



Trails Coalition

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 St.Croix Bike & Pedestrian

Bike & Hike the Valley

St. Croix Bike & Pedestrian Trails Coalition

2020 Annual Report for 2019

Dated April 2, 2020

St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trail Coalition

2020 Annual Report for 2019

General Overview

2019 brought changes to the way the Coalition gets accurate information about trails and the organization out to area residents, included finishing some projects, starting several new projects and, in general, continuing to work on extending a connected trail network throughout the County and beyond in the most effective means available at any particular time.

Standing Committees

The Coalition has two standing committees, each tasked with in depth goals to study and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. See details about the Communications Committee in Appendix B and details about the Highway 64 Trails Corridor Committee in Appendix C.

Special Projects

The Coalition had both ongoing and new activity with several trail related special projects detailed in the following paragraphs.

Union Pacific Railroad Property

In early 2019, the Coalition became aware of the possibility of purchasing Union Pacific Railroad property that included an abandoned railroad bridge across Lake Mallalieu between the City of Hudson and the Village of North Hudson. The property also included a small strip of land in the Village of North Hudson. The railroad bridge had long been considered an ideal place for a bicycle trail crossing of Lake Mallalieu instead of the very busy crossing on STH 35 currently being used. It also had potential for a stunning park on the water on the scenic St. Croix River. The discussions/negotiations remained on going through 2019 between various local units of government and the railroad. The Coalition continues to work on a solution that would allow this property to come under the ownership of a local entity and then to pursue the completion of an appropriate facility that accentuates the importance of the historic nature of this property to the region.

Beyond The Loop Mapping Project

2019 also included a collaborative effort between the New Richmond Pathway organization and the Trails Coalition. With the opening of the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge anticipated in the spring of 2020, the two organizations decided to create a map that would tell Loop Trail visitors there are beautiful rides in Wisconsin as well as in Minnesota. Nothing like it existed. Both groups gathered veteran on road riders and began the process of identifying on road trail designations that would connect to the Loop Trail and lead visitors farther into Wisconsin. St. Croix County personnel were consulted to assure no contradictions with the County's Bike & Ped Plan, both organizations contributed funding for the initial publication of the map and as the year ended last minute fine tuning and details were all that remained to be completed. For more details, read the Hwy 64 Trails Corridor Committee Report (Appendix C).

Economic Summit

Late fall of 2019 brought a donation of \$1000 from the St. Croix County EDC to hold an economic summit related to trails networks. As the year ended, partners for the summit were identified and plans were made to start in early 2020 to organize a gathering of key stakeholders in the St. Croix Valley to brainstorm ideas about what it takes to bring

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visitors and opportunities to the valley. A spring date for the summit was in the planning stages as the year ended.

Multimodal Local Supplement (MLS) Grant Application Coordination

In early October of 2019, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) announced a state funded grant program, Multimodal Local Supplemental (MLS) in the amount of \$78 million for local governments to improve many types of transportation infrastructures including bicycle and pedestrian trails. The Coalition organized a meeting of three communities (the Towns of St. Joseph & Somerset and the Village of Somerset) to discuss a proposed trail extending from the St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail along STH 64 further into western Wisconsin. The ultimate outcomes of the meeting were 1) agreement among the three communities on a route from the Loop Trail, through the Towns of St. Joseph and Somerset into the Village of Somerset, 2) a resolution approved by all three municipalities to support any grant application from the other two to build this trail and 3) many letters of support for the applications. Two MLS grant applications were filed, one by the Town of St. Joseph and the other a joint application by the Town and Village of Somerset. This type of cooperative work was unprecedented in the history of the three municipalities. For more details, read the Hwy 64 Trail Corridor Committee Report (Appendix C). The grant awards will be announced in early 2020.

Financial Report

As 2019 began, funds carried over from 2018 were \$3086.76. The total revenues collected for the year were \$5788.00. The Coalition held one small fund raiser in the spring of 2019. Yearly expenditures amounted to \$5726.33. The year ended with \$3148.43 in the bank with most of that designated for the bicycle rack initiative. See Appendix A for details.

Looking to the Future

Making strong connections that create a county wide network of trails reaching into neighboring counties in both Minnesota and Wisconsin will continue to be the focus of the Coalition's activities in 2020.

Board of Directors

Terms Expiring in 2022

Pam Kaiser

Kyle Lindstrom

Open Seat

Terms Expiring in 2021

Susan Heuiser, Secretary/Information Director

André Johnson, Chairperson

Mark Vanasse, Treasurer

Terms Expiring in 2020

Mark Gherty

Andrew Lamers, Vice Chairperson

David Mandel

Alternates

Brandi Popenhagen – Term ends in 2020

Appendix A
Financial Statement
St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trails Coalition, Inc.
Jan-2019 - Dec-2019

Revenue	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Total to Date	Budgeted 2019
Grants - General														2,000.00
Grants - Baldwin														
Grants - Bench Project				250.00									250.00	
Grants - Bike Rack Initiative												1,500.00	1,500.00	2,000.00
Grants - Bicycle Summit														2,000.00
Grants - Bridge Opening														3,000.00
Grants - Hwy. 64 Corridor														2,000.00
Grants - Mallaleu RR Bridge														
Total Grants:				250.00								1,500.00	1,750.00	11,000.00
Donations - General			50.00		200.00		500.00		200.00			14.00	964.00	2,320.00
Donations - Baldwin														
Donations - Bench Project														
Donations - Bike Rack Initiative												186.00	186.00	
Donations - giveBGCsv				20.00	470.00								490.00	5,000.00
Donations - Hwy. 64 Corridor					500.00								500.00	7,320.00
Total Donations:			50.00	20.00	1,170.00		500.00		200.00			200.00	2,140.00	1,000.00
Fund Raiser - General														1,000.00
Fund Raiser/Raffle - Baldwin														1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Bench Project														1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Hwy. 64 Corridor														1,000.00
Fund Raiser/Raffle @ Barley John													1,640.00	
Fund Raiser - Oliphant					1,640.00								1,640.00	
Fund Raiser - Raffle @ Oliphant					258.00								258.00	
Total Fund Raisers/Raffles:					1,898.00								1,898.00	4,000.00
Sales/Admission														200.00
Total Revenue:			50.00	270.00	3,068.00		500.00		200.00			1,700.00	5,788.00	22,520.00

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St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trails Coalition, Inc.
Jan-2019 - Dec-2019

	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Total to Date	Budgeted 2019
Disbursements														
Office Supplies			33.10		30.60								63.70	500.00
Insurance					400.00								400.00	500.00
Professional Fees														250.00
Gov't Filings Fees			10.00	25.50		79.50							115.00	250.00
Web Page/Media			100.00				1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50		1.50	100.00	400.00
Bank Charges		1.50						1.50	1.50	1.50		1.50	9.00	20.00
Disbursements - General	104.00			231.28	50.00	450.00	100.00	1.50	1.50	1.50	14.00	1.50	949.28	400.00
From Donations - General :	104.00	1.50	143.10	256.78	480.60	529.50	101.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	14.00	1.50	1,636.98	2,320.00
Grants - General														2,000.00
Grants - Baldwin														
Grants - Bench Project				250.00									250.00	2,000.00
Grants - Bicycle Summit														2,000.00
Grants - Bridge Opening														3,000.00
Grants - Hwy. 64 Corridor														2,000.00
Grants - Lake Mallaleu Rt Bridge														
From Grants:				250.00									250.00	11,000.00
Donations - Baldwin														
Donations - Bench Project														
Grants - Bike Rack Initiative														
Donations - giveBIgscv													1,000.00	5,000.00
Donations - Hwy. 64 Corridor					1,000.00								1,000.00	5,000.00
From Donations - Projects:					1,000.00								1,000.00	1,000.00
Fund Raiser - General														1,000.00
Fund Raiser/Raffle - Baldwin														1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Bench Project														1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Hwy. 64 Corridor					305.69								305.69	1,000.00
Fund Raiser/Raffle @ Barley John					2,125.66	150.00							2,275.66	1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Oliphant					258.00								258.00	
Fund Raiser - Raffle @ Oliphant														4,000.00
From Fund Raisers/Raffles:					2,689.35	150.00							2,839.35	200.00
Sales/Admission														
Total Disbursements:	104.00	1.50	143.10	506.78	4,169.95	679.50	101.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	14.00	1.50	5,726.33	22,520.00
Funds Available														
General	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19		
	1,246.62	1,245.12	1,152.02	915.24	1,104.64	575.14	973.64	972.14	1,170.64	1,169.14	1,155.14	1,167.64		
Fund Raiser/Raffle @ Barley John	305.69	305.69	305.69	305.69										
Fund Raiser @ Oliphants	930.45	930.45	930.45	930.45	444.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79		
Fund Raiser - Raffle @ Oliphant														
Baldwin														
Bench Project														
Bike Rack Initiative													1,686.00	
Hwy. 64 Corridor	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00										
Total Funds Available:	2,982.76	2,981.26	2,888.16	2,651.38	1,549.43	869.93	1,268.43	1,266.93	1,465.43	1,463.93	1,449.93	3,148.43		

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Appendix B – Communication Committee White Paper Report

The Communications Committee meets approximately quarterly, with 5 meetings in 2019 as work began regarding the emphasis on and method of Coalition Communications moving into the implementation phase of St. Croix County's bike & pedestrian plan.

GOALS

1. *Provide a list of methods the Committee intends to use to disburse information.*
 - The first endeavor undertaken in 2019 was to fine tune the Communications Committee's charter as 2018 discussions indicated.
 - The new year brought continued discussion of a bicycle summit created under the direction of St. Croix County staff. Possibilities were discussed and delayed into 2020 closer to the Loop Trail opening.
2. *Create the necessary documents and procure necessary supplies to be used during presentations.*

Work regarding documents and supplies for the various efforts will continue into 2019.
3. *Provide a list of venues at which information could be presented containing dates and times. This list shall be renewed annually.*

Work regarding venues for the various efforts will continue into 2019.
4. *Provide a list of Directors and Members willing to assist with the presentations. A list shall be provided annually.*

Both Board of Director and Communications Committee members participated in the 2019 outreach activities. Participation by others is always welcome.
5. *Provide an estimation of costs expected to be incurred for these presentations. These estimates shall be renewed annually.*

The Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Directors about ongoing expenditures required for outreach and those are typically included in the yearly budgeting process.

Communications Plan

The major thrust of the early months of 2019 was to develop a committee plan in line with the Coalition Mission Statement and responsive to the changing nature of trails implementation in the area. After several months discussion, a general guiding theme was developed as follows: *Moving forward the Communication Committee plans to continue the bicycle rack initiative, continue getting accurate information to interested parties via various methods to be discussed with the Board of Directors as time requires and continue working cooperatively with groups interested in trails and trail promotion in the area.* What follows are 2019 specifics related to that theme.

Art Bench Project at the Main Trailhead of the St. Croix River Crossing Project's Loop Trail
Begun in 2018, this project was completed in 2019. It was a collaboration between mainly the Phipps Center for the Arts and Houlton Elementary School with lots of additional community collaborators and contributors including the Trails Coalition. As with all of the Phipps Center for the Arts *Art Bench Projects*, students were heavily involved in the study, planning, and implementation of what is called the *Hawks Landing gathering space* since it is the keystone *bench* of the ten Art Benches located on both sides of the St. Croix River and, consequently, larger than the other benches. It is an imposing multi-level, semi-circular stone block seating area with a small stage for presentations. On-going maintenance and further plantings will be coordinated with St. Croix County as the owner of the Trailhead facility. The dedication ceremony was held September 21, 2019.

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Celebration of the Grand Reopening of the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge.

Work began in 2019 on a plan to celebrate the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge as it reopened to bicycle and pedestrian trail traffic. That reopening also included the completion of the Loop Trail portion of the St. Croix River Crossing Project. The Minnesota contingency planning the event invited Wisconsin groups to participate in the planning since the half of the Loop Trail facility is located in Wisconsin. Coalition Board Representatives were appointed to attend the celebration planning meetings in Minnesota. A separate Wisconsin committee was formed to plan Wisconsin activities. As it ultimately turned out, the celebration was delayed several times in 2019 and will likely occur in the spring of 2020.

Bicycle Rack Initiative with WITC

The Committee decided placement of bicycle racks around the area to create *bike friendly spaces* was a positive long-range undertaking that would enhance locations developing amenities to attract and serve trail users. Accordingly, a grant application was filed with the Hudson Daybreak Rotary Club to place bike racks within the Hudson School District boundaries with acknowledgement on the installed racks going to both the Rotary Club and the Trails Coalition. That grant was awarded at the end of the year and plans began moving forward to continue partnering with Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) in New Richmond to create the bicycle racks. This action creates several positive local connections and good public awareness of both the Rotary Club's and the Trails Coalition's contribution to communities.

Joined the St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation

The Coalition Board thought it important to make a strong connection/commitment to organizations that particularly emphasized the economic benefit of a strong trails network in the area. The St. Croix County EDC seemed to be the broadest based organization in the County to support. The Coalition became a member of the EDC in January 2019.

Joined Hudson Chamber of Commerce

In addition, the Hudson Chamber of Commerce was recognized as a particularly strong advocate for tourism as an economic stimulus in the area. The Coalition became a member of the Hudson Chamber during 2019 as well.

Polk County Tourism Conference

In late summer, the Coalition was invited to put together a presentation for the September 26, 2019, Polk County Regional Tourism Conference around the theme developed by the WisDNR and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism about the benefits of outdoor recreation. It was requested that the topic be about the St. Croix River Crossing Project's Loop Trail. A group was assembled that included the St. Croix County's Economic Development Corporation, St. Croix County's Community Development Department, the Hudson Chamber of Commerce, the City of Stillwater and the Trails Coalition. The major thrust of the presentation was about the economic benefit of trail networks to the surrounding communities but other topics, e.g. health benefits and quality of life enhancements, were touched on as well. The 20-minute Power Point presentation with multiple speakers was well received by the 100+ group in attendance.

Further Outreach Tools used by the Coalition include a *Facebook* page with slightly more than 300 followers, an email account with 300+ persons receiving messages from the Coalition and a website that averages slightly under 1500 views each month with a high of 2705 in January and a low of 583 in December.

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CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Going forward, the Committee's activities will be to support collaborative efforts to place bicycle racks around the area as requested, to continue to provide accurate information about connecting trails throughout the county, and to work cooperatively with other organizations that support trail networks in the area.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Mark Gherty, Chairperson
Susan Heuiser
Andre Johnson
Andrew Lamers

Janet Lindstrom
Tim Wtizmann
Mark Vanasse, Alternate

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Appendix C – Highway 64 Trail Corridor Committee White Paper Report

The Highway 64 Corridor Trail Committee was created by the St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trail Coalition in mid-2016 to research and provide a variety of information to the Coalition regarding collaboration between and among the Highway 64 corridor communities. Organizations identified as part of the Hwy 64 corridor were the Towns of Richmond, St. Joseph, Somerset and Star Prairie, the Village of Somerset, New Richmond's Pathways Committee and the City of New Richmond. Each of the organizations has passed the Committee Charter at their Town/Village/City/Committee boards/councils/meetings and a representative from six of the seven organizations has been appointed.

The Committee met only once in 2019 on February 27th but there was considerable action along the corridor in 2019 nonetheless. Warren White's work with the Coalition detailing plans for a future trail along the Landing Hill area of STH 64 continued into 2019. The project's report included a study of the both the Rivard Stone and the St. Croix National Golf Course sides of this area. The conclusion of the report indicated first, that the St. Croix National Golf Course side should be the preferred route for any future trail given multiple difficulties on the Rivard Stone side of the highway and, second, that WisDOT will allow trails in its Rights of Way (ROW) along state highways. With those conclusions, White drew very specific trail lines along STH 64 - some lengths in current WisDOT ROW and other stretches in abandoned WisDOT ROW of the old STH 64. An option to continue the trail along a Town of Somerset Road was also discussed. Detailed drawings with elevations, materials list and cost estimates were included. The Trails Coalition approved the report and sent it on to Town of Somerset and County officials for use in future trail planning.

There were issues with WisDOT excess ROW on the 32nd Street cul-de-sac in the vicinity of St. Croix National's property. The Town of Somerset was negotiating the purchase of parts of that property to assure an entrance into any trail developed along the Landing Hill area.

In the Town of St. Joseph, WisDOT's turnover of portions of the abandoned STH 64 was accomplished. Road reconstruction along that now town road will be completed in 2020. The trail portion of the road upgrade doesn't quite reach Andersen Scout Camp road to complete the loop to CTH V and therefore, more work remains to complete that section of trail.

The City of New Richmond had a very successful grant year winning both a WisDOT and a WisDNR grant. That money will be used at the Doar Prairie/Nature Center site and along CTH A as it approaches those properties. Construction is anticipated to be completed in 2020.

The eminent domain change for trails passed in the Wisconsin Legislature during 2019 affected construction on County GG adversely. That road improvement project was completed in 2019 without the trail portion that had been planned.

The City also has a water trail along the Willow River and work continued on the kiosks, steps to the river and parking lot for that project.

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Appendix C – Highway 64 Trail Corridor Committee White Paper Report

Most importantly, as the year moved along, was the discussion started at this committee about an on-road trail map connecting the City of New Richmond with Somerset. During the summer of 2019 as discussion about the reopening of the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge was continuing, the Trails Coalition partnered with New Richmond's Pathway organization to create a map leading from the Loop Trail in the Town of St. Joseph through the Town and Village of Somerset, the Town of Richmond and into the City of New Richmond. The project goal was to have a trail map/brochure letting Loop Trail visitors know that there are places to visit *Beyond the Loop* (the eventual name of the committee) in Wisconsin. Along the way, there was also discussion about placement of these maps/brochures in Wisconsin establishments so local residents could use the map/brochure as well. Work on that project continued in 2020 and hopefully will be finished by the celebration of the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge opening.

During the late fall of 2019, WisDOT made available \$78 million dollars of money for multimodal transportation infrastructure projects. The Multimodal Local Supplement (MLS) program was all state funds and the process from notification to application to award was a very short one. The Towns of Somerset and St. Joseph along with the Village of Somerset met, agreed upon a proposed trail route from the Loop Trail into the Village of Somerset and filed grant applications for same. The City of New Richmond and St. Croix County also filed grant applications. Notification of award will be in early 2020.

Communication among members of the committee in late 2019 determined that it would be best to meet after the MLS awards were made; therefore, there was no fall meeting of the committee.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

With the established base of knowledge in place and with approval of the county's updated bike and pedestrian plan, the Committee intends to continue quarterly/semiannual meetings to keep all members apprised of each community's plans so preparations to support those plans as a group initiative can be made as proposals come forward.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Laine Belter
Susan Heuiser, Chairperson
André Johnson, Vice Chairperson

Kyle Lindstrom
Jim Peirson
Jim Remington
Tim Witzmann

Mark Vanasse serves as minute taker but is not a member of the Committee.