



WASHBURN COUNTY FOREST

FOREST ADMINISTRATOR

1760 Roundhouse Road
SPOONER, WISCONSIN 54801
(715) 635-4490 Fax (715) 388-7947

NARRATIVE – MANDATORY TRAIL RELOCATION ATV/SNOWMOBILE GRANTS TRAIL 7 – WILD RIVER TRAIL WEST

BACKGROUND: Trail 7 is a snowmobile and year round ATV/UTV trail. It runs west from the Wild River Trail, connects to the only gas and services within 7 miles, and continues west linking to Burnett County. Snowmobile connections are all off road. ATV's have about 4 miles of road route to connect to the off road Casey Loop trail system. (*See attached Map 1*). WisDOT announced plans to reconstruct the US 53/63 interchange in 2015 and initial plans showed a project overlap with the eastern-most 1 mile of Trail 7. The designs indicated a frontage road bridge lying on the same footprint as a recreational trail bridge over Potato Creek. (*See attached Map 2 & Map 3*)

Countless hours working with WisDOT in public input meetings resulted in a written assurance from them that an off-road trail connection for trail 7 would be designed into the project. More specifically we were assured of a flat bottom ditch line and a lane on the frontage road bridge for recreation traffic. When construction was initiated in 2021, it was obvious that these items were removed from the final construction plans.

ISSUES: After project completion, WisDOT repeatedly asserted that their intention was for trail traffic to operate on the surface of the frontage road or in the ditch line. Due to extensive guardrails, snowmobiles need to travel over 700 feet in order to cross the bridge. ATV's need to run on the roadway and the local Town does not want them operating on this busy section of road. (*See attached Photo 1*)

The ditch lines are extremely steep and covered with heavy rip-rap. Washburn County contracted with an engineer to redevelop the ditch to accommodate recreation traffic, only to find that WisDOT authorized a buried natural gas pipe in the centerline of the proposed route. Running on the roadway is further exacerbated by WisDOT retaining control of roundabouts and connections and not allowing recreational vehicle traffic. (*See attached Photos 2 and 3*)

The final issue relates to safety. Trail users are forced to cross 4 lanes of high speed traffic at only one approved location. The remainder of the project area has crash barriers installed between the lanes running south from Trego. The crossing location is likely to be closed once 53 is upgraded from expressway to freeway. Trail maintenance is complicated due to the median being too narrow to stop the groomer without impeding traffic lanes.

Washburn County engaged legislative assistance and a constructive meeting with WisDOT agents was held last fall. They are now cooperating in efforts to restore trail connections.

TRAIL OPTIONS

The issue with restoring trail 7 is complicated by WisDOT's design that has the trail crossing well south of Potato Creek, at the Mackie Creek Frontage Road intersection with Highway 53. One of our prior plans was to re-design the ditch line of the frontage road and construct a recreation trail bridge adjacent to the road bridge. The steepness of the ditch lines, coupled with the heavy rip-rap throughout, makes this complicated. This option was abandoned once the natural gas distribution line was placed in the ROW. We cannot operate equipment over the top of this pipe.

We began researching options for crossing Highway 53 north of Potato Creek. This would eliminate the need for a recreation trail bridge over the stream. An at grade crossing is dangerous and DOT has denied requests to construct such a crossing due to concrete crash barriers separating the traffic lanes along this entire length of roadway. This left us with only one obvious option of constructing a bridge over the Highway.

We contracted with Ayres and Associates to develop feasibilities, consult with DOT and create probable cost estimates for crossing the Highway. They created two options, both provide for a direct trail connection from Wild River Trail and into property owned by the same individual that owns the Mobil gas station. Given the complexities of these proposals, we have opted to have the Councils review both options: *(see Ayres Document 1 & 2 for detail, Photos 4 & 5 and Map 4)*

OPTION 1A: TRAIL UNDER 53 STRUCTURE AT POTATO CREEK (low profile)

Cost estimate: \$1,900,000

This option includes a 10 to 11' retaining wall, which might be problematic as it could interfere with the stability of the highway bridge during construction. The advantage is that this gives us the highest vertical clearance.

OPTION 1B: TRAIL UNDER 53 STRUCTURE AT POTATO CREEK (high profile)

Cost estimate: \$1,600,000

This option would be higher elevation than 1A and include 2 retaining walls, one on the north and one on the south. This only allows for 11' clearance, but gives more stability to the existing bridge during construction.

OPTION 2: TRAIL OVER 53 WITH A TWO SPAN STRUCTURE

Cost estimate \$4,300,000

More direct trail connection, less slopes and curves, no impacts to Potato Creek.

REQUESTED ACTION

Ayres is still in discussions with WisDOT on the proposed options. While they are supportive of both options, we still have details to iron out. There are concerns with floodplain issues, clearances, approach slopes and others on both options.

Given the high dollar values associated with the project options, we are respectfully requesting that funds be awarded as available for the current cycle and we will come back in 2025 for remaining funds needed. This will give us additional time to complete engineering for the project under and active grant.

Please note that \$255,000 was awarded for the original plan of constructing a recreation bridge adjacent to the frontage road. (50/50 snow/ATV). We have requested a scope change to allocate those grants to this project. Washburn County will also attempt to solicit funds directly from DOT to help cost share the project.

#24 Washburn County Hwy 53 Crossing (2 Options Provided)

State of Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources
dnr.wi.gov

Motorized Recreation Grant Application

For: (choose all that apply)

Form 8700-159 (R 02/2024)

Page 1 of 5

ATV/UTV Trail Aid

Snowmobile Trail Aid

Due Date: April 15

Notice: Completion of this form is required under Wisconsin Statutes 23.09(26) and 23.33. Failure to complete this form will result in denial of financial assistance. Personally identifiable information found on this form is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may provide this information to requesters as required by Wisconsin's Public Records law {ss. 19.31 – 19.39, Wis. Stats.}.

Instructions: Applications may combine more than one source of funds. They may be submitted for consideration of traditional ATV, UTV, Snowmobile and Motorized Stewardship funding. Submit one copy of all forms and attachments. See Page 2 for necessary attachments. Send applications to your [Community Services Specialist](#).

DNR Use Only	
Category	Number

Section 1: Applicant Information

Applicant / Organization Name Washburn County			Check Recipient: Individual other than authorized individual to act on behalf of the applicant. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Select if the same as applicant.		
Individual Authorized to Act on Behalf of Applicant per Resolution Mike Peterson			Check Recipient Name (Name to Appear on Check) Mike Peterson		
Title Washburn County Forest Administrator			Title Washburn County Forest Administrator		
Address 1760 Roundhouse Road			Address 1760 Roundhouse Road		
City Spooner	State WI	ZIP Code 54801	City Spooner	State WI	ZIP Code 54801
Telephone Number (715) 635-4490		Email Address mlpeters@co.washburn.wi.us			

Section 2: Project Information Required for all Projects

Project Title US 53 - Potato Creek Underpass					Current Funded Miles	New Miles (if applicable)
County Washburn	Township 39 N	Range 12	Section 2	¼ ¼ NW SW	GPS Coordinates: Lat. 45.892 Long. -91.8276	

Project Description Summary

Trail 7 is a main ATV/Snowmobile connection in central Washburn County, linking the Wild River Trail, Trego, the Casey Loop and Burnett County. Trego is an important trail connector since the next nearest gas and services are either 15 miles north or 7 miles south. WisDOT re-constructed the interchange between U.S. 53/63 at Trego in 2021/2022. Despite written assurances from WisDOT that a trail connection would be restored, 1 mile of Trail 7, including a recreation bridge over Potato Creek was obliterated.

There are 2 options provided by our engineers on this project. We wish to present both to the Council for review. This application is to route the trail UNDER U.S. Highway 53. The project estimate is \$1,537,174.00, less \$255,000.00 in grant funds awarded previously = \$1,282,174. We are splitting the grant 50/50 with Snowmobile = \$ 641,087

A more detailed narrative is included in this application.


I certify that all maintenance land use agreements are on file.

Estimated Cost

Maintenance	Acquisition	Insurance	Development \$641,087.00	Bridge Rehab.	Trail Rehab.	Total Estimated Cost \$641,087.00
Leave Blank – DNR Use Only						

Applicant Certification

Printed Name of Authorized Official Mike Peterson	Official's Title Washburn County Forest Administrator
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As the ap  certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information in this application is true and correct.

Signature of Authorized Official

4/3/2024
Date Prepared

Appendix B – Required for Trail/Qualified Trout Rehab, Reroute, or Development

Trail Rehab Qualified Trout New Trail Trail Reroute (Mandatory or Discretionary)

County	Township	Range	<input type="radio"/> E <input checked="" type="radio"/> W	Section	¼ ¼	¼	GPS Coordinates: Lat. 45.892 Long. -91.8276
Washburn	39 N	12		2	NW	SW	

Funded Trail Name or Number (SNARS if applicable)	Has this trail ever received development or rehabilitation funds in the past?	Year:	\$
Trail 7	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		6,850.00

Trail is located on: <input type="radio"/> Private property <input checked="" type="radio"/> Public property	Length of Easement or Landowner Use Agreement years	Expiration Date
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Landowner Where Trail is Located	Telephone Number
WisDOT Wild River Trail, WisDOT ROW and portion private	

What other recreational trail uses are planned for this trail?

Snowmobile

If there are other Recreational uses planned, how much of the trail development/rehab. cost will be paid for by other users?

How many miles would be affected if this project is not funded?	Will this result in closure of a trail?
33	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Is this a critical section to the overall trail system? <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Is there a reasonable alternative? No.
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Does any section of this trail contain a bridge? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	Will this bridge require rehabilitation now or in the next few years? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	What is the weight of your puller & drag/grading equipment? lbs.
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- Yes No Have you contacted your local [DNR Water Management Specialist \(WMS\)](#) regarding a permit?
- Yes No Is a permit needed? (Please provide any written correspondence from WMS.)
- Yes No Will this project be located near or cross any intermittent or perennial waterway? [Surface Water Data Viewer](#)
- Yes No Will this project be located near or cross any wetland?
- Yes No Will this project involve land disturbance – including clearing and grubbing – of 1 acre or more of land? (Less than 4/10th mile for a typical trail) [DNR Storm Water Contact List](#)

Trail Project Detailed Description

This project entails crossing under both the north and south bound lanes of US Highway 53. The highway crosses Potato Creek and our engineer has determined there's sufficient room to construct retaining walls adjacent to the Creek, under the highway bridge to accommodate a 14 foot wide trail. The less expensive option includes 4 to 5 foot retaining walls on both the "uphill" and "downhill" sides of the trail to stabilize the fill under the bridge. This options also requires construction of new trail connections intersecting with the Wild River Trail and the trail adjacent to the Mobil gas station. This design also will require retaining wall against the west ROW of the highway in order to accommodate a tight turn between wetlands and a slope in the ROW.

This option is feasible but not ideal. There are tight turn radii on both sides, concerns with height clearance for groomers, a steep slopes (10%) dropping in and coming out of the project area. WisDOT also still needs to approve the construction design to assure that disturbance will not undermine the integrity of the Highway.

Motorized Recreation Grant Application

For: (choose all that apply)

Form 8700-159 (R 02/2024)

- ATV/UTV Trail Aid
- Snowmobile Trail Aid

Due Date: April 15

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Applicant / Organization Name Washburn County			Check Recipient: Individual other than authorized individual to act on behalf of the applicant. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Select if the same as applicant.		
Individual Authorized to Act on Behalf of Applicant per Resolution Mike Peterson			Check Recipient Name (Name to Appear on Check) Mike Peterson		
Title Washburn County Forest Administrator			Title Washburn County Forest Administrator		
Address 1760 Roundhouse Road			Address 1760 Roundhouse Road		
City Spooner	State WI	ZIP Code 54801	City Spooner	State WI	ZIP Code 54801
Telephone Number (715) 635-4490		Email Address mlpeters@co.washburn.wi.us			

Section 2: Project Information Required for all Projects

Project Title US 53 Potato Creek Overpass					Current Funded Miles	New Miles (if applicable)
County Washburn	Township 39 N	Range 12	Section 2	¼ ¼ NW	¼ SW	GPS Coordinates: Lat. 45.8937 Long. -91.8276

Project Description Summary

Trail 7 is a main ATV/Snowmobile connection in central Washburn County, linking the Wild River Trail, Trego, Casey Loop and Burnett County. Trego is an important trail connector since the next nearest gas and services are either 15 miles north or 7 miles south. WisDOT reconstructed the interchange between US 53/63 at Trego in 2021/2022. Despite written assurances from WisDOT that a trail connection would be restored, 1 mile of Trail 7, including a recreation bridge over Potato Creek was obliterated.

There are 2 options provided by our engineers on this project. We wish to present both to the Council for review. This application is to route the trail OVER US 53. The project estimate is \$4,288,167.00, less \$255,000.00 in grant funds previously awarded = \$4,033,167.00. We are splitting the grant 50/50 with Snowmobile = \$2,016,583.50

A more detailed narrative is included in this application

I certify that all maintenance land use agreements are on file.


Estimated Cost

Maintenance	Acquisition	Insurance	Development \$2,016,584.00	Bridge Rehab.	Trail Rehab.	Total Estimated Cost \$2,016,584.00
Leave Blank – DNR Use Only						

Applicant Certification

Printed Name of Authorized Official	Official's Title

As the applica " " that, to the best of my knowledge, the information in this application is true and correct.

Signature 

Date Prepared
4/3/2024

Appendix B – Required for Trail/Qualified Trout Rehab, Reroute, or Development

Trail Rehab Qualified Troute New Trail Trail Reroute (Mandatory or Discretionary)

County	Township	Range	<input type="radio"/> E <input checked="" type="radio"/> W	Section	¼ ¼	¼	GPS Coordinates: Lat. 45.892 Long. -91.8276
Washburn	39 N	12		29	NW	SW	

Funded Trail Name or Number (SNARS if applicable)	Has this trail ever received development or rehabilitation funds in the past?	Year:	\$
Trail 7 - rehab in 1999	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		6,850.00

Trail is located on: <input type="radio"/> Private property <input checked="" type="radio"/> Public property	Length of Easement or Landowner Use Agreement years	Expiration Date
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Landowner Where Trail is Located	Telephone Number
WisDOT Wild River Trail, WisDOT ROW, and some private	

What other recreational trail uses are planned for this trail?

Snowmobile

If there are other Recreational uses planned, how much of the trail development/rehab. cost will be paid for by other users?

50/50 Snow/ATV

How many miles would be affected if this project is not funded?	Will this result in closure of a trail?
33	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Is this a critical section to the overall trail system? <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Is there a reasonable alternative? No
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Does any section of this trail contain a bridge? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	Will this bridge require rehabilitation now or in the next few years? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	What is the weight of your puller & drag/grading equipment? 19,640 lbs.
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- Yes No Have you contacted your local [DNR Water Management Specialist \(WMS\)](#) regarding a permit?
- Yes No Is a permit needed? (Please provide any written correspondence from WMS.)
- Yes No Will this project be located near or cross any intermittent or perennial waterway? [Surface Water Data Viewer](#)
- Yes No Will this project be located near or cross any wetland?
- Yes No Will this project involve land disturbance – including clearing and grubbing – of 1 acre or more of land? (Less than 4/10th mile for a typical trail) [DNR Storm Water Contact List](#)

Trail Project Detailed Description

This project entails crossing both the north and south bound lanes of US Highway 53 in order to avoid an at grade crossing and by-pass a need for a recreational trail bridge over Potato Creek. This project is expensive but the best option in the long run. We are prepared to "bank" funds over several years to accumulate enough to complete the project and we will also attempt to secure funds from DOT since they neglected to follow through on their commitment to the trail. A partial funding award will allow us to proceed with final engineering and with securing additional funds.

It is rumored that US 53 will be upgraded from an expressway to a freeway in the near future. This is evidenced by the continually upgrades from intersections to the highway at grade to ramps and overpasses. Once the freeway designation occurs, at grade crossings will likely be eliminated.

Guidelines for Applicant

Complete this form for each relocation you are submitting a grant application for. Provide any additional documents not requested on application checklist to substantiate your points, including actual deeded easements.

Mandatory or Discretionary? (no points)	
A) Trail is already closed or will be closed for the upcoming season. = Mandatory	Mandatory
B) Trail won't be closed for the coming season, but relocation is preferable for landowner request. to avoid road use. etc = Discretionary	

Category		Possible Points	Actual Points
1	Maintenance Increase Only		
	New trail footprint has already been cleared/constructed, application is requesting only a maintenance increase	2	
2	Dedicated Highway Rec Wing		
	An opportunity to develop a dedicated rec wing on a highway will allow for increased safety of trail users by getting them off of a shared highway bridge.	2	
3	Funding (maximum points 2) Are other funds already committed?		
	50% or greater from other funding source(s)? TBD	2	
	11% - 49% from other funding source(s)?	1	
	0% - 10% from other funding source(s)?	0	
4	Length of Written Easements or Land Use Agreement (max points 4) (ch. 23.09(26)(am)1 WI Stats)		
	On public land (County, State, Federal)	4	4
	10 or more year deeded easement on private land or other public land, for all portions of that trail segment to the nearest road on each side	3	
	3-9 year deeded easement on private land or other public land, for all portions of that trail to the nearest road on each side	2	
	10 or more year land use agreement (LUA, not deeded) on private land or other public land	1	
	3-9 year land use agreement (LUA, not deeded) on private land or other public land	0	
5	Miles Impacted – How many miles will need to rerouted if the trail is shut down? Measured from nearest intersection on both sides of lost segment. (max 4 points)		
	Less than 20 miles	1	
	20 miles or more	3	3
	No other snowmobile trails connect. Explain:	4	
DEDUCTIONS			
8	County Active Project Deduction (maximum deduction 1 point) A snowmobile active project is one that has exceeded it's initial grant period.		
	Two or more active projects - deduct 1 point	-1	
GRAND TOTAL			7

Map 2: WisDOT Construction Plans



Map 3: WisDOT Bridge Construction

2020 Imagery



2022 Imagery



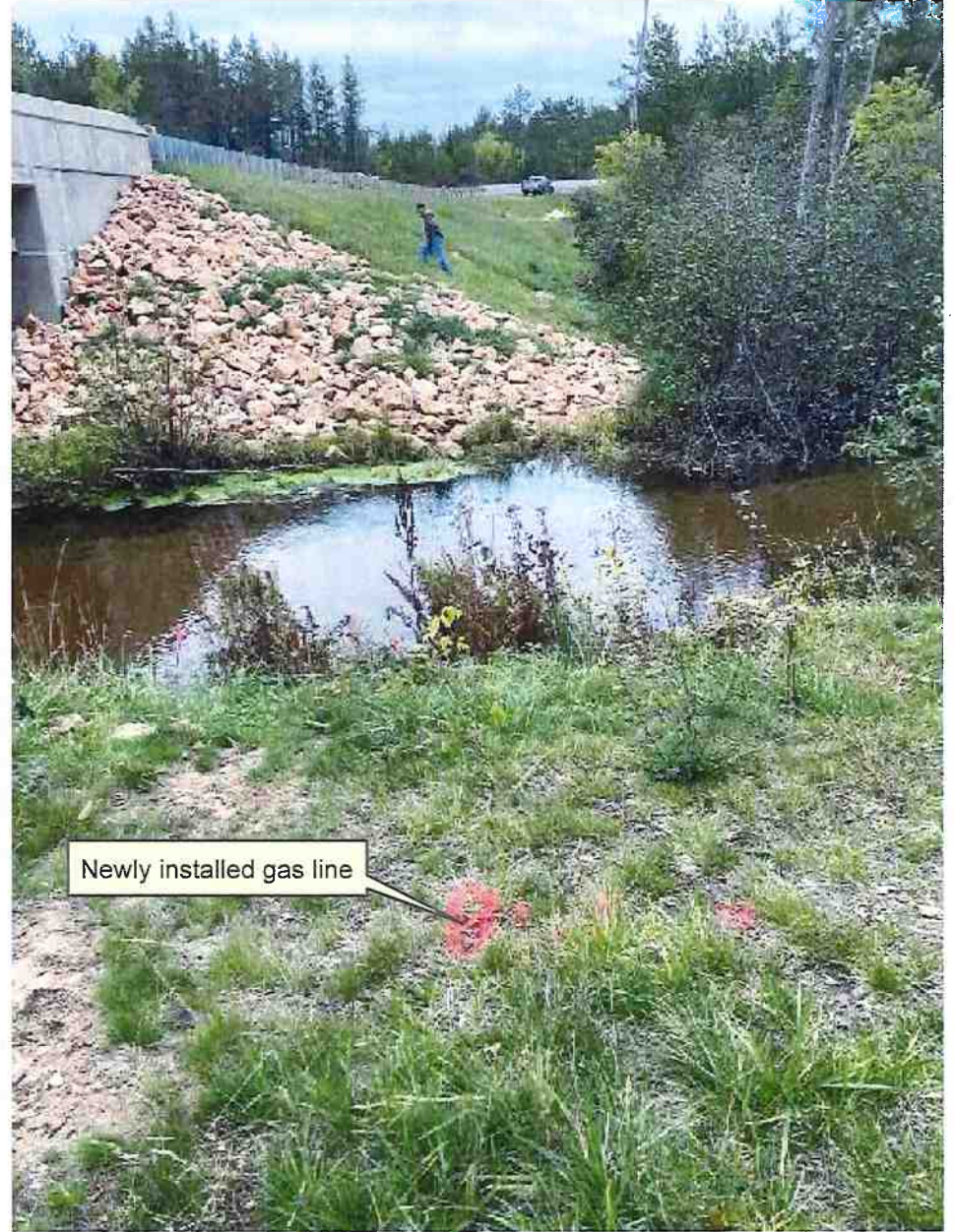
Photo 1 - Aerial of New Bridge



Photo 2 - Ditchline looking south



Photo 3 - Ditchline looking north



Newly installed gas line

Illustrates "flat bottom" ditches installed by WisDOT

MEMORANDUM

To: Washburn County Forestry Department

From: Ayres

Date: April 1, 2024

Project No.: 41-0894.00

Re: Trego Trail Options

The Washburn County Forestry Department requested that Ayres evaluate some alternatives for a grade-separated crossing of the ATV/Snowmobile Trail with USH 53/63 south of the Trego Interchange. Based on discussions with the County and WisDOT two options were taken forward for evaluation and cost estimates. An option with the Trail going over USH 53 and an option with the trail going under the USH 53 structure over Potato Creek. The trail option under the structure has two alternatives for retaining walls. The alternatives are described in more detail below:

Option 1A – Trail Under USH 53 Structure over Potato Creek (Lower Profile)

This option provides a trail that connects the existing Wild River State Trail to Mackey Road by going under USH 53/USH 63 at the Potato Creek structures. There is an existing flat area under the structure that would be widened to 14' to allow the trail under the structure. This would require a retaining wall of 10-11' height to be constructed under the structure.

Cost

The estimated cost for this alternative is \$1,900,000. This cost includes Construction, Design Engineering, and Construction Engineering.

Benefits

- This alternative is a lower cost than a structure over USH 53.
- No lane closures or traffic control on USH 53/63 are anticipated for this alternative.
- Vertical clearance is estimated to be approximately 17'. The trail's tractor for grooming is almost 10' tall.

Challenges

- This alternative requires a 10-11' retaining wall to be constructed under the existing structure. This can be problematic for the temporary shoring of the embankment in front of the existing abutment.
- Need to confirm with survey that fill will avoid the flood plain of Potato Creek.
- The curves of the trail to get under the structure will be tight and sight distance may be a concern.
- Need to maintain the drainage from USH 53 ditches to Potato Creek.
- Potential DNR concerns with the trail running adjacent to Potato Creek due to erosion or loss of the existing critter crossing under the structure.

Option 1B – Trail Under USH 53 Structure over Potato Creek (Higher Profile)

This option provides a trail that connects the existing Wild River State Trail to Mackey Road by going under USH 53/USH 63 at the Potato Creek structures. There is an existing flat area under the structure that would be widened to 14' to allow the trail under the structure. This would require two retaining walls on each side of the trail. An approximate 5' tall retaining wall on the south side of the trail and an

approximate 4' tall retaining wall on the north side of the trail. Railing will be required along the trail's south side to protect the drop off from the retaining wall.

Cost

The estimated cost for this alternative is \$1,600,000. This cost includes Construction, Design Engineering, and Construction Engineering.

Benefits

- This alternative is a lower cost than a structure over USH 53 and Option 1A.
- No lane closures or traffic control on USH 53/63 are anticipated for this alternative.

Challenges

- This alternative has a vertical clearance of approximately 11'-12'. The trail's tractor for grooming is almost 10' tall.
- While not as challenging as Option 1A, temporary shoring of the embankment in front of the existing abutment will be required.
- Need to confirm with survey that fill will avoid the flood plain of the Potato Creek.
- The curves of the trail to get under the structure will be tight and sight distance may be a concern.
- Need to maintain the drainage from USH 53 ditches to Potato Creek.
- Potential DNR concerns with the trail running adjacent to Potato Creek due to erosion or loss of the existing critter crossing under the structure..

Option 2 – Trail Over USH 53 with a two-span structure

This option provides a trail that connects the existing Wild River State Trail to Mackey Road by going over USH 53/USH 63 north of the Potato Creek structures. The structure would meet the 17'4" minimum clearance over USH 53/USH 63. The median pier would be protected by the existing concrete barrier along southbound lanes. New beam guard would be required along the northbound median lanes to protect the pier. The median pier would be placed in a location to meet at least the minimum lateral clearance requirements for a pier protected by beam guard and concrete barrier. The abutments would be placed outside of the USH 53 clear zone and would not need to be protected by beam guard.

Cost

The estimated cost for this alternative is \$4,300,000. This cost includes Construction, Design Engineering, and Construction Engineering.

Benefits

- Shorter trail to connect with less curves.
- Does not impact the drainage along USH 53.
- Impacts are not near Potato Creek

Challenges

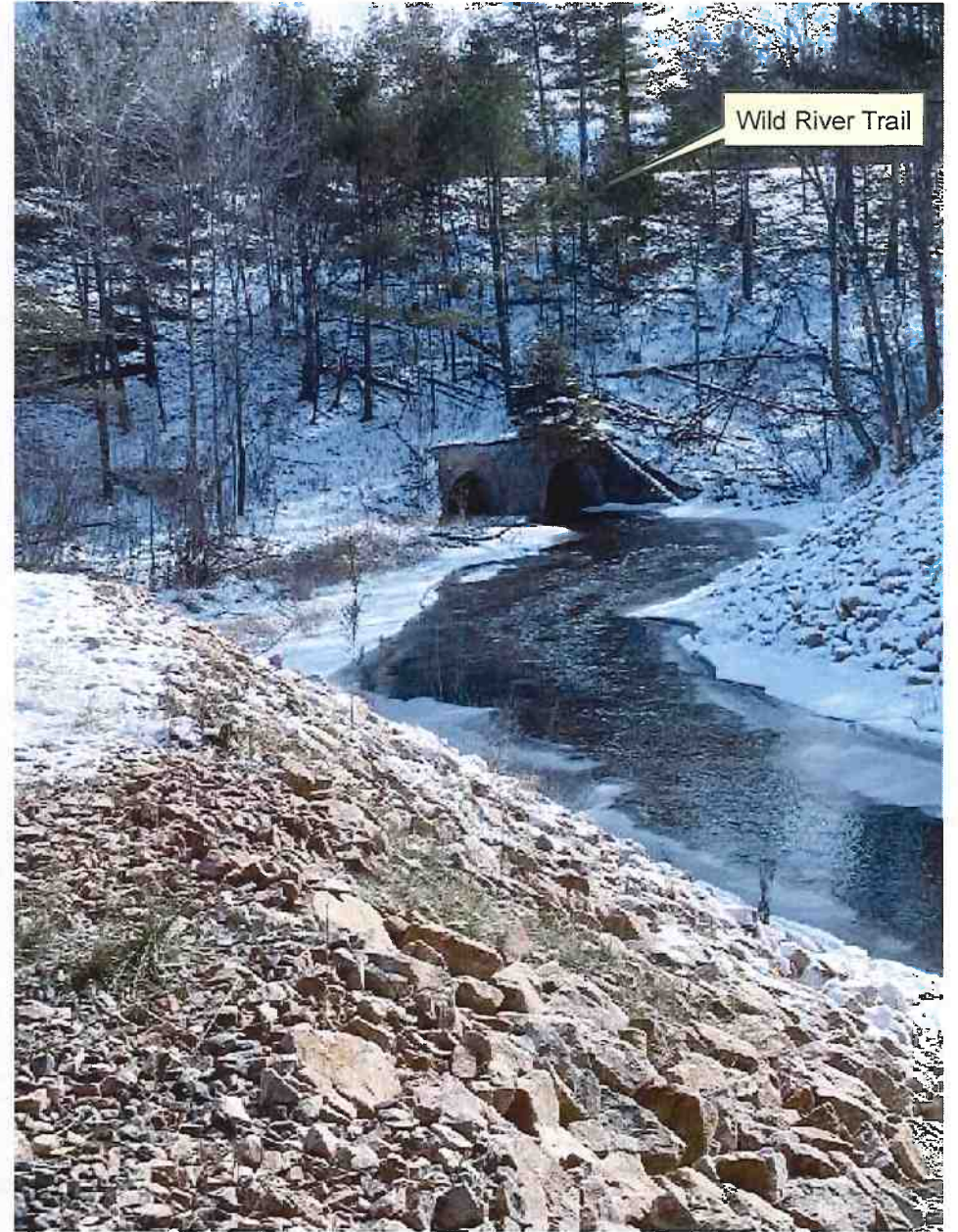
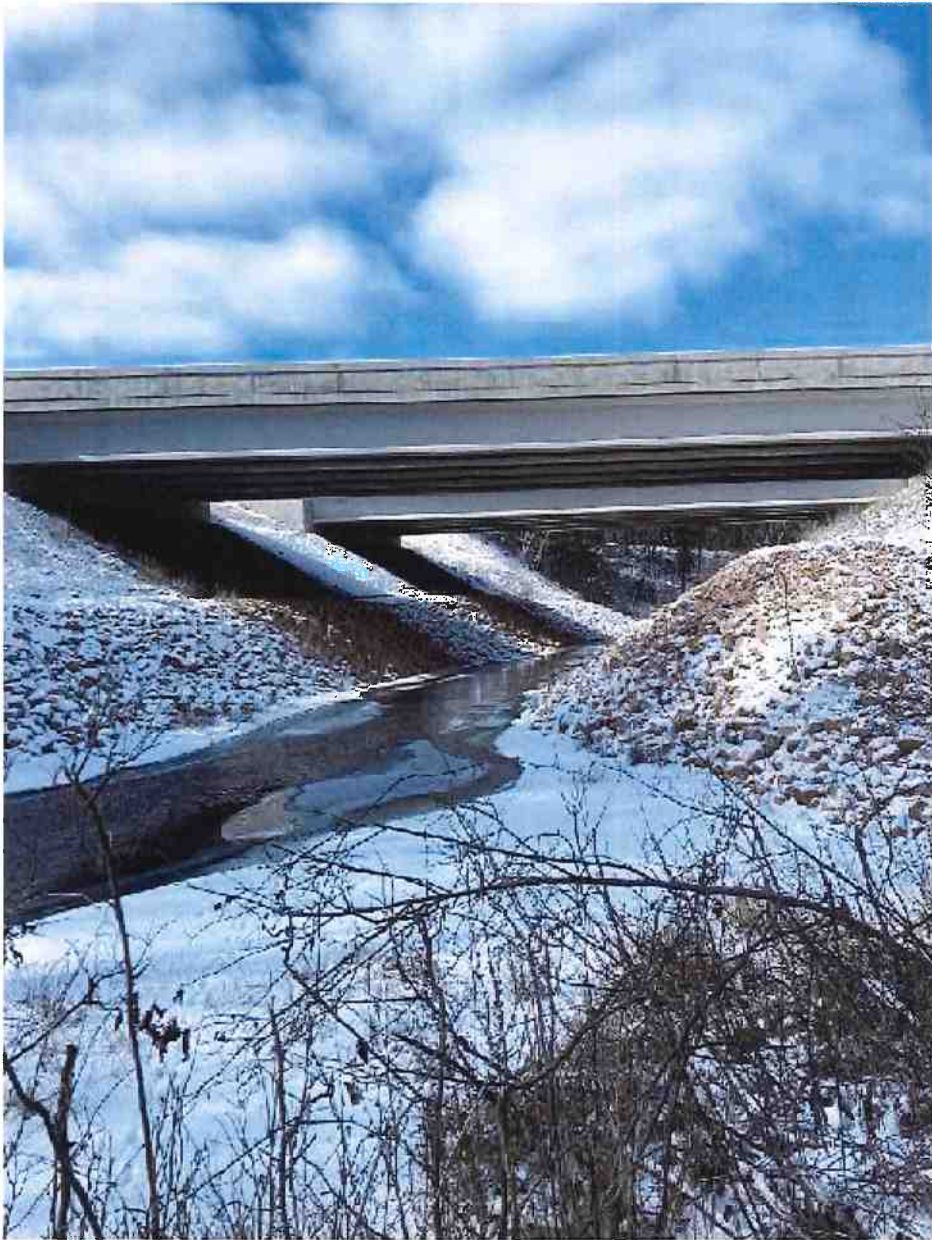
- Construction will require lane closures on USH 53/63 for pier construction as well as overhead work.
- This alternative has a higher construction cost as well as an estimated higher maintenance cost.
- Alignment may need to be shifted further south as we develop structure footing plans to avoid impacts to the existing concrete barrier along southbound lanes.

Conclusions

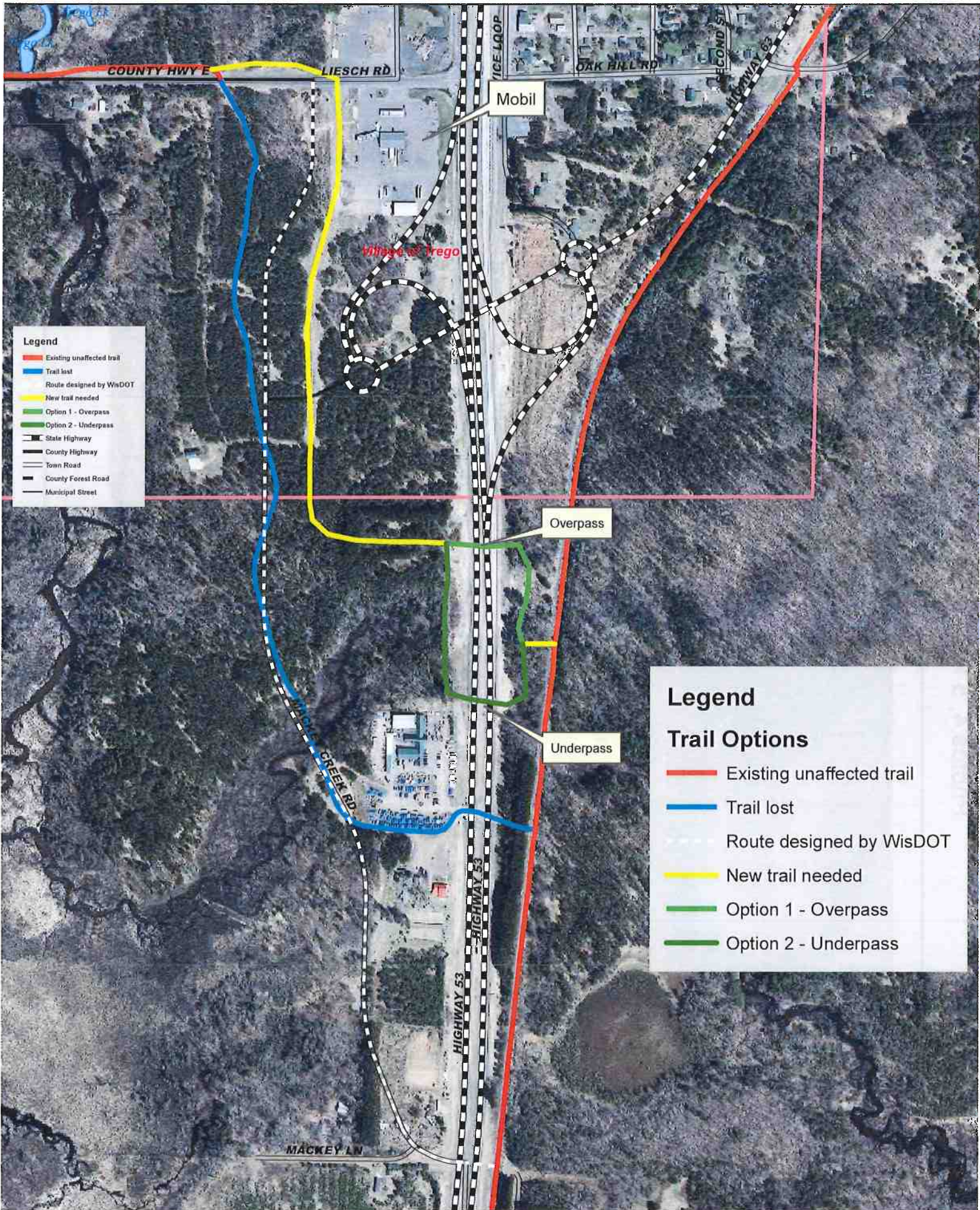
Both options appear to be viable to proceed to the next phase of design. The County will be applying for funding for this project based on these options. A second meeting with WisDOT will be planned to include WisDOT structures, and WisDOT environmental staff to further discuss the challenges.



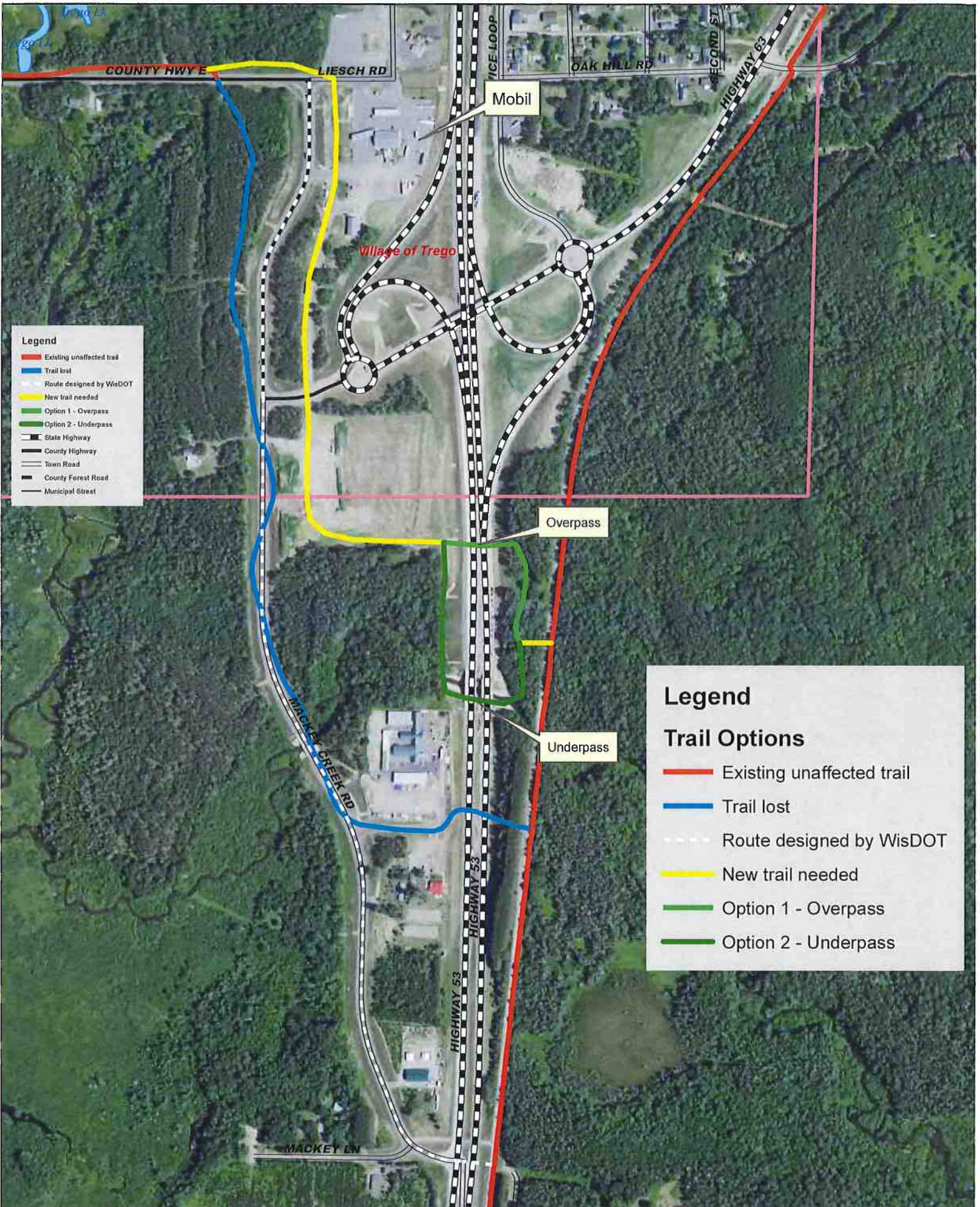
Photos 4, 5 Potato Creek Underpass Area



US 53 Crossing - (Aerial 2020)



US 53 Crossing - (Aerial 2022)



Legend

- Existing unaffected trail
- Trail lost
- - - Route designed by WisDOT
- New trail needed
- Option 1 - Overpass
- Option 2 - Underpass
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Road
- County Forest Road
- Municipal Street

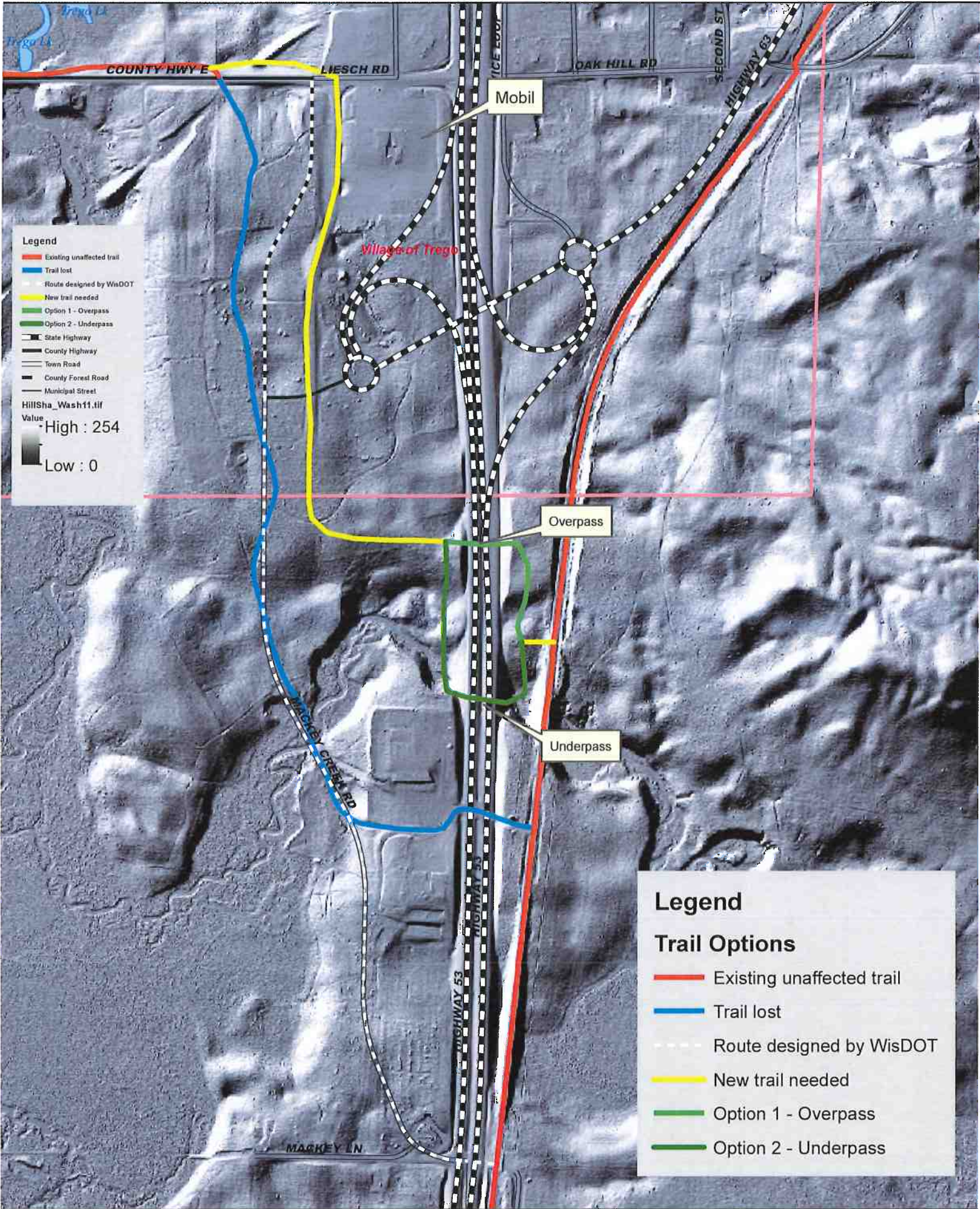
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Trail Options

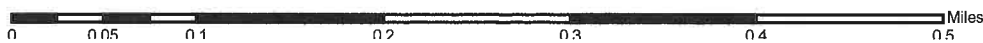
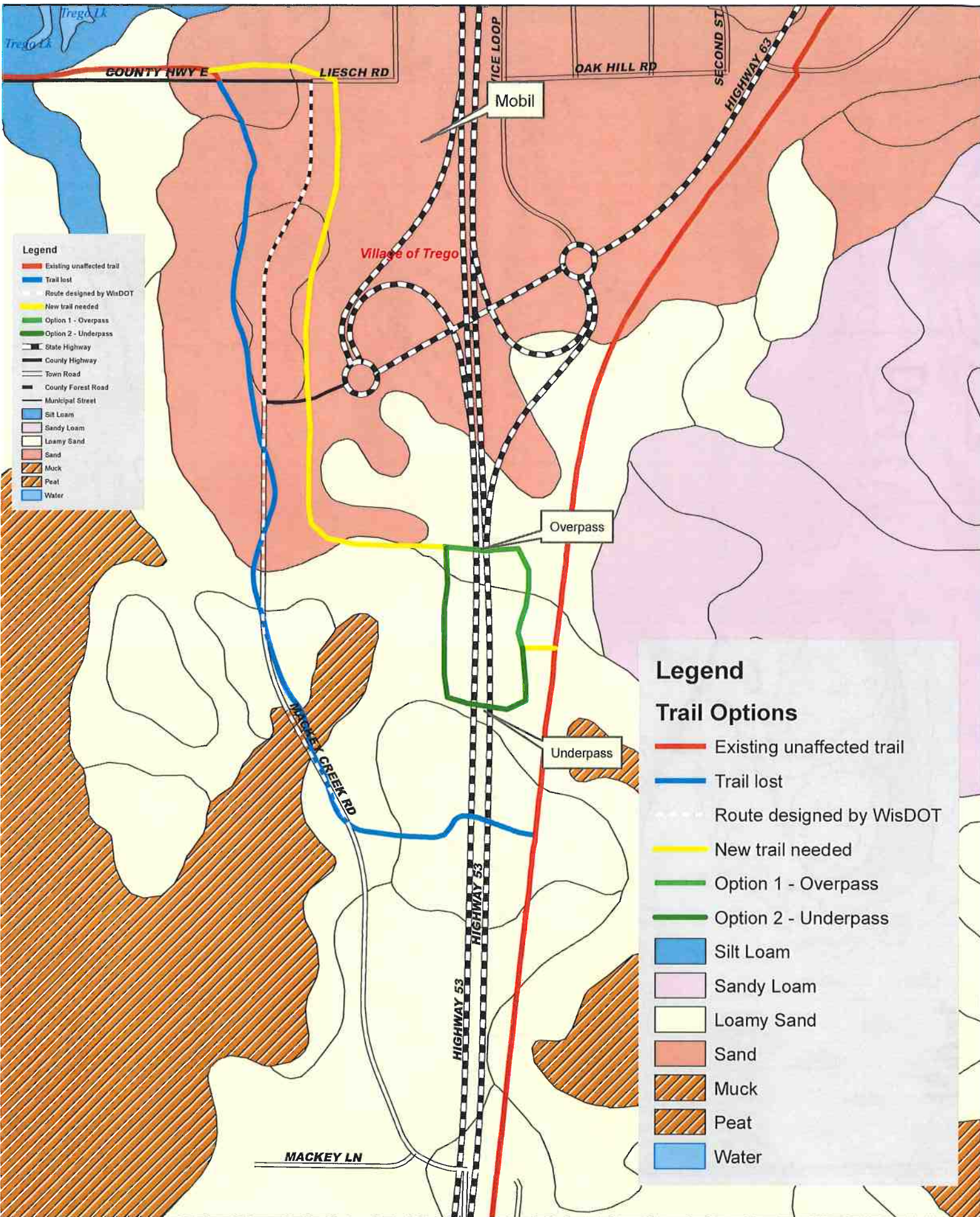
- Existing unaffected trail
- Trail lost
- - - Route designed by WisDOT
- New trail needed
- Option 1 - Overpass
- Option 2 - Underpass



US 53 Crossing - (LIDAR/Hillshade)



US 53 Crossing - (Soils)



US 53 Crossing - (Topo)

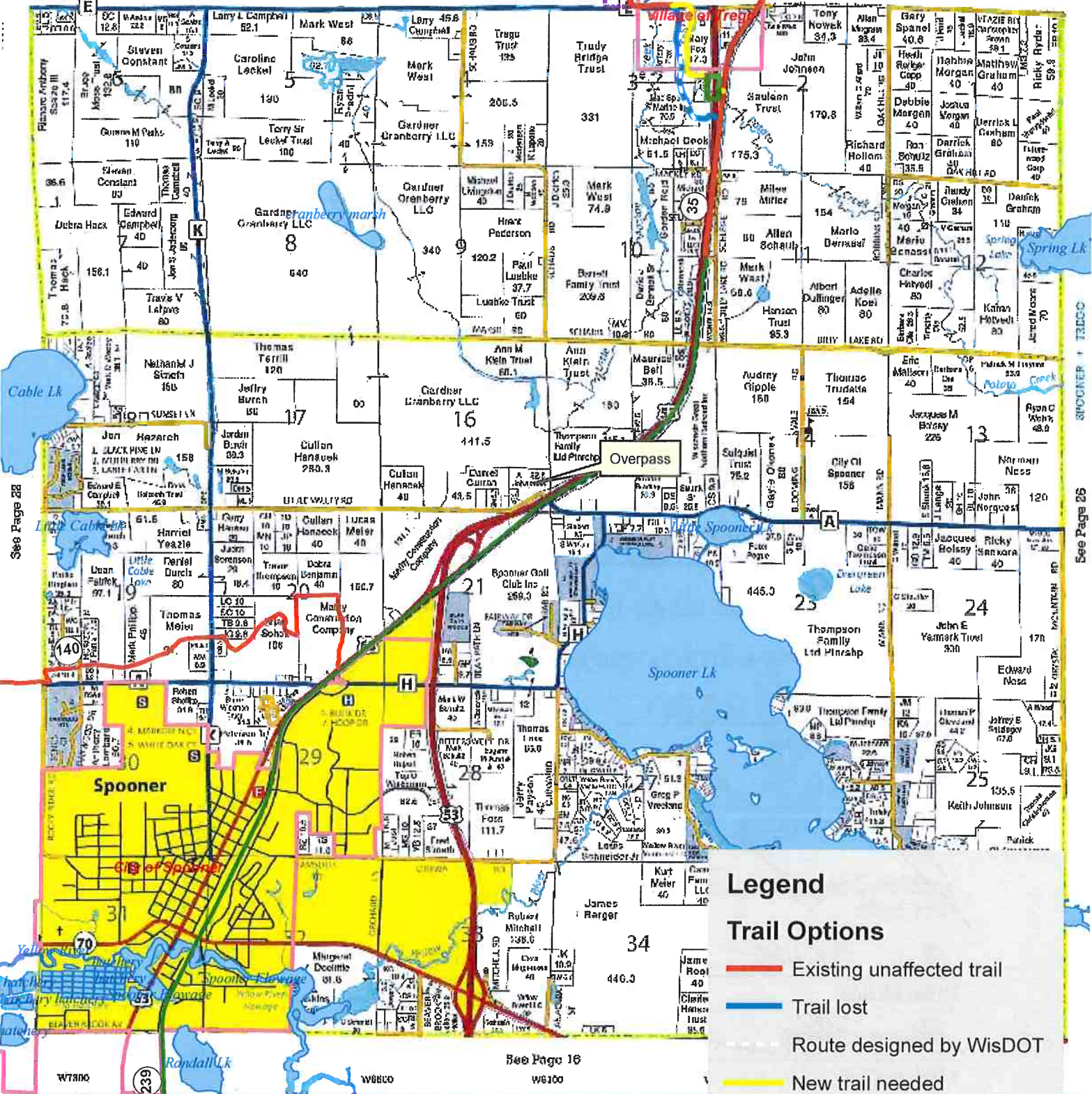
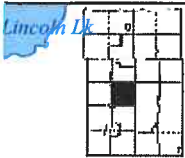


Spooner / Trego (S)

Washington County Land Information Office Shell Lake, WI

T.39N R.12W

See Page 32



Legend

Trail Options

- Existing unaffected trail
- Trail lost
- Route designed by WisDOT
- New trail needed
- Option 1 - Overpass
- Option 2 - Underpass

See Page 16

County, WI

Like a good neighbor,

