COMMUNITY SELECTION & DESIGN STRATEGIES:
Because the project budget did not permit working in each community, communities were selected in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation, and community groups. Criteria used for selection included trail construction schedule, community interest, opportunities to enhance and create amenities, and the need to remove trail development challenges. Three communities along the trail were selected: Beaver Bay, Lutsen, and Taconite Harbor.

COMMUNITY:
Making the Gitchi-Gami State Trail a viable asset to each community as it passes through drove the design work. The trail was made more visible by designing a trailhead as a major place in each community. Opportunities to link the trail to the other community amenities and the enrichment of the existing community form were pursued simultaneously.

IDENTITY & INTERPRETATION:
A design vocabulary of kiosks, signs, fencing, and bicycle racks was created to give the trail a memorable identity. Although different in history and development, all the communities along the trail are linked to the Lake Superior and regional natural resources. A kiosk strategy was developed to create a rich and diverse interpretative narrative relating natural and culture features of each community and the region.

THE LARGER CONTEXT:
The existing patterns of the North Shore’s natural and cultural resources were studied to identify their intrinsic qualities. Although the North Shore is usually identified as a narrow strip of land immediately adjacent to Lake Superior, the project took a larger view. Drawings of the larger landscape were produced. These drawings are interpretations of the larger landscape and are a key to creating a linked network of recreational systems.

LEVERAGING:
Because of the richness of recreational systems on the North Shore; the Gitchi-Gami trailheads and North Shore Scenic Drive rest stops were co-located in order to strengthen each system, leverage the resources of each system, create a synergy between the systems, and lessen their impact on the natural environment.