

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN

Outdoor Recreation Alliance of the 7 Rivers Region

AND

City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING is hereby made and entered into by and between the Outdoor Recreation Alliance of the 7 Rivers Region, hereinafter referred to as ORA Trails, and City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, hereinafter referred to as City.

PURPOSE:

This MOU sets forth the understanding between the ORA Trails and the City for the purpose of cooperating and defining the roles of each organization.

OBJECTIVE:

ORA Trails and the City have the mutual goal to expand upon the existing framework of cooperation in beneficial programs, projects and recreational development activities already accomplished and planned by ORA Trails and the City. This MOU is intended to act as a guide for future cooperation between ORA Trails and the City. Cooperative development, maintenance, and construction activities are contingent upon availability of funds, resources and available staff/crews for each organization. This document may be amended by mutual agreement from time to time as the parties may desire. It is not intended to be legally binding or enforceable document in any respect, and nothing hereinafter creates any legal obligations of any kind for ORA Trails and the City.

Commented [SM1]: I just added this as a blanket statement in our objectives section to cut down on the repetitiveness later in the document.

INTRODUCTION:

As a Department of the City of La Crosse, the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department is dedicated to the management of parks owned by the City of La Crosse for the benefit of the community. The parks provide for a variety of uses and activities including outdoor recreation. Recognizing high public demand for diverse outdoor recreation and shared-use trails, as illustrated by increasing use on existing trails, events and public meetings. The City is interested in providing recreation and shared-use trails, in various locations throughout the city in both existing parks and potential new parks. The City recognizes high quality shared-use trails and other recreational facilities within the parks contribute to local and regional economies and quality of life, and through this MOU or subsequent agreements is committed to providing resources for accomplishment of mutually beneficial recreational projects or related activities. ORA trails is a 501c(3) nonprofit dedicated to building happy, healthy, and resilient communities. ORA Trails represents a

significant and growing segment of recreational participants in the La Crosse area and is the recognized leader in establishing recreational participants in the La Crosse area and is the recognized leader in establishing recreational ethics, safety standards, volunteerism, and fostering appropriate land-use management. ORA Trails desires to use City managed properties for recreational purposes, and through this MOU or subsequent agreements is committed to providing support, volunteer labor and/or funds to the City for the accomplishment of mutually beneficial recreational projects or related activities.

It has been identified that actively promoting public-private partnerships help encourage physical activity and public participation in facility maintenance and construction opportunities within the properties owned by the City. Both ORA Trails and the City share the common responsibility and interest of promoting, maintaining and developing venues for recreation.

STATEMENT OF MUTUAL GOALS:

- Manage and maintain high-quality public trail systems and recreational opportunities.
- Direct use to designated trails and discourage creation of unsustainable, rogue trails.
- Enhance shared use recreation that reduces conflicts between different user groups.
- Provide consistent public education and information, including meetings, events and signage.
- Enhance educational and training opportunities around shared-use, trail maintenance, and sustainability by offering training courses, educational forums and events.
- Drive community growth by continuing to develop high-quality trail systems and recreational opportunities.
- Collaborate to identify/assess potential trail connections with consideration for long-term feasibility, sustainability, and overall community benefit

Commented [SM2]: Moved from ORA specific to mutual goals, hoping as a nod to an upcoming signage plan.

The primary actions to accomplish these goals may include:

THE CITY IS COMMITTED TO:

- Working with ORA Trails to identify appropriate partnership opportunities (trail projects, education programs, events, training, etc.) and to jointly pursue such projects in conjunction with the recreation in and around the City of La Crosse.
- Encouraging continued participation between ORA Trails and City officials in the development of mutually beneficial work projects, educational activities, and community events.
- Cooperating in the closing and opening of trails and recreational facilities as necessary for weather related events, spring thaw, trail maintenance activities, and new construction.

- Continuing to make qualified City managed lands available for human powered, shared-use trail recreation or community events, subject to City policies regarding park usage.
- Facilitating introductions between ORA Trails and other stewardship groups so that multiple groups can work together towards recreational opportunities that are safe, fun, and sustainable.
- Coordinating with ORA Trails, as applicable, when technical expertise or professional services are needed in (1) maintaining existing trails and other outdoor recreation park amenities, (2) developing new trails or other outdoor recreation park amenities, or (3) developing park programs related to outdoor recreation.
- Working with ORA Trails regarding the grooming and maintenance of trails for winter related activities such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and fat biking.
- Including ORA as a sponsor for community events, educational activities, and projects, as applicable.
- Reviewing this agreement with ORA Trails as needed for the purpose of making revisions.

ORA TRAILS IS COMMITTED TO:

- Working with the City to identify appropriate partnership opportunities (trail projects, education programs, rock climbing, etc.) and jointly pursuing such projects in conjunction with the recreation community and the City. See notes above regarding specific projects outlined.
- Providing technical assistance and professional services for projects, educational activities, events taking place on the trails, and recreational opportunities.
- Identifying and coordinating volunteer work projects and other efforts, to maintain designated trail systems and facilities and assisting with development of new opportunities.
- Encouraging community members to work with local City officials to discuss and identify opportunities for cooperative work on mutually beneficial projects or activities, as appropriate.
- Providing high quality training and instruction to crew leaders for the purpose of providing safe and effective leadership at volunteer events.
- Obtaining City approval prior to implementation of any construction, maintenance, educational publication or distribution of any printed material regarding recreational uses on public lands.
- Continuing regular trail maintenance volunteer events at City facilities with existing trail network.
- Including the City as a sponsor for community events, educational activities, and projects, as applicable.
- Providing assessments and documentation for rain and weather-related infrastructure damage.
- Assisting with new trail construction, followed by regular trail maintenance at City facilities newly opened or anticipated to be opened.

- Providing maintenance and oversight of the Lueth Park Bicycle Playground and Skatepark, Bud Hendrickson Nature Loop, Chad Erickson Forest Features, as well as Upper Hixon Bike Park and Trailhead.
- Providing and coordinating the labor and resources necessary to maintain and groom trails for winter activities such as cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and fat biking.
- Reviewing this agreement with the City as needed for the purpose of making revisions.

ORA TRAILS AND THE CITY ARE COMMITTED TO:

- Mutually assisting each other in moving trail based projects forward
- Specific to 2025, the following projects will be considered:
 - Create a safe, alternative route for foot traffic only to bring users to desired overlooks quickly, without the use of decommissioned or rogue trails, with the goal to relieve traffic on Vista and minimize ecological impact
 - Bicentennial Trail Improvements to improve safety, sustainability and user experience
 - Improved connection between Shelby Butterfly Trails (Upper Farnam St.) and HWY 33
 - Improved connectivity between Northern Bluffland properties connecting County Rd B with Mathy Quarry Parking Lot
 - Repairs, surface maintenance and artistic expressing at Lueth Park
 - Upper Hixon Trailhead improvements including revamping the pumptrack and skills loop area
 - Inventory and remap existing trails in Upper Hixon for an enhanced user experience
- Working together to update land management plans and accomplish the community goals of improved connectivity, sustainability, safety, and user experience through the following projects and similar:
 - Connections between Juniper and Hass Tract
 - Upper Aspen to County Rd FA Safety Corridor Connector
 - Connecting Dobson Tract to the Gateway Trail System
 - Connecting Dobson Tract to Ebner Coulee and nearby neighborhoods
 - Connecting Hixon and Northern Bluffland properties (Miller Bluff/Mathy Quarry) to neighborhoods near Highway 16.

Commented [SM3]: I just tidied up this bullet point a bit. Same sentiment, fewer words.

Commented [SM4]: Collaborative grant opportunity here

It is mutually understood by all parties:

1. The cooperators will develop operating and maintenance plans, along with best practices for outdoor recreational facilities, located within City Park Lands as part of this MOU, which will be reviewed and updated as needed.
2. The cooperators will jointly seek funding/grants to assist with all aspects of building, managing, and maintaining quality public trail systems and infrastructure.

3. NON-FUND OBLIGATING DOCUMENT: This instrument is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Any endeavor or transfer of anything of value involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between parties to this instrument will be handled through separate contracts or agreements, subject to the appropriation of funds by the governing body.
4. COMMENCEMENT/EXPIRATION DATE: This instrument is executed as of the date of last signature and is effective through May 1, 2026, at which time it will expire unless mutually extended by a written agreement.
5. NON-AGENCY PROVISION: It is understood that the City and ORA Trails are independent parties and are not agents of each other.

DESIGNATED POINTS OF CONTACT AND SIGNATURES:

City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department

X _____
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Date

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Sami Meyer, Outdoor Recreation Coordinator
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Outdoor Recreation Alliance of the 7-Rivers Region

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Michael Borst, President
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Date

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Stephen Cohen
Vice President, Outdoor Recreation Alliance

Date