



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2020 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2020-039

Staff Lead: Becca Nash

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: August 13, 2021

Project Title: Mesabi Trail: New Trail and Additional Funding

Project Budget: \$1,000,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Bill Dahl

Organization: St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority

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Email: bdahl@rrauth.com

Web Address:

Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: August 13, 2021

Reporting Schedule: April 1 / October 1 of each year.

Project Completion: June 30, 2024

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2024

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09q

Appropriation Language: \$1,000,000 the second 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 constructing the Mesabi Trail beginning at the intersection of County Road 20 and Minnesota State Highway 135 and terminating at 1st Avenue North and 1st Street North in the city of Biwabik in St. Louis County. This appropriation may not be spent until all Mesabi Trail projects funded with trust fund appropriations before fiscal year 2020, with the exception of the project funded under Laws 2017, chapter 96, section 2, subdivision 9, paragraph (g), are completed.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2024

Narrative

Project Summary: This project is for the construction of an approximately 5.5 mile-long segment of the Mesabi Trail beginning at the City of McKinley and ending at the City of Biwabik.

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

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-nine (29) communities across two counties starting in Grand Rapids and ending in Ely. Approximately 126 miles of the trail has been constructed and 13.7 miles are currently under construction 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 \$390,000. The trail has been constructed in cooperation with local landowners, local governments and State and Federal lands with no eminent domain proceedings.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

The McKinley to Biwabik segment (hereafter known as the "Project") is a planned approximately 5.5 mile-long, 10 foot wide bituminous paved surface with 2 foot gravel shoulders. The Project will begin at the City of McKinley and then traverse easterly approximately 5.5 miles to the City of Biwabik. This important segment will make connection to the existing trail from the City of Gilbert to McKinley from the East to the existing trail from Biwabik traversing to the West through the Giants Ridge Recreational Area to Embarrass. LCCMR Grant M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g is also contributing to the completion of this project.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

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 29 communities with yearly users exceeding 220,000 per year of which, 34% arrive from outside of the Northeast MN region.

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): NE

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): NE

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: McKinley to Biwabik

Activity Budget: \$1,000,000

Activity Description:

This approximate 5.5 mile-long segment of the trail will make connections to the existing Mesabi Trail in the City of McKinley and traverse easterly to the City of Biwabik. Due to right-of-way issues, part of the proposed trail has been relocated to a new location. The new trail location length is approximately 3,900 feet passing across the Cave Lake water inlet and adjoining wetlands. We are proposing to construct a 900 feet long floating bridge to cross the wetlands minimizing impacts to the wetland and water flowage. The new trail location has increased project costs primarily for the floating bridge, wetland mitigation and fencing along the trail of mining operations.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
1. ML 2015 and ML 2018 funds spent	June 30, 2022
2. ML 2017 funds spent and projects completed	December 31, 2022
3. Engineering for Construction Management	June 30, 2024
4. Trail Construction	June 30, 2024

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

Mesabi Trail news and updates through a variety of media, marketing and publications. The website is Mesabitrail.com. The following are some of the groups and organizations that disseminate Mesabi Trail information and typically updates of newly completed trail segments: Club Mesabi (15,000 maps and website), Iron Range Tourism (30,000 brochures and website), MN Office of Tourism, MPR, Parks & Trails, Home & Away, other private magazines, 240,000 trail users per year, Named by the Star Tribune as "Best of Minnesota" in year 2013, and Top 3 Minnesota Trails in year 2021. The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be acknowledged through the use of the fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

Long term strategy for the Mesabi Trail has not changed since 1995 which is to construct a trail from Grand Rapids to Ely connecting 29 communities along the way. Seeking eligible grants to complete the trail is an on-going process. A key component is to maintain the trail to last for a period of 20 years. The Regional Railroad Authority has committed to maintain the trail and currently budgets over \$390,000 per year for maintenance costs.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Mesabi Trail Development - Soudan to Ely Segment	M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 07c	\$1,000,000
Mesabi Trail Development Soudan to Ely - Phase II	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 09i	\$1,000,000
Mesabi Trail Segment from Highway 135 to Town of Embarrass	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 09e	\$1,200,000
Mesabi Trail Development	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g	\$2,269,000
Develop Mesabi Trail Segment From County Road 88 to Ely	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b	\$600,000
Mesabi Trail Extensions	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g	\$3,000,000
Historic Bruce Mine Park and Mesabi Trailhead	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09q	\$1,000,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Northern Engineering, Inc.	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Engineering Management for trail construction				1.2		\$100,000
							Sub Total	\$100,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
		Construct bituminous surface trail	For trail construction					\$900,000
							Sub Total	\$900,000
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$1,000,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
Cash	State Bond Appropriation	For construction	Pending	\$286,115
Cash	Minnesota Legacy Grant L-034-12-2B	For construction	Secured	\$179,763
			State Sub Total	\$465,878
Non-State				
Cash	Federal HPPH Grant	For construction	Secured	\$1,497,430
			Non State Sub Total	\$1,497,430
			Funds Total	\$1,963,308

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [aabb1949-a40.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Mesabi Trail: segment map of McKinley to Biwabik...

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	59cbf9a4-af1.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Overall Mesabi Trail Map: McKinley to Biwabik	ab30e526-beb.pdf
Background Check Certification Form	ea27c146-3d2.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Reviewed and updated for the items described in 1. Introduction. Updated the dates for project completion to June 30, 2024.

7.13.21 Reviewed Comment ID 1061 and 1062 and added the comment in the Activity Description: "There are two (2) easements to be acquired with the city of Biwabik. The RRA negotiates and pays for the costs for recording, fee, easement, or other land interests." Added Milestone 1 further describing that ML 2017 funds will be used first prior to the ML 2020 funds for this project. Added Milestone 2 for easement acquisition.

7.26.21 Reviewed Comment ID 1179 and 1180. Removed land acquisition from activity/milestones and budget. These activities are being completed as part of the ML 2017 project - Biwabik to McKinley segment. Added a milestone for completion of ML 2015 and ML 2018 with date to be completed as part of the appropriation language for this project.

8.2.21 Reviewed work plan and added the Background Check Certification Form as an attachment.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?

Yes

Do you agree travel expenses must follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

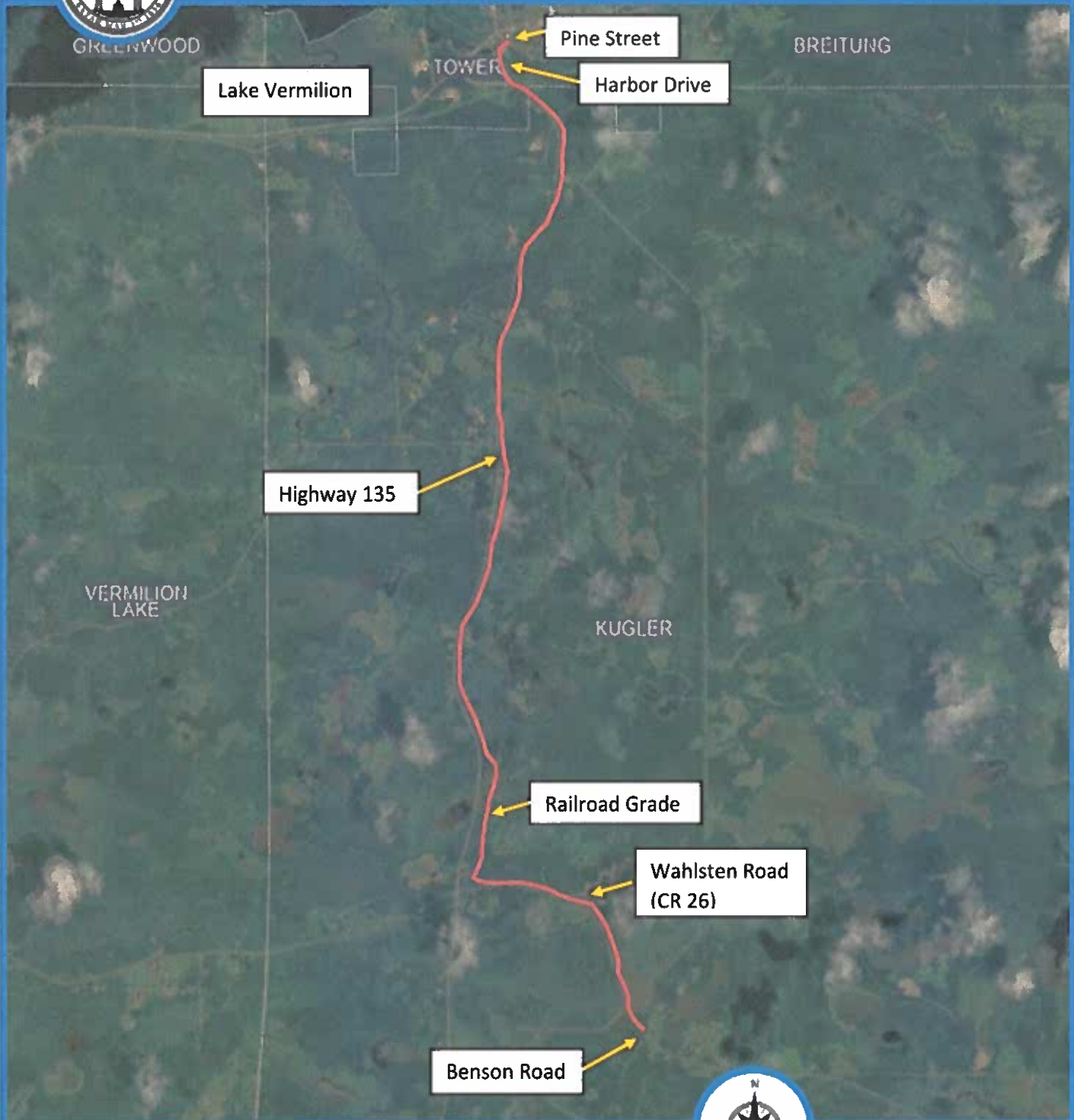
Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No



County Land Explorer

St. Louis County, Minnesota



Wahlsten Road (CR 26) to Tower

default author

Map created using County Land Explorer
www.stlouiscountymn.gov/explorer



County Land Explorer

St. Louis County

www.stlouiscountymn.gov/explorer

Minnesota

Disclaimer

This is a compilation of records as they appear in the Saint Louis County Office affecting the area shown. This listing is to be used only for reference purposes and the County is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein.

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