

Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on September 30, 2025

M.L. 2022 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2025

Project Title: Environmental Learning Classroom with Trails

Project Manager: Reggie Engebritson

Affiliation: Independent School District #712 - Mountain Iron Buhl Public Schools

Mailing Address: 8659 Unity Drive

City/State/Zip: Mountain Iron, MN 55768

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Website: <https://www.mib.k12.mn.us/>

Funding Source:

Fiscal Year:

Legal Citation: M.L. 2022, Chp. 94, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b

Appropriation Amount: \$82,000

Amount Spent: \$81,984

Amount Remaining: \$16

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

With the additions to the Mountain Iron - Buhl School Forest, students and the community now have broader access to the forest. Gated and clearly marked usage will allow for safer hiking. New trails and bridge have opened up more trail access. The pavilion will be a great meeting place!

Overall Project Outcome and Results

The Mountain Iron - Buhl School Forest has been around since the early 1980s. In that time, the only real care has been to maintain the trail system. Educational opportunities were limited. Only recently were the trails even mowed. This grant provided a major improvement to getting students and educators into the outdoors. One challenge was making it clear that our school forest is a hiking only site. Our new gates are welcoming, yet clearly make this distinction. When the school district built a new high school, part of the trail system was lost. We now have access to most of that trail system. One challenge to get educators utilizing the forest as a learning environment was a space for groups, and outdoor learning tools. Our new pavilion and shed will now provide this need. Finally, to enrich students experiences to the outdoors, our new bridge will not only provide greater access, it will give opportunities for stream and water study.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

All approved projects were completed on budget and on time. Pictures have been shared. The school paper and one of the local newspapers, the Hometown Focus have printed stories sharing the progress of our project. a news report with the Mesabi Tribune is in the works and will be shared when printed.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2022 Approved Final Report

General Information

Date: November 12, 2025

ID Number: 2022-041

Staff Lead: Lisa Bigaouette

Project Title: Environmental Learning Classroom with Trails

Project Budget: \$82,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Reggie Engebritson

Organization: Independent School District #712 - Mountain Iron Buhl Public Schools

Office Telephone: (218) 735-8271

Email: renebritson@isd712.org

Web Address: <https://www.mib.k12.mn.us/>

Project Reporting

Final Report Approved: September 30, 2025

Reporting Status: Project Completed

Date of Last Action: September 30, 2025

Project Completion: May 31, 2025

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2022, Chp. 94, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b

Appropriation Language: \$82,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Mountain Iron-Buhl Public Schools to build an outdoor classroom pavilion, accessible trails, and a footbridge within the Mountain Iron-Buhl School Forest to conduct environmental education that cultivates a lasting conservation ethic.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2025

Narrative

Project Summary: We will build an outdoor classroom and up to an additional mile of accessible trails, including a foot bridge connecting the School Forest Trail System.

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

In the heart of the city, adjacent to the school, lies acres of forest, streams, wetlands, and interconnecting trails which form the MIB Environmental Learning Laboratory. We are fortunate and proud to share this with our students, faculty, and the community to enhance their knowledge and support of the environment. Climate change education has become a focus of our educational efforts. MIB provides students with hands-on exploratory outdoor learning year-round. Students explore different parts of the ecosystem in the forest: trees-plants, mammals, the watershed, birds, amphibians, and reptiles. Exploratory teaching is achieved through nature hikes, guest speakers, arts-based projects, and experiential learning. Students spend time outside in all types of weather. We seek to enhance this outdoor teaching environment through the construction of an outdoor classroom and pavilion, and shade shack. We will also expand the School Forest Trail System. It is important that we construct these structures and trails to be accessible to all students so that they can have a hands-on outdoor learning experience. MIB created this Environmental Learning Center in 1983 and much of the development has been led by students, teachers, and volunteers under the direction of local DNR and County staff.

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

Since 1983, the city of Mountain Iron, the Mountain Iron-Buhl School District, Boy Scouts of America, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Army Corp of Engineers, St. Louis County and others have partnered to create this outdoor learning area in a forest located next to the school. A system of trails exists, as well as benches, a campfire ring and privy along with environmental laboratory experiments and research. This proposal would create a permanent outdoor learning classroom as well as accessible forest trails for use by all learners. This school forest is also large enough for student athletes in cross country to utilize it for trail running practices and the community for skiing, snowshoeing, and forest hiking. With wetlands, a winding stream, bridges, berry patches, and forests, student achievement flourishes in a dynamic outdoor laboratory enhanced by dedicated teachers and volunteers. With a little investment, we can create an even better learning center for our kids. Our goal is to continue to make smart investments in our school forest to promote the learning environment for students.

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?

This project will enhance the environmental education of students in the district. It will increase the knowledge and skills of students to cultivate a sustainable lifestyle, improve and maintain water quality, reduce and monitor energy and water consumption, restore and maintain a healthy and biodiverse natural environment. This project will help provide outdoor experiences for learners and build within them a long-lasting and action-based conservation ethic. Enhancements of this outdoor area with help with efforts that deliver and implement existing environmental education. It will provide recreational opportunities for athletes and community members.

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: Outdoor Learning Classroom

Activity Budget: \$50,000

Activity Description:

We will build a 20'x20' outdoor learning classroom pavilion in our outdoor learning area. This will allow our students to be able to have an outdoor classroom area as they learn more about our school forest and the environment around them. The pavilion will have tables and benches so students can sit and complete paper/pencil tasks or hands-on projects. While the pavilion will not provide protection for all types of weather, it will allow some protection. The plan is to put in a concrete slab as the floor and then the pavilion. Having this outdoor classroom will also allow community members a place to sit and have meetings or discussions as they enjoy the school forest or participate on the trails. This is an open pavilion so anyone can use it at any time. It will also be big enough to allow more than one classroom of students to come out to the school forest at the same time and do projects.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Planning, engineering and design.	October 31, 2022
Construction	September 30, 2023

Activity 2: Bridge Construction

Activity Budget: \$17,000

Activity Description:

We will construct an accessible footbridge to connect the School Forest Trail System and a second culverted crossway, or footbridge, roughly 1/4 mile farther downstream. These bridges will allow equal access for all to enjoy the trails and the school forest. Connecting the trails is important for not only students at the school, but also for our cross-country team who uses the trails to run and for community members to enjoy the trails for walking, running, and to go snow shoeing in the winter. Besides allowing greater access to this part of the trail system, the second footbridge will allow us easier access to the stream edge for water study.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Planning, engineering and design.	September 30, 2022
Construction	September 30, 2023

Activity 3: Trail Construction and Trail restoration

Activity Budget: \$15,000

Activity Description:

Our plan is to add to the school forest trails by building up to a mile of additional trails and upgrade the current trail system so that it is accessible for all. There are parts of the trails that go underwater in the spring and take weeks to dry out which does not allow our classes to participate to the fullest extent possible. These dollars will upgrade and restore the trail system so that the trails can be used more in the spring and also add additional trails for both the school students and community to enjoy. Upgrades will include a gate off the west Unity and northeast (by Hwy 169) entrances

to deter motor traffic and a pole barrier at the main entrance off of Unity Drive. This type of barrier is less restrictive for public access, including those who may need alternative means of mobility such as a wheelchair.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Planning, engineering and design.	October 31, 2022
Construction	October 31, 2023

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Craig Wainio	Mountain Iron Economic Development Authority	MIEDA has worked in partnership with ISD#712 on the outdoor lab and trails.	No
Karen Harrison	MN DNR	They are a partner with the our School Forest. They are on board with adding a pavilion and doing work on the trails.	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.

Quarterly updates to the school board about the progress of the project; update school parents about the school forest; give teachers at the school the opportunity to use the outdoor classroom and expose all students to the school forest. Update community members about the final project through a presentation to the City Council and through the local newspaper.

We will be adding signage to both entrances of the School Forest acknowledging the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund funding to making our School Forest more accessible to both students and the community.

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 work be funded?

The school district, in cooperation with the City of Mountain Iron, will maintain the forest, trails and structures.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
Personnel										
ISD #712 - LOUIS PARENTEAU		Project Manager - our teacher, Louis Parenteau, has been in charge of the School Forest for many years. He has construction experience and is able to lead the project to the specifications within the grant. Looking at 100 hours at \$51.12; his hourly rate as a teacher. This work would be done outside of school hours and ENRTF funds are not being used as a substitute for school funds that would otherwise pay him.			7.65%	0.7		\$6,727	-	-
							Sub Total	\$6,727	\$6,712	\$15
Contracts and Services										
BENCHMARK ENGINEERING	Service Contract	Planning, engineering and design of outdoor classroom/pavilion, bridge and trail.				4		\$8,703	\$8,703	-
NEGEN, LLC	Service Contract	PREPARE SITE FOR PAVILLION AND SHED. TRAIL WORK PROVIDE MILL FEED				0.08		\$11,650	\$11,650	-
J & D WORKS LLC	Service Contract	TREE REMOVAL				0.08		\$2,400	\$2,400	-
AQUATIC ECOSOLUTIONS INC	Service Contract	DELINEATION				0.08		\$2,375	\$2,375	-
COMPLETE LAND SOLUTIONS	Service Contract	CONCRETE FOR PAVILLION				0.08		\$9,861	\$9,861	-
Alesch Construction	Service Contract	BUILDING BRIDGES				0.75		\$1,249	\$1,249	-
Alesch Construction	Service Contract	Construction of outdoor classroom/pavilion, trail and bridge. Make the trails accessible to all and provide classroom space for students to learn.				0.5		\$28,500	\$28,500	-

STEVENS WELDING AND FABRICATING	Service Contract	CREATING GATES				0.25		\$5,000	\$5,000	-
							Sub Total	\$69,738	\$69,738	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies										
	Tools and Supplies	CABLE, LOCK, CONCRETE MIX, GRASS SEED	GATE/SHED LOCKS, SECURE GATES, SEEDING LANDSCAPE					\$160	\$159	\$1
	Equipment	Shed	Purchase a prefabricated 10' x 12' wood shed to store wood for the campfire and tools for the work in the school forest. A fire pit currently exists. This wood shed would go near the fire pit. The firepit teaches students how to cook outdoors.					\$4,440	\$4,440	-
							Sub Total	\$4,600	\$4,599	\$1
Capital Expenditures										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Travel In Minnesota										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Travel Outside Minnesota										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Printing and Publication										

							Sub Total	-	-	-
Other Expenses										
		CITY OF MT. IRON	BUILDING PERMIT					\$935	\$935	-
							Sub Total	\$935	\$935	-
							Grand Total	\$82,000	\$81,984	\$16

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	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
State						
Cash	IRRRB	BRIDGE WORK, TRAILS FOR SCHOOL FOREST LEARNING LAB	Secured	\$82,000	\$82,000	-
			State Sub Total	\$82,000	\$82,000	-
Non-State						
			Non State Sub Total	-	-	-
			Funds Total	\$82,000	\$82,000	-

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [4b75cd83-37b.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

April 16: This is an updated map. Bog walk picture and description is removed. Map still shows pavilion and shed we want to build....

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Resolution of Support from MIB School Board	4acf3df0-652.pdf
Example of Proposed Pavilion	1708d18d-d2e.pdf
Background Check	029f66da-56d.pdf
Recent and Future Changes to the MIB School Forest (Ranger Times)	5c4b0e5c-d16.pdf
media	4d121421-362.pdf
New pavilion	3f7af270-ee5.jpe
MIB School Forest Bridge	def62c61-4cf.jpe
MIB School Forest Main Gated Entrance	b1d6df76-ca3.jpe
MIB School Forest Shed	0918d1e9-fbd.jpe
Recent and future changes to the MIB School Forest - Hometown Focus - Northland	44f280b1-403.pdf
Entrance signage & gate	6cb89dc4-568.jpe
Entrance signage	fa9f608a-fa0.jpe
Finished pavilion	ab41f477-23c.jpe
Gate - youth - signage	0141ca68-387.jpe
Bridge building	9aabfc4a-580.jpe
Mesabi Tribune Article	d78b5f1a-559.pdf

Media Links

Title	Link
Recent and future changes to the MIB School Forest	https://www.hometownfocus.us/articles/recent-and-future-changes-to-the-mib-school-forest/
Mesabi Tribune Article	https://www.mesabitribune.com/news/local/mi-b-school-forest-improvements-complete/article_ae568907-0aca-4845-b828-fad819a24a3c.html

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

We added building a 10 x 12 wood shed to store cut wood and tools used to work in the forest rather than haul tools from the school and back again. We expanded the description of the work on the trails. Not only will the trails be expanded, but also upgraded so they can be accessible for all.

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 understand that travel expenses are only approved if they 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, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

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

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

Not acknowledged

Work Plan Amendments

Amendment ID	Request Type	Changes made on the following pages	Explanation & justification for Amendment Request (word limit 75)	Date Submitted	Approved	Date of LCCMR Action
1	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative • Attachments • Activities and Milestones 	Bid for bog walk exceeded budget. Want second culverted crossway, or footbridge created roughly 1/4 mile farther downstream from proposed footbridge in activity 2 and gate off west Unity and northeast (by Hwy 169) to deter motor traffic; and create a pole barrier at the main entrance off Unity Drive for foot traffic.	April 17, 2023	Yes	April 18, 2023
2	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget - Personnel • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts • Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies • Budget - Other 	Adjusted budget to better align with the building of the project. Amounts that have been paid are now included and will be submitted for reimbursement after budget amendment is accepted.	November 27, 2023	Yes	December 13, 2023
3	Completion Date	<p>Previous Completion Date: 12/31/2023 New Completion Date: 11/30/2024</p>	Due to permit issues, weather, and time constraints, the completion of this project will need more time. If granted, we will be able to complete all work, with the exception of bridge #2 if additional funding cannot be secured.	December 13, 2023	Yes	December 13, 2023
4	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts 	There were errors made in the previous approved amendment that needed to be corrected. Such as, inadvertently leaving off Stevens Welding for the gates, not decreasing Benchmarks budget by the cost of the work performed by Aquatic Solutions (delineation), and adjusting the budget for the bridges to align with funds.	December 21, 2023	Yes	December 21, 2023
5	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts • Budget - Non-ENRTF Funds Contributed 	A matching grant has been secured through the IRRRB and City of Mt. Iron. These funds will be used to complete the	October 25, 2024	Yes	October 28, 2024

			bridges and trails in the school forest learning lab.			
6	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 11/30/2024 New Completion Date: 06/30/2025	LCCMR workaround needed to approve September 2024 update.	October 28, 2024	Yes	October 28, 2024
7	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 06/30/2025 New Completion Date: 11/30/2024	LCCMR workaround needed to approve September 2024 update.	October 28, 2024	Yes	October 28, 2024
8	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 11/30/2024 New Completion Date: 06/30/2025	Weather and permitting issues	February 10, 2025	Yes	February 10, 2025
9	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget - Personnel • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts 	Due to the teacher contract increase the amount per hour increased and the amount of time needed increased due to additional permitting and weather issues. The IRRR grant will not cover personnel time but will cover the Bridge build. Due to the cost of materials the pavilion cost increased by \$500. Funds were shifted from other contracts to cover these increases.	February 12, 2025	Yes	February 14, 2025
10	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 06/30/2025 New Completion Date: 05/31/2025	All activities have been completed.	May 13, 2025	Yes	May 15, 2025

Status Update Reporting

Final Status Update July 15, 2025

Date Submitted: September 29, 2025

Date Approved: September 29, 2025

Overall Update

I am happy to share that we have completed all of the activities on time. The MIB School Forest is now a more welcoming destination for a diverse population of students and members of the community. The enhancements to our forest such as the gated entrances will provide more secure and visible access points. The pavilion is a beautiful meeting place. Our shed is already packed with outdoor tools and bonfire equipment right at the ready! The additions and improvements to our trail system will now allow for activities such as cross country races, safer hikes, and greater access with mobility challenges. Finally, our new bridge! I don't know what to say about it other than it is awesome! I would like to thank everyone who made this project possible, especially the LCCMR. It could not have happened without you. Thank you!

Activity 1

This activity was previously marked complete.
(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 2

This activity was previously marked complete.
(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete.
(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

My dissemination update from the May 2nd additional status update was intended for the final update. We will continue to add photos, and are planning on media coverage upon completion of the 2nd stream crossing project.

Additional Status Update Reporting

Additional Status Update May 2, 2025

Date Submitted: May 29, 2025

Date Approved: June 5, 2025

Overall Update

We are finally close to finishing this project and look forward to wrapping things up in the next few weeks.

Activity 1

This activity was previously marked complete.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 2

On April 28, 2025, our bridge project was completed! This will be a wonderful addition to the school forest trail system. I'm looking forward for having more inclusion and access to our trails.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

Upon completion of our second stream crossing project, we will be conducting media coverage in order that both the LCCMR and The IRRR grants will be acknowledged. This final project which is funded by the IRRR will be completed prior to June 30, 2025. I would like to thank The LCCMR for all their assistance in this project! We had several hurdles to overcome, and we greatly appreciate the patience, support, and guidance from the awesome LCCMR staff!

Additional Status Update Reporting

Additional Status Update February 12, 2025

Date Submitted: February 12, 2025

Date Approved: February 14, 2025

Overall Update

Asking for a budget adjustment due to the increase in personnel cost and pavilion cost. The IRRR grant will only cover the expenses for the bridge builds not labor hours. We would like to consider using the remaining funds for Bridge 2 to be reallocated for classroom/pavilion seating thus the ability to close out the project without having to wait on the bridge completion.

Activity 1

This activity was previously marked complete.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 2

We would like consideration to be given to reallocate the funds allocated to Alesch for the bridge to provide seating for the outdoor classroom/pavilion. This would allow work space for classroom instruction outdoors. Also allowing us to close out the project without the Bridge construction holding things up.

Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

No update to be given

Status Update Reporting

Status Update March 1, 2025

Date Submitted: February 12, 2025

Date Approved: February 14, 2025

Overall Update

See additional update

Activity 1

This activity was previously marked complete.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 2

see additional update

Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

see additional update

Additional Status Update Reporting

Additional Status Update January 14, 2025

Date Submitted: February 10, 2025

Date Approved: February 14, 2025

Overall Update

With the new additions to the Mountain Iron - Buhl School Forest, the students and community have had better access and opportunities to enjoy and explore. With the placement of gates and enhanced main entrance, there has been no unwanted motorized vehicle use. With that, the community clearly knows this is a welcomed space for foot traffic only. Our new shed has been a welcomed addition. It's already packed with tools, outdoor learning supplies, and bonfire equipment! Now, any class that wants to use the school forest for group activities just has to contact our school forest coordinator, get the key, and most of the things they might need are readily available. One major event due to the improved trail system was a Haunted Trail that was conducted during Halloween. Finally, with the completion of our beautiful pavilion, we are looking forward to many activities with this addition to the school forest.

Activity 1

The school forest outdoor learning area/pavilion was completed late November. I have attached a picture of the pavilion along with the Alesch Construction crew that built it.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 2

I believe since the last update, bridge #1 had the support pilings completed. Due to winter setting in, the construction of the bridge has stopped until spring. The DOT ROW permit was also extended until the end of June. The footbridge #2 farther downstream currently has a wetland impact study being conducted.

Activity 3

Trails have been completed

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

The plan forward is to have a news report once the two bridges get completed.

Additional Status Update Reporting

Additional Status Update January 14, 2025

Date Submitted: October 25, 2024

Date Approved: October 28, 2024

Overall Update

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic, this is place holder text for the final update to be submitted in January 2025

Activity 1

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic, this is place holder text for the final update to be submitted in January 2025

Activity 2

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic, this is place holder text for the final update to be submitted in January 2025

Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete.

Dissemination

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic, this is place holder text for the final update to be submitted in January 2025

Status Update Reporting

Status Update September 1, 2024

Date Submitted: October 25, 2024

Date Approved: October 28, 2024

Overall Update

Since our last update, the preparations for completion of the outdoor learning classroom, bridge construction, and boardwalk have been ongoing. There have been positive statements made from the community as to the progress that has already been accomplished. The new entrance gates, as well as the two other gates limiting vehicle access are very visible and well constructed. The new shed has been put to use and welcomed by the School Forest Committee. The trail additions are a welcomed addition for all users especially the cross country team.

Activity 1

The Outdoor Learning Classroom's slab was completed last fall which I believe was reported in the previous update. Due to the cold weather, we had to stop construction. This spring and especially June was extremely wet and it was not possible to make any progress. This also set back our contractor by several weeks. The materials for the structure are on order and the plan is to have it built in the next few weeks!

Activity 2

The required DOT ROW permit has been issued and construction has begun on the bridge. 16 inch concrete pillars have been installed as supports. We are planning to have the bridge completed by November 30.

Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete.

Dissemination

As of our last update, there has really not been any significant physical additions to our project. With the acquisition of a matching grant provided by the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, along with the City of Mountain Iron, this project has gained positive notoriety. The IRRR publicizes their grants through "The Ranger" newsletter, in which our project was featured.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update March 1, 2024

Date Submitted: May 2, 2024

Date Approved: July 8, 2024

Overall Update

Since our last update, there has not been progress made in any of the remaining projects due to it being winter. We put a hold on our building permit until the weather allows us to move forward with the construction of the pavilion and stream crossings.

Activity 1

We are currently waiting for the weather to allow us to get to the building site and construct the pavilion. We are hoping to begin as soon as Alesch Construction is available.

Activity 2

No progress on the actual construction of the two stream crossings has begun to this point being that it is still too early in the year to do construction at those sites. We do have exciting news to share in regards to these activities. The school, along with the City of Mountain Iron, applied for a matching grant from the IRRRB, and the city was successful in attaining this grant. This will allow us to create a well constructed bridge at Bridge Site #1, and create a new crossing farther downstream which will include around 100' of boardwalk. We are actively working on permits for these activities, and hope to start construction once our permitting is approved.

Activity 3

As stated in our previous updates, the trail system activity has been completed, and the gates and main entrance barrier have been installed. We were able to update two of the entrances of the school forest along Unity Drive with signage informing the public of the support the school forest has acquired from the LCCMR. I believe that Activity 3 is complete. We may however need to do some maintenance on the trail system because of any disturbance to the trail that may result in the construction of our stream crossings.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

Upon the completion of our gates and main entrance barrier, I invited one of our vendors, Steven's Welding, along with members of the School Forest Committee to be part of a news report. Shay Busch, a member of the School Forest Committee, and reporter for the school paper, 'Ranger Times', wrote a terrific update on the current progress of the school forest. This story was published in the Ranger Times and in a local newspaper, 'The Hometown Focus'. We are hoping that the other local paper, 'The Mesabi Tribune', will also be sharing this story in April.

Additional Status Update Reporting

Additional Status Update February 14, 2024

Date Submitted: December 21, 2023

Date Approved: December 21, 2023

Overall Update

Due to permit issues, weather, and time constraints the completion of this project will need more time. We are hoping to have it complete before July 1, 2024.

Activity 1

Alesch Construction would not complete the pavilion before the Dec. 31, 2023 deadline. They have promised it would be complete in Spring of 2024

Activity 2

At this time we will not be able to complete Activity 2 by the December 31, 2023 deadline. Several factors led to delays. We needed wetland delineation completed to determine wetland impact, DOT ROW, lack of bids from contractors to get cost estimates, and overall cost. Benchmark Engineering has provided us with a cost estimate to complete both bridges. Their proposed cost estimates far exceeded the money we have available in our grant budget. We are looking into other funding to support this activity. If other funding does not come our way, we will still have the funding to complete Bridge #1. One last factor will be gaining a DOT ROW permit to build in their ROW. We cannot build outside of the ROW since that would put us in wetland. Our plan is to have Bridge #1 constructed once permitting is approved, and a bid for construction is approved. If a bid does not get received within our budget, the bridge will get built by our school forest committee. The goal will be to have construction take place in the spring of 2024.

Activity 3

The gates have been completed and installed.

Dissemination

LCCMR/DNR signage has been order to be posted on the shed, gates, and pictures will be posted on the schools social media and webpage once they arrive. The school board was will be given an update at the November 27, 2023 meeting.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update September 1, 2023

Date Submitted: November 27, 2023

Date Approved: December 13, 2023

Overall Update

Since our last report, we have completed a water delineation study so that we could proceed with trail maintenance and construction. This also provided us with the areas we were allowed to build the pavilion and placement of shed. This study also provided us with information regarding the best placement of our new proposed bridge sites.

Activity 1

Since our last report, we advertised for bids to have the pavilion and shed site excavated, the concrete slab constructed, and the pavilion built. We received only one bid for each task and they were approved. The pavilion site has been excavated and the slab for the pavilion has been poured. The shed site was excavated and the shed was brought in and set into place. Both the slab for the pavilion and the shed look great!. Alesch Construction will not be available to complete the pavilion by the December 31, 2023 deadline. Alesch Construction has made clear that they will have the pavilion built early next spring.

Activity 2

At this time we will not be able to complete Activity 2 by the December 31, 2023 deadline. Several factors led to delays. We needed wetland delineation completed to determine wetland impact, DOT ROW, lack of bids from contractors to get cost estimates, and overall cost. Benchmark Engineering has provided us with a cost estimate to complete both bridges. Their proposed cost estimates far exceeded the money we have available in our grant budget. We are looking into other funding to support this activity. If other funding does not come our way, we will still have the funding to complete Bridge #1. One last factor will be gaining a DOT ROW permit to build in their ROW. We cannot build outside of the ROW since that would put us in wetland. Our plan is to have Bridge #1 constructed once permitting is approved, and a bid for construction is approved. If a bid does not get received within our budget, the bridge will get built by our school forest committee. The goal will be to have construction take place in the spring of 2024.

Activity 3

Two bids were advertised for the trail work and the gates. We received one bid for each activity and they were approved. The trail improvements are completed. The gates are complete and will be installed in November.

Dissemination

We updated the School Board in August regarding progress on the project. We will again be updating them at the end of November. Teachers are also aware of what we are working on. Progress has been slow and steady. Many activities have been going on with the new trails such as weekly hikes with the elementary provided by the school forest committee. A haunted trail was created for the elementary students for Halloween. The school forest committee leveled the new shed. Cross Country has been able to safely practice out in the school forest. Once our gates are installed, we will be posting all of these activities along with LCCMR's support on the school's media outlets.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update March 1, 2023

Date Submitted: April 17, 2023

Date Approved: April 18, 2023

Overall Update

We have not been able to make much progress on our plan. Our holdup is that it has been determined that we need permits to do this work and we were not aware of that when we submitted our project. We've contacted Benchmark Engineering and they have provided us with a bid to complete the permitting, assist in project layout and design. That would include bridge sites, trail improvements, pavilion and shed site. The permits we will need are; MPARS for our stream crossing, MNDOT in case we impact the ROW by HWY 169, and the wetland impact permits are needed for the trail improvements, outdoor classroom and shed building sites. This bid does not include the costs of the actual permits, or any wildlife, natural heritage, or archeological reviews that might occur. We hope to start the permitting process Within the next few weeks.

Activity 1

Site area has been roughly cleared. We received one bid for everything -the cement slab and the pavilion to put on the slab. We need permits before we can do this work.

Activity 2

Again, permitting is required before we can begin this project. The right-of-way needs to be determined. There are too many unknown factors in this activity to begin without securing permits.

AMENDMENT REQUEST 4-6-23 As our wish is to create an accessible trail system, we want to request that a second culverted crossway, or footbridge be created roughly 1/4 mile farther downstream. Besides allowing greater access to this part of the trail system, it would allow us easier access to the stream edge for water study. The cost is unclear due to permitting being required first. The hope is that the trail development costs in Activity 3 could be used for this amendment. If permitting does not hold up anything this spring, we hope to complete this project by October 31, 2023.

Activity 3

We have contracted for logging to occur to help with widening the access and clearing the dead fall debris on our current trail system. This work is scheduled to begin this spring of 2023. We have a bid from Alesch Contracting for \$7500 to repair the low part of the new trail development near the multi-sport field. This will also need a permit. Our goal is to still have this work completed by October 31, 2023.

AMENDMENT REQUEST 4-6-23 We would like to gate off the west Unity and northeast (by Hwy 169) entrances to deter motor traffic. These gates would be approximately 12' across, similar to a cattle gate that could swing open for maintenance vehicle work. There would be an additional 4' gate to allow foot traffic. Finally we want to create a pole barrier at the main entrance off of Unity Drive. This type of barrier is less restrictive for public access, including those who may need alternative means of mobility such as a wheelchair. These are often used at bike trail entrances and can be removed for maintenance vehicle access. Our goal is to complete this by October 31, 2023.

Dissemination

Progress has been very slow as we found we need permitting to begin for each project. I will email you a revised map of the proposed amendments.