



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2021 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2021-028

Staff Lead: Becca Nash

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: July 21, 2021

Project Title: Mesabi Trail Csah 88 To Ely

Project Budget: \$1,650,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Robert Manzoline

Organization: St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority

Office Telephone: (218) 744-2653

Email: bmanzoline@rrauth.com

Web Address:

Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: July 20, 2021

Reporting Schedule: December 1 / June 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. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b

Appropriation Language: \$1,650,000 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 to acquire, engineer, and construct a segment of the Mesabi Trail beginning at the intersection of County State-Aid Highway 88 toward Ely.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2024

Narrative

Project Summary: This project is for the construction of an approximately 2.8 mile long segment of the Mesabi Trail beginning at the intersection of County State Aid Highway 88 to Ely.

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 milelong 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 County State Aid Highway 88 to Ely Segment (hereafter known as the "Project") is a planned approximately 2.8 mile long, 10 feet wide bituminous paved surface with 2 foot gravel shoulders. The Project will begin at County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 88 and then traverse easterly approximately 2.8 miles to Ely. This segment will make connection to the North American Bear Center, the planned Ely Visitors Center and the International Wolf Center. It will connect to the existing Mesabi Trail on the West (to Tower) and the existing Mesabi Trail in Ely.

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: Right-of-Way Acquisition

Activity Budget: \$10,000

Activity Description:

Acquire right-of-way in sufficient width for trail construction by way of permits, easements, leases or purchase. The minimum right-of-way width is forty feet. Land purchase is not anticipated but if needed, lands will be acquired by the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority. No ENRTF funds will be used to pay for the land itself. ENRTF funds will be used to pay for a portion of the survey, title work, and recording/closing fees. Right-of-way work includes land surveys, legal descriptions, title searches and recording. Majority of this work will be performed by a registered land surveyor, attorney and Minnesota Department of Transportation as all of this segment of the trail will be within the Highway 169 right-of-way. It is understood attorney and appraisal fees are not eligible for grant reimbursement.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
1. Acquire approximately 14,600 lineal feet by 40 feet wide of trail right-of-way	June 30, 2022

Activity 2: Trail construction

Activity Budget: \$1,310,000

Activity Description:

Construct a 10' wide bituminous surfaced trail approximately 14,600 lineal feet in length built in accordance with the engineering plan. Trail construction will include 2' wide gravel shoulders, base preparation, grading, gravel base, ditch ways, slopes, culverts, fencing, signing, landscaping, seeding and all else necessary for a complete trail.

Construction will be performed by a licensed and bonded contractor. Project bidding, contractor selection and contracts will be performed in accordance with the St. Louis County Public Project Procurement Process.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Construct approximately 14,600 lineal feet (~2.8 miles) of bituminous surface trail	June 30, 2024

Activity 3: Environmental and Permitting

Activity Budget: \$97,500

Activity Description:

Environmental work needed to comply with the Federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State of Minnesota Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) involving those compliance agencies namely the Federal Departments of Environmental Protection, Highway Administration & Fish & Wildlife and the Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation & Historic Preservation.

Other oversight agencies that will become involved include the Federal Army Corps of Engineers, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Local Board of Soil and Water Conservation.

The environmental work will be supported by engineering work to locate alternative trail routes, survey cultural

resource locations, survey wetland boundaries, establish property lines and identify land ownership.

Geotechnical work may occur if unsuitable soils or ledge rock is encountered.

Work will be performed by a person or firm accredited by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) hereafter known as "Consultant". Consultant will perform work needed to comply with NEPA and MEPA documenting trail route alternatives, cultural resource identification, wetland delineation & mitigation, endangered species, social impacts, economic impacts, state waters impacts, land use (4f) and other. Consultant will further evaluate and assure compliance with local ordinances, planning, zoning and codes.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
1. Approvals and permits from various agencies	June 30, 2022

Activity 4: Engineering survey, design, plans and construction management

Activity Budget: \$232,500

Activity Description:

Engineering will be done in accordance with the MN DOT Standards for Bicycle Trails. Engineering work begins with route(s) identification and support of environmental work and then to more specific survey work once a preferred trail route alternative is selected. The project engineer will design the trail in accordance with MN DOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ASHTO standards while taking into account on-site conditions such as waterways, wetlands, hills, valleys and other features to determine the final trail location and design.

Engineer, working in cooperation with the environmental contractor, will perform design, provide construction plan and specifications. Engineer will also perform construction management, on-site inspections, testing oversight and other functions in accordance with FHWA standards.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Support for environmental work	June 30, 2022
Plans and specifications	December 31, 2022
Final inspection and project documentation	June 30, 2024
Construction management	June 30, 2024

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Bill Dahl	St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority	Deputy Director	Yes

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 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
- ampers radio
- Parks & Trails, Home & Away, other private magazines
- 220,000 trail users per year
- Yearly "Mesabi Trail Tour" 700 registered riders
- Named by Bicycle Magazine as "top 10 in the country"
- Coop visitors with the MN Discovery Center

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.

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

8/22/2021

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								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Contract with firms TBD for environmental work and permitting				0.6		\$97,500
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Right of way acquisition				0.06		\$10,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Engineering for trail				2.8		\$232,500
							Sub Total	\$340,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
		Construct bituminous surface trail	For completion of the Mesabi Trail					\$1,310,000
							Sub Total	\$1,310,000
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Other Acquisition	Acres: 0 Parcels: 0 Miles: 2.8						-
							Sub Total	-

8/22/2021

Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$1,650,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
---------------	---------------------	-------------	--

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Hwy 169 Right-of-Way Limited Use Permit from the MN Dept. of Transportation	St. Louis	forest - Hwy 169 right-of-way from CSAH 88 to Ely for the Mesabi Trail	Easement - Other	-	2.8	-	Public		Has not begun
Totals				0	2.8	-			

Easement (Other) Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including an explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

The original intent are to acquire and utilize old railroad grades for the Mesabi Trail. Landowners that currently own the railroad grades would not allow easements through their properties. To complete this section, it was determined that this segment of the Mesabi Trail be constructed along the Highway 169 right-of-way, which requires a Limited Use Permit from the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.

Minnesota Department of Transportation Limited Use Permit for this segment of the Mesabi Trail along Highway 169 starting from CSAH 88 to Ely.

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

No parcels will be acquired in fee title.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

We will not be purchasing parcels for this trail segment.

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

N/A

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [dd64e609-524.docx](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Trail segment map of CSAH 88 to Ely...

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
RRA Board Resolution	46ba2dd9-a00.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Overall location Map on the Mesabi Trail	6dcb7a99-b63.docx
Background Check Certification Form for ENRTF Funding Recipients	bd11c2c3-6b9.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Due to the requested project funding of \$2,200,000 from the original RFP and approved for \$1,650,000, I reduced the activities and budget line items by 25%.

9.21.20 - Responded to Comment ID 120; 1. Checked the Easement (Other) Acquisition box in General Information. 2. Added clarification for Activity 1 - Right-of-way acquisition for obtaining a Limited Use Permit from MN DOT along Highway 169 from CSAH 88 to Ely. 3. Decreased the Activity 1 budget by \$12,500 from \$22,500 to \$10,000. 4. Increase Activity 2 construction budget by \$12,500 from \$1,297,500 to \$1,310,000. 5. Completed Acquisition and Restoration information.

7.9.21 - Reviewed and Responded to Comment ID 799; Updated Activity 1, right-of-way clarification per the comments.

7.13.21 - Attached the required, completed background check for per Comment ID 1060.

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



TRAIL LENGTH
14,531.79 LF - 2.75 MI

DRAWN BY: --				
DESIGNER: --				
CHECKED BY: --				
DESIGN TEAM	NO.	BY	DATE	REVISIONS



**ELY,
MINNESOTA**

**MESABI TRAIL
CSAH 88 - ELY**

FILE NO. 145307
1 / 1

