

The Preservationist

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Preservation and Maintenance Plan Adopted for Historic Race Circuits

After nearly three years the Preservation and Maintenance plan for the roads that make up the Elkhart Lake Historic Race Circuits has been completed and adopted by the Sheboygan County Highway Department (SCHD).

Background - In November of 2007 the SCHD undertook an unauthorized cut and fill project on the Hamill's Hollow portion of the Historic Race Circuitst. The Wisconsin State Historical Society (WSHS), as partial remediation for this unauthorized action, required the SCHD to contract with an independent archeological historian to prepare a Preservation and Maintenance Plan for the Historic Circuits. Subsequently, the SCHD contracted with Heritage Research, Ltd. of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin for preparation of that plan. After many false starts, lengthy negotiations and seemingly unending frustrations, Heritage completed a draft of the Plan late in 2009 and submitted it for review by the WSHS. After several amendments, the Plan was approved by the WSHS and subsequently formally adopted by the SCHD.

The Plan - Over forty pages in length including appendices, the Plan contains much of the supporting material submitted by the Preservation Society during its development. At its core, the Plan provides that any work under consideration by the SCHD that may affect the width of the roadway, the depth of the shoulders, the geometry of the curves and the historic and remaining view sheds as they are limited to the public Right-of-Way (ROW) requires consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Further, that it is necessary to maintain the characteristic of the Historic Race Circuits to the greatest extent

possible since they provide the basis that facilitated nomination to the National Register. The SCHD is charged with the care and maintenance of the historic property and authorized to make needed repairs without consulting with the SHPO as long as such repairs do not adversely affect the existing historic footprint.

Specifically, the SCHD may mow within the ROW, patch or repair pavement within the historic footprint, replace or repave the roadways within the footprint, maintain and re-gravel the shoulders within the existent footprint and re-ditch to accommodate drainage as long as the activity occurs in areas previously ditched and within the geographic parameters of the earlier ditching.

In all other matters affecting the Historic Race Circuits, the SCHD must submit its plans to the WSHS for review and determination, if any, of potential adverse effects on the characteristics of the historic property. If the plan is determined to have an adverse affect on the historic property the SCHD must consult with the SHPO to seek other alternatives and/or mitigation of the adverse effect.

Finally, it is the obligation of the Sheboygan County Highway Commissioner to advise all Highway Department employees on an annual basis of the existence of the historic entity, that Wisconsin Historic Preservation laws apply and that there is a preservation plan in effect.

This is a major milestone in your Preservation Society's efforts to preserve the roads that make up the Historic Race Circuits in their original and historic configuration.