



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: June 5, 2019

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2020

Does this submission include an amendment request? No

PROJECT TITLE: Mesabi Trail Extensions

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

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Web Address:

Location: Breitung & Eagles Nest Townships located between the cities of Tower & Ely; and Embarrass & Kugler Townships located between the cities of Aurora and Tower; and Biwabik Township located between the cities of McKinley and Biwabik all of which are located within St. Louis County in northeast MN.

Total Project Budget: \$3,000,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$3,000,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g

Appropriation Language:

\$3,000,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority for environmental assessment, permitting, right-of-way easements or other acquisition as needed, and engineering for and construction of four trail segments beginning and ending at the following approximate locations: Darwin Meyers Wildlife Management Area to County Road 21, Embarrass to Kugler, County Road 128 to the Eagles Nest Town Hall, and Wolf Creek to the Highway 169 underpass.

I. PROJECT STATEMENT: the Project Statement that was included within our 2019 project proposal had a budget of \$5.15 million. LCCMR has recommended funding in the amount of \$3.0 million thus requiring a reduced project and a change to the Project Statement reflecting a reduction of work that will occur on the CR-26 to Tower segment.

The CR 26 to Tower segment funding will be combined with a Legacy Grant (\$1.8 million) to construct the Embarrass to Kugler trail segment for a distance of 8.5 miles. This change will make the most efficient use of funds and further the trail construction between Embarrass and Tower as was the intent of the proposed project.

I. PROJECT STATEMENT Our request is for funding to build the trail segments known as Darwin Meyers WMA to CR 21 – 3 miles; and Embarrass to Kugler – 7.35 miles; and CR 128 to Eagles Nest Town Hall – 2.5 miles; and Wolf Creek to Hwy 169 Underpass – 2.5 miles.

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. 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, and is funded locally and by users. The trail has been constructed in cooperation with landowners, local governments and State and Federal agencies with no eminent domain proceedings. The LCCMR has been our solid partner as we proceed to finish this premier trail in Minnesota.

The Mesabi Trail is constructed in accordance with the MN DOT Bikeway Facility Design. 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. It is truly a statewide asset.

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

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2022

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1 Title: Darwin Meyers WMA to CR 21

Description: this project will involve environmental, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction work to build a bituminous surface trail in accordance with the MN DOT Bikeway Facility Design manual. The trail will begin at a point at the north end of the Darwin Meyers Wildlife Management Area at the intersection of Palo Tia Road (CR 558) and Soini Road; thence northerly following and CR 558 for a distance of approximately 2.25 miles to the intersection of CR 588 and CR 21; thence easterly following and CR 21 for a distance of approximately 0.75 miles to a north branch of the Embarrass River located within NE1/4 of NE1/4, Sec. 26, T60, R15 there ending. Total length is approximately 3.0 miles.

The point of beginning connects to the existing Mesabi Trail that leads to the Giants Ridge Recreation Area, the City of Aurora and the City of Biwabik.

The end point is known as “Embarrass” which is the central gathering point for Embarrass Township residents, however; Embarrass is not an incorporated city. The end point will connect to the proposed “Embarrass to Kugler” trail segment further described within Activity 2 of this workplan.

Several Public Meetings were conducted for this trail segment in Embarrass Township and White Township. Plan changes were made following the meetings and revised plans were presented to the public and their respective Boards. The Embarrass Township Board and the White Township Board have approved the proposed plan and project.

The environmental work for this segment is complete with approval received from the Army Corps of Engineers, MN Board of Water and Soil Resources and local jurisdictions. Wetland mitigations occurred as part of this project.

Right-of-way acquisition is ongoing.

Preliminary engineering work has begun and a preliminary estimate of construction costs has been developed.

It is understood project costs incurred will not be eligible for reimbursement under this grant until a grant agreement has been executed.

ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$700,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Engineering, environmental work and wetland mitigations	July 2018
2. Right-of-way acquisition	December 2019
3. Construction	October 2020

First Update March 1, 2020

Second Update September 1, 2020

Third Update March 1, 2021

Fourth Update September 1, 2021

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2022

ACTIVITY 2 Title: Embarrass to Kugler

Description: this project will involve environmental, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction work to build a bituminous surface trail in accordance with the MN DOT Bikeway Facility Design manual.

As stated within the Project Statement, due to a reduction of funds requested, this activity is amended from the 2019 Main Proposal. It is our intention to combine this activity with an ongoing project funded by a MN Legacy grant in the amount of \$1.8 million dollars. The Legacy grant is funding a trail segment known as Embarrass to Sauna Road, a distance of 4 miles. Combining Activity 2 with this project will allow the trail to extend an additional 3.35 miles ending at Kugler. Combining these projects is an efficient use of both funding sources.

The Embarrass to Kugler trail is further described as follows:

The trail will begin at the north branch of the Embarrass River located within NE1/4 of NE1/4, Sec. 26, T60, R15; thence easterly and northerly following CR 21 for a distance of approximately 2.4 miles to the intersection of Wahlsten Road (CR 26); thence westerly along CR 26 for a distance of approximately 0.75 miles to the intersection of Sauna Road N. (CR 627); thence westerly along CR 627 for a distance of approximately 0.3 miles to the SW1/4 of SE1/4, Sec. 11, T60, R15; thence westerly across forested land for a distance of approximately 0.5 miles to the intersection with the abandon DM&IR RR grade located within the NW1/4, NE1/4, Sec. 15, T60, R15; thence northwesterly along the abandon DM&IR RR grade for a distance of approximately 1.75 miles to the SE1/4 of SW1/4, Sec. 33, T61, R15; thence northeasterly for a distance of approximately 0.4 miles through forested lands to Benson Road (CR 364) within the NW1/4 of SW1/4, Sec. 33, T61, R15; thence northeasterly along CR 364 for a distance of approximately 0.25 miles to the intersection of CR 26 (Wahlsten Road) located within the SW1/4 of NW1/4, Sec. 33, T61, R15; thence northwesterly along CR 26 for a distance of approximately 1.5 miles to the intersection of State Highway 135 there ending. Total length is approximately 7.35 miles.

The point of beginning will connect to the proposed "Darwin Meyers WMA to CR 21" segment described under Activity 1 of this workplan.

The end point is 4.5 miles south of the City of Tower. We are working to secure funds and planning for this next segment.

Public Meetings were conducted for this trail segment in Embarrass Township and Kugler Township. Plan changes were made following the meetings and revised plans were presented to the public and their respective Boards. The Embarrass Township Board and the Kugler Township Board have approved the proposed plan and project.

The environmental work for this segment is ongoing with wetland impacts and mitigation plans submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers for their consideration. A cultural resource review is ongoing.

Right-of-way acquisition is ongoing.

Preliminary engineering work has begun and a preliminary estimate of construction costs has been developed.

It is understood project costs incurred will not be eligible for reimbursement under this grant until a grant agreement has been executed.

ACTIVITY 2 ENRTF BUDGET: \$950,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Engineering, environmental work and wetland mitigations	February 2019

2. Right-of-way acquisition	May 2019
3. Construction	October 2019

First Update March 1, 2020

Second Update September 1, 2020

Third Update March 1, 2021

Fourth Update September 1, 2021

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2022

ACTIVITY 3 Title: CR 128 to Eagles Nest Town Hall

Description: this project will involve environmental, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction work to build a bituminous surface trail in accordance with the MN DOT Bikeway Facility Design manual. The trail will begin at a point 0.5 miles west of the intersection of CR 128 and State Highway 169 located within the SE1/4 of SW1/4, Sec. 15, T62, R14 hereafter referred to as the “point of beginning”.

In accordance with NEPA, we are currently conducting a down select process identifying the preferred route alternative evaluating the social, economic and environmental factors from the point of beginning to Eagles Nest Town Hall. The Eagles Nest Township Board has been involved with this process. Public meetings have not yet occurred and will take place once the alternative route(s) analysis is complete. Two routes have been identified and entitled Route A and Route B further described as follows:

Route A: from the point of beginning thence easterly for a distance of approximately 0.50 miles to CR 128 (Bearhead Road) located within the SW1/4 of SE1/4 Sec. 15, T62, R14 thence southerly and following CR 128 for a distance of approximately 2.0 miles to the Eagles Nest Township, Town Hall located within the SW1/4 of SW1/4, Sec. 23, T62, R14 there ending. Total length is approximately 2.5 miles.

Route B: from the point of beginning thence easterly for a distance of approximately 0.25 miles to Trygg Road (CR 599) located within the SE1/4 of SW1/4, Sec. 15, T62, R14; thence southerly along CR 599 for a distance of approximately 0.25 miles to a point located within the SW1/4 of SE1/4, Sec. 15, T62, R14 ; thence southeasterly through forested land for a distance of approximately 1.50 miles to a point intersecting CR 128 located within the SE1/4 of NE1/4, Sec. 22, T62, R14; thence southerly and following CR 126 for a distance of approximately 0.25 miles to the Eagles Nest Township, Town Hall located within the SW1/4 of SW1/4, Sec. 23, T62, R14 there ending. Total length is approximately 2.25 miles.

The point of beginning will connect to the planned Mesabi Trail segment now being developed from Vermillion State Park

The end point will connect to the existing Mesabi Trail located between the Eagles Nest Township, Town Hall and Wolf Creek.

The environmental work has begun with the route alternative analysis. Additional environmental work will be performed in accordance with NEPA and MEPA once the preferred alternative route as been selected.

Right-of-way acquisition has not begun.

Preliminary engineering work has begun in support of environmental work.

It is understood project costs incurred will not be eligible for reimbursement under this grant until a grant agreement has been executed.

ACTIVITY 3 ENRTF BUDGET: \$750,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Engineering, environmental work and wetland mitigations	December 2020
2. Right-of-way acquisition	June 2021
3. Construction	October 2021

First Update March 1, 2020

Second Update September 1, 2020

Third Update March 1, 2021

Fourth Update September 1, 2021

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2022

ACTIVITY 4 Title: Wolf Creek to Highway 169 Underpass

Description: this project will involve environmental, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction work to build a bituminous surface trail in accordance with the MN DOT Bikeway Facility Design manual. The trail will begin at a point approximately 0.4 miles west of Wolf Creek on the former DM&IR RR grade located within the SE1/4 of NW1/4, Sec. 8, T62, R13 hereafter referred to as the “point of beginning”. From the point of beginning thence easterly and following the DM&IR RR grade for a distance of approximately 2.5 miles to the existing Highway 169 underpass located within the NW1/4 of SW1/4, Sec. 3, T62, R13 there ending. Total length is approximately 2.5 miles.

The point of beginning will connect to the existing Mesabi Trail located between Wolf Creek and Eagles Nest Township, Town Hall.

The end point will connect to the south end of the existing State Highway 169 concrete pedestrian underpass that extends from the south to the north side of Highway 169. The Mesabi Trail is being planned and developed from the north end of the Highway 169 underpass to Ely.

The environmental work has not begun.

Right-of-way acquisition is nearing completion

Engineering work has not begun.

It is understood project costs incurred will not be eligible for reimbursement under this grant until a grant agreement has been executed.

ACTIVITY 4 ENRTF BUDGET: \$600,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Engineering, environmental work and wetland mitigations	December 2019
2. Right-of-way acquisition	June 2020
3. Construction	October 2020

First Update March 1, 2020

Second Update September 1, 2020

Third Update March 1, 2021

Fourth Update September 1, 2021

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2022

Notes:

1. A map for each individual Activity are attached to this Workplan
2. The mileage distances in each activity are estimated. Exact mileage will not be known until the final project plan is complete.
3. Costs are estimated based on today's construction cost estimates. Future costs may increase or decrease due to circumstances beyond our control such as the price of oil that greatly effects the cost of a bituminous surface trail.
4. Costs for wetland mitigation are based on today's BWSR wetland bank credit costs. Wetland credits have varied significantly in northeast MN ranging from \$35,000 per acre to \$65,000 per acre in years 2017 & 2018 for types 2, 6 & 7. Future wetland cost increases or decreases may affect Activity cost estimates.

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 this is a stand-alone project not needing additional work. No results, findings or other unanswered questions will result from this project.

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- Over 250,000 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

The Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund is acknowledged as a funder for the Mesabi Trail with recognition posted in each kiosk along the trail.

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](#).

Description:

First Update March 1, 2020

Second Update September 1, 2020

Third Update March 1, 2021

Fourth Update September 1, 2021

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2022

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: N/A

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

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: no personnel will be paid for by this appropriation	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE:
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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: 60,000	Divide total contract hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 28.8
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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: 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:

- 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 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**

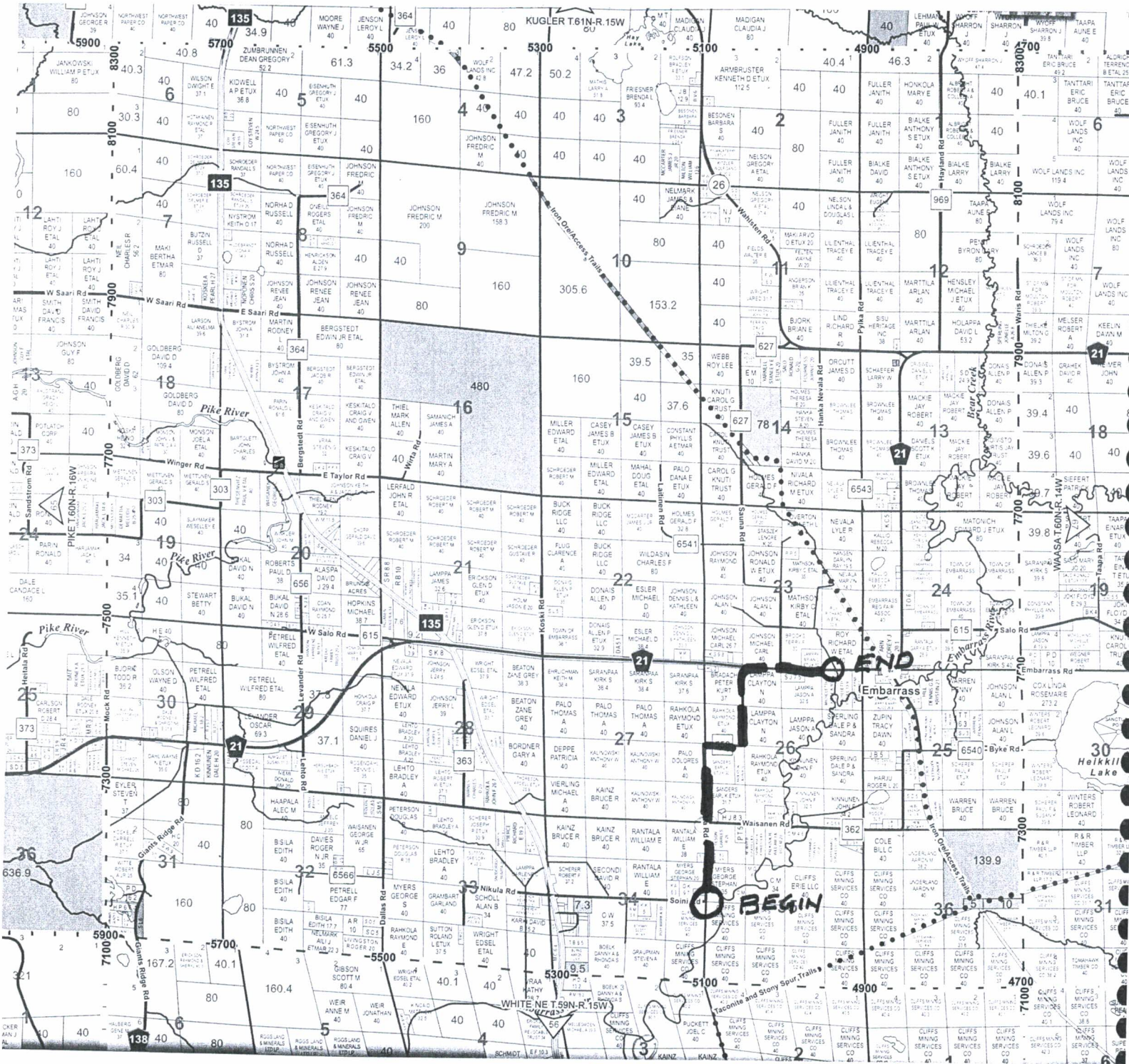
Attachment A:**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund****M.L. 2019 Budget Spreadsheet****Legal Citation:** M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g**Project Manager:** Robert Manzoline**Project Title:** Mesabi Trail Extensions**Organization:** St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority**Project Budget:** \$3,000,000**Project Length and Completion Date:** 3 years, December 2021**Today's Date:** November 29, 2018

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM			
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts			
Engineering and Environmental services estimated at 18% of project cost (competitive bid)	\$ 540,000	\$ -	\$ 540,000
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000			
Trail construction (competitive bid)	\$ 2,400,000	\$ -	\$ 2,400,000
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Easement Acquisition			
Estimated at 2% of project cost	\$ 60,000	\$ -	\$ 60,000
COLUMN TOTAL	\$ 3,000,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000,000

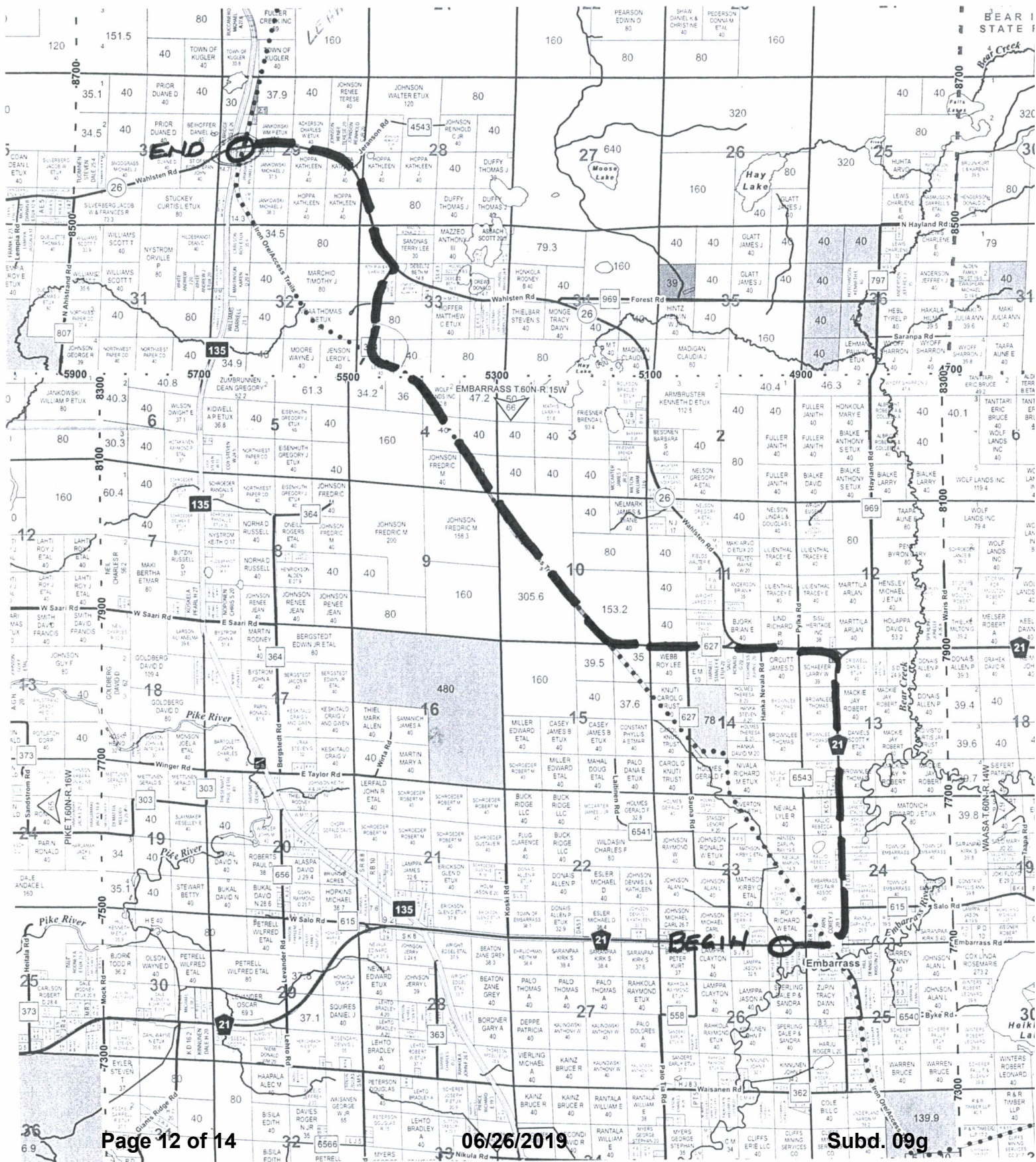
OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State: none		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State: Legacy ML 2015, Chp. 2, Art. 3, Sec.3b	secured	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 87,200	\$ 1,712,800
In kind:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

PAST AND CURRENT ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
Current appropriation:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Past appropriations: see attached		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

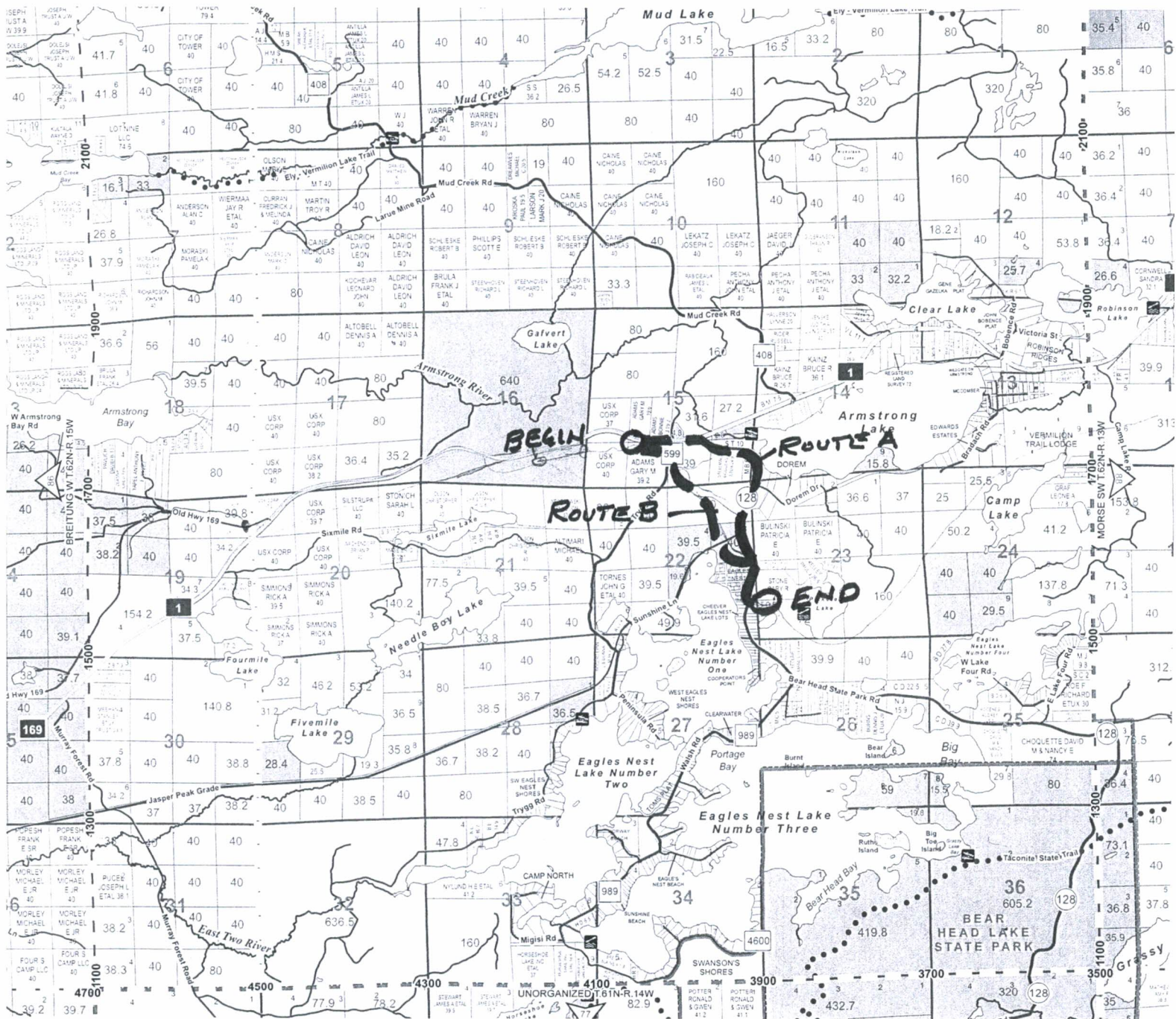
Map for Activity 1



Map for Activity 2



Map for Activity 3



Map for Activity 4

