



# HEART OF THE LAKES TRAIL IS ALMOST FINISHED

June 11, 2025

*By Heather Rule, photos provided*

In total, the Heart of the Lakes Trail is a 31-mile regional, multi-use trail going from Pelican Rapids to Perham. Construction for the trail started in 2021 and is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2025. The trail is open for cycling, e-bikes, walking, running and roller blading. No motorized vehicles allowed.



The trail winds through the heart of Otter Tail County, giving users a view of all the environmental attributes of the trail so they can take in the scenery of the lakes, streams, hills, prairies, wetlands and open farm country. Each of the five trail segments are unique: Pelican Segment (6.8 miles), Silent Lake Segment (8.1 miles), McDonald Lake Segment (5.8 miles), Perham Segment (6.4 miles) and Maplewood Segment (3.9 miles).

The Maplewood Segment of the trail is 3.9 miles with about 12 miles left to pave, and this final segment of the trail is set to be completed in spring 2025.

"Definitely the star is going to be that segment through Maplewood State Park," said Kevin Fellbaum, Otter Tail County parks and trails director. "Just because you're totally immersed in the middle of the environment and nature."

The Pelican Rapids segment of the Heart of the Lakes Trail is 6.8 miles. The westernmost part of the trail starts along Hwy. 59 and then goes east along Hwy. 3, all just south of Pelican Rapids. The section also follows the Otter Tail Scenic Byway.

With a direct connection to the south side of the city, this segment was completed in 2022 and can be accessed by anyone. There's also a co-op with Pelican Rapids school for a couple of parking areas there at the trailhead, Fellbaum. The school district also built a new concession building at the football field, including two restroom areas for trail users at the trailhead.

The Parks and Trails Staff maintains the trail seasonally and monitor conditions of the pavement over time to make sure it's in usable condition. With brand new trails, the ride on the path is pretty nice, and the staff wants to keep the path in good condition for an enjoyable experience for users. The trail is already popular in the beautiful summer months.

"I think once we get this last part of Maplewood complete so that the trail



is complete in its entirety, I really do think it's going to continue to pick up usage," Fallbaum said.



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