

**Inside this Issue**

New Social Media Manager	Pg. 2
Website Update	Pg. 4
DNR Update	Pg. 5
The Back Page	Pg. 6



# Through the Gateway

Volume 27 Issue 2 Fall-Winter 2019

## Presidents Message

by Dennis Lindeke

Happy New Year! Greetings to all of our members and to those that enjoy, maintain, and support our beautiful trails. As you can see from our most excellent newsletter, your Association has had a very active 2019. Our Board of Directors, the DNR, and volunteer members have done an amazing job to make the trails a safe place to enjoy nature, commute, and to get some exercise.

Looking ahead to 2020, I think that the two main activities will be the grand opening of the new Loop Trail in Stillwater, and the bonding request to the Legislature for construction of a new trail segment at Scandia. The Association will have an active part in both these activities.

The Stillwater Loop Trail grand opening is scheduled for the weekend of May 15<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned to our website and Facebook pages for updates! And in cooperation with the City of Scandia, Cycling Scandia, the DNR, Parks & Trails Council of MN, plus many other groups and individuals, we have proposed a major bonding request for construction of a new 3-mile segment of trail between William O'Brien State Park and the City of Scandia. Legislative activity related to this request will occur in February and March 2020. Please keep an eye on our website and Facebook, as there will be a call to the membership for action and support, including attendance at the Capital on days where key decisions will be made. Further trail extension and future construction of the segment between Pine Point Park and William O'Brien Park awaits the acquisition of additional easements and funding.

Everyone wants to know how the bluebirds are doing along the trail. We have a total of 16 houses placed on the northern end of the Gateway trail between Wildwood Elementary School School in Mahtomedi, and Pine Point Park.

*President's Message continued on Page 2*



City and State officials, local business representatives, staff from the design, construction companies, and the public gathered on 22 November for the official ribbon cutting at the Highway 36 / Hadley Avenue traffic interchange.



A view of the Gateway State Trail pedestrian crossing under Hadley Avenue. It's a beauty!

In 2019, 45 bluebirds fledged from these houses, bringing the six year total up to 280 baby bluebirds. YAY!

This will be my last newsletter as President of the Association. In April, Beth Hayden will take over the leadership role. Beth, who works for the Nature Conservancy, has been Vice President for the past three years; she is very skilled and more than capable of taking on this role. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve the Association, the trails, and its amazing core of member volunteers.

***The Association recognizes Dennis for his dedicated service as President.  
Thank you, Dennis!***

### **New GBCTA Facebook and Social Media Manager**

Hello, my name is Jon Slock. I'm the newest board member for the GBCTA, and will serve as social media manager. My focus is our Facebook page.

Why does the GBCTA have a Facebook page?

- Outreach – letting people know that the trails and the GBCTA exist
- Information – what's going on, such as construction projects, candlelight walks, and other events
- Community – connecting with other GBCTA members and trail users
- Membership – finally, we hope our social media presence encourages more folks to become members!

We started the year with roughly 300 likes/followers, and as I write this, we're up to about 475 likes. For all the reasons listed above, our goal is to continue to gain more followers.

I have been handling the Association Facebook page for a couple months now. A recent post on December 9<sup>th</sup> about winter snow plowing on the trail generated a lot of views and engagement. I allowed commenting on our page, and a lively (but civil) conversation occurred. It's clear our followers care about the trails! That is something we can show the DNR as we advocate for the trails going forward.

A few facts about me: I live in St. Paul, about a five minute bike ride to the Arlington parking lot on the Gateway. If you're in St. Paul or Maplewood, please reach out to me! I'd love to organize some events for the western part of the trail.

Happy Holidays!



The view through the new trail underpass at Hadley Avenue

### **Hadley Interchange Ribbon Cutting 2019**

The Hadley Ave. / Highway 36 construction project was big, dramatic, and hard to miss if you were travelling anywhere nearby. On Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, a large crowd was on hand to dedicate and celebrate the opening of the triple-roundabout traffic interchange and the Gateway trail pedestrian tunnel.

Many groups supported this effort: Washington County, MN DOT, the City of Oakdale, the Federal Highway Administration, MN DNR, MN State Legislators, Fleet Farm, the GBCTA, and of course the many contractors who worked long days and weekends to complete the exchange. U.S. Congresswoman Betty McCollum, MN Senator Chuck Wiger, and MN Congressman Leon Lillie were among the speakers who praised the entire project team for a job well done. The honors of cutting the ribbon went to Washington County Commissioner Stan Karwoski. The new interchange and Gateway Trail pedestrian tunnel represent a significant safety improvement to this very busy intersection.

Thank you all!

by Ian Harding

### **In Memoriam**

It is with sadness that we note John Oldendorf passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> December.

John was a past president of the GBCTA, a position he served in for 8 years. He was a tireless advocate for the Association, and for the Gateway and Brown's Creek trails. He helped give them the strong positions they have today.

His experience and wisdom will be greatly missed.



# TIDS and BITS along the TRAIL

## Cross-country Ski/Snowshoe Event on Saturday February 1, 2020

The annual GBCTA Ski and Snow Shoe Event is on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2020. At 11:00am, start from Bob Hagstrom's house at 8441 Kimbro Ave. N. in Grant, across from the Grant Town Hall. Noon lunch will be at the Gasthaus Bavarian Hunter restaurant, 8390 Lofton Ave. N., Stillwater. Distance from the start to the restaurant is approximately 1.75 miles.

Walkers can meet at 11:15am at Browns Creek Park on Neal Avenue, and proceed approximately 1.4 mi along the trail to the restaurant.

The restaurant opens at noon for those driving there. Attendees are responsible for their own lunch, and can order from the menu. No pre-payment is required.

Please RSVP on or before Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 by visiting our website at [www.gatewaybrowns creektrail.org](http://www.gatewaybrowns creektrail.org). Go to "Upcoming Events", click on the event, and use the convenient response form. This will help us let the restaurant know how many to expect. Note: This event is separate from the DNR show shoe event scheduled a week earlier, on 25 January.

Hope to see you there!



### *Permanent restroom construction in the home stretch*

In 2019, the Rotary Club of North St. Paul Maplewood Oakdale funded construction of a permanent restroom facility at the Rotary Park rest stop in North St. Paul. Recently, students from ISD 916 NE Metro Career and Technical Center worked onsite as part of their education program, and the GBCT Association also gave their support with a \$500 donation. Completion is scheduled sometime in 2020. This series of photos show the site from spring through late fall.

### Winter Candlelight Walk, Friday January 24, 2020

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the winter version of this fun event on Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from 6pm to 9pm. The walk will begin at Wildwood Elementary School, 8698 75th St N. in Stillwater, and go along a mile section of the Gateway Trail. There will be bonfires, cider, and hot cocoa for all, with plenty of parking at the school.

See our website [www.gatewaybrowns creektrail.org](http://www.gatewaybrowns creektrail.org) for more information. See you there!



Rachel Henzen (DNR) gets snacks ready at the fall candlelight walk on October 18<sup>th</sup>.

### GBCTA Informational Presentation to Residents of Frost English Silver

The Association will give a presentation this January to residents of Frost English Silver, a 55+ Community located near the intersection of the Gateway and English St. in St. Paul. We look forward to the opportunity to share information about our organization, its goals, and to educate folks about the vital support GBCTA members provide to the trail.

## GBCTA WEBSITE UPDATE

by Ian Harding

### Overview:

There were 25 events and 21 news / project updates publicized on the website in 2019. Based on website activity, Hadley / Highway 36 intersection and Stillwater loop trail progress reports were very popular items. Direct payment to GBCTA by credit card (Affinipay) is now online, which enables one-stop shopping for membership renewals.

### Statistics

There were 3,600 visitors from July thru Dec 2019, an increase of 17% compared to 2018. The most popular pages, in addition to the home page, were: Maps (950 visits), News items (920 visitors, an increase of 1500% from 2018!!), Biking (260 visitors), Parking (220 visitors) and Events (210 visitors)

### Membership data:

The Association has 163 active members, which is an increase of 6% compared to June 2019. A total of 65 members have responded to our question about topics of interest. Results are shown below.

Interest	Biking	Birds	Running / Walking	X-C Skiing	Volunteering	Wild Plants
Percent Responding	75%	49%	38%	34%	72%	15%

Thank you for your information! It helps us here at GBCTA better connect with you, and serve your needs.

*The Back Page cont'd from Page 6*

**GBCTA** – To be here today, you definitely have a guardian angel! How are you now, 9 years later?

**Dorian** – I still have aches and pains, and learned the hard way that withdrawal from opioids was almost harder than enduring the pain of the accident. The good news is that as part of our mission at the Bicycle Alliance, we lobbied for, and won, new legislation about careless driving. Up to that point, a person could hit and KILL someone while intentionally committing multiple driving offenses, and only receive a misdemeanor for careless driving, which carried up to a 30-day sentence and a \$500 penalty. I was able to testify and talk about my own crash and experience. And thanks to the work of the MN Bike Alliance, the Dakota County Attorney, motorcycle advocacy groups, and Minnesotans for Safe Driving, Minnesota Statute 169.13, Subdivision 1 (c) was signed by Governor Dayton in 2015. These types of crashes are taken more seriously now, and can be charged as a gross misdemeanor rather than misdemeanor offense. Being a reckless driver will come with stronger penalties; up to 90 days in jail, and up to a \$3,000 penalty. The other good news is that pedestrian tunnels are part of MnDOT's long range plan for Minnesota trails to keep pedestrian and bike crossings safe.

**GBCTA** – Thank you for lobbying on behalf of pedestrians and bicyclists, including lobbying for the new hands-free cell phone law. Distracted driving has become a big issue. Do you have any advice for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers to be safe and practice good habits?

**Dorian** – My top 5 stay safe recommendations for trail users are:

- Always wear a helmet while biking, even on trails.
- Yield to the slower trail user.
- Be careful and aware of what is around you.
- Trails are for recreational use. Single file is always safer!
- If you are looking at purchasing an ebike, get one that does not exceed 20mph. Some can go up to 28mph, and will not be permitted on many trails.

*Dorian Grilley sat down with Kerri Kolstad, board member and Secretary of the Gateway Brown's Creek Trail Association. Dorian graduated from the U of M as a Landscape Architect. He also worked as Director of the Minnesota Parks and Trails organization from 1996 – 2008. While in college working as an intern for the DNR, Dorian participated in planning that transitioned the Soo Line railroad to a recreational trail that would later become the Gateway Trail. He promised himself he would someday live near the trail, which he did, moving to Mahtomedi. He has used the trail to commute to work/meetings in St. Paul for over 15 years!*

**Did you know?**

By getting your newsletter electronically, you save trees and printing costs. That means more Association funds can benefit the trails! If you are a member, go to the website, click on 'Contact Us', and let us know your preference.

**Thank you!**

## Welcome Winter!

Rachel (Hintzman) Henzen DNR PAT Area Supervisor

### Hadley Avenue Crossing

After years of discussions, meetings, planning, and 7 months of intense construction, the Gateway State Trail has reopened in Oakdale with a new tunnel under Hadley Avenue. We are grateful for this safety improvement to the trail, and appreciate the work of our partners: Washington County, the City of Oakdale, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. A ribbon cutting ceremony took place on November 22.

### Westminster Bridge Replacement

Design work continues for the St. Paul Westminster Bridge replacement and repaving of a portion of trail east of the bridge. Construction will take place sometime in 2020.

### Trail West of 35E

The trail segment behind Kmart has reopened after being closed some time for a city sewer project. Final work on this segment will take place next spring, but the trail is safe to travel now. The legislature approved the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) recommendation that included funding for the reroute of the Gateway trail along L'Orient St. in St Paul, utilizing the Maryland Ave tunnel. Construction will begin in 2021.

### Trail Maintenance

It was another busy summer for our staff. From March through October, staff removed a total of 148 trees from the Gateway and Brown's Creek State Trails. We contracted to have a failed culvert fixed at the 55<sup>th</sup> St Parking Lot, and will work next spring to replace another on Brown's Creek just north of downtown Stillwater. We planned to stripe a few more sections of trail this fall, but cold weather came too quickly, so that will happen in spring 2020.

### Candlelight Events

Thanks to everyone who attended the October 18<sup>th</sup> fall candlelight hike on Brown's Creek. The weather was lovely; and close to 300 trail users attend the event; a record for us! The winter candlelight hike will be on January 24, 2020 from 6-9pm on the Gateway trail at County Road 12/Wildwood Elementary School. If you haven't had enough outdoor activity after this event, come back to the same location the next day on January 25 at 10am, and learn how to snowshoe!

### Gateway Extension Update

The DNR Parks and Trails Division places a high priority on extension of the Gateway trail. We work with communities, landowners, and non-profit partners like the GBCTA to realize the goal of a multiuse trail connection from Pine Point Park to Scandia. Conversations continue with a number of landowners to host a segment of the Gateway on their property, and a handful of those have advanced to more formal stages of the real estate right-of-way process. Of note, this year we were able to allocate funding for engineering and design work on a segment of trail extension to the south of Scandia, where all necessary land rights have been acquired.

Thanks to the Association, and I hope to see you on the Trail!

#### Top 5 Habits for People Friendly Drivers

- **Avoid all distraction** & aggressive behaviors
- **Slow down** & always watch your speed
- **Be alert** for bicyclists and pedestrians and prepare to **Stop and Yield**
- **Be patient** when passing a bicyclist
- **Look before opening your door**



Pilot Project of BikeMN

*The GBCTA recognizes Everett Meyers for his past service as Facebook and Social Media manager. Thank you, Everett.*

**BikeMN's Top 5 "Stay Safe" tips for drivers**

### 2019 Gateway Brown's Creek Trail Association Board / Association Officers

<b>President</b>	Dennis Lindeke	<b>Treasurer</b>	Laurie Mainquist		
<b>Vice President</b>	Beth Hayden	<b>Officer at Large</b>	Liz Stejskal		
<b>Secretary</b>	Kerrie Kolstad				
<b>Association Board of Directors</b>					
Laurie Beaulieu (Equestrian Liaison), Ian Harding (Website Manager), John Kimberly, Rob McKim (Community Liaison), Pam Meyer, Peter Nord (Ski Event Chair), Janie O'Connor, Ed Sanderson, Jon Slock (Facebook/Social Media Manager), Liz Stejskal (Editor), Barb Wahman (Volunteer Liaison), and Kim Weber					
<b>Honorary Board Members and Trail Liaison</b>					
Judy Drew (Equestrian Liaison), Noreen Farrell, Bob Hagstrom, Doug Schwartz, Peter Seed, Vik Wilson					
<b>DNR Parks and Trails Supervisor</b>	Rachel Henzen	<b>DNR Trail Naturalist</b>	Linda Radimecky	<b>DNR Acquisition/ Development Specialist</b>	Brandon Helm

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## The Back Page

[www.gatewaybrowns creektrail.org](http://www.gatewaybrowns creektrail.org)



### **Accidents, Angels, and Advocacy**

by Kerri Kolstad

With the new Hadley Avenue interchange completed, we now have a brand-new tunnel escorting users on the Gateway trail safely below traffic. A lot has changed, so we reached out to Dorian Grilley, the Executive Director of the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota to get his perspective. Dorian was hit by a car at the Hadley intersection in August of 2010.

**GBCTA** – Dorian, what happened that day on the Gateway Trail?

**Dorian** – I have always been a bicycle commuter, and had been at the Minnesota Bicycle Alliance for less than a year. That afternoon, I was pedaling along the Gateway Trail from a meeting in downtown St Paul to my home in Mahtomedi. As I crossed Hadley Avenue in the pedestrian crosswalk, I was hit by a vehicle passing stopped cars on the shoulder that failed to yield to me in the crosswalk as required by law. Coincidentally, the meeting I was going to attend was about the “Safe Routes to School” initiative.

**GCBTA** – That’s a bicycle rider’s worst nightmare. Were you injured?

**Dorian** – I have little recollection of the incident, but in the hospital, they said my bones were broken in sixteen places. One broken neck vertebrae, right shoulder in many places, several ribs, a finger, and a thumb. I was in the hospital for three weeks, had three major surgeries that included five fused vertebrae. I was on doctor prescribed opioids for the severe pain and spent more than three months taking them and many more recovering.

**GBCTA** – Wow, I remember reading it about it in the paper and thinking about how many times I had crossed that same intersection on my own bike. What happened to the driver?

**Dorian** – She was ticketed for careless driving.

*The back Page Continued on Page 4*

