MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Eastern U.P. Regional Trails Consortium

ABSTRACT
This document is intended to bring together regional recreational trail stakeholders for the common goal of promoting and protecting our valuable natural resources while providing opportunities for all to enjoy.

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Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission
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Parties:
The parties included in this agreement constitute the Eastern U.P. Regional Trail Partnership, referenced hereinafter as the “Partnership” (Includes public and private organizations).

The Parties listed on attached signature page.

Purpose:
This agreement formalizes the relationship between the Parties and allows the Parties to speak with one voice for the mutually agreed-upon vision, mission and goals set forth below.

Vision Statement:
The Eastern U.P. Regional Trail is a system of land and water trails and routes that connect Eastern U.P. communities, tribal lands, parks, and private development, to provide opportunities for walking, biking, paddling, observing wildlife, horseback riding, non-motorized transportation and motorized recreation use. The Eastern U.P. Regional Trail system will be a premier destination for outdoor and nature enthusiasts offering a rare opportunity to travel through exceptionally scenic, remote, primitive landscapes that will provide a variety of recreational activities and promote local and regional economic improvements.

Mission Statement
To unite the Eastern Upper Peninsula with a regional system of land and water trails that enhances our communities’ livability and promotes stewardship of our natural resources.

Goals for the Eastern U.P. Regional Trails Consortium
Our goal is to use the collective and cooperative energy of the Parties to support projects that further our mission. The Parties are committed to the following partnership objectives, to the best of each party’s ability, dependent upon policies, budgets, and agency procedures.

1. Work with community leaders, local and Tribal governments, private developers, community members and our neighbors to develop public-private partnerships for creating a seamless system of connected multi-surface and multi-use trails on land and water. Coordinate and cooperate between groups to further the mission.
2. Promote healthy lifestyles by designing trail systems that accommodate citizens of all ages and abilities, and promote diverse outdoor recreation activities.
3. Establish trail routes that highlight the natural beauty of our region and promote appreciation of wildlife and natural systems.
4. Encourage innovative land uses to maximize public open space and development of trails between Eastern U.P. communities, working forests, agricultural areas and new development.
5. Provide educational opportunities and identify points of interest throughout the trail system that highlight cultural resources, working lands, local history and natural science.
6. Connect our trails with other regional, county and cross-state trail systems. Promote our trail system as an eco-tourism destination and enticement for economic development.

7. Encourage non-motorized transportation by offering multiple trail access points and safe, reasonably-direct routes between Eastern U.P. communities, our ferries and bridges, and popular destinations within each community.

8. Create a network of trails and "trail heads" that allow easy public access from parking to land trails and to the shoreline with landing/launching sites for water trails which will enable all citizens opportunities region-wide to enjoy the scenic and environmental richness of our surrounding land and waters.

9. Support the ongoing usefulness and availability of the Eastern U.P. Water Trail Atlas guides for public use; the creation of which will be a major accomplishment of the Parties.

10. Offer mutual support and advice on specific on-going projects.

11. Investigate avenues for increasing funding of conservation, restoration and non-motorized recreation projects for the Parties.

12. Increase community awareness of the recreational, economic and environmental value of a trail system.

13. Request and encourage the inclusion of manual-powered design considerations at new facilities and facilities that are slated for significant improvements or renovations.

14. Promote the Eastern U.P. Trail system as a valuable resource for non-motorized recreation, education, stewardship and tourism.

While the focus on the partnership is to promote non-motorized recreation, the intent of this MOU is not to impede motorized use, or advocate for excluding motorized use.

Guiding principles:

Trails, greenways and blueways that promote:

**Accessibility**: A regional infrastructure of trails and greenways that are a part of everyday life and accessible to all people of varying abilities, ages, and backgrounds

**Healthy lifestyles**: Improved fitness, health, and well-being for all people through trails and greenways (blueways) that offer opportunities for physical activity, recreation, rejuvenation, and preventative health care

**Economic vitality**: A trail system that contributes to the financial strength and attractiveness of a community by enhancing business opportunities, tourism, and property values

**Sustainable development**: A trail system that offers alternative transportation opportunities, contributes to the health and vitality of a community, and connects people to nature.
**Best practices:** Innovative, sustainable, and technically sound guidelines that are understood and applied by decision makers in the planning, design, development, and construction of high quality trail systems

**Experiences in the outdoors:** Responsible and enjoyable opportunities that are afforded to all trail users and contribute to each community of trail recreationists

**Appreciation for the outdoors:** Inspiring trail experiences that cultivate an appreciation for our natural and cultural heritage

**Learning in the outdoors:** Educational and interpretive opportunities that promote understanding, skills development, and appreciation of the environment

**Connectivity:** Trail systems that link communities, natural areas, and people as a means of recreation and transportation

**History of Partnership**
Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission has been involved in non-motorized transportation and trail planning in the Eastern U.P. for many years. In the last decade, the EUPRP&DC has completed digital GIS mapping and maintains a database of the Region’s trail resources. Since 2011, EUPRP&DC has coordinated and collaborated with a wide variety of stakeholders in the development of an inventory of water access sites along the Great Lakes and St. Marys River shoreline. As a multi-county agency and with approval of the EUPRP&DC Board of Commissioners, the EUPRP&DC has taken on a lead coordinating role in developing this MOU and formally bringing together stakeholders with the same vision and mission to provide a forum for discussion, develop policies and implement strategies. This MOU will provide evidence of strong community support that our trail systems are supported, managed and maintained by one or more organizations and will meet the requirements to become State Designated in the future if so desired.

**Benefits**
The Parties agree that the ability to achieve common and related goals can be enhanced significantly by working collaboratively to support projects that further our mission. The Partnership agrees that each individual project that fits within the mission of this partnership benefits all the communities along the trail system.

**Responsibilities**
All Parties agree to:

1. Work together to respect and honor private property along the Regional Trail System.
2. Cooperate in the education of Eastern U.P. Regional Trail users regarding the responsible use and respect of private properties, public lands and all Trail facilities.
3. Cooperate to develop and distribute outreach, interpretive, and educational materials, tools and programs that enhance, enrich and or promote the Eastern U.P. Regional Trail System.
4. Appoint a minimum of one representative to act as liaison to the party and attend each meeting, averaging two meetings per year. Meetings may be attended in person, or can be attended by telephone or by any telecommunication method available to the parties.

**Decision Making Process**

Actions in support of specific projects will be made during regularly scheduled meetings. The Partnership will strive to make all decisions at meetings by consensus of the Parties at the meeting. If a consensus cannot be achieved, then the Parties attending the meeting may decide to vote on the action by majority vote. A quorum of more than 50% percent of voting members is required for any decision of the Partnership. Each Party is encouraged to have multiple representatives attend the meetings; however, each Party only has one vote.

**Modification, Termination and other conditions**

- This MOU is neither a fiscal nor funds obligation document. Any endeavor involving funds between the Parties will be made in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and procedures. Such endeavors, if any, will be outlined in separate agreements.
- Parties will be notified in writing of any proposed changes to the MOU at least 30 days prior to the vote. This MOU may be modified through the decision making process for this MOU. In such case, all agreeing parties will re-sign the MOU.
- Any party may terminate its involvement at any time by providing written notice to the facilitator of the Eastern U.P. Regional trail group. Any additional members may be approved by utilizing the decision making process in the MOU. New members may be added without the then-current Parties re-signing the MOU. The full list of Parties to the MOU will be kept by Eastern U.P. Regional Trail Group facilitator, currently EUPRPDC.
- This MOU becomes effective when signed by the signatory Parties and remains in effect until modified or terminated.