

Sen. Marklein, Rep. Kurtz: Announce repairs on Elroy-Sparta State Trail finally completed

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MADISON— State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) and State Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) released the following statement related to the repair work on the Elroy-Sparta State Trail:

“The DNR has finally completed the repairs of the Elroy-Sparta State Trail after the 2018 floods. We have been persistent despite the bureaucratic delays that have kept sections of this trail closed for three years!

The Elroy-Sparta Trail is one of the most popular trails in the state, yet it remained partially shut-down for far too long. Every day that the trail remained closed was another day that visitors and tourism dollars were not flowing into Juneau and Monroe counties.

We are thrilled that this trail is finally fully re-opened.”

Sections of the Elroy-Sparta and 400 Trail were severely damaged by flooding in August 2018. Repairs by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) were delayed. Sen. Marklein and Rep. Kurtz worked to secure \$100,000 in the 2019-20 state budget to fix these two specific State Trails but Governor Tony Evers vetoed this provision in the budget, because he ‘object(s) to directing the department to repair specific trails’.

In 2019, Sen. Marklein and Rep. Kurtz implored DNR Secretary Preston Cole to restore the funding and fix the trails. Instead, the DNR used these funds to make repairs on the Badger State Trail, which runs between Madison and the Wisconsin-

Illinois border and the Sugar River State Trail.

At the May 20, 2020 meeting of the State Building Commission, \$1,851,100 in General Fund Supported Bonding was unanimously approved for repairs to the heavily damaged Elroy-Sparta Trail, the 400 State Trail and the Hillsboro State Trail. However, the repairs could not move forward because all bids for the project came in over budget.

On September 29, 2020, after learning that all of the bids were rejected, Sen. Marklein and Rep. Kurtz sent a letter to the members of the State Building Commission asking them to approve the project amendment and to increase the funding.

At the October 14, 2020 meeting of the State Building Commission, an additional \$452,700 in General Fund Supported Bonding was unanimously approved for the trail repairs.

The project was scheduled to be completed in August 2021, but was not. The trail remained closed throughout the autumn season.

Rep. Kurtz and Sen. Marklein received notice from the DNR on December 7, 2021 that the trail repairs were completed. The DNR noted that the three tunnels along the trails are closed annually from November 1 to April 30, but detours are available for snowmobile use during the winter.

The tunnels are expected to re-open May 1, 2022.