

Mountain bike park debut set

Posted: Friday, July 29, 2016 9:23 am

JEFFERSON — The Jefferson County Parks Department will hold a grand opening Wednesday, Aug. 3, for the new Glacial River Train Mountain Bike Park.

The grand opening takes place at 5 p.m. at the bike trail parking lot off of Wisconsin Avenue in Jefferson. Attendees are encouraged to bring their bikes.

There will be hotdogs for sale, and the Jefferson County Bike Club will conduct a membership drive.

“Jefferson County identifies outdoor recreation as a major component of our local economic development activities,” said Jefferson County Parks Department director Joe Nehmer. “Trails like these are good for our local economy, our health, and our environment.”

The mile-long loop is located next to the Jefferson County Health and Human Services building. Completed by group of volunteers — chief among them members of the Jefferson County Bicycle Club — the trail loops up and around a glacial drumlin and through woods, connecting to the existing paved Glacial River Trail that runs between Jefferson and Fort Atkinson.

Named the Glacial River Mountain Bike Trail, it is the first of what planners hope eventually will be a network of intersecting trails in that area.

The site is part of what used to be the original county farm. In the spring of 2015, plans began in earnest for the trail, and work began on the first mile loop.

Jefferson County Parks Department staff worked with the International Mountain Biking Association to put the concept for the trail together. Those professionals helped lay out the requirements for an official mountain biking trail and helped to train volunteers from the county.

Then Parks Department employees designed and laid out the trails, correct surface, extending the full loop.

The Jefferson County Bicycle Club and its members played a big part in the process, providing not only input and support, but also dedicating countless hours of physical labor to make the trail a reality.

Ultimately, planners hope to see about three miles of trail.

Several other loops have been conceptually designed, and staff will have to do ground truthing, probably in the fall. That means getting into the woods and taking into account the location of each rock and tree to see exactly where the trail will run within the bounds of its basic design.

The trails must be designed to be sustainable, to resist erosion and to stand up to heavy use by bikes.