



**Hubbard County**

# **OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN**

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**PREPARED FOR**



**HUBBARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Hubbard County Government Center**

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# Section 1: Introduction

## 1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Hubbard County is located in the heart of Minnesota's lake and natural open space areas in the northcentral region of the state. Park Rapids serves as the county seat and is the most populated town in the county with a population of approximately 4,000 with an overall county-wide population of approximately 21,199.

Hubbard County is known for its scenic characteristics with abundant lakes and forests that include Paul Bunyan State Forest, Mississippi Headwaters State Forest, Badoura State Forest, and Itasca State Park, famed for the Mississippi Headwaters and drawing in approximately half a million visitors per year. Other highly sought-out recreational amenities in Hubbard County include the ATV recreational areas in Paul Bunyan State Forest and the 49-mile multi-use Heartland Trail that starts in Park Rapids and extends to Cass Lake.

Hubbard County owns and manages county owned parks and tax-forfeited lands that, when combined with state lands, equates to over a quarter million acres. Hubbard County maintains a strong commitment to responsible use of these lands to serve many interests and varying uses. With respect to recreation, county lands provide citizens and tourists an opportunity to pursue a variety of non-motorized and motorized recreational activities. The aesthetic quality of these landscape features make Hubbard County an appealing place to live and visit. The same holds true for the many beautiful lakes and streams in and around Hubbard County, each with their own visual appeal and recreational value.

Through this and other plans, Hubbard County strives to find the right balance between providing access to public lands and waters for recreation while at the same time preserving and protecting the highly-valued resources. This plan is a part of that effort and helps position Hubbard County to successfully manage ever-increasing demands on its public lands.

These county managed lands currently have numerous outdoor recreational amenities available, but strategic improvements can help make for more varied and improved experiences, as well as to identify methods to expand tourism beyond the traditional summer season. To that end, parks and trails play an important role in the region's quality of life and making it a desirable place to live, work and recreate.



## 1.2 PROJECT VISION AND PLAN GOALS

The purpose of the Hubbard County Outdoor Recreational Plan is to provide a community vision for high quality outdoor recreational experiences within the abundant natural resources that improve the quality of life, accessibility to recreation, the economic vitality of Hubbard County, and encourage ongoing stewardship through collaborative partnerships.

### PLAN GOALS

- Preserve and protect the quality of Hubbard County's natural resources
- Maximize the value of existing recreational assets while balancing the preservation of natural resources
- Improve access to, and awareness of, outdoor recreation
- Improve outdoor recreation to meet the diverse needs of the users
- Improve year-round economic benefits from recreation and tourism
- Identify the needs of stakeholders and match programs and services appropriately
- Encourage collaboration and partnerships with stakeholder user groups to avoid duplication of services
- Prioritize initiatives to make strategic improvements that will have the greatest benefit

This planning document focuses on setting the necessary framework and priorities to implement long term initiatives to continue to meet the needs of its stakeholders. The plan is meant to be re-evaluated, generally no greater than 10 years, to identify any changes in demographics, recreational trends and perspectives that may dictate the plan to be amended as needed.





### 1.3 RECREATION PLAN COMPONENTS

This plan focuses on a comprehensive outdoor recreational plan to create high quality recreational experiences while immersed in natural surroundings. The plan is centered around the preservation and enhancement of Hubbard County's land holdings and will also consider current and potential relationships with lands owned by the State of Minnesota. The plan will highlight three main areas to include:

- Parks and Trails: The physical features at the local, county and state level that provide places for residents and visitors to recreate.
- Recreational Services & Programming: The services and programs that help facilitate families, groups and individuals' participation in recreational and social activities and events.
- Marketing and Promotion: Enhancing awareness of the many parks, trails, programs, and outdoor activities available to residents and visitors.

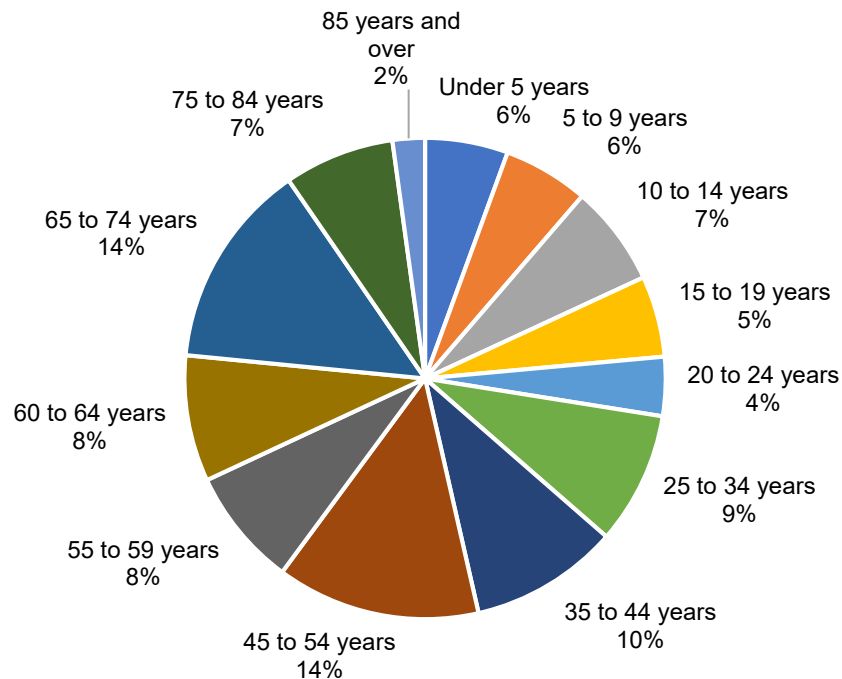
## Section 2: Planning Context and Background

### 2.1 COUNTY OVERVIEW AND DEMOGRAPHICS

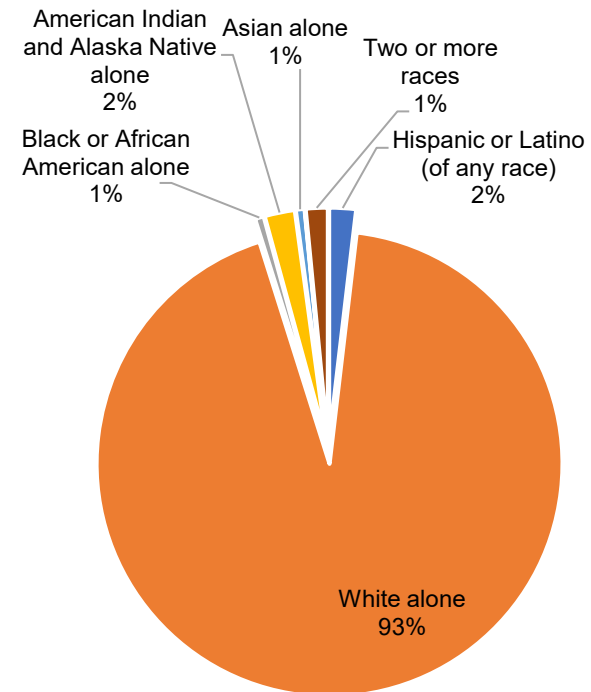
As of the 2010 census, Hubbard County's population was 20,428 which indicated a growth of approximately 11% from the 2000 census. The most recent data released by the U.S. Census Bureau indicates continued growth with an estimated population of 21,018 as of July 2017. Through the community engagement events for this plan, many residents noted a strong senior population due to many people leaving upon high school graduation and returning upon retirement. It was also noted that many of the lake shore property owners were seniors who leave during the winter months.

The following are demographics taken from the U.S. Census American Community Survey

Hubbard County Population Ages



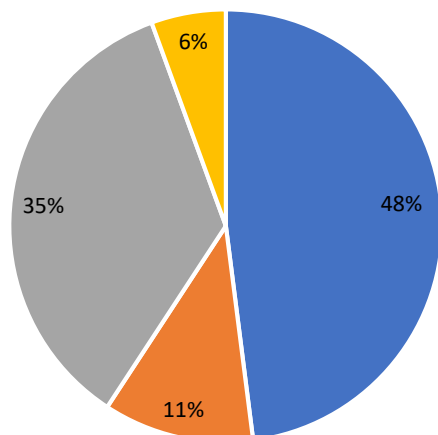
Hubbard County Population Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Housing Units by Occupancy



- Owner Occupied
- Seasonal, recreational, occasional
- Renter Occupied
- Vacant

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

A look at occupancy for housing units in the County gives some indication of the number of seasonal residents in the community. The following chart illustrates that 35% of the housing units are for seasonal, recreational or other occasional use. The U.S. Census Bureau considers these to be “vacant” units but separates them from other vacant categories allowing us to distinguish them. The remaining vacant units (including those that are for sale or rent or otherwise unoccupied) amount to only 6% of the County’s housing units. The remaining 59% of housing units in the County are owner or renter occupied.

Compared to the statewide rate of 6% for occasionally occupied residences, Hubbard County’s 35% is large. This presents a difficulty in truly understanding the makeup of the population. Data such as ages, race and the population numbers themselves do not reflect the individuals who stay in these seasonal dwelling units, yet, they are often visible and active members of the community. They are significant to the local economy as they pay property taxes and purchase goods and services in the community. However, as many of the “residents” of these second homes count other locations as their primary residence, they are not included in much of the demographic data.

The median income for a household was \$49,742<sup>1</sup>. There are an estimated 9,180 workers over the age of 16 who reside within Hubbard County. 40% of them work outside of Hubbard County.<sup>2</sup> The following table illustrates the different types of business industries operating within Hubbard County (count is from March 2016).

<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016)

Business Industries in Hubbard County		
	Establishments	Employees
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	12	57
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	1	N.A.
Utilities	3	N.A.
Construction	90	295
Manufacturing	32	853
Wholesale trade	9	28
Retail trade	94	1,036
Transportation and warehousing	22	89
Information	9	68
Finance and insurance	23	146
Real estate and rental and leasing	18	30
Professional, scientific, and technical services	28	106
Management of companies and enterprises	1	N.A.
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	25	94
Educational services	3	20
Health care and social assistance	56	822
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	11	13
Accommodation and food services	78	520
Other services (except public administration)	60	265

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 County Business Patterns

Part of fostering economic expansion is enticing people to come to the region as permanent or seasonal residents, and tourists. Although the economic value of these amenities is often less discernible than revenues from items such as timber harvests, the economic value of parks and trails should not be underestimated as a direct source of revenue for the County.



## 2.2 MANAGEMENT AND USE OF PUBLIC LANDS

The use of county lands for recreation is a privilege and maintaining access to these lands is a shared responsibility. The success of this plan relies heavily on this premise and on the willingness of each user group to share the land and actively participate in plan implementation and the responsible use of trails and outdoor recreational areas.

Hubbard County is undertaking this planning initiative to address and accommodate broader planning and visioning for recreational uses on county land, however, this is clearly a much broader issue that also affects public lands managed by other agencies. Although each agency may take different approaches to recreation and management, accommodating recreational uses is a shared responsibility requiring close collaboration between public land managers to ensure that all needs are adequately met and well managed.

Under this plan, Hubbard County is setting forth its approach to addressing and planning for improved outdoor recreation to meet the recreational needs of the region, enhance tourism and ensure lands and resources are adequately protected.

### County and State Forest Management

Hubbard County maintains a strong commitment to managing natural resources on its lands to ensure preservation of the high-quality resources available for future generations. Natural resource management is vital to maintaining a healthy forest and remains among Hubbard County's top priorities.

In this context, recreational uses have been developed consistent with, and often times in response to, broader land and water management plans and policies so that their impacts are not detrimental to the area's natural resources. At times this may require restrictions on recreational

uses. For example, limiting use of or altering the alignment of trails in certain areas during specific seasons in order to achieve broader resource management goals. In these instances, user groups will have to work with County and State resource managers to best determine how to accommodate each other's needs, with the intent being to end up with solutions that accommodate both management goals and recreational use whenever feasible.

Hubbard County and the State of Minnesota manage some of their lands to include timber harvesting based on varying economic and biological factors. Typically, only specific state-owned lands are set aside to remain as old growth forests, such as in Itasca State Park. Other specific lands that are located within a visual management corridor are managed differently to maintain the natural aesthetics. Timber harvesting and additional management tools are often used to improve the overall health, biological diversity and habitat value of the forest, though many who are not familiar with the process can find the results somewhat unsettling at first sight. Some of the slash left behind can be unsightly, but it is deliberate and purposeful as it protects soils from erosion, protects the roots of seedlings, and restores nutrients back into the soil as it decomposes



Timber harvesting provides an important economic benefit and remains a major revenue source for the County. For example, timber revenues were \$2.06 million in 2015; \$2.21 million in 2016; and \$1.63 million in 2017. Revenues generated through timber harvesting can cover various expenses, such as operations and maintenance and the costs of services the county offers to its citizens. Although yearly revenues fluctuate over time, timber harvesting is expected to remain an important revenue source for the foreseeable future and vital to supporting a variety of public services performed by Hubbard County.

Timber harvesting is also an integral part of the history of Hubbard County and can serve as a prime educational instrument for learning about the past through programs and interpretive plans. There is currently a yearly celebration known as “Legends and Logging Days” that provides a variety of community events over the second weekend in August that would be a prime location for illustrating a more enhanced educational component in terms of management and restoration in the County.



Minnesota Historical Society: Collections Online / Photographs / HD5.31 r52 (Locator Number SV)

Title: Summer logging in Akeley with a big wheeled cart. Created: 1913

Places: Akeley, Hubbard County, Minnesota, United States



## Recreational Uses and Conflicts on County Land

Recreational use of county lands has a long history that is deeply rooted in the local culture. Traditionally, trails originally developed for resource management and timber harvesting were informally and routinely used for recreation. This use centered on individual activities, such as hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, and resource harvesting (berries, mushrooms, wild rice, etc.).

The Hubbard County Board provided recreational cabin leases on county managed lands to individuals through a *Recreational Cabin Lease Policy*. This policy allowed leaseholders to construct non-permanent dwelling structures on county owned lands, but does not include the actual land, other than what the cabin sits on and a small area for parking. As stated in the lease policy, these structures can include cabins, sheds, privies, saunas, decks and patios but cannot include any basements, permanent pads or utility services.

The *Recreational Cabin Lease Policy* states that all county managed lands are to remain open for public recreational use to include, but not limited to, hunting, trapping, fishing, boating, camping, picnicking, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, firewood gathering, pleasure driving, including snowmobiling, and the operation of any motorized vehicle or conveyance upon a road or upon or across in any manner, including recreational trail use, nature study, water skiing, winter sports, and viewing or enjoying historical, archeological, scenic, or scientific areas.

While the county is no longer offering new leases, existing leases are still being renewed.

While the lease specifically states all lands are to remain open to the public, the perception of leaseholders may be that these lands are private, which can lead to conflicts.

This perception of personal ownership of public lands encompasses not only lease holders, but also individuals and families who may not hold a lease, but have routinely used a specific parcel of county land for many years and consider it their own property. This can lead to conflicts when individuals, groups or private enterprises try to use the same parcels of land for outdoor recreational purposes that some may feel personal ownership of, whether a lease holder or not. This conflict may also extend to conflicts with land and natural resource management efforts by the state and county on these parcels.

Additional conflicts arise where there is not a clear delineation of private land from public land, which is the case in many instances in Hubbard County. The county manages numerous tax-forfeited land, some of which is mixed among privately owned property and it can be unclear as to where private and public property starts and ends. Adding to the confusion is that many of these lands are very remote, making it difficult to determine actual boundaries when on site.

Though not as common, there are also county managed parcels inaccessible due to being landlocked by private property owners. This can become an issue if the landowners refuse to allow access to the public lands for recreation or management efforts.



In the case of landlocked parcels, the county should work with adjacent land owners to obtain easements as necessary to access the parcels for proper land management, or consider on a case-by-case basis to sell the properties. Unless these land locked properties are significant enough in size and opportunity for a recreational purpose, it is not recommended to consider them a priority for recreational development or provide a public access to them for recreational use in order to limit potential conflicts.

There are currently occurrences of privately owned lands being land locked by county owned parcels and old forest access roads that go through privately owned lands. If these routes are not located within a designated easement, the county should work to obtain an official easement as these routes offer prime links and connections.







## Vacation Rentals and Resorts

Another major recreational trend is the use of Airbnb/VRBO rentals versus staying at resorts. Due to the rise in popularity of Airbnb and VRBO rentals, many resort owners have made significant improvements in order to attract more clients by providing numerous activities and amenities to remain competitive, such as:



- Pools
- Tennis and pickleball courts
- Watercraft (jet skis, boats, etc.)
- Wine tasting events
- Kids programs and daycare
- Yoga
- Spas
- Shuttles to activity areas (The Headwaters, Heartland Trail, Detroit Mountain, etc.)
- Guided activities

Resort ownership has declined over the past decade, mainly due to a lack of interest in the next generation of families willing to take over resort operations and property values making it nearly impossible to sell the resort as a whole, forcing aging resort owners to parcel off and sell their property as Planned Unit Developments (PUD's).

## Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

Larger trends related to recreation and challenges show an overall decline in outdoor recreation, especially for youth. Some barriers for this trend include:

- Many youths lack experience in outdoor recreation due to parents not having time or experience to get them involved (ie:

parents never had an opportunity to hunt during their youth, therefore lack confidence or ability to allow their own children this experience)

- Youth being over-programmed in sport activities year-round (basketball, volleyball, hockey, baseball, etc.)
- “Virtual reality” and gaming experiences replacing actual time outdoors
- Lack of necessary equipment (cost factors)
- Desire for comforts and conveniences
- Physical disabilities or barriers
- Technology taking over time for both youth and adults, diminishing the perceived time available to get outdoors (smart phones, texting, etc.)



Source: <https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/sprint-kidsfirstphone-website-launch/>

Transplant residents, immigrants and underserved populations who have had little exposure to outdoor recreational experiences can have additional barriers for participation, including:

- Lack of awareness (not knowing what is available)
- Language barriers
- Lack of transportation or access to outdoor recreation
- Fees or associated costs with outdoor activities
- Fear / safety concerns
- Map challenges
- Cultural or religious insensitivity / discrimination
- Lack of companions
- Lack of desire

### Concerns of Overuse

On the opposite end of the spectrum is the threat that the most desirable activities or recreational areas will be destroyed by over-tourism and vandalism. Many tourist hot spots or even unique community features can become prime locations for Instagram, SnapChat and other social media photos and postings.

Many today are seeking that perfect photo to post and seek out locations not for the actual recreation, but for the ultimate photo. This can lead to over tourism concerns that may harm sites, increase crowding, and ruin the quality of the recreational space.

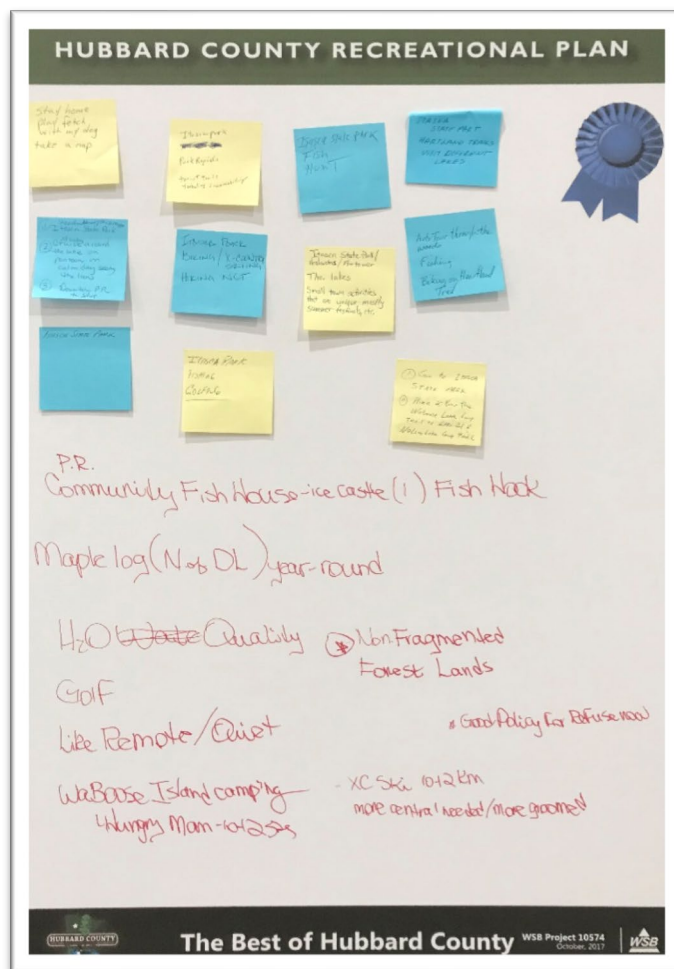




## 2.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS AND FINDINGS

### Planning Process

The Hubbard County Outdoor Recreational Planning process included a public engagement strategy in order to inform, consult, collaborate and partner with the community and stakeholders throughout the visioning and planning process and included the engagement strategies shown in the list to the right of this text.



- Online Engagement: Use of an online platform called Social Pinpoint, was used to allow anyone the ability to provide comments on a county map related to outdoor recreation. This resulted in 60 comments provided on the map and 21 survey responses. Below are some key words taken from the responses with more in-depth responses found in the appendix.
- Stakeholder Committee: A committee was formed to include specific project stakeholders representing varying perspectives in terms of types of outdoor recreation. Their roles in the project were to promote the project to the greater community, offer valuable information related to their area of expertise, review and comment on planning and design outcomes, and provide consensus of the plan document. The stakeholder committee included approximately twelve members.
- State Input: Meetings with the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources were held to gather their perspectives and insights as it related to recreation on state owned lands, as the county and state have a history of working cooperatively on outdoor recreation and natural resource management.
- Press: Hubbard County staff utilized both print media as well as radio to promote the project and encourage involvement in the planning process
- Public Open House Meetings: Public open house meetings were held at the start of the project to gain input from residents on their concerns and ideas related to outdoor recreation. There were two project input and visioning open house meetings held to include one at the Lake George Community Center and another at the Park Rapids Century School.





## Stakeholders

Stakeholders were defined as any individual or group that had an interest in the recreational use of county-managed land and/or otherwise wanted to provide input into the planning process.

Specifically identified stakeholders included:

- Snowmobiling
- ATV/OHV/OHM trails and activities
- Dirt biking
- Mountain biking
- On/off road cycling
- Hiking and walking trails
- Multi-use trails
- Equestrian trails and horseback riding areas
- Cross-country skiing
- Water trails and water sports
- Hunting and shooting sports
- Fishing sports
- Resorts / tourism
- Businesses / Chamber of Commerce
- Dog sledding and skijoring
- Interested citizens / landowners
- Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA)
- Local townships
- Department of Natural Resources

Overall, the stakeholder meetings and open houses provided much needed perspectives on recreational uses and demands in Hubbard County. Although some groups are more established and thus better represented, there was enough cross-interest between recreational activities that issues associated with under-represented groups were reasonably defined by those attending other meetings. For example, a

cross-country skier was often an avid bicyclist, as was a snowmobile rider commonly an ATV rider.

Each of the stakeholder groups defined issues, needs, and perspectives unique to their group which are addressed in the recreational plan for each category. In many cases, there were a variety of shared perspectives among most, if not all, groups. The following considers these.

## Common Perspectives

Without exception, advocates of outdoor recreation share a number of common perspectives:

- Awareness of public lands and outdoor recreation is a primary goal
- Use of public lands is a privilege and that each group has a shared responsibility to preserve that privilege
- Recognition that recreational use of public lands has to be consistent with resource management plans
- Recreational use and development of public lands has to improve access to all groups, demographics and abilities
- Improvements for outdoor recreational uses on public lands are to be balanced for numerous opportunities and user groups
- Environmental stewardship and sustainable use of public lands is a shared goal, with all groups underscoring that a major reason they live or recreate in Hubbard County is because of the natural remote setting, being outdoors and finding solitude

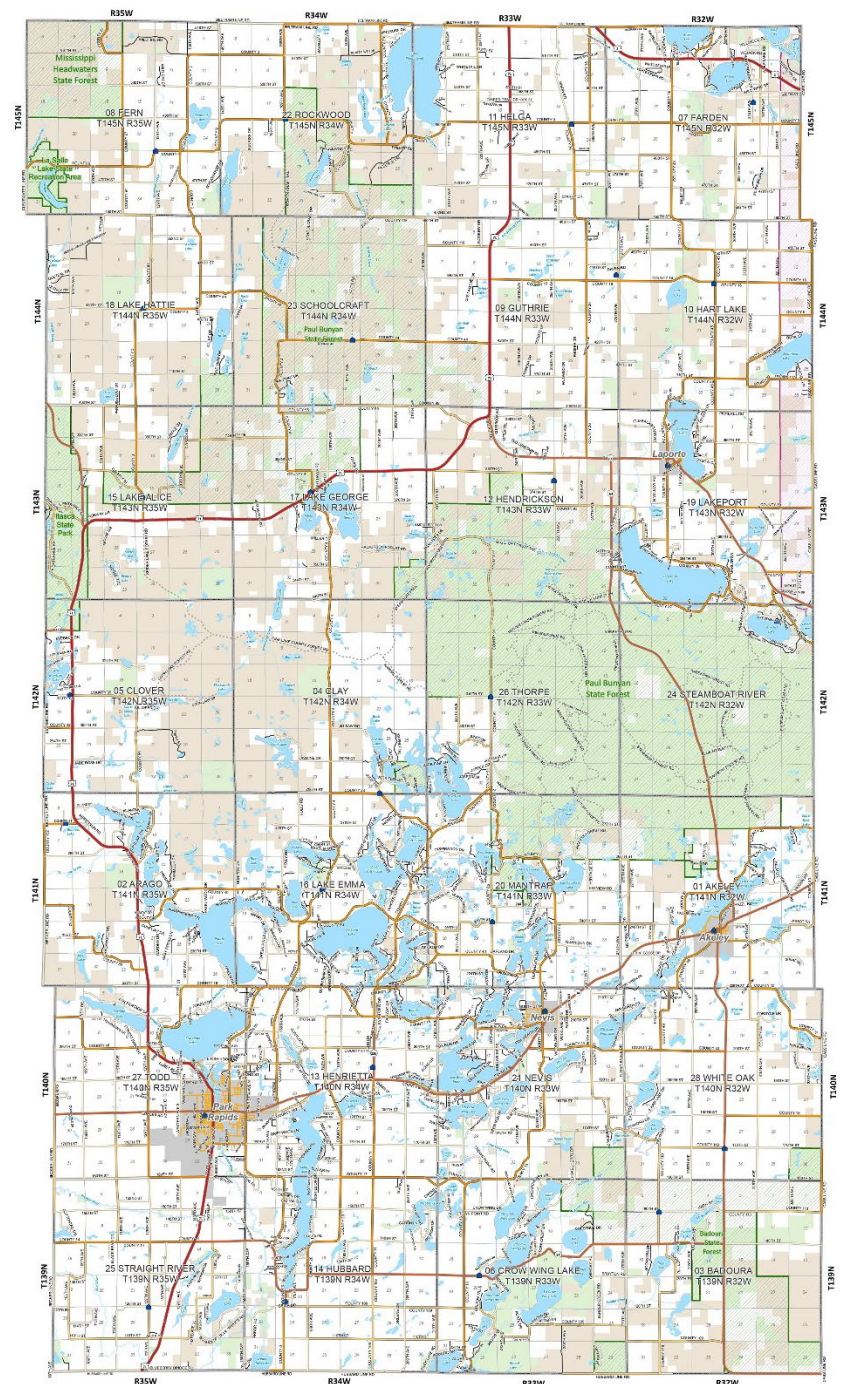
Each group recognizes a common and pervasive concern about recreational use of public lands: Individual recklessness or irresponsible users can cause conflicts and environmental impacts that will lead to more restrictions on access. One OHM advocate noted that currently ATV/OHM trails and users are considered better “out of sight and out of mind” as many relate this type of use with reckless and damaging behavior. While many users are responsible, just one bad

experience can have a significant detrimental impact to the perception of all users. Each of the groups recognizes that it is a shared responsibility to deal with individuals who contribute to the bad imagery and must find ways to promote their groups activities through improved relationships and marketing efforts.

Notably, reckless users were not attributed solely to a given type of recreational pursuit. It was more about individuals who are either uneducated about responsible use, are simply being irresponsible, or both. Uniformly, it is believed that these individuals must be held accountable by their peers and the larger recreational community. A formal recreational plan coupled with educational material and subsequent enforcement of illegal practices were all considered important to eliminating the majority of these occurrences, as was promoting responsible use through example.

Another common concern is effectively identifying county and state-owned and managed lands for users, including availability to adequate mapping to help users find recreational areas. This was of high importance given the remoteness of some areas of Hubbard County and the ease of getting lost, as well as to keep recreational users off private lands that are adjacent to county and state lands.

The following map identifies all the various parcels of county and state-owned land shown in tan and green colors, with private shown in white, illustrating how scattered some parcels are. Most of the contiguous amounts of county owned and managed lands occur north of Highway 34 and around the Badoura State Forest, as well as south of Crow Wing chain of lakes. There is a general lack of public lands west and south of Park Rapids, and along the Highway 34 corridor where the greater populations and tourist areas exist.



As stated previously, there can be conflicts stemming from recreational users unknowingly trespassing on private lands and the perception that local residents and lease holders feel that some of the actual public lands are their own personal property. The conflicts can lead to altercations and awareness of the right for public use on public lands and proper identification of public lands and access will be an ongoing discussion that will need to take place to limit future conflicts as recreational uses may change or grow.

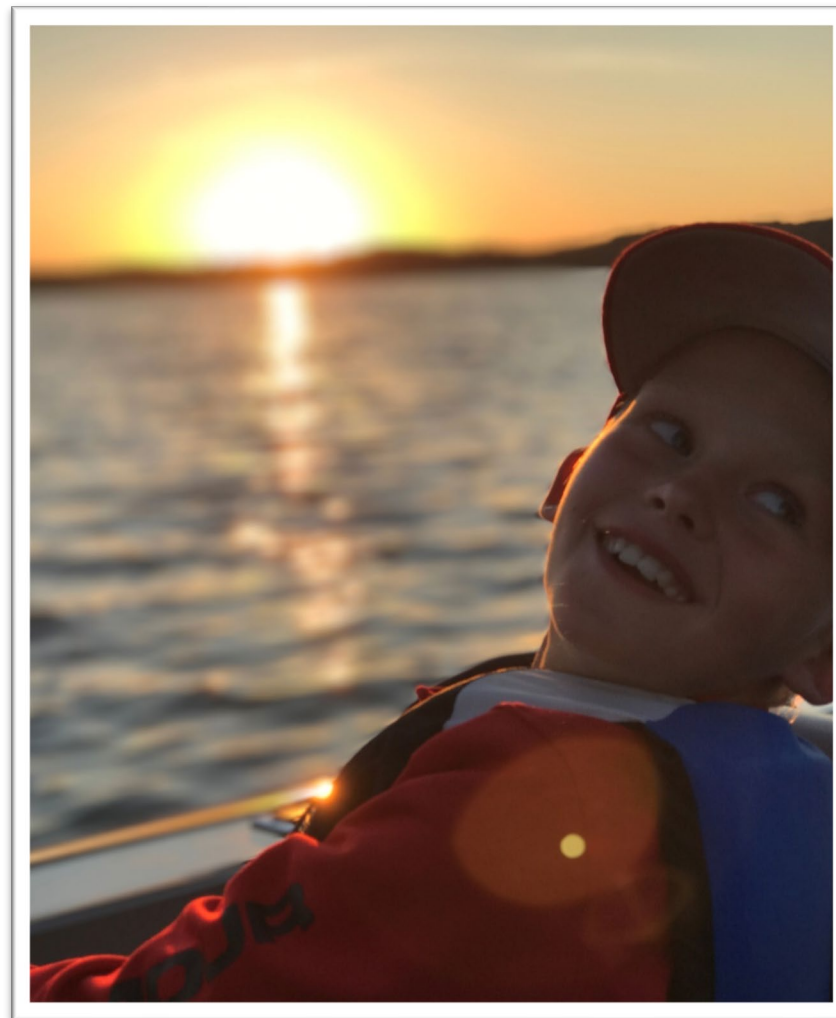
### **Future Growth and Development**

The growing pressure of recreational use on public lands is a common perception of all groups, albeit in different ways with differing levels of concern. While many realize that tourism is important for the region to stay competitive with neighboring counties, there are concerns that more development of public lands to accommodate increased recreational uses will detrimentally affect the overall quality of the public lands and the community's desire to maintain the region's remote and natural character. There are also concerns with protecting the overall quality of the resources with many noting that protection of the water quality is of high importance, followed by the forest areas.

Most of the groups agree that use pressures are not excessive at this point but are generally more concerned with ongoing growth and want to ensure that a solid outdoor recreational plan addresses growth and development in a balanced and sustainable manner for shared use of public lands. The groups also uniformly applaud Hubbard County for taking a proactive and collaborative approach to planning where the interests of all stakeholders are duly considered and acted upon.

The outdoor recreational plan is meant to address the varying recreational uses and help identify goals, priorities and partnerships to accommodate future growth and development to meet recreational demands, including planning, development, management and maintenance.

Hubbard County should continue to oversee and guide future development on county owned lands that complement or enhance recreational areas and activities provided by private groups and enterprises, as well as the state. The county should also continue to work with the numerous recreational groups and townships to maintain a solid understanding of all recreational activities taking strengthen partnerships for win-win solutions.









# Section 3: Outdoor Recreation

## 3.1 OVERVIEW

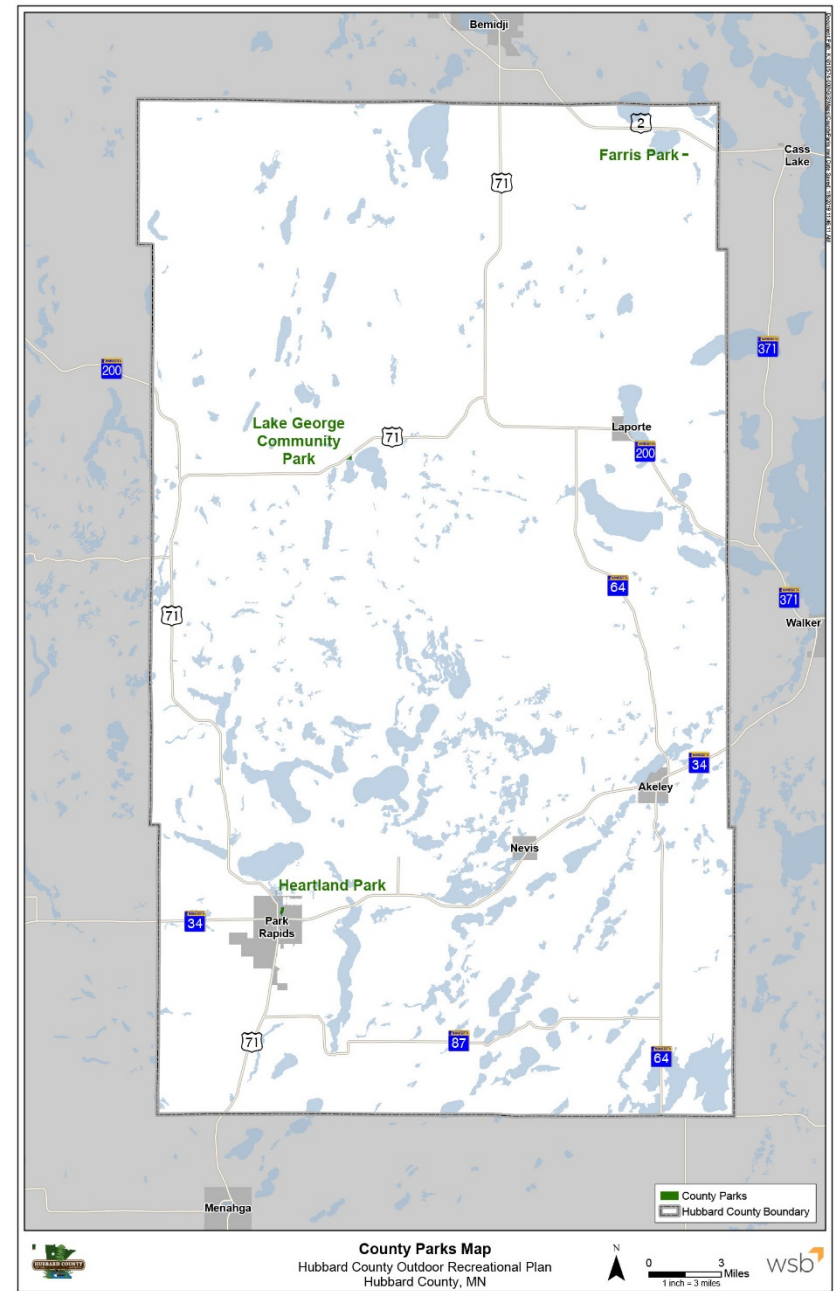
This section of the Hubbard County Outdoor Recreation Plan identifies each existing type of recreational amenities included in the system plan, including the physical features, programs and services related to recreational uses, and considerations for marketing and promotion. Additional information detailing specific amenities can be found in Appendix B: Inventory of Outdoor Recreation Assets. The section following this identifies specific opportunities and priorities for potential improvements to the various uses described below.

## 3.2 PARKS

### County Parks

Description: Current county parks administered by Hubbard County Parks and Recreation include:

- Heartland Park: Located in Park Rapids along the Fish Hook River and is adjacent to Red Bridge Park. Both parks are essentially one large park and the location of the start of the Heartland Trail.
- Lake George Community Park: Located in Lake George along the north shore of Paine Lake.
- Farris Park: Located in the northeastern corner of Hubbard County in Farden Township.



## County Parks - General

### Services & Programs:

Each of the parks provide more developed recreational spaces for the community, typically serving the direct community in which they are located. They each contain typical amenities found in community parks, as shown in the table found in Appendix B.

### Marketing & Promotion:

There are several websites that provide information on park locations, amenities and methods of reserving rental space.

## Heartland Park

### Opportunities:

The location of Heartland Park in close proximity to downtown Park Rapids is of great benefit, especially given its visibility from Hwy 34 where numerous visitors frequent.

Heartland Park, when combined with Red Bridge Park, provides a blend of both active and passive recreational spaces and is the starting location for the Heartland Trail.

There is opportunity to complete a joint effort to ensure both Heartland and Red Bridge parks have regional designation. A master plan created for both park spaces with improved overall character and functionality of the two spaces as one, with a primary connection to the downtown area of Park Rapids, will highlight its regional significance and may improve future funding and grant efforts.

Ideally, the two businesses along the previous pedestrian crossing on Hwy 34 adjacent to Heartland Park would be prime parcels to acquire for expansion of park property to allow for more scenic views into the park and overall awareness from Hwy 34, though this may be a long-term objective for consideration.



### Constraints:

The biggest constraint is the lack of a more direct connection between Heartland Park and downtown Park Rapids. A previous trail route led to a crosswalk to access downtown Park Rapids mid-block on Hwy 34, which was not ideal. The trail crossed the river along an old bridge, which has since been closed off.

Unfortunately, the bridge and trail connection remain but lead to blockades, which deters from the overall park aesthetics and confuses users not familiar with the area. The bridge and trail are in need of removal.

Another constraint includes the beach that has been noted as not being an ideal beach setting or experience due to its location along the Fish Hook River with weeds and algae typically present.

Public beaches are prime destinations, especially for local residents who do not live along a lake. It was noted a beach was added at Garfield Lake more recently.



## Lake George Community Park

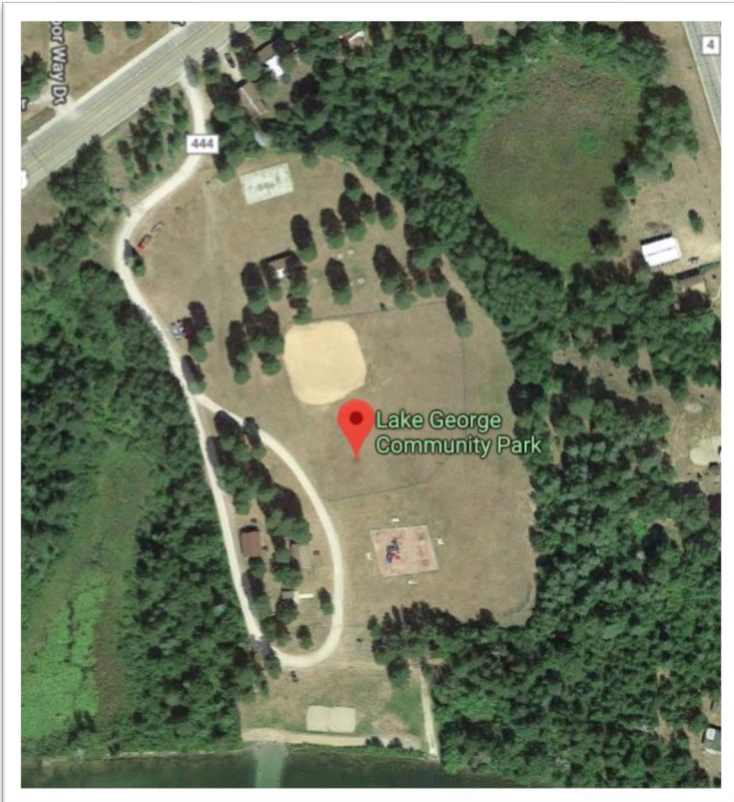
### Opportunities:

The park contains adequate land and its location along Highway 71 make it an ideal recreational spot for visitors and residents alike. The park contains a small beach with a very scenic backdrop and there is opportunity to make significant improvements for a higher quality park and beach experience.

### Constraints:

Many of the park amenities are outdated and in need of replacement and it lacks proper identification from the highway, as you can easily drive right past the park and not know it exists. Overall, the park needs an adequate entrance road and full reorganization to make better use of the space available.

*Source: Lake George Community Park (Google imagery copyright 2019 Google)*



## Farris Park

### Opportunities:

The park has good visibility from Hwy 101 and contains a blend of recreational amenities with a more functional design.

A master plan should be created so that as improvements are necessary, the site amenities can be placed for optimal relation to one another with improved orientations, accessibility and circulation. The ballfield in particular has a poor orientation.

### Constraints:

Constraints related to Farris Community Park will primarily be cost factors to replace amenities as they are needed. Its location is more suited for nearby residents, resulting in less significance as a regional draw.

*Source: Farris Park (Google imagery copyright 2018 Google)*



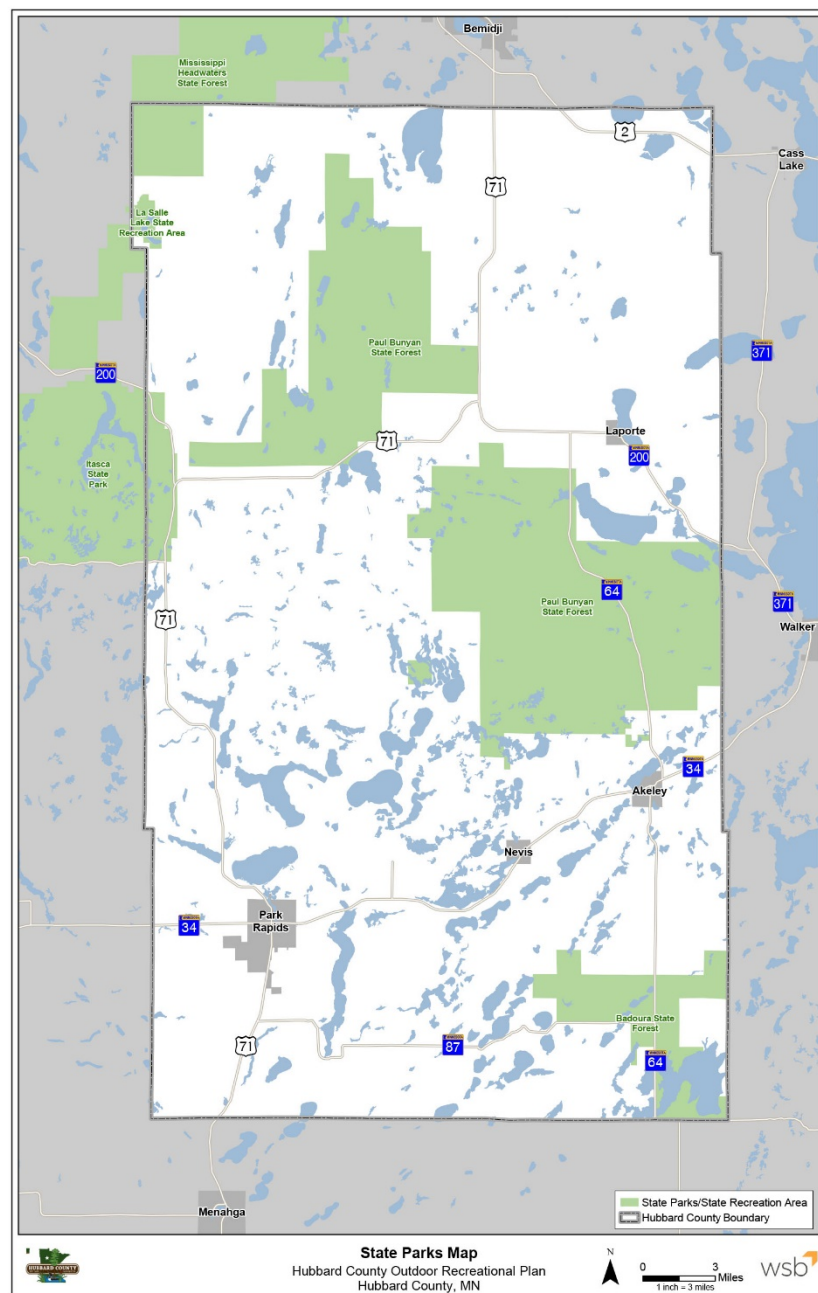
## State Parks

Description: Current state parks and recreation areas managed by the MN DNR within Hubbard County include:

- Itasca State Park
- La Salle Lake State Recreation Area
- Paul Bunyan State Forest
- Mississippi Headwaters State Forest
- Badoura State Forest
- Lester Lake SNA

### Services & Programs:

The State of Minnesota offers varying services and programs at each of the state park and recreational areas. The most highly visited are Itasca State Park and the Paul Bunyan State Forest. The Mississippi Headwaters in Itasca State Park in particular draws in the vast majority of visitors within Hubbard County.





### Marketing & Promotion:

Currently the State of Minnesota markets the sites and associated programs. Additional efforts should be made to cross-reference websites illustrating the parks, programs and recreational opportunities across various platforms and organizations.

### Opportunities:

The greatest opportunity from state owned parks is the regional and even international draw that brings in tourists annually to these parks. Providing the right blend of additional outdoor recreational opportunities outside of the state parks will give visitor more reason to stay in the county longer, and thereby, spend more money in the county.

State park and recreational areas also supplement the county and city owned parks for a full spectrum of opportunities. Most state parks are meant to preserve quality natural resources, historic settings or a specific recreational need, and generally encompass larger amounts of lands than regional or city owned parks. Strong partnerships with the State of Minnesota in terms of a coordinated plan for trails, linkages, and future development that will supplement one another will provide greater opportunity for higher quality recreation, as well as funding opportunities.

### Constraints:

State owned lands are operated, managed and developed separately and ongoing coordination with that state is necessary to determine how the state and county owned lands can work together, especially in terms of services provided, development and improvements.

For instance, while some recreational areas within state parks may draw in many users, the state may not necessarily be willing or equipped to develop and manage high quality campgrounds that would support that particular use or recreational area. The state, like counties and cities, also has limitations of what can be achieved due to related operations and maintenance costs, and any facility that is not well designed or maintained will ultimately have a considerable negative effect on the county related to revenue.

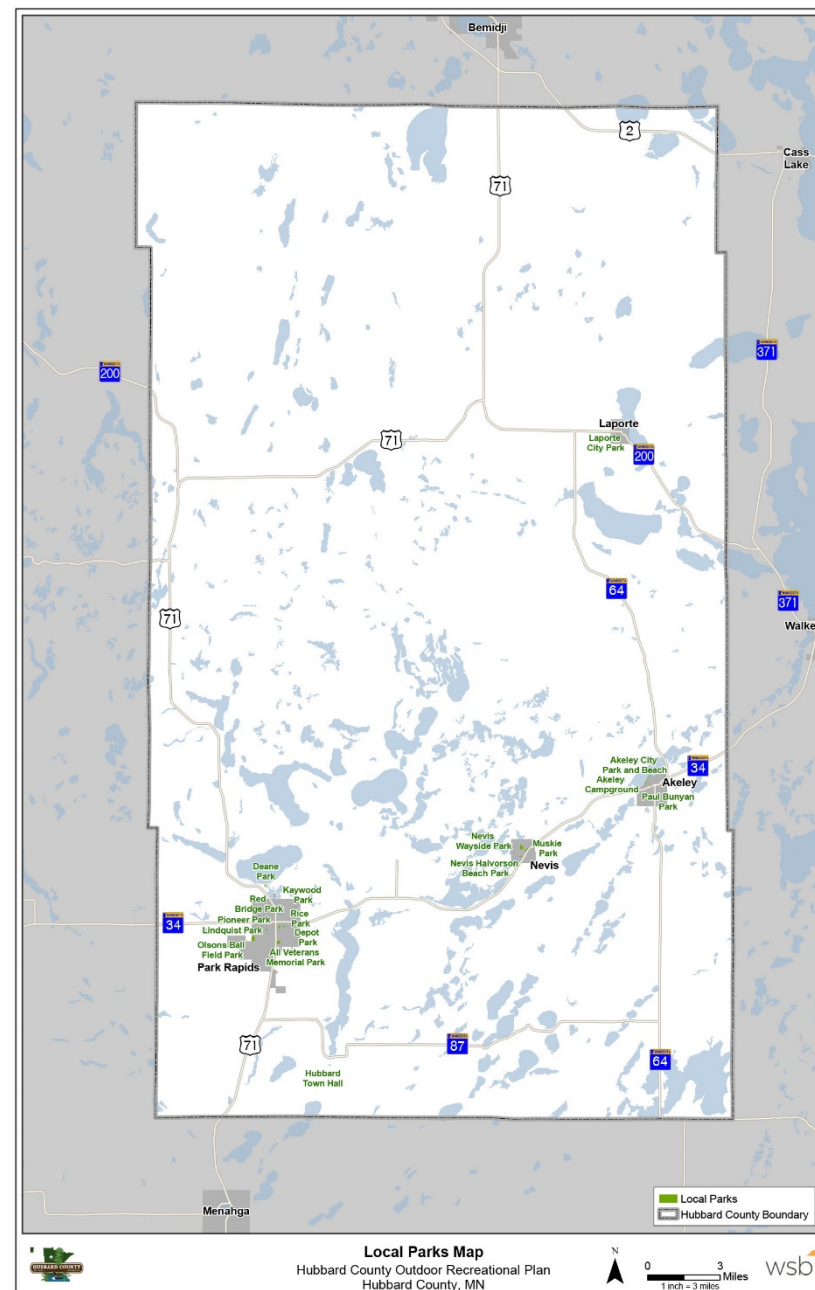




## Local Parks

Description: The cities and townships within Hubbard County maintain a number of local parks, including, but not limited to:

- Paul Bunyan Park
- LaPorte City Park
- Muskie Park
- Deane Park
- Kaywood Park
- Red Bridge Park
- Olson Ballfield
- Lindquist Park
- Pioneer Park
- Depot Park
- Rice Park
- Hubbard Town Hall Park
- Nevis Wayside Park
- Nevis Halvorson Beach
- Akeley City Park & Campgrounds
- Akeley Crow Wing Lake Landing & Beach
- All Veterans Memorial Park



### Services & Programs:

The local parks offer similar types of recreation as county owned parks, but due to limited county parks, help to provide more recreational amenities and services to the community, located across different geographies within the region. Refer to Appendix B for a list of amenities.

### Marketing & Promotion:

Currently, there is limited marketing and promotion of the local parks, other than a few select locations and those that are associated with existing community events and tourist draws, such as the Nevis Tiger Muskie, Akeley Paul Bunyan Days, etc.

An improved marketing approach can offer improved awareness of amenities, attractions and events to improve the overall draw.

### Opportunities:

Locally owned parks, if designed well, can serve the day-to-day recreational needs of the community. These also tend to be of high importance for community events, meeting athletic needs and can help supplement county owned parks. This is of particular importance in Hubbard County for providing additional opportunities for public beach and lake access for residents.

### Constraints:

Locally owned parks are operated, managed and developed separately by varying municipalities, and therefore, it is difficult to gauge the recreational opportunities and quality of each park to consider how they may, or may not, be of benefit in terms of recreation. Ongoing coordination with numerous municipalities can be difficult but is highly encouraged.







### Services & Programs:

There is a Heartland Trail trailhead located in Park Rapids at Heartland Park with additional parking, rest areas and bike rental opportunities located along the trail in Nevis and Dorset.

The Paul Bunyan Trail has numerous trail heads and rental opportunities with the Brainerd Lakes Area also offering shuttles services to access the trail.

The Itascatur Headwaters 100 Bike Ride is sponsored by the Itascatur Outdoor Activity Club and is a 42, 75 and 100-mile ride that is partially held on the Heartland Trail, held on the fourth Saturday in September. The NorthWoods 100 Bike Trip is held on the Paul Bunyan State Trail.

### Marketing & Promotion:

Generally, marketing and promotion of the Heartland and Paul Bunyan State Trails is adequate, though expanding marketing beyond the Minnesota region will continue to promote the trail and region as more of a destination for visitors.

### Opportunities:

There is opportunity to expand the Heartland Trail connection to Itasca State Park, as this is a prime destination location in the county. The best opportunities are those that continue to connect the Heartland and Paul Bunyan Trails together for additional loop and access options and more importantly, create linking trails from the State Trails to destination locations and areas of lodging.

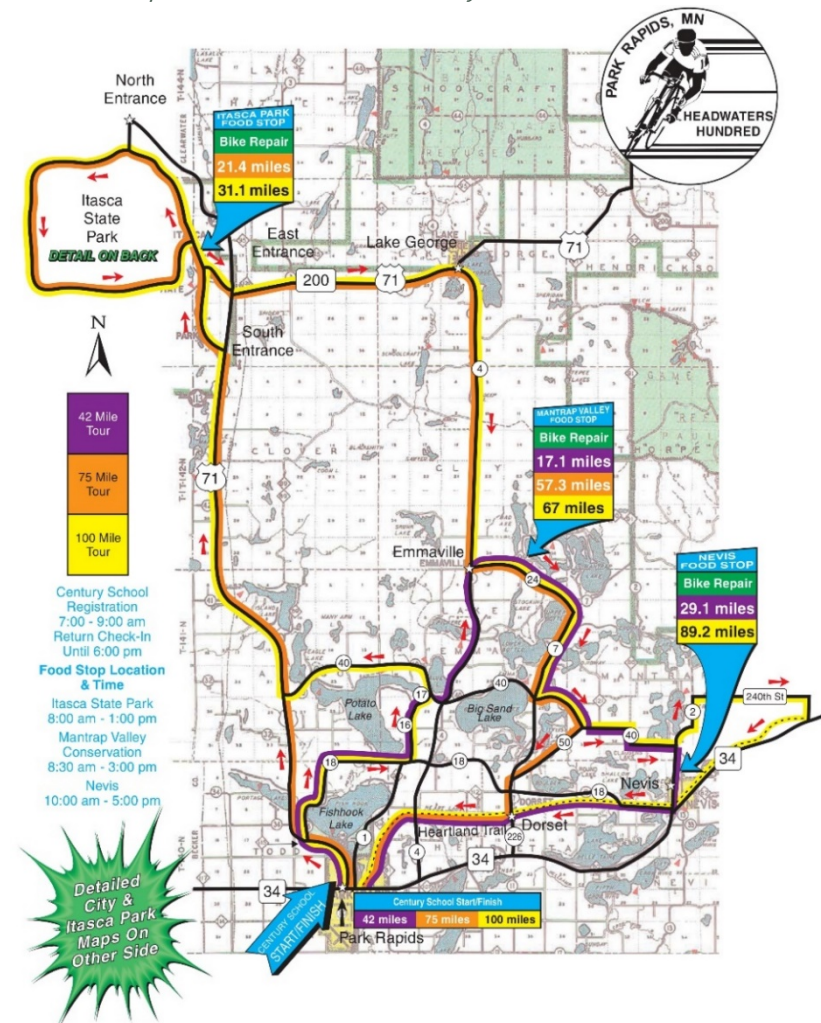
There are numerous opportunities to continue to create support facilities along the existing and future trail corridors. This includes lodging, parking and rest areas, access to water, scenic overlooks, and

trail destinations, such as places to shop, eat and drink which increase the trails popularity.

### Constraints:

The main constraint of multi-use trails is costs for ongoing maintenance and operations, along with initial costs for future expansion of the trail system. Currently there are conflict areas along the trail at pinch points where trail users cross with motorized vehicles.

*2012 route map from Itascatur Outdoor Activity Club*



## ATV/OHM and Dirt Biking Trails

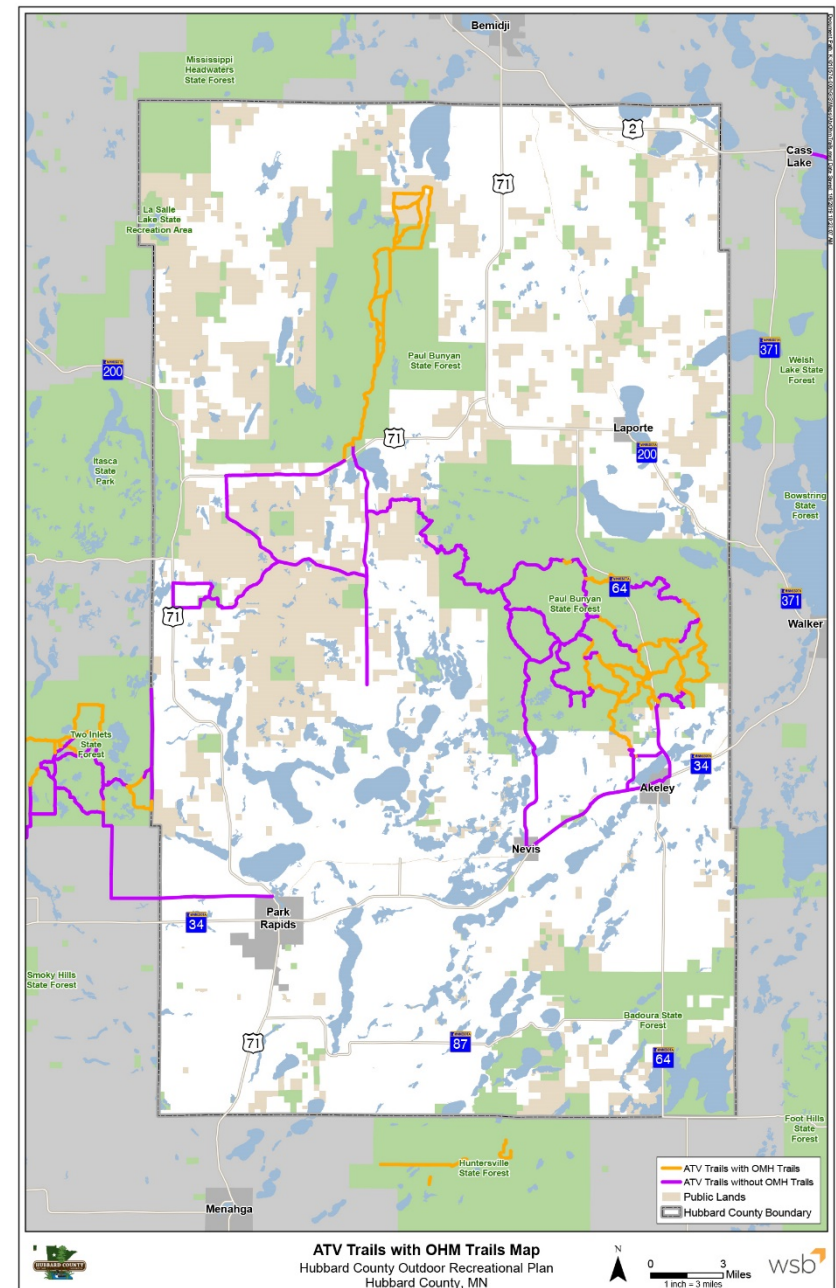
### Description:

The all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and off-highway vehicle or motorcycle (OHV/OHM) trails, particularly in and around Paul Bunyan State Forest, are a regional draw for ATV/OHV/OHM and dirt biking that continues to attract more users, putting new pressures on the land resource which raises understandable concerns about managing use.

ATV/OHV/OHM uses throughout Hubbard County have led to some conflicts with residents and visitors alike due to ongoing erosion issues along high use routes and up steep embankments, and conflicts at locations where ATV/OHV/OHM routes cross vehicular or pedestrian routes.

Current designated trails, mainly located in and around Paul Bunyan State Forest, include:

- Forest Riders Trail: 100 miles of trails using state and county forest roads providing access to the Paul Bunyan Trails.
- Round River Drive ATV Trail: Combination of trails and state forest roads within the Paul Bunyan State Forest.
- The Martineau Off-Highway Motorcycle Recreational Trails: 2 loops totaling 105 miles in south unit
- The Schoolcraft Trail: 29-mile trail connecting Lake George to the Paul Bunyan Trail



The Minnesota DNR is currently looking into expansion of the trails in the Paul Bunyan State Forest and while expansion of trails is important, the overall quality of the trails is more important to be able to be a regionally recognized and premier facility.

Additional considerations include:

- There are distinct types of riders that need to be accommodated, including those that like riding on designated trails and those that use their ATV/OHV/OHM for local access to forests for recreation and utilitarian purposes.
- Designated trails should be designed to include a mixture of trail types, including on-road trails, trail conversions, and dedicated trails (a minimum of 25 miles needed for a designated trail, with 80 or more miles preferred).
- Trailheads, signage and other typical amenities, such as food, lodging and fuel should be in close relation to the trail systems.
- Trail information and mapping should be readily available, including on the internet.



In general, ATV/OHV/OHM riders try to maintain good relationships with other trail users and like the idea of continuing multiuse of trails where possible.

There is a general recognition that reckless trail users and ongoing maintenance issues along road corridors are of growing concern and reflect poorly on the activity, with the concern being that access will get more restrictive over time if problems become pervasive (most of this is attributed to riders damaging trails due to their aggressive riding patterns and are either not aware of the problems they are causing or don't really care).

In order to use peer pressure to encourage responsible riding, the county and state needs to clearly define what trail abuse looks like so that trail riders understand what is acceptable and what is not.

#### Facilities, Services & Programs:

There is the Gulch Lake Campground located in a non-motorized portion of the Paul Bunyan State Forest, though the DNR is contemplating shutting this campground down.

A prime spot for lodging is the Stompin' Grounds lodge and camping area including a bar & grill. Due to the close proximity of this facility to the trail system, this location fills up fast and can lead to frustration when trying to get a camping spot or some food and drinks due to the popularity.

#### Marketing & Promotion:

Riders across the state have become more organized in promoting their activity, establishing riding areas, and educating the public about the activity and is adequate at the current level. Marketing approaches focused on more family-oriented uses are encouraged to promote the activity as being compatible with broader users, as well being compatible with the land.



### Opportunities:

Opportunities for potential future partnerships that would provide rentals of ATV/OHV/OHM equipment or even organized trail ride tours for visitors would greatly enhance opportunities to expand tourism and future enthusiasts. Local groups and businesses could either set up their own rentals with waivers and educational information, or partner with businesses that cater to equipment rentals to adequately address any associated liability concerns. An example of this type of situation would be Power Lodge Adventures that works with groups and businesses to provide the rentals of recreational equipment, including safety videos, insurance, waivers and use cameras. Expansion of their territory and range could be a future option if the demand were high enough.

Opportunities for partnerships with the DNR for training facilities near the ATV/OHV/OHM trails that could be used in conjunction with some rental opportunities.



Photo: ATV training (source: [www.searchnrescue.com](http://www.searchnrescue.com) )

Opportunities for additional support facilities (camping, convenience stores, and fuel) are in high demand in close proximity to the actual trail systems. The demand for fuel is especially high.

Opportunities to expand potential for training and skills areas.

### Constraints:

The biggest constraint to growth is proper management of the trails and responsibility of trail users.

Constraints related to where ATV/OHV/OHM and dirt bikes are allowed to travel. ATV's/OHV' are allowed in more areas to provide access to destination areas, whereas dirt bikes are rarely allowed anywhere but on designated trails unless they are designed to be street legal, which is not typically the case.

Constraints include the ability for the county to build or maintain these types of trails on their own.



## Snowmobile Trails

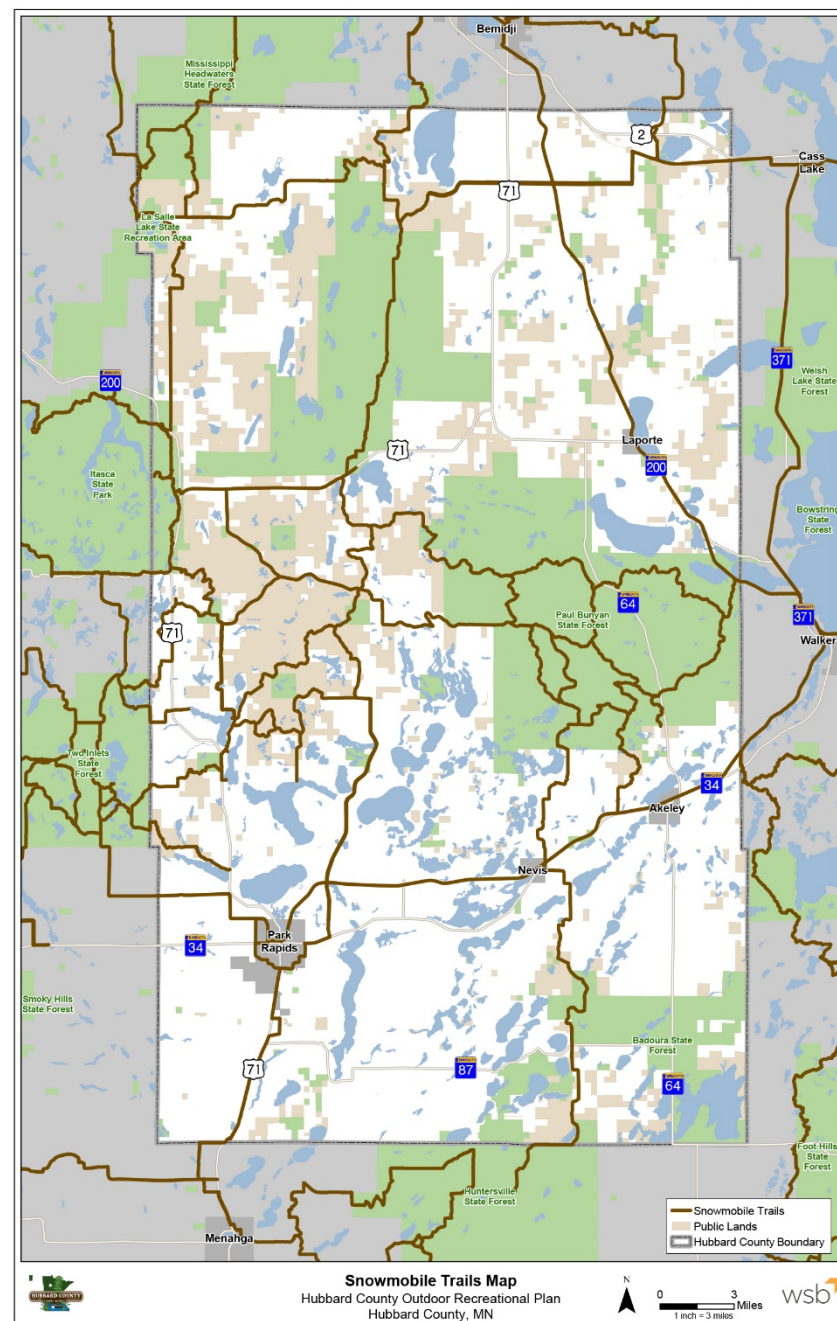
### Description:

There are numerous snowmobile trails and routes throughout Hubbard County and through efforts by various snowmobile clubs, there are over 700 miles of snowmobile trails, with approximately 276 miles that are groomed. Currently snowmobiles are allowed on the Heartland Trail, which is groomed.

Overall, perception of the sport is that the use is declining, which, to some degree, can be attributed to numerous years of inconsistent snow and temperatures along with the high cost of equipment. Snowmobiles are allowed in ditches but can lack access to destination areas once the ditches reach town limits and are no longer available.



There are also some users who have expressed concerns related to trails and routes on state and county managed lands that are not clearly defined and can result in accidentally crossing over private land, leading to conflicts.





### Services & Programs:

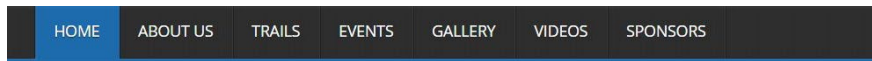
The local clubs (Forest Riders, Nevis Trailblazers and North County, etc.) provide trail grooming and website information related to trail maps, conditions and events.

There is a USXC Snowmobile race that typically takes place in two days with time needed for setup and takedown of the course. Some residents oppose and others enjoy this race. It appears some future race events may be cancelled due to the high costs of the event.

### Marketing & Promotion:

The local riding clubs do well at promoting the trails and events on their websites and the Chamber of Commerce has materials, including maps. Polaris has an online map as well.

The USXC event tends to be under-marketed, other than on the official website, and there have been comments that additional community methods for marketing this as more of a celebration should be incorporated.



### Opportunities:

Opportunities for potential future partnerships that would provide rentals of snowmobile equipment or even organized trail ride tours for visitors would greatly enhance opportunities to expand tourism and future enthusiasts. Local groups and businesses could either set up their own rentals with waivers and educational information, or partner with businesses that cater to equipment rentals to adequately address any associated liability concerns. An example of this type of situation would be Power Lodge Adventures that works with groups and businesses to provide the rentals of recreational equipment, including safety videos, insurance, waivers and use cameras. Expansion of their territory and range could be a future option if the demand were high enough.

### Constraints:

Constraints include lack of awareness for some maps indicating trails and routes, along with a lack of routes to specific destinations within town limits that are highly desired by users.

Constraints related to some trail routes include proper identification of routes for users to avoid conflicts with private landowners.

Constraints to continued popularity of this sport includes unsuitable weather conditions and the high cost of owning equipment that could potentially not be able to be used during warm winters or a lack of snow.



## Hiking Trails

### Description:

The North Country Hiking Trail is mainly a foot traffic only trail, though some segments are aligned with existing roads. Starting in North Dakota along the Missouri River, the route continues through Minnesota up along the border of Canada to the north shore region of Minnesota, then down to Duluth. Further extensions of the trail route go all the way to New York. The trail is run by the North Country Trail Association which consists of numerous volunteers that build and maintain the trails, and the trail route is marked by small signs or blue paint on trees.



### Services & Programs:

The website [northcountrytrail.org](http://northcountrytrail.org) has online maps and information available for the various segments of trails, including GIS based data accessible by anyone.

There are several trailheads located throughout Hubbard County.

### Marketing & Promotion:

The North Country Trail Association utilizes their website [northcountrytrail.org](http://northcountrytrail.org) with support from sponsors, along with information on Facebook. Efforts to create awareness of the trails would highlight the spring and fall seasons when hiking conditions are more optimal.

### Opportunities:

There are opportunities for partnerships to create trail links or extensions from the North Country Trail or to implement separate trails in areas of the county not currently serviced by the North Country Trail. A significant trail route with optimal connections could be marked out with minimal effort in some locations, and typically require lower maintenance needs.

Currently there is a local chapter of the North Country Trail organization known as Itasca Moraine based out of Hubbard County and a chapter in Becker County known as Laurentian Lakes. There may be opportunities to partner with these local chapters to help fund and/or maintain some trail segments.

### Constraints:

The county lacks the ability to fund and maintain additional trails on their own, therefore additional partners are necessary to expand upon hiking trails.

Local residents can be resistant to natural hiking trails in forested areas.

Safety along remote trails, including animals and insect-borne diseases, are also concerns.

## Mountain Biking Trails

### Description:

There are very limited trails designated specifically for mountain biking in Hubbard County, though the activity can take place on other types of trails and forest roads in the county. There are existing mountain bike trails that can be found in LaSalle, though prime destinations for mountain bike trails include nearby Detroit Mountain in Detroit Lakes, and Cuyuna and therefore, duplication of similar facilities in Hubbard County would not be a priority. Currently there is not a known mountain biking club in Hubbard County.

Mountain bike trails are not allowed in Itasca State Park.

### Services & Programs:

None exist related to mountain biking.

### Marketing & Promotion:

The county and Chamber of Commerce provide maps of trails.

### Opportunities:

Opportunities for potential future partnerships that would provide rentals of equipment. There are opportunities for potential partnerships with mountain bike advocates to map routes, build, and maintain mountain bike trail opportunities within the region to include linking or skills areas meant to complement the destination mountain bike areas with a focus on fun trails through the woods. There are also opportunities for a mountain bike club organization to form if there are enough enthusiasts.

### Constraints:

Constraints include a lack of awareness of mountain biking within the county and direct competition by Detroit Mountain.

Constraints include the ability for the county to build or maintain these types of trails on their own.

## Winter Use Trails

### Description:

There are numerous winter use trails and routes throughout Hubbard County including winter uses allowed on the Heartland Trail, which is groomed during winter for snowmobiles and cross-country skiing, which requires a ski pass.

Cross-country skiing has become increasingly more popular with a steadfast group of enthusiasts from the Itasca Outdoor Activity Club that have improved the availability of cross-country ski trails to include the Soaring Eagle Ski Trail area located north of Park Rapids that draws skiers from within and outside of the region. It features 10 km of bidirectional marked and groomed trails from a beginner to expert level for both skate and classical skiing, and contains a warming house building and equipment to loan out at no cost. A snowshoe trail is also available.





Additional cross-country skiing also takes place more informally on the North Country Trail and on the Heartland Trail. Itasca State Park has cross-country ski trails with some groomed sections, but most are not groomed.

Skijoring is a sport where a person on cross-country skis is pulled by a dog on a leash. Skijoring trails are currently limited with some trails in Itasca State Park. Users prefer groomed or packed trails that are wide enough for users and dogs, and can also take place on lakes.

Additional winter use trails include Hok ski and snow shoeing, which can be compatible with cross-country ski trails if parallel tracks are provided.

Fat tire bike trails can be routed over summer mountain bike routes or hiking routes. Dog sledding trails can also be combined with skijoring, snowshoe and fat tire trails.

Ice skating trails, or forest skating, is a more recent trend that is gaining in popularity. Some agencies have intertwined “forest bathing” into the forest skating experience meant to experience the forest on a more personal and sensory level. These types of trails can be popular but require a higher amount of ongoing maintenance in order to keep optimal ice conditions. Skating trails through forests are more difficult than routes across lakes and other water bodies.

Photo: Muskegon Ice Trail



#### Services & Programs:

The Soaring Eagle facility, run by Itascatur Outdoor Activity Club, provides services and programs for cross country skiing.

#### Marketing & Promotion:

Itascatur promotes the cross-country ski trails on their website and the Chamber of Commerce.

#### Opportunities:

Opportunities for potential future partnerships that would provide rentals of equipment or even organized trail tours for visitors would greatly enhance opportunities to expand tourism and future enthusiasts.

#### Constraints:

Constraints include lack of awareness for some maps indicating trails and routes.

Constraints include a lack of awareness of locations for the ability to use fat tire bikes, Hok ski's, dog sleds, and skijouring.

Constraints related to some trail routes include proper identification of routes for users to avoid conflicts with private landowners.

Constraints to continued popularity of this sport includes unsuitable weather conditions and the high cost of owning equipment that could potentially not be able to be used during warm winters or a lack of snow.

Constraints include the ability for the county to build or maintain these types of trails on their own.

## Equestrian Trails

### Description:

Horses are currently allowed along the Heartland Trail and there are stables available in Dorset, though horses can be easily spooked by cyclists on the Heartland Trail. There are some equestrian trails available in the county including at Huntersville and in Schoolcraft Township, and at one time there were trails in Paul Bunyan and some local private businesses offering trail rides, which do not exist any longer. Many visitors will typically go to Bemidji or Brainerd for horse trails.



The DNR has expressed interest in reopening an equestrian trail facility in Paul Bunyan where a horse facility once existed, as this would be an ideal location to create equestrian trails and facilities if there is a demand. Currently it is uncertain if the demand exists to support this development.

### Services & Programs:

None exist other than the Heartland Trail map.

### Marketing & Promotion:

Equestrian trail maps are generally lacking. Overall marketing and promotion is almost non-existent, due to a lack of equestrian trails and facilities.

### Opportunities:

Opportunities for partnerships to work with stakeholders to map existing routes available.

Opportunities to partner with the Park Rapids rodeo ground for equestrian-focused programs.

The DNR has expressed the potential for development of an equestrian facility and trails within the Paul Bunyan State Forest. With Hubbard County visitors traveling to Brainerd and Bemidji for horse trails, there would appear to be a good opportunity to keep existing tourism dollars within the county if a facility and trails were developed comparable or better than those in Brainerd and Bemidji. It appears that the biggest demand would be for services offering trail rides for those who are seeking a day activity, but do not own their own horses.

This type of recreation can extend beyond the summer season, much like hiking and biking trails, with a focus on fall trail rides during optimal colors, though trail uses in many areas would need to be closed down during times of active hunting.

### Constraints:

Currently the largest constraint is the lack of existing equestrian trails and facilities in the county and there is a lack of a local organized club.



### 3.4 LAKES AND WATER

#### Water Access and Recreation

##### Description:

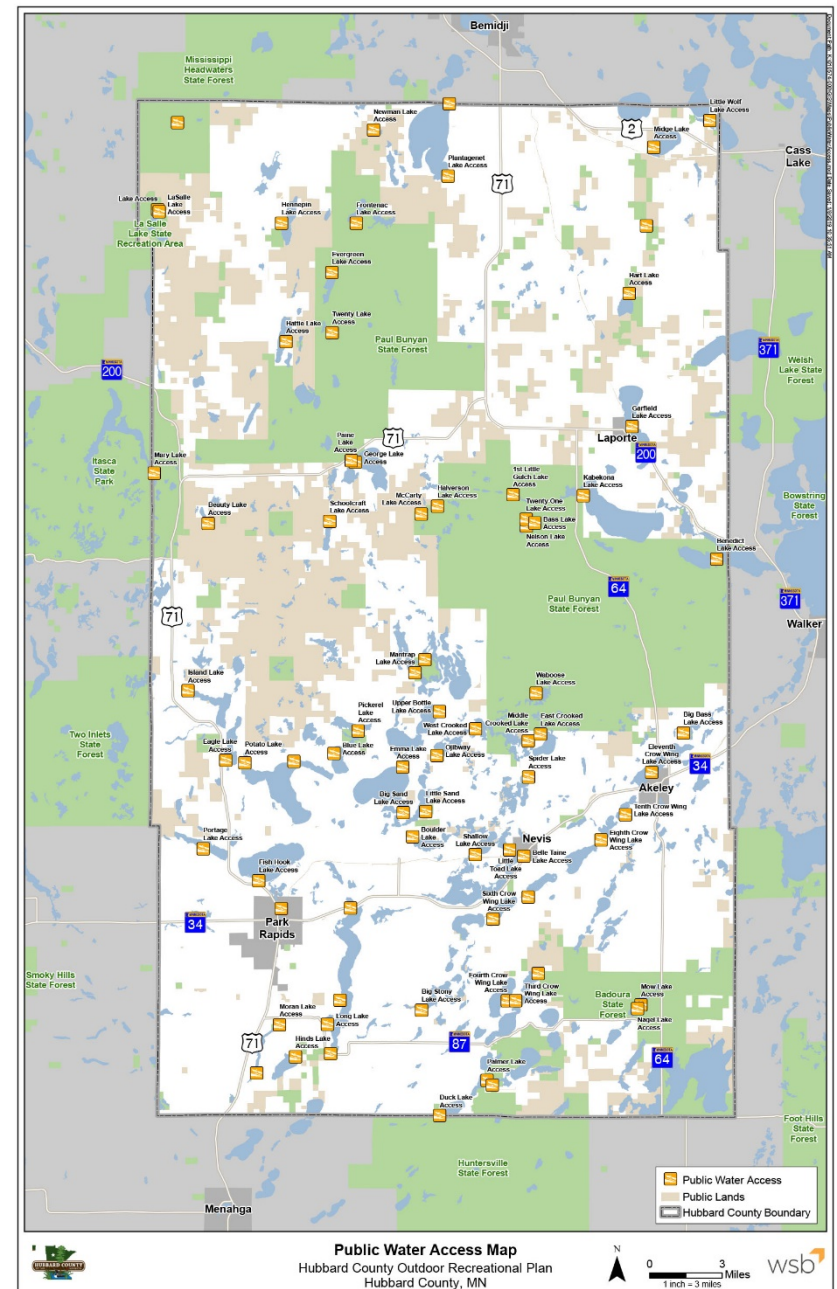
There are over 70 designated public lake accesses throughout Hubbard County, 18 of which are maintained by Hubbard County Parks. Public lake accesses include trailer water access, carry-in water access, and fishing piers, along with state designated water trails.

##### Services & Programs:

Lake access locations vary in terms of overall facilities, such as parking stalls, fish cleaning stations, restrooms, etc. Most are basic with more developed locations at select larger / more popular lakes. Better information regarding the lake accesses is needed to illustrate what each of the lake accesses offer.

##### Marketing & Promotion:

There are a few known fishing tournaments that highlight fishing and the lake opportunities with maps available online. Overall, Hubbard County is known for the abundance of lakes and water-related recreation, which is easily seen on various websites with photos portraying fishing, tubing, kayaking, etc.

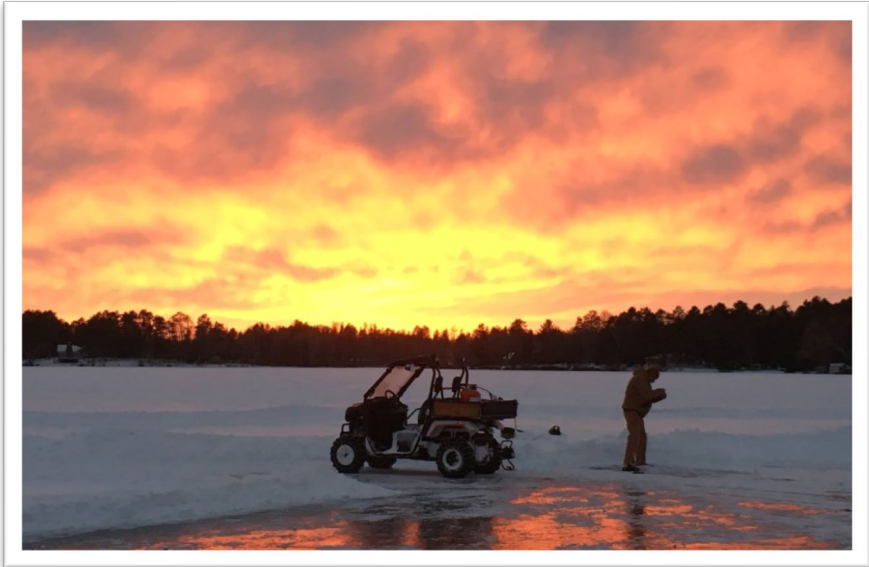


### Opportunities:

There are opportunities to concentrate on providing strategic upgraded facilities at key lake accesses. Improvements would focus on adequate vehicular circulation, parking, restrooms, fish cleaning stations, boat wash-down areas, trash containers, and looking at opportunities for picnic and other day use areas.

There is an opportunity to prepare a fishing guide that details local lakes, water depths and types of fish at each so visitors can easily understand which lake is best for different types of fishing. Promoting local blogs and other social media is another avenue to help visitors and residents access more specific fishing information, such as where fish are currently biting and at what depths.

There are opportunities for working with local businesses and resort owners to increase and promote winter fishing activity, including potential for rentals of ice fishing trailers, which can also extend all year-round as camping facilities. Other services include winter fishing guides and expanding on winter lodging.



### Constraints:

Overall accessibility (ADA) is lacking at most lake accesses and there is a need for improved support facilities, such as restrooms, garbage collection, adequate parking, and inspection/ decontamination areas. The control of invasive species is especially important given that the water quality in Hubbard County is ranked some of the best.

The largest constraints for fishing during fall and winter is the availability of lodging since many resorts close down beyond the summer season. There may be considerable costs for winterizing many of the lodge and resort cabins to allow for extended seasons, as well as the lack of a desire for the owners to remain open during these additional seasons.

The majority of the lakeshore is under private ownership, stressing the importance of proper education and methods for minimizing chemicals and other pollutants from entering water bodies that directly affect water quality.





## Water Trails

### Description:

Some local residents are aware of the locations to access smaller creeks and waterways for canoe and kayak trips but they are not as well known by the majority of the residents or tourists.

There is a state water trail designated for the Crow Wing River and lakes. During low water levels on the Ottertail River, tubing activities have sometimes been relocated to Hubbard County rivers.

### Services & Programs:

Lake access locations vary in terms of overall facilities, such as parking stalls, boarding docks, etc. Most are basic and the more developed locations are focused on motorized boat facilities. Improved information regarding the lake accesses is needed to illustrate what each of the lake accesses have to offer.

### Marketing & Promotion:

The county, DNR and Chamber of Commerce have maps of water trails and public water accesses for the various lakes in the region.

### Opportunities:

Opportunities exist for potential future partnerships that could provide equipment rentals, shuttles to sites for drop-off and pick-up, or even private businesses that can organize and lead excursion trips independently or at local resorts to promote the activity.

There are very scenic areas along some of the rivers, including smaller rivers in certain segments that are just wide enough for small equipment, and may be opportune locations for these types of activities.



### Constraints:

Lack of awareness of routes, lack of access points, and a lack of rental equipment.

Concerns with tubing activities becoming more popular in Hubbard County, which can bring undesirable behavior and activities, is considered to be in direct contrast to the types of characteristics Hubbard County residents desire.

### 3.5 OUTDOOR SPORTING ACTIVITIES

#### Hunting, Firearm and Related Activities

##### Description:

This includes hunting activities related to firearms and archery, as well as firearm sports such as trap shooting.

Hunting activities still remain an overall decline in popularity, though there has been a considerable increase related to female hunters. There has also been a recent increase in archery and trap shooting, which has expanded considerably in numerous communities, including many schools forming trap clubs. According to the Minnesota State High School Clay Target League, the 2018 spring season included 349 teams and 11,936 student athletes in trap shooting.

Hubbard County includes an abundance of state forests and other public lands suitable for many types of hunting activities.

##### Services & Programs:

The Mantrap Valley Conservation range, which is private and run by the Mantrap Valley Conservation Club, is located in Park Rapids. The Osage Sportsman Club is still in operation for handgun and rifle, though neither of the ranges are highly used or well known in the community.

Adjacent communities have either developed, or are planning on developing, larger shooting range facilities that will meet the regional needs for these types of services, such as the Beltrami Northland Regional Sports Park in Bemidji.

##### Marketing & Promotion:

Trap clubs are promoted through the schools and little else is needed for marketing for these clubs. Overall, there is a lack of marketing related to hunting sports, though there are opportunities for better marketing and programs to improve this sport targeting specific groups.





### Opportunities:

With the abundance of public and state lands available in Hubbard County, there are numerous opportunities to improve hunting sports in the county and improve overall marketing of these sports during typical off-season times.

Females and youth in particular are becoming increasingly more interested in shooting sports, offering an opportunity for future enthusiasts.



### Constraints:

There is a lack of indoor shooting facilities and the public lands are noted as not being clearly marked for easy identification of lands available for hunting. The lack of facilities has led to some individuals using other lands for shooting, such as an old quarry.

With land uses changing over time, previous locations for gun clubs have run into conflicts with new land uses encroaching and having issues with the noise from the gun clubs. There are also conflicts with groups and individuals who feel they have personal ownership of some of the public lands and are not receptive of new users on sharing the public lands.

Some residents have expressed concerns regarding overall game management as populations of varying species have been changing over the years. Some examples include increased turkey populations and declining grouse populations in recent years. While mainly governed by state laws, there may be a need for improved hunting and game management to balance the populations to ensure hunting activities remain sustainable.



## Camping, Resorts and Lodging

### Description:

There are numerous campgrounds and resorts spread throughout the county with some more limited options related to hotel establishments. The rise of AirBNB/VRBO rentals has increased and allowed for a different type of lodging experience.

The following are campgrounds and lodging available in Hubbard County, though not operated by Hubbard County:

- Akeley City Campground (City)
- Mantrap Lake Campground (State)
- Gulch Lake Campground (State)
- LaSalle Lake State Recreation Area (State)
- North County Trail Remote Sites
- Numerous private resorts and misc. lodging

### Services & Programs:

Akeley City Campground is a city owned and operated campground located on 11th Crow Wing Lake. It is open May 1 through Sept 30 with 23 lakeside RV sites, 5 non-lakeside RV sites, 14 tent sites with a public boat access and is located close to the Heartland Trail and within walking distance to downtown Akeley. Generally ranked well and is usually full and can be rented seasonally.

Mantrap Lake Campground and day use area located in Paul Bunyan State Forest and managed by Itasca State Park. There are 36 drive-in primitive campsites and is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Gulch Lake Campground and day use area is located in Paul Bunyan State Forest and is managed by Lake Bemidji State Park with just 14 primitive camp sites. It is located in a game refuge with non-motorized recreation, so therefore no ATV's are allowed.

LaSalle Lake State Recreation Area is owned and managed by the MnDNR with 39 drive in RV sites with sewer, water and electric hook-ups and shower facility. They also have a cabin and guest house available for rent. This is located just north of Itasca and the facilities are newer.

There are additional resorts and campgrounds located throughout the county, mainly along lakes, providing additional options for lodging. One such campground worth noting is the Stompin' Grounds site located in Paul Bunyan State Forest which is a highly sought-out campground due to the close proximity to the adjacent recreational areas with easy access to trails for those with ATV's, snowmobiles, bikes, etc. It has RV campsites with services, primitive sites, shower facilities and a restaurant on site. This is a good example to illustrate the effectiveness of connectivity between lodging locations with destination areas and trails.





### Marketing & Promotion:

With many expressing concerns over a lack of camping facilities, but maps identifying several campground areas, a more effective marketing campaign needs to be incorporated to raise awareness of lodging options, locations, and available amenities.

The Hubbard County website has useful information related to tax forfeited lands. It also informs the public that these lands are available for camping for 14 consecutive days May through mid-September and up to 21 consecutive days the rest of the year, provided the site is at least one mile from a public or private fee campground.

### Opportunities:

There are numerous camping locations throughout the county, though some may be underutilized. With strategic improvements to meet a variety of camping styles and marketing, they may be able to attract more use. Some of these locations may be able to allow for a more direct connection to trails and destination areas.

The county owned and/or managed public lands, including tax forfeited parcels, provide a great opportunity for a more remote camping experience.

### Constraints:

Some constraints are willing businesses and joint partnerships to develop, improve and manage campground facilities. One such example is the Minnesota DNR expressing the potential for an existing campground to be shut down due to lack of use, while the location would seem to be opportune for recreation on state forest lands if it were improved to a higher quality campground with fewer restrictions. Hubbard County has expressed concerns related to involvement with improvements on lands that are not owned or operated by the county, thereby showing that better partnerships need to be formed to allow for win-win solutions.

## **General Tourism & Economy**

### Description:

The main tourist season is Memorial Day to Labor Day with the lakes, downtown Park Rapids, the Mississippi Headwaters and the Heartland Trail being common destination areas for visitors. Many businesses, including restaurants and resorts, shut down during the off season.



More efforts are needed to expand tourism and economic growth beyond the summer season and more broadly across Hubbard County (beyond Park Rapids). Longer seasons or opportunities are needed to keep families and younger age groups living in Hubbard County.

The presence of the airport in Park Rapids is an asset that continues to draw in regional tourists to the county due to ease of access. Currently the 3M Wonewok Convention Center, a private retreat on Mantrap Lake, brings in users almost daily by flying them into the Park Rapids airport on their corporate aircraft.



### Services & Programs:

Many of the resorts, businesses and Chamber of Commerce provide numerous services and a wide variety of programs specifically related to, or meant to enhance, summer recreation activities throughout Hubbard County, though the main area for programs are typically found in Park Rapids. The downtown Main Street and 2nd Street Stage for summer music programs are examples of the programs that provide considerable economic assets to the county.



Photo: Downtown Park Rapids

There is a need to promote and increase services and programs for a wider diversity of user groups (more programs for the senior populations, varying cultures, ethnicities, and economic groups) and more specifically, promotion of programs and activities held in locations beyond Park Rapids. Examples include the Akeley Paul Bunyan Days, Lake George Blueberry Festival, etc.

There is a need to increase services, programs, and a work force available during the off-season when visitors are limited. Many senior residents go south for the winter and need a reason to stay during this time. A variety of programs and cultural activities for local residents during the off-season times will keep residents in the County for longer periods of time, increase civic pride and provide residents with activities they cannot take partake in during the peak tourist season.

### Marketing & Promotion:

Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce promotes resorts, activities, events, and recreation at the visitor's center, at local businesses and resorts, and through social media (Facebook, Twitter).

There is a need to broaden marketing and promotion of community events outreach (Twin Cities, other states, etc.) to get more people to Hubbard County and to keep them in the county longer. Strategic marketing and targeting specific audiences can be an effective tool to improve promotion regionally.

There is a need for an integrated plan for services, programs, marketing and promotions that are cross-referenced across varying websites and social media avenues for consistency. The Hubbard County website should have a link to find recreational information on the Chamber of Commerce site and vice-versa, making sure to have links to other communities such as Akeley, Lake George, etc.

There is a need to market and promote activities available during the off-season (fall color tours, fall fishing, fall biking, winter ice fishing, snowmobiling) and lodging available during the off-season.

There is a need to promote the quality of living in Hubbard County to attract and keep more year-round residents and encourage business opportunities.

#### Opportunities:

Even though there is a desire to encourage more families and individuals in outdoor recreation, retirees remain a major population of importance. There is a need to have plenty of reasons for retirees to stay longer, or even year-round. There are opportunities for retirees to enhance and promote tourism, as many are not only looking for ways to get out and recreate but can do so while volunteering or partaking in part-time work. Some examples include transporting visitors to and from recreational activities, conducting group programs at resorts, or providing canoe tour guide services.



Source:<https://www.chron.com/news/article/Seniors-make-a-difference-in-Houston-by-10627742.php>

Opportunities for AirBNB/VRBO rentals of residential homes or cabins while the owners are south during winter during a time when many resorts are closed can expand recreational use during off-season times.

#### Constraints:

Airbnb/VRBO rental properties is an opportunity but also considered a constraint by local resorts. Many resorts in Hubbard County have closed or have been sold, and while this can lead to existing resorts having less competition from other resorts, the competition from rental properties is increasing.

Some communities are making rules more restrictive to AirBNB's and VRBO's, though this should be done with extreme caution to ensure there are fair rules while still allowing for various types of lodging options, as this will be a key goal to attracting more visitors to the county.

Lack of lodging (resorts, cabins, etc.) during the off season directly affects the ability to increase winter tourism.

Lack of people/work force (especially during the off-season) directly affect the ability to increase tourism. Finding a solid work force during the off-season is difficult in a region where many of the senior residents go south for the winter, and residents who work in the tourism industry during the summer have little interest to extend their seasons with little return in revenue. They have also expressed the need for down time and the ability to take their own vacations.







## Section 4: Action Plan

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

Implementing the Hubbard County Outdoor Recreation Plan will require a strong working relationship between the county and the many local and regional advocacy groups in order to be successful – especially since this is the first formal plan developed by the county for this purpose. This section considers a number of key factors associated with developing an action plan and implementing the outdoor recreational plan initiatives.

### 4.2 GENERAL STRATEGIES AND APPROACH

The following implementation strategies are based on the findings from the planning process and a realistic assessment of Hubbard County and related recreational and advocacy groups' capacity for implementing initiatives that will provide the most strategic and beneficial improvements as it relates to outdoor recreation.

Since this is Hubbard County's first outdoor recreation plan, the county does not have the benefit of use data to fully understand current use levels or to project future growth in demand for a given type of recreation. This is compounded by the fact that general recreation trends are still emerging in the region as the regional economy and demographic characteristics continue to evolve. Combined, this leaves an inherent level of uncertainty in the actual demand threshold for each type of outdoor recreation, which is an important factor in developing implementation strategies to meet actual needs. The county will need to continually work with stakeholder groups to continue to monitor trends and the success of improvements and adjust priorities accordingly.

Whereas the information gained from the public process and related research provides a compelling and justifiable basis for the initial set of priorities in the outdoor recreation system plan, it is not substantial enough on its own to justify the full implementation of the plan in the near term. Instead, actual implementation of the plan should be pragmatically paced over a period of time consistent with the county's and stakeholder groups capacity to better understand demand and secure funding. Even if much of the work for some of the initiatives is done by local advocacy groups, Hubbard County should continue to provide some guidance and partnerships in ongoing development, especially in terms of any improvements that will place additional operational, management, and maintenance responsibilities on the county. Hubbard County is also uniquely positioned to gather data on levels of use (and therefore demand) moving forward for the industry.

The following implementation strategies are based on findings from the planning process and are meant to provide initial recommendations, considerations and potential priorities, but are to remain flexible to allow for adjustments to meet actual needs and any current unknown opportunities that may arise.

#### Develop a Phased Approach

A phased approach for implementing each type of trail or outdoor recreational use defined under the system plan should be prepared, taking into consideration the combined capacity of the county and local advocacy groups to fund, develop, operate, and maintain the overall system. The role of the county and local advocacy groups should be clearly defined to avoid ambiguity and can include written joint use agreements that state specifically the roles of each. The ramifications of user groups failure to follow through with obligations should be clearly stated, including the potential for restrictions being placed on trails that pose an unacceptable level of impact on the resource or are inconsistent with Forest Management Plans.

## Recreational Use Conflicts, Impacts & Success

Establishing a routine monitoring protocol for each type of trail and outdoor recreation is recommended to put the county, state and local advocacy groups in a proactive position related to understanding use levels, use issues and conflicts, and detecting problems at an early stage where they can be more easily remedied.

Clarity in how conflicts and use impacts will be addressed is one of the most important aspects of managing relationships with user groups. Developing a clearly defined policy and process in this regard and communicating that to user groups is highly recommended with a variety of if/then scenarios if conflicts and problems occur to adequately resolve the issues.

### 4.3 KEY PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Hubbard County is encouraged to set initial priorities meant to accomplish the following:

- Expand and promote outdoor recreation beyond the summer season.
- Provide outdoor recreational opportunities that are complementary to adjacent counties.
- Identify improvements that are regionally significant in order to improve funding opportunities.
- Develop or maintain partnerships for improved opportunities for funding and implementation.

Priorities will continue to shift over time and should be based not only on community sentiment but should be flexible to take into consideration opportunities that may arise.

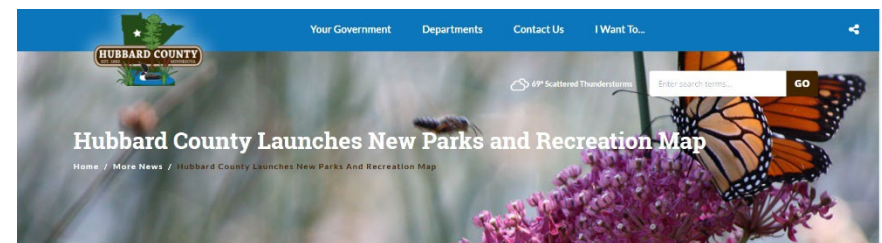
The following key priorities are not in any particular order as to rank but are meant to provide a general high-level approach to outdoor recreation.

### Coordination, Awareness & Marketing Program

All general county-wide information related to outdoor recreation, opportunities, maps, apps and other related information should be consistent and cross-referenced across all platforms and agencies, such as the State of MN, Hubbard County, Chamber of Commerce sites, city websites, and various clubs and organizations.

Efforts should be made to ensure up-to-date information is shown, including seasonal opportunities, programs and events. Information on websites, maps and related applications should meet ADA requirements and shall be user-friendly for ease of use.

In 2018 Hubbard County offered a Parks and Recreation Finder map through the Hubbard County GIS. This was a significant improvement and allows users to select which types of recreation they are seeking to be highlighted on the map, improving access to types and locations of outdoor recreation available in the county. Additional information should be included on the website for related maps, app tools and even links to associated websites.



Marketing should include working with the state, local communities and other organizations to provide recreational programs that will highlight recreational amenities during all seasons of the year and include varying cultures, abilities and demographics.



Photo: Cultural group [www.culturalvistas.org](http://www.culturalvistas.org)



Photo: White Earth Powwow (source: DL-Online, “White Earth Powwow ends Sunday” article, June 12, 2009)

Marketing improvements should focus on promoting recreation and available lodging during the fall to spring seasons to expand the tourist season, such as:

- Walking / hiking trails
- Biking trails
- ATV/OHV/OHM trails
- Fall color tours
- Hunting
- Fall fishing and winter ice fishing
- Snowmobiling trails and activities
- Winter trails (cross-country skiing, etc.)

Recreational programs should expand to focus on attracting those who are currently not familiar with, or aware of, the amenities currently available in order to promote outdoor recreation. This can include immigrant communities, new residents, those with a disability, and those that lack confidence or the equipment necessary to be able to partake in outdoor recreation.



Photo: <http://www.wday.com/sports/outdoors/2640356-new-dock-brings-handicap-accessible-fishing-lake-elsie>



## State Trail to Itasca State Park

Due to the increasing popularity and pressures on the existing Heartland Trail, implementing a multi-use trail from the Heartland Trail in Park Rapids to Itasca State Park would be a high priority. Hubbard County would need to partner with the Minnesota DNR to secure land for the trail and promote the implementation. This trail is regionally significant and would have grant opportunities available.

Itasca State Park is a prime destination and this trail connection, if along a route with highly scenic qualities, could also spur additional recreational and economic opportunities for the overall business community. Examples include restaurants, campgrounds, lodging, rentals, and other private enterprises.

This trail may also help take some of the use pressure off of the existing Heartland Trail and would add a significant section of trail for biking events, such as the Itascatur Headwaters 100 Bike Ride.

Though not a high priority at this time, additional considerations for support trails and trail connections include:

- Itasca State Park to the Paul Bunyan Trail at Laporte.
- Itasca State Park north to the Mississippi Headwaters State Forest, then east to connect to the Paul Bunyan State Trail.
- Itasca State Park to La Salle Recreation Area and further on to Bemidji to connect to the Paul Bunyan State Trail.

## ATV/OHV/OHM Improvements

Hubbard County currently offers an extensive system of ATV/OHV/OHM trails that, if improved to a higher quality system with additional connections, could increase its regional draw and allow for better connectivity.

With an activity that is prime during spring and fall times, the improvements could promote use beyond the summer period. Making select, but focused, improvements to the existing trails meant to improve the overall experience will be more beneficial than just adding more trails, though some select connections to close existing gaps between trails and to destination areas should be a high priority.

- Improve and/or develop trails with a focus on a high-quality experience that will accommodate varying skill and user levels (many of these trails are within the State Forest properties, and therefore a joint effort will need to be taken, especially with stakeholder groups).
- Work with the DNR to secure lands to implement trail routes to close existing gaps between existing trail systems and to access prime destination areas (lodging, fuel, food, etc.).
- Work with the DNR to potentially identify select trails or locations that could be available for year-round use.
- Identify a more sustainable approach to development and ongoing maintenance for trails to minimize detrimental impacts and perception of the sport.
- Work with stakeholders, clubs and local organizations to promote responsible use for the activity and improve public perception.

## Joint Partnerships

While Hubbard County has the ability to make some improvements on county owned and/or managed lands, there are numerous improvements that will meet recreational demands and improve outdoor recreation, but they will require strategic joint partnerships or economic initiatives in order to achieve them.

Hubbard County should coordinate with other agencies for strategic partnerships. This could include the MnDNR, local cities and townships, private organizations, and entrepreneurs willing to provide services that will improve outdoor recreational experiences. This will allow the county to focus on making strategic county improvements that would be mutually beneficial. Implementing a Joint Powers Agreement for any shared resources would be needed to provide a clearly defined shared responsibility agreement.

Many of the priorities listed below involve joint partnerships (MnDNR, local clubs, groups, private enterprises, etc.) and may also require a formal Joint Powers Agreement in order to be successful. Examples include:

- Lodging opportunities for fall to spring seasons in close relation to main destination and recreational use areas (campgrounds, resorts, cabins, etc.) with higher quality facilities, improved layouts and more direct access to recreational use areas).
- Support opportunities and businesses (equipment rentals, shuttles to and from recreational activity areas, food, gas, convenience stores) strategically located where high demands currently exist.
- Improvements on lands not currently owned by Hubbard County.

## Hubbard County Park Regional Improvements

Make select improvements that will increase the service level of the Hubbard County Parks and lake access locations to better serve both residents and visitors year-round as regional destinations.

Heartland Park would likely be of a higher priority in terms of its presence in a core location for tourists and residents, as well as the Heartland Trail trailhead. Partner with the City of Park Rapids, and potentially the State and DNR, to develop a master plan of Heartland Park and Red Bridge Park focusing on the overall accessibility/connectivity to downtown Park Rapids and as a primary regional trailhead.

Lake George Community Park would be of a higher priority than Farris Park, due to the opportunities for serving numerous types of outdoor recreation for residents and visitors, with potential for an improved public beach.

Hubbard County should focus on promoting and enhancing outdoor recreation on county owned and/or managed lands with a primary focus on fall to spring recreation, as well as those that would be mutually beneficial from a joint partnership, such as campgrounds.

As a county known for its lakes, a higher priority item would be to improve select lake access locations to include more significant improvements for both motorized and non-motorized boats, as well as winter use. Additional improvements to include adequate vehicular circulation and parking, boarding docks, restrooms, trash, fish cleaning stations, and picnic spaces for day use activities.

Locations for improvements should be strategically located to reach county-wide populations and lands that offer the most opportunity without significant investments for land acquisition or alterations.

## Improve Accessibility to Outdoor Recreation

There are currently issues of being able to access outdoor recreational opportunities for those with a lack of transportation, disabilities or other mobility issues. Existing transportation options have limitations in terms of where they will pick up or deliver those who are in need of transportation. This may be a great business opportunity for someone willing to provide this needed service that would benefit the community, recreation and may even keep seasonal residents within the region longer.

Additional considerations in terms of access to outdoor recreation is ensuring improvements are made to existing recreational facilities to meet current guidelines from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This include the ability to find and use information regarding outdoor recreation from websites, to maps, to actual physical development of a recreational facility.



## 4.4 PARK PRIORITIES

### County Parks

Strategy focuses on maintaining and improving existing county parks to better meet the needs of park users and demographics. This includes amenities to better serve residents, as well as tourists, to keep users active year-round and encourage staying in the county longer. With a strong senior population, improvements may be necessary to meet these needs, while still accounting for other age-groups.

Priorities should focus on some Heartland Park improvements to include Red Bridge Park and potential future acquisitions for a regionally significant destination related to connectivity.

Prioritize more immediate needs in all of the parks to ensure a safe user experience (replacing or removing unsafe amenities), more accessible amenities, meeting current needs and trends, accommodate expanded use, and encourage year-round activities.

#### Key physical plan priorities include:

- Prepare a maintenance and replacement plan for existing park amenities to be included in the general funding plan for ongoing maintenance, repair and replacement to ensure the overall quality of the parks are kept to an adequate level.
- Coordinate efforts with the local townships and/or local city in securing state and federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable
- Prepare a master plan for each park to guide improvements or development and phasing approaches. Gather input from community in terms of most desirable amenities that may be lacking (currently Pickleball was an item noted numerous times as being desired, along with improved public beaches, disc golf, and dog park).
- Implement maps and wayfinding signage to access parks and guide trail users.



#### Heartland Park Improvements (with Red Bridge Park):

- Remove old closed-down bridge and trail route (State).
- Create and strengthen the connection between the parks and the downtown area of Park Rapids
- Highlight the connection and access to the Heartland Trail.
- Consider future land acquisitions to integrate into the park.
- Focus on high quality recreational amenities with proper circulation and orientations (create overall master plan).
- Improve overall accessibility (ADA).
- Enhance park entrance points & utilize wayfinding.
- Water quality and beach improvements.
- Potential rentals (watercraft, bikes, etc.).
- Consider connection to the south side of Hwy 34 through trails with overlooks along the river – utilize educational signage to provide DNR fishery information on the south side.

#### Lake Farris Park Improvements:

- Some park reorganization, replace amenities as needed, add amenities that are lacking, in a phased in approach.

#### Lake George Community Park Improvements:

- Overall reorganization with better circulation to include new master plan design and amenities. Examples include improved beach with amenities, various picnic areas, potential splash pad, volleyball and basketball courts, open green space, and related amenities.

#### Other:

- Identify County owned lands, or potential future land acquisitions, that would be more suitable for recreational development as well as camping/lodging within close proximity to primary destinations.



#### Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs, local communities, and other stakeholder groups to incorporate programs and events in the parks (includes local, county and state-owned parks) to focus on spreading out programs to more areas of the county. Additional programs focusing on fall, winter and spring seasons would encourage year-round use of the park system.

#### Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively market existing or new park programs.
- Smaller communities can incorporate community events/festivals and recreational programs that will reach broader age groups and demographics utilizing the park spaces and attracting more users.
- Heartland Park has many marketing opportunities related to Heartland Trail activities, park activities, and community events which should continue to be promoted. Promote this park as a regional destination.

## **4.5 TRAIL PRIORITIES**

As the primary activity that residents and tourists alike seek out, trails remain a top priority for the county.

It is recommended that the county, state and advocacy groups continue to work together when it comes to developing and implementing trail systems to avoid overduplication and instead, focus on select routes that connect to prime destinations, adding strategic linking trails to access the primary trails, and focus on ongoing maintenance and replacement as needed to maintain a high-quality trail.

The county and state should develop a joint trail management plan to ensure the trails remain well maintained for a higher degree of overall satisfaction. For instance, if a state-owned trail is in good condition but the county owned trails linking to the trail are in poor condition, or there is a lack of trailheads and trail access to the state trail, satisfaction for both will be low.

Successful trails are those that are built to be more sustainable, offer a high degree of satisfaction with varying levels of abilities accounted for, provide interest for the users, and reduce conflicts. Proper design of the trails is highly important and should be done not only with professional designers, but also user groups who can offer substantial input on small design nuances that will make the trail more successful.

Also of high importance is ensuring that trails are continually monitored for conflicts. Whereas some multi-use trails are currently working well, this may change as use rates increase or new uses are added. This may lead to restrictions of users on the trail types, or separation of users, which would require new trail systems being added to account for separate trails and user groups.

The following provides a starting point for each type of trail. The strategy builds upon the existing relationship between Hubbard County, the state and various advocacy groups to leverage funding avenues that might be available to aid in development and maintenance of the overall system.

## Multi-Use Paved Trails

Overall strategy focuses on maintaining the existing system (Heartland Trail in particular) and working with the state and local groups to ensure ongoing maintenance for a high-quality trail system and continuation of new trails to key destinations. A complete trail system within Hubbard County to primary destinations, such as Itasca State Park, will continue to attract use by residents and visitors.

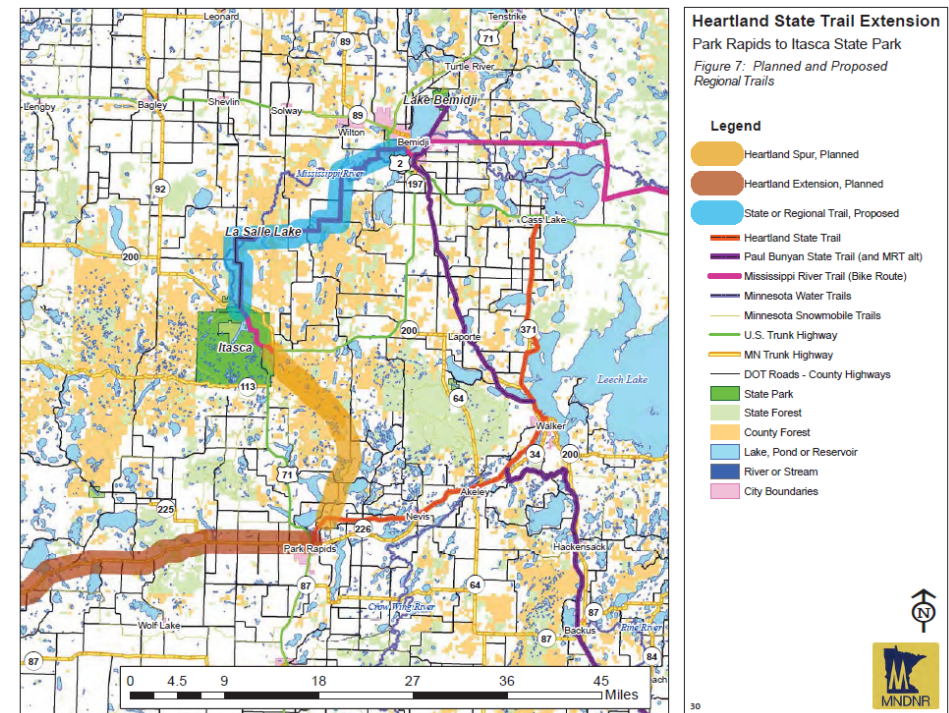
Multi-use trails should be developed away from high volume traffic routes as much as possible in order to be successful. Routes along vehicular traffic are not as well received and will mean more implementation and maintenance costs but a lower overall use, whereas scenic routes with shade and resting opportunities will attract more ongoing use and make the investments worthwhile.

It should be noted that snowmobile use on multi-use trails can lead to conflicts of use between motorized and non-motorized users. If future conflicts arise, it is recommended to determine if a parallel or alternate snowmobile route is necessary. Conflicts also arise at pinch points where motorized vehicles intersect with non-motorized trail users where additional safety signage may need to be added.

### Key physical plan priorities include:

- Prepare a maintenance and replacement plan for existing trails to be included in the general funding plan for adequate trail pavement. This should include actively monitoring changing technology related to trail surfaces that are resistant to impacts by snowmobiles. Ensure coordination with the state regarding maintenance plans for their trails.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs in securing state and federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable, for improvements and development.
- Work with the state to implement the Heartland Trail extension from Park Rapids to the Mississippi Headwaters (State of MN

Trail) – Note: the MNDNR has a master plan for this trail and the route should be developed mainly away from primary vehicular routes as much as possible and allow for stopping points along the route.



- Implement maps and signage along trails, especially as it concerns hazard or conflict areas where motorized and non-motorized uses cross, and right-of-way trail signage.



- Add points of interest along the trails such as art or cultural displays, historical features, overlooks, seating areas, etc.

*The Lure of the Water's Edge is...*

## Trade and Transportation

*Shay-now-ish-kung*, known to white settlers as Chief Bemidji, was the first native person to greet George Earl and Merian Ellsworth Carson in 1888. The brothers left their father's trading post at Moose, a village on the Mississippi River, to cut a wagon trail 17 miles east to Lake Bemidji where they built Carson's Trading Post (pictured at right). The relationship between Chief Bemidji and his family was so good that Chief Bemidji's daughter, *Bahgahmaushequay*, later married Merian Carson.

The first white woman to settle in Bemidji was Betsey Doud who, with her husband Freeman, purchased Diamond Point and built a modest log cabin. The Doud's cabin has been preserved and moved to the county's fairgrounds. The Douds also established a long-lasting friendship with Chief Bemidji, who became a much-loved and respected figure in the early settlement of the City of Bemidji.

In 1897, Bemidji was named the Beltrami County seat, and an already steady lumber industry began to explode as railroad connections between Bemidji and St. Paul and Grand Forks were established. Hotels, restaurants, saloons, gambling and gaming houses and other establishments common to a growing logging town sprang up, and Bemidji became a bustling center of activity.



Bay-ow-ge-mung (Chief Bemidji).  
Photographer: Unknown. Ca. 1895.  
Minnesota Historical Society



Interior of Carson's Trading Post, Site of Bemidji.  
Photographer: George P. Metcalf. August 12, 1894.  
Minnesota Historical Society



Sawyers at Work in the North Woods of Minnesota. Photographer: Whitney and Zimmerman. Ca. 1865. Minnesota Historical Society



Horse Pulling Car. Photographer: Unknown. Ca. 1915. Beltrami County Historical Society

### Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to continue to incorporate programs and events on the trails (Itascatur Headwaters 100, geocaching, etc.).
- As trails continue to be implemented, develop or work with private enterprises on providing rental opportunities in close proximity to trails.
- Provide seating, restrooms, trailheads and bike fix-it stations along trails in select locations.

- Incorporate art or cultural displays in select locations, such as resting stops or overlooks along trails, to be incorporated into recreation programs or events.

### Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information, such as trail apps to show current location along trails.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote trails in spring and fall to attract local and regional users when there are fewer insects, better sight lines and fall colors.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote trails in winter to attract local and regional users for those who are not aware of the varying winter uses allowed on the multi-use trails.
- Marketing the existing support facilities and example trail itinerary rides based on different lengths of ride and destination areas should be promoted to encourage new riders or visitors to easily plan a trail ride.

### Related Economic Opportunities:

As with the existing Heartland Trail route, many opportunities exist related to support facilities along the trail route that will also increase popularity and use, such as:

- Camping/lodging with easy trail access or service to access routes. Focus on providing lodging during spring and fall to time with best trail use times and even winter time periods for fat tire biking and/or snowmobiling.
- Rentals for bikes, in-line skates, snowmobiles, etc.
- Service companies offering pick-up/drop-off services for those who only want to go one-way on the trail or a portion of the trail.
- Food and restroom opportunities along the trail such as restaurants, snacks/ice cream, etc. in select locations along the proposed routes to stop and rest.

Photo: <https://forums.mtbr.com/cars-bike-racks/utility-trailer-setup-5-bikes-991958.html>



### **ATV/OHV/OHM Trails**

Hubbard County contains popular all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and off-highway vehicle or motorcycle (OHV/OHM) trails, also used by dirt bikes, but some strategic improvements and expansion of trails and facilities with a focus on the overall experience can expand its regional significance. When done correctly, ATV/OHV/OHM use can work with other types of recreation with minimal conflicts and even improve upon overall perception of the activity.

Whereas most existing trails are aligned along old forest roads, a well-designed trail system accounting for alternate routes, speeds, abilities and users would improve the overall quality and sustainability. This may mean closing off some old routes and clearing out new forest areas for better routes, different uses, scenic quality, and adding in training and skills course areas, which can sometimes be done in conjunction with natural resource management, such as logging or other management procedures. Trails should be designed to best fit with the environment in order to reduce ongoing maintenance and erosion issues using best management practices and should focus on the overall experience on the trail.







A trail route constructed to withstand heavy use by vehicles while minimizing erosion



A superelevated trail curve plus embedded rocks along trail edge



Rolling grade design of the trail helps manage runoff through dips and crests to minimize erosion

#### Key physical plan priorities include:

There are also gaps in the existing trail routes that, if connected, would greatly improve the overall trail experience, as shown on the trail gap map on the next page.

The overall strategy focuses on coordinating with the state and local advocacy groups to work together on the improvement of existing ATV/OHV/OHM areas and expanding the system and facilities available.

Increasing the level of awareness of the user's responsibility to help manage use and deal with impacts to county land is also a key strategy. While there has been previous interest in the Border-to-Border Touring route for off-road vehicles going through Hubbard County, this has been met with some opposition, indicating that there needs to be improvements made to responsible use and overall perception of the sport.

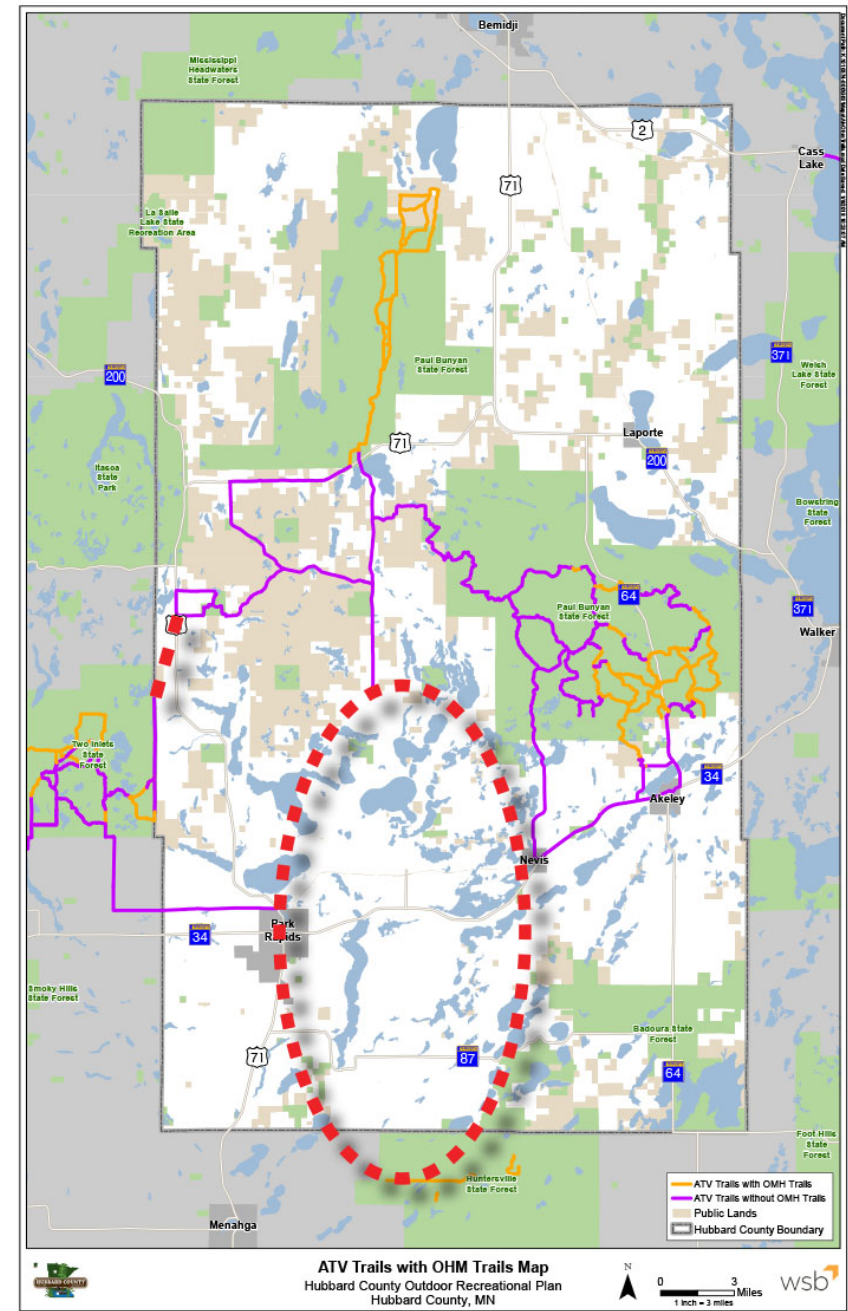
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs in securing state and federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Support the efforts of advocates to work with the county and state on the design and development of the trail system (existing and future) for improved sustainability, variety, interest, and skill levels for a higher-quality system.
- Clearly define trail routes (mapping/signing) and riding rules for both established trails, as well as forest access routes. Ensure that all use conflicts that may arise between user groups are expediently resolved.
- Establish defined trails specified for ATV, OHV, OHM and even dirt bikes would be of great value to many riders, whereby they would be more assured of where it is acceptable to ride and take pressure off many of the trails now used in the forest while reducing conflicts with other types of trail users.



- Create areas for training and circuits with skills courses or alternate spurs.
- Identify or create primary routes that would connect the main ATV/OHV/OHM use areas with prime destination areas (lodging, food, gas, town locations).
- Possibility of expanding beyond OHM to include designated routes for off-road vehicles (ie: Jeep) if compatible with land uses.



- Close gaps to connect the primary ATV/OHV/OHM routes and use areas together for an expanded system. Refer to the map to the right identifying existing gaps that would connect the varying routes together for a more expansive and interconnected system.



#### Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate programs and events on the trails to encourage new users and improve skills (ie: safety and training classes).
- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate programs and events related to overall trail improvements and maintenance where ATV/OHV/OHM use causes most concern for on the trails to encourage compatible use and perception.
- Coordinate with local groups or private enterprises to offer ATV/OHV/OHM rentals and excursion trips.
- Coordinate efforts with local towns and clubs to designate access routes through towns or other currently restricted areas to reach specific destination areas where routes do not exist (restaurants, lodging, fuel, etc.) and to connect to other ATV/OHM trail areas.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs in developing a location that allows for year-round ATV/OHV/OHM use, except during the fall deer hunting season and some rest/maintenance times during slow use periods.

#### Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information, such as trail apps to show current location along trails.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote trails, particularly in spring and fall use times when temperatures are reasonable, insects are low and fall colors are present to attract local and regional users.

- Coordinate efforts with the State and local clubs in marketing appropriate family-friendly and responsible use for ATV/OHV/OHM trails.
- Foster a partnership between all public landowners in the county to develop a strategy for cooperatively addressing broader regional trail issues, especially as it relates to the development of additional trails, maintenance and sustainability of trail routes and overall perception of users. This could include working with ATV/OHV/OHM groups to provide volunteer services and events.
- There is a desire by ATV/OHV/OHM advocates to work on promoting this activity in a more responsible manner and taking steps to improve the overall perception of ATV/OHV/OHM uses to be more consistent with responsible and family friendly activities.



Photo: <https://svia.org/get-involved>

### Related Economic Opportunities:

Many opportunities exist related to support facilities related to ATV/OHV/OHM areas and routes that will increase overall satisfaction in and increase popularity and use, such as:

- Camping/lodging with close and easy trail access or service to access routes, as lodging that requires a half hour drive each direction each day is not ideal. Focus on providing additional lodging opportunities available during spring and fall to time with best trail use times and even winter time periods for any trail areas that may be open year-round. Prime areas for lodging are those with direct access to ATV/OHV/OHM trails from the lodging or camping areas to avoid trailering machines back and forth, which is especially important for those with dirt bikes that are more restricted.
- Private business or service companies offering ATV/OHV/OHM rentals and/or excursion trips, which would likely be very popular with tourists, or even locals who do not have their own machines, to include shuttle services to and from trail areas.
- Gas and food availability in close relation to the main ATV/OHV/OHM areas. Having to trailer machines to get gas or to find food is not ideal and a common complaint.

### **Snowmobile Trails**

Strategy focuses on maintaining the existing systems and working with local clubs to resolve alignment or access issues as they arise.

#### Key physical plan priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the State and local clubs in securing State and Federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Coordinate efforts with local towns and clubs to designate specific access routes through towns to reach specific destination areas where routes do not currently exist.
- Work with local clubs on alignment issues on public lands as they occur and find new routes over time that add interest to the current system.
- Work with local clubs on improving mapping/signing and marking location of the trail routes, especially lands that adjoin with non-public owned lands or any routes within towns to reduce conflicts.

#### Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to maintain existing programs and incorporate new programs and events that encourage new users and improve skills (ie: safety and training classes, snowmobile charity runs, etc.).
- Coordinate with local groups or private enterprises to offer snowmobile rentals and excursion trips.
- Work with local clubs and stakeholders to find trail ambassadors to work with law enforcement and encourage responsible trail use.



Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information, such as trail and route apps to show current location along trails and routes.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote snowmobile trails both locally and beyond Hubbard County to attract families and regional users and promote existing events as celebrations to encourage positive involvement, such as the USXC race.



Related Economic Opportunities:

Potential opportunities related to support facilities for snowmobiling include:

- Service companies offering snowmobile rentals and/or excursion trips, which would likely be very popular with tourists or even locals who do not have their own machines and promote family activities.
- Camping/lodging during winter with close and easy access to snowmobile routes.

**Hiking Trails**

Strategy focuses on maintaining the existing systems and working with local clubs to resolve alignment or access issues as they arise.

Key physical plan priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders in securing State and Federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders to delineate and map out trail routes on public land with primary access locations, connections to destination areas and other hiking trails that have minimal conflicts if needs dictate. Trails can offer an array of experiences from safer, smaller route options to longer and more remote options for those with more experience or ability.
- Develop strategic locations for trail access / trailheads.
- Sign areas for closure during hunting seasons.

Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder that raise awareness and support for remote hiking trails to minimize conflicts.

Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information, such as trail and route apps to show current location along trails and routes.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote trail use during optimal seasons of spring, fall and potentially even winter when sight lines and fall colors are optimal, and there are minimal insects.

Related Economic Opportunities:

Potential opportunities related to support facilities for hiking trails include:

- Camping/lodging facilities that are in close proximity to trails and available during off seasons.
- Food and restaurants during off-season times.

## **Mountain Bike Trails**

Strategy focuses on working with the state and local advocacy groups to work with the county on securing funding and developing support for complementary mountain bike trails that can also accommodate fat tire trails that offer a varying experience to those offered at nearby Detroit Mountain and even Cuyuna. The intent should be to designate routes primarily along old forest routes that can provide a different experience. It is not the intent for the county to develop a large

destination mountain bike area, but rather create strategic connections, some lower use single track trail systems, and a different type of biking experience unless future demands increase the need for additional mountain bike trails in the county.

Key priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs in securing State and Federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable. At this time, no known local mountain bike clubs exist in Hubbard County.
- Support the efforts of the state, local clubs and advocates to work with the county on the design and development of simple but fun bike trail routes on county land that would be complementary to adjoining mountain bike trail areas and potentially create strategic connections.

Key service & program priorities include:

- Support the efforts of mountain bike advocates to form a local club to work with the county on the design and development of any future trails for a route.

Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information, such as trail and route apps to show current location along trails and routes.

Related Economic Opportunities:

Opportunities related to support facilities for mountain bike trails and fat tire bike trails include:

- Camping/lodging with close and easy trail access or service to access routes by bike rather than vehicle.
- Service companies offering bike gear, bike rentals and/or shuttle services to and from trail areas. Food and restaurants.

## Winter Use Trails & Recreation

Winter trail activities include cross-country skiing, skijoring, Hok ski (Altai), snow shoeing, fat tire biking, dog sledding, and a more recent trend, ice skating trails.

Strategy focuses on maintaining the existing trails and working with existing clubs and stakeholders to provide adequate or improved facilities.

### Key physical plan priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the State and local clubs in securing State and Federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Coordinate efforts with the State, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to mark routes in areas beyond Park Rapids and create the idea of a “ski journey” with loops preferred, connections to destination areas (food, drinks, etc.) and trails that make use of natural winter scenery.
- Coordinate efforts with the local clubs and stakeholders if expansion of the Soaring Eagles facility or an additional facility in a varying location is necessary to meet demands, including the potential for some select groomed forest trails.
- Designate trail areas where dogs are allowed.
- Though not a top priority at this time, if interest in ski trails continues to increase, Hubbard County can coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to develop an ice skating trail route, potentially at the Soaring Eagle Facility or a forested route on county land. Forested and protected areas are preferred with varying skill and speed levels but trails can also connect to lake routes which includes clearing a route on frozen lakes. Ice trails can be built over summer trails, such as mountain bike trails. Ice trails require ongoing maintenance so this is a lower priority until demands exist and maintenance needs can be met.

- Coordinate efforts with the State, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to develop designated routes for varying winter use trails to combine compatible sports on specific routes and separate sports that will conflict with one another, some of which can be designated over a summer use trail route, such as a winter fat tire bike trail over a summer use trail.
- Develop access points with adequate parking and support facilities to access trails on county or state-owned land.
- While not an actual trail and not of high priority due to the proximity of Detroit Mountain, there may be opportunity to reintroduce sledding or skiing at a private site known as Val Chatel.

### Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate programs and events that encourage new users and improve skills. Itascaur has done well at providing many programs at the Soaring Eagles location. Incorporate programs to also include Hok ski, snow shoe and potentially ice trail skating as demands dictate.
- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate programs and events that highlight dog sledding training or races at a smaller scale.



Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

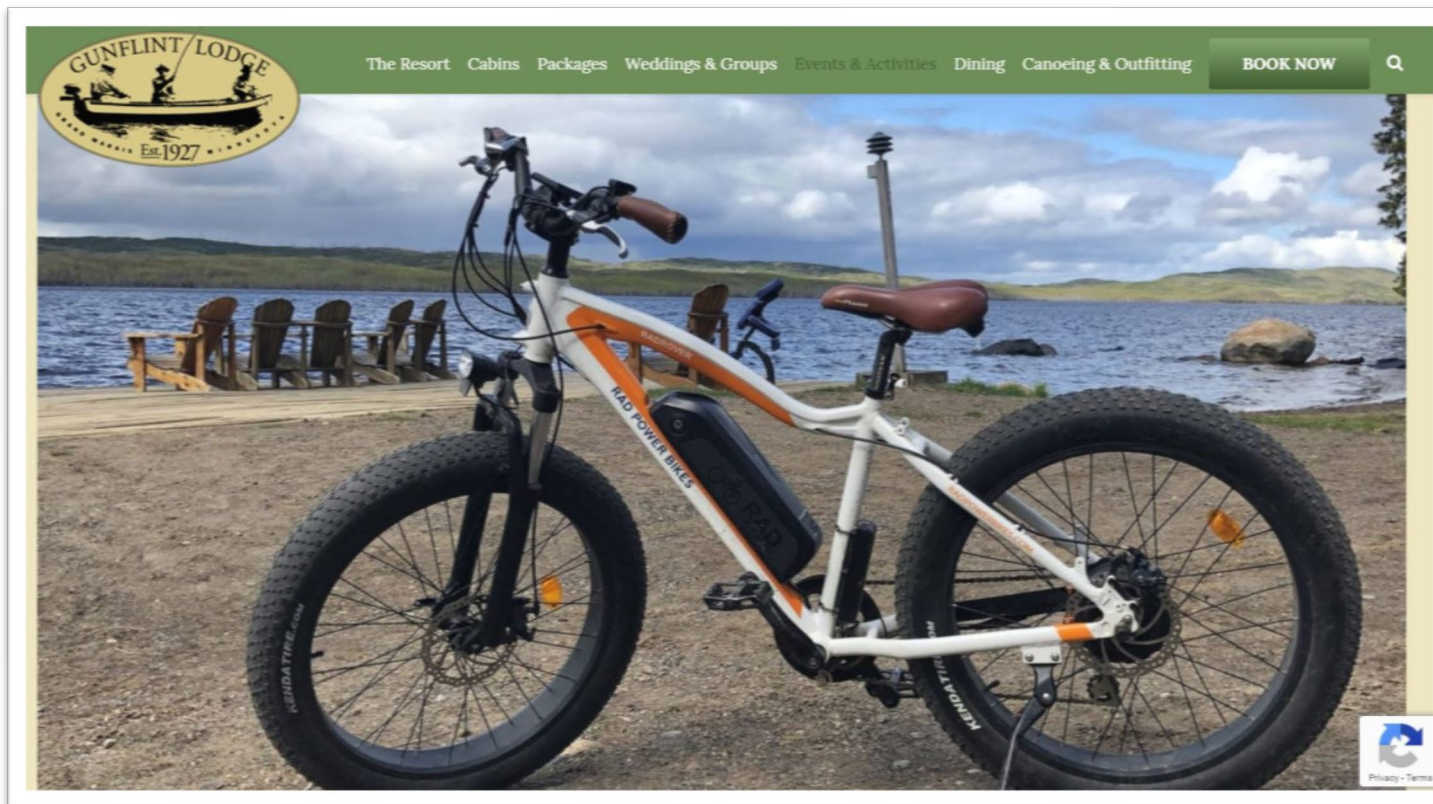
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information, such as trail and route apps to show current location along trails and routes.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote cross country trails beyond Hubbard County to attract regional users.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other marketing information related to skijoring, Hok ski, dog sledding and fat tire trails and events to promote new users.

Related economic opportunities:

Opportunities related to support facilities for winter trail related sports include:

- Camping/lodging during winter with close and easy access to trail areas.
- Private businesses offering gear or equipment rentals related to winter sports.
- Food and restaurants during winter.
- Dog boarders.
- Val Chatel revitalization.

Photo: Gunflint Lodge website advertising Fat Tire bike rentals



## Equestrian Trails

Strategy focuses on working with the state and local stakeholders to develop equestrian trail routes on public lands, which are currently lacking in the county, and potentially finding a service to offer horses and trail rides. This would keep visitors looking for a day activity within the county longer and can also provide residents the same opportunity since many people do not own their own horses.

Currently there is some equestrian use along the Heartland Trail, and Dorset has a few horse stables available for use, though horses can get spooked by Heartland Trail bike users. Huntersville has been noted as having some trail areas and the MNDNR has identified a potential location in Paul Bunyan State Forest that was once the location of an equestrian facility that could be developed into designated equestrian trails.

### Key physical plan priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders in securing State and Federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders to delineate and map out equestrian trail routes on public land with primary access locations and minimal conflicts.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders to design and develop an equestrian trail area (best opportunity currently on state owned land).

### Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate programs and events that raise awareness and support for equestrian facilities.

- Coordinate with local groups or private enterprises to offer excursion trips/trail rides.

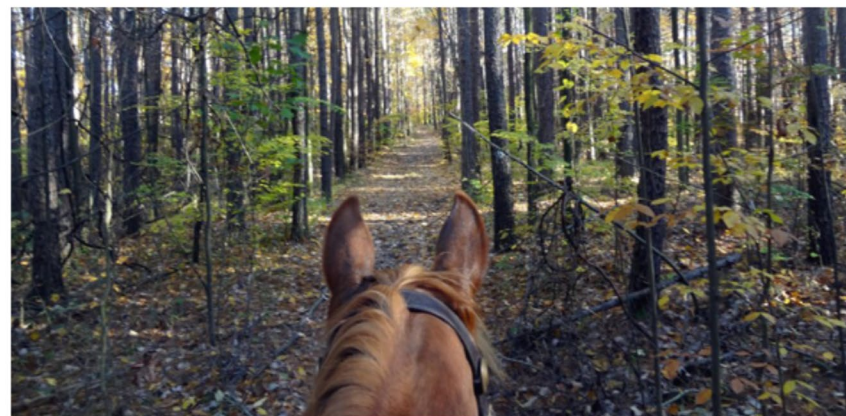
### Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information, such as trail and route apps to show current location along trails and routes and market fall color trail rides.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote equestrian trails to attract regional users.

### Related Economic Opportunities:

Potential opportunities related to support facilities for equestrian trails include:

- Companies offering excursion trips/trail rides.
- Camping/lodging facilities that are in close proximity to equestrian area to include stables for horses.
- Horse boarding services.
- Food and restaurants in close proximity to equestrian area.



## 4.6 WATER ACCESS & RECREATION PRIORITIES

### Fishing and Lake Access

Strategy focuses on working with the state and local stakeholders to improve awareness of fishing and improve select lake access opportunities with support amenities and ease of access.

Amenities should be compliant to current regulations and size requirements, especially as it concerns boat launch facilities, ramps and vehicular movement for ease of use.

#### Key physical plan priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders in securing State and Federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders to design and develop adequate public access to lakes with boat launches, parking, restrooms, fish cleaning stations, boat cleaning stations, and desirable picnic areas. Priorities to be focused on improvements to strategically located existing facilities before creating new access locations.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders to design and develop public beach facilities to include parking, restrooms and drinking water.
- Make site improvements and recreational facilities meet ADA regulations as much as feasible.

#### Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate programs and events that would take place at beach and lake locations during summer and winter (pond hockey, ice festivals, fishing tournaments, beach parties, etc.).

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to offer fish guide services during various seasons.
- Coordinate with local businesses and resorts to offer rentals (ice fishing houses) including getting them off and on the ice for the renters.
- Coordinate with local businesses and resorts to offer additional lodging opportunities (winterized cabins) which may include incentives for winterizing existing facilities.

#### Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping of public beaches and lake access locations with a listing of amenities offered at each.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote fall fishing, as this is prime time for fishing, and ice fishing activities and events.

#### Related Economic Opportunities:

Potential opportunities related to support facilities for fishing and lake access includes:

- Private companies and/or resorts offering rentals of ice fishing houses, including getting them on and off of lakes for the users.
- Camping/lodging facilities that are available during fall and winter seasons.
- Food and restaurant options in fall and winter seasons.
- Fish guide services.
- Curling clubs.



## Water Trails

Water trails and access locations need to be accurately mapped. Canoeing / kayaking opportunities in Hubbard and surrounding counties is extensive, but very underutilized. The lack of information about water trail routes, service providers, recreational programs, and promotion limits increasing participation in this activity. Strategy focuses on fostering the improvement of awareness of water trails and access locations.

### Key physical plan priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs in securing state and federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders to develop trailheads or access points that can simply be small parking areas with restroom facilities and maps.

### Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate programs and events that raise awareness of water trails and encourage new users. Interesting programs, such as a “voyageurs” canoe trip can explore local culture, history and recreation together in one program.
- Coordinate with local groups or private enterprises to offer rentals, shuttle services for one-way trips and excursion trips. This could include allowing rental service space for vendors at select public water access locations.

### Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and

other useful information, such as trail apps to show current location.

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote water trails and sports beyond Hubbard County to attract regional users.

### Related Economic Opportunities:

Opportunities related to support facilities for water trails and water sports include:

- Outfitting company to offer gear and rentals for canoes, kayaks and paddleboards.
- Services to include offering water trail excursions (canoe, kayak, paddleboards, tubes) including a shuttle service to provide transportation to and from water trail locations. Services can also work with lake resorts to provide opportunities for events and classes at the resort locations. Limit to individuals or small families and groups and place restrictions on large activities such as those that occur on the Ottetail River.



Photo: Voyageur Canoe (source: [www.dailydodge.com/voyageur-canoe-rides-on-fox-lake](http://www.dailydodge.com/voyageur-canoe-rides-on-fox-lake))

## 4.7 SPORTING PRIORITIES

### Hunting & Shooting Sports

Strategy focuses on working with the state and local stakeholders to improve hunting and shooting opportunities that will minimize conflicts and allow for more sustainable uses in the future through proper management on county owned lands.

Key physical plan priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders in securing State and Federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders to delineate, sign and map out hunting trails, public access locations and public lands available.
- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders to implement signs and/or markers to adequately delineate public land from private land where they adjoin.
- Though not a priority, work with local clubs and stakeholders to improve a shooting range and archery facility to meet current local needs.



Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate hunting safety and training programs and events that raise awareness and support for hunting and shooting sports, such as safety courses, training sessions, and skills workshops for everyone from those with little to no experience to those who want to expand upon existing skills.
- Coordinate efforts with state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to offer guide services to help those who are not familiar with the public lands, the best locations for hunting, or are not comfortable with hunting on their own.
- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to raise awareness of natural resource management programs that temporarily affect certain areas for hunting to reduce conflicts and perception of management.



Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information, such as trail and public access locations on apps to show current location along trails.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote hunting, shooting and archery activities beyond Hubbard County to attract regional users.
- Marketing should be strategic to encourage more users to the sport who are currently not partaking in the activity and those showing interest but lacking confidence on their own. Current marketing and programs geared towards women and teens are encouraged to keep future generations involved in hunting and shooting sports, along with expanding opportunities to cultural groups not currently familiar with the sport.

Related Economic Opportunities:

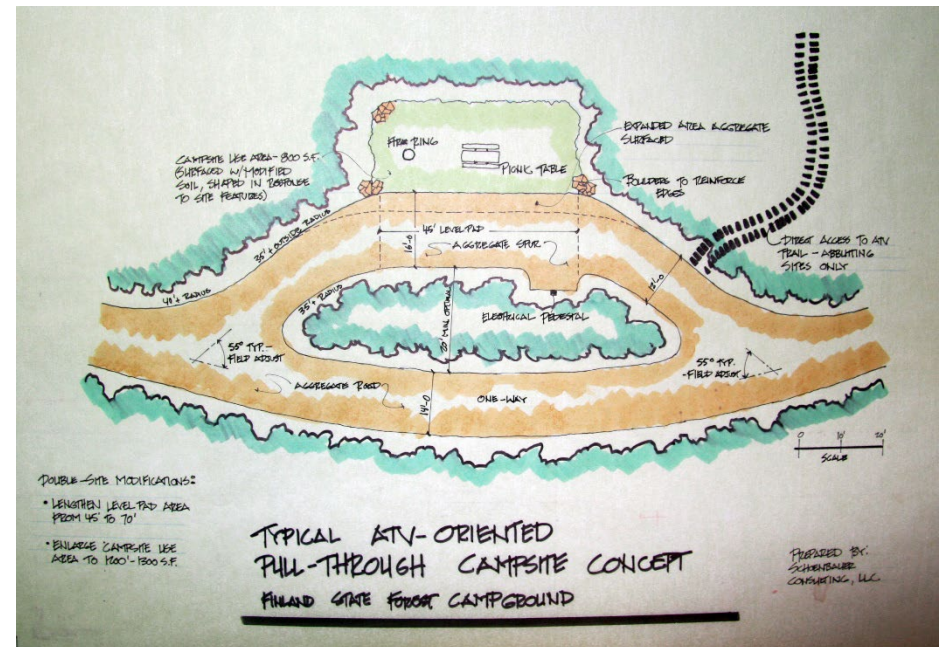
Potential opportunities related to support facilities for hunting and shooting sports include:

- Companies offering hunting trips to visitors and/or hunting guide services or mentorship program for those who are not comfortable hunting on their own.
- Camping/lodging facilities available during off-season times and that allow dogs.
- Dog boarding services.
- Archery ranges / trap shooting.
- Private businesses offering hunting and shooting gear.
- Food and restaurants in off-season times.

## Camping, Resorts and Lodging

With a variety of available resorts and AirBNB/VRBO rentals available in the county, the strategy should focus on working with the state to improve existing camping opportunities on county or state owned lands, or look for initiatives for private businesses to make worthwhile investments in their campground facilities, with consideration to local resorts and other lodging facilities to offer complementary services. This will allow the county to attract a wider variety of user groups with varying preferences in terms of camping and lodging.

Initial priorities should be focused on offering a range of primitive to more developed sites with vehicular access and areas suitable for vehicles and equipment (bikes, ATV's, snowmobiles, etc.), as well as tents. Linking trails providing direct access from camping areas to trails and recreation areas are highly desirable.





Campgrounds can range from primitive walk-in sites to more developed sites offering water and electrical hook-up and sanitary services, depending on location and ability to manage and operate, while raising awareness for the public land available for boondocking. Boondocking is camping outside of campgrounds (no services), where allowed.

The strategy should also focus on improving camping and lodging facilities in close relation to the main destination areas which will greatly improve the overall recreational experience and draw in more repeat users, as well as new ones.

Key physical plan priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state and local clubs and stakeholders in securing State and Federal grant-in-aid funding, as viable.
- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs, private resorts and businesses, and other stakeholders to develop or improve campground facilities in close relation to destination areas that will allow for more direct access to trails and recreation areas without additional driving time. Some locations may result in joint agreements or transfer of lands in order to improve the campground facilities. Examples include potential use of the Park Rapids rodeo grounds as boondocking camp space, improvements to the Mantrap Lake Campground with full services, and creation of primitive sites along canoe routes.
- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs, private resorts and businesses, and other stakeholders to develop or improve campground facilities to ensure the county is meeting a variety of camping needs and desires without over-duplication of facilities.

Key service & program priorities include:

- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate camping programs and events that raise awareness and education related to camping, such as weekend guided trips to week-long trips and educational workshops related to camping gear.
- Mapping of camping sites that are not currently shown due to more primitive nature.
- Coordinate efforts with the state, local clubs and other stakeholder groups to incorporate rules, regulations and encouraging the “pack it in, pack it out” and “leave-no-trace” policies for responsible use of campsite areas.



Key marketing & promotion priorities include:

- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs and Chamber/business groups to effectively provide mapping and other useful information on the variety of lodging options available, such as resorts, hotels, camp sites and public land available for remote experiences, including useful apps to identify locations.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the state, local clubs, and Chamber/business groups to effectively promote lodging options that are available during the off-season times of fall through spring.
- Market or promote current regulations that allow for camping on public lands not necessarily marked as a campground, known as “boondocking.” There are apps like the Public Lands app to help find free public lands where this is allowed.



- Marketing should be strategic to encourage more users who are currently not partaking in the activity and those showing interest but lacking confidence or their own gear. Current marketing and programs geared towards families, women and teens are encouraged to keep future generations involved in camping, along with expanding opportunities to cultural groups not currently familiar with camping. Offering a range of camping opportunities and locations (camping closer to developed areas for those starting out, to more remote locations for those with a greater ability and comfort level) to account for greater demographics and abilities.
- Additional marketing should focus on attracting the users seeking remote and adventure related camping activities.

Related Economic Opportunities:

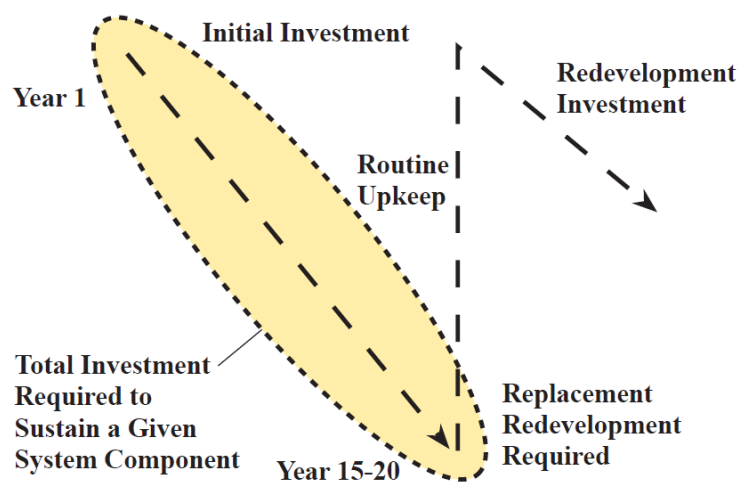
Potential opportunities related to camping, lodging and resorts include:

- Camping/lodging facilities available during off-season times and ones that allow dogs.
- Food and restaurant options available during off-season times.
- Private enterprises that can work with local resorts to offer programs on-site, off-site excursions and shuttle services to and from destination areas.
- While this plan focuses on outdoor recreation, lodging that also offers indoor recreation (pools, waterpark, etc.) would improve tourism beyond the summer months and would also benefit residents during the off-season if it were open to the public through a fee.

## 4.8 IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

### Overview

Investments in parks and trails must also take into account the commitments required to sustain the system on a long-term basis. As the figure below illustrates, the total investment required for a given component is the cumulative costs for initial development, the ongoing routine costs for operations and maintenance, and the complete redevelopment once it has reached the end of its lifecycle.



Hubbard County should focus on making select improvements that will have the greatest positive impacts and that won't stretch the county beyond its means for ongoing operations, maintenance and redevelopment, rather than trying to make a lot of smaller improvements that will ultimately be too costly in terms of upkeep and result in a negative impact.

The overall strategy for making meaningful and strategic improvements for implementation focuses on working with local towns

and townships, chambers, stakeholders, and private businesses to identify and improve prospects for strategic business, lodging and recreational amenities available to not only improve existing summer related recreation, but to also expand upon the fall to spring seasons for outdoor recreation as a joint effort instead of relying solely on the county.

The numerous individual recreational items include focus areas and initial priorities that may benefit the overall tourism-related economy but can also expand and improve upon outdoor recreational uses by seasonal and permanent residents. As mentioned previously, keeping residents and tourists in the Hubbard County for longer periods of time is key to strengthening the overall economy.

Coordination among all the various stakeholders will be of utmost importance in focusing on priorities moving forward. These priorities will likely change as new opportunities, recreational trends and community demands continue to evolve.

Potential resources for implementing the recreational plan will also vary over time as existing programs may be phased out and new programs implemented. These include both sources of funding as well as programs which assist communities in refining their planning efforts and/or creatively accomplishing tasks to help reach their goals.

While there are some sources of funding, such as grant programs, many granting agencies look for projects that already have broad support and collaborating agencies. Several of the following programs provide ideas for creative collaboration in order to move toward the ability to seek such funds.

It is highly encouraged that Hubbard County work jointly with other organizations and agencies on high priority recreational improvements in order to have a greater ability to receive funding.



## Collaborative Community Development

### U of M Extension

- Regional Partnerships: Sustainable tourism & resilient communities foster innovation, deepen understanding and build relationships that empower Greater Minnesota communities to advance their future sustainability.  
Molly Zins, Executive Director, Central RSDP  
Email: zend0007@umn.edu Phone: 218-828-2332
- Community Development: Developing Local Tourism, tourism assessment program and Community Tourism Development Manual. The manual applies theory to real life by delivering the essentials of planning, developing and managing tourist destinations from a community standpoint.  
Tammy Koerte  
Email: tkoerte@umn.edu Phone: 763-767-3881

### Main Street Program (© National Trust for Historic Preservation)

- Coordinated by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the program provides a framework for communities to organize themselves for success of local economic sustainability centered on traditional commercial districts. Resources include: information, technical assistance and workshops to members and non-members.  
<http://www.mnpreservation.org/services/minnesota-main-street/start-a-community-main-street-program/>

### State Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) & North County Health Alliance

- Pursues a focus on “active living” opportunities in Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard and Lake of the Woods counties. One initiative is to implement policies and practices that create active communities by increasing opportunities for non-motorized transportation (walking and biking) and access to community recreation facilities.

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/ship/communities/northcountry.html>

## Parks & Trails

### MN DNR - Local Trails Connection

- Relatively short trail connections between where people live and desirable locations, not to develop significant new trails. The minimum grant request is \$5,000, and the maximum grant award is \$150,000. Funding available for FY 2019 is \$250,000 recipients must provide a non-state cash match of at least 25 percent

### MN DNR -Regional Trails Grant

- Development of regionally significant trails outside the seven-county metropolitan area. The minimum grant request is \$5,000, and the maximum grant award is \$250,000. Anticipated funding available for FY 2019 is approximately \$800,000

#### Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC)

- Previously the MN DNR Parks and Trails Legacy Grant
- Grant program for parks and trails of regional significance outside of the seven-county metropolitan area.
- Includes ATV and snowmobile trails.
- Includes land acquisitions.

#### Minnesota Snowmobile Trails Assistance Program grants-in-aid (Development and maintenance of snowmobile trails)

- Capital Grants - eligible costs are matched at up to 65 percent. A guideline for project eligibility is that the total cost of the project should be approximately 20 percent or more of the existing maintenance and grooming grant
- Maintenance & Grooming – Hubbard Co FY 2018 total funding \$ 111,731.63

#### Off-highway grants-in-aid

- Facilitates development and maintenance of trails for use by All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Off-Highway Motorcycles (OHMs), and Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) at the initiative of enthusiast groups or clubs, with the support and participation of local government sponsors.
- Funded by vehicle registration and trail pass fees plus a percentage of the state non-highway gas tax from each of the motorized groups. (The percentage of gas tax varies for each user group and is established by Minnesota Statute Chapter 296A.18).
- All aspects of OHV trail development and maintenance are eligible to receive GIA funds, including project administration, site planning, trail improvements, land acquisition for trail development, and trail maintenance.

#### Cross country ski trail grants-in-aid (GIA)

- Grants are awarded annually for cross-country ski trail maintenance and winter grooming.
- 40% of the grant is reimbursed to set up the trail through the performance benchmark, and the remaining 60% of the grant is reimbursed based on the number of hours groomed and the established grooming rates

### **Water Resources & Recreation**

#### LCCMR - Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund

- Activities that protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's "air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources" for the benefit of current citizens and future generations.

#### Public Water Access Sites - Partnership Funding

- Acquisition, development and/or improvement of public boat accesses, parking lots, docks, and boat launching ramps, campsites, rest areas and portages.
- The level of grant and technical assistance fluctuates. MnDNR Ecological & Water Resources, Park Rapids phone:218-732-8960

## Hunting & Fishing

### Angler and Hunter Recruitment and Retention Grant Program

- The program was created to help local groups support Minnesota's angling and hunting heritage. Priority will be given to programs for new and diverse audiences and those with an ongoing impact rather than one-time events. One example of a past funded project include Mother/Daughter Fly Fishing Weekend; one idea would be to use this program to introduce hunting and fishing in Hubbard County to those from outside the community, thereby also promoting it as a recreational destination.
- Grants from \$5,000 to \$49,999 will be awarded. No match is required, but organizations are encouraged to include a match of dollars or in-kind labor, materials or services. All hunting and angling equipment (bows, rods, tackle, etc.) and other related items with a purchase value of \$4,999 or less are eligible and shall remain the property of the grantee.

### Public Parks and Recreation Archery Range Rehabilitation Grants Program

- The DNR will determine how much money is available each year; currently the total is \$100,000. Groups may apply for a single grant per grant cycle. Matching grants of \$5,000 (\$10,000 total project cost) to \$25,000 (\$50,000 total project cost) are available.

### Large & Small Shooting Range Grants

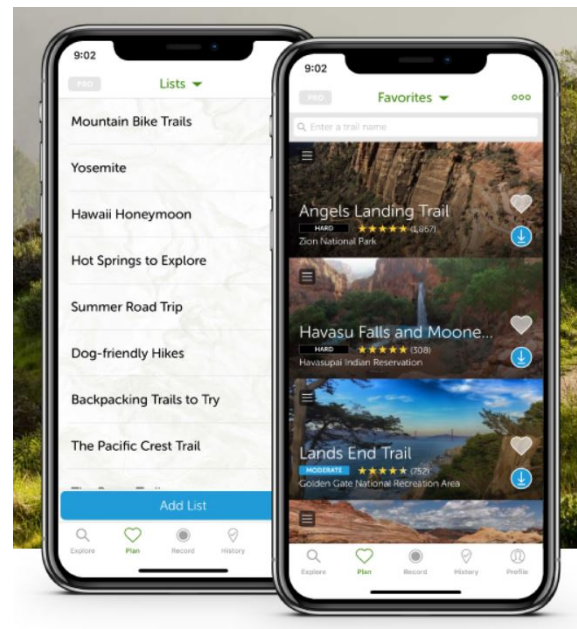
Both programs have a purpose to increase shooting range capacity for youth shooters and the general public, by providing matching funds to recreational shooting clubs open for public use.

- The Small Shooting Range Grants (SSRG) program provides grants from \$2,500 to \$25,000 for listed projects eligible for expedited funding. The grants must be matched 1:1.
- The Large Shooting Range Grants (LSRG) program provides grants from \$25,002 and above \$25,000 for listed projects eligible for expedited funding. The grants must be matched 1:1.

### Marketing & Awareness

Look for new opportunities/platforms for sharing the story of Hubbard County outdoor recreation in order to promote its regional significance – some examples include:

- The Dyrtr - the fastest growing camping app on web and mobile, with new features being rolled out regularly. A platform where campers share information on campsite, camping resources and learn from others across the country. [www.thedyrt.com](http://www.thedyrt.com)
- AllTrails – A online platform and app that provides detailed mapping for trails. Trails are ranked in popularity with online reviews and ranking from easy, to moderate to hard. Maps have layers and are downloadable. [www.alltrail.com](http://www.alltrail.com)





## 4.9 IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

The strategy for prioritizing recreational improvements focuses on taking a balanced approach to implementation, recognizing that ultimate improvements will be based upon many factors including available funding and availability of lands, just to name a few.

The top priorities include initiatives that will require implementation by other agencies or joint agreements in order to be successful but are listed to encourage Hubbard County to be the primary driver to work with other agencies to get them implemented.

The following defines the main priorities, as listed previously in this report, with the top initiatives placed under each for consideration. They are not necessarily placed in order of significance, as there are many varying factors that will determine how and when they are implemented. Priorities should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to account for updated needs and opportunities.

<b>Coordination, Awareness and &amp; Marketing Program</b>	<b>Comments / Status</b>
Specifically include an icon listing for “Recreation” on the main Hubbard County website that further breaks down recreation types (fishing, trails, chamber of commerce, etc.) ensuring this has its own icon and not just listed on “Popular Pages” which is not recreational based. Coordinate with the local Chambers, townships and other organizations to cross-reference other websites, maps, programs, lodging, etc. under this category.	
Create a Hubbard County Facebook and/or LinkedIn page for marketing and identify a staff person for ongoing management to ensure posts are being continually added. Include everything from recreation elements such as updated fishing reports, to current events, such as when and where timber harvesting is being done, to inform and educate the public. As an alternative, Hubbard County can also work with the Chamber of Commerce to provide them with information that can be shared on their existing social media platforms. The “Visit Park Rapids” Facebook page is very successful at promoting activities, events, contests, and tourism and should be utilized for shared information and should especially focus on fall to spring activities and lodging opportunities.	
Map out the more remote trails, water trails, camping areas and other outdoor recreation not currently included on existing maps.	

Coordinate with local Chambers, townships and other organizations to evaluate and update recreational programs to be in alignment with needs and promote outdoor recreation. This would include meeting on a regular basis to brainstorm ideas with the stakeholders to determine best how to utilize outdoor recreational spaces for programs, even though Hubbard County would likely not actually implement the recreation programs.	
<b>Expansion of the Heartland State Trail to Itasca State Park (and related improvements)</b>	<b>Comments / Status</b>
Work with the State to secure lands for the primary regional trail route from Park Rapids to Itasca State Park.	
Work with the State to apply on grant funding opportunities to show support and joint effort to implement the regional trail.	
Establish designated pedestrian route with wayfinding measures from the downtown Park Rapids Main Street district and along Hwy 34 to Heartland Park and the Heartland State Trail.	
Work with the State to secure funding for removal of the previous Heartland State Trail segment now closed off, including the bridge. Consider transfer of these parcels of land to Hubbard County.	
Work with the State to identify and plan for a future trail route from Itasca State Park to the Paul Bunyan Trail at Laporte.	
Work with the State to identify and plan for a future trail route from Itasca State Park north to the Mississippi Headwaters State Forest, extending east to connect with the Paul Bunyan State Trail.	
Work with the State to identify and plan for a future trail route from Itasca State Park to La Salle Recreation Area and further north to Bemidji to connect to the Paul Bunyan State Trail.	

ATV/OHV/OHM Improvements	Comments / Status
Work with the State and stakeholders to help identify the needs and design standards necessary for improvements to the existing and future trails in Paul Bunyan State Forest for an improved, high-quality experience.	
Work with the State, local landowners and stakeholders to close gaps in the trail systems by securing lands to connect the existing trails.	
Work with the State and stakeholders to evaluate the ability to designate a specific trail area to remain open for year-round use.	
Work with the State, stakeholders and other agencies to identify prime destination areas by users to evaluate the ability to link the trails to the destinations (fuel, lodging, food) with designated routes that would improve overall experience with fewer constraints.	
Work with the State, stakeholders and other agencies to identify design standards and establish maintenance agreements to ensure existing trails across public spaces (roadway crossings, etc.) are safe with more sustainable design measures to reduce ongoing issues, safety concerns, and conflicts.	
Work with the State, stakeholders and other agencies to promote safe and considerate use of ATV/OHV/OHM trails, including additional programs within various areas of the county that encourage more family friendly uses and new users.	
Joint Partnerships	Comments / Status
Establish a template for joint agreements that will allow for successful partnerships. Agreements should have primary contacts, date of initiation, responsibilities of each organization related to funding, maintenance and operations, and course of action if either party does not adhere to their portion of the agreement.	



Establish main points of contacts with various organizations that may likely be involved in a joint partnership and hold routine meetings to evaluate current needs, priorities and opportunities. Depending on the agency and situation, the timing of meetings will vary, but it is suggested that a minimum of once per year would be beneficial.	
Coordinate with local Chambers, townships and other organizations to evaluate where high demands for services exist to promote new opportunities for businesses or services.	
Coordinate with the State, townships, and other municipalities for potential partnerships for improvements on lands not under county ownership or management. This could include shared responsibilities of funding improvements, management and operations of lands, or could include transfer of lands.	
Coordinate with local Chambers, townships and other organizations to expand upon services improving access to outdoor recreation. This includes items such as shuttles to and from recreational areas, as well as transportation services for those beyond existing service areas.	
<b>Hubbard County Park Regional Improvements</b>	<b>Comments / Status</b>
<u>Heartland Park:</u> Work with stakeholders and additional agencies for an overall master plan for Heartland Park and Red Bridge Park focusing on its regional significance as a primary trailhead for the Heartland Trail and as a regional park meeting diverse recreational needs and demands at a high-quality level with an improved and direct connection to downtown Park Rapids. Consider additional land acquisition. If regionally significant, there may be grant funding available.	
<u>Lake George Community Park:</u> Work with the City of Lake George and the Township to create an overall master plan for the redevelopment of the park to meet local and regional recreational needs and demands to a high-quality level. If considered regionally significant in terms of meeting regional demands, lake access and connectivity, there may be grant funding available.	

<u>Lake Access:</u> Prioritize up to 3 existing lake access locations to consider for day use recreational improvements focused on lakes with more recreational draw and with adequate property to accommodate improvements. Work with the DNR for consideration of improvements to the lake accesses regarding amenities and services available for an improved experience.	
<u>Other:</u> Identify existing county lands or potential future acquisitions for lands that would be more suitable for development of recreational facilities.	
<u>Non-County Owned Park:</u> Mantrap Lake Campground & Day Use Area: Coordinate with the DNR to highlight importance of improvements and upgrades to the campground facilities. Consider option of transfer of campground property to Hubbard County if DNR and County prefer this approach regarding future improvements and operations.	
<u>City / Township Owned Parks:</u> Coordinate with cities and townships to plan for and implement improvements to locally owned and managed parks that meet the recreational needs of the region, appealing to broader demographics and age groups. Work with local stakeholders in development of updated master plans in order to identify needs currently not being met. Initial focus should not only be on children, but also seniors who have more time and are in search of more active recreation. Items such as trails, pickleball, tennis courts, remain popular. Tennis courts should be improved separately from pickleball courts, if feasible, to avoid conflicts of use.	
<u>Indoor Recreation:</u> Coordinate with the community to conduct a feasibility study to determine if a community center servicing the broader recreational needs of the region would be supported and achievable. Items for consideration would include recreational programming and meeting rooms (including senior center), indoor playground, running track, fitness, and potentially indoor pool and water play.	







# APPENDIX

Appendix A: Park Inventory

Appendix B: Engagement Data

## APPENDIX A: PARK INVENTORY

Park	Adminsitrator	Parking	Restrooms	ADA Compliant	Shelters	Picknicking	Grills	Playground	Swimming Beach	Hiking	Fishing	Fishing Pier	Boat Ramp
Grace Lake Beach	Farden Twnshp	10		X		X			X		X		
Farris Park	Hubbard County	20	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Lake George Community Park	Hubbard County	40	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Heartland Park	Hubbard County	105	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Garfield Lake Beach	Hubbard County	10	X	X	X	X			X		X		
Stony Lake Beach	Hubbard County	6				X			X		X		
Itasca State Park	DNR		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Laporte City Park	DNR / City of Laporte	15	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Soaring Eagle CC Ski Trails	DNR / CC Ski Club	10	X		X								
Hubbard Town Hall	Hubbard Twnshp	10			X	X		X					
Halvorson Beach	City of Nevis	20	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Muskie Park	City of Nevis	20	X	X	X	X		X		X			
Akeley City Beach	City of Akeley	10	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Paul Bunyan Park	City of Akeley	10	X	X	X	X				X			
Deane Park	City of Park Rapids	50	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Kaywood Park	City of Park Rapids	0				X							
Red Bridge Park	City of Park Rapids	22		X		X				X	X	X	
Olson Ballfield	City of Park Rapids	20			X	X		X					
Lindquist Park	City of Park Rapids	7		X	X	X	X	X					
Pioneer Park	City of Park Rapids	0	X	X		X							
Depot Park	City of Park Rapids	51	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Rice Park	City of Park Rapids	0				X	X				X		

Park	Adminsitrator	Hunting	Biking	Camping	Disc Golf	CC Sking	Soccer	Ballfield	Basketball	Tennis	Pickleball	Volleyball	Skate Park	Horseshoe	Drinking Fountain
Grace Lake Beach	Farden Twnshp														
Farris Park	Hubbard County		X					X	X	X				X	X
Lake George Community Park	Hubbard County							X	X			X		X	X
Heartland Park	Hubbard County		X		X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Garfield Lake Beach	Hubbard County														
Stony Lake Beach	Hubbard County														
Itasca State Park	DNR		X	X		X						X			X
Laporte City Park	DNR / City of Laporte		X												
Soaring Eagle CC Ski Trails	DNR / CC Ski Club					X									
Hubbard Town Hall	Hubbard Twnshp								X						
Halvorson Beach	City of Nevis														
Muskie Park	City of Nevis		X											X	X
Akeley City Beach	City of Akeley		X			X									X
Paul Bunyan Park	City of Akeley		X			X									X
Deane Park	City of Park Rapids														X
Kaywood Park	City of Park Rapids														
Red Bridge Park	City of Park Rapids		X												
Olson Ballfield	City of Park Rapids							X							
Lindquist Park	City of Park Rapids							X							X
Pioneer Park	City of Park Rapids														
Depot Park	City of Park Rapids						X		X	X			X		X
Rice Park	City of Park Rapids														

Campgrounds	Adminsitrator	Sites
Akeley City Campground	City of Akeley	42
Mantrap Lake Campground	DNR	38
Gulch Lake Campground	DNR	10
LaSalle Lake State Rec. Area	DNR	39
North Country Trail Sites	NCT Association	6



## APPENDIX B: ENGAGEMENT DATA

### Social Pinpoint Data

#### Stakeholder Engagement Summary

852

Total Visits

841

Unique Users

10:27

Avg Time (min)

47

Unique Stakeholders

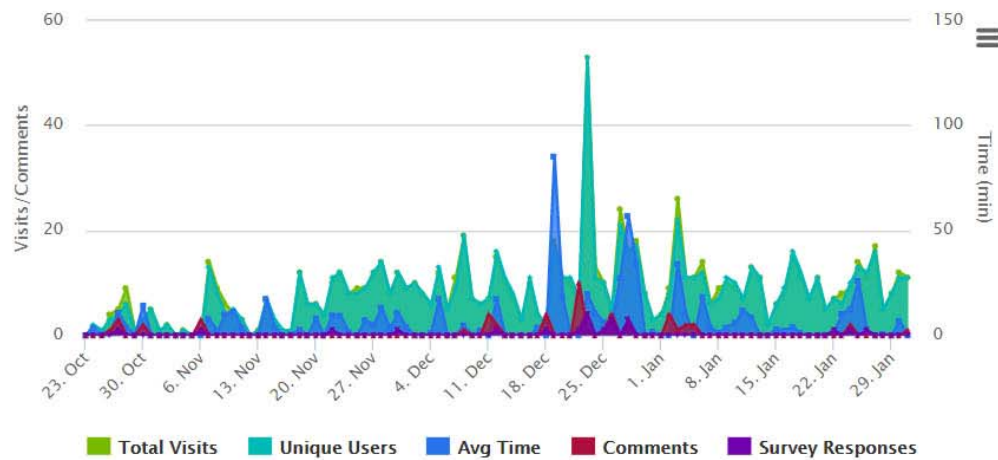
50

Comments

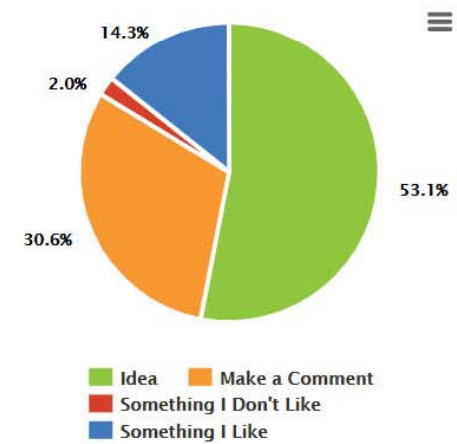
21

Survey Responses

#### Stakeholder Engagement by Day



#### Comment Types



## Social Pinpoint Map Comments

- Again, the trail already exists...it just doesn't show up on the map.
- This wasn't clear. The trails are there already, they just don't show up on the map.
- Volunteers from the Lakes Area Mountain Bike Alliance and Trails (LAMBAT - an IMBA Chapter) would be interested in volunteering on developing this.
- It would be fantastic if Inner Forest Rd. and the Waboose Lake access road could be plowed to facilitate winter non-motorized use of the Waboose Lake area. It could be popular for backcountry XC skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing. Wouldn't negatively impact snowmobiling either.
- Loop trails around Lake 21 and Nelson Lake should be added.
- Loop hiking trail around Waboose Lake should be added.
- Why is the North Country National Scenic Trail not included on this map? It crosses Hubbard County from Itasca State Park to just west of Walker.
- More enforcement of the non-motorized zone is needed. The little non-motorized area that we have is a treasure for hiking and canoeing.
- A bandshell, with a multi-purpose room on the back side overlooking the river. The room could also be used by performers during plays or concerts, etc. A venue like this could attract thousands each summer to enjoy the park and help the local economy.
- This link can be shared with anyone for input as outreach
- Pickleball at Heartland Park. Working on tennis courts being converted to pickleball courts. There's room for 6 courts. It's a great game that is played by all ages. Surrounding towns have indoor courts, but few for summer outdoor play.
- Try and move the snowmobile trails off of the County forest roads. If that means widening the forest roads to allow the snowmobile trail to be next to the road. These forest roads are supposed to be multiple use trails but are snowmobile only during the winter.
- I think we should create rough campsites (tent only, no outhouse, no running water) overlooking some of the counties lakes that they have to offer. This would give people an opportunity to get away from everything for a weekend and just enjoy the beauty that our forested lands have to offer
- Acquire land to expand beach - both county & city need a beach warmer & safer than present Heartland Park beach
- Let's do something with Trestle Bridge material - sculpture commemorating PR railroad & logging history? Great vantage point just north of present trestle
- Local business need a variety of people, working, tourist, retired don't limit to only the Arts.
- How about encouraging ATVs and Snomobiles to use city streets? They spend LOTS of dollars if they can ride to the location

- A community event center. One that provides a workout area, indoor track, tennis courts, gym, meeting area, it would be great if this was something that could incorporate the high school ice arena as well as the pool. It would help with cost of both. Nice place to go during winter.
- Park Rapids needs a swimming beach,  
bandshell ,expand pickleball courts,  
do a better job on tennis court maintenance  
(people settle in the area just for the tennis courts)  
Increase size of shoulders on roads for bike safety (especially around the lakes)
- The area in which Park Rapids has strength is in The Arts. We have a facility in the Armory that can bring many people to our community. Northern Light Opera had 7 sold out performances this summer.  
The report from MCA (Minnesota Citizens for the Arts) illustrates the economic impact the Arts have on Hubbard County. We need a reason for people to come to our community for entertainment. Our business places will thrive with more people coming for events and learning activities.
- The Heartland Activity and Wellness Connection (HAWC).  
The HAWC will provide holistic and preventative behavioral health services with a focus on community advancement and a goal of enriching the Park Rapids Community. We are looking for partnerships in healthcare, recreation, and community programs. Some ideas include physical therapy, yoga, pickleball leagues, Drop-in Day care, Job Skills training, conferences & events, and many more.
- We love the Heartland trail! We use it 3-4 days per week in the summer!
- I would like to see a Single Track Mountain bike course in Hubbard County. Mountain bike courses have gained popularity and are now found in most counties except Hubbard.
- I would like to see a Single Track Mountain bike course in Hubbard County. Mountain bike courses have gained popularity and are now found in most counties except Hubbard.
- I would love a horse camp in this area as well!! Iâ€™m from Motley MN and love to go horse camping close to home, spending money on fuel, groceries and who knows what else on my travels!
- I would really like to see both an indoor and outdoor pool area. There are a couple indoor pool options at an area hotel and the high school pool, but both options are very limited in times they are open and are also expensive. The school is also not easy for seniors or those with other disabilities to access. Exercise is vital to all but especially those with limited physical abilities and swimming is a highly recommended option by physicians and a great way to get strength and cardio exercise.
- How about a "Rocky Bass" and "Perky Perch" tournament for kids on Fish hook lake? Lots of Rock Bass and Perch! If a kid catches a Rock Bass or Perch, they get a prize, you could do some other prizes as well, but keep it simple.  
Tie it into some award ceremony in town.
- The County land in this vicinity would be a good location for a Horse Camp for Hubbard County. Beltrami County supports recreational horseback riding with Grant Creek Horse Camp, which provides parking, pump well, vault toilet, and tie lines. A place to tie the horse



away from the ATV/OHM is important. Encounters with ATV/OHM while the horse is not tied are fine, but an introduction while the horse is confined (tied or in a corral) can get dangerous, so a separate Horse Camp would be great.

- You should also consider all of the trail in the Paul Bunyan state forest as there is a lot more extreme in topography
- The Historic Hubbard County Courthouse is one of only two Park Rapids buildings listed on the National Historic Register. Home of the Nemeth Art Center and Hubbard County Historical Society for the past 40 years, this unique cultural destination should be included and considered in future recreational planning.
- There are 105 miles of atv trails maintained  
By Forest Riders Atv club which brings many people to our community each year.  
Should show where they can find information about riding
- How about a cross country ski trail in Heartland Park and the Heartland Trail? The lodging industry could market lodging with cross country skiing in town - that would draw cross country skiers to our city!
- Public Transportation available! We already have the Heartland Express, but don't utilize the equipment to it's full capability. Having safe, available travel for those recreating in our lakes area would make a lot of sense, and could have the costs offset by the fares (it doesn't necessarily have to be affordable public transportation, it has to be available public transportation). This would make our county roads and highways safer, and would be a draw for tourists. See Whitefish, MT
- Keeping our water ways navigable from lake to lake. Putting in culverts and bridges that are too low, limits the accessibility of our waters to our tourists & locals. The Brainerd lakes area does this well (Whitefish Chain & Gull Chain). This would be one of the more popular complaints I've heard from my guests (local & vacationing). Our lakes are our commodity & revenue centers. All business in the area benefits from the draw that our lakes and waters bring.
- I am an endurance horse rider. The Heartland Trail is an excellent resource to condition my animals. to vary scenery on 15-25 mile rides I trailer to and start from various points along the trail, mainly Dorset, Nevis, and Akeley.
- The park shelter has been a great addition to the Paul Bunyan trail, I see people often starting their bike rides from here or stopping for a bite eat.
- This site was hard to find, and I knew it existed. Let us know how we can help.

Thanks. Excited that this process is underway and looking forward to its completion.

- You visit Lanesboro, it is very easy / user friendly to rent canoes, kayaks, bike, etc. and access trails. How do we do this locally? Trails into towns? Close to lodging? More businesses catering to this?

We've been wanting to do this planning process for a number of years, now that it's happening we need to reach out aggressively, get outside the box. Not just another plan like every other one. Hoping it also prioritizes projects and provides cost estimates.

- Yes, this would most likely cost significant dollars, but this is an excellent opportunity to dream and create a vision. One that may challenge us, but is achievable. Like Detroit Mountain, a shooting sports park, ATV meca, etc. Also, resorts and small "town" should be considered. How do we connect / interact with them. Make the resorts more appealing all year for hunting, skiing, etc. Again, drive economics.  
Park Rapid, and other communities, need to be more rec oriented.
- Would like to see a better outreach for public input. Working directly with user groups is fine, but guessing they would focus mostly on their needs. Perhaps a survey in the paper, or a significant news story about this process with links. Radio programs with Bernie, etc. E-blasts from the Chamber, EDC, DBA and others. And, I feel strongly that we need to look at trends, etc. and determine what can we do with what we have to make us unique and standout as a destination. An economic driver.
- How about developing an auto tour to view wildlife and the fall colors on our state and county forest roads. Small parking areas with blinds next to ponds could be developed to view migrating waterfowl.
- Heartland Park would be a great spot for that!
- There needs to be more day use, or short term camping sites available. Most of the resorts have only seasonal camping available.
- How about some Mountain Bike trails. They could double as fat tire bike trails in the winter, or snowshoe trails.
- I Agree with this. The closest sledding hill I know of is in Wolf Lake. Would be nice to have something closer. Outdoor activities for kids are hard to find in the winter. Especially for little ones.
- So it sounds like indoor recreational amenities are lacking overall - good to know
- Lets get a splash park in Heartland Park or in Park Rapids.
- An alternative to an indoor playground, is adding playground equipment specifically designed for use in the snow...if it exists?
- Another idea for kids in the winter...an indoor jungle gym at an existing park. The building could be quite basic - like a pole barn with bare minimum heat or an inflated dome :) I imagine there are many challenges to doing. But kids need somewhere to climb and run in the winter. I know many families that take kids to the Burger King ball pit because there's no alternative!
- More outdoor winter activities are needed for kids. A sledding hill that's easy to access, has a warming hut, and is close to Park Rapids amenities would be great!
- I think the idea of building a paved bike trail through Hubbard County's pristine wild lands is an absolutely terrible idea. It is offensive to anyone who truly cherishes these beautiful lands and they should be left in their natural wild state. People destroy the very things they say they love.
- Yes, let's keep the arts in the forefront of our recreation planning.
- I believe that the shooting range was closed because of potential danger to the surrounding residents. The Mantrap Valley Conservation Club already hosts a shooting range that is safe.

- The North Country National Scenic Trail goes east and west from the south entrance of Itasca State Park for a total of 4600 miles, ND to NY. The footpath should be shown and protected for people who enjoy the quiet and solitude of nature.
- Thank you - these can definitely tie into recreational needs
- Re-open County 18 Shooting Range
- I'd like voice my support for the creation of an outdoor Pickleball court at Heartland Park. The existing tennis courts are currently used by a dedicated group of Pickleball players on a daily basis. However the current courts are not configured properly for Pickleball.
- I know this is primarily devoted to recreation in the county but I hope you can find a way to provide links to cultural attractions and events such as Second St. Stage, the Nemeth Art Center, Hubbard Theatre, Jasper's, Northern Light Opera productions plus other amenities that we have--excellent medical care, great restaurants, etc.
- Soaring Eagles XC trail is located here and should be noted on your map.
- Beautiful Campsite over-looking the Mississippi River. Should be improved and better maintained.

### **Social Pinpoint Survey Responses (24 responses)**

Q1: Tell us a little more about yourself by checking one of the following:

1. I am a permanent or seasonal resident of Hubbard County (21)
2. I work in Hubbard County but do not live there (1)
3. I visit / have visited Hubbard County (2)

Q2: I am between the ages of

1. Under 18 (0)
2. 18-25 (1)
3. 26-40 (3)
4. 41-55 (9)
5. Over 55 (11)

Q3: What existing outdoor recreational amenities do you participate in / enjoy the most?

1. Fishing / Water Sports (19)
2. Shooting / Hunting (14)
3. Snowmobiling (3)
4. ATV / OHV (9)



5. Biking / Cycling (15)
6. Walking / Hiking (18)
7. Equestrian (3)
8. Skiing (4)
9. Court Games (tennis, pickleball, etc.) (2)
10. Field Games (baseball, soccer, lacrosse, etc.) (4)
11. Camping (12)
12. Other (what types do you prefer)
  - Bird Watching
  - I think there should be an expansion on the category for fishing. I enjoy ice fishing, fly fishing, and soft water angling. There are many people who enjoy certain aspects of each and that should be broken down more as there are a lot of tourists that come here for that.
  - Canoeing
  - Snowshoeing
  - Swimming
  - Wildlife viewing
  - I primarily think of my children when it comes to recreation. Things that we can do together as a family.
  - Golfing

Q4: If you go outside of Hubbard County for your recreational needs, where do you go and why?

- Fishing better lakes
- I love to go to the BWCA and go hiking in other types of landscapes. I love to explore our world. We also enjoy zip lining.
- Movil Maze Mountain bike and ski trails Beltrami Co. Blacks Grove MTB and ski trails, Wadena Co.
- Beltrami County or Cass County for fishing, boating, hunting, shopping
- Places with horse camps that support a rig with living quarters. The closest is horse camp I can park my rig is the Grant Creek Horse Camp in Beltrami County. For most of the summer I take my horses and money to locations that have improved access and sites, because the most of the equine camps at MN state parks are not level and the access into the camp is narrow with low hanging tree branches
- We primarily camp and bicycle on paved trails in the State of MN and also camp at the MN State Parks. WI-Fi service is almost a given, but hard to find in campgrounds depending on the services they have for infrastructure on their property.
- Other bike trails around the state

- State Parks
- Also enjoy Walker area for the Shingobee rec area (hiking, skiing, snowshoeing) and the Paul Bunyan bike trail.
- Itasca State Park (parts in Hubbard County and parts in Clearwater county), Shingobee in Cass County, Big Bass Lake in Cass County (for fishing)
- I sometimes bicycle in adjacent counties either passing through Hubbard County or going there to bicycle with friends.
- Red Lake, Lake of the Woods, and Leech Lake. The fishing is better.
- Detroit Lakes- Community Center in the winter is a must for my family to get out and let our kids run and get out of the house. I also go sledding in either walker mn or Wolf Lake. My kids are quite young but we have gone to the DL mountain for snow tubing and skiing
- I don't partake but a shooting range is needed

Q5: What are the best outdoor spaces and/or recreational amenities in Hubbard County?

- Lakes
- Bike trails and atv trails
- Heartland Park, Nevis Park, Deane Park, and most generally all of our water/lake areas. Blacksmith lake is amazing.
- Bike trails and Canoe routes
- Lakes and state forests
- The multi- use trails within Hubbard are my favorite.
- Heartland Trail and the lakes
- North Country Trail
- North Country Scenic Trail, Itasca State Park, Soaring Eagle Ski trail, Heartland bike trail
- Heartland Trail, Heartland Park
- Lakes, Heartland Trail
- The vast amounts of available public lands.
- Heartland Park. Is the best Park in Hubbard County. I agree with one comment on this site for a splash park. My young kids really enjoy the splash park inside the DL community center pool. We do use this in the winter. I dont go there much in the summer because I rather have my kids at a lake and outside. So a splash park outside at the Heartland park would be a good idea.

Q6: What may be missing in terms of recreation in Hubbard County, or what could be done better to improve the existing amenities?

- I think we need to focus on our root interests of the area... hunting and fishing. Let people explore and promote our county. ie Paul Bunyan State forest and beyond.

- I think we need a recreational center in Park Rapids, open to all, which would include a pool, gym and climbing areas similar to the one in Detroit Lakes. There are no opportunities open to all residents for water exercises such as lap swimming and aerobics. Just a place for our kids to hang out, stretch their legs, get some exercise, and a point of pride for the community.
- Indoor Community Recreation facility for winter activities
- The education of the ATV/OHM trail users. For some strange reason they think because a paper map indicates a trail as OHM only then that applies to non motorized traffic.
- You already do a great job on printed materials. I can only think how useful an app for your county would be with mapping and the event calendar in the palm of my hand. Cook County had a great app but they discontinued it -- maybe because of the cost? It was great! David -- check out the app for Clear Lake IA -- this was done by the same company -- its a great tool.
- Indoor rec area providing all ages, affordable, activities
- We need to have pick leball courts. It is the fastest growing sport in the US. It is a low impact sport and great for all ages
- continue a paved bicycle trail to Itasca Park with some hills. The Heartland Trail is good, but too flat and too congested in the summer.
- Short-term camping, mountain bike trails, snowshoe trails
- No sledding hill
- Swimming beach in Park Rapids

Q7: What ideas do you have for improving year-round outdoor recreational opportunities in Hubbard County?

- Allow atvs everywhere that snomobiles are allowed
- Moving snowmobile trails off of the forest roads. These forest roads are supposed to be multiple use trails, and that should include during the winter. even if the roadways are widened and the snowmobilers can go right next to it. I just don't think that is fair for people who don't have snowmobiles to be punished. This would open both newman and blacksmith, which are 2 of the 3 designated trout lakes in the county, for ice fishing and expand the opportunity to create cross country skiing on the hunter walking trails during the winter.
- We need a community center that has open gyms and something that supports strong community activities.
- Organized work days for the community to get involved in the development, improvement and maintenance of the resources.
- Better maintenance on the Heartland Trail to extend the time it can be used.
- We should promote some winter activities in Hubbard County. We seem to many activities in the summer but not in the winter. Indoor activities could be promoted in the winter.
- Provide better connectivity from the trails to the communities and between trail systems. Provide more variety, such as more x-c ski trails scattered throughout the county, fat tire bike/mountain bike trails, snowshoe trails, etc.



- Increase size of shoulder for biking and work on bike trail to Itasca. Add mountain biking

Q8: What are the main threats of concerns that could affect the quality of outdoor recreation in Hubbard County?

- Trying to do too much and destroy the great forested lands that we already have.
- Politicians... seems like a no-brainer here.
- Climate change, aquatic invasive species
- Ignorance
- Water contamination
- Invasive species
- Pollutants from too many ATVs/snowmobiles (also ruin unpaved hiking trails) have negative impact on wildlife
- Lack of county wide zoning remains a concern since it doesn't prevent development of large feedlots, clearcutting of land for agricultural purposes or other types of development. Aquatic invasive species remain a concern for water quality.
- Aquatic Invasive Species need to be controlled. The pipeline also concerns me as our water table and lakes are connected. One spill could impact the area for generations.
- Losing our wilderness appeal and becoming another Brainerd.
- I suppose money? To build an indoor auditorium might cost too much. Things like a sledding hill/warming house maybe more affordable.

Q9: Do you have general comments, concerns or ideas to add regarding outdoor recreation in Hubbard County?

- people come here because we have beautiful forests, great lakes, and a peaceful feel. I agree that we need to improve our county's recreation plan, but I do not want to see it overdone and get away from the core reasons why people come up here. We have such a rare thing that I would just hate to see it disappear.
- Communicate frequently with the newspaper to get interest going from a more public direction. Not all people are willing to participate online, who may otherwise have a very good concept.
- it's awesome
- We need a horse camp. If that camp were located on the south end of South Unit of the Paul Bunyan State Forest that would be close enough for the horse campers to also use the commercial facilities, and maintain a safe degree of separation from the ATV/OHM camp.
- You are doing a great job in your county to promote your outdoor amenities and opportunities. We take in all your theater productions while camping as well.
- Try to maintain quiet spaces and protect the wildlife that depend on those spaces.

- Answered on behalf of the family.
- I feel we need to focus on the city limits area first. We have a beautiful river running through but surrounded by vacant buildings, and strip malls. This should be bought by city/county and vitalize the dam where the DNR fishery is currently at. So much potential for a boardwalk with shops and parks
- We need to promote recreation of all types. It is not an either or proposition. I sometimes hear people say that bicyclists do not help the Park Rapids and Hubbard County economy. That is not true.
- Thanks so much for the abundance of summer things to do. We are blessed in this area to have so many lakes to swim at. Summer time there is a lot of things to do. Winter not so much. Thanks for all the hard work.
- the bike trails are a positive economic boost

[illegible]




# HUBBARD COUNTY RECREATIONAL PLAN

- lack of Time
- Conflict of Use  
(e.g. trails)
- Mountain Wild (hazard)
- ~~Count~~ Getting People Involved  
(where to find Recreation)
- Peace + Quiet / over development
- Wise Use of Resources  
Finding the Right Demographic  
for Future
- Preserve non-motorized trail
- Water Quality / Invasive Species  
(plan to remove)
- Limited Funding (maintenance)
- Sustainable Forest / Resources

Digital World

lack of snow  
warm winters

Responsible Use



WSB Project 10574

[illegible]

## HUBBARD COUNTY RECREATIONAL PLAN



- Theater
- Biking - trail to Itasca
- Diving
- Mt. Biking
- Extreme <sup>mc</sup> Hiking
- Canoe/Kayak
- Horse back Riding  
(Spring/Fall/Summer)
- Boat in Camp Sites  
/walkin
- ~~Trip Shooting~~
- Trip Shooting/Archery
- School Programs
- Airport
- Hunter Walking Trails
- Cross Country Ski trails  
(+back country)
- Dog Park
- Parking/Support  
facilities
- Beach
- Berry Picking