

Rustic Roads easy, attractive



Usually a citizen group proposes a Rustic Road, says Katherine Yeaple, Rustic Roads administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. People who live on a unique road, or those who enjoy its scenic qualities, often want to protect it from change. As a Rustic Road, it remains under local control and is eligible for state aids just like any

other highway. There are now 75 roads covering more than 402 miles in 46 counties participating in the program.

Riley Road in Rock County joined the system recently, becoming Rustic Road No. 68. "I got involved when they took out a little plank bridge on the road," says Tom Veek, a Riley Road resident who made the Rustic Road proposal. "I wanted to keep the esthetics of the road and to make sure that the bridge would blend into the scenery." He describes Riley Road as "an old roller coaster road that is fun for people to ride or bike down." Veek and his neighbors petitioned the Town of Porter town board to request the Rustic Road designation.

"We had a series of meetings and got input from the Rustic Roads people at the state," says Porter Town Chairman David Viney. "We wanted to be assured that there wasn't some hidden thing that we would be forced to do, or that we would not be allowed to have development on it down the road." According to Viney, the bridge on Riley Road had been condemned and the town was faced with replacing it or closing the road.

Under the program, when a road is approved by the state Rustic Roads Board, the maximum speed limit is set at 45, and can be as low as 25 mph. The road should be lightly traveled and no major improvements should be anticipated,



Riley Road, Rustic Road No. 68. A Rustic Road should have outstanding natural features that set it apart: rugged terrain, native vegetation, wildlife, or open agricultural vistas.

but normal repairs to maintain safety and drainage may be done. In general, nothing much changes except the speed limit. While the state posts Rustic Roads designation signs, the town has to pay for any new speed limit signs. The \$800 cost for new speed limit signs on Riley Road is a concern, according to Viney.

WisDOT District offices can help municipalities who are considering a section of road for Rustic Road designation. A booklet, *Wisconsin's Rustic Roads...A Positive Step Backward*, is available, and rules for the roads are printed in Chapter Trans-RR1 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

For information on Rustic Roads, contact the Rustic Roads Board, WisDOT, P.O. Box 7913, Madison, WI 53707, 608/266-3661.

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