern to the complaints? Do you get more in the winter, for instance, than in the summer?

Sheriff: No, actually I think the majority of complaints are in the summertime when there is no snow and motorized vehicles are being used more.

Interviewer: OK, so that's the main problem, not trespassing.

Sheriff: Yes.

Interviewer: On some other trails, trespassing by snowmobilers has been a complaint, but that is not the case here?

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: Then it sounds as if the effect of the trail on your staff has been minimal. You haven't had to add personnel and it really hasn't increased your workload at all?

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: Do you have any general comments you'd like to make about people using the trail? Are they mostly local people on the Heartland?

Sheriff: No, I'd say most of them are out-of-towners that come up for the weekend. Hubbard County is basically a resort area anyway. In the winter time, our population is 13,500, and in the summertime it goes pretty close to 40,000. There are 519 lakes that are over 10 acres in size in the County alone, so it's mostly a resort and vacationing area.

Interviewer: I see, so most of those trail users coming up from the cities are there for your other recreational opportunities.

Sheriff: Yes, and in the wintertime, the out-of-towners use the snowmobile trail quite frequently because it's a place where they can go and not get lost. It's well marked unlike the logging trails and stuff that the locals use; the out-of-towners get lost easier so they stick to the main roads and trails.

Interviewer: Have you had any problems at trail parking lots or campsites?

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: Alright, I don't have any other specific questions unless you have some general comments you'd like to add.

Sheriff: Well, I think they should have more trails. It's a good opportunity. It's a very inexpensive way to relax and I feel it's a benefit to both the tourists and the local people.

Interviewer: I recently talked to the Cass County sheriff, Louis Chalik, and he had the same reaction. In fact, he thought that they received fewer complaints regarding snowmobilers now that the trail was established just because it provided a place to snowmobile.

Sheriff: Right, I believe that, too.

Interviewer: Good, Thank you for your comments, Mr. Johnson.

Interviewer: This is an interview with Louis Chalik, Cass County sheriff, and the Heartland Trail runs through his County. Mr. Chalik, you were just about to tell me what your general experience with the trail has been.

Sheriff: I don't feel it poses any problem as far as law enforcement goes. We get an occasional complaint on motorcycles or vehicles on it, but I think, overall, it helps us because it gives them (especially the snowmobile riders in the wintertime) someplace where they can ride. I ride on it myself!

Interviewer: I wanted to ask you, have you served as Cass County sheriff as long as the Trail has been in existence?

Sheriff: Yes.

Interviewer: And, how large is your staff and jurisdiction there?

Sheriff: I have 12 deputies that work in the field.

Interviewer: And you feel that your staff is large enough to deal with any problems that might occur on the trail?

Sheriff: Sure, in fact now, I wish the dickens that you guys could get that one between Walker and Cass Lake going. That would help. Yes, I really do; I wish some sort of a compromise could be reached on that with the landowners and the Indian people cause I'd like to see that trail opened up. The more trails we have, the less complaints I feel I'll have on snowmobilers and this type of thing running over private property.

Interviewer: So you get more trespassing complaints from snowmobilers not using the trails than from snowmobilers who use the trail?

Sheriff: Right, and you know our complaints have gone down over the years. Eight to ten years ago, we had 75 to 80% more complaints on snowmobilers than we do now.

Interviewer: That was before the trail was built.

Sheriff: Right.

Interviewer: So you feel the trail has really helped as far as winter trespassing complaints are concerned.

Sheriff: I think it's helped us considerably, you bet I do.

Interviewer: How about summer users of the trail, do you get complaints about them?

Sheriff: We've never had a complaint. Like I said, an occasional complaint on a car on the trail or something like that, but this summer I don't think we've had a complaint.

Interviewer: Great!

Sheriff: Yes really. It's posted, and if some skunks get on it, somebody will call us and we'll go and write them a ticket or whatever. But, I don't think we've had a complaint this summer on the Heartland Trail at all.

Interviewer: You're able to get there quickly enough to catch people who misuse the trail?

Sheriff: Sure, we've caught several over the years, but they haven't bothered us. I'm sincere: I don't think I've had a complaint on the Heartland Trail this summer.

Interviewer: Excellent! And last winter, how many complaints do you think you had?

Sheriff: Oh, heavens sakes, 2 or 3 maybe, that's all very, very minimal.

Interviewer: And you haven't had any problems with trail users blocking traffic at highway crossings or any camp-site problems associated with the trail?

Sheriff: No.

Interviewer: So, you can't say the trail has increased your work load at all?

Sheriff: In fact, I think it's reduced it! Because the people can go from Walker to Akeley or Park Rapids or wherever, and it gives them a purpose to go out there and ride the machines. And they don't have to go on somebody's property.

Interviewer: Well, would you characterize most of the trail users as local people then?

Sheriff: Well, yes. I think it's local but we do have a lot of people - especially on the weekends - from the Twin Cities area. And, doggone it, this gives them a trail to ride on, and you know our Snow Way One Trail that goes right down through the center of Cass County - that's used an awful lot in the winter now. Darn it, I would sure like to see that trail from Walker to Cass Lake resolved and get that opened up. I think that would be tremendous.

Interviewer: You know, when I talked to landowners along the trail, it sounded as if a lot of them used it just to commute to and from town, and a lot of their children used it to commute to school. Do you have more problems with the trail users that come up on the weekends?

Sheriff: We don't have any problems with them. I've talked to snowmobilers from Crosby, Aitken, Brainerd, and all over the area that come up on the weekend. They ride their machines clear from there and stay here at a local resort or hotel and they really enjoy it.

Interviewer: So, it's brought you a little business too, you think?

Sheriff: I think it's brought the community business, you bet I do. Absolutely.

Interviewer: What about horseback riders on the trail?

Sheriff: Well, if they're riding out there, I haven't had any complaints.

Interviewer: OK, I don't have any other specific questions unless you have anything to add, any general comments.

Sheriff: No, I've criticized the DNR many times over the years, but this is one thing I absolutely couldn't do. I think they did a good job on the trail!

Interviewer: Well this is a delight to hear. Thank you, Mr. Chalik.