

The Trail Takes Twists And Turns

By Bob Heffner
(Pres. Rice Lake Trails Foundation)

A summary of efforts to extend CedarSide Trail

Editor's Note

This account is not intended to be an official report of the city's efforts to expand its CedarSide Trail system, but rather a narrative of the numerous stumbling blocks encountered by the author and others in adding a mile of pedestrian and biking trail to the existing system.

Dates are at times "circa" such as summer being sometime from May to August. Pitfalls at times came from rules or rule changes by government agencies overseeing the project, as might be anticipated, while others resulted from differences between departments within the city.

The six-year process resembled a snowplow after a huge blizzard: ramming ahead into the pile, only to be forced to back up and make another, and another run at the mass that blocked the way.

Acknowledgements

Many are the individuals, organizations and firms that had a hand in providing the new extension to CedarSide Trail. There were donors who gave anywhere from \$50 to \$5,000 and many of those contributions were made several years ago and they may be wondering what happened to the project. The three \$5,000 contributors should be especially noted: Rice Lake Glass & Door, Rice Lake Mens Club and the Rice Lake Kiwanis Club.

A special thanks is due the businesses who provided easements to make the route possible, G.B. Herrons, White Pine Gallery, Dahl Studio, Jason DeRousseau and F/G Products, along with Hugh and Karen Mommsen, The Park Board which consistently backed efforts to move forward and Bill Sanders of Sanders, Wacker and Bergly who patiently tried to work with the city as it changed courses numerous times. Thanks, too, to the City Council and Rice Lake Utilities which provided some extra funds in the end and to the Street Dept. which made sure the base materials over the storm sewer extension was top grade. It all helped to assure the trail was done properly.

A special thanks also to other members of the Trails Foundation. Mary Schnacky, treasurer, was host to the board meetings in her office and kept the financial records. To Nels Curnow, Wally Narins and Bjorn Hanson, the other board members, it was calls and letters to prospective donors and monthly meetings.

Most of the service clubs in the city participated in one way or another as did the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Commission, and the media in promoting fund-raising events.

To anyone who had a hand in getting this project completed, consider your contribution duly noted. Thanks, also, to Mike Heffner who put together the front page and did the photo layouts.

Introduction

The concept of pedestrian and biking trails in Rice Lake began in the 1980s when Hulda Hilfiker approached the City Fathers about constructing such a trail along the river from Main Street to Allen Street. The Parks and Rec Department investigated the possibility but ran into strenuous opposition from residents there who would be asked to provide easements, and the plan was dropped. But the idea and desire for such a trail system remained and efforts resumed about a decade later.

Rice Lake's original segment of CedarSide Trail was completed in 1998 after a six-year effort under the auspices of the Rice Lake Rotary Club. Many of the other local clubs, organizations and individuals were also involved in the effort which included fund-raising, legal work, and physical work. No city, state or federal grants were used.

The original 1.25-mile trail goes from GoodWill at Highway O on the south to Coleman St. on the north. The 10-ft wide scenic walkway runs along the Red Cedar River behind the WITC and UW-Center campuses and is used by hikers, bikers, rollerbladers and, in the winter, by skiers when there is sufficient snow fall.

The trail was turned over to the city in the fall of 1998 with a request by the Rice Lake Trails Foundation to extend it both to the north and the south, connecting some day the system from the Main Street Bridge to the south city limits. That is where this story begins. As envisioned, the first extension would go from Coleman Street north to Main and later, the southern extension would be built from GoodWill to the south city limits. This story explains the twists and turns and the peaks and valleys, both physical and emotional, the project took the past eight years.

Chapter I

“Let’s Keep Going!”

When the city accepted the 1.25 mile CedarSide Trail in the fall of 1998, the Rice Lake Trails Foundation urged the Parks and Rec Department to go after state and federal funds to extend the trail along the river. I was on the City Council and chairman of the Parks Board and supported the idea. The original concept was to divide the project into three phases: Phase I was the original trail. Phase II would be from Coleman to Main and Phase III from GoodWill to the south city limits.

The city applied for a study grant that fall and was successful, getting a \$40,000 state grant the next spring (the city’s share was \$8,000) to look at extending the pedestrian and bike facility. Interviews were held with four firms specializing in trail development and in the summer of 1999 the firm of Sanders, Wacker and Bergly of St. Paul was selected. It’s task was to look at alternative routes to build the trail to the Main Street Bridge, recommend a route, get any required easements and prepare an application for a federal grant for the selected route. The construction phase would follow under a separate grant.

Sanders, Wacker and Bergly hired Mike Korby, a former employee at Cooper Engineering in Rice Lake, to be its local liaison for the project. Mike and I, with the input of Glen Landis, trails specialist with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation at Superior, looked over and walked several potential routes, including one that would require an aerial bridge from the east side of the river just north of Coleman Street, across to Shudlick Park on the west side. The park would be a jumping off site for west side residents wishing to get on the trail. It would provide trail parking as well as a spot for regular park activities.

From Shudlick Park the trail could continue along the west side of the river to Main with a handful of easements required, or it could go up to Allen Street, then jog west a few feet to connect to Reuter Avenue where the trail would run in the street along the curb up to Messenger.

After looking at a variety of routes, we suggested trying to follow the river whenever possible, using a special bridge near the railroad trestle, and going

north to Messenger, then east to Main and down to the Main Street Bridge.

Even before attempting to get easements along the river, objections came from property owners along Messenger, including homeowners, a church and funeral home. They objected to losing parking stalls along Messenger.

After a public input meeting on that plan, we and the Park Board decided to look at another alternative. The most desirable would be follow the river whenever possible since it was called "CedarSide" Trail. It was possible to do that from Coleman Street to Allen, but north of there a mobile home park stood in the way.

In early 2000 we had a route that appeared would work. It went along the river to Allen, then east along the boulevard on Allen to the railroad tracks. On the east side of the tracks it would turn north behind the street department building (the new MarketPlace would come a short time later) and along the west side of Tate Park, turning east near the river and up to Main.

The plan went to the Park Board and we got the go-ahead to continue with getting easements and design. Initial discussions with property owners along the route were encouraging. The city owned the property at the southern end just north of Coleman, while others along the way were American Excelsior, Mastercraft, Barron County and an apartment complex owned by Bob Yarish and Lind Knudson.

The local manager at American Excelsior had no problem with the plan since the firm no longer stacked logs in that area. But he would have to have it approved by the full board and said he would bring it up at a meeting in Dallas, TX later that month.

Initial talks with local officials at Mastercraft were also hopeful, though they had some concerns. The County College Committee listened to the plan and it appeared would support the concept but would decide after looking at the final plan. The county owns what was once the Barron County College on Ann Street which later became the Ann street School used for special education classes.

Knudson and Yarish were supportive but as part of the easement, would like some help in getting a few more parking stalls for the apartment. A parking lot for the trail would abut their property and possibly an arrangement could be made to share some stalls.

As we moved into 2001, we continued to work on Mastercraft where one of the board members was not in favor of a trail going through the property. Mike and I attempted to set up a meeting with the full board to explain the project and how we could possibly resolve those issues. Several times we were on the board's monthly agenda only to be cancelled at the last minute.

As summer turned into fall of 2001, Mike and I became concerned that, due to lack of any progress, we could lose the study grant money. Maybe we should switch and build the south segment first. Then it was announced in August or early September that the mobile home park along the river just north of Allen Street was going to be closed. The park was owned by the heirs of the Johnston family, former owners of Mastercraft, and was to be sold to close the estate.

That made the decision easier to postpone our efforts to build the trail north and switch to Phase III, go south from GoodWill. There is a 50-foot conservancy along the river where the mobile homes were located and no permanent buildings could be erected there once the homes were moved. That meant it could be possible to use that conservancy for the trail and continue along the river instead of going behind the city shop and Tate Park.

So, with Park Board approval, and an infusion of another \$25,000 (part of the study grant money had been used in efforts to go to the north) we switched to Phase III.

Chapter II

“We Move to the South”

In September of 2001 Mike and I began the process all over again of trying to identify potential routes, this time on the south side. We looked at three or four possibilities, each with some positives and some negatives.

Our first choice was to continue the original trail from a point at the back side of GoodWill straight south and go under the two highway bridges at Highway O. Unfortunately the new bridge for the eastbound lanes was already underway and it was too late to include a trail going beneath it. While a special bridge for the trail could be built, it would be very expensive.

Just a quick estimate from those in the field put the price tag for the underpass at \$100,000. We had already gotten the word that the state was getting trail funding requests for far more money than it expected to receive from the federal coffers and we wanted our grant request to be reasonable and have the best chance of approval.

There was another reason we gave that route a lower score. We had just left the north effort because we could not get an easement. Going under the bridges and continuing along the river would have required several easements and we were a little gun-shy at that moment.

There was also another potential obstacle. Was there enough room under the bridges to accommodate a walk bridge?

To try to answer that question, Mike and I used a paddle boat to investigate. We put in behind UW-Center and paddled down the river to the Highway O bridges. Observing the high water mark left by the spring runoff the year before and knowing we needed nine feet of clearance, it appeared the trail would be under water briefly during the spring and possibly periodically if there were prolonged rains and the dam had to be opened for a period of time. We continued on downriver to check the terrain for wetlands that might make building a trail close to the river more difficult.

We then looked at another possibility that had one good point, but a couple of negatives. Instead of going under the bridges, we would continue the trail at

GoodWill across Highway O, then on the south side of the highway, go westward to the river, then follow the river as far south as we could.

The one positive was that it connected the original trail to the south segment and provided parking at GoodWill. The bad news was that there were no traffic signals at that intersection and users would have to cross at their peril. There were several turn lanes plus four lanes of traffic with vehicles traveling at least 35 miles an hour. At that time the traffic lights at Wisconsin Avenue had not been installed to offer a break in the traffic flow. In addition, we would still have to get those dreaded easements.

So we looked at a couple of other possibilities. The first was to head east on the north side of Highway O to Pioneer Avenue where traffic signals would help trail users cross the highway, a positive from a safety factor. On the south side of Highway O we would jog east a few yards to the abandoned Soo Line railroad bed and then head south to the Soo Line Crossing which was at the south city limits.

In walking the route, Mike and I discovered that it, too, had some positives and negatives. The good news was that some day we wanted to connect CedarSide to the Moon Lake area and this headed us in the right direction. Secondly the railroad bed was flat and would require practically no grading or fill, so the cost would be much less. The biggest negative was that it was a long way from the river to be called "CedarSide."

Mike and I walked to the Soo Crossing (where once the Soo and Chicago & NorthWestern lines crossed) and we found two old structures that were still in good shape. One would make a suitable restroom we felt.

Since the state required parking at each terminus of the trail, we would have to get easements here as well. We needed one easement for a driveway from Highway SS to the crossing and a little more property for half a dozen parking stalls or so.

Mike and I met with Hugh and John Mommsen who own the property leading to and abutting the crossing. Could we get an easement for a driveway from SS and a little more for parking?

They were both supportive of pedestrian and bike trails and were very pleasant, but the answer was negative. They had plans for developing the property in that area and trails did not fit in.

That didn't matter, anyway, as it turned out. Mike contacted the owners of the rail line, Canadian Central at the time, and found out it would not give up the line for trail development for at least five to ten years. That made that route a moot point.

Hugh Mommsen, during our conversation, offered an alternative, however. At the north end of his property, and abutting city-owned property, there was a deer trail he had walked as a youth and he thought a trail along that path would work out well. Mike and I, along with Bill Sanders of SWB, walked the potential route with Hugh and we agreed it had a lot of potential.

So the fourth potential route would go from GoodWill east to Pioneer, cross Highway O at the traffic lights on Pioneer, then follow along the boulevard on the west side of Pioneer southward to an undeveloped street between F/G Products and Schwan's. From there the trail would go west past a sanitary lift station into a wooded parcel owned by the city and head southward onto Hugh's land and make a loop back to Pioneer and the point between Schwan's and F/G Products.

Like most of the others, it had some good points and some negatives. The good news was that it would all be built along city street right-of-way or on city-owned land, except for Mommsen's parcel, and he had already promised an easement. Creating the loop meant we would not need parking on the south end

and it would be relatively easy construction except for two marshy areas where bridges or boardwalks would be needed. And it would head us toward Moon Lake and future trails.

The bad news was that about half of the trail would be quite a distance from the river. And those boardwalks could be considerably more expensive than just building atop solid ground. And, of course, it meant the DNR would be more deeply involved.

Mike and I took the four potential routes to the Park Board in October—go under the bridges, cross Highway O at GoodWill and follow the river, go to Pioneer then south on the old Soo Line or go east to Pioneer, cross there and follow Pioneer Avenue to the street between Schwan's and F/G Products and make the loop. We recommended the latter for the previously noted positives: We needed only one easement and it had already been promised, it got us headed toward Moon Lake and we had the traffic lights at Pioneer Avenue to get users across Highway O.

The Park Board approved the recommended route following a public meeting in November and sent it on with its recommendation to the city council for a public hearing.

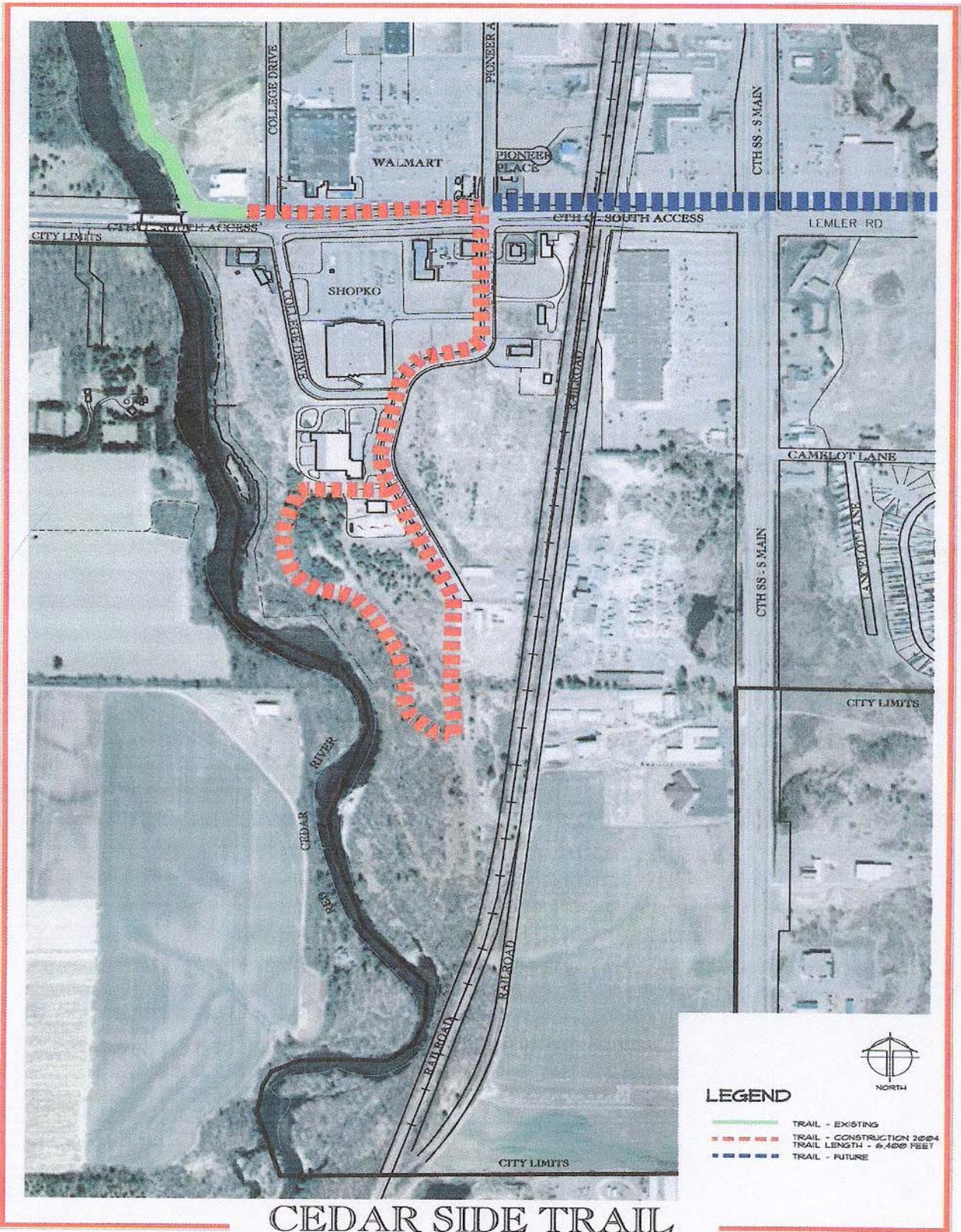
A public hearing was held by the council in December of 2001. No one from the public, no one from city staff and no property owners along the route appeared to object to the route.

Sanders-Wacker-Bergly was then directed to design the trail, provide estimates, obtain the needed easement and prepare an application for a federal grant.

In early April of 2002 the matter returned to the City Council. The trail route had been designed and a grant application completed. The estimated cost would be \$250,000 with the city's share being \$50,000. The council's subsequent action was not unexpected: "Go ahead and submit the application, but even if accepted, the city's share will have to come from private sources."

Mike and I had already anticipated that response and had talked with a couple of service clubs and discussed the possible use of the Wisconsin Conservation Corps to offset some of the city's costs.

We indicated to the council that we would head the drive to raise the funds and the application was submitted by the deadline. Had we any idea what the next few years would bring, we probably would have taken a very hard look at our rash offer.



**CEDAR SIDE TRAIL
CONSTRUCTION PLAN - 2004**



CITY OF RICE LAKE

LEGEND

- TRAIL - EXISTING
- TRAIL - CONSTRUCTION 2004
- TRAIL LENGTH - 6,400 FEET
- TRAIL - FUTURE

NORTH

**SANDERS
WACKER
BERGLY
INC.**
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS
OCTOBER 03, 2003

Chapter 111

“A Formidable Challenge”

Things finally seemed to be falling into place. Later in April I ended my years on the council and the Park Board, but I had more or less promised to help raise the city's \$50,000, so I would continue ties to the trail. Hardly had it become known that we would do the fund-raising, than I received a call from AMSCO. It had a \$1,000 check waiting to be used for the trail.

Mike and I then called together a number of service and fraternal groups, along with any other clubs or organizations that might be interested. A meeting was held at the Library near the end of May of 2002 and everyone there spoke in favor of moving ahead. More than a dozen from as many groups attended. We discussed several potential plans to raise the money: Combine for one big fundraiser; each group do something on its own or each could make a contribution without a fundraiser.

A second meeting was held in June and eight groups were represented. Another was called in July and six people showed up. By late fall only Mike and I turned out.

But there was good news as well. The Mens Club, which Mike represented, agreed to give the major part of its profits at the next Frozen Ball event, golfing on the ice, toward the trail. The Rotary pledged \$1,000 if we reached \$49,000 and other groups sent smaller contributions. The Kiwanis club decided to sell T-shirts printed with “Take a Hike” on CedarSide Trail with profits to the trail.

Mike and I also contacted the Wisconsin Conservation Corps which was winding up a two-year program in the Chetek area, doing a variety of projects for non-profit organizations, including that city.

We envisioned that group would cut out the trees along the trail route and could install the two boardwalks when the trail was built. The boardwalks would be of a composite material, costly at the outset, but virtually maintenance free.

We expected that their in-kind work would be valued at more than \$10,000 which would count as part of the city's \$50,000 share.

Balloons and Golfing

The Rice Lake Men's Club agreed to give much of its profits from the next Frozen Ball Event (golfing on the ice) toward the trail and Mike and I thought it would be neat to spice up the event with some hot air balloons.

Since the event would be held around Valentine's Day in 2003, we decided to add a "Sweethearts Dance" for the weekend as well.

A firm called Lofty Concepts of West Salem would provide three balloons and pilots and would present a program on weather and ballooning to fifth graders as part of the activities.

The event would begin Friday night with the dance and end Sunday, so we contacted the Tourism Commission to see if we could get some promotional funds and help with providing the balloon pilots with a couple of nights at a motel. The commission provided \$1,500.

In November of 2002 Mike and I contacted Mary Randall, elementary principal, to set up the program for the fifth-grade kids. We thought she would be delighted, but we left the meeting a little bit disappointed. That type program did not fit fifth-grade curriculum and she would have to clear all of this with her superiors.

Later we found out she had taken care of everything. While it didn't fit the fifth-grade curriculum, it fit with second-graders. She took care of all of the arrangements with Lofty Concepts, the busing of the kids to the Hilltop Elementary and the timetable. It turned out to be a big success, thanks mainly to her efforts.

The Friday night dance Feb. 14, 2003, was to be held in the Boys and Girls Club on Main Street and Mike and I were supposed to be there for that as well. Frank Pacyga was going to provide dance instruction from 7-8 p.m. and Good Time Karaoke would provide the music, all for a \$10 contribution.

Lofty Concepts arrived Friday and launched a couple of balloons in the afternoon. Mike grabbed a ride on one of the balloons while I offered to be the guide for a retrieve vehicle, which was a pickup and trailer to haul back the balloon and crew. Mike's balloon came down just outside of town and he was back by late afternoon. The balloon I was aiding had trouble finding a spot to sit down and it ended up in the parking area of what is now the new government center in Barron. Construction had just gotten underway.

Our vehicle became stuck in the yard, but thankfully another pickup with four-wheel drive had followed us and the balloon and towed us to the balloon landing and pulled both of us out of the area to solid ground. I didn't get back until the dance was already underway.

All three balloons launched on Saturday, but had to abort Sunday because of the winds. All in all the event was a success and we ended up with some \$4,000 toward the trail.

We met several times with officials from the WCC and Chetek representatives and the Corps was anxious to continue work in the area. It was not as simple as we anticipated, however.

The WCC doesn't just sign up for a project here or there. It needs the commitment of a year's work. That meant it would require a sponsor (the City of Rice Lake) an office space where workers would gather each morning and afternoon (the former Inspections office at the old city hall), a work area (the former council chambers) and it needed 42 weeks of projects. That was the challenge because the trail might require only five or six.

But other city, village or non-profit groups could join in the effort. The Village of Cameron came up with some work as did the Rice Lake school district and the Ice Age Trail group. During 2002 and that winter, the work plan was completed and by spring a contract with WCC was ready to be signed, thanks to Dale Hanson and others at Parks and Rec. who took that part of the effort off our hands.

Over the next couple of years, Mike and I would walk the potential trail route through the wooded areas, both on city land and Mommsen's stretch, dozens of times, measuring and marking the 20-foot width of the work area and staking the center line. We redid the stakes a couple of times after we adjusted the trail to avoid cutting some larger trees and sometimes to stay closer to the river. That meant putting new ribbons on the trees that marked the 20-foot edges.

Some of those trips were in the summer and the trek went through briars and brush and high grass. We stepped on and tripped over barbed wire from fences long since out of use and rusting on the ground and stepped into holes covered over with weeds and hidden from view. Flies and mosquitos accompanied us, usually bussing about our heads but occasionally landing to "refuel."

Going back to 2002 for a moment—the good news was that our grant application was accepted in August or September. Mike had attended the summer meeting at which the applications were reviewed and was asked to explain a couple of responses that had been made on the application. It was obvious that had he not been there, the application would probably have been rejected.

Two weeks after we received notice that the grant was awarded, we received a call from the folks at F/G Products. They objected to the trail going between their firm and Schwan's. Their concerns were two-fold: Semis would be going over the proposed trail route as they maneuvered into F/G's loading docks and someone could be struck. They were also concerned trail users could leave the trail and get onto their property.

We asked why they had not brought out their concerns at the public hearing months earlier and they explained they did not want to appear that they were against the trail. It took several meetings, including one with the mayor, but we were able to address their concerns. In their defense, F/G did contribute to the original trail and was not against the trail as such.

During our meetings with F/G we did look at some other options in that area, but could not make any of them work to the state's satisfaction.

The year 2003 was filled with setbacks. The governor vetoed funding for the

Conservation Corps, removing that option for reducing our fundraising needs. A lot of effort had gone into putting together that package, not only by Mike and me but by the Corps and Park Department personnel.

That was partially offset, however, when we learned about a group called Leadership Barron County. It is an organization that works on developing young executives. As part of the training program the dozen or so men and women must perform a major project for a non-profit organization. We met and asked them to cut trees through a portion of the trail the next winter. The group agreed and in the winter of 2003-04 then spent just over 100 hours taking down trees mainly on the trail through Hugh Mommsen's property.

In the summer of 2003 Mike went to the Street Department to get the needed permits to build the trail along street right of way. He was told that city ordinance did not allow for trails on the boulevards...the ordinance would have to be changed. That would mean going to the Planning Commission and the Council to make the change, which would take some time, but was not a major hurdle.

However, at the same time, Mike was informed that we could not build the trail abutting the curb. At least two feet of green space would be required between the curb and the trail.

That was a blow! To move the trail two feet in from the curb would put it on private property of four businesses along Pioneer: Norske Nook, AgStar, ShopKo and F/G products. That would require getting easements from each of those firms. Again we pondered why that was not presented at the public hearing 18 months earlier.

As those issues came to a head, a meeting was held with city staff, Bill Sanders and Park Board members. SWB was directed to go back and do a design and an estimate for going under the two Highway O bridges and down to the start of the loop and to check with the property owners along that route about getting easements. Apparently the staff discarded as invalid the reasons that Mike and I had presented, and the Park Board had agreed with, for not picking that route.

Mike and I were certain that when the cost of going under the highway spans came back, the Park Board would reject that idea. So we set out to get easements from the four property owners along Pioneer. We anticipated F/G Products would be the toughest so we started there. To our delight, Mr. Nelson agreed to allow the trail along the boulevard. We then contacted the owner of Norske Nook and he agreed to an easement as long as we would leave enough room for a row of petunias planted there annually by the Golden K.

We contacted the local managers of Ag Star and ShopKo. At Ag Star there were some concerns because of a sprinkler system and other issues, but it appeared they could be addressed. The local manager at ShopKo saw no problem since we only needed about 15 feet at the southeast corner of the property to get around a utility pole. The alternative would be to move the pole at a cost of some \$2,000.

In each case, however, the matter would have to be turned over to each firm's legal department. ShopKo wanted money to sign the easement, which the city rejected. AgStar had nine issues, several of which the city would not agree to, so we were in a bit of a pickle.

In early 2004 the estimates came back for going under the bridge and, as

expected, it was more than \$100,000 to get to the start of the loop. The Park Board said no and when it became impossible to get the easements along Pioneer, the Board said, "go back to the curb."

But city staff said no to that plan...building adjacent to the curb was a safety factor, we were told. Sanders, Wacker and Burgly was directed to come in with some other alternatives.

So Bill Sanders, Mike and I met at Superior with Glenn Landis to discuss some possibilities that the state could accept.

DNR Changes Rules . . .

In 2004 the DNR announced a change in the rules regarding storm runoff requirements. Until then a project covering less than five acres needed no storm water runoff plan. Suddenly that was lowered to one acre.

Our project was exempt before, but now required a SWR plan. That came to another \$1,500, added to the already rising costs due to numerous changes in routes.

Four alternative routes were designed and presented at a Park Board meeting in late 2004. One route would be to go to Pioneer, cross at the traffic lights, then head directly west again, crossing College Drive on the south side of Highway O, go down the bank to the river and head south to the loop.

One of the others was to go to Pioneer Avenue and on the south side, build the trail in the street abutting the curb on each side of the street. Such trails are often built in cities larger than Rice Lake and with a higher traffic flow than would be expected on Pioneer Avenue.

The Park Board said build it in the street on that portion that was along the

street. The police chief felt it would work, but other city staff members said no. It was a safety problem.

So, in the winter of 2004, Sanders, Wacker and Bergly was directed to move the trail off of Pioneer Avenue. Build it from GoodWill, cross Highway O at College Drive, go down to the river and follow the river to the loop. The city council approved that directive in December.

While that would probably be a more scenic route than Pioneer, it was also the seventh trail route, or parts thereof, that the firm had been asked to design—the original route, one going under the two highway bridges, the four alternatives and now the latest.

An obvious factor in all of this, but one some on city staff seemed to be oblivious to, was that making all of these changes was running up the engineering costs for the project. By that time those costs were some \$40,000 over budget, and some obviously felt it was all the fault of SWB.

In directing the move to the new location, the council also put a cap on construction costs—the original \$250,000 plus \$20,000 in additional cost overruns. The other \$20,000 would come from the utility department.

The new route follows a city sanitary sewer line for about half of the route. Having the trail abutting the line would allow the Utilities to access the manholes along the way and the department agreed that would be a benefit to the tune of \$20,000.

Change in Tax Status

As anyone who has had to deal with the Internal Revenue Service knows, the experience can be potentially troublesome. So, after the Rice Lake Trails Foundation was reorganized in April of 2003, it was realized that the tax status would now have to be changed.

I was elected president, replacing Barb Johnson, and Mary Schnacky became treasurer and Nels Curnow secretary. Bjorn Hanson and Wally Narins rounded out the board.

The Foundation had been operating under the auspices of the Rotary Club and had a 501(C)7 status. Now without the Rotary backing, the Foundation would have to change to a 501(C)3. Contributions to either makes them tax deductible. Chuck Lawrence of Lawrence and Associates offered to guide us through the process without charge.

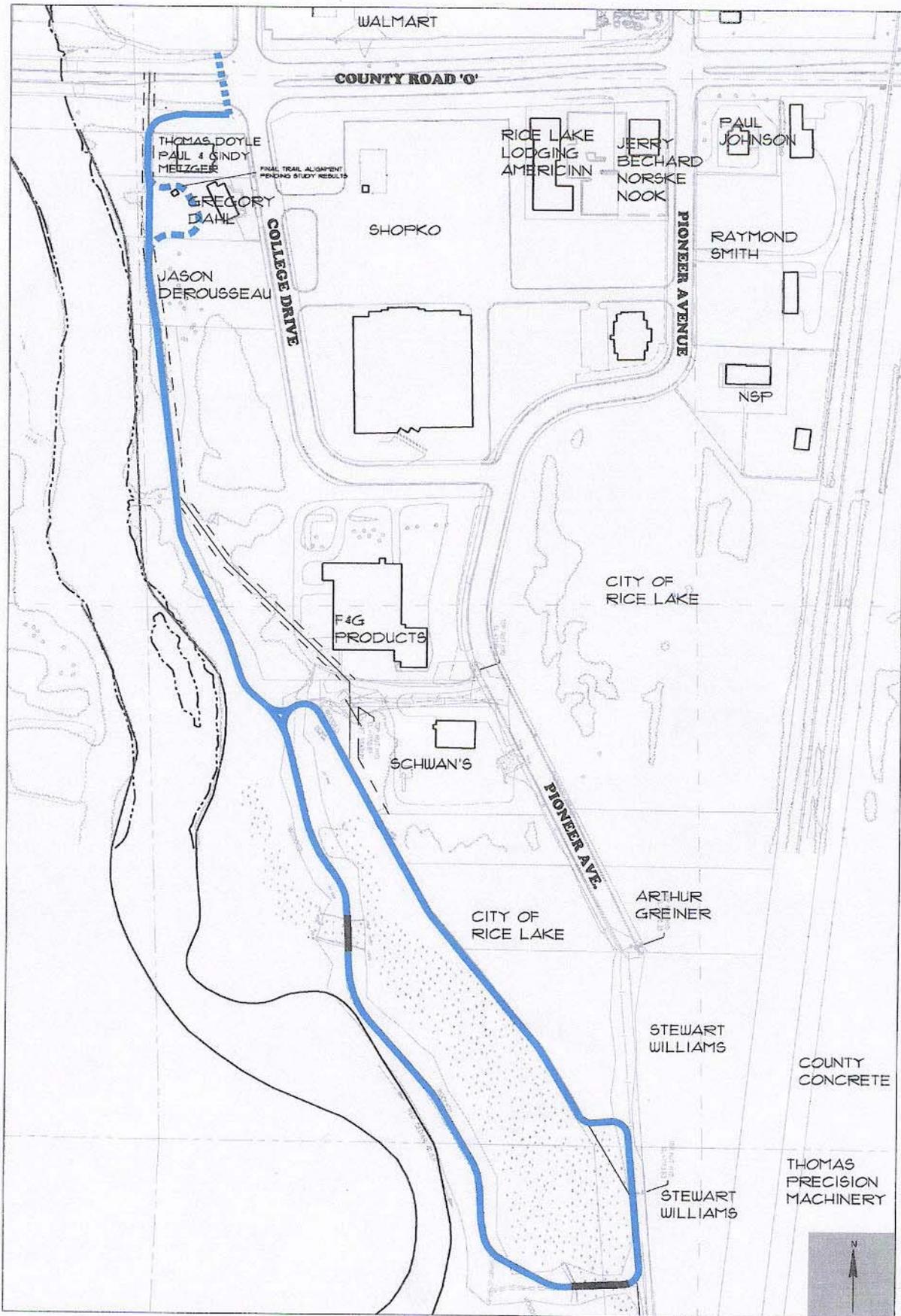
His capable assistant took on the task, which was similar to a request she was working on for another local organization. She called the IRS office in Kansas City and was assigned an agent, Zev Hazelkorn. A folder of needed information was sent, which she passed on to us to fill out.

When she called back later with some questions about the form, she was interrupted in mid-sentence with "Are you an officer in the Foundation?" he asked. "No," she confessed. "Then I can't even talk to you." That ended the conversation.

The agent she had for the other foundation seeking 501(C)3 status led her through the form without ado, advising her on what they "really" needed and what part she could ignore. Not so, our agent.

It became my task, as president of the Trails Foundation, to deal with Mr. Hazelkorn. At one point I was informed that the information he requested would be needed "by Friday," which was just a few days away. A call to his office that Friday morning to pass on that info, however, was fruitless. He was on vacation for another week.

But after seven months of paperwork, the IRS granted us 501(C)3 status in January of 2004 and Mr. Hazelkorn turned out to be a pretty reasonable guy.



TRAIL OPTION TWO

Rice Lake - Cedar Side Trail
Rice Lake, Wisconsin

- TRAIL - OFF STREET
- TRAIL - ON STREET
- ■ ■ ■ TRAIL - DAHL OPTION



**SANDERS
WACKER
BERGLY
INC.**

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www.swbtrc.com

NOVEMBER 15, 2004

For Mike and I, the change was a double-edged sword. While we acknowledged it would be more scenic in ways and would continue along the river (CedarSide), it had some negatives.

Could the trail be built for the same price the original trail was estimated at? That price tag was set three years earlier.

Could we get easements from the five property owners along the way? One of them was Dahl's Studio and the proposed trail would go right through his outdoor photo shoot area. How agreeable was he going to be to allow pedestrians, some with kids and pets, or cyclists and rollerbladers to cruise through his property during a shoot?

We did not envy the job ahead of us. In addition, the new route would require a third boardwalk which would mean going back to the DNR and updating the plan. By adding another boardwalk, the overall cost would not stay within the budget, so the boardwalks would have to be changed from the original composite material to plain treated wood and the construction would change from a standard bridge with piers to a simple floating style. That, too, would require DNR approval. All of these things would mean delays and added engineering costs, already a touchy subject.

So, while SWB set out to revise the plans and design, Mike and I met with property owners. We were pleasantly surprised when the four near Highway O, G.B. Heron's. While Pine Gallery, Dahl's Studio and Jason Derousseau, owner of a vacant lot, all agreed, with some concerns, to providing an easement. Even F/G Products provided an easement behind its buildings and along the sewer line.

Only about one-third of the new trail route was the same as the original route, so pretty much it would be all revised. Some of the cost of the project was reduced because it was shortened slightly by following the utility line. That helped offset the added cost of the third boardwalk. It took ten months to put it all together and in October of 2005 it was ready to go to bid.

Bids were opened in early September and DeSantis Excavating of Cumberland, who had earlier built a mile-long trail in the Moon Lake complex, was by far the low bidder, coming in very close to the cap the council had put on the project. He had also just put in a utility line along the same easement and was familiar with the terrain.

By making this segment of the trail only eight feet wide instead of ten feet, it appeared the project would stay within budget. The DNR would have to buy off on the new boardwalk style and materials and approve the new route, as would Landis with the DOT.

Construction began in May of 2006, grubbing out trees and stumps. In a rather short time, the route had been roughed in. DeSantis had built the boardwalk sections at his firm in Cumberland over winter and hauled them to the site in the summer.

But then came a rude awakening. The plan was to cross Highway O, as mentioned, then build the trail over a storm sewer line that sloped down the bank on the south shoulder of the highway. About halfway down the bank the sewer line emptied into a pile of large rocks to divert the flow. The line would have to be extended another sixty feet or so to get it to the bottom of the bank.

For whatever reason, the impression was left that the street department would take care of curb cuts on the highway boulevards, the striping of the trail across Highway O and could help with extending the storm sewer.

So most of those costs were not included in the final plans or in the bid. Adding it up, another \$6,000 or more was needed just for the sewer line which, all agreed should be extended farther than initially designed to get the flow past the point where the trail made a bend to the south. Striping and curb cuts would be an additional expense.

A meeting was held with the engineers, Street Supt. Gary Newman, Ronn Kopp, director of Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries and others involved and very emphatically they were informed: There will not be another dime spent on this trail (over the limit set by the council).

So the decision was made not to cross Highway O but to simply build the trail from College Drive on the south side of Highway O, straight down the bank along side the storm sewer instead of over it and then go south as planned. That accomplished a couple of things: it kept the project within the budget limits and it allowed the trail to be completed. However, it created a rather steep grade at the outset that the state may object to, and along side the trail was a steep slope right down to that pile of rocks at the storm sewer outlet. If a youngster should lose control of his bike, he could take a header into those rocks with dire consequences.

In addition, at the bottom of the grade and only a foot from the paved portion of the trail was a large steel utility pole. Again, someone could lose control on the slope and hit the pole.

Most agreed there were several serious drawbacks to the plan, but with no more money and time running out (the pavers were ready to go) The decision was made to finish the trail.

There was another question that would have to be answered by the state. This plan did not provide parking at the terminus of the trail since it did not connect to the original trail where parking was already provided at GoodWill. The engineers decided to suggest to the state that parking was available on College Drive where this trail segment began and hope that the state would accept that.

Most of the trail was paved in late July, including the start beginning at G.B. Herons. A segment from the start of the loop to the middle boardwalk had to be left temporarily. The marsh at the second boardwalk had to be filled in temporarily to allow heavy equipment access to build and pave the section between the middle and third boardwalks. That area is totally surrounded by marshland.

With that work done, the temporary fill was removed and the boardwalk put into place. At the ends of each boardwalk, concrete anchors are constructed and the planking connected to them and laid over floatation devices. There is no real stream flow through those areas. The water table simply rises and lowers with rainfall.

Though late in coming, the touchy and dangerous situation at the trail beginning was corrected in early August. After walking the new trail, some city officials suggested the city find the funds to do the trail as originally planned.

That meant cross Highway O with curb cuts and proper markings, extend the storm sewer well down the bank and build the trail over it, making the grade much more manageable and it would remove several dangerous obstacles.

From the bottom of the grade, the original blacktopped section was removed to the top of the hill. Since a curb cut had already been made on College Drive, that was left for anyone parking south of Highway O and planning to use the trail. A small section of blacktop was then laid from there to connect to the main trail.

The yard along side G.B. Herons was restored to grass with a more gentle slope going down to the trail.

With the final blacktop being laid Sept. 1, the only thing left was some touch-up work along the way for proper drainage away from the trail.

Mike and I took a look at the final asphalt work about 9:30 a.m. Sept. 1, some two hours after it had been laid. Just north of the middle boardwalk we spotted deer tracks clearly visible on the blacktop where it had crossed.

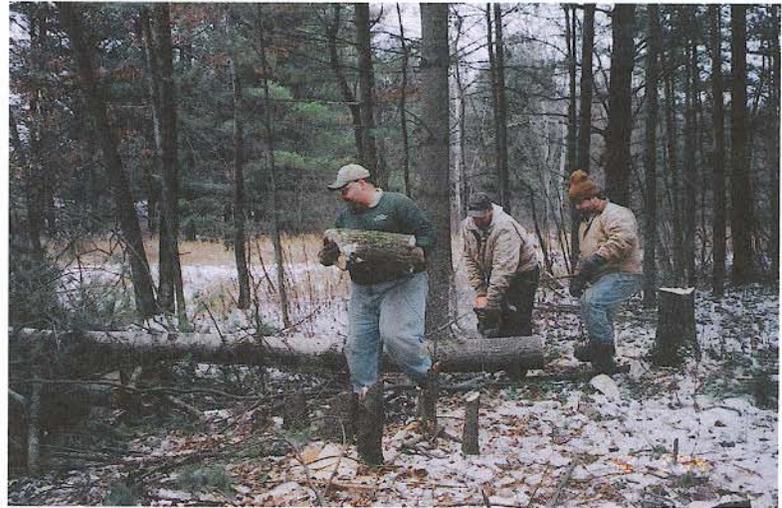
Trail users now have about two and a quarter mile trail, all along the Red Cedar River. The lower segment will give hikers and bikers a look at herons, deer, squirrels and other wildlife as well as the sounds of many birds. And just a dozen yards off the trail near the start of the loop is an eagle's nest.

Despite constant daily traffic in and out of F/G Products and Schwan's and construction of the trail this summer, the eagle pair and their offspring had hung around to watch.

In addition to the CedarSide Trail, there is a mile of similar trail in the Moon Lake soccer complex and when the new inner-city by-pass along Macauley Avenue is completed in a couple of years, a pedestrian and bike trail will be part of that construction. The next effort will be to somehow connect CedarSide Trail to that stretch.



Parks Department Personnel Volunteered
time to clear trees



Members of Leadership Barron County
work to clear the way for the extension
of CedarSide Trail

The beginnings of the CedarSideTrailConstruction



Trail construction done by DeSantis Excavating



East side of loop



Trail bends left behind GB Heron's & White Pine Gallery

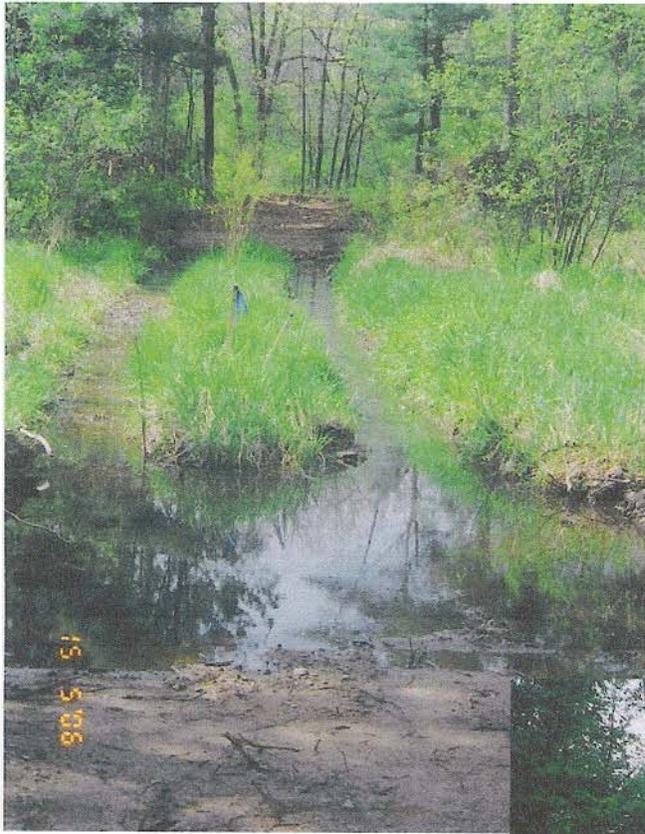


Trail through woods ready for paving



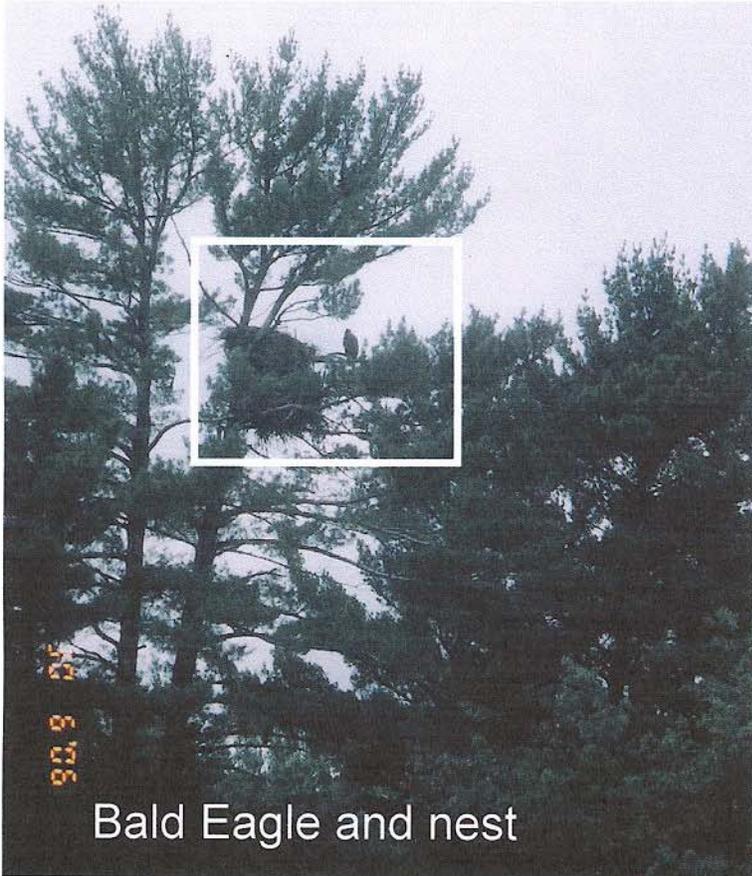
Trail winds behind Dahl Studio

Trail construction done by DeSantis Excavating

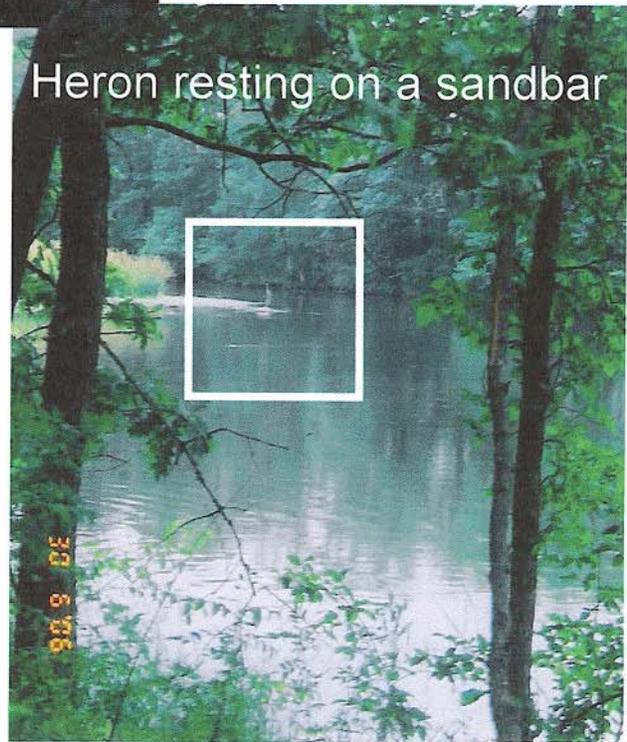


Marshy areas get
overlaid with boardwalks





Bald Eagle and nest



Heron resting on a sandbar

Wildlife on the CedarSide
includes Eagles, Herons
and more

All's Well... ...That Ends Well

From this...

Mike Korby and Bob Heffner trudged through thick wooded areas to stake out the loop section of the original trail route back in 2002.



To this:

The trail was paved late in the summer of 2006. Seeding was completed in the fall and avid hikers and bikers were using the trail, though not officially open.

To final inspection:

On Oct 1st, trails specialist with the DOT, Glenn Landis, took a walk along the trail with representatives of R.L. Parks & Rec Dept, & the contractor, Sanders, Walker & Burghly. A handful of items remained to be completed: a small area of seeding, plates on the boardwalks and some signs.

