

**From:** [Mark Westphal](#)  
**To:** [Joe Pavelko](#)  
**Cc:** [Mark Johnson](#); [Sandy Smith](#); [Amanda Schnabel](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Carlton County-North Country Trail Association Trail easement  
**Date:** Friday, April 19, 2024 12:20:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [North Country Trail Association Exhibit B.pdf](#)  
[North Country Trail Association Exhibit C.pdf](#)

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Joe,

Attached you will find the answer to your information request from below.

As for the owner of the easement, that will be the North Country Trail Association (NCTA). I asked the regional trail coordinator, Matthew Davis, to provide the allowed uses, how the trail will be managed and official documents that govern the NCT.

The following is his response:

1. The North Country National Scenic Trail will be managed for year round non-motorized foot travel including hiking, backpacking, birdwatching, nature study, hunting, fishing, backcountry (ungroomed) XC skiing, skishoeing, snowshoeing, etc. It is closed to all motorized vehicle use. The Trail is governed by a combination of the hosting land managers regulations/policies and the National Trails System Act, which authorized the North Country National Scenic Trail back in 1980 (see <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/management.htm> for more). The Trail is a partnership between the land managers, the National Park Service, and the North Country Trail Association (NCTA).
2. It will be maintained by volunteers of the Brule-St. Croix Chapter of the NCTA. The NCTA is the official non-profit partner of the National Park Service, which is the official administering federal agency. The volunteers are self-sufficient using tools provided by the National Park Service, are covered under Volunteers in Parks (VIP) agreements through the National Park Service which provide workers compensation and tort liability coverage, and using funding provided by the NCTA or fundraised locally.
3. I've attached the NPS' Comprehensive Plan for the Trail and also their Foundation Document. The NCTA's guiding documents including our current strategic plan can be found at <https://northcountrytrail.org/about-us/transparency/>.

What time is the council meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>? I'd love to make it on that agenda but I have obligations already from 8 AM until noon that day.

Thanks for the help on this Joe!

Mark P. Westphal  
Land Commissioner

Carlton County Land Department  
218.384.4288

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**From:** Joe Pavelko <Joe.Pavelko@lsohc.mn.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 2:23 PM  
**To:** Mark Westphal <Mark.Westphal@carltoncountymn.gov>  
**Cc:** Mark Johnson <mark.johnson@lsohc.mn.gov>; Sandy Smith <sandy.smith@lsohc.mn.gov>;  
Amanda Schnabel <amanda.schnabel@lsohc.mn.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Carlton County-North Country Trail Association Trail easement

Hi Mark,

Thanks for the information. That clarifies what direction we need to go with this. The Council will have to approve the proposed trail easement due to the Outdoor Heritage Fund notice of funding restriction (NOFR). We will need a few pieces of information from you in order to do that.

1. We will need a copy of the draft easement language along with a map showing the boundaries of the OHF funded parcel, the surrounding public lands, and where the proposed trail is going.
2. Please include a description of who will own the easement, the allowed uses on the trail, and how the trail will be managed. If there are official documents that govern the North County Trail?

The council will be meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and June 12<sup>th</sup>. We can get this on either agenda, whichever works best for you. We would like to have someone from the county available to answer questions at that meeting (either in person or virtually). Once we get the information we'll put a memo together for the meeting which you can review prior to the meeting.

Thank you!

Joe Pavelko  
Assistant Director  
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

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**From:** Mark Westphal <[Mark.Westphal@carltoncountymn.gov](mailto:Mark.Westphal@carltoncountymn.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 11:20 AM  
**To:** Joe Pavelko <[Joe.Pavelko@lsohc.mn.gov](mailto:Joe.Pavelko@lsohc.mn.gov)>  
**Cc:** Mark Johnson <[mark.johnson@lsohc.mn.gov](mailto:mark.johnson@lsohc.mn.gov)>  
**Subject:** Carlton County-North Country Trail Association Trail easement

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [mark.westphal@carltoncountymn.gov](mailto:mark.westphal@carltoncountymn.gov). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hey Joe,

So here is what I have for a description of the North Country Trail easement on the portion of property acquired with LSOH funds in conjunction with Pheasants Forever:

The North Country Trail Association was a key partner in obtaining this large block of land with the intent to acquire permanent easement to connect their trail sections in NW Wisconsin and NE Minnesota. Without their support, this acquisition may not have happened and this land may not have been acquired allowing access to existing public lands while creating more public lands.

The trail crosses approximately 5,900 feet (20 foot width in easement) of the property that was acquired. The trail is used by hikers, hunters, gatherers, etc., but is not open to motorized use. This trail hasn't altered the areas wildlife and it can be argued that the creation of this trail has positively impacted wildlife habitat in the area as investments have been made to improve and maintain wildlife openings adjacent to the trail and throughout the adjoining property. The trail easement covers approximately 2.7 total acres but it is important to realize that the actual footprint is smaller.

We are seeking a letter of permission to establish this permanent easement over these lands for the North Country Trail Association Trail and continued protection of these public lands.

Thanks and if you need something further from me, let me know!

Mark P. Westphal  
Land Commissioner  
Carlton County Land Department  
218.384.4288