



# United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service  
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway  
401 N. Hamilton Street  
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024



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October 28, 2021

## Memorandum

To: Regional Director, National Park Service, DOI Regions 3, 4, and 5

From: Superintendent, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

Subject: Written Determination: Bicycle Use on Cable Connector Trail

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (hereafter Riverway) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Cable Connector Trail that analyzed the impacts of the proposed bicycle use of a 0.25-mile natural surface, multi-use trail connection that would be built from the end of a segment of Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association's (CAMBA) Wild River Trail on a former railroad grade near the Town of Cable, Wisconsin. Currently, bicycle use in the park is limited to roads only.

The Regional Director signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for this project on February 1, 2021. Designating the new trail as a route open to bicycle use requires a written determination that such use is consistent with the protection of the park area's natural, scenic, and aesthetic values; safety considerations and management objectives; and will not disturb wildlife or park resources (36 CFR 4.30(e), as discussed below). The EA and the FONSI provide information and context for this written determination - including specific analysis of the potential effects of bicycle use on park resources - and can be found on the park's planning website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/sacn>.

A special regulation is also required before the Superintendent can authorize the use of bicycles on new trails outside of a developed area of the park (36 CFR§ 4.30). Promulgation of the special regulation is proceeding.

### **PARK BACKGROUND**

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is located in northwest Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota and is a unit of the national park system administered by the National Park Service. Relatively free-flowing and unpolluted, the Namekagon and St. Croix Rivers flow through some of the most scenic and least developed country in the Upper Midwest. In 1968, Congress established the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, a 230-mile-long park that includes the Namekagon River, as one of the original eight rivers protected under the national Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In 1972, the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was added to the system.

### **Purpose of the Park**

The purpose of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is to preserve, protect, and enhance the values of the St. Croix and Namekagon rivers and their immediate environment for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The values for which the Riverway has been designated as a wild and scenic river are its free-flowing character, exceptional water quality, and the aquatic, riparian, recreational, cultural/historic, geologic, scenic, and aesthetic values present in the rivers.

### **Significance of the Park**

Significance statements express why a park's resources and values are important enough to merit designation as a unit of the national park system. These statements are linked to the purpose of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Statements of significance describe the distinctive nature of the park and why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. They focus on the most important resources and values that will assist in park planning and management.

Ten components of significance have been identified for the Riverway. (Please note that the sequence does not reflect the level of significance.) The significance statements can be found in full in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Foundation Document.

- water quality
- free flow
- mussel diversity
- ecological corridor
- human history
- recreational opportunities
- river conservation history
- geology
- scenery

### **Values of the Park**

Fundamental resources and values are features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

The following are the fundamental resources and values of the Riverway:

- free-flowing condition
- water quality
- aquatic resources (mussel and fish diversity)
- cultural resources
- geology of the Dalles and glacial potholes
- recreation
- riparian resources
- scenic-aesthetic values
- rare upland habitats

### **Management Objectives for the Park**

Management objectives for the Riverway are guided by NPS Management Policies 2006. These policies direct superintendents to develop management plans that ensure recreational uses in the park provide for visitor enjoyment, but do not cause unacceptable impacts on park resources or values. They also emphasize the need for alternative transportation systems, especially those that promote nonmotorized means of accessing and moving within parks.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH 36 CFR 4.30**

Pursuant to 36 CFR 4.30, the Superintendent has examined the addition of bicycle use on the Cable Connector Trail to ensure it is consistent with the protection of the park's natural, scenic, and aesthetic values; safety considerations; management objectives; and will not disturb wildlife or park resources.

Best management practices and project design criteria were included in the EA (Table 4) and are considered integral and important components of the project to support long-term protection of wildlife and park resources on and adjacent to the Cable Connector Trail.

### **Natural, scenic, and aesthetic values, and management objectives:**

Recreation and the opportunity to enjoy the Riverway's scenic, aesthetic, natural, and cultural and historic resources and values are a major focus of the Riverway, as identified in the Riverway's Foundation Document. The addition of bicycle use as an allowed activity on the new Cable Connector Trail will expand the visitor experience by increasing options for nonmotorized recreation in the Riverway and local community, while continuing to protect resources and values. It will also promote the health and well-being of park visitors and provide a connection between other local trails.

### **Safety considerations:**

- Supporting compliance with state bike helmet recommendations.
- Installing appropriate signage to direct bicycle traffic and prevent user conflicts.
- Following International Mountain Bicycling Association trail-building guidelines when constructing the trail.
- Maintaining the trails, which may include periodic resurfacing and stabilizing of slopes.

### **Wildlife and park resources:**

The Cable Connector Trail and the decision to allow bicycle use on the trail is not expected to have any significant impacts on resources or wildlife. Analysis of potential impacts in the EA and FONSI concluded that resources and values in the park, including cultural and natural resources and sensitive species, would not be impaired or significantly impacted by bicycle use on the new trail. Impacts to vegetation would be small in scale and localized; no large-scale clearing is proposed. The proposed action may affect but is not likely to affect one federally listed species, the northern long-eared bat. Project design criteria for cultural resources were included in the event that historic or archeologic resources are discovered during construction of the multi-use trail.

**FINAL DETERMINATION**

Based upon the foregoing and as required by 36 CFR 4.30, the NPS has determined that bicycle use on the Cable Connector Trail evaluated in the EA and FONSI is consistent with the protection of the Riverway's natural, scenic, and aesthetic values; safety considerations; management objectives; and will not disturb wildlife or park resources.

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Juliet L. Galonska, Superintendent  
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

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Date

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Herbert C. Frost, Ph.D., Regional Director  
National Park Service, DOI Regions 3, 4, and 5

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Date