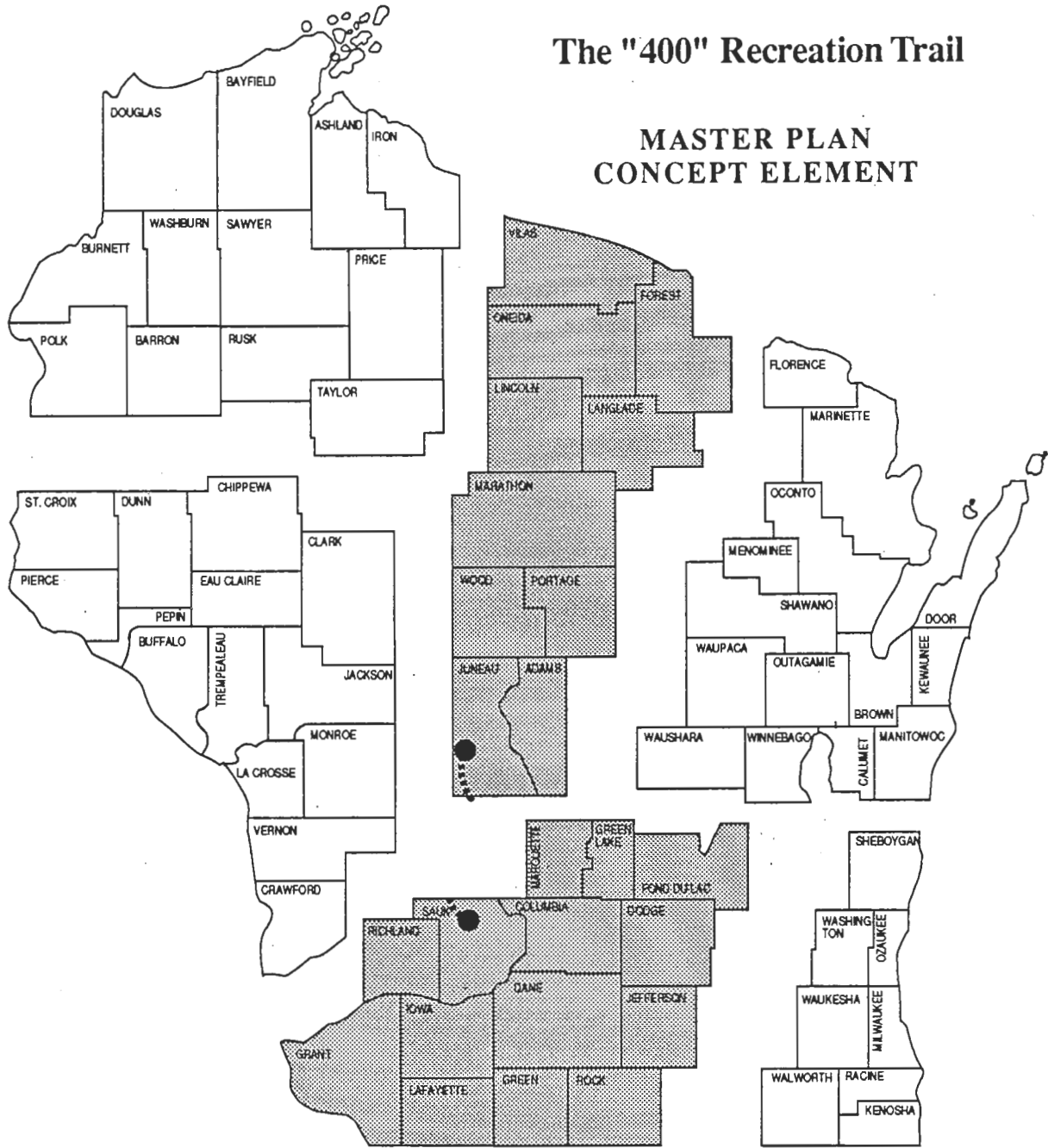


The "400" Recreation Trail

MASTER PLAN CONCEPT ELEMENT



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Date: July, 1990



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SECTION 1 - ACTIONS

Rock formations, cliffs, relic pine groves, river bottomlands, and many crossings of the Baraboo River characterize the 22-mile Baraboo River Trail. Beginning in the community of Reedsburg (Sauk County), the trail extends northwesterly to Elroy (Juneau County).

In Elroy, the trail will connect with the Elroy-Sparta State Trail and Juneau County's Omaha Trail. It will also connect with the proposed Hillsboro State Trail in Union Center.

When developed, The "400" Trail will actually be part of a 100-mile trail system composed of the Elroy-Sparta, LaCrosse River and Great River Trails.

A. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Goal

To provide a 22-mile state recreation area trail that will accommodate a continuation of existing uses presently provided on the Elroy-Sparta Trail (bicycling, hiking, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling).

Also, provide a separated parallel 7.5-mile segment of trail between the communities of LaValle and Wonewoc for horse use in the summer and ATV use in the winter on a prototype basis to assess policy implications such as costs, user patterns and conflicts, and wear on the resource.

Annual Objectives

1. Provide a trail with necessary improvements to accommodate 50,000 bicyclists based on the usage of the Elroy-Sparta Trail.
2. Provide winter use opportunities for snowmobiles and ATVs.⁽¹⁾
3. Provide trail opportunities for hikers.⁽¹⁾
4. Provide trail opportunities for equestrians.⁽¹⁾
5. Provide for such activities as bird watching and fishing the Baraboo River and other streams crossed by the trail.⁽¹⁾
6. Accommodate individuals who have disabilities.

⁽¹⁾ No basis for estimating user numbers

Additional Benefits

1. Provide a connecting link for other state and county trails in the region.
2. Benefit wildlife and plant species indigenous to the region.

B. RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The alternative selected for The "400" Trail recommends that it be designated as a state recreation area trail and complemented with the necessary support facilities to make the property functional for year-round use. Hunting and trapping will not be permitted.

Facility Management

The trail is located in the Southern and North Central DNR administrative districts. In the Southern District, the Mirror Lake Sub Unit at Mirror Lake State Park will have responsibility for the trail from Reedsburg to Wonewoc. Although the Wonewoc to Elroy trail segment is located in the North Central District, by agreement it will be managed by the Wildcat Mountain Work Unit at Wildcat Mountain State Park which is in the Western District. The Wildcat Mountain work unit also manages the Elroy-Sparta and LaCrosse River Trails.

When The "400" Trail becomes fully operational, the Mirror Lake Sub Unit will need one 9-month seasonal Ranger to share duties between assisting in the management of the trail and working at Mirror Lake State Park. One additional 6-month limited term employee will also be assigned to the trail.

Staffing needs for the Wildcat Mountain work unit will include an additional 6-month limited term employee and a 3-month limited term employee.

Trail staff in both districts will work closely together to provide continuity of service to the public.

The Department will initiate efforts to form a nonprofit corporation, composed of interested citizens from communities along the trail, to provide service for bicycle rental and pickup, refreshments, souvenir sales, lodging, other services, and trail amenities. Four state trails, Elroy-Sparta, Sugar River, LaCrosse River, and Military Ridge, currently utilize a nonprofit trail corporation to provide trail services.

Responsibilities of the corporation would be:

1. Consider any business aspects of the trail such as concession services for the public.
2. Maintain liaison with all state and local governmental agencies.
3. Recommend priorities on development projects.
4. Coordinate trail activities among the communities affected by the trail.
5. Raise funds for the trail.

The trail will be developed and maintained to provide opportunities for bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, horsedrawn vehicles, and snowmobiles, and ATVs in the winter season. Cross-country skiing can be accommodated, but the trail will not be maintained or groomed for skiing

since former railroad corridors are not recognized by the public as choice ski trails. The various trail uses will be monitored by the Department and evaluated for potential conflict.

The trail will be routinely inspected by Department staff. Standard maintenance procedures will insure that the trail tread, signage, and other related facilities are kept in good condition.

It is recommended that trial rules governing trail use by horses be put into effect on The "400" Trail. After one year these rules will be carefully evaluated for possible inclusion in Chapter NR 45 which governs the conduct of visitors to state lands and provides for the protection of the natural resource.

For winter trail maintenance, the Department will negotiate snowmobile use agreements with Sauk and Juneau Counties.

Two Sauk County parks, Hemlock and Lake Redstone, adjoin the trail corridor or are in close proximity. The Department will work with the County to determine the feasibility of providing access to these parks from the trail.

Hemlock Park has a picnic area and provides access for fishing. Picnicking and swimming are available at Lake Redstone. Neither park has camping.

Partnership with Wisconsin Horse Council

Equestrians have requested that the Department provide a riding experience on this trail corridor. Although the two trail treads for horses and bicycles will be separated on the corridor, there are a number of concerns relating to user conflicts, trail damage, maintenance costs, etc. The Wisconsin State Horse Council has offered to cooperate with the Department in monitoring the compatibility of equestrian use on the 7.5-mile trail segment.

After three years of operation of the trail if horse use is light as determined by contact with horse groups and maintenance and operations cost per horse user is high as compared to the other trail uses, closing the trail to horses will be considered.

Vegetative Management

Various methods will be used to manage the trail corridor's vegetation. Most of the tree and shrub growth will be maintained in its present state, however, some selective cutting may be necessary to provide vistas of the river, bluffs, and surrounding landscape.

Controlled burning may be prescribed to control woody vegetation and maintain the trail's grasslands and limited prairie plant species. Open grasslands provide vegetative diversity, as well as, essential habitat for certain wildlife species.

A 10-foot wide strip of vegetation on either side of the surfaced trail tread will be controlled by mowing.

Where private developments outside the trail boundary threatens the scenic and aesthetic value, native vegetation will be planted on the trail right-of-way to provide screening.

Since a complete biological survey of the trail does not exist, it is recommended that an inventory be conducted as funds permit or through volunteer efforts by the university system or private individuals.

Wildlife Management

Placement of nest boxes in suitable habitat on the right-of-way for song birds, owls, hawks, and wood ducks through a volunteer effort is recommended. Implementation of this program will be coordinated between wildlife management and the trail staff.

Fisheries Management

Where the trail crosses or immediately adjoins the Baraboo River, or its major tributaries, access for fishing will be provided. Where land relief permits, effort will be made to provide fishing for persons with disabilities.

Development

The following are the development needs for the trail over the next ten-year period.

The first phase of development will focus on preparing the trail for public use and will include decking and railing of trestles and placing of trail stop signs to alert users of road crossings. Debris left by the railroad company after abandonment will be removed. The cracked stringers of a damaged trestle will be repaired.

Remaining development will include surfacing the 22 miles of bicycle trail with limestone screening material, constructing rest areas in some of the communities, additional signing, and a trail connector to the Elroy-Sparta Trail in the City of Elroy. The following is a description of some of these projects:

Reedsburg Terminus

It is recommended that the Reedsburg terminus be located in the City of Reedsburg. Preferably a long-term lease can be negotiated for office space and parking at the privately-owned former Chicago-Northwestern depot. A non-profit corporation may also wish to operate a concession from the depot for renting bicycles, providing a shuttle service, selling refreshments and dispensing tourist information.

Since the end of the abandoned rail corridor begins approximately 3/4-mile northwest of the depot, a connection for trail users will have to be determined and designated in cooperation with the City of Reedsburg.

Rest Areas for Bicyclists

Trail rest areas will be located in LaValle and Wonewoc. Whenever possible, they will be provided in conjunction with existing community parks. Existing facilities will not be duplicated, however, it may be necessary to expand those facilities to accommodate the community and trail users. Facilities typically provided are toilets, parking, and drinking water.

Horse Trail (Figure 2)

As a result of public comment received at the open forum meetings in February, 1989, and a 433-signature petition requesting the inclusion of horse riding opportunities on The "400" Trail, a separate 10-foot wide trail for horses will be designated on 7.5 miles of corridor between the communities of LaValle and Wonewoc. There will be about 6 feet of separation between the horse and bicycle trails. If user conflicts occur, a permanent barrier between the two trails will be considered. Some grading and crushed rock fill may be necessary in certain areas to make the trail suitable for horses.

Separate rest areas to accommodate horseback riders may be located outside the village limits of LaValle and Wonewoc. Facilities would include parking for vehicles with trailers, toilets, drinking water, and hitching posts. However, with proper design it may be feasible and certainly more economical to develop a single rest area for bicyclists and horseback riders depending on the location in each community.

Drinking water for horses will be made available at a natural source such as the Baraboo River. A graveled slope to the water will be provided at several locations on the 7.5-mile segment. Artesian wells adjacent to or in close proximity to the trail will not be used as a watering source for horses in accordance with State codes.

All but two bridges on the segment designated as combination bicycle/horse trail are double width. These two bridges will be widened so that they will have separate decking and railings for horses and bicycles. Signage will instruct horseback riders to dismount and walk their horses across each bridge on the 7.5-mile segment.

Elroy Terminus

In cooperation with the Department, the City of Elroy is developing a "Trail Commons" project that will provide many trail amenities such as flush toilets, showers, drinking water, parking, and shelter.

Canoe and Boat Access

The trail is closely associated with the Baraboo River which it crosses ten times between Reedsburg and Elroy. With the presence of scenic sandstone bluffs and the availability of fishing, there is the potential or providing excellent canoeing and boating opportunities on the river. A cooperative project involving the Department, the communities and local service organizations would be needed to remove fallen trees and log jams presently restricting these activities in some areas. Suitable access points will also have to be determined.

Endangered Resources

All areas of development will be examined for the presence or absence of endangered and threatened wild animals and wild plants and appropriate protective measures taken for significant sites. If any list species are found during development, construction would be suspended until the District Endangered and Nongame Species Coordinator is consulted.

Estimated Development Costs and Phasing

Total estimated development cost based on 1990 figures is \$641,000. All proposed development will be dependent upon the availability of funds and upon statewide priorities. Additional and/or up-to-date justification will also be required before development projects are funded.

Phase I

1.	Two 10'-wide bridges (at first 2 stream crossings north of LaValle).	\$11,200
2.	Decking and railing of trestles for bicycles and horses.	90,000
3.	Trestle repair (replace support stringers on 1 trestle).	2,000
4.	Trail cleanup and brushing.	3,000
5.	Boundary fencing (10 miles at \$3,500/mile)	35,000
6.	Land surveys	<u>15,000</u>
	Total Phase I Development Cost	\$156,200

Phase II

1.	Surfacing bicycle trail tread 10 feet wide (22 miles at \$7,500/mile).	\$165,000
2.	Crushed aggregate (3/4 inch) as needed for equestrian trail.	30,000
3.	Elroy terminus facility contribution.	50,000
4.	Signing (entrance, informational and trail signs).	6,000
5.	Trail cleanup and brushing.	5,000
6.	Boundary fencing (5 miles at \$3,500/mile).	17,500
7.	LaValle rest area for bicyclist	
	a. 20-stall gravel parking lot	5,500
	b. Flush toilet	30,000

8.	LaValle rest area for equestrians	
a.	20-stall gravel parking lot for vehicles with trailers	5,500
b.	Well with hand pump	12,400
c.	Four-unit pit toilet	20,000
9.	Wonewoc rest area for bicyclist	
a.	20-stall gravel parking lot	5,500
b.	Flush toilet	30,000
10.	Wonewoc rest area for equestrians	
a.	20-stall gravel parking lot for vehicles with trailers	5,500
b.	Well with hand pump	12,400
c.	Four-unit pit toilet	20,000
11.	Selective vegetative clearing and planting.	3,000
12.	Picnic tables, grills, refuse containers, bike racks, and hitching posts.	4,000
13.	Land surveys	<u>15,000</u>
	Total Phase II Development Cost	\$442,300

Phase III

1.	Asphalt the bicyclist rest area parking lots at LaValle and Wonewoc.	10,000
2.	Fencing (7 miles at 3,500/mile).	24,500
3.	Rest area landscaping.	5,000
4.	Selective vegetative clearing and planting.	<u>3,000</u>
	Total Phase III Development Cost	\$42,500
	Total Project Cost	<u>\$641,000</u>

Land Acquisition

In July 1988, the Natural Resources Board approved acquisition of the abandoned Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company rail line between the communities of Reedsburg and Elroy. The Board also approved an acreage goal of 400 acres of which 349.77 acres have been acquired as of December 31, 1989. The 400-acre acreage goal includes additional acreage that may be needed for rest areas, trail connectors, access to fishing, etc.

The railroad company granted a 10-foot wide perpetual easement to U.S. Telecom, Inc. (now U.S. Sprint) in December 1985, for the purpose of installing a fiber optics cable the full length of the right-of-way. The Department is subject to the provisions contained in the easement (agreement).

The Department will also cooperate wherever possible with municipalities who need to cross the trail with utilities. Leases transferred with the sale of the railroad grade will be continued. The selling of those leased lands where a business or other building is located will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Negotiation by the Department for the remaining reversionary parcel is continuing.

Operation Cost and Revenue Potential

It is estimated that approximately \$60,000 to \$100,000 per year will be needed to operate the trail. This includes salaries, mileage and costs for maintenance vehicles, travel, services and supplies.

Once the grade becomes fully operational, a user fee for bicyclists 18 years of age and older will be charged as is the case on other state trails. A special horse user fee may also be enacted, dependent on discussions with the new state trails council and legislative initiatives already underway. Based on experience gathered at other trails statewide, it is anticipated that the trail will generate less than 30% of its operating costs.

Outlets for the bicyclists trail card will be in communities along or near the trail.

Public Involvement in the Master Planning Process

Five open forum public meetings were held in February, 1989, in Elroy, Wonewoc, LaValle, Union Center, and Reedsburg. Two hundred forty citizens attended the meetings and provided a wide variety of comments on such topics as land sales and possible uses of the trail.

The Department also published a "Trail Notes" newsletter that was sent to 231 individuals and organizations. The newsletter was dedicated to public information on the Baraboo River Trail, (renamed The "400" Trail).

A 10-minute video titled "The Baraboo River Trail" was produced by the Department to introduce the trail to user groups, potential friends groups, communities, and other interested parties.

A news media event to kick off the public review of the Trail master plan was held on March 2, 1990, at the depot in Reedsburg. Approximately 100 citizens and members of the local newspaper and radio station attended the event.

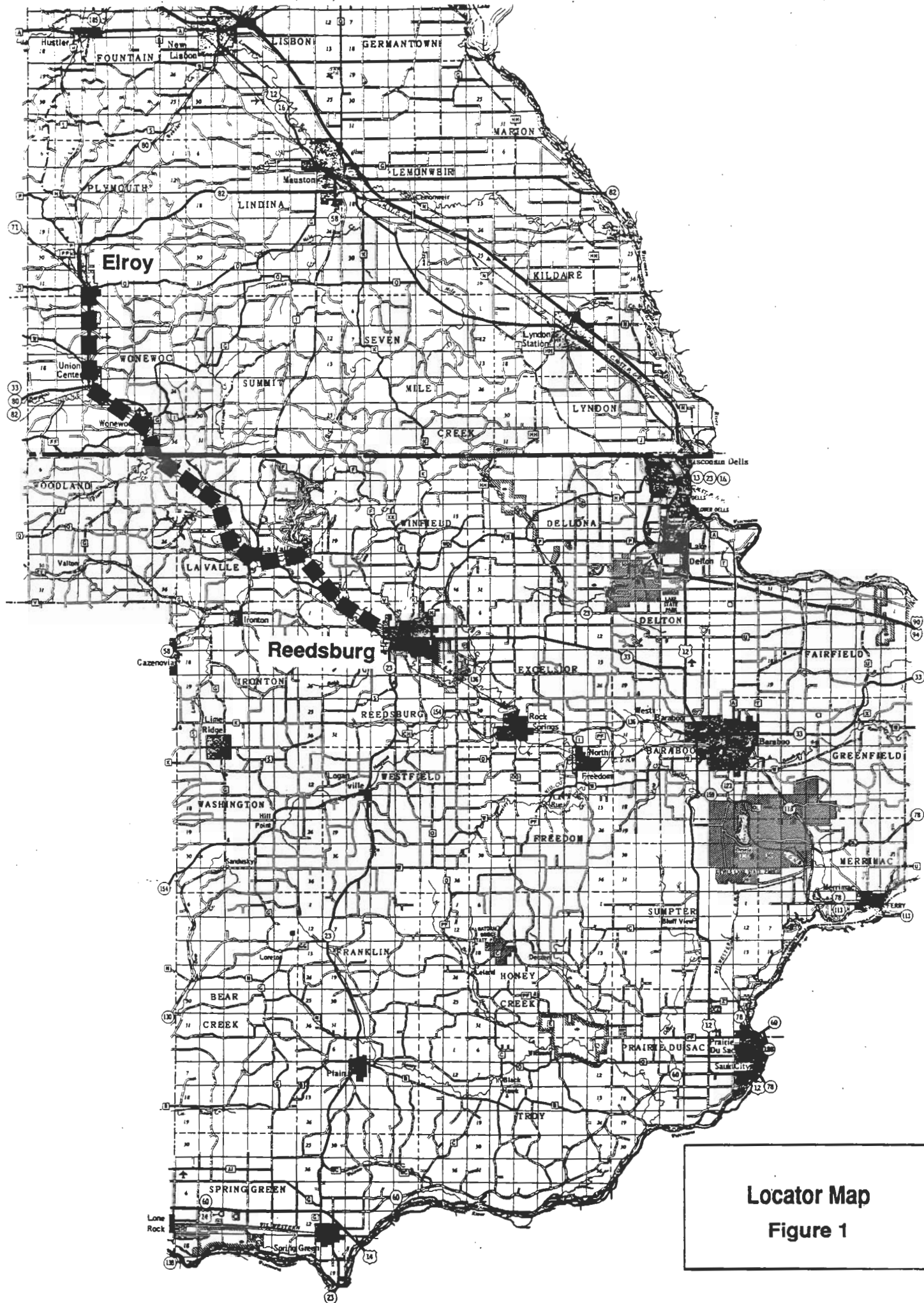
Two open house public meeting were held during the 45-day master plan review period to gather citizen comments. The first was held March 27, 1990 in Reedsburg and the second was at Elroy on April 5, 1990. Over 90 citizens attended the meetings. Twenty-one letters were also received during the review period.

Providing for Use by the Mobility Disabled and Other Handicapped Persons

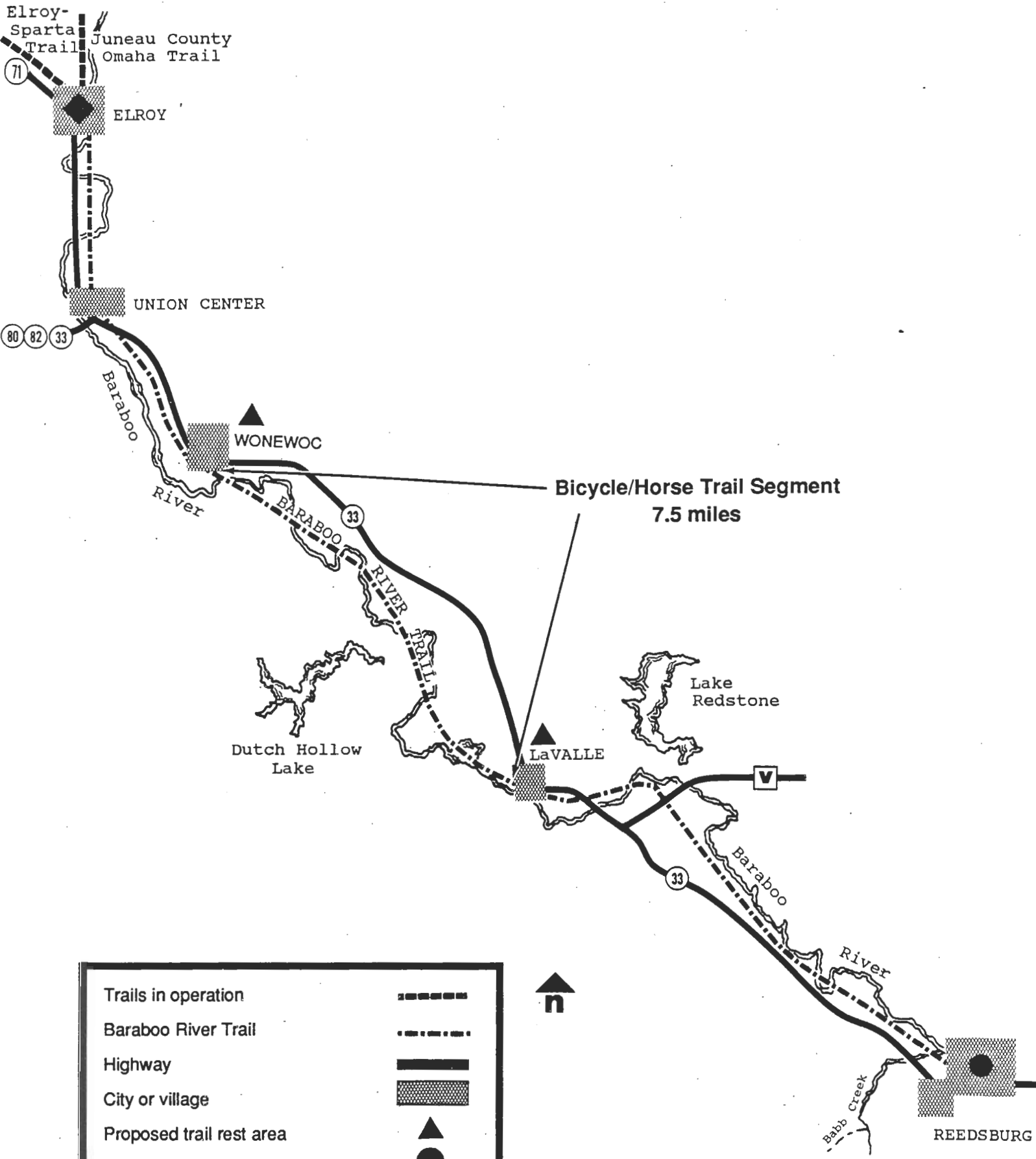
The parks program will initiate an information/education program to inform the public of accessible facilities. The program will also work with and accelerate communications with advocacy groups to determine needs for other and less traditional recreation activities.

All toilet facilities for trail users will be accessible.

Fishing areas adjoining the trail that could be made accessible to those with disabilities will be investigated and developed if feasible.



Locator Map
Figure 1



Elroy-Sparta Trail
 Juneau County Trail
 Omaha Trail

ELROY

UNION CENTER

WONEWOC

Bicycle/Horse Trail Segment
 7.5 miles

Dutch Hollow Lake

LaVALLE

Lake Redstone

REEDSBURG

Trails in operation	-----
Baraboo River Trail	- - - - -
Highway	—————
City or village	■
Proposed trail rest area	▲
Proposed southern trail terminus	●
Trail connectors	◆



Development Map
Figure 2

SECTION II - SUPPORT DATA

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Location (Figure 1)

The "400" Trail is located in southwestern Wisconsin in Sauk and Juneau Counties. From its beginning point in the City of Reedsburg (population 5,356), the grade proceeds in a northwesterly direction through the communities of LaValle (population 432), Wonewoc (population 851), Union Center (population 223), and terminates in Elroy (population 1,616).

The main travel route to the proposed trail area is Interstate Highway 90-94 for those traveling either from the east or west. State highway 33 gives access to Reedsburg, LaValle and Union Center. Highway 33 intersects with State Highway 23 in Reedsburg and U.S. Highway 12 north of Baraboo. There are good road connections to intermediate points on the trail such as Elroy and Union Center from I 90-94 via State Highway 80 from New Lisbon and via State Highway 82 from Mauston. LaValle can be reached via State Highway 58 from Mauston.

History of the Area

The railroad corridor running from Reedsburg to Elroy was once part of the Chicago-Northwestern rail line that connected the Chicago area with southern Minnesota, northern Iowa and points beyond. The rail line was busiest during the late 1800's and the early part of the 1900's. During the first half of the 20th century rail traffic declined and by 1964 the section of the corridor connecting Elroy to Sparta was abandoned to become the State's first rail to trail project.

Chronology of Property's Establishment and Planning Process

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| May 28, 1985 | The Chicago-Northwestern Transportation Company (ICC) petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission for abandonment. |
| March 31, 1986 | ICC approved the abandonment. |
| July 28, 1988 | An environmental assessment for the acquisition and development of the grade was approved. |
| July, 1988 | Natural Resources Board approves establishment of the trail project and acquisition of the right-of-way. |
| February 21, 22, 23, 1989 | Public open forum meetings held in Elroy, Wonewoc, LaValle, Union Center, and Reedsburg to solicit ideas and comments on the proposed trail. |
| March 2, 1990 | News media event to kick off the public review of the draft master plan held in Reedsburg. |
| March 27 and April 5, 1990 | Open house public meetings held in Reedsburg and Elroy during the 45-day master plan review period to gather citizen comments. |

B. RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

Geology and Soils

The trail lies wholly within the unglaciated area of Wisconsin but its main physical aspect was shaped in part by glacial phenomena. Glacial Lake Baraboo covered much of the valley of the Baraboo River that the grade follows.

Lower magnesium dolomite shielding the softer underlying Cambrian sandstone from erosion was responsible for the formation of the picturesque rock formations and cliffs that are numerous throughout most of the area of the grade. Differences of elevation are not great between the valley floor of the Baraboo River and its surrounding highlands. They average approximately 200 feet, however, cliffs and dramatic rock formations usually magnify the relief of the area. The soils on lower slopes and most of the valley floor are sandy loams formed from the exposed Cambrian sandstone.

Climate

The climate is continental characterized by marked changes in weather common to the latitude and interiors of large land masses. Frequent weather systems move through the area from west to east. Spring, a mixture of warm and cold periods, is often late. Summers are warm.

The growing season, defined as the number of days between the last 32 degree freeze in spring and the first in the fall, averages 142 days in Sauk County and 131 days in Juneau County.

In winter, the average temperature is 22.1 degrees F. The average summer temperature is 70.9 degrees F.

Total annual precipitation is about 32 inches. Of this 60 percent usually falls in April through September. Average seasonal snowfall is about 36 inches.

The sun shines 70 percent of the time in summer and 40 percent in winter. Prevailing winds are from the west in winter and south in summer. Wind speed is the highest in March, April and November.

Water Resources

Baraboo River - 10 Crossings

Other than Wisconsin River, this is the largest stream in Sauk County. The river supports a variety of fish species, however, fishing pressure is light to moderate. Waterfowl hunting and canoeing are also important recreational pursuits.

The Baraboo River has an average grade of 3 1/2 feet per mile. From Wonewoc to Reedsburg it is a much meandered stream and consequently has a broad belt of lowland forest interspersed with small farm fields in this area.

Silver Creek - 1 Crossing

A small spring fed tributary to the Baraboo River located 3 miles northwest of Reedsburg. Only forage fishes exist. The watershed is primarily cropland and wooded pasture. Upland game species are common to the area.

Crossman Creek - 1 Crossing

A low gradient spring and seepage fed stream originating in southwestern Juneau County and entering the Baraboo River 4 miles northwest of Lavelle in Sauk County. Forage fish dominate the fishery.

Little Lemonweir River - 1 Crossing

This clear stream flows in an easterly direction and joins the Lemonweir River at New Lisbon Flowage. The upper portion of the stream is Class II and III trout water. The lower part of the stream contains a fishery of northern pike, walleye, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed, green sunfish and various rough and forage fish.

Bear Creek - 1 Crossing

A light brown colored stream that flows in an easterly direction into Juneau County where it joins the Lemonweir River. Much of the stream is ditched. The fishery consists mostly of forage fish.

In addition to the above, there are over 16 crossings of small unnamed streams.

Vegetative Cover

The trail right-of-way is closely associated with the Baraboo River for its entire length and passes through numerous areas of lowland forest. Tree species common in this plant community are silver maple, American elm, willow and various other species.

Rising 3 to 15 feet above the wetlands, the sides of the grade also support considerable shrub and small tree growth. Woody plants such as black locust, sumac, box elder, dogwood, and honeysuckle are common. Hemlock and relic pine groves are found on some of the north facing slopes adjoining the right-of-way.

Non-woody plants common on the right-of-way include little bluestem, trillium, goldenrod, mullin, and coneflower. There are no significant prairie remnants.

Wildlife

The trail encounters three major types of wildlife habitat including farmlands, woodlots, and wetlands. Wildlife present in farmland areas include ring-necked pheasants, bobwhite quail, white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, red and gray fox, badgers, raccoons, opossums, skunks, and woodchucks. A variety of songbirds, including bobolinks and meadowlarks, use the grasslands for nesting.

Woodlots are also used by several farmland species along with fox and gray squirrels, red-tailed hawks, kestrels, great horned owls, and barred owls. Songbirds utilizing woodlots include indigo buntings, northern orioles, and species of vireos, warblers, thrushes, and woodpeckers.

Wetlands are inhabited by a variety of wildlife. Waterfowl nesting in areas along the trail include mallards, blue-winged teal, wood ducks, and Canada geese. Great blue herons, red-winged blackbirds, bitterns, and sora rails are summer residents in the wetlands. Resident fur bearers include mink, muskrats, and beaver.

Land Use Inventory

About 44 acres of the state-owned rail corridor to be utilized by surfaced trail tread and horse trail is classified intensive recreational development (IRD). Additional private parcels purchased for rest areas and trail terminus development will also be classified as IRD. The remaining 306 acres of trail right-of-way is classified extensive recreation area (ERA).

Historical and Archaeological Features

According to the State Historical Society a number of prehistoric archeological sites are located in the vicinity of the rail corridor. However, if the project is confined to the abandoned railroad right-of-way, archeological sites will not be affected. Lands purchased outside the right-of-way for rest stop development will likely require an archeological survey.

C. MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

River Erosion

During periods of high water, the Baraboo River tends to eddy and erode the base of the grade.

Existing Commercial Use

Union Center, Wonewoc and LaValle have existing commercial uses in very close proximity to the trail. The right-of-way has been used for parking and storage by these interests in the past and presents a potential hazard to trail users.

Conflicting Uses of the Corridor

Some local citizens use the corridor for parking, storage, driving to hunting lands, and driving to work.

Reversionary Property

There is one remaining reversionary parcel north of Union Center.

Vegetation

The potential exists for weed trees such as box elder to encroach on the right-of-way. Open areas should be maintained to retain vistas of the river and the surrounding bluffs. This maintenance will also encourage native prairie plants to reestablish along the corridor.

D. RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATION

Wisconsin's 1986-91 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Needs Assessment sections sets priority ratings on various outdoor recreation activities to serve as an indicator of needs. The rail corridor is located in two planning areas -- the Dodgeville Area which includes Sauk County and the Wisconsin Rapids Area which includes Juneau County. The following is a ranking of trail activities in those two planning areas according to need.

Dodgeville Area

High Priority - bicycling, walking/jogging
Medium Priority - Cross-country skiing, hiking/backpacking
Low Priority - Horseback riding, ATVs, snowmobiling

Wisconsin Rapids Area

High Priority - Bicycling, cross-country skiing, walking/jogging.
Medium Priority - Hiking/backpacking
Low Priority - Horseback riding, ATVs, snowmobiling

E. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

Management

1. Designate as a state recreation area trail.

Under this recommended alternative the entire corridor would be managed as a state recreation area as authorized by statute 23.091. A variety of uses would be accommodated including hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and ATVs. Hunting and trapping would not be permitted because this type of use would not be compatible on a high-use trail.

Use zones could be established with rules adopted to control activities within the zones, as well as, limit the number of trail users using any particular zone. A copy of statute 23.091 is in the appendix.

2. Designate as a state park trail.

As a state park, the entire 22-mile trail could be managed to allow a wide variety of recreational activities. However, this designation does not provide the management flexibility to establish use zones and limit the number of users.

Development and Acquisition

1. Leave the trail in an undeveloped condition

Although the right-of-way has been acquired, this alternative would provide for no further acquisition and no development. The Department would merely retain the right-of-way for future use. This alternative is not desirable since the grade was acquired for recreational purposes.

No further acquisition or development could lead to safety, trespass, and encroachment problems, as well as degeneration of the resource.

2. Limited trail development

The Department could provide a 22-mile corridor for limited recreational use with minimal development. Such activities as hiking, and snowmobiling in the winter, could be enjoyed without trail surfacing.

Parking, toilets, wells and other facilities would be provided at a few major access points. Railing and decking of trestles would also occur.

This alternative is not recommended since state, regional, and outdoor recreation plans indicate a need for additional biking trails.

3. Full trail development

This recommended alternative would provide for a full complement of trail facilities for use by bicyclists, hikers, horseback riders, and snowmobilers and ATVs in the winter. The trail would be surfaced, the bridges railed and decked, and rest areas would be provided at major access points. Toilets, water, and picnic tables would be provided at all major rest stops. The use of local facilities would be utilized where offered. A separate trail for horses would be developed on about eight miles of right-of-way between LaValle and Wonewoc. Campground facilities are available near Elroy on the Elroy-Sparta Trail.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY SUMMARY

39 OUT OF 46 QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED

17 TRAILS WITH BIKE AND HORSE USE ON A SINGLE TREAD

- * 11 trails do not have a surface for the average recreational bike but may be useable for mountain bikes.
- * Annual use estimates indicate light use by horses and bikes.
- * Only one user conflict reported.

15 TRAILS WITH SEPARATE TREADS FOR BIKES AND HORSES

- * Horse use is generally light according to the user estimates. The highest was 3,360 on a Minnesota trail.
- * Bike use estimates ranged from 500 to 110,000 per year with an average of 27,000.
- * 10 trails have asphalt surfacing for bikes.
- * 5 trails have crushed stone surfacing for bikes.
- * 4 user conflicts reported with 3 involving bikes and horses.

7 TRAILS NOT HAVING COMBINED HORSE/BIKE USE ON THE SAME CORRIDOR (INCLUDES ONE TRAIL WITH SEPARATE SEGMENTS FOR EACH USE)

CONCLUSIONS

- * Trails with one tread for both uses work only if they receive very light use and are not surfaced for the standard bicycle (not mountain bike).
- * Trails expected to serve larger numbers of users should have the double tread design.
- * The majority of trails with double treads have the bike tread surfaced with asphalt (10 out of 15).
- * There is no common method of separating the two uses. Methods used are no separation (adjacent treads), 8' of separation between the two treads, wood rail fence, bike trail on elevated ballast portion and horse trail on lower level part of right-of-way, existing vegetation, and ditching.
- * All but one of the combined horse/bike trails share the bridges. Of these 31 trails, 2 have a yield system, 2 have the requirement that the rider dismount and walk his/her horse across the bridge, and 1 has established rules of use but did not indicate what they were.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

This is a short summary of comments received from a survey that was sent to the trail superintendents on every trail with both horse and bike use on it as indicated in the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's, Guide to America's Rails-Trails. A copy of the survey is attached.

TRAILS WITH BOTH USES ON THE SAME TREAD

Seventeen trails have both horse and bike use on the same tread. User days on these trails vary from a total of 200 user days per year to 18,000 per year. This is relatively low use in comparison to the Elroy-Sparta Trail, which has approximately 50,000-60,000 total user days per year.

Eleven of these trails do not have a surface that would be appropriate for a recreational bike. The surface consists of cinders, sod, or other types of railroad ballast so that the only appropriate bike is a "mountain bike" with fat tires.

Three trails also allow ATV use (the Tuscobia Trail in Wisconsin, the Rockinham Recreational Trail and the Sugar River Recreational Trail both in New Hampshire). On the last two trails it is reported that the greatest use comes from ATVs.

Some interesting comments:

Stan Bales, of the Bizz Johnson Trail which is located in Susanville CA, and managed by the Bureau of Land Management:

"Horse use \ Bicycle use conflicts are primarily related to trail tread roughing by horse hooves. We are considering seasonal closures (wet weather) for horses and bicycles to reduce rutting. In the heaviest use segment we are considering separate trails for horses. Low use does not yet require this however."

Doug Eoute, of the Sugar River Recreational Trail, located in Concord, NH and managed by the Bureau of off Highway Vehicles:

"This trail is in a high density area of New Hampshire population and early use created problems between users. After several years of operation most groups of users have learned to cooperate and get along very well; many have no other place to recreate and by necessity now get along."

Ange Taylor, of Iron Horse State Park and John Way, located in Wenatchee, WA:

"We have not at this time experienced any user conflict between horses and bicyclers. When these user types meet, the bicyclers have normally dismounted and waited for the horses to pass. As noted above we are aware that as use increases this could possibly pose a problem and our engineers and planners are discussing possible ways to separate the uses if the need arises."

Scott Flickinger, of the New River Trail State Park, which is located in Austinville, VA:

"Bike usage has been considerably lower than there has not been many conflicts between the "combination" of uses."

Harry Fisher, of the Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail, located in Roanoke, VA.

"No problem with the two uses being together. One maintenance problem has been damage to bridge decking by horses. We've gone back and put running boards the long way on bridges to cover and protect the decking."

TRAILS WITH SEPARATE TREADS FOR EACH USE

Although it is sometimes difficult to estimate the amount of use a recreational trail receives, the estimates given in the survey seem to indicate the trails with separate treads receive greater use. Annual user days reported on these trails vary from a total of 600 to 110,000.

The trails use a variety of methods to separate the uses. Ten of the fifteen trails have asphalt for the bicycle tread and dirt or sod for the horse tread. The remaining five have limestone screenings or quartzite for the biking surface. Some rely on the different material alone to separate the uses. Others use grade changes, or vegetation and the Ojai Valley Trail in Ventura, California uses a split rail fence.

All but one of the trails have users share the bridges. Two trails have a yield system, two have the rider dismount and walk his/her horse across the bridges, and one has established trail user rules that were not included with the survey.

Some interesting comments:

Dave Dionne, of the Baltimore and Annapolis Trail, in Severna Park, Maryland.

"In some sections horses are required to use the asphalt bike trail. Normally they ride on a parallel sod trail. Rules are 'Equestrians yield to all others.' and 'Use caution near horses.' Separate treads is the ideal situation... Our trail is not fully operational. I expect an increase in equestrian use when we are finished in 1990."

Ina Brolis, of the Little Miami Scenic Bike Trail, Waynesville, Ohio:

"In the beginning, the equestrians used the asphalt trail, but the bicycle population increased dramatically and the horses stay on their portion of the trail today -- they are outnumbered 1,000 to 1. We haven't had much of a problem, basically I believe because we don't have much equestrian use. Although I have considered drafting a regulation that prohibits galloping on the trail. That seems to be our only complaint or problem with multi use trails."

Dick Schmidt, trail manager of the Luce Line Trail in Maple Plain, MN: (The Luce Line Trail as well as other trail in Minnesota has the bikes on the raised area in the corridor with the horse tread running along side but off of the built up berm area. So the separation is attempted by use of a grade change. In the survey Schmidt explains that this does not work to keep the

horses off the bicycle tread which is made of crushed limestone and damaged by horse use.)

"When considering the installation of parallel treadways within the same corridor, beware of the amount of long term maintenance that goes with the horse trail versus the small relative amount of use it will get. For approximately 1-2% of the total trail users, we spend almost 50% of our maintenance budget working on the horse trail."

Andy Oshita, of the Ojai Valley Trail, in Ventura, California:

"No problems, wood fence separates user groups effectively."

Kevin Arends, of the Hinkley Fire State Trail, which is located in Moose Lake, MN:

"Multiple use trails sound good from a concept or political stand point but do not work from a management standpoint... Building the horse treadway was expensive, serves next to no users and creates a liability and user conflict problem."

TRAILS WITHOUT HORSE OR BIKE USE AT THIS TIME

Five of the trails listed in the Rails to Trails Guide to Americas Rail/Trails are actually not developed for uses other than foot traffic at this time.

TRAIL WITH BOTH USES ON SEPARATE SEGMENTS

The Root River Trail, in Rochester, MN is listed in the guide as having both uses. This trail has attempted to divide the uses in different segments of the trail. The bicycles have the western 28.5 mile and horses have the eastern 6.5 miles of the trail. The bike trail is asphalt while the horse trail is sod.

Craig Blommer, the area trails manager with the Minnesota DNR, said the topography would not allow two separate treadways without removing "many trees which would have spoiled the beauty of the trail."

Craig comments that the trail was just opened this year so it is too early to tell what kind of problems will come up. However, he says, "we have already encountered a number of horseback riders on the bicycle only segment. We have put up signs at every access point that say 'No horses permitted'. This seems to help a bit."

TRAIL WITH HORSE USE DISCONTINUED

Sam Gooden, of Grundy Center Iowa, wrote that the Comet Trail "originally planned for horses and bike/foot use on ballast/grass surface." They are now, however, planning to surface with limestone and limit the trail to bike use only.

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State of Wisconsin

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Carroll D. Besadny
Secretary

BOX 7921
MADISON, WISCONSIN 53707

May 3, 1989

IN REPLY REFER TO: 2500

Dear Trail Superintendent,

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is currently compiling information on combined use within abandoned rail road corridors. The use combination we are particularly interested in is horses and bicycles.

According to the Rails to Trails Conservancy's A Guide to America's Rails-Trails your trail currently allows both of these uses in the same corridor.

I have enclosed a short questionnaire regarding surfacing, user days, and tread design. I would appreciate if you would take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire and return it. I am hoping to collect documentation on what other states have been doing in regards to these two uses.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Ann Freiwald'.

Ann Freiwald
Landscape Architect/Planner

Trail Name: _____

How long is the corridor? _____

How long is the horse trail portion? _____

How long is the bike trail portion? _____

Please check the appropriate statements.

We have both horse and bike use in the same corridor.

Yes _____

No _____

If no, why not?

_____ We have one tread for both uses.

What is the surface material?

_____ We have separate treads for each use.

What is the surface material used for each tread?

How do you separate the uses?

What is the distance between the uses, is there a grade change, fencing, vegetation?

Have you had success in keeping the two uses separate or do you find user groups using the wrong tread?

_____ Both user groups share a bridge.

Have you set up a system of yields for the bridge crossings? _____

_____ User groups have separate bridges.

Please estimate the user days per year for each group.

Horse _____

Bike _____

Total user days _____

Please feel free to include further comments on the successes and problems you have experienced along your trail in regards to the combination of these two uses on another sheet of paper.

Appendix B

23.091 Recreation areas. (1) DESIGNATION. The department may acquire, develop, operate and maintain state recreation areas. State lands and waters may be designated as state recreation areas that are environmentally adaptable to multiple recreational uses, or are so located to provide regional or urban recreational opportunities or for preservation.

(2) MASTER PLAN. The department may designate a recreational area only after a master plan for use and management of the area is prepared, public hearings on the plan are held in the county where the largest portion of land in the project is located, the procedures prescribed in s. 1.11 are complied with, and the plan is approved by the natural resources board.

(3) USE ZONES. The department may establish use zones within state recreation areas providing for the full range of recreational uses, including hunting and fishing. It may promulgate rules to control uses within zones and may limit the number of persons using any zone. Such use zones shall be consistent with the activities identified in the master plan formulated under sub. (2).

History: 1977 c. 29; 1985 a. 332 s. 251 (1); 1987 a. 298.

APPENDIX C

OPEN FORUM PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - FEBRUARY, 1989

ELROY

40 people signed in

30 comments total

-9 comments in favor of horse and bike or just horse use

-17 comments in favor of only bikes on the trail

-2 comments in favor of ATV use on the trail

-2 comments concerning hunting and fishing along the trail

WONEWOC

29 people signed in

17 comments total

-6 comments in favor of horse and bike or just horse use

-4 comments in favor of bike use

-2 questions on the DOT plans for the right-of-way

-5 general comments

UNION CENTER

5 people signed in

- all comments concerned land sales

LAVALLE

49 people signed in

24 comments total

-16 comments in favor of horse and bike or just horse use

-3 comments against ATV use

-4 comments in favor of ATV use

-1 general comment

REEDSBURG

117 people signed in

60 comments total

-30 comments in favor of horse use or both bikes and horses

-19 comments in favor of bike use

-5 comments calling for all uses including driving horses and ATVs

-2 comments in favor of horses but no ATVs

-4 general comments

COMMENTS RECEIVED SINCE THE OPEN HOUSES

15 comments total

-4 comments in favor of both bikes and horses or only horses

-13 comments in favor of bike use

-2 comments with concerns about the safety of multi-use

PETITION CALLING FOR HORSE USE

-433 signatures on a petition requesting the inclusion of horse riding opportunities on the Baraboo River Trail.

PETITION CALLING FOR CONTINUATION OF USES ON THE ELROY-SPARTA TRAIL

-325 signatures on a petition requesting the continuation of the same uses found on the Elroy-Sparta Trail. (bike-hike-snowmobile-cross-country skiing)

MAILING LIST FOR TRAIL NOTES

-235 addresses on the mailing list, about 170 new addresses