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Title: Regional Trail Coordinator for ND-MN-WI

Comments: On behalf of the North Country Trail Association and the volunteers from our local Ely Northwoods and Kekekabic Trail Chapters, I would like to thank the Superior National Forest for including the new North Country National Scenic Trail segment in your Fernberg Corridor project. We fully support approval of this new trail segment as it helps to accomplish Congress' intent via the North Country National Scenic Trail Route Adjustment Act. The NCTA looks forward to working with Forest Service staff to build and maintain the trail and we truly appreciate you all as a fabulous partner.

Here are some specific comments:

*On page 111, you list the clearing width as 2-3' wide. Elsewhere, you say it could be up to 8' wide (page 103). The NCT's clearing will typically be 4' wide and the tread 18-24" wide.

* On page 97, you state "Recreation opportunities would not be improved by adding a new section of the North Country Trail, walk-in access to Greenstone Lake, and the additional trailhead parking areas to access the Kawishiwi Triangle trails would not occur." It should be stated under that alternative that North Country Trail users would remain walking on the Fernberg Road which isn't a safe option. A roadwalk does not meet Congress' intent via the North Country National Scenic Trail Route Adjustment Act or National Trails System Act.

* In Appendix F on (page 13) "Concern: The addition of 10.6 miles of the North Country Trail would contribute to the road and trail impacts that greatly increase road- and compacted snow route-density in lynx habitat, harming lynx by increasing habitat competition with and depredation by bobcat. Response: The North Country Trail is intended for non-motorized hiking and not designated as a snow route. Please see the recreation section in chapter 3 (3.9) for more detailed information about the trail specifications and class." You should note that the NCT would be open to ungroomed winter use and we expect winter usage to be very low and mostly limited to near roads / trailheads.