



## Winona Forest's "New Vision" Trail Rehabilitation Project:



This project further enables Winona Forest to continue to evolve into a world class, year round recreation destination for outdoor enthusiasts, bring locals, as well as tourists, to the almost 10,000 acre State Forest, DEC managed, but primarily maintained by our volunteer organization. Traditionally known for exceptionally groomed snowmobile trails, and the Winona Forest Tourathon Nordic ski race, our organization is expanding to include recreation for all seasons throughout the year.

**Route Selection:** An estimated 17 mile route has been determined. (See Map) Three key considerations were made in deciding the route plan. 1 - Selecting a route that could be easily accessed from multiple locations by our community members for their use and enjoyment. 2 – To provide a wide range/variety of trails for users. The most scenic trails have been selected. 3 – One of the major financial contributors to the local economy, and our organization, are the events that take place here. This project route was chosen specifically to grow our event base. Much collaboration took place with multiple users from the bike community, as well as the trail running, and dog mushing community. Once completed, these user groups could include this route into their events.

### **Project Details :**

**Phase 1** Construction of 2 new kiosks at the 2 primary parking lots to the forest (P1 and P3 - see map), 4.2 miles of trail rehabilitation beginning at the most heavily used parking area, (P1) that include the trails of Bill's Belly and Shady Shuttle, the erection of (14) 6x6 posts at trail intersections, and putting in place map and usage signage on each post. Accept delivery of 21 truckloads of stone material to fill rutted trails and mud areas to create a smooth, dry hard packed surface. Already completed in 2017 - the construction of 3 bridges on Bill's Belly, the erection of five 6 x 6 posts at trailheads, and signage. All jointly funded by NYSDEC and WFRA.

During **Phase 2** we will return to P1, and work in reverse. (See map) 4 miles of trail rehabilitation will include Winona Way to Hiscock Trail, east to Ted's Turn, to Alice's Alley, until reaching the newly constructed trail by NYS DEC. 5 sign posts have already been placed into the ground (jointly funded by NYS DEC and WFRA) and signed, with another 6 being necessary to complete the Phase 2 project.

**Phase 3** will include the rehabilitation of the middle section of the route, that will include Backus Bend, a well-known snowmobile trail. This section is approximately 7 miles.

### **What we will achieve:**

This project will ultimately change the direction of our local economy. The 9,233-acre Winona State Forest is located on the boundary of southern Jefferson County and northern Oswego County. Known for its abundance of winter snowfall, it is also located on the western edge of the Tug Hill Plateau. It is within 10 miles of interstate I81, making it easily accessible for users. Much of these 9,000+ acres are maintained by the Winona Forest Recreation Association (WFRA), a 501c non-

profit organization made up of hard working volunteers who share a common vision. This vision is two-fold; to provide a “playground” for outdoor enthusiasts and become destination for recreation users. This will bring outside folks into an economically challenged area, resulting in Winona Forest Recreation Area becoming an economic driver for the local economy. This is desperately needed in this upstate region. This is our vision, and if we are successful, we may be a reason for folks to choose to settle in the area, a much needed asset to our community and region.

### **“Timing is everything”**

The “New Vision” rehabilitation project directly coincides with the revolution currently taking place within our organization. The timing couldn’t be better. Over the last few years, WFRA has undergone significant changes, and a new direction. We have added events, which have grown significantly in recent years, making them our main source of non-motorized funding. We have assembled a new Board of Directors, now made up of folks who are passionate about outdoor recreation. They are professionals, and several are avid athletes, who travel across the country participating in various types of events. They bring this expertise back to the table with new ideas, and passion to bring to our 9,000+ acres, what Utah, Colorado, Vermont, and many other states already enjoy; incredible outdoor recreation opportunities. We have many miles of trails, most of which historically were primarily used in the winter, for Nordic skiers, and snowmobilers who enjoy our family-friendly well-groomed trail systems. In the non-winter months, when the snow is gone, the trails reveal the need for significant improvements. Rehabilitate the trails, grow the events, increase tourism dollars, and grow the local economy.