


The question continues to be ...
Can folks in an all-volunteer organization work effectively with local officials and gather enough community support to bring eastern Vilas County more biking and walking trails?
Looking ahead to 2024, the answer is a definite



Great
Headwaters
Trails

2023
Update
and
Appeal

Yes!



Vulnerable road users - That is what these two boys are as they ride against traffic on STH 70 just west of Eagle River. The River Trail is about giving them and everybody else a safe place to ride and walk off the highway. Envision it: a paved 10' wide path about 15 feet to their left.

Happy trail users - These folks are enjoying the Conover-Phelps Trail during last summer's Ride with Leinie. That popular event will be on July 27 in 2024. GHT's other major fundraising event, SepTimber Ride, will be on Sept. 14. More details at ghtrails.org.




Dear GHT supporter,

First, a big thank you for all you have done to help GHT be an effective builder of and advocate for biking and walking trails in eastern Vilas County. In 2023...

- GHT put on two successful ride events: The midsummer Ride with Leinie and the fall SepTimber Ride each drew almost 400 people!
- Building the important River Trail became a bit more daunting. Last June the Eagle River City Council voted to truncate the proposed route along the STH 70 corridor due to misinformation about safety. Since then GHT has steadfastly worked to clear up those misunderstandings. See the other side for more information.
- We've recently scoped out a possible addition to the Conover-Phelps Trail. The two-mile addition would connect Conover to the new county campground at Torch Lake.

The goal of this year's appeal is **\$50,000**. To get things rolling, the GHT board and several generous supporters have created a **\$25,000 Challenge Fund**. Help us meet the challenge and achieve our goal!

Thank you,


Jeff Currie
Executive director

Enhancing a trail, building a trail, increasing our advocacy - Help us do more in 2024!

- ☐ Use \$ _____ of my donation to keep the ball rolling on developing the River Trail!
- ☐ Use \$ _____ of my donation to expand and enhance the Conover-Phelps Trail!
- ☐ Use \$ _____ of my donation to help GHT continue to be a strong advocate for biking and walking trails in Vilas County so it can help towns develop future trails!
- ☐ My company/employer has a Matching Gift Program. Company name - _____

Name _____ Phone(s) _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

E-mail address (Please print clearly!) _____

How would you like your name(s) to be listed as a donor? _____

Is your gift being made ☐ in honor of or ☐ in memory of someone? Please provide the person's name below:

Please make your check payable to "Great Headwaters Trails" or "GHT."

Send it with this completed form to Great Headwaters Trails, P.O. Box 609, Eagle River, WI 54521

You can also donate online at ghtrails.org. Your contribution is tax deductible to the furthest extent under the law.

The Great Headwaters Trails Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit corporation.

What's ahead for the River Trail project

GHT is working hard to provide crucial resources to our River Trail Commission partners, but Eagle River and Cloverland are not being useful partners to each other.

The central problem is that they are forgetting about the power of the “River Trail team” (the Commission and GHT) when it works together in a committed way. The two municipalities are letting themselves be distracted about

what can be accomplished by building the River Trail.

GHT is staying the course. Our official statement on the situation is that “We are disappointed in the recent actions of the Eagle River City Council and the Lincoln and Cloverland Town Boards. We feel that their decision to step back from support of the River Trail Project as proposed is an

unfortunate distraction that can be overcome. Therefore, GHT will continue to work with the River Trail Commission, community members and organizations who share our belief that completion of the River Trail as proposed is in the best interest of the overall community.”

Acting to clarify the confusion over the best route for the trail, three GHT volunteers have used the last month to collect data on the key attributes of three options: the Central Route (the one for which a professional feasibility study was conducted in late 2019), a Northern Route using CTH G, and a Southern Route in the corridor made by a utility easement to accommodate power lines. Their work provides a quantifiable way to compare the options.

And the results?

The Central Route is the least costly option, the easiest to build option, and the option that most fully meets the goals of the River Trail project. You can get more details on the study group’s findings and recent River Trail Commission actions on our website at ghtrails.org.

Be an advocate

Strategically and frequently be in touch with county or town officials to remind them of the importance of the River Trail and the need for us all to work together to get it built. Talk to your your neighbors and friends about doing this too. Find information to help you be an advocate at ghtrails.org.

Preparing for 2024 and beyond

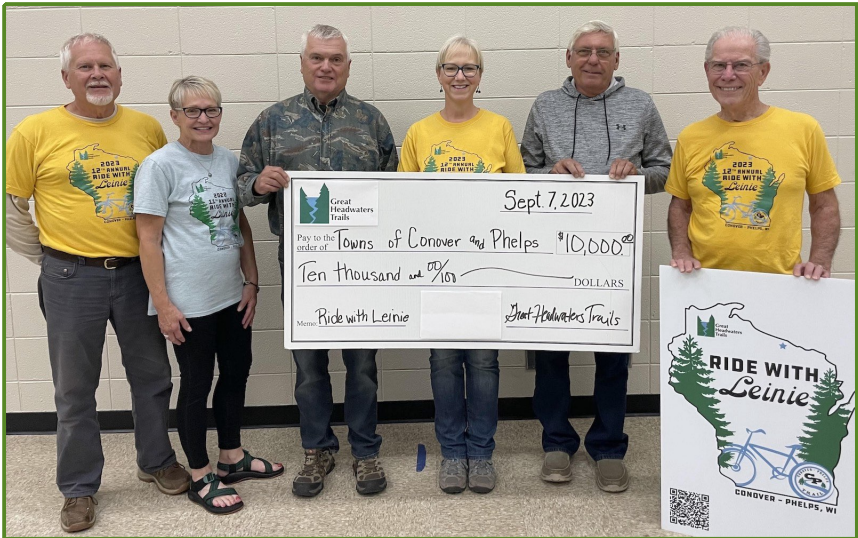
Help add muscle to GHT

Great Headwaters Trails has accomplished a lot since 2010:

- Brought together almost \$3 million for trail building.
- Played a crucial role in developing the trail that now connects Conover and Phelps.
- Set a strong foundation for building the River Trail to connect St. Germain and Eagle River. Since 2019, \$45,000 has been spent on the professional feasibility study and on a market study to prepare for obtaining easements. GHT’s current assets are \$380,725, and \$200,964 of that is restricted for further measures to build the trail.

To build the River Trail, though, GHT has to get stronger and bigger.

In conjunction with this need, we’re working on strategic planning with volunteer facilitator



Helping take care of the Conover-Phelps Trail - From the proceeds of this year’s Ride with Leinie, GHT gifted \$5,000 each to the towns of Conover and Phelps to support care and enhancement of their trail. Accepting the checks were Phelps Town Supervisor David Selby (third from the left) and Conover Town Chair Dale Mayo (second from the right).

Dick Leinenkugel, newly retired from being president of Leinenkugel Brewing Co. and a strong advocate for the River Trail.

In addition to renewed strategies, GHT is reaching out to seek the talents and commitment of more people who share our passion to help bring more biking and walking infrastructure to

Eastern Vilas County.

We’re reaching out to you, actually.

If you or someone you know can help with fundraising, provide additional social media or website expertise or add to our strength as a trail building non-profit in any way, please let us know. And if you have questions let us know that too. Email or call Jeff Currie at ghtrails@gmail.com, 715-617-0080.

Pitch in to match this year’s \$25,000 Challenge Fund!

There are many ways to give...

- Write a check to Great Headwaters Trails
- Donate online
- Establish a recurring donation
- Set up a pledge plan
- Donate publicly held stocks
- Use your IRA distributions to build a legacy and set up qualified charitable distributions (QCDs)

And many ways to help!

- Be an active advocate for the River Trail project.
- Become a Friend of the Conover-Phelps Trail or a Friend of the River Trail
- Contribute your time and professional expertise to help us with grant writing, marketing, accounting and more.

Prefer to donate online?



Do that and find out more about GHT. Scan the QR code or go to ghtrails.org.

Promising C-P Trail developments

GHT volunteers were on the railroad grade south of CTH K recently to check out the conceptual plan for a Torch Lake extension of the Conover-Phelps Trail. We’ll be working with Conover and the county in the coming year to see how the plan develops.

By next spring we plan to have “You-are-here” signage posted at key spots along the 11 miles of existing trail.

Also, a permanent, complete “Yard & Mile Club” list is expected to be posted at the Conover and Phelps trailheads by next spring. It’s a well-deserved thank you to all those whose donations helped build the trail.