

HIGH CLIFF CONNECTION PLAN

AUGUST 2022 DRAFT



David L. & Rita E. Nelson
Family Fund



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PROJECT CONTEXT

PLAN PURPOSE

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC), in partnership with municipalities throughout the Fox Cities, is fostering a long-term plan for a new multi-modal route to connect pedestrians and bicyclists to High Cliff State Park. This plan will provide guidance on the route alignment, as well as concept design and strategies for funding and implementation. This project has been identified as a priority through previous planning efforts throughout the Fox Cities. Most recently, a Fox Cities Trail Summit hosted on February 25, 2020, which included stakeholders from across the region, clearly identified this project as a priority for study.





Existing trailhead at the Menasha Lock and Miron Bridge



Trail segment at the Menasha Conservancy



Existing conditions on Fire Lane 12

STUDY AREA

The East Central Wisconsin region offers more than 2,000 miles of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This network consists of paved shoulders, paved trails, shared lane markings, bike lanes, natural surface trails and sidewalks. The bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is constructed and maintained by a patchwork of municipal and state agencies.

The study area was developed through collaboration with ECWRPC staff and builds from the priorities identified in the 2020 Trail Summit to develop a connection from the Fox Cities to High Cliff State Park. The Loop the Little Lake Trail, with a trailhead at the Miron Bridge on the west end of Broad Street, will serve as the western terminal point of the High Cliff Connection corridor. The conclusion of this study will determine the best route and provide recommendations for facility types to create a continuous and connected path for pedestrians and bicyclists across an east-west corridor to connect to High Cliff State Park. Spur connections north to the Appleton/Kimberly/Combined Locks area will also be identified, as well as potential connections from the southern area of High Cliff State Park.



PARTNERS

Representatives from the following groups worked together to provide guidance and input for this plan:

- City of Menasha
- Village of Harrison
- Village of Kimberly
- Fox Cities Greenways
- Fox Cities Cycling Association
- Friends of High Cliff State Park
- Calumet County
- Winnebago County
- Wisconsin DNR
- Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region
- Fox Valley Thrives
- ESTHER
- Wisconsin Bike Federation
- Residents and local advocates in the study area



Figure 1.1 High Cliff Connection Study Area





HIGH CLIFF STATE PARK

High Cliff State Park is a 1,187-acre park, owned by the State of Wisconsin and managed through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). High Cliff State Park is adjacent to Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin's largest inland lake, with access from the Village of Sherwood to the north, and a maintenance access from the Village of Harrison to the east.

Today, the park contains a marina; historic sites; campgrounds; picnic areas and shelters; a beach; an observation tower; trails for hiking, biking, and horse riding; and a playground.

With the natural surface trails at High Cliff State Park extending throughout the southern portion of the park, there is potential for a future access point from the south, with potential for connection to Calumet County Park.



Photo: www.mnprairieroots.com



Photo: www.mnprairieroots.com

HISTORY OF HIGH CLIFF

Photo: www.travelwisconsin.com



Photo: www.stateparks.com

1,000 – 1,500 years ago a nomadic indigenous group of Siouan constructed effigy mounds in the area now designated as High Cliff State Park. Thirty of these mounds were first spotted at High Cliff, yet now only nine remain: four panther-shaped mounds, two buffalo-shaped and conical mounds, and one linear mound. Today, the Park contains a statue of Ho-Chunk tribe leader Red Bird to commemorate the history of the people of the area.

The State of Wisconsin purchased the land in **1956** after advocacy by a group of local residents. The leadership of that group included Lewis Nelson, father of David Nelson, the source of funding for this study. The area was opened up as a park by the State of Wisconsin in 1957.

1895-1956 a limestone quarry and kiln were constructed to extract lime for such uses as plaster and cement. Most of the workers at this facility were recent immigrants of Hungary. A small company town with 16 houses and several stores were also constructed and in-use during this time.

The High Cliff Escarpment was designated a State Natural Area in **1982**.



Photo: www.wisconsinfirstnations.org



PROJECT SCHEDULE

The study commenced in August of 2021 and was completed the following year. Over the course of the study, six tasks were completed. Due to the ongoing conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, most meetings were held virtually.

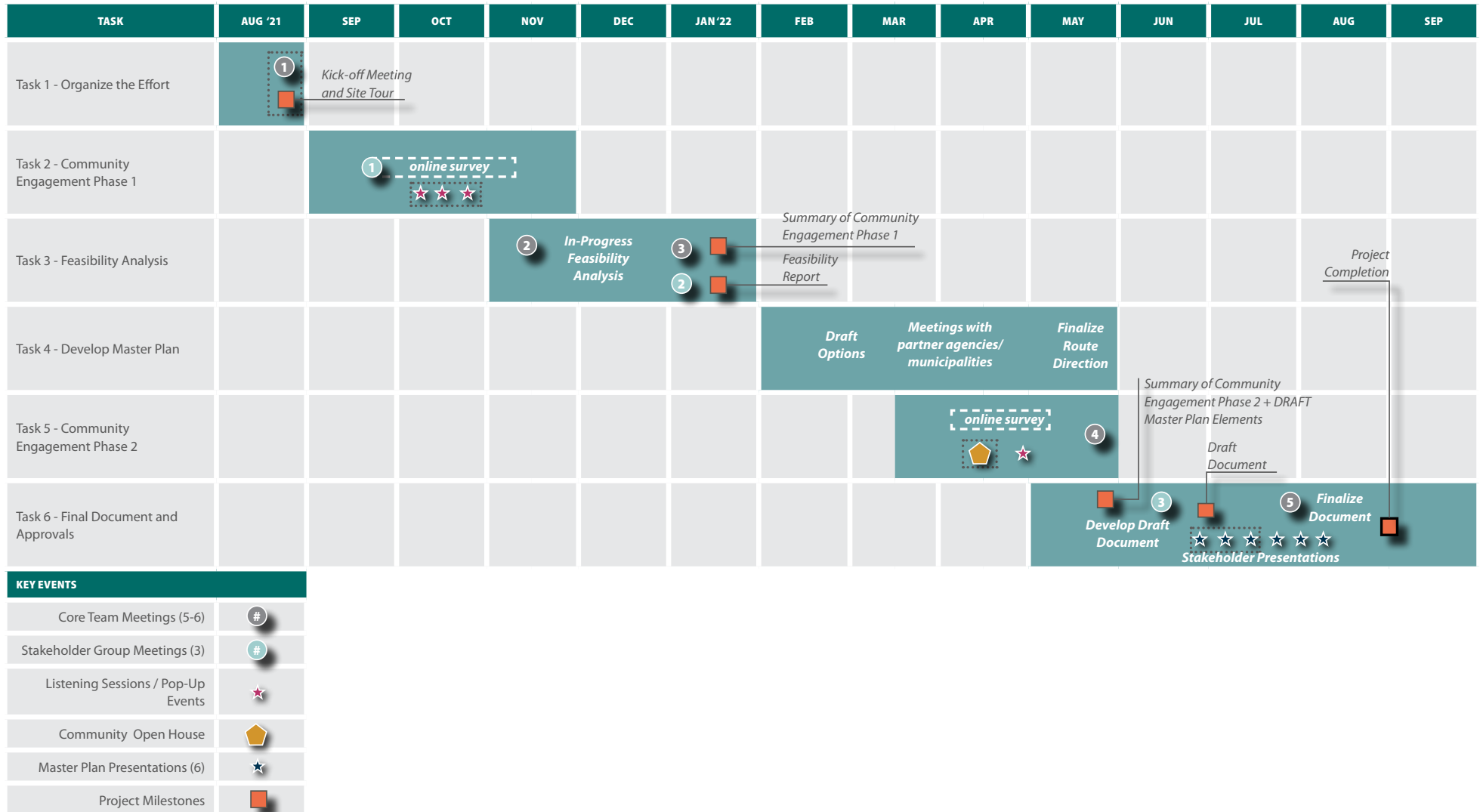


Table 1.1 High Cliff Connection Study Schedule