

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



City of Duluth - Parks and Recreation

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SUBJECT: Duluth Natural Surface Trails Extremely Vulnerable During Annual Freeze/Thaw

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

Duluth Natural Surface Trails Extremely Vulnerable During Annual Freeze/Thaw

[Duluth, MN] – The City of Duluth Parks and Recreation division wants to remind the public of winter trail use opportunities. Gravel surface trails, including the Duluth Winnipeg Pacific (DWP) Trail and Waabizheshikana (formerly Western Waterfront Trail), remain open throughout winter. It is important to note that these trails are not plowed. Paved surface trails, including the Campus Connector Trail, Lakewalk, and Cross-City Trail, are cleared of snow and open regardless of weather conditions.

“These trails provide a great snowshoe or backcountry style cross-country ski experience and are wonderful for walking year-round,” said Matt Andrews, Trails Coordinator for Duluth Parks and Recreation. “The City added a new 2.4-mile section to the Cross City Trail this year, referred to as the River Route; we now have a paved connection from Irving Park to Kitchi Gammi Park (Brighton Beach).”

In collaboration with the Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA) and the Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores (COGGS), the City has currently closed all-natural surface (dirt) trails due to the annual fall freeze-thaw cycle until further notice. Overnight below-freezing temperatures combined with daytime above freezing temperatures create wet and vulnerable soil conditions. Continued use by any method (foot or bike) could result in damage to the trails. Please avoid these trails if the soil is wet or muddy.

“If you see footprints or bike tire ruts in the underlying dirt, then it’s best to turn around and find a different outdoor recreation opportunity,” Andrews said. “Until everything is frozen solid, the trails are highly vulnerable to damage, which could create erosion on the trails when the snow melts next Spring.”

The City anticipates fully reopening natural surface trails once surface conditions allow and the ground has completely frozen. To learn more about the City’s trails, please visit <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/trails-bikeways/natural-surface-trails/>.

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