An aerial photograph of a forested trail. A thick black outline of the state of Minnesota is overlaid on the image. A green semi-transparent text box is positioned over the left side of the state outline. The background shows a dense forest with a paved trail winding through it. A person on a bicycle is visible on the trail. The overall scene is lush and green.

# Arrowhead *Coalition of Trails*

NE Minnesota

# INTRODUCTION



## **The Mission**

Collectively operationalizing our outdoor recreation assets to create an economic renaissance for main streets and major employers.

## **The Vision**

Uniting communities with purposefully designed amenities for all trail users to connect our towns to our recreational assets.

# Arrowhead Coalition of Trails

# History

Desire for outdoor recreation is not new,  
and neither is the idea of a Coalition



1990s-  
2010



1950s

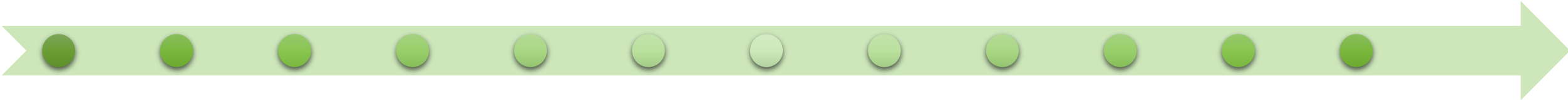


1930s

1920s

1908-  
09

1870s



1900s

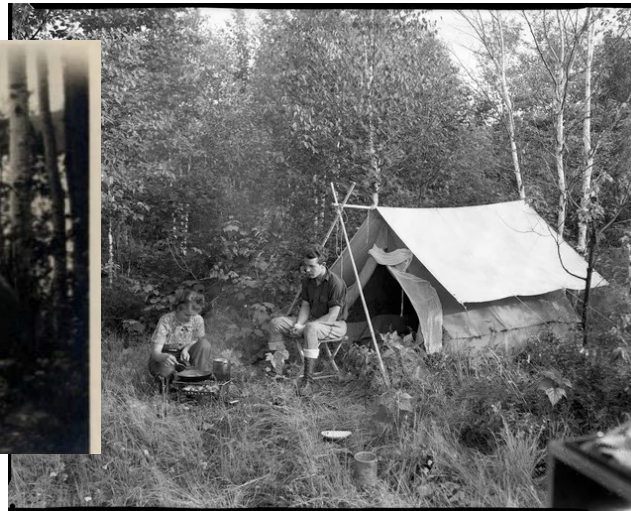
1910s

1925

1940s

1960s-  
80s

Today



## Original "Coalition"

Mn Arrowhead Association was  
formed in 1925 to

"bring cooperation to civic groups  
working together to promote and  
advertise the recreational and  
agricultural resources of the region."

# WHO

**“Trails are a testament to human perseverance – they are the result of countless hours of hard work and determination.” -OnTrails**

## Trails/Clubs

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- ATV/OHV Trails & Clubs
- Snowmobile Trails & Clubs
- Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe Trails & Clubs
- Equestrian Trails & Clubs
- Hiking Trails & Clubs
- Bicycle/Mtn Bike Trails & Clubs

## Governments

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- Elected Officials
- Cities
- Towns and Townships
- Counties
- Rail Authority
- IRRRB
- US Forest Service
- DNR

## DMOs

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- Iron Range Tourism Bureau
- Visit Grand Rapids
- Visit Ely
- Trails Task Forces
- Chambers of Commerce
- Others??

# FACT

**57.3% of Americans (175.8 mil)  
participated in an outdoor activity in  
2023. ([Outdoorindustry.org](https://www.outdoorindustry.org))**

**55% (168.1) in 2022**

# WHAT

## Outdoor Recreation in NE Mn

### Trail Systems

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- 1,340 miles ATV/OHV Trails
- 22,000 miles Snowmobile Trails (All of MN)
- 218 miles Ski Trails
- 1,810 miles Hiking Trails
- 1,000+ miles Equestrian Trails (All of MN)
- 320 miles Paved Trails
- 367 miles Mtn Bike Trails

### Amount Invested in just the past 5 years

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**\$50,000,000+**

### Recreation Areas

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- Chippewa Nat'l Forest 1.6M ac
- Superior Nat'l Forest 3M ac
- OHV Recreation Area 1,200 ac

**“...Access to the outdoors is critical to economic vitality...” –Katherine Andrews (Arkansas Office of Outdoor Rec)**

# TRAILS TO TOWNS



**Purposefully designed towns that welcome all users, motorized and non-motorized alike, can create a truly one-of-a-kind tourist destination.**

Connecting trails to towns takes a concerted effort.

# HOW

## HOW WOULD A COALITION HELP?

**Some ideas to jump start discussions:**

### Trails to Towns

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- Connect trails and towns
- Research Successful Programs:
  - Appalachian Trail Towns
  - Great Allegheny Passage
  - Northern Michigan

### Business Encouragement

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- Non-Traditional jobs
- Niche markets development

### Marketing

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- Storytelling/Placemaking
- United Campaign
- Sharing resources

**“Trails are stories told on the land, inviting us to step into the narrative and explore a world beyond our daily lives.”**

**-OnTrails**



**FACT**

# **Outdoor Recreation positively impacts the American Economy**

“The BEA calculates the economic output of outdoor recreation to be \$1.1 trillion, surpassing industries such as mining, utilities, farming and ranching, and chemical products manufacturing.”

([Recreationroundtable.org](http://Recreationroundtable.org))

# Impacts

## National Economic Impact by Outdoor Industries (It's all here!)

ATV/Motorcycling

\$18.5 billion

Boating

\$47.3 billion

Fishing

\$12.5 billion

Hunting, shooting, trapping

\$18.8 billion

Camping, hiking, tenting

\$10.2 billion

Equestrian

\$10.2 billion

Skiing/Snowboarding

\$7.0 billion

Snowmobiling & other  
snow activities

\$6.2 billion

Rving

\$70.8 billion

Canoeing/kayaking

\$1.1 billion

Outdoor recreation comprises  
2.6% of 2022 Mn GDP.  
([headwaterseconomics.org](http://headwaterseconomics.org))

Biking

\$4.3 billion

# WHY

**To leverage our collective investment to bring economic success to our towns.**

## Identity

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- Create an identity that unites us
- Be a Destination trail system
- Bigger picture

## Communication

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- Common needs among trail systems.
- Stronger voice to advocate for maintenance funding
- Protection of assets through cohesive messaging

## Community

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- New residents, new businesses
- More tourists = more money in our communities
- Resilience against recession

**Imagine the possibilities!**



“I took the one less traveled by and that has  
made all the difference.”

— Robert Frost

# FACT

**This has not been done to this scale.**

Advocation, yes. Projects, no.

Pioneering a new approach





# NEXT STEPS

LISTEN AND SHARE



# Where do we go now?

## 5 basic needs a coalition can address

**1**

### **Assessment & Research**

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Identify what we have and what can be

**2**

### **Communication & Collaboration**

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Sharing of info, needs, assets, advocacy

**3**

### **Infrastructure**

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Amenities, Maintenance

**4**

### **Wayfinding & Mapping**

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Trails to Town, unified signage, clear maps

**5**

### **Outreach & Marketing**

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Consistent messaging, share resources

# 1

What do we have/need?

## Assessment & Research







# 2

How do we work together?

## Communication & Collaboration

A photograph of a forest with a dirt path. In the background, a person wearing a red jacket is walking on the path. The trees have green and yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The ground is covered in brown leaves and soil.

**3**

Build to meet needs

**Infrastructure**

# 4

Bring trail users to Town

## Wayfinding & Mapping





# 5

Engage locals and Visitors

## Community Outreach & Marketing



## TAKEAWAY

We are all in this together

## INSPIRE

Collaborate to redefine outdoor tourism

## ACTION

Support and grow the initiative

It is time to ACT!





“And into the woods I go, to lose my mind and find my soul.”

—John Muir

Do you want to be a part of this?  
Sarah@rrauth.com

**Let's Talk!**

Sarah Ciochetto