

Narrative response – GWHTS Conover Segment - Attachment 1

This project is the 3.2 mile western segment of an 8.3 mile multi-use alternative transportation trail linking Conover and Phelps in Vilas County (*Attachment 2*). The trail will use an abandoned railroad grade for most of its length. This project is a stand-alone segment, accessible and usable from Muskrat Creek Road as well as from Conover. The Town of Conover will sponsor the application for this western segment. It will run from the Conover Town Park west to the railroad grade that parallels US Highway 45, then north to the railroad grade and east toward Phelps. The Conover portion, this project, will end at Muskrat Creek Road (*Attachment 3*). The Town of Phelps will sponsor the TE Program application for the other segment which will begin at Muskrat Creek Road and continue east to Song Hill Lane. In the future Phelps plans to bring the trail into the center of Phelps. The complete Conover-Phelps Trail (*Attachment 4b*) is a part of the planned Great Wisconsin Headwaters Trail System, and is included in the Vilas County Regional Alternative Transportation Plan prepared by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). The Plan, which was approved by the Vilas County Forestry, Recreation and Land Committee, employs a ranking system for the trails based on safety, support, gap closure, connection, timing, feasibility and visibility. The Conover-Phelps Trail received 28 out of 28 available points, making it a first priority trail. The trail will be 10 feet wide, surfaced with crushed and compacted limestone. Most of the trail is on county-owned land, but the western end would cross two private properties. Both property owners have committed to providing the necessary easements for the trail to cross their properties.

The western terminus for the trail is Conover Town Park (*Attachment 3*). It includes a pavilion with kitchen facilities, a picnic shelter, full BBQ pit facilities, restrooms, an outside drinking fountain, parking and a playground area. The park will be enhanced by new ADA compliant toilet facilities that are part of this project. (*See Attachment 4a for project cost details.*) Adjacent to the park are the Headwaters Soccer Association soccer fields and a sledding hill used in winter by numerous church and youth organizations, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Girl and Boy Scout Troops, and 4-H. It is a significant destination for resident and tourist

activities and youth recreation. The park serves as the town's center for many functions and festivals, including the annual "Taste of Conover", "Take a Kid Fishing", and the Lion's Club sponsored "Picnic on the 4th of July". Currently the primary means of access to the park is by car. Those who wish to bike or walk to the park must travel on area roads that have heavy summer traffic. In addition, these roads do not have shoulders or bicycle/pedestrian lanes. The Conover Segment of the new multi-use trail will enable adults and children to travel safely to the park via alternative transportation on an off-road trail, improving the quality of life in Conover as well as enhancing the community.

From the park, the trail will parallel State Highway 45, then, turning east, will travel toward Phelps through county forest land north of County Highway K. Highway 45 is a high volume road, a major transportation artery to the Upper Peninsula. Highway K is narrow and twisting. Both roads are dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians. The new trail will greatly improve the safety of all who use it and also the safety of those who drive on County K and currently must react quickly when encountering bicyclists and pedestrians on the narrow road. Since the trail will go directly to the center of Conover, it can be utilized by those who shop and work in Conover.

In addition to providing safe alternative transportation to Conover residents, the new trail will be a boon for tourism. As an easily accessible trail, near many resorts, particularly those on the Twin Lakes and Lac Vieux Desert, the trail will be a tourist destination, providing a window into nature in the Northwoods. Year-to-date statistics provided by Vilas County Tourism & Publicity indicate that 24.2 percent of all tourism inquiries involved biking or hiking activities. Since the trail will be on railroad grade, it will be easy for walking and bicycling, yet those using it will feel like they are a world away from the hustle and bustle of asphalt and automobiles. The quiet and slower pace will foster an appreciation of the wildlife, songbirds, wildflowers, and autumn foliage surrounding the trail. As part of a day trip, Conover's restaurants and shops could easily become destinations for tourists utilizing the trail.

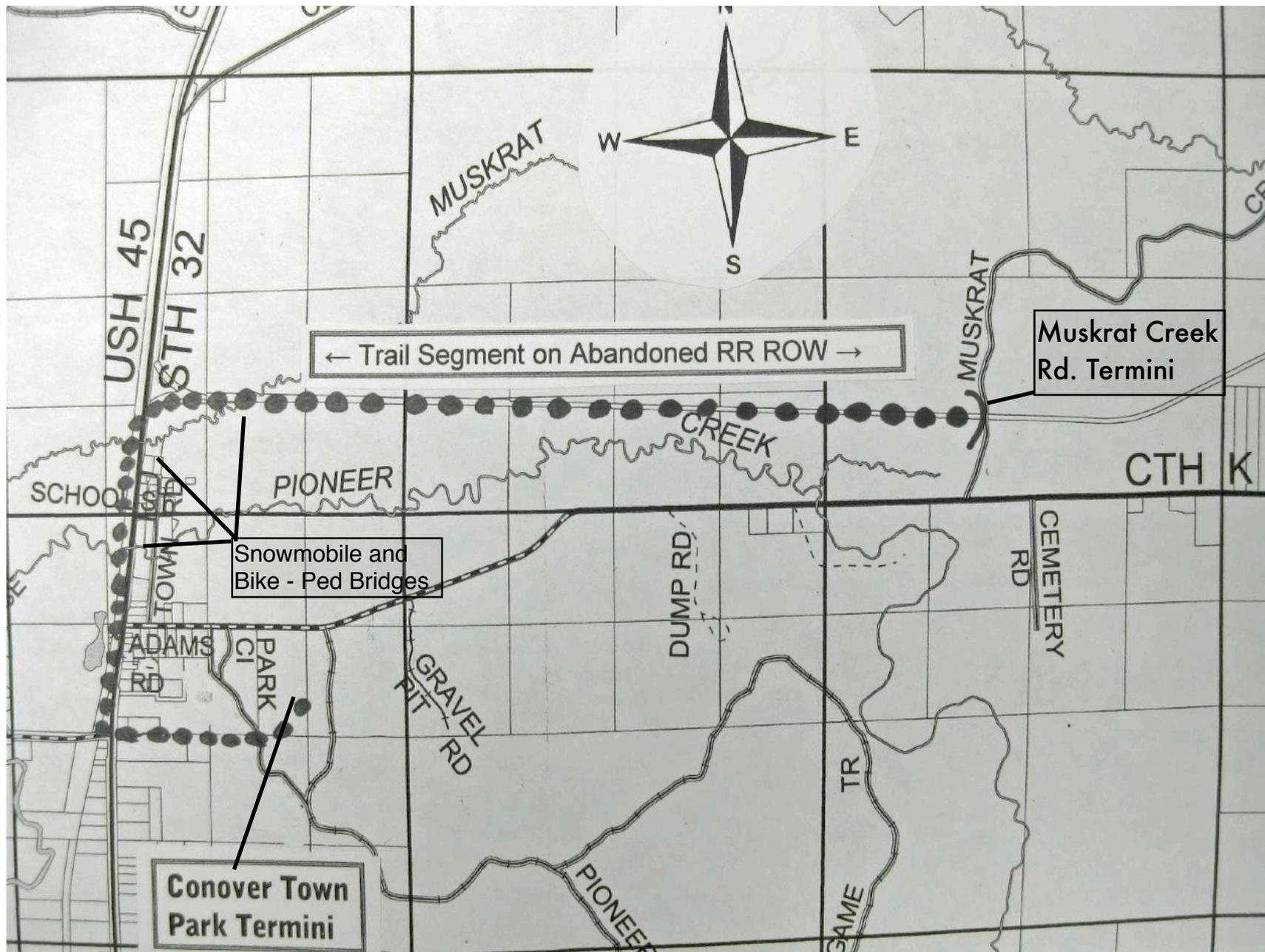
Cedar Corp and the Army Corps of Engineers have inspected the proposed trail segment and indicate that there are no environmental issues that will affect engineering the project. The

Conover Sno-Buddies Snowmobile Club will be instrumental in the design and construction of three new bridges on the abandoned railroad grade which will be part of this project. (*See Attachment 4a for project cost details.*) Maintenance of the trail will be a cooperative effort. In the winter, hundreds of snowmobilers each week utilize the Conover trails to travel north from the Eagle River area to where the snow offers better riding conditions.

As part of the Great Wisconsin Headwaters Trail System, the Conover-Phelps trail will ultimately connect with a trail that will run from Eagle River to Land O'Lakes via Headwaters Park on Lac Vieux Desert. It will also connect with the planned route from Phelps to Headwaters Park, thus forming a loop. Connections will ultimately be made with the Three Eagle Trail from Three Lakes in Oneida County. A planned link between Eagle River and St. Germain will connect all the GWHTS trails on the east side of Vilas County with the established trails between St. Germain and Boulder Junction. (*See Attachment 4c.*) The GWHTS trails are all included in the Vilas County Regional Alternative Transportation Plan. According to statistics from the NCWRPC, population growth in Conover between 1990 and 2005 was the 2nd largest in the study at 33.2% and by 2000 the median age had increased from 42.7 to 44.5, which reflects a "retirement" population. Among the recommendations and comments made by NCWRPC (Ch 1, pages 1-9 of the Conover Comprehensive Plan) was that the community lacks the amenities and activities of some of the surrounding communities. It further stated that Conover needed to promote area trails and its location at the headwaters of the Wisconsin River. The Conover-Phelps Trail is an important way to do just that.

Town founder Seth Conover made many trips north by train, stopping so frequently at the same place that it became known to train personnel as "Conover's Stop" and later just "Conover." From Conover's Stop he hiked northeast toward North Twin Lake. His route later became the route for the railroad spur to Phelps, the grade of which provides the majority of the route for this trail. What better place to construct a healthy and safe alternative to automobiles, which will improve the quality of life and enhance the community of Conover, serve as a catalyst for economic growth, nurture an appreciation of the environment, and carry on the historic tradition of the area?

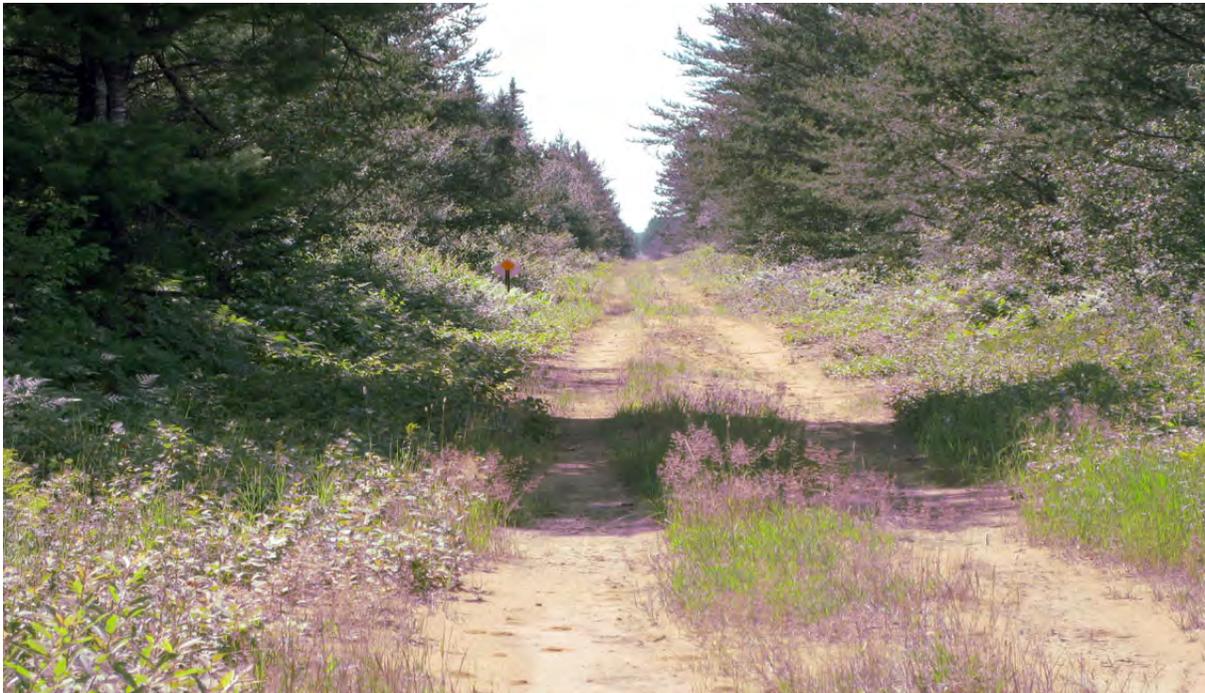
Attachment 2 for "GWHTS - Conover Segment"



ATTACHMENT 3 for “GWHTS – Conover Segment”



Conover Town Park looking south toward the sledding hill with the open air shelter building in the background. This is the western terminus of the Conover Segment of the Conover-Phelps Trail. To the north, the park contains a large parking area, playground equipment, BBQ grills, picnic area, soccer field and outdoor drinking fountain.



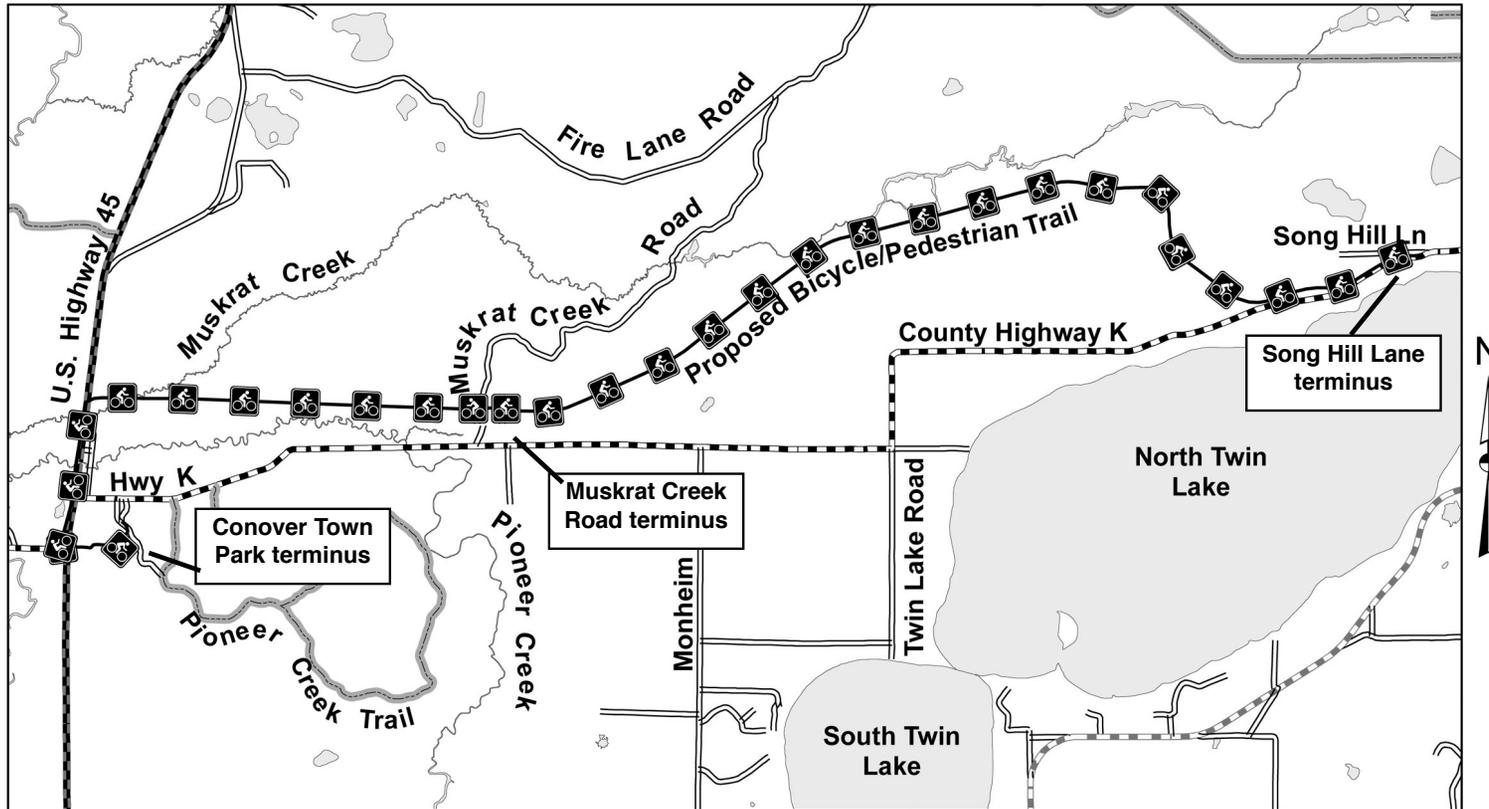
A view along the abandoned Chicago & Northwestern Railroad grade, looking west from Muskrat Creek Road, the eastern end of the Conover Segment.

Attachment 4a - GWHTS - Conover Segment

ESTIMATE FOR SEGMENT FROM CONOVER PARK TO MUSKRAT CREEK ROAD				
(approximately 3.2 miles)				
Clearing/Grubbing	18	STA	\$250	\$4,500
Excavation Common	4025	CY	\$5	\$20,125
Base Agg. Dense 1 1/4 - inch	6300	TON	\$10	\$63,000
Crushed Limestone	2625	TON	\$50	\$131,250
Mobilization	1	EACH	\$30,000	\$30,000
Restoration	15750	SY	\$3	\$47,250
Traffic Control	1	EACH	\$5,000	\$5,000
Erosion Control	1	EACH	\$4,000	\$4,000
Culvert Pipes	80	LF	\$35	\$2,800
Breaker Run	4025	TON	\$15	\$60,375
Bridges	3	EACH	\$75,000	\$225,000
ADA Bathroom Facility	1	LS	\$55,000	\$55,000
Contingency (15%)				\$97,000
Construction Total				\$745,300
Preliminary Engineering/Design (10%)				\$74,530
				\$819,830

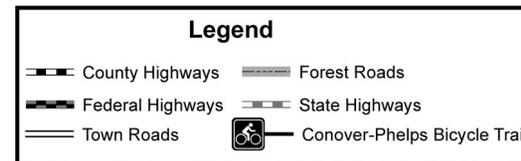
Attachment 4b for “GWHTS - Conover Segment”

Conover - Phelps Bicycle & Pedestrian Trail
8.3 miles overall

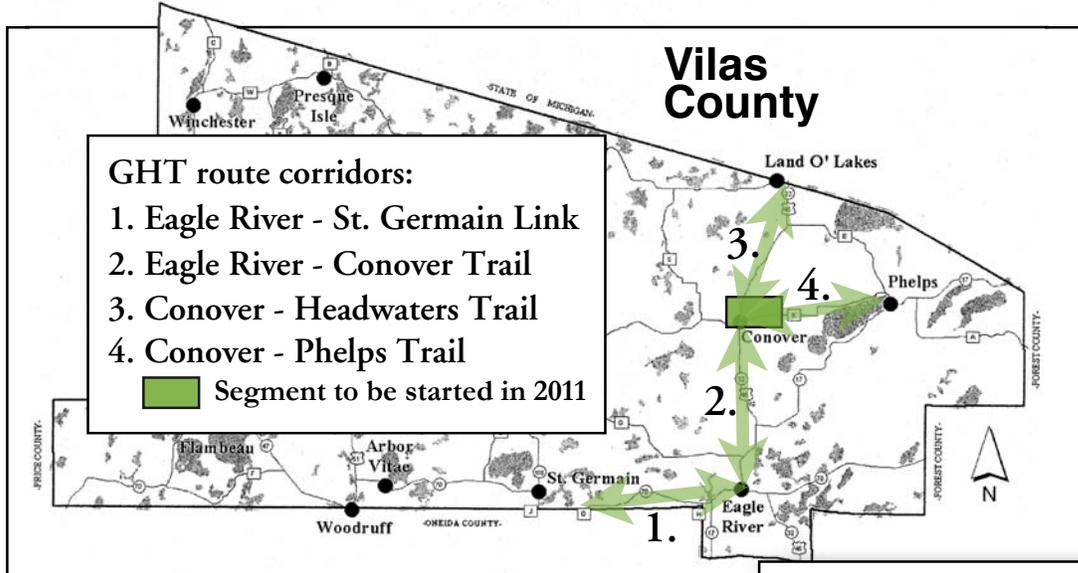
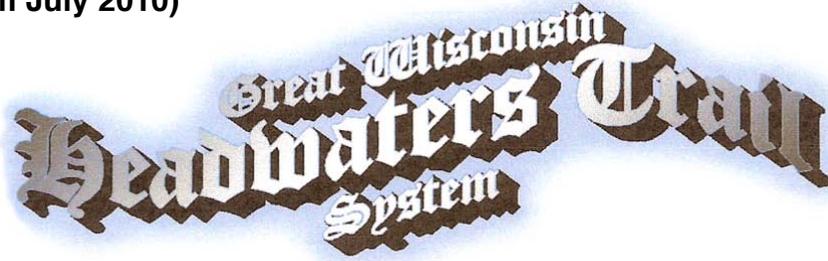


Segments of the Conover - Phelps Trail:

- **Western Segment** (3.2 miles) from Conover Town Park to Muskrat Creek Road
- **Eastern Segment** (5.1 miles) from Muskrat Creek Road to Song Hill Lane



**Attachment 4c for “GWHTS-Conover Segment”
(updated from July 2010)**



- GHT route corridors:**
1. Eagle River - St. Germain Link
 2. Eagle River - Conover Trail
 3. Conover - Headwaters Trail
 4. Conover - Phelps Trail
- Segment to be started in 2011

Great Headwaters Trails, a nonprofit corporation, exists to develop a system of bicycle-pedestrian trails in eastern Vilas County that are practical, safe and cost efficient; that will allow trail users to enjoy the beauty of the Northwoods; that will have educational, health and historic attributes; and that will foster economic benefits for this area. GHT aims to have the entire system in place by 2020.

The GHT trail system will provide over 30 miles of family-friendly biking and hiking trails for residents and visitors to the Northwoods. It will connect five municipalities and three established trail systems. Trail surfaces will be suitable for all types of bicycles and will vary depending on topography, location and use. All portions of the system used by snowmobilers in winter will have a crushed limestone surface.

This summer design work starts on the first portion of the system, the western end of the Conover-Phelps Trail. Last November the Town of Conover was awarded \$655,000 in federal Bicycle-Pedestrian Facility Program funds for the design and construction of that segment.



This spring Great Headwaters Trails partnered with Trees for Tomorrow where we now have our office. The partnership is a natural fit, and we're happy and proud to be connected with Trees, a “natural resources education tradition” since 1944. Our mailing address there is PO Box 609, Eagle River, WI 54521.

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