



Minnesota High School Cycling League
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Dear Friends of the Jackson County Trails Committee,:

I write on behalf of the Minnesota High School Cycling League in support of the Friends of the Jackson County Trails Committee proposal to the funding agency for a grant to fund the Belmont County Park Off-Road Trail to reduce health disparities in the Jackson County, Minnesota. The Minnesota State High School League Racing strongly supports this project because of the positive community impacts we see when new local trails are developed. In many out state communities from Austin, MN to Crosby-Ironton, we have seen firsthand how providing a trail gets entire families outdoors and embracing a new life-long activity.

The Friends of the Jackson County Trails Committee has been advocating and working for more than twenty years to bring trails to Jackson County, Minnesota. Jackson County, Minnesota is a rural county in Southwest, Minnesota. Jackson is the County seat has seen progress over the past several years with trail development and bicycle friendliness. Now known for its well-developed paved trail network that spans almost twelve miles, Jackson is looking to build an Off-Road/Mountain Bike trail on the outskirts of town. In 2017, The Friends of the Jackson County Trails became involved in an Off-Road trail/mountain bike trail through interested individuals who have experienced this type of riding experience. With that enthusiasm the membership began researching Off-Road/Mountain Biking opportunities on a national and state level. This is a very fast-growing sport and there are very few opportunities available in the State of Minnesota. Thus, a dream was born.

Through this letter, we acknowledge specific roles and responsibilities we will fulfill in this partnership. In the event this proposal is funded, we would expect our role in the Belmont County Park Off-Road Trail to include:

One of our representatives would be designated to work on this effort; including forming a local team. The key with the Minnesota High School Cycling League is for each student athlete, over 50% get a parent riding. Additionally, trail advocacy is a critical part to our curriculum – we look forward to helping maintain through our Teen Trail Corps. program. Being a statewide organization with an estimated 2,100 student-athletes in 2019, we frequently look to host events around Minnesota with an average attendance of 2,500-3,000 people total. Our hope is that the Belmont County Park Off-Road Trail's development that would be the "first of its kind" in Southwest Minnesota and a potential host venue in the years to come. It would also lead to economic opportunities as these riders and families will have need for eating, sleeping, and supplies. It will also introduce tourists to the other resources in the area. We look at this as a recreation destination. The enthusiasm for this sport is new and fast growing.

Best Regards,

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