

Trail Talk

By Steve Litts, Executive Director
Dickinson County Trails Board

Last month I had the pleasure of announcing the arrival of the Iowa DOT trail permit for the Bay Harbor Trail along Hwy. 86. With that permit in hand, DCTB moved forward, and I'm happy to announce the bids for the Bay Harbor Trail came in within budget. Seven contractors submitted bids for the trail portion of the project. Six of the bids were fairly close, demonstrating that the scope of the work required had been clearly described in the bid specifications prepared by our engineer. Diamond Concrete of Spirit Lake was the low bidder at \$462,263.99.

The building of two tunnels is an integral a part of this project and was bid separately. Three contractors submitted bids for work on the two tunnels, and again, the bids were quite close. Peterson Contractors of Reinbeck, Iowa was the low bidder at \$331,733.34.

Three contractors submitted bids on the work for the two tunnels that will be an integral part of this trail. Again, the bids were quite close with the low bid being \$331,733.34 submitted by Peterson Contractors of Reinbeck, IA.

DCTB will be meeting with the winning contractors in the next two to three weeks to map out a construction schedule. I'll be able to share more specific timelines in next month's column. I can tell you now that this trail will not be operational until late September or early October. Due to the heavy summer traffic on Hwy 86, it's understandable that the tunnels cannot go in until after Labor Day. This part of the work will require a detour while the tunnels are installed. It is my understanding that to complete the tunnel installation, the detour will not be required for more than ten days.

The vision for this project began one Saturday morning in 2006 when a group of interested people met to determine how a trail might be constructed around the west side of West Lake Okoboji that would enhance the safety and expand the opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the beauty of the lakes area. The group also recognized that connecting the new trail to the original Spine Trail, east of the new Hwy. 71, was important to the usefulness of any trail along the lake. DCTB thanks the many people who contributed time, creative thinking and generous contributions to make this vision a reality.

As reported previously, the federal stimulus funding has been a boon to the county. However, the rush of stimulus supported construction jobs throughout Iowa has placed a larger workload on the Department of Transportation, resulting in longer timelines for getting design approval for placement on the Iowa DOT bid-letting schedule. Consequently, it appears the Garlock Slough trail project will not be completed until the summer of 2010. In spite of that, we are grateful that this project has been funded. The Garlock Slough trail will be a key part of completing the vision of connecting the trail on the west side of West Lake to the Spine Trail.

DCTB is also in the planning stage of developing an E-911 system that will place markers identifying a biker's location on the county trails. Our Maintenance Team has

met with Mike Ehret, the county Emergency Management Director, and we've begun the process of laying out a system for marking the trail system so people who require emergency assistance can be quickly located and helped. The next phase will be budget planning as well as physically laying out where the markers are needed. Completion is expected in 2010. The E-911 plan is another way your Dickinson County Trails Board is working to make the Iowa Great Lakes Trails a safe as well as enjoyable part of living in Dickinson County.

Did you Bike to Work on the 15th? THANK YOU to all who participated in this year's Bike to Work Day. I work out of my home but I did bike to the Okoboji Post Office and once there decided to go on around the lake back home, so, yes, I can say I biked to work last week. It was good to get that first trip of the summer around the lake under my belt – and it had a positive effect on my belt size, too. If you didn't bike to work on the 15th, do yourself a favor and ride today – and tomorrow. Your heart will appreciate the exercise.

Trail riders are already out monitoring our trails on their four-wheelers. They are a great resource to trail users. When you see one on the trail, be sure to thank them for their service.

Also new to the trails this year will be four trailhead information kiosks. These will soon be installed at each end of the Kenue Park Trail, one at the Wahpeton trailhead and one at the trailhead on the east side of Big Spirit Lake.

This concludes the recent news about the Dickinson County Trails. Be checking next month's column and our website for additional news on trail construction and activities. (<http://www.co.dickinson.ia.us/> and click on Trails Board) Until then, as always, Happy Trails to you and yours.