Vilas County Highway Department
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5/4/2022

NOTICE

RE: CTH K Current Brushing and Future Road Construction Plans

Vilas County Highway Dept. personnel met with concerned residents of Star Lake at their request to discuss ongoing brushing operations and future road construction plans for CTH K on April 11, 2022.

Vilas County Highway Department has been following Trans RR-1 (Rustic Roads) for current maintenance activities and considerations for future safety improvements. Below are the sections that pertain to the current work that is ongoing.

Trans-RR 1.07 Jurisdiction and authority. Upon approval of the board of rustic road designation and except as otherwise provided in these administrative rules, the county highway committee, the municipalities and counties shall have the same authority over rustic roads as they possess over other highways under their jurisdiction—including responsibility for maintenance.
Note: See s. 83.42 (7), Stats.
History: Cr. Register, May, 1981, No. 305, eff. 6-1-81.

Trans-RR 1.08 General maintenance. A rustic road shall receive the level of maintenance necessary for public travel by auto, bicycle or hiking for recreational enjoyment, while still preserving the rustic qualities of the route.
History: Cr. Register, May, 1981, No. 305, eff. 6-1-81.

Trans-RR 1.09 Road bed maintenance.
(1) Rustic roads may be dirt, gravel or hard surface. Necessary improvements may be made in surface to improve safety or drainage or to reduce maintenance problems, but shall not disturb the rustic characteristics for which the road was designated. Drainage and road improvements shall be kept as narrow as possible to retain the rustic charm of the road as well as keeping the driver's speed lower. The improvements shall be kept to a minimum to avoid disturbance of vegetation or unusual scientific or cultural sites which have been designated.
(2) Where it becomes a necessity, dust treatment may be used.
History: Cr. Register, May, 1981, No. 305, eff. 6-1-81.

Trans-RR 1.10 Cross drainage maintenance.
(1) Cross drainage shall be maintained where necessary to prevent damage to the road, possible washouts and other problems which may be detrimental to proper safety.
(2) When bridge replacement is necessary, it is preferable that it be of a design and construction with a rustic appearance such as timber or stone structure.

(3) Repairs to an existing bridge of rustic character shall be made with an effort to preserve the rustic qualities of the structure.

(4) When deemed advisable, the maintaining authority may impose weight limitations on structures on a rustic road in lieu of structure replacement or repair.

History: Cr. Register, May, 1981, No. 305, eff. 6-1-81.

Trans-RR 1.11 Vegetation maintenance.

(1) Where necessary for safety or protection of the traveling public, tree branches and shrubs may be trimmed or whole trees removed. This shall be done with proper tools so as not to leave unsightly scars. Land and forest management may be practiced.

(2) Control of undesirable vegetation shall be accomplished by mowing or selective cutting. However, when herbicides are necessary, they shall be used judiciously and in a prudent manner to avoid unnecessary browning of roadside vegetation.

(3) Mowing shall be performed only as necessary for health, safety and ecological reasons with the aim of encouraging, where appropriate, the growth of prairie flora adjacent to the road.

History: Cr. Register, May, 1981, No. 305, eff. 6-1-81.

Brushing- In the winter of 2021/2022 the Highway Dept. continued roadside brushing between Jutzi Rd. and the Boulder Jct./Plum Lake Townline. This has been an on-going effort that started in the winter of 2019/2020 on CTH K starting at USH 45 in the town of Conover. Brushing is warranted due to the encroachment of limbs and branches to CTH K that are currently affecting large commercial vehicles, school buses and Vilas County Highway maintenance vehicles that use CTH K on a daily basis. The Highway Dept. is taking a proactive approach on minimizing future maintenance and improving safety by increasing line of sight. Currently brushing operations have temporarily ceased due to Oak Wilt restriction. However, brushing will begin again sometime in the late summer/fall of 2022 and will start with the mulching of stubble left behind due to snow depth.

Future CTH K Road Construction- Discussion was had during this meeting on initial proposed plans by Highway Dept. personnel to add 3' paved shoulders and establish a 10' clear zone along CTH K to enhance safety of all users to include motorists, bicyclist and pedestrians along with reducing future maintenance costs while maintaining the beauty of CTH K. During the discussion it was stated that Highway Committee approval and design would begin at the earliest in late 2023. Construction would also not begin until at least 2025 if funding is available. There will be a public involvement meeting in the early stages of design for comments to be heard and considered, this meeting will be held during a time when most residents are in the area. When actual design begins WisDOT-Facilities Development Manual and Trans RR-1 will be followed.

Troy Schalinske
Highway Commissioner