

AMENDMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION ON THE NEED FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Revised 7-2006

Title of Original Environmental Assessment: Acquisition, Development, and Management of the Nicolet State Trail – Forest and Florence Counties
Region or Bureau NOR
Type List Designation NR 150.03(5)(a)1.b

Contact Person: Terry Jordan
Title: Parks & Recreation Specialist
Address: 810 W. Maple Street, Spooner, WI 54801
Telephone Number: 715-635-4121
E-mail Address: terry.jordan@wisconsin.gov

Title of Proposed Amendment: Nicolet State Trail Center Segment

Location: County: Forest

AMENDMENT SUMMARY

Describe the nature of proposed amendments to the original assessment and the reasons for the change.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposes to acquire, develop, and manage a former railroad grade as a state recreational trail that will connect existing segments of the Nicolet State Trail in Forest County. The “Center Segment” starts in the Town of Laona and proceeds north approximately 7.8 miles to a trailhead/parking area near County Highway G in the Town of Cavour. The purpose of this project is to address recreational needs in the local area as well as regional recreational demand from Wisconsin residents and visitors.

The proposed project will connect with the existing 13 mile long South Segment and the 12 mile long North Segment of the Nicolet State Trail, which have recently been completed and opened as a State Recreation Trail in Forest County. Acquisition and development of the south and north segments were evaluated in the 2006 EA. Acquisition and development of the Center Segment would provide one contiguous recreation trail through Forest County linking with Oconto County to the south and Florence County to the north.

For this project, the Department proposes to purchase the approximate 7.8 miles of Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Company abandoned rail line from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, enter into a memorandum of understanding and cooperative state trail easement with Forest County, and approve the master plan prepared by Forest County for development, maintenance, and operation of the trail system. The current Forest County master plan for the existing trail segments states that the center segment, if acquired, would be managed in the same manner as the rest of the trail.

The Forest County Forestry Department has requested snowmobile trail aids in order to convert railroad trestles into bridges, gate the corridor to prevent travel by motor vehicles as well as sign and brush the corridor. ATV trail aids have been requested to surface the corridor to provide a safe, smooth trail surface for hiking, biking and ATV use.

The county's proposed development would include four railroad trestle-to-bridge conversions. They propose to install four steel-framed, wood decked bridges over the existing railroad trestles in a similar fashion to the bridges installed on both the north and south segments. The bridge names and dimensions are: Laona Mill Pond 12' X 74', Rat River 12' X 76', Camp 8 Creek 12' X 79', and Sixty Two Creek 12' X 60'. For the Sixty Two Creek crossing the county intends to use a bridge recently removed from the 100 Mile Snow

Safari Club Trail system. They are requesting only \$2500 to relocate this bridge in order to save \$15,800 in trail development costs.

The entire corridor is currently covered with stone ballast. The county intends to grade and level the ballast to provide a level, stable trail base. They propose to place six inches of road gravel over the stone ballast in order to create a trail surface 12 feet wide. The completed trail would average a width of approximately 14-15 feet when complete due to the use of equipment, grading, compacting and sloping the trail. The gravel would be graded, crowned and compacted with a highway shoulder machine to shed water and provide a smooth, compacted trail surface. The county intends to contract this development phase with the Forest County Highway Department as was done in the past with the North and South segments.

The county has applied for 100% of the trail surfacing funding from the ATV Program. The remaining costs for signs, gates and bridges would be split equally at 50% from the Snowmobile Program and 50% for the ATV Program. Currently the total development project is estimated to cost \$253,381.00 with \$53,370 from the Snowmobile Program and \$200,010.00 from the ATV program.

DNR EVALUATION

Discuss the adverse and beneficial impacts not addressed in the original EA that would result from the amended action, and any additional alternatives considered.

This center segment of the trail is similar to the north and south segments that were evaluated in the 2006 EA. The type of development, operation and management are also the same, therefore the anticipated environmental effects of this project are anticipated to be similar to those described for the earlier project segments.

This center segment project also received a National Heritage Inventory review for rare species, and a cultural review for historic and archaeological resources. These reviews indicated that the proposed project is not anticipated to impact rare species or cultural resources.

Attachments: Project maps
 Development funding application
 2006 EA

Amended Project Name: Nicolet State Trail Center Segment County: Forest

DECISION (This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate authority)

In accordance with s. 1.11, Stats., and Ch. NR 150, Adm. Code, the Department is authorized and required to determine whether it has complied with s. 1.11, Stats., and Ch. NR 150, Wis. Adm. Code.

Complete either A or B below:

A. EIS Process Not Required

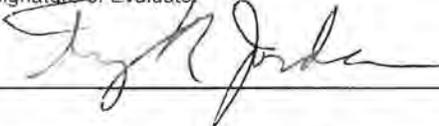


The attached analysis of the expected impacts of this proposal is of sufficient scope and detail to conclude that this is not a major action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. In my opinion, therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required prior to final action by the Department.

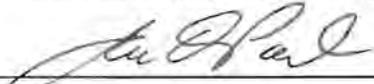
B. Major Action Requiring the Full EIS Process



The proposal is of such magnitude and complexity with such considerable and important impacts on the quality of the human environment that it constitutes a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Signature of Evaluator 	Date Signed 02/23/09
---	-------------------------

Number of responses to news release or other notice (if provided): 2

Certified to be in compliance with WEPA	
Environmental Analysis and Liaison Program Staff 	Date Signed 02/23/09

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

If you believe you have a right to challenge this decision made by the Department, you should know that Wisconsin statutes, administrative codes and case law establish time periods and requirements for reviewing Department decisions.

To seek judicial review of the Department's decision, ss. 227.52 and 227.53, Stats., establish criteria for filing a petition for judicial review. Such a petition shall be filed with the appropriate circuit court and shall be served on the Department. The petition shall name the Department of Natural Resources as the respondent.

NICOLET STATE TRAIL CENTER SEGMENT

Attached is an application for a development grant for the Nicolet State Trail in Forest County. This grant will provide funding to develop the "Center Segment" of the Nicolet State Trail for snowmobiles, ATV's, hiking and biking.

The Center Segment of the Nicolet State Trail is a recently abandoned railroad corridor and is 7.8 miles in length. The Center Segment will connect to the 13 mile long South Segment and the 12 mile long North Segment of the Nicolet State Trail which has recently been completed and opened as a State Recreation Trail in Forest County. Development of the Center Segment will provide one, contiguous recreation trail through Forest County linking with Florence County to the North and Oconto County to the South. The Center Segment starts, at approximately, County Highway H in the Town of Laona and proceeds North 7.8 miles to a trailhead/parking area near County Highway G in the Town of Cavour.

We are applying for development funding through the Snowmobile and ATV programs. We will apply for 100% of the trail surfacing costs through the ATV program. The remaining costs for signs, gates and bridges will be split equally at 50% from the Snowmobile program and 50% from the ATV program.

Our development costs will include four railroad trestle to bridge conversions. We propose to install four steel framed, wood decked bridges over the existing railroad trestles in a similar fashion to the bridges installed on both the North and South Segments of the Nicolet State Trail in the past. The bridge names and lengths include: Laona Mill Pond 12' X 74'; Rat River 12' x 76'; Camp & Creek 12' X 79' and Sixty Two Creek at 12' x 60'. We will not be applying for a new bridge for the Sixty Two Creek Crossing, we will only be applying for \$2,500 to relocate an existing 12' x 60' steel frame, wood decked bridge recently removed from a state funded snowmobile trail on the 100 Mile Snow Safari Club Trail system in Forest County. This bridge was removed due to the loss of a snowmobile trail easement. By utilizing this existing bridge at the Sixty Two Creek crossing we will reduce our development cost by \$15,800.00.

01/29/2009 12:14 4783815

F.C. FORESTRY

PAGE 02

State of Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources
dnr.wis.gov

Outdoor Motorized Recreation Trail Aids Application

For: (Select one) Form 8700-159 (R 11/05) Page 1 of 4

- County Snowmobile Trail Aids
- All-Terrain Vehicle Trail Aids

Notice: Completion of this form is required under s. 23.09(2b) and 23.11, Wis. Stats. Failure to complete this form will result in denial of financial assistance. Personally identifiable information found on this form is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The Department may provide this information to requestors as required by Wisconsin's Open Records law (ss. 19.31 - 19.38, Wis. Stats.).

Instructions: Submit two (2) copies of all forms and attachments. See page 2 for necessary attachments. Mail applications to the appropriate DNR Regional Office (see page 2 of this form).

Activities Involved in Application: (Select all that apply)

- Maintenance
- Insurance
- Bridge Rehabilitation
- Acquisition
- Development
- Trail Rehabilitation

Leave Blank - DNR Use Only
Project Number

Applicant Information

Applicant/Organization Name Forest County Forestry Department	Check Recipient: Individual other than authorized individual to act on behalf of the applicant. Provide check recipient information below.
Authorized Individual Name David Ziolkowski	Title County Forest Administrator
Address 200 East Madison Street	Check Recipient Name: (Name to Appear on Check) Forest County Forestry
City, State, ZIP Code Crandon, WI 54520	Address 200 East Madison Street
Telephone Number () (715) 478-3475	City, State, ZIP Code Crandon, WI 54520
	E-Mail Address dziolkow@fcz-net.com

Project Information

Project Title Nicolet State Trail - Center Segment	Number of Trail Miles 7.8
--	-------------------------------------

Project Description

- * For maintenance, include a concise statement of the type of maintenance activities and the type of grooming equipment used.
- * For major bridge rehabilitation, describe the proposed construction items to rehabilitate the bridge.
- * For trail rehabilitation, describe the repair and renovation activities necessary to improve the trail for user safety.
- * For development, describe development activities and structures to be constructed.
- * For development of intensive use areas, describe the need and expected use and method of operating and maintaining the facility.

Estimated Cost

Maintenance	Acquisition	Insurance	Development	Bridge Rehab.	Trail Rehab.	Total Estimated Cost
			53,370.00			53,370.00
Leave Blank - DNR Use Only						

Snowmobile Funds

Applicant Certification

As the applicant's authorized official, I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information in this application is true and correct.

Typed Name of Authorized Official David W. Ziolkowski	Officer's Title County Forest Administrator
Signature of Authorized Official <i>David W. Ziolkowski</i>	Date Prepared 04/10/2008

01/29/2009 12:14 4783815

F. C. FORESTRY

PAGE 03

State of Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources
dnr.wis.gov

Outdoor Motorized Recreation Trail Aids Application

FOR: (Select one) Form 8700-159 (R 11/05) Page 1 of 4

County Snowmobile Trail Aids

All-Terrain Vehicle Trail Aids

Notice: Completion of this form is required under s. 23.02(20) and 23.85, Wis. Stats. Failure to complete this form will result in denial of financial assistance. Personally identifiable information found on this form is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The Department may provide this information to requesters as required by Wisconsin's Open Records law [ss. 19.31 - 19.39, Wis. Stats.].

Instructions: Submit two (2) copies of all forms and attachments. See page 2 for necessary attachments. Mail applications to the appropriate DNR Regional Office (see page 2 of this form).

Activities Involved in Application: (Select all that apply)

- Maintenance
- Insurance
- Bridge Rehabilitation
- Acquisition
- Development
- Trail Rehabilitation

Leave Blank - DNR Use Only	
Project Number	

Applicant Information

Applicant/Organization Name Forest County Forestry Department	Check Recipient: Individual other than authorized individual to act on behalf of the applicant. Provide check recipient information below.
Authorized Individual Name David Ziolkowski	Title County Forest Administrator
Address 200 East Madison Street	City, State, ZIP Code Crosson, WI 54520
Telephone Number () (715) 478-3475	E-Mail Address dzforeston@cz-net.com

Project Information

Project Title Nicolet State Trail - Center Segment	Number of Trail Miles 7.8
--	-------------------------------------

Project Description

- * For maintenance, include a concise statement of the type of maintenance activities and the type of grooming equipment used.
- * For major bridge rehabilitation, describe the proposed construction items to rehabilitate the bridge.
- * For trail rehabilitation, describe the repair and renovation activities necessary to improve the trail for user safety.
- * For development, describe development activities and structures to be constructed.
- * For development of intensive use areas, describe the need and expected use and method of operating and maintaining the facility.

Estimated Cost

Maintenance	Acquisition	Insurance	Development	Bridge Rehab.	Trail Rehab.	Total Estimated Cost
			200,010.00			200,010.00
Leave Blank - DNR Use Only						

ATV FUNDS

Applicant Certification

As the applicant's authorized official, I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information in this application is true and correct.

Typed Name of Authorized Official David W. Ziolkowski	Official's Title County Forest Administrator
Signature of Authorized Official <i>David W. Ziolkowski</i>	Date Prepared 04/10/2008

State of Wisconsin
 Department of Natural Resources
 Box 7821
 Madison, Wisconsin 53707

RECREATION GRANT PROJECT COST ESTIMATE WORKSHEET
 Form 8700-014 Rev. 01/2004

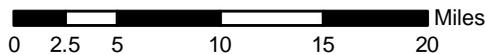
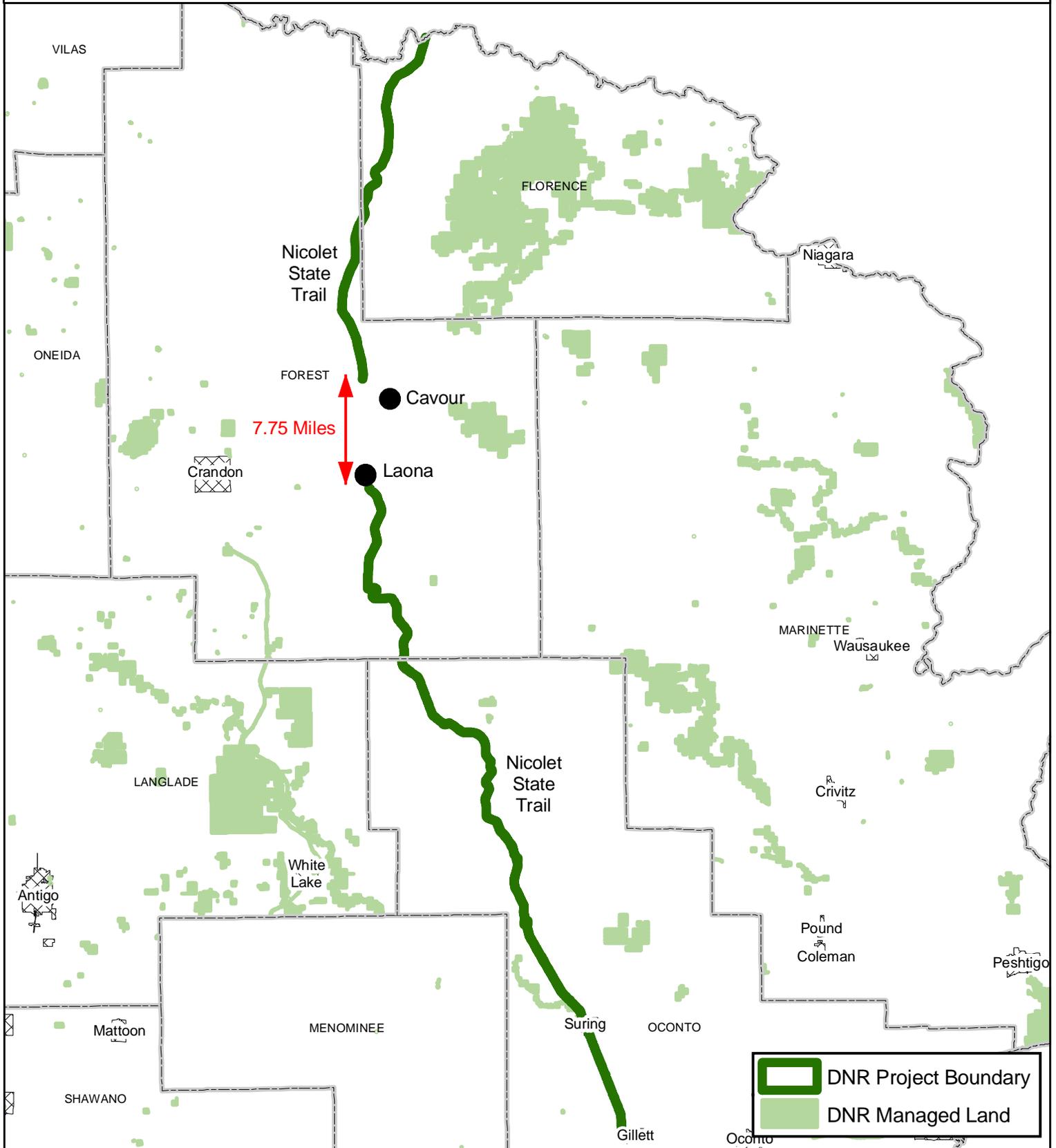
For use with Grant Application Form 8700-101

Sheet of 1 1		Project Applicant: Forest County Forestry Department		Prepared By: David Ziolkowski		LEAVE BLANK - DNR USE ONLY			
County Forest		Project Name: Nicolet State Trail Surfacing - Center Segment - 7.8 miles				Project Number			
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ITEMS <i>List by individual item or break down by Use Areas (See Item List on Back of This Form)</i>						INFORMATION PROVIDED			
						Insp. Date - B/S No.			
						Percent Completed			
	Indicate Contract (C) Force Acct. (F) Donated (D)	Quantity and Unit of Measure	Component Costs	Estimated Total Item Cost					
Graveling 6" Deep X 12' Wide X 7.8 miles	C	1175 yds/mile	\$16/yard	\$146,640.00					
Graveling Includes -									
grading stone ballast, hauling and									
spreading gravel, grading, crowning and									
compacting gravel									
Steel Gates Installed in concrete	C	18 gates	\$1,180.00	21,240.00					
Boulders for Borders/Barricades	C	121 yards	\$1/yard	121.00					
Boulder placement - Loader Truck	C	12 hours	\$70/hour	840.00					
Bridges - Sixty two Creek	C	12'x60'	placement only	2,500.00 **					
Camp 8 Creek	C	12'x80'		27,300.00					
Mill Pond	C	12'x74'		25,600.00					
Rat River	C	12'x76'		26,300.00					
Signs, Posts, Hardware	C	150		2,840.00					
				TOTAL	\$253,381.00	TOTAL			

NOTE: For acquisition projects, complete the information on the reverse side of this form.

Nicolet State Trail

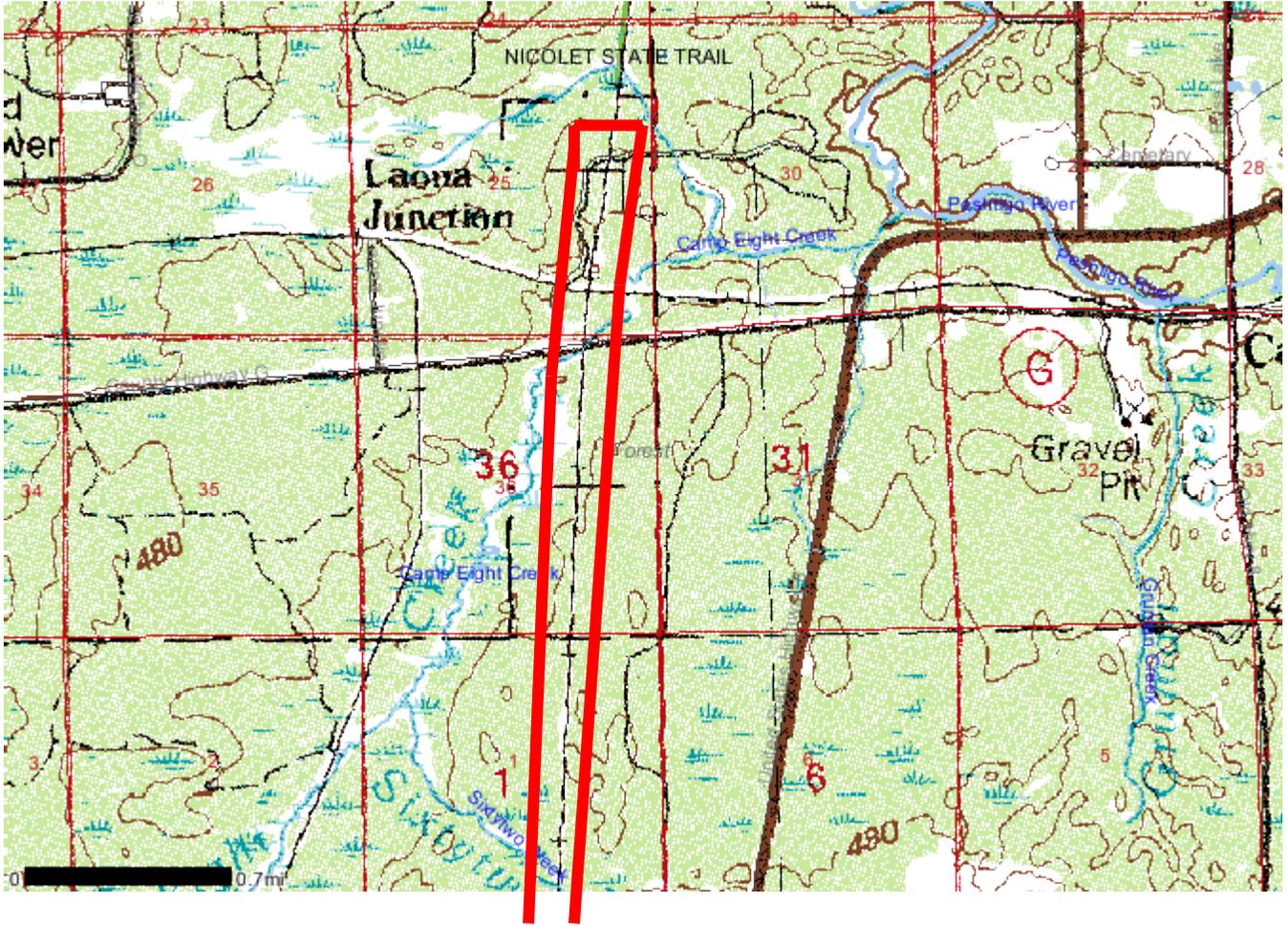
Florence, Forest and Oconto Counties



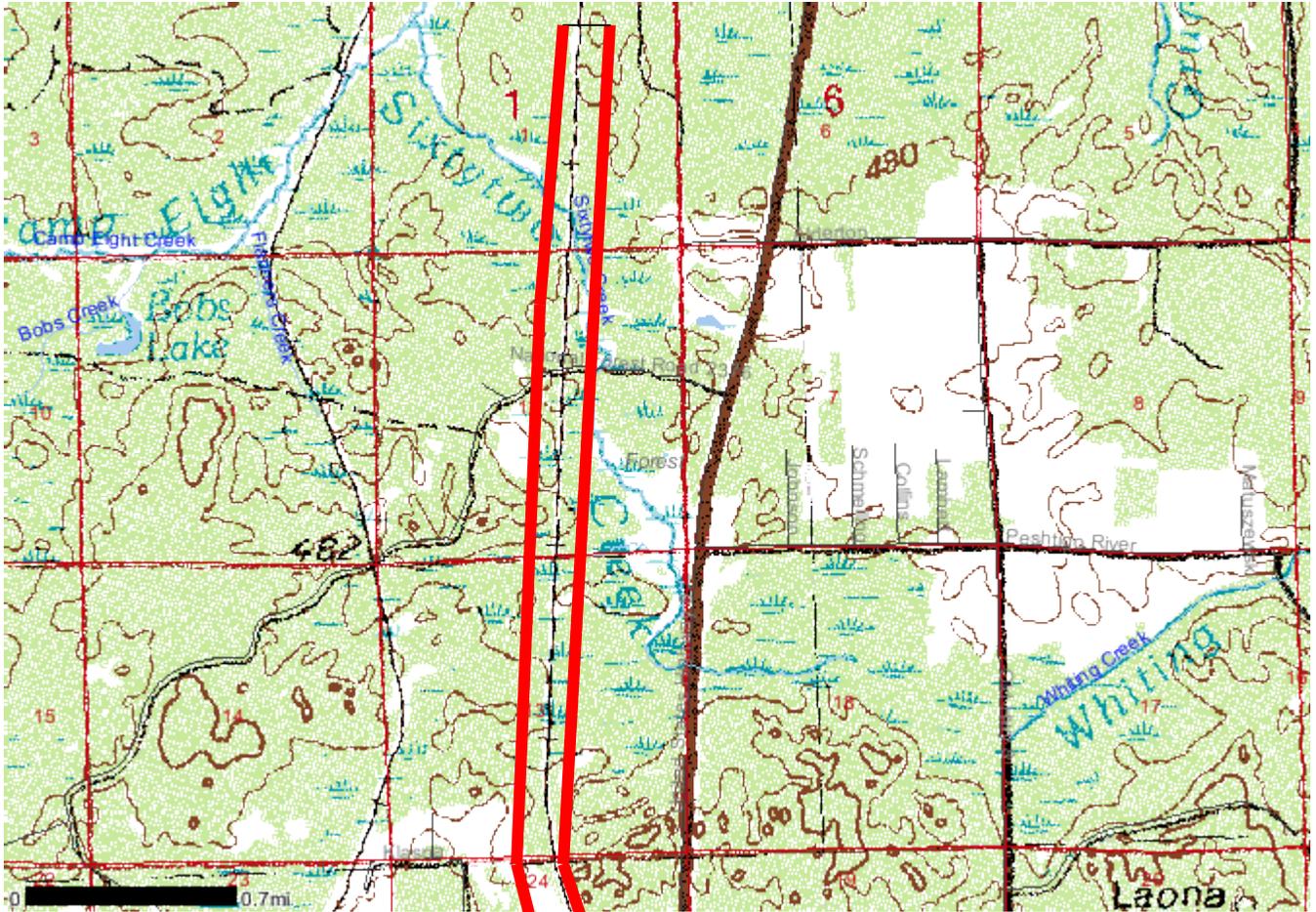
Created by Bureau of Facilities and Lands
Real Estate Section
December 30, 2008



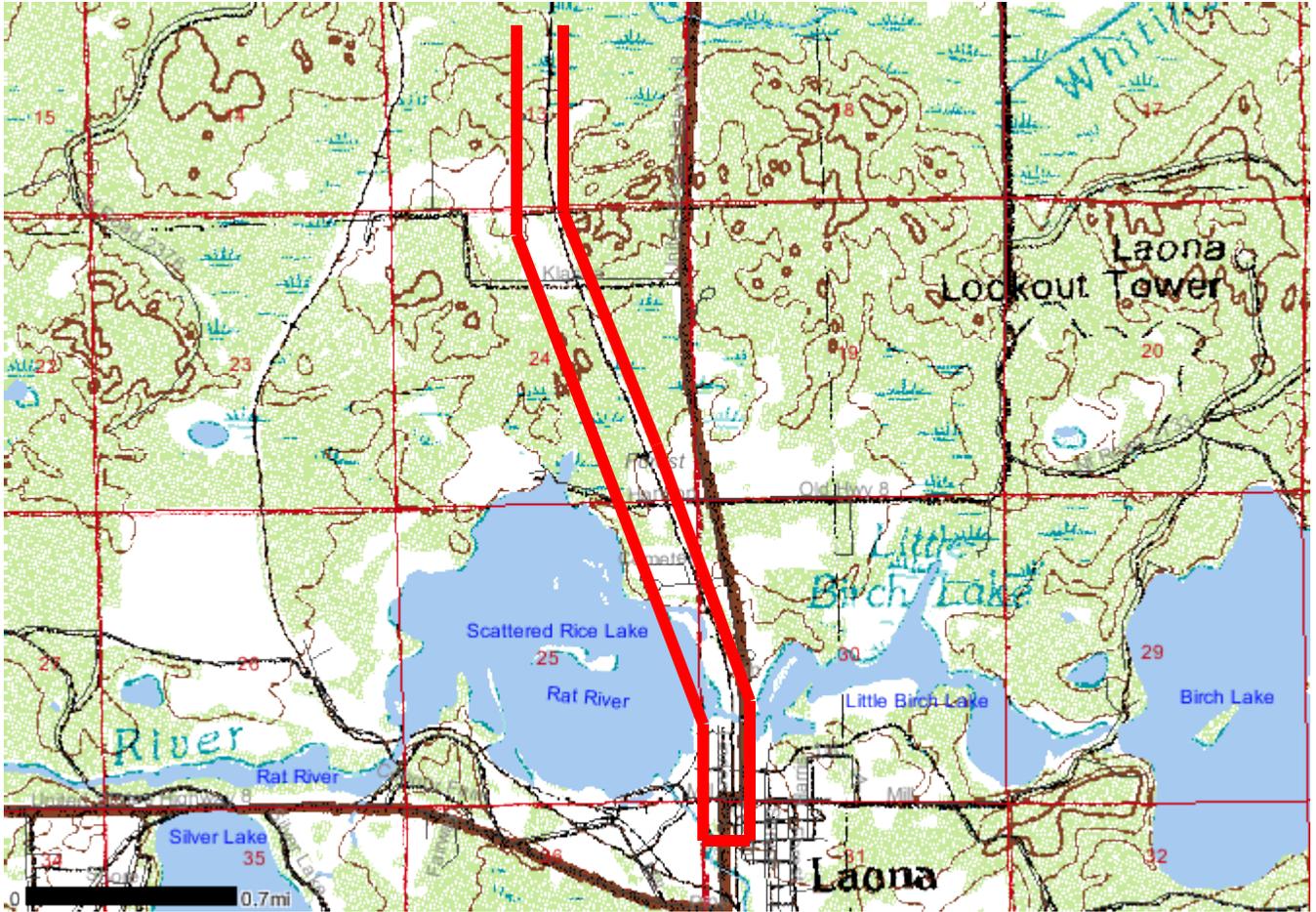
Forest County – Laona to north of County Highway G
Approximate 7 mile gap in the Nicolet State Trail along an abandoned rail corridor



100 foot wide corridor
This map includes:
T36N R14E Section 1
T37N R14E Sections 36, 25



100 foot wide corridor
This map includes:
T36N R14E Sections 24, 13, 12, 1



50 foot wide corridor in Laona; 100 foot wide corridor outside of Town.

This map includes:

T36N R15E Section 30

T36N R14E Sections 25, 24, 13



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Northern Region

810 W Maple St., Spooner, WI 54801
Phone: (715) 635-2101 TDD: 711
107 Sutliff Avenue, Rhinelander, WI 54501
Phone: (715) 365-8900 TDD: 711
dnr.wi.gov www.wisconsin.gov

DATE: February 3, 2009

CONTACT: Terry Jordan, DNR Parks & Recreation Specialist, 715-635-4121

SUBJECT: DNR plans 7.8 mile connection between segments of Nicolet State Trail

SPOONER, Wis. – The Department of Natural Resources proposes to acquire, develop, and manage a former railroad grade as a state recreational trail to connect two existing segments of the Nicolet State Trail in Forest County. This “center segment” of the trail will link the existing 13-mile south segment, which runs from the Forest/Oconto county line to Laona, with the 12-mile north segment that runs from CTY-O near Cavour to the Forest/Florence county line. Development of this center segment will provide one continuous trail through the southeast section of Forest County. This this project will address recreational needs in the local area as well as regional recreational demand from Wisconsin residents and visitors.

The department plans to purchase approximately 7.8-miles of abandoned Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Company rail line from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, enter into a memorandum of understanding and cooperative state trail easement with Forest County, and approve the master plan prepared by Forest County for development, maintenance, and operation of the trail system. The current Forest County master plan for the existing trail states that the center segment, if acquired, would be managed in the same manner as the rest of the trail.

Before a decision is made on plans for the proposed trail an Environmental Assessment will be completed to ensure the opportunity for public input. This section of trail is very similar to that of a 2006 environmental assessment done for the existing trail segments. Differences will be addressed in an amendment to that 2006 study.

This project is not expected to result in significant adverse environmental impacts and the Department has made a preliminary decision that an environmental impact statement will not be required. This recommendation does not represent approval from other DNR sections which may also require review of the project. Copies of the original assessment and the amendment can be obtained from Terry Jordan, DNR Parks & Recreation Specialist, 810 W. Maple Street, Spooner, WI 54801; by phone at 715-635-4121; or by email at terry.jordan@wisconsin.gov. Written or verbal comments are welcome and should be received by 4:30 p.m. Friday, February 20.

- 30 -