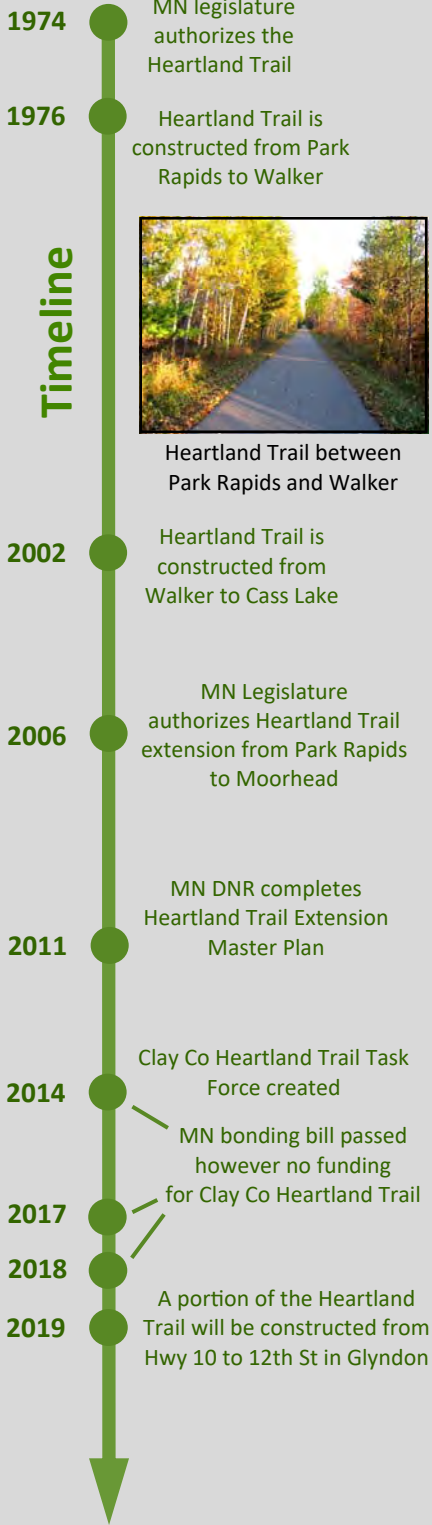


The Clay County Heartland Trail



Heartland Trail between Park Rapids and Walker

Heartland Trail Overview

The current Heartland Trail is a 49-mile paved shared use path that extends from Park Rapids to Cass lake. The trail was constructed in 1976 with the Walker to Cass Lake portion constructed in 2002. In 2006 the MN Legislature authorized the extension of the Heartland Trail from Park Rapids to Moorhead.

Need for Trail Extension

As seen in the adjacent map, northwest Minnesota does not have the opportunities of nearby state trails as does the rest of the state. Today residents of Clay County are missing out on the benefits and quality of life that such a trail would have to offer.



This trail would provide a designated route for those seeking a variety of recreational opportunities in Clay County. The trail would link cities, towns, and parks along the route and would also provide residents of rural Clay County with a safe and scenic recreational corridor.

Heartland Trail Extension Efforts

Efforts to implement the Heartland Trail within Clay County have been in the works for almost a decade. The City of Hawley was the first to champion Heartland Trail extension efforts. In 2008 advocates from Hawley began meeting with the regional Heartland Trail group. As momentum grew, other jurisdictions joined the effort and a Clay County Committee was created in 2010.

In 2014 the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Council of Governments (Metro COG) became involved and designated the Committee as the Clay County Heartland Trail Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of representatives from local jurisdictions, MN Dept. of Natural Resources, MM Dept. of Transportation, and other trail planning partners.



Public involvement has been an important part of the Clay County Heartland Trail planning effort. In 2015 two public open houses were held to enlighten the public on the trail planning efforts and to receive their input. It is recognized that public input, especially landowner input and relations, is crucial to a successful trail. The Task Force believes that both landowners and the public can mutually enjoy the benefits that such a trail can offer.

