

HEALTHY COMMUNITY PLAN

Community/Team Name: Cuyuna Range

Geographic Area: Cuyuna Range Communities

HCP Round/Years: Round 7, October 2000 - Sept. 2002

This project was developed jointly with the Blandin Foundation Community Investment Process.

Vision/Purpose Statement: (Written with Blandin Foundation)

Priorities:

- Life Long Learning
- Cultural & Recreational Opportunities
- Economic Development

Project Focus:

- The Economic Development interest initially placed their emphasis on raising capital to build an Internet incubator complex but was unsuccessful. More recent focus has been on developing a tourism focus by creating a Tourism Collaborative including local municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, and related non-profits to consolidate splintered efforts. This has led to interest in festivals, event, and other “special attractions” to draw visitors to the community. The next example of this is a planned celebration of the 50th anniversary of the “Man High” balloon flight (August 19, 2007), considered the “birth of the United States’ aeronautical program.”
- The Cuyuna Lakes Trail received official designation as a state trail in spring ’02, and the first five miles of the trail was paved and dedicated in October ‘05. More recently, the Milford Mine Pit (site of a major mining disaster in Feb. 1924 which took 41 lives) was designated a Crow Wing County Park in March 2006. The youth skateboard park opened in the summer of 2001 adjacent to the law enforcement center, and has widely been viewed as highly successful.
- The “Unlimited Learning” discussion group continues to offer monthly seminars and “Chautauqua-style events on a wide-ranging set of information, from “the nature of Islam” to “the life history of loons.” The Lions Mobility bus brings attendees from throughout the Brainerd Lakes Area, and the series routinely attracts an average of 50 or more citizens, and is completely self-supporting and sustaining.
- A Youth Center received support from the Hallett Trust, and is now located just off Main Street in downtown Crosby, and has the capacity to provide “safe and sober” activities 3-4 nights/week and attracts 20 to 30 young people per night. A volunteer coordinator supports the program.

Follow Up Grants and Loans:

- \$6,500 - To support shipping and construction costs associated with development of the Youth Skateboard Park.
- \$45,000 - For the skateboard park project from the Blandin Foundation.
- \$55,000 - To support the Trails organization from the Blandin Foundation.
- \$5,000 - To support additional research, field trips and evaluation of the BCIP process from the Blandin Foundation.
- \$1,000 - IF Outstanding Volunteer Awards Event winner, (Fall 2003).
- \$1,000 - IF Outstanding Community Awards Event winner (Fall 2004).
- \$30,000 - From Hallett Trust for the youth center project.
- \$2,000 - From Youth as Resources.

- \$10,000 - From individuals and service clubs for the youth center operations.
- \$5,000 - Family Services Collaborative.
- \$500,000 (plus 20% matching funding from Minnesota DNR) - Federal funding for the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail for paving of first segment of trail in 2005.
- \$1.6 million - Federal funding committed to the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail for additional construction.
- \$6,000 - Provided by Central Region Partnership of the University of Minnesota to retain Kent Gustafson for tourism promotion and strategies for the region. This effort has also lead to reformation of an area Chamber of Commerce which is staffed by volunteers and part-time paid staff.
- In-kind donations:
 - Land donation for skateboard park (\$35,000)
 - City of Crosby dirt removal and landscaping (\$15,194)
 - Davis Engineering (\$2,000)
 - misc. (\$5,987)

Key Accomplishments:

- Over 200 participants attended a combined Blandin/Initiative Foundation visioning session in a blizzard on March 23, 2001.
- Completed construction of the Youth Skateboard Park.
- Trails Project grown to become 501(c)(3) and expanded to a dual trail concept completed.
- Started Life Long Learning series that is ongoing (Fall 2003).
- Dedication of Cuyuna Lakes State Trail (October 2005).

Date Updated: September 18, 2008