

Dairyland Trail Development Timeline

2008	The Stearns County Board allocated \$250,000 from the Capital Improvement Plan for the Dairyland Trail
2009	The Minnesota DNR awarded a Federal Recreation Grant of \$150,000 to match county CIP allocation for the Dairyland Trail
2010	The State of Minnesota awarded a \$250,000 development grant for the Dairyland Trail
May 5, 2011	Meeting with mayors of communities along the proposed trail corridor
Spring 2011	Develop the concept design for the entire 26 mile length of the corridor
Spring – Summer 2011	Prepare preliminary design for 15 miles of trail between the Crow River and the Sauk River, including one bridge structure at County Ditch No. 15
June 2, 2011	Dairyland Trail public open house in Meire Grove Community Center
June 2011	Community meetings in Elrosa and Greenwald about trailhead design
June- August 2011	Trail design development and construction plan development for 15 miles of trail
September 2011	Bid and award Phase I construction contract
September 2011 – Spring 2012	Phase I trail construction for up to eight miles of trail
Spring 2012	Phase I of Dairyland Trail opens



- Early 1900s (Approx. 1908)- The Soo Line rail corridor was developed as a railroad.
- March 27, 1996- Soo Line Railroad corridor from Brooten to Genola was abandoned.
- 1996- The Soo Line corridor was added to the Stearns County Bikeway Plan (adopted May 7, 1996).
- 1998- The first segment of the Lake Wobegon Trail opened from Sauk Centre to Avon – 27 miles.



*Soo Line Railway, c. 1918
Photo used with permission from the MN Historical Society*

- 1999 - 552 acres of the corridor were acquired by Stearns County using county and state railbank funds.
- 1999 - Public hearings were held in Elrosa (October 12) and Albany (November 16) regarding potential uses of the corridor from Brooten to Albany.
- December 19, 2000- The Stearns County Board unanimously approved snowmobiling on the corridor beginning in the 2001-02 season.
- 2000 & 2001- Stearns County donated 28 acres to local communities in the project area. 11.4 acres of excess station land were given to New Munich, six acres to Elrosa, and 10.76 acres to Greenwald.



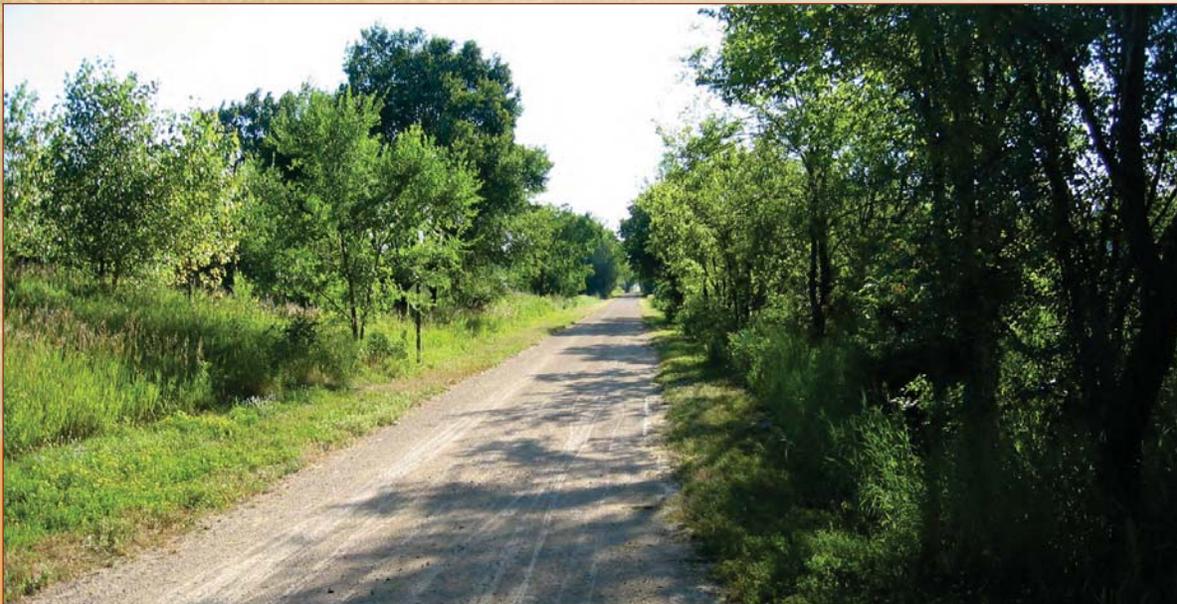
*Brooten Train Depot, c. 1910
Photo used with permission from the MN Historical Society*

- March 2002- Grove Township unanimously passed a resolution supporting hiking, biking & skiing on the corridor but opposed ATV use.
- 2006- Stearns County conducted a public opinion survey that showed the following results:
 - 37% want walking/biking trails
 - 6% want snowmobile trails
 - 4% want ATV trails on former Soo Line
 - 54% are willing to have their taxes raised for hike/bike/horse/snowmobile trail on the Soo Line corridor
 - Support for raising their taxes for ATV trail on the Soo Line:
68% NO, 26% YES
- 2008- The Stearns County Board allocated \$250,000 from the Capital Improvement Plan for the Dairyland Trail.
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The Dairyland Trail will be gravel for the entire 26 mile length through Stearns County. Several factors were considered in determining which trail surface to use:

1. Input from the public process
2. Availability of funds:
 - To pay for constructing the trail
 - To reconstruct trestles
 - To correct drainage issues
3. Provide a trail suitable for equestrian and snowmobile use
4. Provide a trail that best fits the needs and interests of the adjacent communities
5. The life-cycle costs associated with construction and maintenance of the trail surface



Aggregate Trail



Dairyland Trail

Allowable Uses:

- Walking
- Jogging
- Bicycling
- Horseback Riding
- Snowmobiling
- Hunting
 - Types of hunting allowed on trail: Upland bird hunting, small game hunting.
 - Local ordinances will determine the extent of hunting near communities along the trail.
 - Deer hunting will not be allowed on the trail. Rifle use and slug use will not be allowed on the trail. Birdshot will be allowed.
 - Hunters have the right to retrieve game they shoot but must leave their gun on the corridor.
 - In Minnesota, hunting is allowed on State Trails unless restricted by local ordinance.
 - There have been no incidents related to hunting on DNR trails.
 - Hunters tend to use DNR trails during the week when they are less busy. When bikers and walkers are present there is less wildlife and, therefore, fewer hunters.



Restricted Uses:

- All-terrain vehicles will not be permitted on the Dairyland Trail.





Typical Trail Section



Typical Existing Corridor



Typical Aggregate Trail



County Ditch No. 15 Bridge



Rest Stop



At-grade Crossing



Community Enhancement Opportunity in the City of Greenwald



Community Enhancement Opportunity in the City of Elrosa



Trail/Trestle Repair: The trail and trestles will be inspected annually and minor trail repair will be handled on a timely basis.

Sign Maintenance: During the operational season, signage will be inspected as part of the routine inspection and clean up tasks.

Solid Waste: The County maintenance crews will remove garbage from trash containers on a regular schedule and pick up trash along the corridor during trail inspections.

Vegetation Maintenance: The trail will be kept clear of vegetation and debris. Additional maintenance may be required if a storm creates debris.

Edge Management: The trail shoulders will be planted with a roadside, low maintenance turf mix. Shoulders will be mowed periodically to a width of 3 feet.

Winter Operations and Maintenance: Local snowmobile associations will maintain the Dairyland Trail for winter snowmobile use. The Stearns County Sheriff will coordinate with the snowmobile associations to patrol the trail.

Corridor Safety: The Stearns County Sheriff will patrol the trail with vehicles and mounted horse patrols; snowmobiles will be used for patrols in the winter.

