











MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT IN ELY, MINNESOTA



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WHO WE ARE – ELY NORDIC SKI & BIKE CLUB

ABOUT THE ELY NORDIC SKI & BIKE CLUB

The Ely Nordic Ski & Bike Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization run by volunteers.

We focus our efforts towards the Hidden Valley Recreation Area located on the east end of Ely, Minnesota. As a club, we are responsible for building & maintaining the Hidden Valley Recreation Area trail system for year-round use, single-track mountain bike trails, as well as maintaining and managing the Hidden Valley Chalet and facilities. While open to the public, this trail system is most heavily used by youth programs such as: the Ely Nordic Wolves ski team and the Team Borealis Mountain biking team. The club also offers scholarship support to youth athletes involved in the ski and bike teams.



THE VISION – PROJECT OVERVIEW

For many years, a group of local mountain bike enthusiasts knew that Ely, Minnesota could be a unique mountain bike destination. The varied topography and geology, combined with mostly very well drained soil, is an exceptional combination in the region. This combination along with the natural beauty of the northern landscape, set the stage for a phenomenal mountain biking venue. Hidden Valley, already a hub for recreational activities year-round, provides an excellent site for the development of mountain bike trail systems. In addition to the aforementioned physical terrain attributes, infrastructure such as a parking area, chalet, and outdoor toilets - key pieces for a successful venue - are already in place. As well as the extraordinary terrain, Ely draws riders to the area for many other reasons. A strong tourism infrastructure is in place already, providing visitors with many restaurants, lodging, bars, shopping opportunities and festivals to experience. These amenities enhance and embolden the experience and in turn, play a significant factor in a rider's decision as to where they take their bike trips. The addition of mountain bike trails to an already diverse set of recreational opportunities has been a great asset to the town and the surrounding areas, making Ely a very attractive destination. Seeing the potential and opportunity of bringing mountain biking to the area, in 2019 the City of Ely requested Dirt Candy Designs LLC to lay out a 10-20 mile long trail system at Hidden Valley Recreation Area. The trail system has been designed and purpose built for mountain biking and fat biking in the winter. All trails are singletrack and directional. The project has progressed in two phases.

Phase One - 9.4 miles of this trail system was completed in September, 2022.

Phase Two – design is complete and fundraising is currently underway to build an additional 9+ miles of trails.



TIMELINE – PHASE ONE

2019 – approximately 9.4 miles of trails were designed by Adam Harju of Dirt Candy Designs. Design was approved by City of Ely, MN DNR, St. Louis County, and the United States Forest Service.

Expenses:

2019 – 1K Skills loop - \$30,626

Phase One design: \$11,762

2021 – Construction of loops A,B,C,D: \$314,111

2021 – Construction administrator, Kay-Linn Enterprises :\$18,000

2021 – Winter grooming machine and signage: \$5,262

2022 – Construction of loop E: \$79,867

Environmental work: \$4,591

DNR Lease: \$38,751

Total cost of Phase One : **\$502,970**

Revenue:

Donations: \$9,950

Federal Recreational Trails Program: \$150,000

IRRRB

- Skills loop: \$20,000 (1:1)
- Loops A,B,C,D: \$190,000(1:1),
- Loop E: \$15,989 (1:1)

City of Ely

- Skills loop construction: \$13,538
- Environmental work: \$4,591
- DNR lease: \$38,751
- Signs: \$262

Ely Nordic Ski and Bike Club: \$60,000 (includes matching grant being accessed by City of Ely)

Total revenue raised for Phase One: **\$503,071**



TIMELINE – PHASE TWO

PHASE TWO – ultimate goal is 9-9.5 miles.

Currently 5.4 miles have been designed utilizing terrain at three different locations: Hidden Valley, MN North College - Vermilion, and the U.S. Forest Service Building located on the east end of Ely. These designs are shovel ready.

MN North College – Vermilion was selected as a trail site for a number of reasons. The location of trails next door to VCC adds recruiting appeal to potential students, and makes possible additional course offerings in trail design and maintenance. Placement of mt. biking trails here also allows the linkage of trails from west to east within the town when utilizing the Mesabi Trail. 2 miles of trails have been designed at this location.

USFS Building – 1 mile of trail has been designed on land adjacent to the USFS Building, which will connect to the trails at Vermilion. There will also be a connecting trail from the USFS Building site to Hidden Valley Recreation Area.

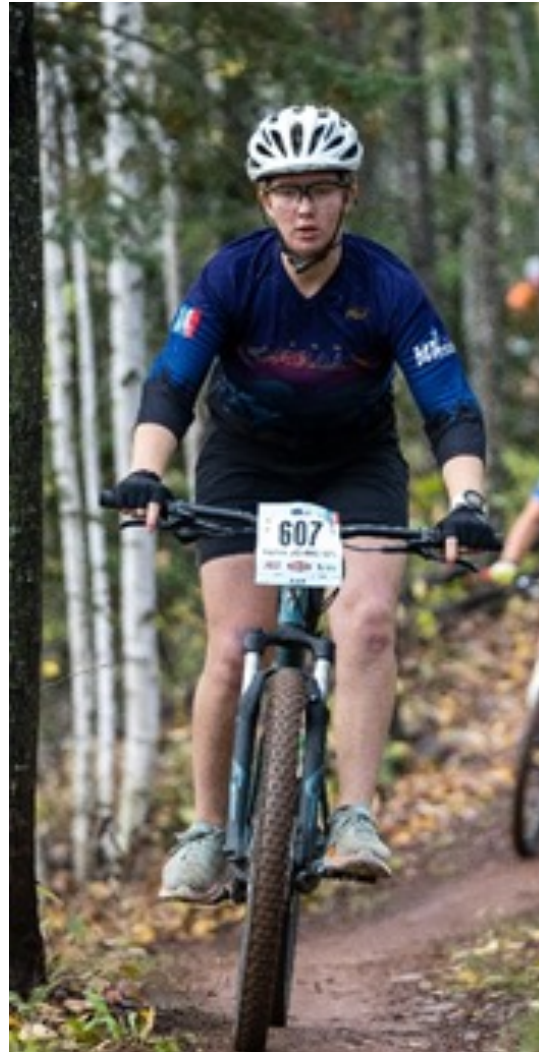
Hidden Valley Recreation Area – An additional 3.4 miles have been designed at Hidden Valley which connect to the existing trails.

CURRENT STATUS OF TRAILS

PHASE ONE WAS COMPLETED SEPT. 31, 2022. IT IS LOCATED AT HIDDEN VALLEY RECREATION AREA WHICH IS LOCATED ON THE EDGE OF ELY, APPROXIMATELY 2 MILES FROM THE CITY CENTER.

IT INCLUDES:

- 1 kilometer skills loop
- 5 loops of varying skill levels (A,B,C,D,E) totaling 9.4 miles of single track.
- Free to all users
- E-bikes are allowed



THERE ARE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIKING IN AND AROUND THE ELY AREA:

- The Mesabi Trail, a paved bike trail going from Grand Rapids, MN to Ely, MN for a total of 145 miles.
- The single-track mt. bike trails at Hidden Valley (Phase One – 9.4 miles plus 1 k skills loop).

WITH THE COMPLETION OF PHASE TWO, ALL OF THESE TRAILS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE LINKED.

TRAIL USERS



Open to public use

- 1500 estimated visitors in 2nd year
- Groomed for fat biking and snow shoeing during winter

YOUTH USERS

Team BOREALIS – 6-12 grade XC race team – see following slide

Ely Community Resources offers a spring and fall bike club for students in grades 3-5 -see following slide

Utilized by local youth camps

- Rock Ridge Christian Camp
- YMCA Camp Northern Lights



TEAM BOREALIS

Team BOREALIS is a 6th – 12th grade mountain bike team serving the communities of Ely, Babbitt, Tower, and surrounding area. A member of the Minnesota Cycling Association (formerly part of NICA), Team BOREALIS is committed to providing opportunities for community youth to learn and grow as individuals and develop strength of mind, body, spirit, and character through mountain biking.

2021 – Inaugural year – 8 riders participated in 5 NICA races throughout MN

2022 – the team's 2nd year – 17 registered riders scheduled for 5 MCA races throughout MN

The team practices at the Hidden Valley trails 4 days a week from August through October.

Discussions with MCA to hold a youth race at Hidden Valley are ongoing



ELY COMMUNITY RESOURCE BIKE CLUB

ECR OFFERS A SPRING AND FALL MOUNTAIN BIKING CLUB FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 3-5.

ELY COMMUNITY RESOURCE fosters positive youth development through activities designed to increase self esteem, build a sense of community, and provide positive adult relationships that allow effective interventions. ECR's vision is to be a primary resource to Ely area youth and to help in building a community equipped to make Ely a great place to grow up.





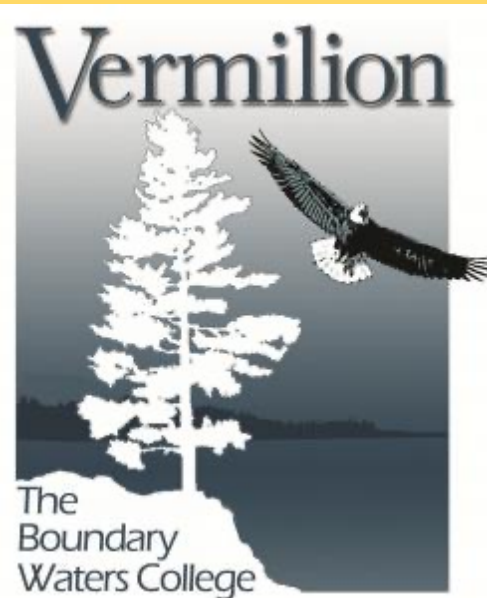
EVENTS

Ely Nordic Ski and Bike Club has extensive experience organizing and hosting races. Ski races, running races and fat bike races have all been held at Hidden Valley in the past. One of the goals for the mountain bike trails is to hold single-track mountain biking events at Hidden Valley, both citizen races and high school races. The first citizen race mountain bike series was launched on May 29, 2023.



SUPPORTERS OF THE TRAILS

Trail supporters: City of Ely, St. Louis County, Vermilion Community College (now renamed MN North College – Vermilion), MN DNR, US Forest Service, IRRRB, Ely Nordic Ski and Bike Club.



PHASE TWO FUNDRAISING GOALS

5.4 miles have been designed and are shovel-ready. \$15,000 has been raised. Total cost for the 5.4 miles is approximately \$300,000. If 25% of this amount is raised, there are IRRRB and Federal Trail Grants available for the final 75%. The goal is to raise approximately \$60,000.





ABOUT ELY, MINNESOTA

- Ely is roughly 112 miles north of Duluth and only fifteen miles as the crow flies from the Canadian border. It is at the northeastern end of the Mesabi Trail and is surrounded by the beautiful [Superior National Forest](#), which contains 2,021 pristine lakes. Within the forest and on three sides of Ely is the magnificent one million acre [Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness](#) (BWCAW) which is why Ely is sometimes referred to as “the canoeing capital of the world.” The BWCAW is one of earth’s last great unspoiled frontiers and boasts more than 10 hiking trails, 2,000 designated campsites, and 1,200 miles of canoe routes.
- Modern day Ely has a population of approximately 3,500 people and is home to Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital, Ely Memorial High School, Washington Elementary School, Vermilion Community College, Ely’s Historic State Theater, the Ely Public Library, churches of various denominations, and museums. Ely also has a thriving community of artists and crafters.
- Internationally renowned National Geographic photographer Jim Brandenburg lives in Ely. Actress Jessica Biel was born in Ely.

TOP ATTRACTIONS:

- North American Bear Center, International Wolf Center, Dorothy Molter Root beer Lady Museum, Ely-Winton Historical Society, and Kawishiwi Falls. Outdoor enthusiasts come year-round to enjoy exploring the forest on the many biking, hiking, dogsledding, and ATV/snowmobile trails, and lakes. Boating is allowed on nearby lakes, but the BWCAW is for non-motorized visitors only.



OUR DESIGNERS AND BUILDERS

Designer and builders:
Adam and Mica Harju
Dirt Candy Designs
P.O. Box 111, Grand Marais, MN 55604
218-370-1124



Builder: Pathfinder Trail Building
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR
CONSIDERATION!

