



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2020 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2020-060

Staff Lead: Corrie Layfield

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: August 13, 2021

Project Title: Superior Hiking Trail As Environmental Showcase

Project Budget: \$450,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Lisa Luukkala

Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association

Office Telephone: (218) 834-2700

Email: lluukkala@superiorhiking.org

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

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. 09k

Appropriation Language: \$450,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Superior Hiking Trail Association to rebuild damaged and dangerous segments and create a new trail segment of the Superior Hiking Trail to minimize environmental impacts, make the trail safer for users, and make the trail more resilient for future use and conditions.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2024

Narrative

Project Summary: Renew and rebuild the Superior Hiking Trail to minimize environmental damage, maximize safety, and increase resistance to impacts of increased traffic and climate change.

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

We plan to renew and rebuild the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) to minimize environmental damage, increase resistance to impacts of traffic and climate change, meet or exceed expectations of public and private landowners to responsibly manage the SHT, and enhance users' experience and safety. Much of the SHT was built before national trail building standards were established. The SHT is hugely popular and was not built to withstand the impact of an estimated 100,000 users annually. As a result, there is considerable environmental damage to the Trail, and damage caused by users of the Trail.

A 2018 ENRTF grant allowed the Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA) to hire trail experts to evaluate root causes of environmental damage and user dangers on the SHT. Their findings: the problems on the SHT were not limited to the miles they evaluated but are endemic along the entire 300-mile length of the Trail. Their advice to the Association: adopt national hiking trail construction standards; change organizational systems and processes to support sustainable trail building; and focus on managing water. This advice dovetailed nicely with the SHTA's own Trail Renewal Program, launched in early 2018, a commitment to reduce natural resource damage.

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.

We will commit to environmental responsibility by adopting and implementing national hiking trail construction standards for every project on the SHT and training staff, volunteers and contractors in those principles and practices.

Our first goal is to renew or rebuild the most damaged, dangerous sections where built structures and water management devices are needed. Replacement will be implemented with construction standards for trail structures developed by the National Park Service and used by most other national scenic trail groups.

We also plan to renew the SHT by building new trail in key locations. Some segments of the SHT were simply put in the wrong, unsustainable place from the beginning. We intend to build entirely new sections of trail (1,000 -10,000 feet), because the existing trail simply can't be fortified enough to withstand the natural and human forces undermining it. In these cases, starting over is the best course of action.

These two strategies will lead to a more sustainable trail, a safer user experience, and a decrease in environmental impact.

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?

Sections of the Trail showing the most environmental damage will be repaired. Built structures will be constructed to minimize environmental damage and reduce hazards. Wetlands along the SHT will be far less impacted; slopes and stream banks will be better protected. This ENRTF grant would enable the SHTA to continue the renewal work stemming from a 2019 ENRTF grant that focuses on the "worst of the worst" sections of the SHT. If we fulfill the promise of our Trail Renewal Program, the SHTA can be a showcase for how an "old" hiking trail can be renewed and built to last.

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: Renew and Rebuild the Most Damaged and Dangerous Segments

Activity Budget: \$225,000

Activity Description:

There are countless board walks, stairways, small bridges and other structures – and, conversely, a lack of them – needing reconstruction and renewal. Our focus in this activity will be to replace weak or decrepit built structures, using construction standards for trail structures developed by the National Park Service and used by most other national scenic trail groups. In addition, this activity will include retrofitting the SHT with water management devices (e.g. water bars, drainage dips, swales, ditches) so that water is deflected away from and off the tread (footpath) of the Trail, thereby reducing or eliminating erosion and mud holes.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
10 to 30 structures will be rebuilt or built anew in areas most in need	December 31, 2023
8 to 20 miles of the SHT will be retrofitted with water management devices	December 31, 2023
4 to 10 short reroutes totaling up to 2 miles will be completed	December 31, 2023

Activity 2: Renewing the SHT By Making Brand-New Trail

Activity Budget: \$225,000

Activity Description:

Some segments of the SHT were simply put in the wrong place from the beginning: at the bottom of a slope, through a wetland area, or onto a nearby snowmobile trail for lack of a better route. In this activity, we intend to build entirely new sections of trail (1,000 -10,000 feet), because the existing trail simply can't be fortified enough to withstand the natural and human forces undermining it. In these cases, starting over is the best course of action. There are many vagaries to getting a "reroute" approved, making it difficult to determine exactly which segments would get rerouted. Those listed below are high-priority candidates for rerouting:

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Soggy areas, up to 5 miles, will be rerouted between Britton Peak and Caribou Trail	December 31, 2023
New 2.67 mile segment built between Gooseberry State Park and Split Rock State Park	December 31, 2023
Slumping area, .5 miles will be rerouted between Reeves Rd and County Rd 301	December 31, 2023

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jon Benson	U.S. Forest Service	Liaison to the SHTA for any work done on the SHTA within the boundaries of Superior National Forest.	No
Jim Shoberg	City of Duluth Parks Department	Liaison to SHTA from Duluth Parks to assist in planning and executing trail projects within the limits of the City of Duluth	No
Mike Young	Minnesota DNR Division of Forestry	Liaison to SHTA from DNR to assist in planning and executing trail projects within northeastern Minnesota forest lands	No
Christa Maxwell	Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Division	Liaison to SHTA from DNR to assist in planning and executing trail projects within North Shore state parks	No
Cathy Quinn	U.S. Forest Service	Liaison to the SHTA for any work done on the SHTA within the boundaries of Superior National Forest.	No
Derrick Passe	Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District	Advises on environmental regulatory matters in Lake County	No
Tim Malzahn	Ice Age Trail Alliance	Provides advice and counsel, technical assistance.	No
Matt Davis	North Country Trail Association	Provides advice and counsel, technical assistance.	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.

Superior Hiking Trail Association would highlight our LCCMR projects as completed through our print materials, website, social media and other media outlets. In addition, we will include recognition of ENRTF in our Request for Proposals. We will comply with ENRTF 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?

Our Trail Renewal Program has focused the Association's energy, resources and systems so that the lofty goal of creating and supporting a hiking trail that lasts a century is achievable. The Trail Renewal Program has brought about a significant increase in private donations that will support the operations of the organization. Big trail-building projects will require support from wherever we can get it, including public sources (local governments, IRRRB, ENRTF, Duluth Parks, Greater MN Parks and Trails Commission) and private sources (private foundations, major donors and investors).

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Enhancement Plan for Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09f	\$100,000

Restoring Five Sections of the Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09o	\$191,000
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Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Trail Operations Director		Trail operations director oversees trail construction work.			25%	0.5		\$32,500
							Sub Total	\$32,500
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Trail construction contractors will be experts in recreational trail building. They will be sourced via competitive RFP process. Services would include trail construction, board walk and stairway construction (wood or stone), but could include trail route identification and mapping.				0.73		\$381,000
							Sub Total	\$381,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Equipment, Tools, and Supplies	This includes lumber, cement, hardware, gravel, metal bog pans and related hardware.					\$33,000
							Sub Total	\$33,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								

	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Travel to work sites by SHTA staff	Staff supervision and expertise needed on site					\$1,200
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Material vendors' transport costs	Necessary to transport needed materials to site					\$2,300
							Sub Total	\$3,500
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$450,000

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	Recreational Trails Program, IRRRB	Grants to maintain and improve the Superior Hiking Trail	Pending	\$100,000
			State Sub Total	\$100,000
Non-State				
Cash	Donations and memberships	Various related expenses, including: materials, tools, volunteer support, lodging, travel, and other professional services to support this project.	Secured	\$160,000
In-Kind	Volunteers	4000 hours of volunteer support for the project, valued at \$20/hr.	Secured	\$80,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$240,000
			Funds Total	\$340,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [dcc04401-9fd.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

A one-page document with a map of undesirable trail conditions - an overwhelming number of them. Includes 2 photos of worn-out trail and failed built structures that must be replaced for user safety and erosion concerns....

Financial Capacity

File: [3ef2a330-2f4.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
SHTA Board Resolution	634e4555-8e5.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
SHTA Audited Financial Statements FY2019	bf027373-31f.pdf
Background Check Form	950a8926-a4d.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Activity Two -- Milestone 2 has changed from 2.5 miles of new trail new Grand Marais to 2.67 miles of new trail between Split Rock State Park and Gooseberry State Park. This change occurred due to project readiness and priority connectivity needs.

Activity Two -- Milestone 3 has changed from 1.5 miles of new trail at the Northern Terminus to .5 miles of new trail to reroute creek slumping between Reeves Rd and County Rd 301 Trailheads. This change occurred due to project readiness and priority connectivity needs.

Budget -- Capital Expenditures, Equipment, Tools and Supplies Details has changed. Because of the delay in the funding allocation, SHTA secured a snowmobile through other means. The \$8,000 for the cost of the snowmobile was removed and the Supplies line item has been adjusted from \$25,000 to \$31,000 to reflect the increased cost of lumber and other construction materials.

Non-ENRTF Funds Contributed to the Project has changed. Because of the delay of the funding allocation, SHTA had to utilize cash-in-hand to pay for projects to proceed in 2020 and 2021. Our cash match in through donations and membership fees has been adjusted from \$200,000 to \$160,000. In addition, cash state grants funds have also been expended that had been originally thought to act as match in 2020/2021. The cash state grants has have been adjusted from \$150,000 to \$100,000.

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?

No

Below: The red and yellow dots represent “undesirable trail conditions.” From a 2018 assessment funded by ENRTF grant.

