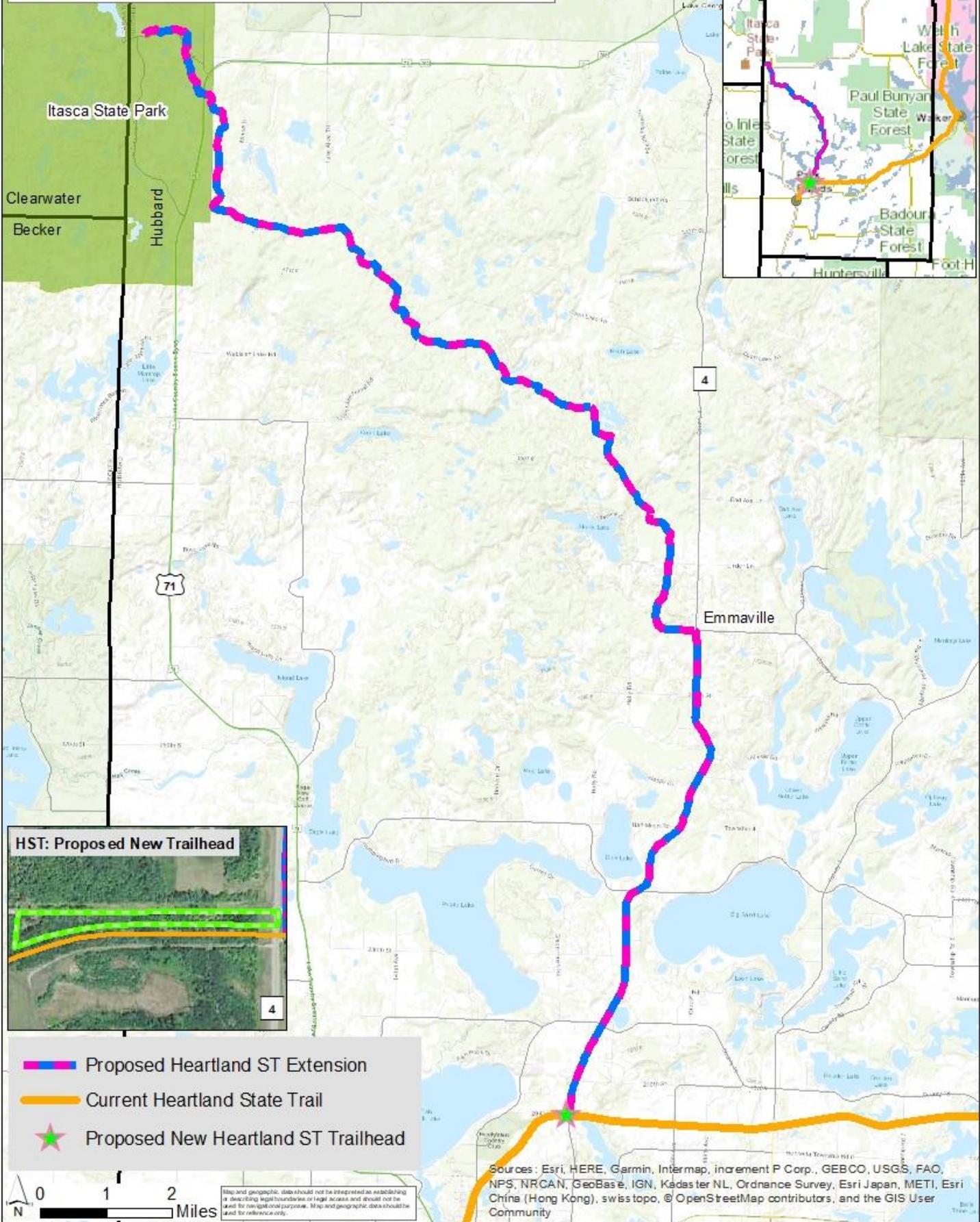


Heartland State Trail Extension or Spur: Itasca State Park to Park Rapids



- — Proposed Heartland ST Extension
- Current Heartland State Trail
- ★ Proposed New Heartland ST Trailhead



Map and geographic data should not be interpreted as establishing or describing legal boundaries or legal status and should not be used for navigational purposes. Map and geographic data should be used for reference only.

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Heartland State Trail Extension from Itasca State Park to Park Rapids

2019 Recreation Proposal

The Heartland State Trail Extension in Hubbard County (otherwise known as the Spur) is a state trail connecting the current Heartland State Trail near Park Rapids, MN with the DNR's Itasca State Park. This project needs further acquisition and development support to design, develop and complete this vital missing piece to the state trail system in Central Minnesota.

- The Heartland Trail Spur to Itasca is considered a Destination Trail in the DNR Division of Parks and Trails' latest system management plan. This proposed trail project is expected to get a high level of public use and thus should get the DNR's highest level of investment and support.
- Itasca State Park, with over half-million visitors annually has a 16-mile bicycle route, including a newly designed trail to the Headwaters and a planned extension to connect with Wilderness Drive. The connection through the park to the proposed spur has been approved as an amendment to the park's management plan and has the full support of the park manager and the Division's regional leadership.
- The Spur will complete a circular route that involves the Heartland State Trail, Itasca State Park, the Paul Bunyan State Trail and the Mi-Gi-Zi Trail system (over 200 miles total). The Spur will also connect to the Mississippi River Trail that goes from Itasca State Park to the Gulf Coast. It will likewise be a part of the larger Heartland State Trail Extension system currently planned and under construction from Park Rapids to Moorhead.
- The current route from Park Rapids to Itasca, along US 71, is considered dangerous due to the high traffic levels and the narrow shoulders with rumble strips. This was a prime consideration in the search for a safe and scenic route to Itasca.
- The Spur will connect the major tourism areas of Park Rapids, Itasca State Park, Bemidji, Cass Lake, Walker, and more than a dozen smaller communities and will be a valuable amenity for local and seasonal residents.
- The trail will be located primarily in county and state owned lands showcasing the abundant natural and cultural resources of the region.
- Hubbard County has actively supported the Spur from the beginning with staff assistance. It also recognizes that the best route will include a segment through undeveloped public forestland and another segment along county highway right-of-way. The need for purchasing easements across private land will be minimal.
- The trail has received resolutions of support from the Hubbard County Board, Park Rapids, Akeley, and Nevis City Councils, Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce, Hubbard County Regional Economic Development Commission, local bicycle and snowmobile clubs.
- The request also seeks to acquire and develop a strategic parcel of land at the junction of the two trails along County Route 4 just east of Park Rapids in Hubbard County.
- The proposed trailhead is a 5-acre parcel for sale at the intersection of existing Heartland Trail and County 4 and at the beginning of the proposed Spur Trail. This would offer safe access along a township road with parking and other amenities for existing trail users as well. Current users are often parking at an unsafe location along Hubbard County 4, so this addition would yield an immediate benefit.

Land Manager	Total Miles	% of Trail
Hubbard County	20.59	84.9
DNR	2.35	9.7
Private Lands	1.31	5.4
Total Miles of Proposed Trail	24.25	100