

• Heart of Vilas Trails

• Wilderness Lakes Trails

• Great Headwaters Trails

• Three Eagle Trail

• Bearskin State Trail

Growing the county's unique, powerful economic asset

The map above shows the extensive bike-ped trail picture for the Vilas County area. It shows an advantageous reality that no county north of Hwy 29 and few counties in the whole state can match. It's a picture that **Great Headwaters Trails (GHT)** has spent a decade improving upon.

Things are on the upswing when it comes to helping people of all ages ride a bike or take a walk in the eastern Vilas County area, and that's good news for everyone.

Here is some information about the work of Great Headwaters Trails, about the important **River Trail** project now underway, and about the **Conover-Phelps Trail** which being completed this summer:

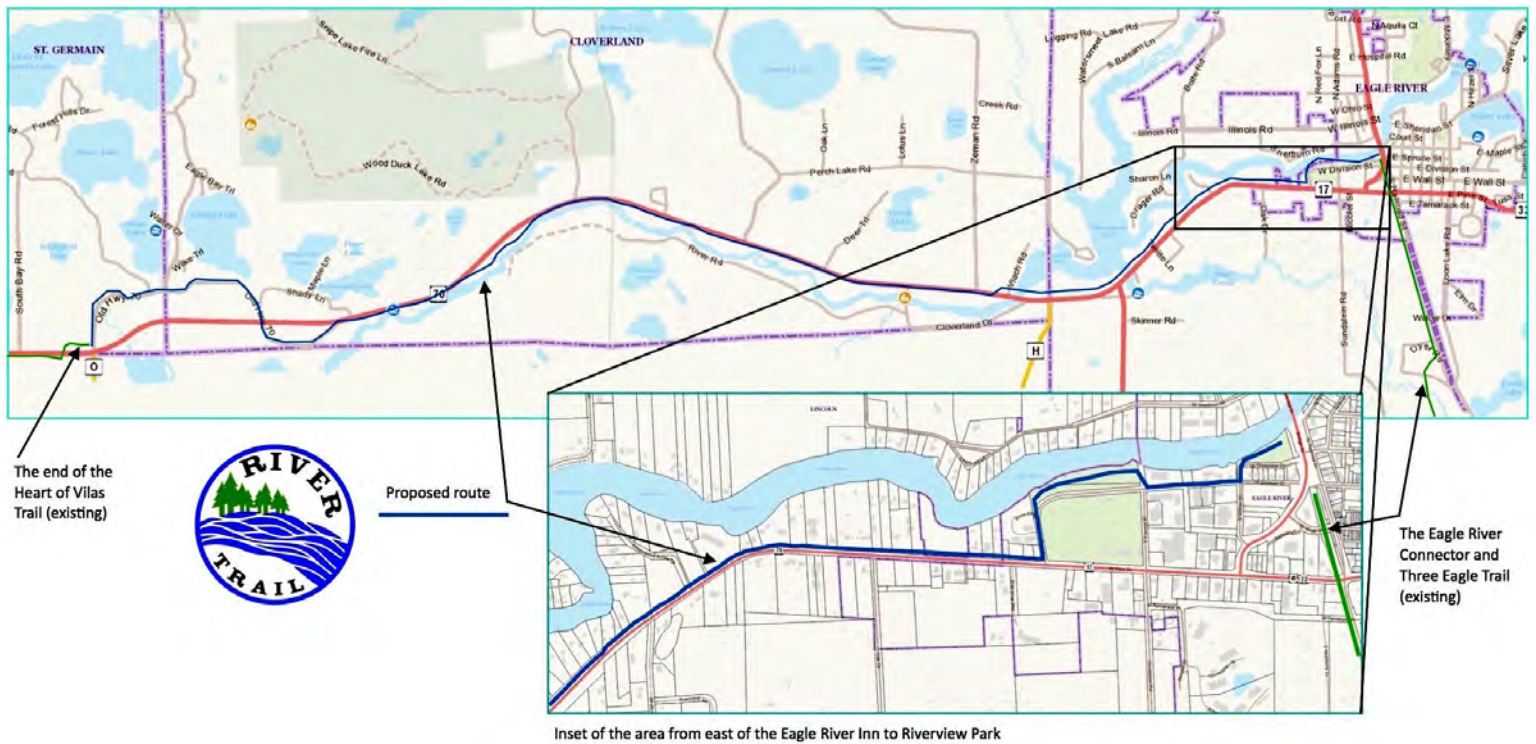
Great Headwaters Trails (GHT) is a local, all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) organization. Since forming in 2010, GHT has...

- Helped raise over \$2 million for area trail development.

- Raised over \$29,000 of that amount in partnership with the Eagle River Area Chamber of Commerce putting on the popular **Sep Timber Ride** for the last 5 years.
- Raised over \$5,000 for the Conover-Phelps Trail putting on the **Don Gillum Memorial Bike and Hike** for the last 2 years in partnership with Relay for Life of the Northwoods.
- Helped the towns of **Conover** and **Phelps** complete their 10.6-mile biking and walking trail. Ribbon-cutting this summer!
- Helped the **City of Eagle River** get a start on planning and signing on-street bike routes in the city.
- Worked with the Three Eagle Trail Foundation and Tara Lila, LLC, to install the **Eagle River Connector** to make it safer and more convenient for bike riders and walkers to come right into downtown Eagle River from the Three Eagle Trail.
- And, in 2018, started working with the multi-jurisdictional **River Trail Commission** to develop the 10-mile **River Trail**.



5/19/2021



About the River Trail Project

For more than a decade, residents and officials in Eagle River, Lincoln, Cloverland and St. Germain have been informally discussing a biking and walking trail to connect all four towns and extend the nationally recognized Heart of Vilas Trail System. With the 2018 formation of the River Trail Commission and its partnership with Great Headwaters Trails, it's time to make that connection happen.

The River Trail will be a paved, off-road trail for people of all ages to use on foot or on bikes. At its western end the trail will start on the northwest corner of Hwy 70 and Cty O where the bike-ped trail coming out of St Germain now ends. It will head east from there for 10 miles, ending at a Riverview Park trailhead in Eagle River. This will connect Eagle River, the Three Eagle Trail and the Town of Three Lakes into the Heart of Vilas walking and biking trail system (the burnt orange line on the page 1 map). That system is already 55-miles long running from St Germain through Sayner, Boulder Junction, and Manitowish Waters and on to Mercer.

The River Trail will add 10 miles and connect Eagle River into the HoV. The trail will be close to the Wisconsin River for much of its route, making it a beautiful place for a ride or a stroll. It will include parking areas and waysides to complement and enhance access to the recreational opportunities already presented by the river, like fishing, boating and tubing.

At its eastern end, the trail will give residents along busy Hwy 70 near Eagle River a safe place to walk or bike into town. The 10 foot wide asphalt path will provide for convenient travel to visit neighbors, get to places of worship, and go to businesses along the way.

Overall, the River Trail will add a convenient amenity for community members, and a powerful draw for visitors and for people considering the area as a place to settle down. It will also be good economic news for private property owners and businesses.

The River Trail Commission is a multi-jurisdictional body whose purpose is to build, operate and maintain a biking and walking trail to connect and serve the communities of Eagle River, Lincoln, Cloverland and St. Germain. The Commission is composed of supervisors from the towns of Cloverland (Joe Spitz) and St Germain (Jim Swenson) and an alderman from the City of Eagle River (Ron Kressin). The Commission meets bi-monthly at the Cloverland Town Hall, 5860 Perch Lake Rd.

Great Headwaters Trails is working with the River Trail Commission in the same manner that it has worked with the towns of Phelps and Conover to build their bike-ped trail over the last 9 years. Fundraising and route planning are key roles that the local nonprofit takes on for the Commission. GHT has also begun reaching out to property owners along the trail's route to explain more about the project and explore how everyone can work together to make it happen.

MSA Professional Services, was hired by GHT to complete a detailed Feasibility Study for the project. It is based on field work done in 2018 and the conceptual plan that GHT developed several years ago, a plan that was reviewed favorably by the DOT and DNR. MSA's study will facilitate further coordination with the DOT and DNR, as well as with stakeholders like the towns and local property owners.

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