



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2020 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2020-042

Staff Lead: Corrie Layfield

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: August 19, 2021

Project Title: Minnesota Hunter Walking Trails, Public Land Recreational Access

Project Budget: \$300,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Jon Steigerwaldt

Organization: Ruffed Grouse Society

Office Telephone: (412) 720-6033

Email: jons@ruffedgrousesociety.org

Web Address: <https://ruffedgrousesociety.org/>

Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: August 20, 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. 09f

Appropriation Language: \$300,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Ruffed Grouse Society to improve Minnesota's hunter walking trail system by restoring or upgrading trailheads and trails, developing new walking trails, and compiling enhanced maps for use by managers and the public.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2024

Narrative

Project Summary: Sustain, enhance public land forest recreation and management access supported by a system of hunter walking trails through the improvement of trail infrastructure needs (gate, signs, parking lots, maps, etc.)

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

Approximately 1,000 miles of hunter walking trails (HWTs) exist on ~250 sites within Minnesota's public forest lands. They were designed to provide a non-motorized recreational opportunity for that segment of the public that desires a quieter, foot-travel experience. Currently this statewide system of HWTs is located on State Wildlife Management Area (40%), State Forest (30%), County Forest (20%), and National Forest lands (10%). A majority of these trails were developed through efforts funded by MNDNR Wildlife and NGO/conservation organizations like the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS). This HWT system was primarily developed in the 1970's-90's as a means to allow hunters to access public land and to improve forest habitats through dispersed timber sales. HWTs are typically funded by annual operating funds of the controlling land administrator, they do not have a dedicated funding source like other trail users (e.g. grant-in-aid ATV trail fund). This lack of a long-term, dedicated funded source over time has led to a generally degraded system that is overdue for upgrades and improvements.

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.

Overall enhancement, upgrade to the states' 1,000+ hunter walking trail system through: 1) restore, upgrade existing hunter walking trail infrastructure at ~120 trailheads, ~50 miles of trail, 2) develop, construct ~12 miles of new hunter walking trails and related trailhead needs, and 3) update, improve hunter walking trail information necessary for management and public recreational users (~100 trails).

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 broad purpose of this request is to ensure that recreational trail opportunities in Minnesota include non-motorized hunter walking trails. These trails will promote the ongoing participation of current hunters, birders and hikers that seek this type of trail experience and also encourage the introduction of new users to upland hunting traditions while also facilitating forest habitat enhancements through access for forest management (e.g. timber harvest) on these trails.

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 and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Restore, upgrade existing hunter walking trail infrastructure at ~120 trailheads and ~50 miles of trail.

Activity Budget: \$210,000

Activity Description:

Based on needs and priorities identified in an upcoming 2020 Assessment of Hunter Walking Trails in Minnesota, Project Manager will coordinate bid, contract, and supply efforts necessary for trailhead (i.e. parking lots, gates, signs, etc.) and trail (i.e. reshape, widen, culverts, etc.) infrastructure needs based on controlling land administrator's environmental, construction and contracting requirements; document and certify successful accomplishments.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Restore, upgrade ~60 HWT trailheads	December 31, 2022
Restore, upgrade ~25 miles of existing trails	December 31, 2022
Restore, upgrade ~60 HWT trailheads	December 31, 2023
Restore, upgrade ~25 miles of existing trails	December 31, 2023

Activity 2: Develop, construct ~12 miles of new hunter walking trails and related trailheads.

Activity Budget: \$50,000

Activity Description:

Based on needs and priorities identified in and upcoming 2020 Assessment of Hunter Walking Trails in Minnesota, Project Manager will coordinate bid, contract, and supply efforts necessary for development of new hunter walking trails and related trailheads based on controlling land administrator's environmental, construction and contracting requirements; document and certify successful accomplishments.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Construct ~6 miles of new hunter walking trails segments, loops, systems.	December 31, 2022
Construct ~6 miles of new hunter walking trail segments, loops, or systems.	December 31, 2023

Activity 3: Update, improve hunter walking trail information necessary for management and public recreation users (~100 trails).

Activity Budget: \$40,000

Activity Description:

Work with public land administrators to update HWT information, data, and related maps as to their specific requirements; link to MNDNR's hunter walking trail webpage.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Ongoing field assessments, information/data gathering, map updates with respective public land administrators.	June 30, 2024

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Staff	MNDNR - Wildlife and Forestry	Public land administrator, review of assessment information, approval of sites, methods, etc.	No
Staff	County Land Departments	Public land administrator, review of assessment information, approval of sites, methods, etc.	No
Staff	Chippewa, Superior National Forests	Public land administrator, review of assessment information, approval of sites, methods, etc.	No

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.

As a ENRTF grant sponsor, RGS has read and will implement ENRTF acknowledgement guidelines on all communications and outreach efforts related to this grant for the life of the grant. It will also insure as much as it can that public land administrators that benefit from this grant include ENRTF logos and acknowledgements on maps, websites, social media sites, etc. after the grant is complete.

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?

Results from this effort will serve to greatly update and revitalize the current statewide HWT system that exists on Minnesota public forestlands, hopefully also serve as a catalyst that forms long-term solutions for the management and funding of this system by MNDNR Wildlife and public forest land administrators.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Gone Wild Enterprises, LLC	Professional or Technical Service Contract	A project/grant consultant will be contracted by the grant sponsor (RGS) to implement, administer, and see to successful completion of this grant, reports to designated RGS Project Manager for this grant. This will be a sole source request.		X		0.6		\$36,000
Various private contractors	Professional or Technical Service Contract	based on priorities identified in the 2020 Assessment of Minnesota Hunter Walking Trails, service contracts for infrastructure work will be bid (RFP) and secured/contracted by the grants Project Manager as per respective contracting, environmental, and permitting standards of the controlling land administrator.				0		\$178,000
GIS support	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Update GIS management information relating to MNDNR's Hunter Walking Trails and Ruffed Grouse Management Areas webpages, also various County and U.S. Forest Service GIS/web information; update and create maps and related public use support needs. It is expected that some of this need will be covered as in-kind.				-		\$20,000
							Sub Total	\$234,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Supplies: gates (50), entrance signs (50), information signs (150), gravel (500 yards), etc.	Some hand tools, but primarily supplies to support site work; including gates, signs, gravel and less than \$5,000 in hand/small power tools (wrenches, brushsaw, chainsaw, etc.) for site work needs.					\$50,000

							Sub Total	\$50,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	xxx	Due to broad scale of this project over northern MN, there will be some level of travel (mileage) and related meal/lodging expenses incurred by the designated RGS Project Manager to assess, administer this grant.					\$6,000
							Sub Total	\$6,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Printing of updated/new hunter walking trail maps; only an initial, limited number; public land administrator responsible for printing needs after initial run.	For grant site effort needs; long-term trail and adjacent habitat management needs of public land administrator; distribution to public users.					\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$10,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$300,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Contracts and Services - Gone Wild Enterprises, LLC	Professional or Technical Service Contract	A project/grant consultant will be contracted by the grant sponsor (RGS) to implement, administer, and see to successful completion of this grant, reports to designated RGS Project Manager for this grant. This will be a sole source request.	Grant sponsor (RGS) has used Gone Wild Enterprises, LLC (Gary Drotts) under a consultant contract as its MN Conservation Partners Legacy grant consultant for the last three years (6 grants for \$600,000). This consultant has 39 years of past DNR experience in forest wildlife habitat restoration/enhancement, related field/trail project expertise and knowledge of northern MN that has been a great asset to RGS grant efforts to date. This is a single source contract.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
In-Kind	MNDNR Wildlife and Forestry, County Land Departments, and National Forest field staff	Public land administrator field staff time spent providing assessment, site needs, recommendations, and project completion information.	Pending	\$15,000
			State Sub Total	\$15,000
Non-State				
In-Kind	Ruffed Grouse Society in-kind	Staff support by RGS to facilitate the grant, funding up front of a MN Hunter Walking Trail Assessment report that will be used to work on priorities for field work.	Pending	\$10,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$10,000
			Funds Total	\$25,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [d196e6cb-eef.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Visual/map notes a map of a current hunter walking trail on the Chippewa National Forest. Bulleted text information needs data/information that is going to be gathered on HWTs on all public lands through an up front HWT Assessment Report that will serve to set work priorities and sites if this grant is funded. This data/information will also be used to track and report ongoing grant status, and final report needs....

Financial Capacity

File: [237ee6bb-4d1.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
RGS and County support letters	91f9cbf7-e9c.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Background Check Certification	a50e4d6e-2f6.docx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

1) changed activity 1 & 2 milestone dates to 12/31 end dates to better reflect the end of a construction field season; 2) entered Dissemination information; 3) since this grant now has a 6/30/24 (3 year) end date, increased consultant/project manager FTE to .6 (.2/year) and increased cost to \$36,000; 4) adjusted contract line to reflect changes in consultant contract and printing need.

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?

N/A

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?

Yes, I agree to the Commissioner's Plan.

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

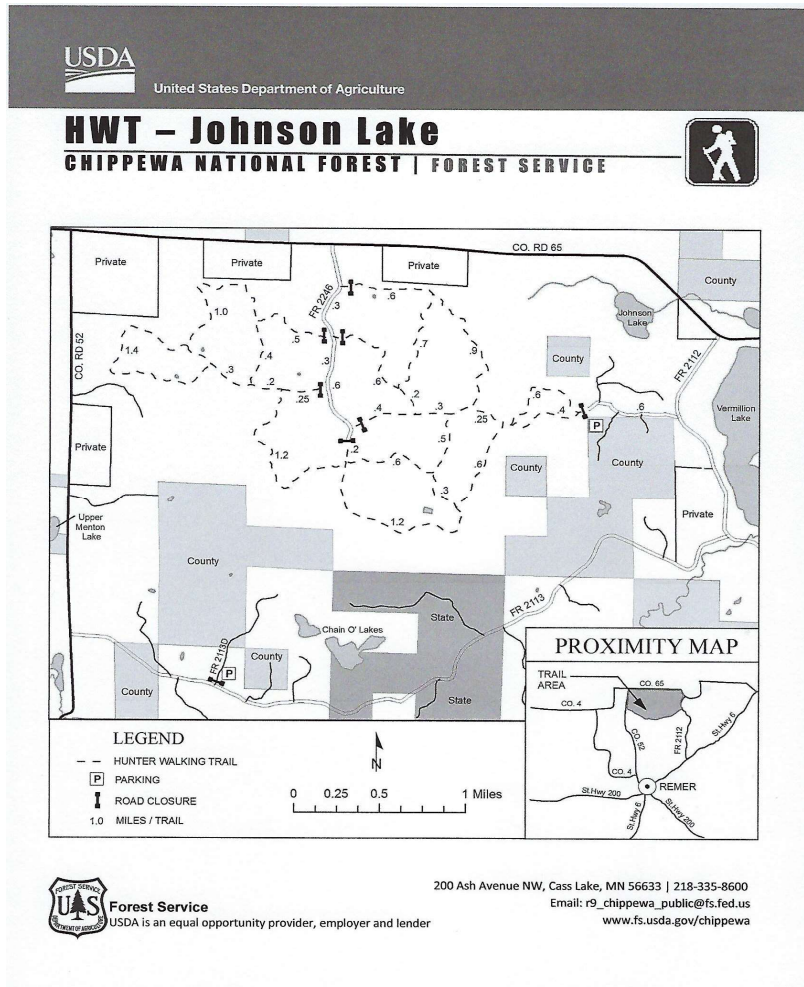
Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

Yes, Sponsored Projects Administration

HWT map and example of possible HWT data to be collected, used to drive grant priority setting.



- County: Cass
- Land administrator: Federal
- Mgmt. Unit: Chippewa NF
- MU name: Johnson Lake HWT
- # of trails: 3
- # of miles: 14.0
- # of acres: size of trail influence area
- Mgmt. priority: H, M, L based on land administrator input
- Current maintenance: text on when, how often the HWT has been maintained (i.e. trails mowed every 2 years, trail heads checked each fall, no infrastructure work for 20+ years)
- Assessment info.: current condition, use (heavy), what infrastructure and habitat needs are there, ???
- Management needs: Note infrastructure and habitat management needs for the future (i.e. replace two gates, gravel one parking lot, three new entrance signs, etc.)
- Other: ???

