



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the *Bridging the Bluffs Campaign*?

Bridging the Bluffs Campaign is a \$1.2M capital fundraising drive facilitated by the Flyway Trail Board with a group of approximately 50 volunteers. The goal is to fund the vital link between Minnesota and Wisconsin at Winona. Further phases will create the 50-mile multi-purpose trail along the spectacular Mississippi River, giving hikers, bikers, and rock climbers from the area and throughout the Midwest the opportunity to:

- Access and explore the river and its bluffs
- Embrace the natural and ecologically rare beauty of the world's largest bird flyway
- Safely enjoy various local outdoor recreational opportunities
- Explore and support the communities and towns along the river

Phase I timeframe is 2019-2020 and will consist of:

- Initial construction of Flyway Trail with use of the new Highway 54 Interstate Bridge and the John A. Latsch Historical Wagon Bridge
- Building a new 842-foot bridge over the Burlington-Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad
- Installation of one mile of crushed limestone trail from the end of the bridge to the Town of Buffalo Park in Bluff Siding, WI
- Creating bike repair stations, bike racks, benches, a donor wall and trail head signage

Phase II estimated timeframe is 2021 – 2023 and will consist of:

Installation of 2.8 miles of 10-ft. wide limestone surfaced trail between Town of Buffalo Park and Marshland, WI, completing the connection from Winona to the Great River Trail.

Phase III estimated timeframe is 2024 - 2026

Phase III is still in the planning stages, although initial design work has been started. Phase III will see the trail north into Buffalo County towns of Fountain City, Cochrane, Buffalo City and Alma with future plans to connect with Nelson, and Wabasha, Minnesota.

2. Where does the route actually go?

The map shows a portion of the Phase I proposed construction route. Phase II will continue through the wildlife refuge south to connect with the Great River Trail. Phase III will follow Highway 35 north, on a new off-road trail, into the above-mentioned towns.



Flyway Connector Trail route and bridges, part of Phase I

3. What will the money raised go towards?

The \$1.2M *Bridging the Bluffs Campaign* goal will provide:

- \$600,000 for the Winona Connector bridge project private match to secure the \$1.9 million in state and federal funding for Phase I
- \$300,000 for the 20 percent private match required for Phase II for the 2.8 miles to Marshland
- \$300,000 for planning, engineering and consulting costs and part of the 20 percent private match needed for the final Phase III to turn the trail northward to Fountain City, Cochrane, Buffalo City and Alma

4. How many people use these kinds of trails regularly?

- 40 percent of Wisconsin residents’ bike for recreation
- 62 percent of Wisconsin residents engage in outdoor recreation that includes hiking, walking, and other trail-based activities
- 76 percent of Minnesotans report hiking or walking in nature daily, weekly or monthly
- Nearly half of Minnesotans bike each year for vacations, errands, recreation, commuting, fitness, and fun. All those rides add up to about 90 million trips and 180 million miles

5. How is the average citizen going to benefit from the new trail?

Supporting Flyway Trail will help to put Buffalo County and Winona on the map as a destination for outdoor recreation. It will serve as an attraction for families, retirees, businesses looking to relocate and others looking for thriving communities to call home. Amenities like trails help raise the tax base of the region by supporting overall business growth. Quality of life features like good schools and exciting recreational opportunities drive people to desire to move to a new location. The trail will provide another healthy outdoor opportunity for all and expand the biking, hiking, and birding opportunities with exciting new destination-trails.

6. Why is this trail of benefit to the community?

Trail Element	Groups Served	Output
A separated trail off Hwy 35	Bicyclists, motorists, families, hikers	Safer trails
Trail connections to state and national parks and wildlife refuges	Outdoor enthusiasts, families, bikers, hikers	Educational opportunities, increased use of 100s of acres of preserved land
Trail connections to town centers	Communities along the river, users of the trail	Economic development opportunities, small business support, housing value increase,

		tourist dollars
Great River Trail connection	Bikers, hikers and residents	Hundreds of miles now accessible via Winona and Buffalo County, will put the area “on the map” for outdoor enthusiasts
Accessibility to residential areas	Local residents, local employers, local community leadership	Increased housing value, increased tax revenue, health and community vitality, draw to new residents and employees

7. Who has ownership of the project?

Buffalo County and The City of Winona are the governmental partners. Buffalo County has ownership of the construction elements and has the responsibility to apply for the federal and state funding available for trail development. The City of Winona has signed an agreement to maintain the trail on the Minnesota side. The committed partnership between Winona’s city planners, Council members and the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors shows the level of vested interest toward health and wellness and economic growth potential through this project.

8. How will the phasing work?

The project is split into three phases. This is due to the funding streams from the Department of Transportation (DOT) which is providing 80 percent of funds needed. Once one segment of the trail is completed, Buffalo County can apply for funding from the DOT for the next segment and so on.

Flyway Trail Phase Funding and Timing Chart

Flyway Trail Phases	Federal & State Funding	Local Funding	Private Funding <i>Bridging the Bluffs Campaign</i>	Total Project Costs
Pre-Phase I Winona Connector Highway 43 Bridge Old Wagon Bridge	MN DOT	City of Winona: invested in trail connections to bridges and Latsch Island Local donors renovate Wagon Bridge	<i>Private match amount</i> <i>Each trail section listed per phase, below:</i>	Completed
Phase I Winona to Town of Buffalo Park <i>2019-2020</i> Former Hwy 54, new bridge over BNSF railroad and one-mile crushed limestone to Town of Buffalo Park	LAWCON Grant \$535,000 in 2019 (50 percent local match required) Recreation Trails Program Grant \$45,000 in 2018 WI DOT Grant \$2.1M in 2016 (20 percent local match required)	Buffalo County: \$175,000 plus engineering and staffing \$50,000 allocated deed review and property agreements \$150,000 campaign pledge	\$600,000 Private match needed Winona/Flyway Connector	Total estimate = \$2.6M Low Bid = \$2.9M LAWCON (Grant) covers additional \$300,000 higher bid than estimate
Phase II <i>2021-23</i> Crushed rock trail to Marshland connecting Great River Trail 2.8 miles	Federal govt. requested Buffalo County apply for funding after Phase I construction underway	Buffalo County provides staff/resources to manage and secure grant funding	\$300,000 Private match needed Connects with Great River Trail	Current estimate \$900,000 - \$1,000,000
Phase III* <i>Estimated 2024-2026</i> 20 miles of trail from Alma to Winona	Federal & State Trail Funds will be applied to connect additional trail systems north	Buffalo County provides staff/resources to manage and secure grant funding	\$300,000 Engineering/planning for Flyway Trail North from the Winona/Flyway Connector*	Current estimate \$24M (not including another DOT matching grant and other grants)
	Matches must be funded prior to applying for next phase		<i>Campaign Goal: \$1.2M for Winona/Flyway Connector</i>	Remaining funds move to next phases

* A future approximately \$3M private campaign will complete Flyway Trail to Alma, Wisconsin (Phase

III)

9. What are some demographics of trail users?

People of all ages and interests are users of trails including birding clubs, hiking groups, and school children. Twenty-two percent of the net growth in U.S. bike trips from 1995-2009 was by riders ages 60-79. In the U.S., 24 percent of all bicycle trips are made by women and 76 percent are made by men. Winona, La Crosse, and other smaller communities like Wabasha, have dedicated bicycling groups which use trails regularly and help raise funds and awareness for the importance of trails for the health, wellness and economic opportunity of its citizens.

10. Where will funds come from to pay for the project?

- In 2016, Buffalo County was awarded an 80 percent grant with DOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) in the amount of \$2.1M along with ancillary grants of \$235,000 for state review of construction and an additional \$300,000 to cover the increase in final bids incurred for the delay in construction from the award date.
- The required 20 percent match for the \$2.9M low bid needs to be in place by March 2020 and construction is planned to begin in Fall 2019 in order to meet the requirements of the TAP grant.
- The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is providing \$535,000 for the Flyway Connector working through Buffalo County as the required governmental body. A local 50 percent match is required for this grant.
- *Bridging the Bluffs Campaign* funds will be used as the private match to help complete the section of the trail from Flyway Connector through Marshland where the trail will connect to the Great River Trail in the US. Fish and Wildlife Refuge.
- In May 2019, Buffalo County pledged up to \$150,000 to be used for the Flyway Connector to provide the lead catalyst gift the campaign, a significant amount for a county with a population of 13,000.

11. Are the towns along the proposed route going to contribute?

Some towns have provided funding for this effort and as more communities hear about project benefits for the region it is likely more will contribute. Towns and municipalities will also have a chance to contribute during the campaign.

12. When will construction start? When will it be completed?

Initial Phase I construction will begin in Fall 2019 and finish in 2020 with a goal of project completion for Phase II by 2023.

13. Why do these trails cost so much to construct?

Many factors contribute to the cost of trails. The first portion of the trail project spans a major waterway, crosses many land types, and has no abandoned railroad bed - as many multi-use trails do - to easily lay a paved trail. Designed by the leading national trail company, Alta, the plan addresses multiple trail and construction needs. Another key issue is the necessary requirements from the railroad to allow bikers to safely cross the mainline BNSF rail tracks.

14. What about more awareness to project? How is Flyway Trail marketed?

The *Bridging the Bluffs Campaign* includes a Communications Committee that will address the promotional needs of the campaign. A marketing plan to promote trail use will also be addressed as part of the maintenance plan of the trail. Flyway Trail website provides updates on the project at www.flywaytrail.com.

15. What organizations are partnering with this project?

Many bike and outdoor organizations have expressed strong interest in creating this vital link to Winona and the Great River Trail with the future goal of the completion of the Flyway Trail through Buffalo County and beyond. Financially, Buffalo County has contributed and

are the fiscal sponsor for the project with the DNR and DOT granting their support following the local match. Interested local organizations will be further engaged through the campaign as well as after trail completion through expanding the Flyway Trail Board.

16. Will the proposed trail come to my town? Where will it connect?

Flyway Trail will eventually link from Winona, Minnesota to Trempealeau, Wisconsin and through Marshland, Wisconsin, in the south and north through the small beautiful towns of Bluff Siding – right at the Town Park - and then Fountain City, Cochrane, Buffalo City and Alma with a future goal of connecting Nelson, Wisconsin and finally Wabasha, Minnesota.



17. What about land rights for the route?

Buffalo County staff and Flyway Trail Board of Directors members have worked tirelessly over the past few years to gain many land easements needed to create this project. To date all land necessary for the route has been secured for use for Phase I and Phase II of the project. Right of way under the Dairyland Power lines in Wisconsin has been granted for Phase III and will provide seven miles of the necessary route.

18. Could we consider asking the towns on the Wisconsin river side if they would consider a 0.5 percent sales tax that would sunset in four years?

Due to the smaller population of Buffalo County, this is currently not an option for funding; however, the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors is fully supportive of the project and has demonstrated this by committing more than \$150,000 over the past several years to initiate the funding process. Buffalo County has pledged another \$150,000 as a lead campaign gift.

19. There are schools located along Hwy 35 - how will it join with the school property? What about safety for students?

Other communities who have had similar concerns have not found this issue to be a problem after the construction of a trail. In Red Wing, Minnesota, the Cannon Valley River Trail runs directly in front of an elementary school, along Highway 61. Students walk the trail daily, getting fresh air, and enjoying safe outdoor educational experiences.

20. What percentage of the trail do planners expect to be off the roadway?

Planners are hoping 100 percent will either be off the roadway or on the side of the roadway with a divider (land bridge or wall) separating from the roadway. However, there are parts of the trail which must pass through towns which either closely hug a bluff or the river/railroad on the other. Limited portions of the trail may need to be directly on a regular road system.

21. Who will maintain the trails?

Buffalo County and City of Winona are responsible for the maintenance of the trail. A maintenance plan will be developed in accordance with trail planning guidelines. A Friends of the Flyway Trail group will help with ongoing support and maintenance. The DNR has grants available for infrastructure and chronic maintenance. The Flyway Trail Board is exploring sponsorship for parts of the trail, to further support maintenance needs.

22. Is there any county funding that could be used for the capital campaign?

Yes. Buffalo County has pledged up to \$150,000 toward *Bridging the Bluffs Campaign*. Over the past approximately 10 years, the county has spent more than \$150,000, a significant investment for a county of 13,000 with a small tax base.

23. How would the trail affect the watershed? Would it disrupt natural habitat? What about wildlife?

The construction of the trail has been carefully examined for ecological disruption through the Alta Planning Study. Every phase is also subject to a required environmental impact study as construction begins. For example, due to the mating season of a frog species located near the bridge, construction cannot begin in the spring months.

24. What is the expected economic impact of the project?

Please see the case statement for specific examples of the huge amount of economic impact multi-purpose trails bring to regions. The Elroy-Sparta and Root River Trails are two examples of how trails can turn small communities around economically. Several examples of trail development in our region has shown that trails have transformed entire communities and brought in significant visitors and tourist dollars on an annual basis.

25. What dollar benefit will this bring to affected towns?

A strong local park and recreation system attracts visitors generating significant economic activity. This comes in the form of increased sales at local destinations such as restaurants, bars, gas and convenience stations, grocery stores and hotels. Similar regions which have made significant investments in outdoor recreation have seen substantial increases in visitors per year and tourism related spending. As an example, during the summer of 2009, according to the most recent report from the DNR, the 60-mile Root River Trail in Minnesota generated about \$2.3M from those who used it and is cited as one of the key attractions to the area.

26. Is there financial support in the community for this campaign?

A Campaign Readiness Study was completed by Crescendo Fundraising Professionals, LLC, with more than 65 area respondents who shared their thoughts on the proposed campaign.

Study results determined \$1.2M in private funding would be possible after further cultivation and planning is completed.

27. Who is coordinating the Bridging the Bluffs Campaign?

Western Wisconsin and Winona volunteer community members, along with the Flyway Trail Board, are providing leadership for the *Bridging the Bluffs Campaign*. The Board hired the consulting firm of Crescendo Fundraising Professionals, LLC to provide expertise. Crescendo has successfully managed nearly 40 capital campaigns for municipal entities.

28. How does the fundraising consultants' contract work?

The Flyway Trail Board of Directors pays consultants for time spent managing the campaign, not on how much is raised. Consulting fees do not increase if the campaign raises more than the goal.

29. What is the timing of the fundraising campaign?

The pre-campaign will be completed by September 2019, and includes identifying prospective contributors, securing campaign leadership, and finalizing the campaign case statement which is the rationale for the Flyway Trail connector Phase I and II. The campaign will formally launch in February or March of 2020.

30. What is a pledge and how does payment toward a pledge work?

Pledges are a donor's promise to give a certain amount to a campaign over time. A specific amount will be decided by a donor to give regularly, and this may be paid to the campaign over three years. Individuals and businesses may make payments semi-annually or annually at their discretion (or monthly using ACH payments). Reminders will be sent based on donor preferences. Timing for payments for this campaign are from 2019 to 2021. Donors may find

it easier to be more generous giving a larger pledge over time. Some major employers may have employee matching programs. Please check with your Human Resources Departments of your employer to identify if these possibilities exist.

31. What options can people use to fulfill pledges?

- Donors may give cash, appreciated property such as stocks, paid up insurance policies, and in some cases, in-kind gifts, such as land near the proposed trail route.
 - An account to transfer tax-deductible stock will be established.
 - When a gift of stock is made at a bank associated with the campaign or the donor's broker, the stock will be sold immediately with the funds issued to the campaign.
 - Check, commodities, appreciated property, land sale or other property may meet payments on pledges.
 - Payroll deduction may be an option if companies wish to offer this for their employees.
 - Employees of companies offering matching programs for charitable contributions are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.
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32. Do most people fulfill their pledges?

Yes. Midwest communities conducting campaigns typically experience pledge fulfillment ranges from 95 to 105 percent. According to the fundraising consultants, one-half of pledges are usually paid into the campaign the first year; one-third is typically paid in the second year, and one-sixth in the third year.

33. Are contributions tax deductible?

Each contribution is tax deductible according to IRS standards. The campaign office will send an acknowledgement of all pledges. As payments are remitted over time, donors will receive thank you acknowledgements and substantiation of the amount for their records to share with their tax advisor.

34. Is there a plan if we don't raise all the money?

We are confident the goal will be met due to the very positive study which was completed in preparation for the campaign and the strong interest to be involved in pre-campaign committees. In the unforeseen event that the full goal is not obtained, the Flyway Trail Board will fund as much of the Flyway Trial phases as possible.

35. Will campaign volunteers seek foundation support?

The campaign will apply for private foundation grants. However, philanthropic research shows the majority of funds given in the U.S. comes from individuals. In 2018, approximately 70 percent of more than \$418B was given by individuals. The campaign is hopeful that approximately 10 to 15 percent of the total goal will be secured from foundations which is the average amount of gifts secured in campaigns from foundations. The majority of funds for this project must come from the people and businesses of this area that are most closely interested in its vitality, economic prosperity and well-being of its residents.

36. Will a challenge or matching gift be offered to help encourage giving?

Opportunities may exist for donors wishing to provide a challenge grant. More information will be coming as the campaign is planned and the donors' wishes are put into place with the consultants, Campaign Co-chairs and the Steering committee.

37. Why should I participate in the fundraising drive?

Investing in the *Bridging the Bluffs Campaign* shows your commitment to improving our region's quality of life for generations and will act as a catalyst for continued development in the region.

38. What if someone wants to give an in-kind gift?

Raising dollar amounts is the priority for the campaign at this time however gifts of land that might run along the proposed trail site would be of huge advantage as well.

39. How do I give?

Each contributor should consult with his or her tax advisor to identify tax advantages for their specific situation. The campaign will provide verification of each gift.

40. How can I help?

When someone asks you to be involved in the *Bridging the Bluffs Campaign*, please say, “Yes!” When you are asked to give, please give generously! If you are interested in becoming involved, please call **Sonya Hansen**, Buffalo County Administrator at 608-685-6235 or email Sonya.hansen@co.buffalo.wi.us

Please view current campaign information on the campaign website at www.flywaytrail.com

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