

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

Subd: 04d

Project Title: Regional Park, Trail, and Connections Acquisition and Development Grants

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ 2,000,000

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

Other Non-State Funds (secured): \$ 1,760,000

Summary:

Provide grants for acquisition and development to local units of government for regional parks, regional trails, and trail connection.

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Sponsoring Organization: DNR

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Location:

Region: Statewide

Ecological Section: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Regional Park, Regional Trail, and Trail Connection Grants – Acquisition and Development

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Regional Park Grant Program, Regional Trail Grant Program, and Local Trail Connections Program provide competitive matching grants, as authorized under MN Statutes 85.019, to local governments for land acquisition and improvements related to parks and trails. The Regional Park Grant Program and the Regional Trail Grant Program are for regionally significant projects outside the seven county Metro Area. Local Trail Connections are for local projects connecting communities, trails, and parks statewide.

These programs are at the front line of the DNR's effort to partner with local communities in providing access to outdoor recreation opportunities. Connecting citizens with the outdoors through trail and park facilities enhance Minnesota's stewardship ethic and further the goals of the Department's Strategic Conservation Agenda. Trails in local communities are known to provide many social and health benefits and are highly desired. For example, connecting people from where they live with desirable locations, such as schools, businesses, neighborhoods, and recreation facilities, help promote environmentally friendly transportation alternatives and encourage reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Regional Park Grants: Local governments are struggling to acquire and develop regional park and trail land as larger land holdings are subdivided for development and competition increases for limited shore land areas. The 60% state contribution is matched by at least a 40% local contribution. The goal of this program is to help local governments acquire and develop land to meet the needs of present and future generations for natural resource based outdoor recreation. Properties acquired under this program are retained for public use in perpetuity and local government recipients are responsible for the ongoing operations and maintenance costs. This program has helped local governments acquire about 2,700 acres of regional park land since 2001.

Regional Trail Grants: Regional Trail Grants help fund projects for acquisition or development of trails of regional or statewide significance. In 2009, the Department received requests from local units of government for over \$16 million in Regional Trail grants and Regional Trail Legacy grants with \$2 million available in funding. These projects help acquire and develop longer distance trail corridors. Regional Trail grants require a 50% local match. Since 2001, this program has helped 27 communities acquire and/or develop 107 miles of regional trail.

Local Trail Connections Grants: Local Trail Connections grants fund projects for acquisition or development of local trail connections across Minnesota. These projects are primarily for shorter distance connections between residential areas, schools, businesses, parks, and trails. These projects help expand the connection between individuals and the outdoors by providing funding for local outdoor recreation infrastructure that also provides for alternative transportation, which results in decreased greenhouse gas emissions. Local Trail Connections grants require a 50% local match. Since 2001, this program has helped 75 communities fund acquisition and/or development of 69 miles of trail connections.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Grants for Regional Parks, Regional Trails, and Trail Connections

Budget: \$2,000,000

This request will provide 10 to 19 matching grants to cities and counties for acquisition and/or development of Regional Parks, Regional Trails, and Trail Connections, resulting in approximately 250-450 acres for new or expanded regional parks outside the seven county Metro Area. Two grant rounds are proposed. The local match for projects funded at the requested level would exceed \$1.7 million.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Provide 2-4 matching grants through two funding rounds for Regional Parks	Fall, 2011, Fall 2012
2. Provide 4-10 matching grants through two funding rounds for Regional Trails	Fall 2011, Fall 2012
3. Provide 10-15 matching grants through two funding rounds for Trail Connections	Fall 2011, Fall 2012
4. Grantees acquire 400-700 acres	June 2014

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Partners are local governments, primarily counties and cities. They will acquire, own, develop, and manage the park or trail land. They will provide match dollars as well as covering costs of appraisals, any required archeological/historical surveys, permits, etc. They will also assume all operations and maintenance costs.

B. Timeline Requirements

This is an ongoing program. The request is for two annual grant solicitations in the spring of 2011 and 2012 with agreements completed in the fall of 2011 and 2012 and projects completed by June 2014.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The long-term strategy for the grant programs is to provide an incentive to local governments outside the Metro Area to acquire significant tracts of land suitable for providing a range of natural resource based outdoor recreation activities. Since 2001, previous grants under these programs have helped local governments acquire about 2,700 acres of regional parks and acquire and/or develop 176 miles of regional trails or trail connections. Requests for grant assistance have far exceeded the available funds.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET - 3years

BUDGET ITEM <i>(See list of Eligible & Non-Eligible Costs, p. 13)</i>	AMOUNT
Additional Budget Items: The Department of Natural Resources will award 10 to 19 matching grants to local units of government for acquisition and/or development of Regional Parks, Regional Trails, and Trail Eonnections resulting in approximately 250-450 acres for new or expanded regional parks outside the seven county Metro Area.	\$ 2,000,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 2,000,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Regional Park grants require a 40% cash match, and Regional Trail and Trail Connections grants require a 50% cash match to provide matching funds. These funds will come form non-state funds from local units of government.	\$ 1,760,000	<i>Indicate: Secured or Pending</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: <i>Indicate any additional state cash \$ (e.g. bonding, other grants) to be spent on the project during the funding period. For each individual sum, list out the source of the funds, the amount, and indicate whether the funds are secured or pending approval.</i>	\$ -	<i>Indicate: Secured or Pending</i>

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Project Manager: Ronald Potter
Affiliation: Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Trails
Telephone Number: (651) 259-5632
Title: Recreation Systems Manager

Ronald Potter has worked for the Minnesota DNR for over 35 years in various positions throughout the state. Currently, he is the Recreation Systems Manager for the Parks and Trails Division. He administers the Division's policies, programs, grants and resource management functions for an extensive, integrated outdoor recreation base including state parks, state trails, grant-in-aid, off-highway vehicles, water accesses, water trails, recreational areas, forest campgrounds, forest trails, and other programs for strategic statewide program development, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement. Ronald Potter oversees a variety of professional program staff.

Organization Description

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Division's vision is to create unforgettable park, trail, and water recreation experiences that inspire the public to pass along the love for the outdoor to the next generation. More information on the Minnesota DNR can be found at www.dnr.state.mn.us.

