



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2019 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

**Today's Date:** November 29, 2018

**Date of Next Status Update Report:** March 1, 2020

**Date of Work Plan Approval:**

**Project Completion Date:** March 1, 2022

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

**PROJECT TITLE:** Making the Superior Hiking Trail's Big Bad Five Beautiful Again

**Project Manager:** Denny Caneff, Executive Director

**Organization:** Superior Hiking Trail Association

**College/Department/Division:** N/A

**Mailing Address:** 731 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 2

**City/State/Zip Code:** Two Harbors, MN 55616

**Telephone Number:** 218-834-2700

**Email Address:** [dcaneff@superiorhiking.org](mailto:dcaneff@superiorhiking.org)

**Web Address:** [www.superiorhiking.org](http://www.superiorhiking.org)

**Location:** Northeastern MN (Lake Superior North Shore)

**Total Project Budget:** \$191,000

**Amount Spent:** \$0

**Balance:** \$191,000

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2019, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

**Appropriation Language:**

## **I. PROJECT STATEMENT:**

The Superior Hiking Trail is showing its middle age. That's due in part to heavy use but it's also because the Trail was initially built before sustainable trail building standards were understood. Moreover, the Trail was routed in places where, from a resource protection standpoint, it shouldn't have gone. Our project intends to repair and renew the Trail in five "worst of the worst" sections (totaling nearly 30 miles) that make the Trail safer for users; reduce or eliminate the environmental impact of upwards of 100,000 annual users of a natural footpath; and create a new 4-mile section of hiking trail near Grand Marais that moves the SHT off a snowmobile trail.

In a targeted conditions assessment of about 80 miles (around one fourth) of the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) in the fall of 2017, the Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA) found five sections totaling nearly 30 miles in need of fundamental, urgent repair. We've come to call these sections "the Big Bad Five," which speaks to their seriousness and urgency. What makes them serious and urgent? They all show slope or gully erosion or damage to wetlands; there are built structures in these sections that are now or will be dangerous to trail users; and all these sections are popular with the public (which explains to some extent why they are more worn out than other parts of the SHT).

The Superior Hiking Trail was the mid-80s brainchild of North Shore business owners and resource agency officials to create a natural footpath on the ridgeline from Grand Marais to Two Harbors. As the Trail grew in popularity, ambitions for its final shape grew as well. Just a year ago, the Association installed a bridge over the Red River, south of Jay Cooke State Park. That bridge was the missing link to making the SHT a 310-mile long continuous footpath from the MN-WI border to the Canadian border. The SHT is a nationally renowned hiking and trail running destination.

A 2018 LCCMR ENRTF grant allows the SHTA to contract with trail experts in the summer and fall of 2018 who will recommend detailed and specific trail repairs on the Big Bad Five. With a 2019 grant from LCCMR, we can get the work done on the SHT that these trail experts recommend. But we don't want to simply fix up old problems; we also intend to use a portion of this grant to create a new 4-mile section of the SHT, north of Grand Marais, that restores an abandoned section of the SHT, brings the Trail to Sawtooth Bluff and its vistas, and removes the SHT from the North Shore State (snowmobile) Trail for about 2 miles.

### **Project Goals:**

- Make the SHT safer for trail users in the 30 miles that are most worn out or damaged.
- Reduce or eliminate erosion and wetland damage caused by overuse or poor trail design, thereby protecting Lake Superior basin streams from sediment pollution.
- Make anew a section of the SHT nearby Grand Marais by creating a new segment that takes the hiking trail off a snowmobile trail.

### **How Goals Will Be Achieved:**

- By following the recommendations of trail experts outside the SHTA organization (whose services were purchased with LCCMR grant support).
- By contracting with highly experienced and nationally renowned contractors who will, using aforementioned recommendations, design and build trail that is resilient and safe and will conserve and protect soil and water.
- By ensuring quality control throughout the trail design and construction process.

### **Why This Project Should Be Done:**

- In its most popular sections, the SHT is well worn and in some cases dangerous to trail users.

- The current state of the 30 miles of trail targeted by this project (the “Big Bad Five”) is such that the soil and water resources of the North Shore will continue to be damaged unless they are protected and made more resilient for inevitable climate change.
- A gem in the hiking trail community, the SHT is considered one of Minnesota’s finest recreational amenities.

**II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**First Update March 1, 2020**

**Second Update September 1, 2020**

**Third Update March 1, 2021**

**Fourth Update September 1, 2021**

**Final Report between project end (November 2021) and March 2022**

**III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

**ACTIVITY 1 Title: Restore and Renew Dangerous and Resource-Damaging Sections of the SHT**

**Description:**

These sections include the well-worn SHT loops at the Split Rock River and Bean and Bear lakes; a new section of trail north of Gooseberry Falls State Park; and muddy stretches of the SHT between Britton Peak and Oberg Mountain; and between Oberg Mountain and the Lutsen ski area. The objective is to repair the “worst of the worst” parts of these sections – those that endanger trail users and that show the most ecological damage.

**ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$170,000**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. <i>Up to 20 of the most dangerous built structures (e.g. stairways, small bridges) are rebuilt or replaced.</i>	October 2021
2. <i>Up to 1.5 miles of the most erosive or degraded segments are repaired and renewed.</i>	October 2020
3. <i>Up to 5,000 feet of board walk is replaced or built anew.</i>	October 2021

**First Update March 1, 2020**

**Second Update September 1, 2020**

**Third Update March 1, 2021**

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**ACTIVITY 2 Title: Bring Back a “Lost” Section of the SHT Near Grant Marais**

**Description:**

In the early days of the SHT, the Trail followed a high ridge that took it to Sawtooth Bluff, near Grand Marais, and its fetching Lake Superior overlook. For reasons lost to time, that section was abandoned in the early 1990s and the Trail was routed in part onto the North Shore State (snowmobile) Trail. That land is now owned by the City of Grand Marais, which has invited us to propose a new route for the SHT as part of its master plan for that property. Our objective is to restore the SHT to this original route (about four miles) and improve trail users’ experience in that area -- a natural footpath, intended solely for hiking, with stunning vistas and towering pines.

**First Update March 1, 2020**

**Second Update September 1, 2020**

**Third Update March 1, 2021**

**Fourth Update September 1, 2021**

**Final Report between project end (November 2021) and March 2022**

**ACTIVITY 2 ENRTF BUDGET: \$21,000**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<i>1. Approval for the restored route and any permits needed will be acquired from public landowners.</i>	June 2020
<i>2. The new (restored) route will be marked (“flagged”) and mapped via GPS.</i>	June 2021
<i>3. Preliminary tread building will be completed on up to 25% of the new trail.</i>	November 2021

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**IV. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:**

Dissemination of progress on our project will be continuous and comprehensive. The area’s community newspapers (Cook County News Herald and Lake County News Chronicle) enjoy covering developments on the SHT, and they will keep tabs on each phase of this project. Even the regional publication Star Tribune, which ran a six-part series about the SHT in the summer of 2018, will pay attention to this project. Our own media include Instagram, Facebook, a print newspaper and an e-newsletter. We will use all of these media to mark and publicize the project as it proceeds. (All these media can be found at [www.superiorhiking.org](http://www.superiorhiking.org) or via the search function of these platforms).

The SHT is affiliated with the North Country Trail, a national scenic trail running from New York to North Dakota. Its association has a quarterly publication that will track project developments too. In addition, the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota is an enthusiastic supporter of the SHT and will no doubt highlight these developments (and the ENRTF as the funding source) in its publications.

We will strictly adhere to publication requirements for grant recipients of ENRTF funds. The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines.

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**V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION:**

**A. Personnel and Capital Expenditures**

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:**

N/A

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:**

Though we are not a state agency with “classified staff,” SHTA intends to backfill the time of our full-time trail operations director devoted to this project by assigning those duties to the SHTA executive director; SHTA trail development director; and a small amount to outside contractors (who are not supported by grant funds).

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

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 260 (10 hrs./mo. X 26 mo.)	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 0.19
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**Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Contract Personnel Hours for entire duration of project:	Divide total contract hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE:
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This number is extremely difficult to estimate. While we will certainly use contractors (\$121,000 of our budget is earmarked for contracted services), most contractors provide a lump-sum amount for their services, or at best provide a daily rate that often includes materials, travel and profit, without segregating a labor rate.

**VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

**A. Partners outside of project manager’s organization receiving ENRTF funding**

None

**B. Partners outside of project manager’s organization NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
MN DNR		Land owner	Land management
U.S. Forest Service		Landowner	Land management
City of Grand Marais		Landowner	Land planning and mgnt
Lake County		Landowner	Land management

**VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

SHTA will oversee and manage this project, working with competent and reputable contractors to carry out the work. This project takes place in the context of the launching of our Trail Renewal Program that will prioritize trail renewal through careful planning by SHTA staff and judicious use of volunteers.

LCCMR funding will be strictly put to trail restoration work; management and oversight expenses will largely be SHTA’s responsibility. An LCCMR investment in these trail sections should last for at least 20 years and so no continued funding for the work completed *by this grant* will be needed. We fully expect that the “Big Bad Five” will require more restoration work than this LCCMR grant could support. Trail renewal is ongoing and unrelenting, and SHTA will seek funding from all sources at our disposal, for the entire Trail.

**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- Project status update reports will be submitted March 1 and September 1 each year of the project.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between the end of the project (November 2021) and March 2022.

**IX. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Competitive Bid Process for Proposals: We will circulate a Request for Proposals for contractors we may engage to carry out the work described here. That RFP will be posted to our web site and Facebook page. It will be shared with “sister” trail organizations Ice Age Trail Alliance and North Country Trail Association, both for their distribution and for their interest as potential contractors. In addition, the RFP will be posted at the web site of the National Trail Builders Association, and the RFP will be submitted to the Minnesota Dept. of Administration’s Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List.

Travel Expenses: We are aware of and fully intend to follow the Guidance for Allowable Expenses and adhere to the directives of the Commissioner’s Plan, as referred to and linked to in the Guidance.

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

**A. Budget Spreadsheet**

Attached

**B. Visual Component or Map**

Attached

**C. Parcel List Spreadsheet**

N/A

**D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements**

N/A

**E. Research Addendum**

N/A

Attachment A:  
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
 M.L. 2019 Budget Spreadsheet



Legal Citation:  
 Project Manager: Denny Caneff  
 Project Title: ENRFT ID #272-GH Making the Superior Hiking Trail's "Big Bad Five" Beautiful Again  
 Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association  
 Project Budget: \$191,000  
 Project Length and Completion Date: 26 months (July 2019 - November 2021)  
 Today's Date: November 29, 2018

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>			
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b>	\$ 26,250	\$ -	\$ 26,250
Wages of SHTA trail operations director (0.19 FTE --monthly salary of \$4,167 x 26 months = \$108,242) (\$21,000)(x%Fringe)			
Trail operations director benefits (25% of grant funds devoted to trail ops director wages) (\$5,250)(x%Fringe)			
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</b>			
Trail building and construction contractors (over 3 years). RFP's will be distributed and vendor	\$ 121,000	\$ -	\$ 121,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies</b>			
Safety equipt and tools for volunteers	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000
Supplies for trail construction: lumber, hardware, concrete, rented tools	\$ 35,000		
<b>Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Fee Title Acquisition</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Professional Services for Acquisition</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Printing</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b>			
Travel expenses in MN for SHTA staff (3,500 miles @ .545/mile IRS rate = \$1,910; \$1,200 lodging; \$640 meals, per State of MN regulations	\$ 3,750	\$ -	\$ 3,750
<b>Other</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	\$ 191,000	\$ -	\$ 156,000

OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
<b>Non-State:</b> SHTA memberships, donations, non-state grants	pending	\$ 42,000	\$ -	\$ 42,000
<b>State:</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
In kind: Volunteer time (1,200 volunteer hrs. x \$20/hr.)	pending	\$ 240,000	\$ -	\$ 240,000

PAST AND CURRENT ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
<b>Current appropriation:</b> M. L. 2018, Chapter 214, Article 4, Subd. #09f	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Past appropriations:</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -