

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Subd: 04a

Project Title: Lake Vermilion State Park Development

Category: H. Other Ideas

Total Project Budget: \$ \$3,000,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2011 - June 2014

Other Non-State Funds (secured): \$ 0

Summary:

Initiate Phase 1 development of Lake Vermilion State Park, providing recreation and outdoor education opportunities to the public through development of campgrounds, day use facilities, trails and public water access.

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Sponsoring Organization: DNR

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Location:

Region: NE

Ecological Section: Northern Superior Uplands (212L)

County Name: St. Louis

City / Township: City of Tower/Breitung Township

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Lake Vermilion State Park Development

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

With the creation of the first major new state park in Minnesota in 30 years, we have the opportunity today to design and develop an innovative, “next generation” state park for the 21st century that will capitalize on the natural and cultural assets of the area. This flagship state park will meet the demands of today’s customers by providing for new recreational and outdoor educational opportunities while preserving the natural resources and cultural values of the area.

Lake Vermilion, an icon of Minnesota’s northern lake country, is the fifth largest lake in Minnesota, encompassing 39,271 acres of water, 368 islands, and 340 miles of shoreline. The goal for development of Lake Vermilion State Park is to provide new nature-based recreational opportunities that utilize the wealth of Lake Vermilion’s high-quality natural and cultural resources to better engage a diverse and changing public, cultivating a stewardship ethic in tomorrow’s leaders. Park development would include infrastructure development, campgrounds and day use facilities, and recreational access.

This next generation park will help to fulfill the Minnesota State Park System’s mission defined in M.S. 86A.04, Subd. 2, which states:

“A state park shall be established to protect and perpetuate extensive areas of the state possessing those resources which illustrate and exemplify Minnesota’s natural phenomena and to provide for the use, enjoyment, and understanding of such resources without impairment for the enjoyment and recreation of future generations.”

This is a proposal would utilize \$3.0 million from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENTF) to design and construct capital projects as allowed under M.S. 116P.08, Subd. 1(5), which states that money in the trust fund may be spent for “capital projects for the preservation and protection of unique natural resources.” This request is quite general due to the fact that a master planning process is underway for Lake Vermilion State Park as required by M.S. 86A.09. This master plan is expected to be completed in late 2010 or early 2011. An amendment to this proposal will be submitted at that time.

Phase I Infrastructure Development needs for Lake Vermilion State Park total \$16.7 million, and are summarized in the table below. After completion of land acquisition at Lake Vermilion, approximately \$1.7 million in 2008 bonding funds remains, and these funds are also shown to meet Phase I costs.

Basic Infrastructure Development

	Est. Cost	2008 Bonding	Prop. ENRTF Funding*
Prof. services (design, survey, construction admin)	\$3,000,000	\$400,000	\$300,000
7 miles of road; 150 parking spots; 1 small bridge	\$3,100,000	\$500,000	
Water supply (wells or municipal connections)	\$1,000,000	--	\$200,000
Sewage treatment (onsite or municipal)	\$2,000,000	--	\$200,000
Renewable energy, electric service & telecommunications	\$1,500,000	--	\$100,000
Resource management (best management practices)	\$500,000	\$200,000	
Interpretation and outreach master plans	\$600,000	--	

Phase I camping facilities, camper cabins, yurts	\$1,100,000		\$600,000
Trail shelters, day-use facilities, vault toilets	\$2,000,000	\$300,000	\$600,000
Trail development (both natural and hard-surfaced)	\$2,000,000	\$300,000	\$800,000
Stuntz Bay access improvement (vault toilets, parking, site preservation)	\$500,000	--	\$200,000
Total	\$16,700,000	\$1,700,000	\$3,000,000

* Cost breakdown is very approximate until master plan is completed

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A park master plan process and resource assessment is underway. This process will determine the scope and general locations suitable for park development. The master plan is expected to be completed by late 2010. Because of this, this funding proposal is not specific as to locations or project details. Once the master plan is complete, a more detailed amendment to this proposal will be provided.

Activity 1: Day Use Facilities

Budget: \$ 1,000,000

Day use facilities to be developed with this funding may include a contact station, picnic areas, vault toilets, boater waysides, and/or accessible fishing piers.

Activity 2: Recreational Trails

Budget: \$1,000,000

Recreational trail development may include both hard surfaced and natural surfaced trails. Lake Vermilion State Park will need a comprehensive network of hiking trails for access to the lakeshore, overlooks, and other prominent features. The Mesabi Trail is planned to extend from Grand Rapids to Ely, and is planned to extend through the southern portion of Lake Vermilion State Park. Paved bicycle trail extensions or loops will need to be provided to allow bikers and other users to access the lakeshore, overlooks, and day-use areas.

Activity 3: Basic Campground Development

Budget: \$1,000,000

Campground development may include boat-in sites, rustic / hike-in campground development (no utilities except a water supply and vault toilets), and semi-modern campground development (sites accessible to motor vehicles, seasonal showers and flush toilets, some campsite electric hookups but no full water/sewer hookups). Camper cabins and yurts may also be installed with this activity.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Lake Vermilion Task Force, Breitung Township, City of Tower, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Stuntz Bay Boathouse Association, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Lake Vermilion Homeowners Association

B. Timeline Requirements

A majority of the work will be completed within 27 months. Construction of some elements may require a full 36 months due to site conditions or obstacles unknown at this time.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

Development of Lake Vermilion State Park is anticipated to occur over a period of several years. Final phasing, schedule and budget will depend on the outcome of the park master plan process and timing of fund allocations.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

BUDGET ITEM <i>(See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)</i>	AMOUNT
Phase 1 Development of Lake Vermilion State Park. Development includes professional services for design, construction administration, and other professional services. Some of this work will be done in house by MN/DNR facilities/engineering staff and will be billed by an hourly professional services rate. All other work will be done by outside consultants selected according to statute and Minnesota Management and Budget policies. Various contracts will be let for development of the park facilities to meet project staging, efficiency and scope of work needs.	\$ 3,000,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 3,000,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: <i>A portion of the 2008 bond funds for Lake Vermilion State Park are expected to be spent for some initial site development work such as highway access and limited road, day use and utility work. Some of this work will extend into FY2012.</i>	\$1,700,000	<i>Secured</i>
Funding History: M. L. 2008 Chapter 365 (sec. 2) Bond to the Department of Natural Resources for Lake Vermilion State Park Acquisition and Development	\$ 20,000,000	

Trust Fund 2010 Project Proposal

Project Title: Lake Vermillion State Park Development

Qualifications

As Director of the Division of Parks and Trails, Courtland Nelson oversees all aspects of the divisions efforts in planning, acquiring, protecting, restoring, developing and operating state parks, state trails, water recreation and other division programs. Nelson was appointed as the Director of Parks and Recreation in 2004 which recently became the division of Parks and Trails. He has served similar roles in Utah and Arizona since 1987.

Organization Description

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)'s mission is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life. The department consists of several divisions based on the state's natural resources, such as Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Lands and Minerals, Parks and Trails, and Ecological Resources and Waters, as well as four regions and four support bureaus.

The Division of Parks and Trails operates 66 state parks, 7 state recreation areas, 591 miles of surfaced state trail, 1,610 water access sites, 30 water trails and 9 state waysides throughout Minnesota. Minnesota Parks and Trails vision is to create unforgettable park, trail, and water recreation experiences that inspire the public to pass along the love for the outdoors to the current and next generation.

