

Bethel

*A Community
That Cares*

2020 Nature Trails Proposal

Bethel Trail System Proposal



Position statements:

- Public outdoor spaces are a commodity in our country – now like never before
- Bethel residents have asked for trails that connect us to each other and nature. And this is a part of our city development plan
- We have public and city land around us that is not easily accessible or navigable for our residents, today

About how the proposed “Nature Trails” work:

- Sustainable paths with minimum implementation and usage impacts to the environment
- Completely natural surface wherever possible. Most often a single walking path in width. Much like a deer or horse path, only well marked
- Unidirectional loops where possible, making the experience feel private
- Multi use – Wildlife watchers, Mountain bikers, Hikers, Trail Runners, Cross Country school teams, etc.
- Can be closed and/or marked as needed to not interfere with hunting seasons

Two Primary Goals Emerge:

1. Establish connecting nature trails for our residents to easily access and enjoy!
2. Establish Bethel as a premier city for nature enthusiasts, hikers, bikers, and trail runners.

Proposed - Bethel Nature Trail Network ~10 miles

Bethel Wildlife Mgmt. Area Trail 2-3 miles???

Gravel 1mi

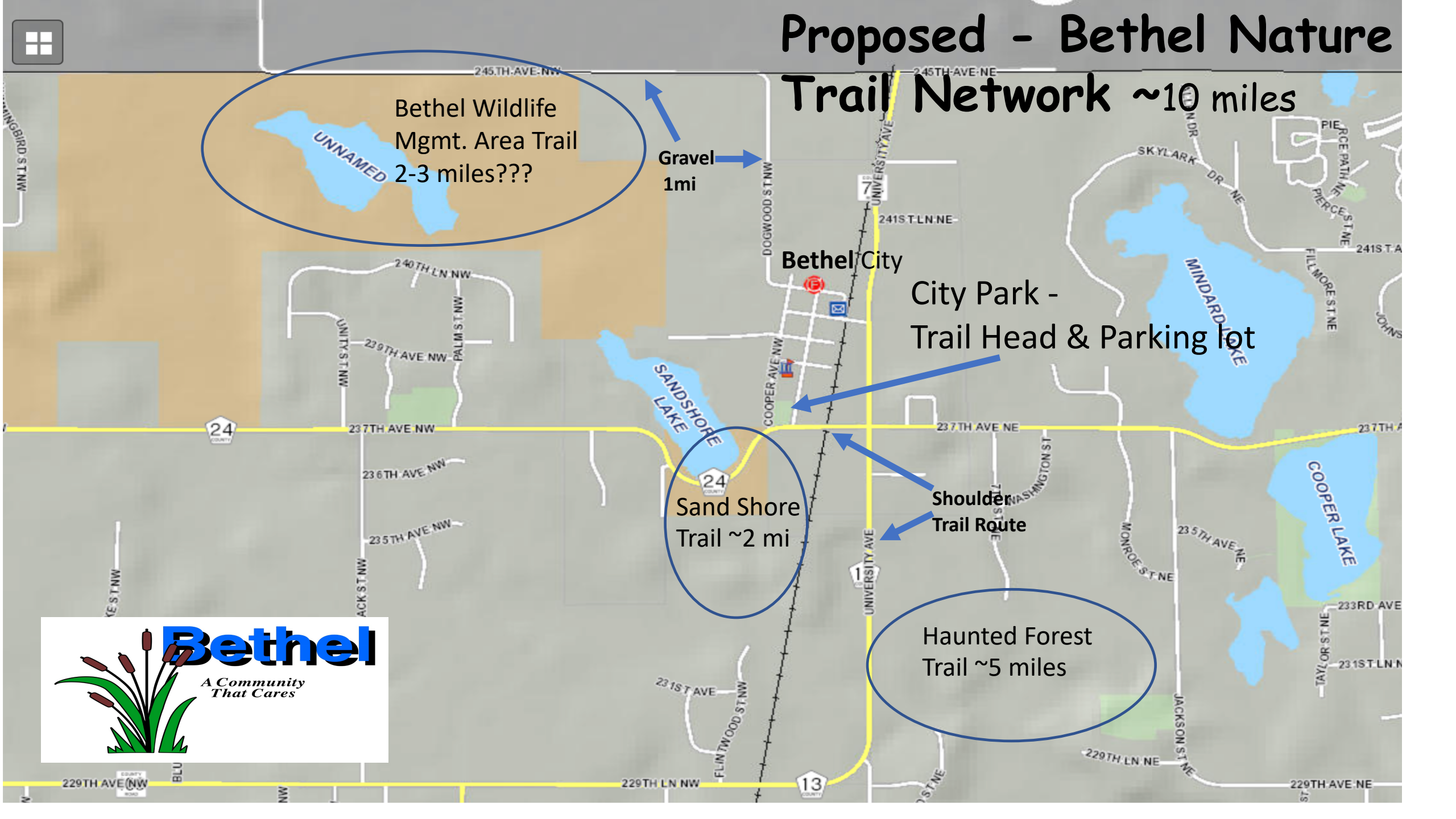
Bethel City

City Park - Trail Head & Parking lot

Sand Shore Trail ~2 mi

Shoulder Trail Route

Haunted Forest Trail ~5 miles



Bethel Wildlife
Mgmt.

Gravel
Route 1mi



Bethel City

City Park -
Trail Head



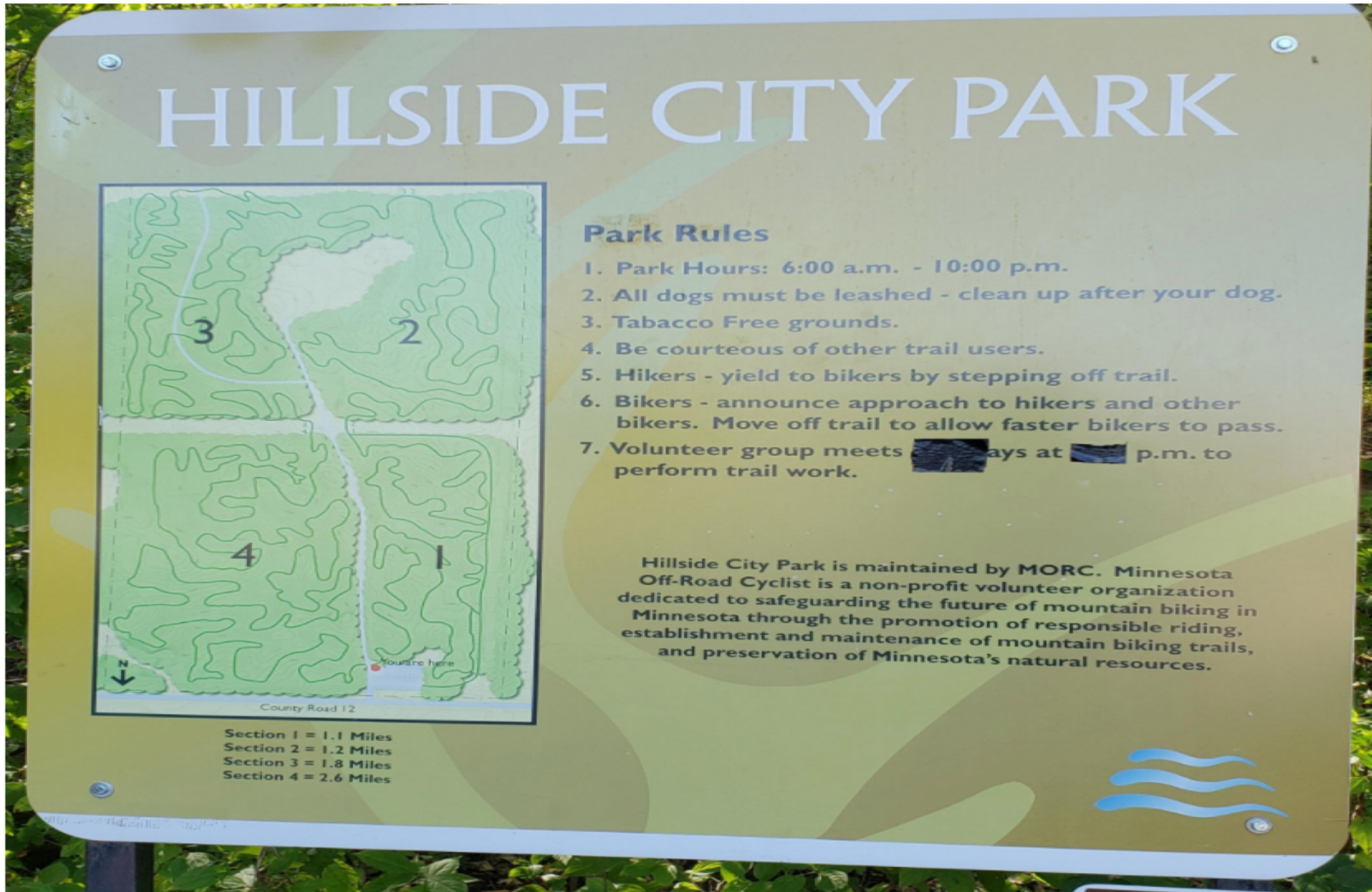
Sand Shore

Shoulder
Trail Route

Haunted Forest



Example Trailhead Signage



Trail head signs



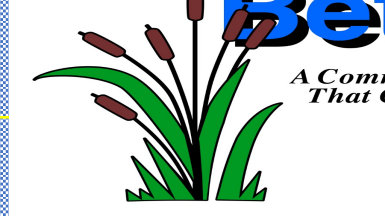
On-trail Signs





Proposed
Sandshore Trail





Bethel Haunted Forest – 2.15 miles to date

Process to make this happen for Bethel-

1. Conduct online and walking site surveys to identify *possible* trail sites that could total up to at least 10 miles - Complete for 3 trails that could encompass a 10 +mile network
2. Garner State, County, East Bethel and DNR support for use of park lands and shoulders with city planner – In process - thank you Nate
3. Determine MORC and other potential trail organization involvements – In process
4. Determine the position on city owned Haunted Forest Land – This is simply the largest (usable) *and* most diverse parcel we have to work with
5. Establish a trail club to maintain trails – In process
6. Establish trails
 1. Plan routes
 2. Clear downfall and brush as required
 3. Haunted forest – Assess and commence any logging opportunities
 4. Add minimal bridges/crossings as needed to not disturb wet areas
 5. Establish a pathway – Simply by raking/blowing leaves in most cases
7. Install signage for trails and trail head parking
8. Publish maps to our residents and online
9. Trail network grand opening - before July 4^{th.}, 2020 - goal





Measurements of Success:

- Trail network is built and trail signage is complete, maps are published to our residents and online
- City Park is established as the primary Trail Head
- We witness our residents outside enjoying our wetlands, grasslands, and forests in nature
- The Bethel City Park parking lot is full of cars on most weeknights and weekends – 1000s of visitors/year
- Hikers and bikers are seen walking/riding through town and frequenting the Brewery and Bar/Restaurant.
- Housing market and business climate in and around Bethel improves. See impact studies for Cuyuna, Copper Harbor, Duluth, and other cities.
- Bethel is ranked as one of the top 10 nature trail destinations in the TC metro. Currently 13 cities with significant trails– NONE in north metro
- Phase 1 cost to City – *Possibly some signage and building materials and city planning*

Future Revenue Sources for State, DNR and City

- Hikers and bikers do not typically pay for day-to-day access. However, events can be conducted to drive revenue
- Admissions can be charged for events such as organized/guided walks/runs/rides and races
- Proceeds can be given to the state, DNR and city
- Allowing a 2 - 3 year “ramp-up” period from the date trails open until the 1st event would allow time for fully establishing the trail club and maintenance disciplines

What is needed from the city to get this thing off the ground?

- City planner time commitment to determine feasibility and process for trail access approvals with State, County, DNR, and East Bethel.
- Possibly some of City Maintenance time and use of equipment
- Minimal funds as we move along <\$2000
- Minimum 3 year time commitment to retain Haunted Forest land

