

All-Terrain Vehicle Use on the North Shore State Trail: A Feasibility Study

[Discussion Draft – 10/20/05]

Study Purpose:

This study is intended to determine the feasibility of hosting All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) traffic on all or portions of the North Shore State Trail based upon an on-site inspection and natural resource analysis.

Scope & Objectives:

This feasibility study examines the physical capacity of the existing North Shore State Trail to potentially accommodate summer-season ATV use based upon a corridor inspection and technical analysis. This analysis, being conducted in cooperation with county and federal land managers, describes surface water and wetland conditions, road and trail transportation systems, and corridor use and ownership concerns. The intent is to determine which segments of the existing trail need additional investments and describe what those investments would be if ATV use was allowed on this state trail.

Objectives:

1. Identify those segments of the NSST that are physically capable of sustaining ATV use, either as is, or with specified mitigation, improvement and/or reroute. Provide cost estimates for specified modifications or improvements.
2. Identify those segments not physically capable of sustaining ATV use without extraordinary modification, mitigation or major reroute.
3. Identify any practical, logistical, administrative or procedural issues or requirements that would need to be addressed prior to authorizing ATV use of selected trail sections (e.g., corridor use and ownership agreements, environmental review, master plan amendment).

If a decision is made to proceed with a trail project proposal which includes ATV designation to all or portions of the North Shore State Trail, then the range of likely effects and appropriate mitigation measures can be identified for selected segments. Project-level effects will be evaluated within the context of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), a federal Environmental Assessment (EA) where required, and pursuant to the North Shore Trail Master Plan (*DNR, 1981*) amendment which would be required in order to effect a change in permitted trail use. These state and federal processes provide for public review and comment.

Study Plan

Interagency Support - Data Sources [USFS, Counties]

The participation of county and federal land managers is critical to this evaluation. Both the USFS and county governments own portions of the NSST corridor and both provide for trail recreation. **Data collection and mapping will take place during the period Aug. 15 – Oct. 31, 2005.** Data needs will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Maps of the NSST corridor and documentation of existing trail conditions. (DNR).
- Identify all surface waters and wetlands coincident with the trail corridor. (DNR).
- Identify unique, sensitive or high-value natural resources along the trail corridor. (DNR).
- Identify any special physical features or archeological concerns (DNR, SHPO).
- Identify road and trail systems, permitted trail uses, numbers of users, etc. (DNR, Counties, USFS)
- Identify recreation facilities or travel destinations linked by the existing/proposed trail alignments. (DNR, Counties, USFS)
- Describe trail corridor ownership; including any permit, lease or easement agreements with private landowners and/or interagency agreements with county or federal land managing agencies. (DNR, Counties, USFS)
- Describe corridor use and ownership. Identify land-use, land ownership and land management policy or planning concerns – e.g., trail signing, off-trail travel, hunting exceptions, local ordinances or resolutions, etc. (DNR, Counties, USFS)

Feasibility Study Timeline (Dates subject to change)

1. NE Regional Management Team briefing. (Aug. 15, 2005)
2. Coordination meetings with USFS, counties to solicit advice and assistance. (Aug./Sept. 2005)
3. T&W preliminary data collection and mapping – existing materials. (Aug. 15 - Sept. 30, 2005)
4. Area Team meeting to review suggested roles, responsibilities and expectations, data needs, project scheduling and misc. process considerations. Prelim schedule/assignments. (Oct. 12, 2005)
5. Supplemental data collection and mapping. Site visits by team members. (Oct./Nov. 2005)
6. Area Team meeting to review resource data, maps and draft recommendations. Identify issues and concerns. Set completion target dates and interim deadlines. (Nov. 2005)
7. Suitability analysis, mitigation recommendations and cost estimates finalized. (Nov. 30, 2005)
8. Area Team & cooperator review of draft report. (Dec. 2005)
9. Revised draft submitted for RMT, OHVPC and CMO review and approval. (Feb. 2006)
10. Final report delivered to legislature (Mar. 1, 2006)

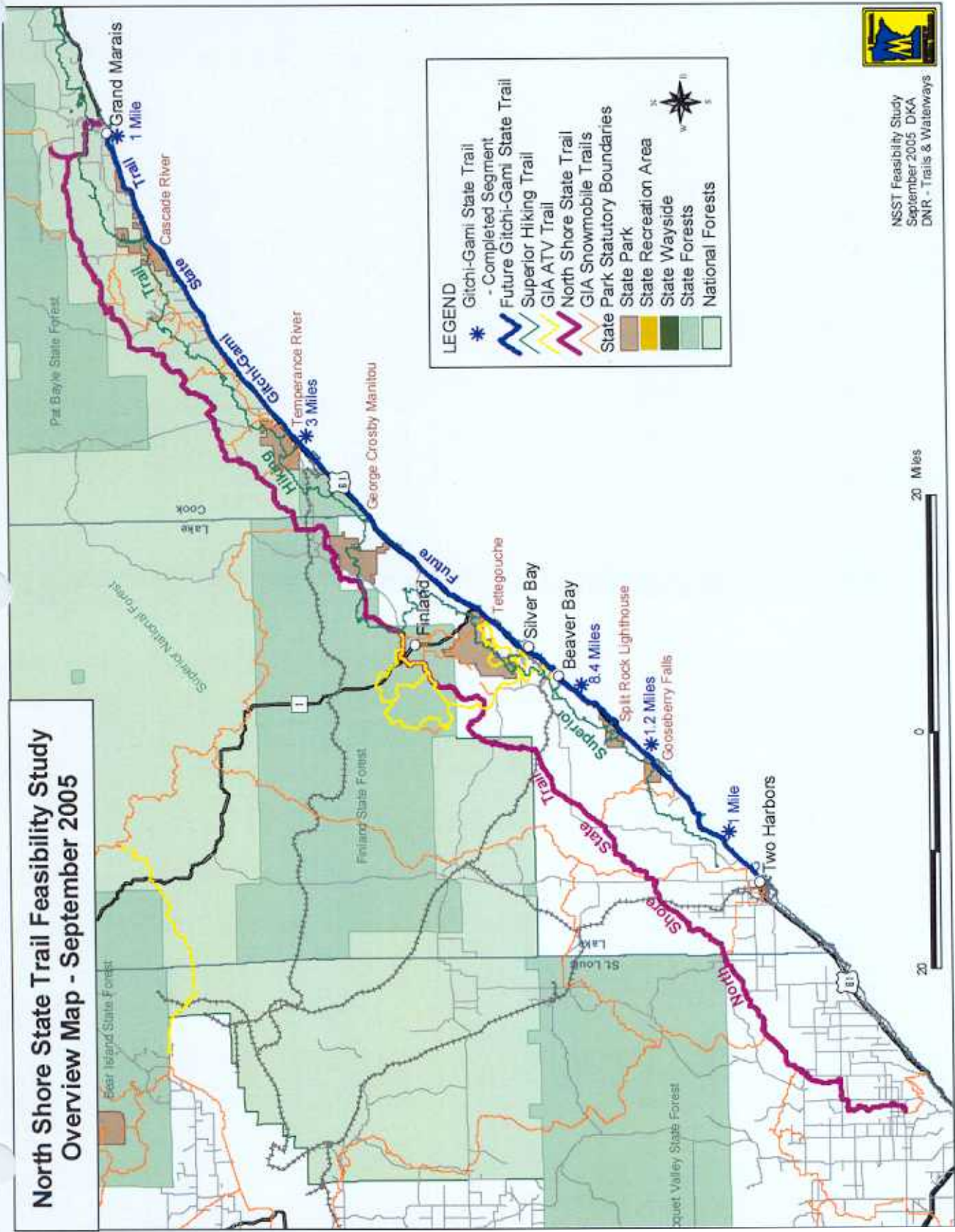
Feasibility Study Budget (Est.)

1. Planning & Facilitation Services / T&W Planning Staff / \$25,000
2. GIS & Mapping Support / T&W GIS Staff / \$10,000
3. Field Resource Evaluations / T&W Field Staff / \$10,000
4. Area Team Travel Expense, Supplies & Equipment, etc. / \$5,000

TOTAL = \$50,000 (from ATV account)

NSSTFEAS_10.20.Doc
10/20/05

North Shore State Trail Feasibility Study Overview Map - September 2005



NSST Feasibility Study
September 2005 DKA
DNR - Trails & Waterways