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 St. Croix Bike & Pedestrian Trails Coalition

Bike & Hike the Valley

St. Croix Bike & Pedestrian Trails Coalition

2022 Annual Report for 2021

Dated April 13, 2022

St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trail Coalition 2022 Annual Report for 2021

General Overview

2021 continued as a second year of the Pandemic affecting many aspects of people's daily lives and the manner in which the Coalition proceeded with their initiatives. The Coalition continued to meet virtually instead of in person for the Board of Directors and Committee meetings. Many plans were put on hold with the exception of a scaled down celebration of the opening of the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge, delayed a year from June 2020. More details are available in the various committee reports.

In 2021 two pieces of major legislation passed at the federal level have the potential to greatly increase funding for many infrastructure projects (including trails) and Pandemic recovery projects. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law March 11, 2021, followed by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) on November 15, 2021. This money will likely be available for a number of years into the future as details about the programs and how to access the funds become available.

Then in November, another major change in the Coalition's organization happened when the organization's Chairperson, André Johnson, passed away unexpectedly. André was one of the founding members of the Trails Coalition, an avid outdoor recreationist in general, a passionate bicyclist and a strong champion in many places for extending the trail networks in St. Croix County and beyond. His knowledge and strong support for the Coalitions initiatives will be sorely missed.

Standing Committees

In 2021, the Coalition added a third standing Committee to the two already in place. The Friends of Mallalieu Trestle Park was organized in May 2021. See the details for that committee's initiative in Appendix D. Details regarding the Communication Committee and the Hwy 64 Trails Committee are contained in Appendix B and C, respectively.

Financial Report

2021 also brought several significant financial changes for the Coalition. First, two large donations were made to the Coalition. A \$10,000 donation from the Hall Family Foundation was received to specifically apply to the Lake Mallalieu Basin initiative. In addition, a \$4,000 donation from the M.P. Verhulst Foundation was for general use on Trails Coalition initiatives.

In addition, André Johnson's family designated the Trails Coalition as the recipient of donations in André memory. Initial donations reached over \$3000 with a donation of \$1000 from André cousin, Jo Ljungkull Wolf. The Coalition is planning a memorial for André.

All donations are greatly appreciated assistance with Coalition projects. These donations led to the largest amount of donations during a single year in the Coalition's existence. The majority of those funds are for designated projects.

The second significant change in the spring 2021 to the financial processes was the addition of an on-line donation capability via the Coalition's web site.

As 2022 began, funds carried over from 2021 were \$3832.32. The total revenues collected for the year were \$18,341.23. The Coalition didn't hold any fund raisers in 2021. Yearly expenditures amounted to \$3938.25. The year ended with \$18,235.30 in

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the bank with a large part of that designated for the Lake Mallalieu Basin project and a memorial for André Johnson. 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 2022. Sharing knowledge about the federal money authorization and how that affects the area will be an emphasis of the Coalition's study for several years into the future.

Board of Directors

Terms Expiring in 2024

Susan Heuser, Secretary/Information Director

André Johnson, until November, 2021

Mark Vanasse, Treasurer

Terms Expiring in 2023

Mark Gherty

David Mandel

Open Seat

Terms Expiring in 2022

Pam Kaiser

Kyle Lindstrom, Vice Chairperson

Paul McGinnis

Alternates

Andrew Lamers – Term ends in 2022

St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trails Coalition, Inc.
 Financial Report
 January 2021 - December 2021

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Revenue	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total To Date	Budget 2021
Grants - General														2,000.00
Grants - Baldwin														
Grants - Bench Project														
Grants - Beyond the Loop														500.00
Grants - Bicycle Summit														2,000.00
Grants - Bike Rack Initiative														1,500.00
Grants - Bridge Opening														
Grants - Hwy. 64 Corridor														1,000.00
Grants - Lake Mallalieu Basin														2,000.00
Grants - Lift and Loop														1,000.00
Total Grants														10,000.00
Donations - General	870.00		72.40	19.85	19.85	19.85	19.85	4,019.85	19.85	19.85	19.85	378.25	5,479.45	1,500.00
Donations - Andre Johnson Memorial											1,692.51	549.58	2,242.09	
Donations - Baldwin														
Donations - Bench Project														
Donations - Beyond the Loop														200.00
Donations - Bicycle Summit														200.00
Donations - Bike Rack Initiative														200.00
Donations - giveBIGscv														
Donations - Hwy. 64 Corridor														200.00
Donations - Lake Mallalieu Basin						10,000.00							10,000.00	2,000.00
Donations - Lift and Loop														700.00
Total Donations	870.00		72.40	19.85	19.85	10,019.85	19.85	4,019.85	19.85	19.85	1,712.36	927.83	17,721.54	5,000.00
Total Membership Dues	280.00		39.69								80.00	220.00	619.69	500.00
Fund Raiser - General														1,000.00
Fund Raiser/Raffle - Baldwin														
Fund Raiser - Bench Project														
Fund Raiser - Hwy. 64 Corridor														1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Lake Mallalieu Basin														5,000.00
Fund Raiser - Lift and Loop														1,000.00
Fund Raiser/Raffle @ Barley John's														
Fund Raiser Oliphant														1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Raffle @ Oliphant														500.00
Total Fund Raisers/Raffles														9,500.00
Sales/Admission														
Total Revenue:	1,150.00		112.09	19.85	19.85	10,019.85	19.85	4,019.85	19.85	19.85	1,792.36	1,147.83	18,341.23	25,000.00

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Disbursements	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total To Date	Budget 2021
Office Supplies								23.35		21.60		610.70	655.65	500.00
Insurance					400.00								400.00	500.00
Professional Fees														250.00
Gov't Filings Fees			10.00	25.50	25.50		54.00						115.00	250.00
Web Page/Media	28.16										41.34		69.50	300.00
Bank Charges									1.50			1.91	3.41	20.00
Disbursements General	15.81	515.81	15.81	15.81	165.81	84.78	15.81	15.81	15.81	15.81	15.81	115.81	1,008.69	400.00
From Donations - General	43.97	515.81	25.81	41.31	591.31	84.78	69.81	39.16	17.31	37.41	57.15	728.42	2,252.25	2,220.00
Grants - General														2,000.00
Grants - Baldwin														
Grants - Bench Project														
Grants - Beyond the Loop														500.00
Grants - Bicycle Summit														2,000.00
Grants - Bike Rack Initiative						1,686.00							1,686.00	1,500.00
Grants - Bridge Opening														
Grants - Hwy. 64 Corridor														1,000.00
Grants - Lake Mallalieu Basin														2,000.00
Grants - Lift and Loop														700.00
From Grants						1,686.00							1,686.00	9,700.00
Donations - General														1,680.00
Donations - Baldwin														
Donations - Bench Project														
Donations - Beyond the Loop														100.00
Donations - Bicycle Summit														100.00
Donations - Bike Rack Initiative														100.00
Donations - giveBIGscv														
Donations - Hwy. 64 Corridor														100.00
Donations - Lake Mallalieu Basin														1,000.00
Donations - Lift and Loop														100.00
From Donations - Projects														3,180.00
From Membership Dues														400.00
Fund Raiser - General														1,000.00
Fund Raiser/Raffle - Baldwin														
Fund Raiser - Bench Project														
Fund Raiser - Hwy. 64 Corridor														1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Lake Mallalieu Basin														5,000.00
Fund Raiser - Lift and Loop														1,000.00
Fund Raiser/Raffle @ Barley John's														
Fund Raiser - Oliphant														1,000.00
Fund Raiser - Raffle @ Oliphant														500.00
From Fund Raisers/Raffles:														9,500.00
Sales/Admission														
Total Disbursements:	43.97	515.81	25.81	41.31	591.31	1,770.78	69.81	39.16	17.31	37.41	57.15	728.42	3,938.25	25,000.00

Funds Available	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
General	2,957.56	2,441.75	2,528.03	2,506.57	1,935.11	1,870.18	1,820.22	5,800.91	5,803.45	5,785.89	5,828.59	5,698.42
Fund Raiser/Raffle @ Barley John's												
Fund Raiser @ Oliphant's	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79	294.79
Andre Johnson Memorial											1,692.51	2,242.09
Baldwin												
Bench Project												
Bike Rack Initiative	1,686.00	1,686.00	1,686.00	1,686.00	1,686.00							
Lake Mallalieu Basin						10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Hwy. 64 Corridor												
Total Funds Available:	4,938.35	4,422.54	4,508.82	4,487.36	3,915.90	12,164.97	12,115.01	16,095.70	16,098.24	16,080.68	17,815.89	18,235.30

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Appendix B – Communication Committee White Paper Report

The Communications Committee meets approximately quarterly, with 5 meetings in 2021 - in February, April, May, August and October. The Communication Committee's guiding theme is *to 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.*

2021 was the second year of the Pandemic affecting all aspects of daily life including meetings of committees. Meetings of the Committee as the year progressed took place outdoors and virtually. Outreach efforts, in particular, were affected by restrictions necessitated by the Pandemic with several events in the planning stages postponed. What follows are 2021 specifics.

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

The Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge opened June 1, 2020. That opening completed the entire 4.7-mile Loop Trail, a part of the St. Croix River Crossing Project. Members of the Committee had been working collaboratively with the Minnesota contingency in charge of planning a large celebration on that historic day. Pandemic restrictions forced the cancellation of the celebration in 2020. However, planning continued for a celebration on or close to the one-year anniversary of the opening. A scaled down celebration was held on August 14, 2021. The majority of the dedication activities occurred in Stillwater but the Coalition and several other organizations had information about Wisconsin trail and outdoor recreation opportunities available for visitors to the Wisconsin side of the Trailhead of the Loop Trail.

Loop Trail Winter Snowplowing and Parking Fee

The Committee recommended to the Board of Directors that the Coalition pursue various avenues to get the St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail plowed on the Wisconsin side during the 2021-2022 winter season. Ultimately, St. Croix County contracted with the City of Stillwater to plow the Wisconsin portion of the Loop Trail on an as needed basis. This was a one-year contract that will need attention and a County budget line item again for the 2022-2023 season.

After discussion with County Board members, it was decided to put the discussion about the parking fees instituted at the Trailhead facility in Wisconsin on hold for now. There is strong sentiment at the County level to collect parking fees for that facility and strong sentiment among trail users against that practice.

Bridge the Valley Bike Ride

The Stillwater Sunrise Rotary Club held a bike ride on August 15, 2021, that utilized trails along the St. Croix River in both Minnesota and Wisconsin from Prescott to St. Croix Falls. Various members of the Coalition were in contact with ride organizers about the best routes in St. Croix County given the extensive road work in the County during the summer of 2021. The Stillwater Sunrise Rotary hopes to make this ride an annual event.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The Coalition had information about the roll out of the ARPA funding that was shared with local government officials as moneys began to be distributed in 2021.

Marketing Plans

Recommendations were made to the Board about the Coalition goals, logo and marketing plan. What was currently in use remained the Committee's recommendation for the Coalition. In addition, a projects list was created to focus the efforts of the Coalition. However, in the Committee's opinion, the UP RR trestle subcommittee needed some basic work product and plans to differentiate that group from the Coalition as a whole as it readies to become a standalone organization.

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Appendix B – Communication Committee White Paper Report

Economic Summit

The Coalition Board continued its membership in both the St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation and the Hudson Chamber of Commerce into 2021. Both these organizations were part of a team that included the Trails Coalition to plan an Economic Summit highlighting the many benefits of trails to local communities' prosperity. An April 2020 date was postponed. Plans for this large indoor event remain on hold until Pandemic restrictions begin to ease.

Bicycle Summit

The St. Croix County Bicycle & Pedestrian Trails Plan, passed in May 2017, contains a provision to hold an annual or semi-annual summit to provide details, share information and generally talk about implementation for the trail networks detailed in the Plan. This kind of summit has not been held to date but the Trails Coalition is committed to joining with others to hold an event at some time in the future when Pandemic restrictions have eased and economic factors will allow for consideration of trail initiatives across the County.

Union Pacific Railroad Trestle and Surrounding Property

Numerous ongoing efforts to acquire the Union Pacific decommissioned railroad bridge and associated properties located between the City of Hudson and the Village of North Hudson continued in 2021. By mid-year 2021, a new approach regarding how to handle the various matters regarding this project was begun – specifically forming a Friends Group entirely focused on this one project. The organization would start as a subcommittee of the Coalition and prepare to become a separate nonprofit when there was some progress on the issues involved. At year's end 2021, that organization remains a Coalition subcommittee and there is discussion about gathering the documents necessary to file a *Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance* grant application, a program of the National Park Service. Significant complexities regarding this property are ongoing and plans remain in the preliminary stage regarding how best to deal with the properties.

Further Outreach Tools used by the Coalition include a *Facebook* page with 300+ followers, an email account with 300+ persons receiving messages from the Coalition and a website that provides a wealth of information about trails in the area and information about how to start and manage trail initiatives. The website also includes two entire pages of trail maps users can access as they plan visits to western Wisconsin and its many trail related amenities.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Going forward, the Committee's activities will be 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 thru May
Susan Heuiser
Andre Johnson, until November
Andrew Lamers

Janet Lindstrom
Tim Wtitzmann, Chairperson beginning in October
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 Pathway 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 Pandemic continued in 2021 affecting all aspects of daily life including meetings of committees. The Committee met twice in 2021 in May and October but there was considerable action along the corridor in 2021 nonetheless.

Town of St. Joseph

The Town of St. Joseph continued to explore how to fund its portion of a trail connecting the Trailhead of the St. Croix River Crossing Loop to Somerset and New Richmond. Plans are being made to file for a WisDOT TAP grant application in January of 2022.

Town of Somerset

In the Town of Somerset, the issues with WisDOT excess ROW on the 32nd Street cul-de-sac in the vicinity of St. Croix National Golf Course's property continued and St. Croix National's future plans are yet to be finalized. At the end of 2021, the golf course and the Town of Somerset were committed to working together to assure access to all activities planned along those properties. The Town was making plans to file a WisDOT TAP grant application in January of 2022 to complete a trail along the Landing Hill section of the Town that borders STH 64 between CTH V and VV.

The Town added a picnic shelter and benches at the Parnell Prairie site. Future plans include a dog park and a single track bike trail.

Village of Somerset

The Village of Somerset continues to work on connecting its new and continuing business and housing developments. Filing a WisDOT TAP grant application in January of 2022 is anticipated to aid those plans.

Town of Richmond

The Town of Richmond completed some road maintenance projects that would add to the safety of the off-road *Beyond the Loop Trail* as it passes through the Town.

City of New Richmond

The City of New Richmond completed paving the trail connecting Doar Prairie and the Sather Nature Center. This trail provides a safe crossing for trail traffic at a very busy CTH A and Business 64 intersection.

The City plans construction of an off-road trail along CTH A to complete the trail along the west side of the City from New Richmond Way to the Sather Nature Center in 2022. This project is funded by a WisDOT TAP grant application

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Appendix C – Highway 64 Trail Corridor Committee White Paper Report

The New Richmond Friday Library completed a Facebook Video about the *Beyond the Loop Trail* in which Andre' Johnson represented the Trail Coalition to make area residents aware of the off-road trail between the St. Croix River Crossing Trailhead, through the Somerset area and all the way to the western edge of the City of New Richmond.

Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge

After more than a year's delay, a scaled down event to celebrate the opening of the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge was held on August 14th. The majority of the celebration was held in the City of Stillwater but there were some organizations that had Wisconsin information available to visitors to the Trailhead of the Loop Trail in Wisconsin.

St. Croix County

St. Croix County has received a WisDOT TAP grant award to build Phase 1 an off-road trail planned from the north side of the Village of North Hudson to the entrance to Eckert Blufflands Park, about 1.1 miles. Design for that plan was anticipated to begin in 2021. Construction is expected in 2023-2024. The master planning process for Eckert Blufflands Park was in the final stages during 2021.

It is anticipated the County will file a WisDOT TAP grant application for Phase 2 of the off-road trail between the Hudson Community and the St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail in January 2022.

Willow River State Park Mountain Bike Trail

A new mountain biking course in Willow River State Park was opened in the fall of 2021. Volunteers and construction workers will continue to add amenities to this facility as plans are followed in the coming years.

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	Kyle Lindstrom
Susan Heuser, Chairperson	Jim Peirson
Josh Hecht,	André Johnson, Vice Chairperson, until November
Jim Remington	Tim Witzmann

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

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Appendix D – Friends of Mallalieu Trestle Park White Paper Report

On April 14, 2021, the Coalition Board of Directors approved a charter for a subcommittee of the Coalition to study the Union Pacific Railroad trestle and surrounding properties in depth and report to the Board of Directors. The group, originally called the Lake Mallalieu Basin Friends Group Committee, met for the first time on May 4, 2021. Proposed members had been invited to join the committee because of their indicated interest in the trestle and surrounding properties located between the City of Hudson and the Village of North Hudson.

The purpose of this Committee is *to research, provide information to the Coalition and take approved actions regarding the formation of a nonprofit organization (Friends Group) that coordinates any and all activities for the creation and maintenance of public green space in the Basin.*

On October 13, 2021, the Board approved the Committee recommendation to change the name of the Committee to *Friends of Mallalieu Trestle Park Committee.*

2021 was the second year of the Pandemic affecting all aspects of daily life including meetings of committees. After its creation this Committee met 8 times in 2021 both outdoors and virtually - specifically twice in May and July and also in June, September, October and November.

Topics for the meetings included the following.

- Speakers provided information about data collected to date. Brett Budrow from St. Croix County and Randy Thoreson, a retired National Park Service employee with knowledge about these kinds of projects along the St. Croix and nationally, provided their expertise as the group organized.
- A visit to the trestle site occurred in June.
- A detailed map of the properties with ownership of the various properties shown was discussed.
- Differences between Village appraiser assessment and County's official appraisal of the property were explained.
- A lengthy history of different studies and possible purchase offers over the years was discussed. No purchase offer for the trestle property has been made in the past.
- A history of the current availability of the trestle property was discussed.
- Details about the possible purchase of the trestle property and concerns regarding that step were discussed.
- The 2019 tax parcel information for the trestle owned by the Union Pacific were discussed.
- Steps necessary to form a nonprofit organization and associated costs were considered.
- Name, Mission Statement and Logo were proposed and discussed.
- A marketing plan with different elements for different stages of the project was proposed.
- A drone video of the property and 11 still pictures were purchased for marketing purposes.
- Mark Gherty, Chairperson, did an interview on the River Channel's *Western Wisconsin Journal* on October 17th detailing the work done to date and future possibilities.
- Preliminary discussions with a marketing firm were placed on hold in the fall.
- A \$10,000 donation from the Hall Family Foundation was received to assist with expenses related to this project.

As the year moved along, discussions between the three local governmental entities stalled and the formation of a stand-alone nonprofit was tabled until progress on the project could take a more positive direction. Discussion began about filing a grant application with the National Park Services' *Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance* program to assist with formation of an entity to own, design, construct and manage a park facility on these properties that would connect the City of Hudson and the Village of Hudson and so much more in the broader view.

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Appendix D – Friends of Mallalieu Trestle Park White Paper Report

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee will continue to meet on a less frequent basis as options develop for the project. A stand-alone nonprofit committee will be formed when further progress is made about a multimember organizational structure that will take the initiative on this project to make it a viable endeavor.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Mark Gherty, Chairperson
Susan Heuser
Don Jordan
Sharon Keiser

Paul McGinnis
Kerry Reis
Dag Selander
Dan Timmerman