

# **70-Mile Trail Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet**

## **1. How did the 70-mile trail project get started?**

Legislation passed in 2003 required the DNR to identify, design and develop a continuous motorized recreation trail at least 70 miles long. After an unsuccessful attempt to establish the trail in Becker County, the DNR selected the proposal from Aitkin and Itasca County to develop the 70-Mile Trail Project. The DNR selected the Aitkin-Itasca proposal because it best matches the established criteria – land availability, level of readiness and public involvement. When complete, the Aitkin-Itasca proposal creates recreational trails that complement the existing trail system in the area.

## **2. Isn't "environmentally-sensitive ATV/ORV trail" an oxymoron?**

The goal of the project is to be environmentally-sensitive in the design of the trail and to fully consider environmental impacts. The trail design also aims to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts as much as possible. To achieve this goal, a diverse range of interests are represented on the Oversight Committee that is directing the project, the public is being asked to provide input throughout the planning process, an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) will be completed, and extensive analysis of environmental indicators and data is underway.

## **3. What types of motorized vehicles will be allowed to use the trail?**

The trail will be designed for use by ATVs and “dirt bikes” (Off-Highway Motorcycles, OHMs). Other Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs), including jeeps and 4x4 trucks will not be allowed on the trail.

## **4. Will there be enough parking in the right locations to handle all the trail users? Will there be adequate parking all along the trail so I can trailer my ATV to the trail?**

The project planning process includes the designation and development of at least 2 areas of access (parking area and loading area) and at least 4 rest areas. These areas will be identified on the ground during the planning process and included in the available information about the project. Plan reviewers will be asked to comment on the adequacy of the designated areas.

## **5. How will enforcement of trail-use rules be accomplished? How will the DNR or County be able to patrol and enforce more than 480 miles of ATV Trail in the final system? How will use of parking areas be enforced so people don't park on roads and private property?**

The project planning process includes development of an enforcement plan that will designate responsible parties, be reviewed for adequacy, and approved by the DNR.

## **6. How will people know where to go and where the "must-see" destinations are? Will there be a map of eating, lodging and entertainment establishments so people can find them?**

The mapping work associated with the project design includes gathering information about recreational destinations and other sites along the potential trail corridor. Final trail maps and information available to trail users will include this information.

**7. How much damage to the environment will be caused by this trail? How will the environment be protected?**

The Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) includes the evaluation of a range of potential environmental impacts and the development of plans to address and mitigate them. This information will be available for public review and comment. The project planning process also includes development of a monitoring plan that will be reviewed for adequacy and must be approved by the DNR. It is hoped that a patrolled, well-marked, destination-oriented trail system that will reduce ATV/ORV damage in the region by attracting riders to it and by putting enforcement in other places where damage is occurring.

**8. What about the rights of hunters, anglers, and non-motorized recreationists to a quiet and peaceful environment? How will they be protected with a new trail?**

The analysis of potential trail corridors will include an evaluation of adjacent land uses, potential noise impacts, and current and desired recreational experiences that may be impacted by the new trail. The final trail corridor will be selected based on minimizing these types of impacts.

**9. Who will own, operate and maintain the 70-mile trail? Who will maintain the trail system?**

The trail will become part of the statewide grant-in-aid program that includes collaboration between the DNR, local units of government, and local trail users and clubs. The project planning process includes development of a maintenance plan that will be reviewed and approved by the DNR.

**10. How will trail safety be assured?**

The maintenance, monitoring and enforcement plans for the trail will address safety considerations. The trail design will consider safety issues such as intersections, visibility, and other concerns. Trail naming, mile-markers, and signage along the trail will address 911 needs and emergency services.

**11. Won't this trail just bring more ATV's to the area and cause more riding in the ditches and yards?**

Promotion of the trail as a "destination trail" through advertising and trail maps should focus users on the trail system and not off-trail. The increased enforcement and visibility of the new trail system will also help discourage inappropriate riding. The monitoring plan for the trail will include tracking rider behavior as well as trail maintenance and enforcements needs.

**12. How much will this trail cost and who will pay for it?**

Funding provided by the legislature and administered by the DNR is currently supporting the planning and design of the trail. Additional sponsorships and donations are being sought to aid with the construction and further development of the trail amenities. After the trail is completed, user fees and state programs will be used to maintain the trail.

***If you have other questions about the project please contact:*** Katie Fernholz, Project Coordinator, Dovetail Partners, tel: 612-333-0430 fax: 612-333-0432 email: [info@dovetailinc.org](mailto:info@dovetailinc.org)