

GITCHI-GAMI TRAIL RIDER

A publication of the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association

Fall 2015

Trail Tales

Super cyclists from Grand Rapids inspire Gitchi-Gami riders

Tim and Rebecca Stocker of Grand Rapids, MN, know adventure. They have been bringing their camping gear, hiking boots, and family to the North Shore of Lake Superior for over 25 years. Their children have grown and flown the nest, but Tim and Becky still bring one little family member along when camping, exploring, and biking — their border collie Sherpa, who rides in comfort and style in a Burley trailer when the couple is out on the trail or the road.

Tim, Becky, and Sherpa have joined the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association's Annual Ride the last two years. They're avid cyclists; Becky deals with chronic illness by, among other things, logging three to four century rides (100 or more miles) each week during cycling season! This season she's ridden over 130 "centuries," and many shorter rides.

Tim and Becky started this summer's North Shore adventure by snagging midweek walk-on campsite reservations at Cascade River State Park. On Thursday, August 13th, they biked to the Canadian border. They liked the challenging climbs and the spectacular views, and they felt safe on the wide shoulders of Hwy 61 from Grand Marais to the border. They enjoyed the overlook at Mt. Josephine, and the views of the Susie



Tim Stocker (in neon) and Sherpa

Islands, rocky palisades and quaking aspen trees.

Following their travels along scenic Hwy 61, the Stockers joined us for the GGTA Annual Ride on Saturday, August 15th. They truly enjoyed the ride this year and made the most of every mile. On last year's ride, Becky had a bad accident on the trail near Split Rock, suffering multiple broken bones. With great determination, and a lot of training on a stationary bike, she recovered from her injuries and was happy to be able to complete this year's ride with much less drama. They say they'll be back again next year — hoping that we'll have dog treats at rest stops in addition to the PB&J's.

At home in Grand Rapids, the Stockers log many miles on the country roads and the Mesabi Trail. Tim volunteers by shuttling bicycles for the Mesabi Trail's Great River Energy Tour each year. Tim and Becky and their pal Sherpa also enjoy riding on the Heartland, Paul Bunyan, and Willard Munger State Trails. They appreciate trails with long stretches of riding without vehicle traffic and busy intersections.

We thank Tim and Rebecca, and Sherpa, too, for sharing their Trail Tale with us—and wish them many happy trails in the future!

~ Michelle Pierson

Editor's note: You can read more "Trail Tales" and tell your own, check out the latest biking news, see lots of great pics and post your own, and much more, on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/gitchigamitrailassociation.

Please like us!



◆ Trail news

◆ 15th Annual GGTA Ride

◆ PARTY! Come to the Annual Meeting January 16

◆ Renew your GGTA membership for 2016

◆ Give to the Max

TRAIL COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Maintenance:

This summer went by in a flash. There was much to do and little time, it seemed, to complete all of the maintenance projects on the Gitchi-Gami State Trail. Mowing trail shoulders, blowing rocks off the trail, removing hazardous trees, and installing signage took much of maintenance time this season. Another project included the addition of a culvert within the Split Rock State Park corridor and adding more caution signs in the park. An unexpected fence repair was completed near Chateau Leveaux Resort this August, due to an accident in which a motorist took out six fence posts and 40 feet of chain link fence.

Construction:

The highlight of this season was surely the grand opening of the Beaver Bay Wayside and Trailhead, at the intersection of Hwy 61 and the Lax Lake Road (Co Rd 4). The wayside features an attractive building with modern restroom facilities and drinking water, picnic

tables, benches, and bike racks. Kiosks provide visitors and trail users with tourist information, historical interpretation, and trail maps. The GGST dead-ends at the "destination" wayside. It is the main rest stop on our Annual Ride.



The new Beaver Bay wayside was a big hit at the Annual Ride

Temperance River trail repair engineering is complete; however, the bid was rejected due to lack of competing bidders and increased costs. The project will be rebid December or January, we expect it will be completed next summer.

Engineering and planning:

Engineering of the West Road segment in Beaver Bay is complete. We expect that construction will begin next summer, but are awaiting approval of a shared use agreement with MnDOT's Beaver River Bridge project. The bridge has historical value and a cultural resource study

was necessary. Reconstruction is to be completed by FY 2016/17.

The Cutface Creek Wayside Rest to Grand Marais trail corridor has been laid out. Portions of the trail alignment will be within the MnDOT Hwy 61 right-of-way, but the trail will also utilize terrain features that veer into Cascade River State Park, as well as other state lands located outside the right-of-way. The idea is to create an unforgettable experience for trail users, and our hike of the proposed corridor proved this will be the case.

The Town of Tofte is working with the ARDC and others in planning the GGST connection through town to link the Schroeder-

to-Tofte and Tofte-to-Lutsen trail sections. A federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) award has been secured for the planning. We hope the design is finalized soon so that construction can be commenced by 2018.

There is much interest in getting planning underway for the Silver Bay to Tettegouche State Park segment, now that the new rest area/park headquarters at the park has been completed. This segment will connect the trailhead in Silver Bay to the rest area.

Enjoy the trail and stay safe!

~Mark Rudningen, DNR
Trail Development Specialist

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Winter party (and Annual Meeting)! End your day of fun in the snow on Saturday, January 16 (MLK weekend), by joining us at the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association Annual Meeting at Tettegouche State Park Visitor Center. Socializing, with hot cider and après-ski and après-snowshoe treats, begins at 3 pm. Then get the latest trail updates and see the video handiwork of the talented technical wizards at the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission. Learn about volunteer opportunities — such as filling an opening on the GGTA board of directors. All are welcome. *See you there!*

Bikers enjoy the 15th Annual GGTA North Shore Ride



Bikes and bikers as far as the eye can see at Gooseberry Falls

Early Saturday morning, August 15th, volunteers from the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association arrived at Gooseberry Falls State Park to set up canopies and tables, and put out registration materials, snacks, and water. Mark Spinler, of Superior North Outdoor Center in Grand Marais, retrieved pumps and tools from his van to help bikers with last-minute repairs. Meanwhile, many of the 127 cyclists who participated in the 15th Annual GGTA North Shore Ride had already unloaded their bikes, bags, and helmets and were ready to go even before the registration team was ready. But none wanted to miss the table where the youngest volunteers handed out ride t-shirts, featuring the illustrated map created by Grand Marais artist Katherine Hellner. Everyone enjoyed socializing with other riders at the Beaver Bay rest stop, this year at the beautiful new wayside. More adventurous riders continued from there on the 37-mile route utilizing the Silver Bay trail section, or the 55-mile route past Lax Lake to Hwy 1, featuring challenging climbs. Warm sunshine made the ride especially enjoyable. Mark your calendars for the 16th Annual Ride, August 19, 2016!



Bikers set out on 28-, 37-, or 55-mile loops on a warm, sun-dappled North Shore day



T-shirt brigade (l to r): Bergen Hubley; Apple, Zoe, and Mauren Pierson



Cameron, Bergen, and Andy Hubley are all smiles on the trail to Beaver Bay

Membership has its privileges!

Please join or renew your membership in the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association. Your membership dues are tax-deductible, and your contributions are put to good use — paying for professional help with our efforts to fund the development and construction of the Gitchi-Gami State Trail through legislation and grants, promoting the trail and supporting publications, subsidizing the annual ride, and assisting with trail maintenance and special projects through our collaboration with the DNR. Most important, with your help, we were able to contract with our great partner, the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, for the indispensable administrative services of executive director Michelle Pierson, ARDC Planning Assistant.

As a member, you are entitled to a substantial discount on the annual ride fee, as well as the knowledge that you are helping fund the GGST — a vital recreational resource.

Send your membership contribution in the enclosed envelope, join online through website links at www.ggta.org, or include the GGTA when you “give to the Max”!



Give to the Max!

Are you one of the many generous Minnesotans who contribute to your favorite causes on “Give to the Max Day” — November 12 this year — maybe doing all of your year-end donations on that day?

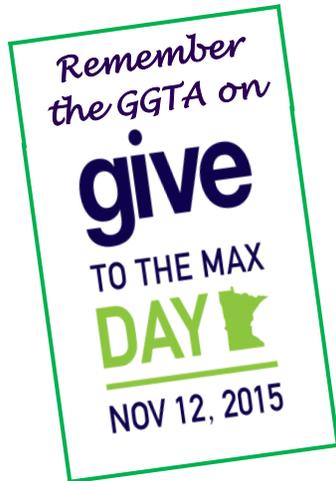
Please consider adding a GGTA membership to your donation list. You can access the GGTA GiveMN page by searching for “ggta” at the “donate” link on the website, www.givemn.org.



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Gitchi-Gami Trail News & Notes

Scoping Project

The Gitchi-Gami State Trail Scoping Project undertaken by the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) will result in a thorough geographic information systems (GIS) analysis of the trail corridor. This information will provide precise measurement of existing trail and the proposed trail alignment, including challenges that can be anticipated with future construction. The project is scheduled to be completed this year. We expect an accurate and up-to-date breakdown of trail segments can be prepared when the project is complete. Watch for information on our website and our Facebook page and in the next issue of the newsletter.

Trail usage counts

The ARDC, in collaboration with the GGTA, MnDOT, the DNR, the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, and Cook County Moving Matters, completed a trail usage monitoring project this past summer, using sophisticated infrared equipment to count bicycle and pedestrian traffic at various points along the trail. The ARDC is compiling the data collected and preparing a report of findings. The ARDC is also seeking a grant to continue the trail monitoring in 2016. The results will assist trail partners with effective planning and management of the GGST. The report on last summer's results will be posted online this month at www.arrowheadplanning.org/ggstcount.



Trail usage counting stanchions in place



Collecting trail usage data