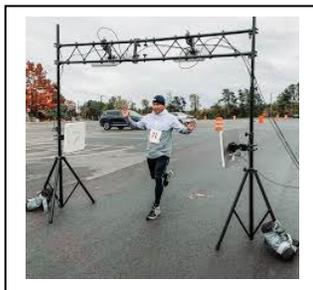
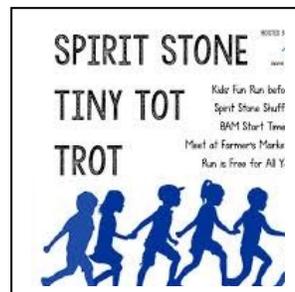


Spirit Stone Trail

Operations and Maintenance Plan



**Bay Mills Indian Community
Brimley, Michigan
2022**



Bay Mills Indian Community

12140 West Lakeshore Drive
Brimley, Michigan 49715
(906) 248-3241 Fax-(906) 248-3283



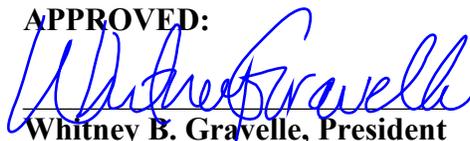
RESOLUTION NO. 22-01-10I

Adoption of Spirit Stone Trail Operations and Maintenance Plan

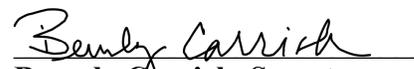
- WHEREAS:** The Bay Mills Indian Community is a federally recognized Indian Tribe with a Constitution enacted pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, as amended, 25 U.S.C. 5101, et seq., and
- WHEREAS:** The General Tribal Council is empowered by Article VI, section (1) of the Bay Mills Indian Community Constitution to adopt resolutions not inconsistent with this Constitution and by-laws, regulating the procedure of the General Tribal Council or Executive Council and of other community agencies, community officials or community organizations of the Bay Mills Indian Community, and
- WHEREAS:** The General Tribal Council, by resolution adopted April 13, 1970, delegated to the Executive Council the power to negotiate and execute agreements on behalf of the Bay Mills Indian Community, and
- WHEREAS:** The TRIBE has undertaken the development of an Operations and Maintenance Plan for the Spirit Stone Trail (the "Plan"), which affirms the purpose, vision, and mission of the trail, documents and maps trail segments, recommends routine and remedial maintenance methods, presents potential costs for maintenance along with discussing the administrative and jurisdictional responsibilities of trail partners, and recommends future extensions and connections with other non-motorized trails in the region and state, and
- WHEREAS:** the TRIBE, working in conjunction with the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission has developed the Plan for the benefit of the entire community, and seeks to adopt the Plan as a document to assist in meeting recreation needs of the Community, including securing grant funding to support the operation and maintenance of the Spirit Stone Trail, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Bay Mills Executive Council hereby adopts the Spirit Stone Trail Operations and Maintenance Plan to assure user safety, envision further expansion, improvement, and long-term maintenance of the trail system, and support grant funding efforts to continue to enhance recreation for the residents of the Bay Mills Indian Community.

APPROVED:

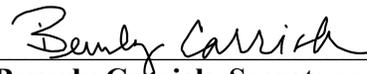

Whitney B. Gravelle, President
Executive Council
Bay Mills Indian Community

ATTEST:


Beverly Carrick, Secretary
Executive Council
Bay Mills Indian Community

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, as Secretary of the Bay Mills Indian Community Executive Council, do hereby certify that the above Resolution No. 22-01-10I was adopted and approved at a meeting of the Bay Mills Executive Council held at Bay Mills, Michigan on the 10th day of January, 2022, with a vote of 4 for 0 absent and 0 abstaining. As per provisions of the Bay Mills Constitution, the Tribal Chairman must abstain except in the event of a tie.



**Beverly Cafrick, Secretary
Bay Mills Executive Council**



Chief Shingabawassin

Shingabawassin (c. 1750 - c. 1828) was an important Ojibwe chief from the Crane Clan who played a significant role in the history of the Brimley/Bay Mills area during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. He was a signatory of the 1820 Treaty of Sault Ste. Marie and met with Henry Schoolcraft in 1822 to establish the first Indian Agency in Sault Ste. Marie. "Spirit Stone" is a rough translation of his name, and the Spirit Stone Trail is named in his honor.

Spirit Stone Trail

Operations and Maintenance Plan

Compiled by the Spirit Stone Trail Committee Members

Bay Mills Indian Community

Connie Watson, GHWIC Project Coordinator
Justin Carrick, Transportation Planner
Angela Johnston, Bay Mills Community College (BMCC)/Biology
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Amber Stephen, BMCC Mukwa Fitness Center
Rachel Lyons, Tribal Manager
Paula Carrick, Tribal Historian
Audrey Breakie, Health Director
Candince LeBlanc, Boys & Girls Club of Bay Mills Indian Community

Partner Agencies

Chippewa County Road Commission
Bay Mills Township
Superior Township
Hiawatha National Forest, Julia Hall
EUP Regional Planning and Development Commission
OUT House Consortium, Ken and Wilda Hopper
Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Conservancy

**Bay Mills, Michigan
2022**

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Introduction

Draft Revised September 29, 2021

The Bay Mills Indian Community (BMIC), a federally-recognized Native American tribe headquartered near Brimley in Michigan's eastern Upper Peninsula, has been the driving force to establish and extend a non-motorized trail. This trail is now called the Spirit Stone Trail and is intended to serve BMIC residents, community facilities, and business locations as well as visitors and recreational trail users. In 2020, BMIC negotiated a cooperative agreement with the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission to prepare an operations and maintenance plan for the trail. The plan includes affirming the purpose, vision, and mission of the trail, along with some of its history, documenting and mapping the segments already in place and recommending both routine and remedial maintenance methods. The plan also presents potential costs for maintenance along with discussing the administrative and jurisdictional responsibilities of trail partners. Finally, the plan looks to the future by suggesting future extensions and connections with other non-motorized trails in the region and state.

Concept of the Spirit Stone Trail

The Spirit Stone Trail has been discussed for nearly two decades, both under its current name and the preceding title of "Superior Shores Trail." Planning for the trail has been accomplished through the Spirit Stone Trail Committee, including not only BMIC members but representatives from several partner agencies. These partners are listed on the report's title page and the jurisdiction of the partners is discussed more fully in the plan. The Spirit Stone Trail concept continues to be a strong motivator to all partners because it encompasses several powerful needs and aspirations as expressed below.

- **Provide Safe, Healthy Access for the Brimley/Bay Mills Community:** The existing and proposed route of the Spirit Stone Trail passes through the heart of the BMIC community. It connects tribal residents to major community facilities including the tribal offices, health center, senior center, school, sports and recreation sites, and to Bay Mills Community College. The route also links to the resort and casino where many community members work and to local businesses where they shop. A non-motorized trail to and through these facilities lessens the dependence on automobile travel for local trips and makes pedestrian travel much safer while enhancing the opportunity for physical exercise and outdoor events while assisting elders or those with disabilities.
- **Collaborate with Trail User Groups:** A number of trail user groups are already active in the local community, the region, and across the state. These include health promotion groups, bicycle organizations, outdoors enthusiasts, sports competitors, environmentalists, and handicap access organizations. By reaching out and cooperating with such groups, it is possible to gain valuable feedback on the condition of existing trails as well as the user experience. Trail user groups can also provide ideas for future

trail improvements and funding. Finally, trail users are a potential source for volunteers who can assist in creating trail-related promotional events and volunteer for trail maintenance activities.

- **Connect Two Major Historical and Tourism Attractions:** The Spirit Stone Trail end points are envisioned to be Brimley State Park and the Point Iroquois Lighthouse. These two attractions bring thousands of visitors to the Brimley/Bay Mills area each year. In addition, Point Iroquois, strategically located at the mouth of the St. Mary's River, is the site of an important turning point in the history of the Ojibwe people. At this location in 1662, the Ojibwe soundly defeated a war party of Iroquois from the St. Lawrence River valley and Upstate New York who were intent on taking over fur trade in the upper Great Lakes. Through this victory, the Ojibwe stabilized their own trading network and economic livelihood around both the Sault Ste. Marie and Straits regions.

By connecting Brimley State Park and Pt. Iroquois with a non-motorized trail, access to each would be increased and the recreational experience strengthened which would, in turn, increase tourism and visitor draw. The many tourism-related businesses in the area would potentially benefit, and the number of campers and day use visitors at Brimley State Park would likely increase substantially when the trail is completed. Furthermore, visitors to the Bay Mills Resort and Casino, along with those interested in Native American history, maritime history, and Great Lakes shoreline exploration, would be provided with alternate recreational opportunities that could enhance their experience and promote return visits.

Ideally, the entire route of the Spirit Stone Trail would utilize one consistent design standard. The committee's preference is for a hard-paved trail design capable of being accessed by pedestrians, street or mountain bikes and wheelchairs alike. A consistent surface throughout the trail would avoid the need to change travel modes (for example, changing from a street bike to a mountain bike). Given the large number of trail segments that are being planned and funded from different sources at different times, consistency can be a challenge. But over time, that is the committee's goal.

- **Link into Existing Adjacent Trail Networks:** Both the Hiawatha National Forest and BMIC manage large tracts of land adjacent to the Spirit Stone Trail route with miles of existing trail networks. By linking into these networks, the Spirit Stone Trail can potentially increase the trail user population and add support for trail improvements while taking better advantage of nearby trail-related recreation opportunities.
- **Cooperate with Long-Term Regional Non-Motorized Trail Planning Efforts:** In the Eastern Upper Peninsula, there are a number of individuals and groups working to develop and improve trails across the entire region. For example, the OUT House Consortium, a local non-profit trail advocacy group, envisions a bike trail from Sault Ste. Marie to Brimley State Park which would potentially make direct connection to the Spirit

Stone Trail. The Michigan Department of Transportation Superior Region has completed a non-motorized transportation plan and investment strategy that includes the Brimley/Bay Mills area in plans that connect the entire Upper Peninsula, including the eastern, central and western Michigan planning regions. The North Country Trail and Iron Belle Trail plans cross the entire state. By engaging with these larger trail groups, the Spirit Stone Trail may attract a larger audience and gain access to additional trail improvement funds and marketing power.

Role of Bay Mills Indian Community in Trail Establishment

Work of the Trail Committee: For nearly two decades, the Bay Mills Indian Community (BMIC) has spearheaded formal and informal planning efforts for the Superior Shores Trail, later re-named Spirit Stone Trail. Initial committee organization work was done by the BMIC Health Center staff using start-up funding from the Inter-Tribal Council. Through the years, the trail committee's composition has fluctuated; but it has included representatives from the Bay Mills Indian Community facilities planning, recreation, history and health groups; Bay Mills and Superior Townships, the Chippewa County Road Commission, the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District, Michigan Department of Transportation UP Region, Brimley State Park, Hiawatha National Forest, Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning, and bicycle advocacy groups like the OUT House Consortium.

With leadership from BMIC, the committee has continued to meet periodically in person and remotely by Zoom audiovisual technology during the recent Covid pandemic. The committee continues to promote trail funding for improvement, maintenance and expansion, support for trail-related events, encouragement for increased trail use, and marketing of trail-related resources and activities.

Committee Vision and Mission: We envision a future where both residents and visitors to the Brimley/Bay Mills area will have easy access to safe, healthy, attractive, and culturally appropriate non-motorized trails that inter-connect homes, schools, shops, and workplaces to civic, cultural, recreational, and natural resource destinations located between Brimley State Park and Pt. Iroquois Lighthouse and provide links to other trail networks in the region and state. The mission of the Spirit Stone Trail Committee is to help bring about and maintain this trail system concept through collaborative partnerships in trail planning, promotion, fundraising, event organization, project design, construction, maintenance, and trail user activities.

Trail Funding: For more than a decade, the trail committee has been seeking funding from transportation partner organizations. When the Chippewa County Road Commission was developing a resurfacing project for Lakeshore Drive, the BMIC trails committee requested that the Commission consider including a bike lane in the project. The Road Commission determined that it was possible to move from a standard three- or four-foot paved shoulder to the Trail

Committee's idea of an eight-foot trail lane with a reasonably small amount of additional funding for slightly more pavement and moving a few power poles and mailboxes. This was possible as the surrounding terrain was relatively flat, and the soils were compatible. The BMIC, through its transportation department, contributed \$400,000 towards the expanded resurfacing project. Initially, the enhanced paved shoulder was designed to begin at the bridge across the Waiska River continuing northwest to Spectacle Lake Road. However, the trail committee asked Superior Township to write a letter of support to the County Road Commission requesting that the enhanced paved shoulder be extended eastward from the bridge to the entry road at Brimley State Park resulting in the addition of that segment to the resurfacing project.

While the resurfacing project was still in the planning stage, the Bay Mills Indian Community continued to seek funding for an off-road trail segment along Lakeshore Drive in areas where high vehicle travel speeds (55 mph) made pedestrian traffic along the road very dangerous. In fact, there have been injuries and one fatality in a high-speed segment that highlighted the need for safer alternatives. During conversations between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Tribe, and the Chippewa County Road Commission, it was discovered that the BIA had already authored a rural safety audit for the area. That audit opened the door to BIA grant funding. In 2016, the BIA provided \$400,000 for the off-road segment as a safety project.

BMIC has applied to the Resource Advisory Committee for federal funding under Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act to construct the 0.65 mile trail segment leading from the Mukwa Fitness Center play area to the day use parking lot on Monocle Lake. This Act, as a whole, is intended to support roads and schools in rural areas such as the Eastern Upper Peninsula where the presence of large amount of federal tax-exempt lands negatively impact community finances. Title II covers special projects on Federal lands. Under Title II, the Forest Service can allocate funding to specific projects that have been recommended by the local Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). The 2021 funding application submitted by BMIC to the Advisory Committee asked for \$10,072 to fund Spirit Stone Trail improvements. The application proposes to contract with the Superior Watershed Partnership's Great Lakes Conservation Corps. The Corps would construct improvements to the existing user-driven trail on Hiawatha National Forest lands while removing and replacing a small piece of the existing route that passes through private property.

At present, design and environmental review work by the Hiawatha National Forest is also in the process for the Spirit Stone Trail segment from Monocle Lake to the Point Iroquois Lighthouse using internal national forest funding. In addition, BMIC is currently investigating the possibility of applying for funds made available under the American Rescue Plan Act, as part of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Act has allocated new funds for tourism and outdoor recreation projects, based on the increased need for outdoor recreation facilities made evident during the pandemic. Later in this report, there will be a brief discussion of additional funding sources for future trail improvements.

Trail Naming and Marketing: When the off-road segment of the Spirit Stone Trail was complete, use began to expand and diversify rather quickly in unexpected ways. In 2016, the trail committee sponsored a trail naming contest. Twenty-five entries were received. The winning name was “Spirit Stone Trail” submitted by then 14-year-old Kendra Carrick. The name Spirit Stone is a rough translation of Shingabawassin, an Ojibwe Chief from the Crane Clan who played a significant role in the history of the Brimley/Bay Mills area. Carrick is a descendant of Shingabawassin.

The re-naming spurred a related art project sponsored by a grant from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, underwriting the design, fabrication, and installation of two signs designating the beginning and end of the off-road trail segment. The new trail also inspired the First Annual Spirit Stone Shuffle 5K Run held in October of 2019. The trail has also been used on several occasions by the BMIC’s Rec-Connect program (using funding from the Michigan Fitness Foundation) to encourage culturally appropriate recreation in ways that encourage incorporating physical activity into daily life.

At the most basic level, the trail has allowed pedestrian traffic to move safely between work, school and civic, retail, and recreational locations within the BMIC and has begun to accomplish many of the objectives established by the trail committee years ago. Even during the Covid pandemic, the trail could be used for outdoor activities when indoor groups and gatherings were not recommended for fear of disease transmission, providing an unanticipated community bonus.

Current Spirit Stone Trail Segments and Pavement Types

Segment Descriptions: A brief description is provided below of the current Spirit Stone Trail pavement types and widths within the existing trail segments, beginning at Brimley State Park, proceeding northwest to the trail terminus at Point Iroquois Lighthouse, which is a total distance of approximately nine miles. The Appendix includes the detailed location and condition map of the trail.

The designated Spirit Stone Trail begins on Six Mile Road at the entrance to Brimley State Park. From the entrance road westward on Six Mile Road, the trail is located in an enhanced paved shoulder, as an eight-foot wide asphalt paved lane on the lake (northeast) side, separated from the northbound traffic lane by a single white painted line. This configuration continues past the intersection with M-221 and continues west on Lakeshore Drive. The enhanced eight-foot paved asphalt shoulder runs past the Bay Mills Indian Community Resort and Casino property to Plantation Road.

From Plantation Road to Bay Mills Point Road, the trail is located off-road, as a stand-alone, eight-foot-wide asphalt paved segment located within the right-of-way of Lakeshore Drive, on the lake (east) side. It is separated from the northbound traffic lane and road shoulder by a grassed buffer strip at least five feet in width. This segment, approximately a mile and a half in

length, has recently been marked with a decorative sign at each end, indicating the name: “Spirit Stone Trail.”

From Bay Mills Point Road to the Tribal Office, the trail is once again located in an enhanced, asphalt paved shoulder, eight feet wide, on the lake (east) side, separated from the northbound traffic lane by a single, white-painted line.

At the Tribal Administration Office, the trail moves to the west side of the road, through a marked crosswalk, continuing as an enhanced, asphalt paved shoulder eight feet wide along the west side. In addition, a four-foot-wide asphalt paved shoulder continues northward on the east (lake) side of the road. Both paved shoulders are separated from the north and southbound traffic lanes by a white-painted line. This configuration continues past Bay Mills Community College, to the intersection of Lakeshore Drive and Spectacle Lake Road, where the trail route turns inland (west) into a residential neighborhood east of Spectacle Lake.

The Spirit Stone Trail route has been designated along Spectacle Lake Road but has yet to be developed. The route proceeds along Spectacle Lake Road to the Mukwa Health & Fitness Center, where a trailhead will be developed. The trail will proceed along the west/northwest Mukwa lot line, enter a designated corridor located along the rear lot lines of residences facing Wolf Avenue, Crane Road and Turtle Drive and exit the corridor on Red Pine Lane. The residential trail corridor continues to Red Pine Lane. The Spirit Stone Trail will then depart BMIC property via a utility corridor into adjacent Hiawatha National Forest property.

From the west side of the residential neighborhood, the Spirit Stone Trail travels in a “user driven” soft surface pathway across Hiawatha National Forest property to the parking lot located at the Monocle Lake Day Use Area. The last trail segment from the day use area northward through National Forest property is not yet constructed but the route has been laid out and is in the federal review process.

According to National Forest staff, the current trail proposal is to build a soft-surface, non-motorized pathway, between four and six feet wide, leading east from the Monocle Lake Campground parking lot, along the Monocle Lake Campground Road to the campground turnoff, then north through wooded National Forest property, to Lakeshore Drive, crossing to the Point Iroquois Lighthouse property on Lake Superior. The lighthouse property is also administered by Hiawatha National Forest making it easier to plan connections to and from that major attraction. At present, the trail construction proposal is undergoing environmental review. Archaeological investigations of the proposed route are also underway to be completed during 2021.

Roles and Jurisdiction of Trail Partners

Operating a trail system can be a complex endeavor, particularly when the trail crosses multiple jurisdictional boundaries and includes a network of owners and managers, as does the Spirit

Stone Trail. Furthermore, there are different aspects and job responsibilities involved with trail operations. A successful trail will require, at minimum, consideration of the following factors:

- Planning
- Construction
- Maintenance
- Regulation of Use
- Promotion

Hidden within these simple words are any number of important operational questions, such as: Where will we get the money to build the trail? How wide should our trail be? What type of trail surface should we construct? How often should gravel be swept off the pavement? Who will remove the tree limb blocking the path? What type of signs can we put up to mark the trail? How can we encourage people to use the trail for healthy exercise or sight-seeing or a journey to work?

BMIC: The Bay Mills Indian Community has taken a lead role in planning efforts for the Spirit Stone Trail. This role evolved naturally out of a concern for the safety and well-being of tribal members. As a sovereign nation, BMIC has authority to construct and maintain physical improvements on tribal lands including a non-motorized trail. The tribe also has jurisdiction to regulate trail use on its lands. However, when portions of the trail are located on public roads and rights of way that cross or abut tribal property, regulatory jurisdiction may be shared with other trail partners such as Township, County, State or Federal transportation authorities. The details of this shared authority can depend on the status of ownership (example: easement versus fee-simple ownership), the specifics of treaty rights, or the latest judicial decisions. This complex legal setting makes it all the more important for partners with overlapping jurisdiction to be willing to work together in a collaborative manner if a multi-jurisdictional trail is to be successful.

BMIC recently completed a five-year recreation plan covering 2019 to 2023. This plan states several goals and objectives relating to the Spirit Stone Trail including continued cooperative work with recreation partners at the US Forest Service and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The plan also emphasizes the need to consider life-cycle maintenance and replacement costs for all recreation facilities. Specific goals for the newly paved off-road section of the trail include ensuring trail maintenance, particularly in the winter. In terms of trail promotion, the tribe has spearheaded most of the promotional efforts to date for existing sections of the trail through health and wellness related activities, public events, and races. The Covid pandemic of 2020 called a halt to many group trail activities, but the need and potential for trail promotion is expected to continue into the future.

Chippewa County Road Commission: The Spirit Stone Trail, for much of its route, runs along or parallel to West Lakeshore Drive and West 6 Mile Road. Because these are county roads, their operation and maintenance falls to the Chippewa County Road Commission. The Road Commission was also responsible for planning and constructing the on-road bike lane and off-

road segment of Spirit Stone Trail in these county road rights of way, in cooperation with BMIC, Superior Township and Bay Mills Township, with each entity contributing to project funding. Regulation of trail use, including signage, falls to the Road Commission when the trail is within County right-of-way. The County's regulatory jurisdiction is also limited by standards and conditions set by the State of Michigan as a condition of annual transportation funding. For example, a set percentage of the county road budget must be invested in non-motorized transportation facilities each year which can be an opportunity for future trail expansion. However, state guidelines may also govern trail aspects like designation of lane width, pavement type and lane marking protocols. While the Road Commission has been supportive of the trail project, it has not undertaken special promotional efforts. But even simple steps like placing the trail on County Road maps and allowing appropriate signage can have a promotional impact especially if coordinated with other trail partners.

Hiawatha National Forest: The Hiawatha National Forest is a federal agency with its own internal project planning and funding mechanisms. The National Forest is a multi-purpose public asset with goals and responsibilities that include not only public recreation but also timber production and harvesting along with environmental management. The Hiawatha Forest in the vicinity of the Spirit Stone Trail route encompasses a number of significant recreation resources including portions of Monocle and Spectacle Lakes, public camping and picnic sites, footpaths, a designated scenic byway along the Lake Superior shoreline, and the building and grounds at Pt. Iroquois Lighthouse. It is a major attraction and trip-generating facility that brings thousands of visitors to the area each year.

Construction, maintenance and use regulation of all trails within the National Forest fall under Forest Service jurisdiction. This includes trail design guidelines and surface material selection. At present, Forest Service plans for interior portions of the Spirit Stone Trail between Monocle Lake and the lighthouse are based on a four-foot wide, soft surface path than may be a challenge for certain types of bicycle users. The Forest Service is also subject to Federal regulations regarding environmental review, including historical and archaeological clearance, that have slowed the trail planning, routing, and construction process. Like the Road Commission, trail promotion and marketing is not a primary mission of the Forest Service, but trail users and visitors will likely refer to forest service maps and signs as well as forest tourism publications that are periodically published by the agency. Inclusion of trail information in these publications can help get the word out about the Spirit Stone Trail and indirectly encourage use.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources: MDNR operates the Brimley State Park, located at the current southeast terminus of the Spirit Stone Trail. Park officials, in cooperation with the Chippewa County Road Commission and Superior Township, enabled the trail to start at the state park entryway. Campers at the state park constitute one of the largest potential trail user groups outside of BMIC residents. All these factors make the state park an important trail partner. Like the National Forest, the state park has its own internal project planning and funding process. In recent decades, the DNR has made trail planning and operation a state priority. The Newberry regional office of the DNR has a trail specialist assigned to the eastern upper peninsula who can work with other trail partners to develop cooperative plans and

projects. If a trail segment is located within park property, MDNR has jurisdiction over the trail's design, construction, and operation following established state trail guidelines. More flexibility is available for trails that link to state park properties but are not built within them.

It is important to note that the MDNR plays an important role in trail planning through its recreation grant programs. The Natural Resource Trust Fund, the Passport Grant program, and other special-purpose grants provide the most common source of trail funding in the state. In order to be eligible for trail funding, the MDNR mandates the preparation of a five-year community recreation plan including any trail projects proposed for funding. BMIC, Bay Mills Township, and Superior Township all have current recreation plans because of this requirement and all include the Spirit Stone Trail as a priority project. However, if a trail project is funded by MDNR, it must meet state design and construction requirements and be reviewed and approved by state recreation staff.

MDNR also provides residents and visitors with online and printed information and promotional materials about trails. By including information about Spirit Stone Trail access in promotional information about Brimley State Park, trail use could be increased; and this might, in turn, increase use of the campground by bicyclists interested in touring the Lake Superior shoreline or visiting Pt. Iroquois Lighthouse.

Bay Mills and Superior Townships: Both these townships have segments of the existing and proposed Spirit Stone Trail within their boundaries. The townships do not directly maintain the road rights of way where the trail segments are now located, but they do share trail planning and funding responsibilities with the Chippewa County Road Commission. Additionally, the Townships can consider planning and constructing additions to the trail network within their respective jurisdictions to increase access to recreation opportunities and possibly to inter-connect existing or proposed recreation sites. As mentioned above, both townships have a MDNR recreation plan including the mention of the Spirit Stone Trail; so both units of government could apply for state recreation funding for future trail projects, assuming a willingness to provide matching funds, and to assume related operation and maintenance costs. In terms of promotion, trails and trail marketing have been increasingly used by communities as a way to attract visitors as well as seasonal and permanent residents in addition to providing quality of life improvements to current residents.

Local and Regional Trail User Groups: The OUT House Consortium is a private, non-profit trail advocacy group that has participated in planning for the Spirit Stone Trail. The acronym OUT stands for Outdoor Use of Trails. The mission of this group is to promote trail creation and use. Through staging fundraising events and by donating dollars, materials, and volunteer efforts, the group has helped construct and maintain several trails in the area. In a field where trail maintenance is typically a sore spot, the OUT House Consortium states that "our mission defines maintenance as one of our reasons for existence." In addition, the Consortium maintains interest and connections with trail groups and trail initiatives across the Eastern UP region and can be a key partner in connecting the Spirit Stone to a wider network of trails and trail users.

Another important trail user group is the North Country Trail Association. The North Country Trail traverses eight states in the northern tier, from Vermont and New York to North Dakota. In Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the trail travels from the Mackinac Bridge to Tahquamenon Falls via Hiawatha National Forest, before turning west along the Lake Superior shoreline to the Wisconsin border. Because the Spirit Stone Trail is near the North Country Trail route, there are mutual advantages to working with the local supporters of the North Country Trail to discuss future connections and joint promotional efforts.

Michigan's own Iron Belle Trail, supported by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, travels from Belle Isle in Detroit to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula. The hiking portion of the trail uses the North Country Trail route through Hiawatha National Forest, so there could be benefits to working with Iron Belle proponents on mutual promotion efforts as well.

Regional Planning: The Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission covers Chippewa, Mackinac, and Luce Counties. EUP Planning has several responsibilities that connect it to trail system planning. First, it serves as a link between the Michigan Department of Transportation and regional transportation planning projects, including plans for non-motorized transportation facilities. For example, EUP Planning has helped develop regional trail maps and assisted member units of government with non-motorized trail projects and grants. Secondly, EUP Planning has helped several members, including BMIC, to develop local recreation plans that include trail projects. Such plans are required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as a prerequisite for MDNR recreational project grants which is widely used in Michigan to fund trail system improvements. EUP Planning has participated in early planning for the Spirit Stone Trail and continues to assist BMIC as the project moves forward. However, the agency has no role in construction, maintenance or regulation of trail use.

Trail Operation and Maintenance Plan

Continuing Need for Trail Maintenance: The primary reason for developing a plan for trail maintenance is to assure user safety. Nothing is worse for a trail project or system than to have an injury on the trail caused by neglected maintenance. Nothing is better for a trail than to have healthy, pleasant, and safe trail experiences passed along by word of mouth or through social media reports. This will encourage others to try the trail and build a network of trail supporters within and around the community. Community support can result in additions to the trail system along with stimulating trail use, promotion, and funding. In addition, a safe trail can provide access for under-served segments of the population such as elders, the handicapped, and those without the economic means to maintain a motorized vehicle.

A secondary, but still crucial reason for developing and implementing a trail maintenance plan is to capture long-term cost savings. It is much less expensive to keep a trail in good shape than it is to rebuild a trail that has been long neglected. Furthermore, most grant funding is reserved for initial trail construction in order to expand the system. Typically, trail maintenance is not an

eligible project for most trail grant programs. In many instances, one common requirement of trail construction grants is the sponsor's agreement to maintain the trail in satisfactory condition throughout the trail's useful life.

BMIC recognized the significance this issue by asking, within the Tribe's recreation master plan, that a maintenance plan and maintenance cost estimates be developed and implemented for major projects resulting from the plan including trails. In this way, the tribe is safeguarding the community investment in recreation and community well-being, as well as safeguarding the community's budget expenditures.

Maintenance Tasks and Schedules

By consulting engineering and recreation standards used for non-motorized trails and through discussions with the Spirit Stone Trail committee members, the following maintenance table was developed to display in simplified form the types and frequency of maintenance activities that are regarded as necessary to keep the trail in shape. The actions identified in this specific table are intended to apply to the current Spirit Stone Trail, its specific type of trail surface, trail location, and user groups. It is not intended to apply generally to other trails located in different climates, or with different surface types or different user groups. As new trail segments are added to the system with different designs and surface materials, the table may need to be expanded or modified.

The Spirit Stone Trail, as built to date, has an asphalt surface for both the on-road lane and the off-road segment, built on a base course suitable for vehicular (on-road segments) and non-motorized (off road segment) use. Depending on the quality of initial construction, typical weather, and climate conditions in the region, and assuming regular maintenance as described in the table, the surface can last as long as 20 to 25 years. This level of performance will only come about, however, if regular repairs such as crack sealing, root removal and sealcoating are performed. Vegetation growth and drainage problems are other factors that need constant attention if a trail surface is to perform well over time.

Culvert repair, crack sealing and lane marking are the types of maintenance that is best left to skilled public works personnel. But many aspects of trail maintenance, such as removing trash, sticks or debris, and inspecting the trail annually or seasonally for safety or maintenance issues can be done by volunteers and/or trail support groups. In this way, trail volunteers can help the community save thousands of dollars annually, ensure safe conditions and help prolong the useful life of the trail. In fact, without volunteer support, many communities cannot afford to keep a trail system in operation. Many communities have successfully made annual maintenance into a celebration that also promotes the trail.

RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE FOR NON-MOTORIZED ASPHALT SURFACE PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE TRAILS

Maintenance Activity	Suggested Frequency					Notes
	Monthly	Annually	Spring	After Storm	Other	
General						
Safety Inspection	X			X		Also Use Citizen Reports
Debris, Trash, & Gravel Sweeping	X			X		Also Use Citizen Reports
Snow Removal					As Needed	
Vandalism Inspection		X				
Encroachments		X				Private Use of Public ROW
Pavement						
Pavement Survey		X	X			Annual Condition Assessment
Crack Sealing					As Needed	
Patching					As Needed	
Sealcoat					5-10 Yrs.	Use Eco-Friendly Bio-Seal
Resurface					20-25 Yrs.	
Inspect Pavement Markings		X				
Repaint Pavement Markings					1-3 Yrs.	More Often for On-Road Lanes
Vegetation						
Mowing: Clear Zones, Trailhead and Rest Areas (2' All Sides)	X				Or As Needed	Except Areas with Sensitive Plants
Brush/Overhead Trimming (10' Above; 3' Sides)		X			Or As Needed	After Summer Growth
Sight Line Trimming at Intersections (5')	X					Roads, Other Trails, Driveways, etc.
Tree/Post Removal (3' All Sides)				X	As Needed	Safety Issue
Root Cutting					As Needed	Monitor Root Activity Along Trail
Drainage						
Erosion Repair			X	X		After Snowmelt & Storm Cleanup
Culvert/Catch Basin Clearing			X	X		Storm Cleanup
Ditch Maintenance (Clear of Debris, Trash, Branches)			X	X		Spring Activity
Standing Water Repair			X	X	If Needed	Possible Puddle/Ice Safety Issue

Assigning Maintenance Responsibilities: Typically, the responsibility for trail maintenance can be summarized by stating that the party who owns the trail is responsible for maintaining it. So far, three primary “owners” have been involved in trail planning and/or construction: the Chippewa County Road Commission for bike lane segments located in the County’s road right-of-way; the Bay Mills Indian Community for segments planned on tribal lands; and the Hiawatha National Forest for segments that will traverse forest lands.

Immediately, the easy statement about the owner’s maintenance responsibility has been contradicted or expanded by cooperative trail efforts already at work. For example, Bay Mills and Superior Townships helped the County fund the on-road trail segments within their respective jurisdictions and have included the trail concept in their recreation master plans, making the Townships eligible for trail-related grant funding. The BMIC has pitched in to conduct some vegetation management along the off-road segment, even though it is within County right-of-way, because the County’s road equipment was too large for the job. BMIC also helped re-paint some of the trail’s pavement markings when they were sanded off by traffic and gravel movement. Though not yet part of the Spirit Stone Trail system, the National Forest’s nature trail at Spectacle Lake was given assistance by the OUT House Consortium, who provided funding to complete a split rail fence along the trail.

These examples make it clear that managing trail maintenance is a cooperative project, and selection of the best party for any given maintenance task needs to be arrived at through cooperative local agreements that may go beyond the simple fact of ownership. Many trail communities use a Letter of Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding, or similar written device to specifically assign trail-related maintenance duties, with formal review and signature by cooperating partners. Such a process can allow for horse-trading, where one partner agrees to perform a particular task, if the other partner accepts responsibility for a different task.

That said, the major responsibility for maintaining the pavement surface along the on-road bike lane segment is largely in the hands of the Chippewa County Road Commission. Because the bike lane is literally part of the road, that lane is also part of the routine maintenance activities undertaken for the road itself; and as such, trail surface maintenance does not need to be budgeted separately. However, the standards and schedule for trail vegetation management and lane line repainting may well differ for the non-motorized lane and may need to be taken into account during the Road Commission’s budgeting process. In recent years, the Road Commission has set aside a portion of the annual budget for non-motorized projects; and these set-aside funds can help maintain the trail, using the standards suggested by the trail maintenance chart included above.

Particularly in rural areas settings like that of the Spirit Stone Trail, trail volunteers and trail user groups serve a very significant role in trail maintenance. Several items in the maintenance chart are most economically performed by volunteers. The first of these items is regular removal of trash and debris from the trail. Major owners like the Road Commission, BMIC or National Forest typically take care of a major clean-up in spring by getting rid of snow melt debris or large limbs that may have come down during the winter; but the task of keeping the

trail clean throughout the year is an expensive one, and volunteer organizations willing to take on light clean-up activities can help keep costs manageable.

The other key task where volunteers are crucial is that of trail condition reporting. At any moment, a trail can be blocked or impaired by a vehicle accident, a downed tree, or a flood event. Without an organized reporting and repair process, trail safety is threatened; and use limited until the mess can be cleaned up. A volunteer reporting system needs not only volunteer reporters but also a number to call or text with a responsible person on the other end to take the message and relay it to the party who can fix the problem. Too often, a trail user may see a problem but not know who to call; so the problem remains unresolved, potentially damaging the trail's reputation, use, and enjoyment. It is recommended that the Spirit Stone Trail partners discuss the concept of a trail problem reporting system and take proactive steps to set up and promote a rapid-response system.

Expanding and Improving the Trail System

Trail Signs and Maps: Perhaps the most immediate and helpful improvement available for the Spirit Stone Trail would be better signage and mapping. At present, the only identification of the trail are two decorative signs mounted on posts, with the title "Spirit Stone Trail," located at each end of the off-road segment. There are currently no signs at the start of the trail, at the entry to Brimley State Park, or at Spectacle Lake Road, where the trail route turns inland. BMIC has prepared a trail route map showing many of the points of interest along the route; however, this map does not distinguish between the trail segments that have been constructed and are in current use and the segments that are proposed for the future. The new map accompanying this report adds some of the missing information and can be distributed more widely to help potential users become more familiar with the trail.

Many trail systems use a stenciled image of a bicycle and/or pedestrian to indicate a designated non-motorized lane. To date, the Chippewa County Road Commission has hesitated to use this marking system because once marked, the designation would need to be enforced. That might mean ticketing motorists who pull over and park temporarily in the lane. Vehicles pull over for many reasons, not the least of which is to answer a cell phone call, check an address, or admire a shoreline view. Because the on-road segment of the Spirit Stone Trail, as now designed, is essentially a paved shoulder, there is nowhere else to pull over, in effect, making the trail lane a multi-purpose lane. However, there are signs available to suit this situation, as shown below.



The sign in the center is perhaps the one used most often to make motorists aware of bicycle traffic. However, the signs on the right and left sides may draw attention to the fact of pedestrian traffic as well. The sign on the left illustrates the on-road segments of the trail best, because it shows that a white line separates the motorist from bicycles and pedestrians and may alert drivers to be more cautious.

Another sign option is a standard green sign with white lettering that states “bike route.” However, this sign is typically used on separate lane for bikes, leading to a motorized traffic in the same lane. It segments of the trail proposed to within the subdivision near Spectacle



low-traffic streets when there is no mixture of motorized and non-motorized traffic. This sign may be most useful for future trail segments that will traverse residential streets and lots near Spectacle Lake.

Even if the Spirit Stone Trail is marked with “share the road” or “bike route” signs, these signs do not in themselves provide the name or identity of the trail. The Spirit Stone Trail Committee has been working to develop a unique trail logo that will suggest some of the history and character of the trail and the surrounding region. Ideally, the committee would like to install that logo on the same post as the trail route marking. Accomplishing this will take consultation with other trail partners to reach agreement on logo design, sign materials, and logo placement.

Trailheads, Rest Areas and Trail Amenities: In 2020, benches, trash containers and trail promotional material racks were added to each end of the off-road trail segment, providing an enhanced user experience. Other key improvements presently proposed include trail head amenities and parking at the BMIC neighborhood park off Turtle Drive and at the Pt. Iroquois Lighthouse property. Another area in need of signs and trail head amenities is the current trail terminus at Brimley State Park. The on-road non-motorized lane begins at the park entry/exit drive, but it is currently unmarked. Even campers at the park may have no idea that the lane is intended for bicycle and pedestrian traffic and leads to a number of nearby shopping, recreational, and scenic destinations.

Once the trail is completed from the State Park to the Pt. Iroquois Lighthouse, including access to the casino, National Forest campgrounds, and public access sites at Monocle Lake, it can be anticipated that campground demand will increase from families that enjoy bicycle holidays. The same may hold true for potential camping increases at the BMIC RV campgrounds, Bay Mills Resort and the National Forest campsites, all of which are on the proposed trail and intended to inter-connect to other recreation attractions along the entire route.

In addition to tourism and recreation related use, the Spirit Stone Trail is intended to serve local residents who would like a safe bike and pedestrian friendly transportation alternative to meet the day-to-day needs of access to worksites, shopping, class attendance, business, and healthcare visits as well as a place to meet and socialize with friends while staying fit. For these purposes, trail amenities are crucial, especially rest areas, benches, and trail route markings.

Planning and Promoting Future Trail Links

Attracting new recreational users to the Spirit Stone Trail depends, in part, on promoting and connecting the core trail to other nearby existing and proposed trails and providing non-motorized access to nearby recreational amenities. Listed below are several logical connections within the region that have potential to expand trail use.

- **Monocle Lake Interpretive Trail and Spectacle Lake Overlook:** These two local trails share an existing access point at the parking lot for the day use area at Monocle Lake, located within the Hiawatha National Forest. Linking the Spirit Stone Trail to this shared access point is the most immediate opportunity to expand the trail network. By tying into two existing, popular trails, the Spirit Stone Trail can gain a large number of new users and promote additional trail use. At present, BMIC is working with the Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Conservancy to help establish this link. The Watershed Partnership's work will include obliterating portions of an existing user-created trail from Spectacle Village to Monocle Lake that trespasses onto private property and will instead create a route entirely within public lands.
- **Whitefish Bay National Forest Scenic Byway:** Hiawatha National Forest has designated the road along the Lake Superior shoreline as the Whitefish Bay National Forest Scenic Byway. Not only could an on-road bike lane be added from Spectacle Lake Road to Pt. Iroquois, but that lane could also be extended westward along the scenic byway to enhance the safety and scenic experience of bikers traveling westward toward Tahquamenon Falls. Even without a separate bike lane, many cyclists continue to the lighthouse and falls along West Lakeshore Drive as it enters the National Forest. The lack of a separate lane and resulting traffic mix constitutes a significant safety hazard. In addition, the safety issues distract bikers and pedestrians from enjoying the woodland and waterfront views and thereby diminishes a potential regional tourism draw.
- **Sault to Strong's Rail Corridor:** This is a 32-mile unimproved rail grade extending west from Sault Ste. Marie to the community of Strong's and M-123. It is already in state forest ownership and utilized by snowmobilers. For decades, improvements have been requested in the region's non-motorized planning documents to make the corridor multi-purpose and more accessible to bikers. The corridor crosses M-221 just north of Brimley, a short hop from the existing Spirit Stone Trail, and would make an ideal connection to enhance Spirit Stone Trail use.
- **North Country Trail:** The North Country Trail in Michigan has been gaining recognition and use. The entire trail stretches 4,700 miles across eight states. The north/south segment closest to the Spirit Stone Trail is located three miles west of Rexford, where it crosses the

Sault/Strong's rail corridor. If a connection is made between the Spirit Stone Trail and the rail corridor, a link to the North Country Trail comes along as a helpful bonus substantially extending the reach of the existing trail system.

- **Connection to Sault Ste. Marie:** The Sault/Strong's Rail Corridor heading east from Brimley offers the opportunity to link into existing bike trails located within the City of Sault Ste. Marie, especially the Easterday Avenue to West Portage loop, which already crosses the rail corridor, and ties into the Lake State University campus, bringing access to a wide variety of potential trail system users.
- **Lake Superior Water Trail:** A water trail along the shores of Lake Superior is in the planning stages, with funding provided by the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program. The proposed trail identifies access points in the BMIC community, including Pt. Iroquois Lighthouse, Bay Mills Resort and RV Park, and the Waishkey Bay shoreline at Brimley State Park. An increasing number of outdoor recreation enthusiasts come to the area toting both kayaks and bikes. The opportunity to use both modes during one visit can be a major attraction and can promote the area as a recreational destination.

Trail Funding Sources

A number of state and federal recreation and transportation programs provide grant funding for trails. Few, if any, grants provide full funding; but most will contribute 60 to 75 percent of eligible project costs. Often programs require the applicant to pay for up-front engineering design and cost estimates along with the administrative costs of preparing the grant application itself. However, most programs will allow preparation of bid documents and construction supervision to be included in the grant-eligible package. It is important to read and understand the details of each funding program to avoid costly administrative mistakes. Costs incurred prior to formal grant award are rarely reimbursable. Listed below are several of the most common funding sources for trail projects in Michigan, along with a brief description of the program and a point of contact for further information.

Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grants: This grant program is relatively new and is an outgrowth of the state's successful adoption of a voluntary "recreation passport" purchased annually along with vehicle registration. The objective for the program is to provide funding to local units for the development of public recreation facilities including trails. Both the development of new facilities and the renovation of old facilities are eligible. In fact, it is one of the very few grant programs to emphasize renovation and prioritize repair of existing facilities that have outlived their useful life expectancy. Projects must be included in an approved DNR approved 5-year community recreation plan to be eligible. At least 25% of the project cost is required as match from applicants, but part of the match can be donated labor and materials. Initially, the maximum grant was limited to \$45,000, but rapidly increased to \$75,000 and is now pegged at \$150,000. Further Information: Christie Bayus, BayusC@michigan.gov, 517-284-5923 or DNR Finance and Operations Division, 517-284-7268

Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund: The trust fund contains earnings gained from the sale of oil and gas leases in the state, with interest income used provide grants to state and local governmental units for recreational land acquisition and project development. Application criteria include resource protection, water access, and community recreation. Projects must be included in a DNR-approved 5-year community recreation plan to be eligible. A minimum 25% match on either acquisition or development projects is required from local applicants. Funding recommendations are made by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board (members are appointed by the Governor) to the State Legislature for final approval. The maximum grant for recreation project development is \$300,000, with no ceiling on land acquisition. Further Information: Jon Mayes, MayesJ@michigan.gov, 517-284-5954 or DNR Finance and Operations Division, 517-284-7268

Land and Water Conservation Fund: This is a federal program, administered through the states, that makes project investments to secure public access, improve recreational opportunities, and preserve ecosystem benefits for local communities. Projects must align with the goals and priorities set out in Michigan’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and must be included in a DNR-approved 5-year community recreation plan to be eligible. Grants range from a minimum of \$30,000 to a maximum of \$500,000. Further information: Christie Bayus, BayusC@michigan.gov, 517-284-5923 or DNR Finance and Operations Division, 517-284-7268.

Transportation Enhancement Fund: This fund, established in the federal transportation act, is administered in Michigan through the Michigan Department of Transportation. It is intended to support non-motorized transportation facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, pedestrian and bicycle safety education, and the conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails. Anyone can sponsor a project, but they must apply through an eligible applicant. Eligible applicants include all governmental entities that receive fuel tax revenues. These include city and village road agencies, all county road commissions, public transit agencies, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for qualifying rail/trail projects. Further information: Landon Johnson, Enhancement Engineer, JohnsonL26@michigan.gov, 517-335-6779.

Highway Safety Improvement Fund: This is a federal program for transportation safety that is administered through the state departments of transportation. The purpose of this fund is to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads. Eligible projects include improvements for pedestrian or bicyclist safety, like better signage at pedestrian-bicycle crossings and in school zones, identification of and correction of safety hazards (including roadside obstacles) that constitute a danger to bicyclists and pedestrians, and safety-related pavement markings. Safety improvement projects on publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathways or trails are also eligible. Because safety funds are included in each state’s five-year transportation plan, wait times for new projects can be substantial. Further information: Dawn Gustafson, Manager, Newberry Transportation Service Center, GustafsonD@michigan.gov, 906-293-5168.

Safe Routes to School: The purposes of this program are to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative (thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age); and to support projects that improve safety, minimize traffic, and reduce air pollution in the vicinity of schools. Eligible projects include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bicycle parking facilities, and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools. Safe Routes to School began as a non-profit based fitness program and is now co-sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and the Michigan Department of Transportation. Further information: Katie Alexander, Director, Michigan Fitness Foundation, KAlexander@michiganfitness.org, 517-908-3830.

Michigan Transportation Fund Act 51 of 1951, as amended (1% Fund): Michigan's transportation law (MCLA 247.660k) reserves 1% of state transportation funds for nonmotorized transportation, including state road funds passed along to county road commissions. Any improvement in a road, street, or highway which facilitates nonmotorized transportation by the paving of unpaved road shoulders, widening of lanes, or any other appropriate measure is considered a qualified nonmotorized facility for the purposes of this fund. For further information contact: Josh DeBruyn, AICP, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Bureau of Transportation Planning, Michigan Department of Transportation, DeBruynJ@michigan.gov, 517-335-2918.

Federal Lands Highway Program: The purpose of this program is to improve access to and within federal and tribal lands by providing technical services to transportation partners in building accessible and scenic roads that ensure the treasures within these lands can be enjoyed by all. Projects can include construction of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities. Further information on federal lands highway access contact Lewis Grimm at lewis.grimm@dot.gov, 703-404-6289. For tribal transportation safety contact safety engineer, Adam Larsen at adam.larsen@dot.gov, 360-619-7751.

Scenic Byways Program: This program funds specific activities for roads designated as National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads, State scenic byways, or Indian tribe scenic byways. This is a discretionary program; all projects are selected by the US Secretary of Transportation. Projects can include construction along a scenic byway of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists or improvements to a scenic byway that will enhance access to an area for the purpose of recreation. Funding can cover the development of environmental documents, design, engineering, purchase of right-of-way, land, or property, as well as supervising and inspecting the actual construction. For further information contact: <http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants/>

US Economic Development Administration Tourism and Recreation Funding: The new American Rescue Plan Act provided EDA with \$3 billion to respond to the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, including \$750 million Congress to set aside for communities impacted by job loss in the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors. A substantial portion of this funding (\$240 Million) is earmarked for competitive tourism grants to be awarded to local

governments and nonprofit organizations in highly impacted tourism and outdoor recreation areas. Awards will target projects that promote economic resilience and development and align with an EDA Investment Priority. Trail systems that encourage additional travel, tourism, and recreation access could fit into these categories. Further information:

www.eda.gov/arpa/travel-tourism/

Other Funding Sources: State and Federal grant programs are by no means the only source of funding for trail construction or enhancement projects. Private foundations often assist with projects that improve access to recreation, encourage fitness, or enhance safety. The Council of Michigan Foundations publishes a comprehensive guide to foundation funding, *The Michigan Foundation Directory*. Contact the Council of Michigan Foundations for further information, at www.cmif.org or 616-842-7080. Additionally, most communities in the state are covered by a community foundation that provides support for projects in the local vicinity, particularly projects sponsored by a non-profit, 501 c 3 organization. These sources can be especially helpful for trail enhancement projects like signs, trail head improvements, and health-related events and programs. The community foundation covering the Spirit Stone Trail region is the Chippewa County Community Foundation. Further information: cccf@lighthouse.net or 906-635-1040.

Summary

The Spirit Stone Trail and its predecessor, the Superior Shores Trail, have been discussed for nearly two decades, as a pedestrian safety measure, an important non-motorized transportation alternative, a path to health and fitness, and a gateway to further recreational opportunities. In the short time since segments of the trail have been constructed, the Spirit Stone Trail has become tightly woven into the fabric of the community and is already a focal point for community events and celebrations. The proposals contained in this plan envision the further expansion, improvement, and long-term maintenance of the trail system so it can continue to enhance the lives of residents and visitors alike.

Appendix

The following fold-out page includes a map of the existing and proposed route of the Spirit Stone trail.

This plan was adopted by Executive Council by Resolution on 1/10/2022.