Agenda Item Report



DATE: November 20, 2023

TO: Members of the Parks and Recreation Committee

FROM: Parks Director

RE: ATVs on WIOUWASH Trail – Chapter 19.27 Revision

General Description:

The Town of Oshkosh is requesting the Parks Department to allow for ATV use from December – February along the WIOUWASH Trail from West Wind Road to the first bridge for access to Lake Butte des Morts.

Requested Action:

The Parks Department recommends that the Parks and Recreation Committee recommends to the County Board to authorize the ordinance revisions to Chapter 19.27 as proposed in exhibit A.

Procedural Steps:

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting date: 12/12/23
Action taken: Approved Vote: 4-0
County Board Meeting date: 1/16/23

Action taken: Vote:

Background:

In August of 2021, the Town of Oshkosh Chairman, Jim Erdman attended a Parks and Recreation Committee meeting and requested the Winnebago County Parks Department to consider allowing ATVs on the WIOUWASH Trail during the winter months for the purpose of access Lake Butte des Morts. In the past, users parked on Edgewood Lane on the north side of Lake Butte des Morts within the Town of Oshkosh. They utilized this fire lane/boat landing to drive their ATV onto the lake. In the last year or so, the Town of Oshkosh signed the road with no parking signs only during the winter months.

The Town of Oshkosh requested that the Winnebago County Parks Department allow use of ATVs from West Wind Road to the first bridge crossing to the north for the purpose of accessing Lake Butte des Morts on an ATV. A diagram has been included below showing the portion of the WIOUWASH Trail that is being requested for ATV use.



For ATVs to be allowed on a small portion of the WIOUWASH Trail, an ordinance revision would be needed. At this time, Chapter 19.27 states that no vehicles of any kind shall be operated on the recreation trail except police vehicles, emergency and rescue vehicles or County maintenance vehicles.

The Parks Department recommends executing a trial period where ATVs would be allowed with limitation and restrictions. We would allow ATVs on the WIOUWASH Trail for one season for the sole purpose of accessing Lake Butte des Morts. Restrictions in regard to weather conditions would be established by the Parks Department. If we run into issues with ATVs damaging the trail or going past the bridge crossing, then we would shut down access. The Parks Department will work with the Town of Oshkosh to install signs on the WIOUWASH Trail and at the bridge.

Allowing ATVs on roughly 2600 feet of trail from West Wind Road to the first bridge to the north is ONLY for the purpose of accessing Lake Butte des Morts.

The ordinance change would allow for the Parks Department to allow or deny use if needed. It will allow us to be more flexible if we do see that damage is being done to the trail system or if there is a conflict among users.

Attachments:

Exhibit A

• Ordinance Revision