



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

## M.L. 2018 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

---

**Today's Date:** December 8, 2017

**Date of Next Status Update Report:** January 31, 2019

**Date of Work Plan Approval:**

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2022

**Does this submission include an amendment request?** No

---

**PROJECT TITLE:** Develop Mesabi Trail Segment From County Road 88 to Ely

**Project Manager:** Robert Manzoline

**Organization:** St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority

**College/Department/Division:**

**Mailing Address:** 111 Station 44 Road

**City/State/Zip Code:** Eveleth, MN 55734

**Telephone Number:** 218-744-2653

**Email Address:** bmanzoline@rrauth.com

**Web Address:** mesabitrail.com

---

**Location:** The project is located within Morse Township located westerly of the City of Ely. The project is part of the larger Mesabi Trail located in Northeast MN extending 155 miles from Grand Rapids to Ely.

---

**Total Project Budget:** \$600,000

**Amount Spent:** \$0

**Balance:** \$600,000

---

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2018, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

**Appropriation Language:**

## **I. PROJECT STATEMENT:**

**General:** Running from the Mississippi to the Boundary Waters, the Mesabi Trail is a planned 10' wide, 155 mile-long paved trail that serves as an alternate transportation corridor and recreational facility for non-motorized use namely pedestrian, bike, ski, and horses and in designated areas, winter snowmobile use. The trail will connect twenty-eight (28) communities across two counties starting in Grand Rapids and ending in Ely. Approximately 126 miles of the trail has been constructed since its inception in 1996. See the attached map for locations of the completed trail, trail under construction and those areas yet to be built. The Mesabi Trail is owned and maintained by the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (RRA). The annual trail maintenance budget is \$395,000. The trail has been constructed in cooperation with local landowners, local governments and State and Federal lands with no eminent domain proceedings.

The Mesabi Trail is constructed in accordance with the MN Dot Bikeway Facility Design Manual. The trail connects communities, provides a transportation corridor, promotes healthy lifestyles and is ADA compliant. The trail traverses multiple landscapes, natural settings, state parks, state and county and federal forests, lakes and streams. The trail travels through many cultural settings that are interpreted including Native American, European settlers, logging era, former iron mining era and current iron mining operations. The trail currently connects 24 communities with yearly users exceeding 200,000 per year of which, 34% arrive from outside of the northeast MN region. The trail is designated non-motorized with the exception of certain trail segments designated for winter snowmobiling. Thirty (30) miles of the trail are designated for snowmobile use.

Trail is constructed through a variety of natural settings and is carefully located to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to waters, wetlands and wildlife. The trail does pass through wildlife areas designated as critical habitat for threatened or endangered species such as the Northern Long Eared Bat and Canadian Lynx, however; proposed trail corridors are vigorously reviewed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, MN DNR Fish & Wildlife, MN DNR Waters, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and local agencies. In addition, designated land use, property ownership, cultural resources, farmlands, recreational areas and other elements are reviewed, changed or approved by the National Environmental Protection Agency, Minnesota Environmental Protection Agency, MN State Historic Preservation Office and local agencies.

Locally, meaning from the City of Tower to the City of Ely, the only existing public transportation corridor is Hwy 1/169 used by vehicular traffic and for the most part, the road shoulders are gravel, narrow and not conducive to pedestrian or bicycle travel. This project will create an off-road, non-motorized transportation corridor in keeping with existing transportation plans and systems. There is also a high tourism potential making connections to the International Wolf Center, North American Bear Center, Bearhead State Park, Vermilion State Park, Lake Vermillion, Soudan State Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

**Specific:** The County Road 88 toward Ely Segment (hereafter known as the "Project") is a planned 3.5 mile long, 10 feet wide bituminous paved surface with 2 foot gravel shoulders. The Project will begin at the intersection of St. Louis County Road (SLC) 88 and State Highway 1/169 and then traverse easterly approximately 3.5 miles terminating and connecting to the existing Mesabi Trail in Ely. (termination point is approximately 2 blocks west of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave & Sheridan Street seen in yellow on attached map) Part of the Project will likely be located within the existing Highway 1/169 road right-of-way; however, we continue to seek an off-road alignment using an abandon railroad grade or other location. The Project will connect to the forthcoming Mesabi Trail at County Road 88.

## **II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**First Update January 31, 2019**

**Second Update June 30, 2019**

**Third Update January 31, 2020**

**Final Update June 30, 2020**

**III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

**ACTIVITY 1: Environmental and Permitting**

**Description:** Environmental work needed to comply with the Federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State of Minnesota Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) involving those compliance agencies namely the Federal Departments of Environmental Protection, Highway Administration & Fish & Wildlife and the Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation & Historic Preservation.

Other oversight agencies that will become involved include the Federal Army Corps of Engineers, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Local Board of Soil and Water Conservation.

The environmental work will be supported by engineering work to locate alternative trail routes, survey cultural resource locations, survey wetland boundary's, establish property lines and identify land ownership.

Geotechnical work may occur if unsuitable soils or ledge rock is encountered.

Work will be performed by a person or firm accredited by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) hereafter known as "Consultant". Consultant will perform work needed to comply with NEPA and MEPA documenting trail route alternatives, cultural resource identification, wetland delineation & mitigation, endangered species, social impacts, economic impacts, state waters impacts, land use (4f) and other. Consultant will further evaluate and assure compliance with local ordinances, planning, zoning and codes.

In the event wetlands or designated waters cannot be avoided and a disturbance takes place, impacted wetlands will be replaced at a ratio of 1.5:1 (1.5 = new wetlands created; 1 = wetlands impacted) Wetland replacement is overseen by BWSR and typically performed by purchasing wetland credits from the MN State Wetland Bank. Cost for wetland credits do vary, however; Mesabi Trail has acquired wetland credits ranging in cost from \$32,670 to \$43,560 per one acre.

Environmental costs are estimated to be 4% of the total project cost.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$36,000**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Agency approvals and permits from US Army Corp of Engineers, US Fish & Wildlife, MN State Historic Preservation Office, MN Department of Natural Resources, Others	June 2019

**ACTIVITY 2: Right-of-Way Acquisition**

**Description:** Acquire right-of-way in sufficient width for trail construction by way of easements, leases or purchase. The minimum right-of-way width is forty feet. Land purchase is not anticipated but if needed, will follow the LCCMR land procurement process. Right-of-way work includes land surveys, legal descriptions, title searches and recording. Majority of this work will be performed by a registered land surveyor and attorney. It is understood attorney and appraisal fees are not eligible for grant reimbursement.

Right-of-way acquisition costs are estimated to be 2% of the total project cost.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$18,000**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Acquire approximately 18,500 lineal feet by 40 feet wide or 17 acres of trail right-of-way from private and public landowners for trail construction.	June 2019

**ACTIVITY 3:** Engineering survey, design, plans & construction management

**Description:** Engineering will be done in accordance with the MN Dot Standards for Bicycle Trails. Engineering work begins with route(s) identification and support of environmental work and then to more specific survey work once a preferred trail route alternative is selected. The project engineer will design the trail in accordance with MN Dot, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ASHTO standards while taking into account on-site conditions such as waterways, wetlands, hills, valleys and other features to determine the final trail location and design.

Engineer , working in cooperation with the environmental contractor, will provided a Federal Project Memorandum and construction plan and specification in accordance with and acceptable to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and MN Dot, Office of State Aid. Bidding documents and contracts will be administered by MN Dot. Engineer will perform construction management, on-site inspections, testing oversight and other functions in accordance with FHWA standards.

Engineering costs are estimated to be 14% of the total project cost.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$126,000**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Support for Environmental work	June 2019
2. Plans & specifications	December 2019
3. Construction management	October 2020
3. Final inspection and project documentation	December 2020

**ACTIVITY 4:** Trail construction

**Description:** Construct a 10’ wide bituminous surfaced trail approximately 18,500 lineal feet in length built in accordance with the MN Dot and FHWA construction standards. Trail construction will include 2’ wide gravel shoulders, base preparation, grading, gravel base, ditch ways, slopes, culverts, fencing, signing, landscaping, seeding and all else necessary for a complete trail.

Construction will be performed by a licensed and bonded contractor. Public bidding, contractor selection and contracts will performed by MN DOT with approval from FHWA. A Disadvantages Business Enterprise (DBE) goal will be established by MN DOT for DBE participation in the construction work. Federal prevailing wage and benefit rates will be paid to all persons working on this project.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$420,000**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Construct approximately 18,500 lineal feet (~3.5 miles) of bituminous surface trail.	October 2020

**First Update January 31, 2019**

**Second Update June 30, 2019**

**Third Update January 31, 2020**

**Fourth Update June 30, 2020**

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021**

**Sixth Update June 30, 2021**

**Seventh Update January 31, 2022**

**Final Update June 30, 2022**

#### **IV. DISSEMINATION**

**Description:** the Mesabi Trail news and updates are provided through a variety of media, marketing and publications. Web site is: Mesabitrail.com. The following are some of the groups & organizations that disseminate Mesabi Trail information and typically include updates of newly completed trail segments and activities:

- Club Mesabi (10,000 maps & web site)
- Iron Range Tourism (30,000 brochures & web site)
- MN Office of Tourism
- amperes radio
- Parks & Trails, Home & Away, other private magazines
- Over 200,000 trail users per year
- Great River Energy/Mesabi Trail annual tour
- Named by the Star Tribune as “Best of Minnesota” in year 2013
- Named by Bicycle Magazine as” top 10 in the country”
- Information distributed at over 70 locations including Chambers of Commerce, visitor centers, businesses
- MN DOT/Pedal MN bikeways map
- “Second best trail in Midwest USA” Dubuque Iowa, 2017

First Update January 31, 2019

Second Update June 30, 2019

Third Update January 31, 2020

Fourth Update June 30, 2020

Fifth Update January 31, 2021

Sixth Update June 30, 2021

Seventh Update January 31, 2022

Final Update June 30, 2022

**V. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:** See attached budget spreadsheet

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:** construction of approximately 18,500 LF bituminous surface trail.

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:**

**Total Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours: N/A	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE:
--	------------------------------

**Total Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours: 8,000	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE: 3.9
--	----------------------------------

**B. Other Funds:**

SOURCE OF AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS	Amount Proposed	Amount Spent	Status and Timeframe
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>			
Federal TA	\$ 300,000	\$ 0	Secured, expires 2020
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>			
none	\$	\$	
<b>Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b>			

none	\$	\$	
<b>Other Funding History:</b>			
none	\$	\$	

**VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

**A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding**

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
None			

**B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
none			

**VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:** this is a stand-alone project not needing additional work. No results, findings or other unanswered questions will result from this project.

**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- The project is for 4 years, will begin on July 1, 2018, and end on June 30, 2022.
- Periodic project status update reports will be submitted January 31 and June 30 of each year.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2022.

**IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:**

- A. Budget Spreadsheet
- B. Visual Component or Map
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements
- E. Research Addendum

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**  
**M.L. 2018 Budget Spreadsheet**



<b>Project Title:</b> Develop Mesabi Trail Segment From County Road 88 to Ely			
<b>Legal Citation:</b>			
<b>Project Manager:</b> Robert Manzoline			
<b>Organization:</b> St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority			
<b>M.L. 2018 ENRTF Appropriation:</b> \$600,000			
<b>Project Length and Completion Date:</b> 4 years, June 30, 2022			
<b>Date of Report:</b> 02/16/2018			

<b>ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>			
<b><i>Professional Service Contracts</i></b>			
Environmental work and permitting prior to construction in accordance with Federal NEPA & EPA; and Minnesota MPCA, SHIPO, DNR; and Local jurisdictions	\$36,000	\$0	\$36,000
Right-of-way aquisition for trail easements, leases, fee ownership	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
Engineering for trail design, plans, specifications, bidding and construction administration	\$126,000	\$0	\$126,000
<b>Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000</b>			
Bituminous surface trail construction ~3.5 miles	\$420,000	\$0	\$420,000
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>



**Unfunded**

Wildlife Management Area to Lamppa's Corner	\$600,000
County Road 26 to Tower	\$3,100,000
County Road 128 to Eagles Nest	\$650,000
Wolf Creek to Highway 169	\$950,000
County Road 88 to Ely	\$600,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,900,000</b>

**Recent LCCMR Funding**

2017	\$2,269,000
2016	\$1,200,000
2015	\$1,000,000
2014	\$1,000,000
2018 LCCMR Request	\$600,000

**2017 Construction**  
**Highway 169 Underpass to County Road 88 - 3 miles**  
**2015 LCCMR \$1,000,000**

**2020 Construction**  
**Wolf Creek to Hwy 169 Underpass - 2.5 miles**  
**Unfunded \$950,000**

**2019 Construction**  
**Highway 169 Relocation - 3 miles**  
**Legacy \$750,000**

**2019 Construction**  
**County Road 88 to Ely - 3 miles**  
**\$300,000 Federal (FY2020)**  
**\$600,000 LCCMR Application (FY 2018)**  
**Total = \$900,000**

**2016-2017 Construction**  
**Eagles Nest to Wolf Creek - 8 miles**  
**Federal TAP \$900,000**  
**2014 LCCMR \$1,000,000**  
**Legacy \$600,000**

**2020 Construction**  
**CR 128 to Eagles Nest Town Hall - 2.5 miles**  
**Unfunded \$650,000**

**Possible 2019 Construction**  
**County Road 26 To Tower - 6 miles**  
**Unfunded \$3,100,000**

**2019 Construction**  
**Wildlife Management Area to Lamppa's Corner - 3 miles**  
**2017 LCCMR \$738,000**  
**Unfunded \$600,000**

**2019 Construction**  
**Embarrass to County Road 26 - 6.5 miles**  
**Current Funding:**  
**Legacy \$1,800,000**

**2018 Construction**  
**Wildlife Management Area - 2 miles**  
**Floating Trail across 3/4 mile Wetland and Trail**  
**2017 LCCMR \$1,031,000**

**2018 Construction (Subject to DNR Easement)**  
**Highway 135 North to Wildlife Management Area - 5 miles**  
**2016 LCCMR \$1,200,000**

**2017 Construction**  
**Biwabik to McKinley - 5.5 miles**  
**2017 LCCMR \$500,000**  
**Federal TAP \$1,100,000**

**Legend**

- Biwabik to McKinley
- CR 128 to Eagles Nest Town Hall
- Highway 169 Relocation (~3 miles)
- Highway 169 Underpass to County Road 88 (~3 miles)
- County Road 88 to Ely (~3 miles)
- Highway 135 to North of WMA (~3.5 miles)
- Dock and Bridge
- North of WMA to Highway 21 (~3 miles)
- Hwy 21 to County Road 26 (~7 miles)
- Wolf Creek to Hwy 169 Underpass
- County Road 26 to Tower (~6 miles)
- Existing Mesabi Trail
- Roads



