



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# 'Bike, Boot or Boat' in Mower County this year

*Minnesota DNR encourages all ages to get 125 miles on state parks, trails*

**June 6, 2016, AUSTIN, Minn.** – Mower County has the state attractions to help anyone seeking to compile 125 miles by “Bike, Boot or Boat” this year in celebration of Minnesota’s parks and trails program.

Minnesotans are encouraged to participate in a 125-mile challenge as part of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources’ state parks and trails. Under the challenge, people of all ages can track the miles they cover by “Bike, Boot or Boat” at Minnesota state parks and trails throughout 2016.

DNR officials are hopeful the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary events statewide will encourage new people to discover the state parks and trails. Just about every Minnesotan has a state park, trail or water trail within 30 minutes of their home, which is true for Mower County residents.

Mower Soil & Water Conservation District and the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau, which promotes tourism countywide, are encouraging residents and visitors to explore the local attractions as part of the challenge. Both are asking to hear from people who complete the challenge partly or completely through the use of Mower County’s state park and trails.

“This challenge is another great reason to get outdoors as much as possible this year with your friends or family to enjoy our beautiful natural resources, whether that be in Mower County or elsewhere in Minnesota,” said Tim Ruzek, Mower SWCD outreach coordinator.

According to the DNR, “Bike” miles consist of those from bicycling while “Boot” covers miles earned by walking, hiking, running, rolling, skating, skiing, snowshoeing and horseback riding. “Boat” covers only canoeing, kayaking and standup paddleboarding – not motorized boating.

Mileage tracking sheets are available online through the DNR or locally at the Mower SWCD, 1408 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.W., and the new Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau office at the U.S. Bank building at 301 N. Main St., Suite 101. Those who reach at least 125 miles will get bragging rights, an exclusive “Finisher” sticker and a chance to have their photo included in a Finishers Gallery on the DNR’s 125-mile challenge website.

In Mower County, you can do all of your state park/trail miles.

**BIKE** – Shooting Star State Trail – which runs for 22 miles from LeRoy going west through Taopi, Adams and Rose Creek – offers lots of opportunities to compile bicycling miles for the challenge. The 8-foot-wide, paved trail runs through native tall grasses and wildflowers, and is expected to be paved from Rose Creek to Austin in the near future.

On June 25, the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Shooting Star Trail bike ride presented by the nonprofit Prairie Visions organization will begin at The Rose Pedaler in Rose Creek along Minnesota Highway 56.

**BOOT** – Walking, running, inline skating and cross-country skiing miles also can be earned during the year on the Shooting Star State Trail.

Lake Louise State Park in LeRoy – which is split by the Shooting Star State Trail in Mower County’s southeast corner – also offers “boot” miles for walking, running, hiking and horseback riding on trails that wind through open meadow and lush hardwoods. It is Mower County’s only state park.

**BOAT** – A historic dam at the park creates Lake Louise – an impoundment of the Upper Iowa and Little Iowa rivers – allowing for paddling, swimming and fishing opportunities.

Mower County also hosts 25 miles of the Cedar River State Water Trail, which officially was launched in 2012 by the DNR. The Cedar River State Water Trail officially starts at the Mower County Road 2 bridge near Lansing and runs down through Austin to the Iowa border. Cedar River Watershed District – which spearheaded the effort in 2011 to designate the Cedar River as a DNR state water trail – has newly updated, printed maps by the DNR for the Cedar River State Water Trail. DNR also has information on a website specifically for the Cedar River State Water Trail.

## **Mower Soil & Water Conservation District**

Since 1953, Mower SWCD has provided land and conservation services to Mower County landowners to help manage lands in a way that promotes a sound economy as well as sustains and enhances natural resources that are key to the state’s environmental health. Mower SWCD is one of Minnesota’s 91 SWCDs each are governed by an elected board.

### **“Bike, Boot or Boat” in Mower County**

**Bike:** Shooting Star State Trail

**Boot:** Shooting Star State Trail and Lake Louise State Park.

**Boat:** Lake Louise State Park and the Cedar River State Water Trail.

### **LINKS**

**DNR 125<sup>th</sup>:**

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/125/125miles.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/125/125miles.html)

**Shooting Star State Trail**

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_trails/shootingstar](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_trails/shootingstar)

**Lake Louise State Park**

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_parks/lake\\_louise](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/lake_louise)

**Cedar River State Water Trail**

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/cedarriver](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/cedarriver)