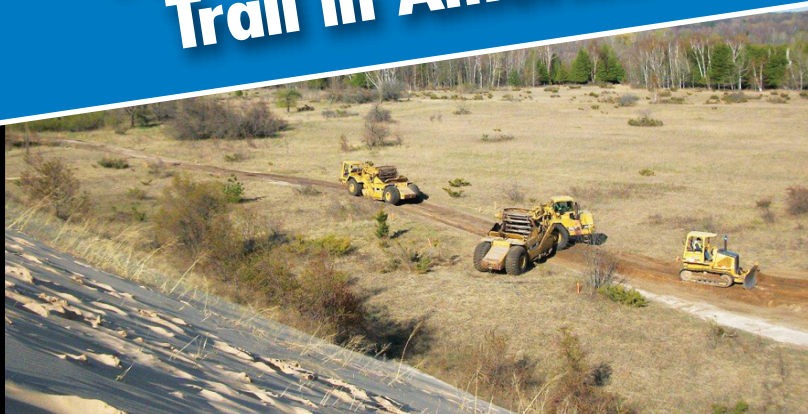


# The Most Beautiful Trail in America



**PROJECT NAME:** Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Heritage Trail

**CHALLENGE:** Completing work on a tight schedule, while keeping forest disruption to a minimum, preserving the natural beauty and historical integrity of the area.

**SOLUTION:** Trail was designed using old logging routes, abandoned railroads, and existing trails in order to minimize environmental disruption where possible. Team Elmer's organized multiple crews and consistent scheduling to complete the project on time.

**OWNER:** MDOT, Federal Transit Administration

**CONTRACT PRICE:** \$945,534.61

**DESIGN ENGINEER:** Judy K. Browning (231) 941-1987

**LOCATION:** Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

**DATE COMPLETED:** May 25, 2012

**SELF-PERFORMED:** 93%

Good Morning America viewers named Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore as the Most Beautiful Place in America. Thanks in part to Team Elmer's, that pristine coastline will now have a handicap-accessible, family-friendly trail – open to wheelchair bound nature enthusiasts, families with strollers, and novice bicycle riders averse to motorized traffic.

Team Elmer's recently wrapped up the first phase of construction on what is set to become the 27-mile, non-motorized Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Heritage Trail, or the M-109 bike trail.

When Team Elmer's broke ground on the project in April, we were tasked with clearing away trees and brush, and preparing an old railway corridor for the asphalt paving of what could soon be known as one of America's most breathtaking trails.

Of course, being environmentally conscious was a necessity, and Team Elmer's made that challenge our main goal. First, the trail was designed by MDOT Engineers in conjunction with funding from the Federal Highway Administration, support from the National Park Service, TART Trails initiative, and numerous businesses, chambers of commerce, and individuals.

The design used the skeleton of older pathways, logging roads, and abandoned railroad beds, often running parallel to county roads to minimize the amount of vegetation to be cleared. Team Elmer's recycled wood debris from project sites and replaced other tree, leaf, sand, and soil debris along the trail to maintain a natural aesthetic and keep as much vegetation as possible. Our crew also worked with Park officials to enact an invasive species protection plan, ensuring our equipment wouldn't bring in or out anything that didn't belong.

By the time it concluded, the first phase of the Lakeshore Trail Project was a beautiful addition to the Most Beautiful Place in America. The 10-foot wide trail runs on asphalt for most of its length. At points, the trail shifts to crushed limestone, and even to stretches of boardwalk.

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