



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2023 Approved Work Plan

## General Information

**ID Number:** 2023-172

**Staff Lead:** Corrie Layfield

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** June 23, 2023

**Project Title:** St. Louis River Re-Connect - Phase II

**Project Budget:** \$1,375,000

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Cliff Knettel

**Organization:** City of Duluth

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## Project Reporting

**Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR:** June 28, 2023

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

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2026

**Final Report Due Date:** August 14, 2026

## Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2023, Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09j

**Appropriation Language:** \$1,375,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the city of Duluth to increase recreational opportunities and access to the Waabizheshikana hiking and water trails in West Duluth with trail and trailhead enhancements such as accessible canoe and kayak launches, picnic areas, and restrooms; restored habitat; stormwater improvements; directional signage, and trailside interpretation. This appropriation may also be used to partner with the St. Louis River Alliance to create an ambassadors program to engage the surrounding community and facilitate use of the trails.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2026



## Narrative

**Project Summary:** Preserve and enhance strategic quality natural resources and expand outdoor recreational access to the St. Louis River through trail improvements, trail extensions and connections to state, regional, and local parks.

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

The St. Louis River Estuary Area of Concern (AOC) is one of the most severely impacted areas in the Great Lakes Basin. Historical municipal and industrial waste disposal and unchecked land use practices, including dredging and filling habitat, resulted in AOC listing in 1987 for nine beneficial use impairments. These include fish consumption advisories, deformities, and tumors; excessive nutrient and sediment loading; degraded fish and wildlife populations and habitats; and beach closings and body contact. Residents recall being admonished by parents, "don't touch the water."

West Duluth neighborhoods that line the AOC once had vibrant commercial corridors linked to industry and maritime commerce. After mining collapsed, the retail areas were abandoned and housing and infrastructure fell into disrepair. Many nearby residents suffer high rates of poverty, un- and under-employment, poor educational attainment, and poor health. Adults and youth do not have access to quality outdoor environments and activities that research shows are so important to developing environmental values. This is especially true in low-income neighborhoods where quality green space is lacking and residents have limited access to transportation. Historically, low-income populations have not had access to waterfront opportunities that will exist when AOC work and this project are complete.

**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.**

Waabizheshikana Trail and the St. Louis River National Water Trail (SLRNWT) implementation provide access to the recovering river, promotes education, interest, and support for remediation and habitat restoration. Waabizheshikana, formerly known as the Western Waterfront trail, includes an existing 3.3 mile bike/ped trail and proposed seven-mile expansion, creating 10.3 miles trail from 63rd Ave West to Jay Cooke State Park. It is divided into seven segments, and will be built as resources allow. Interpretive elements implemented concurrently with trail construction, explaining the geography, ecology, history of human impacts and AOC reclamation efforts completed and forthcoming. Pause areas along the way invite learning and reflection and serve as outdoor classrooms.

SLRNWT implementation highlights the river's recovery from legacy contamination, and encourages visitors to get out on the water. The SLRNWT covers 16.5 miles, over 12,000 acres, with 11 distinct routes that cover 73 miles (routes overlap, loop and meander). Enhanced river recreation and education opportunities improve quality of life and promote and enhance river restoration and preservation efforts for residents who have been disconnected from the river.

Access to waterfronts is typically reserved for the wealthy, so access by disadvantaged and low-income is our priority.

**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?**

Long-term results

Outcome: Increased visibility and visits to achieve the vision for the AOC restoration.

Outcome: Further awareness of the many recreational uses, environmental, and conservation steps completed and underway.

Measurable results

Outcome: Number of West Duluth residents reconnected to river by outreach and events.

Outcome: Three new Interpretive landforms focusing on the environment and culture of the Estuary.

Outcome: Accessibility improvements on .27 miles of trail.

Outcome: Two new/improved trailheads.

Outcome: With 2022 ENRTF (\$500,000) and 2023 ENRTF (\$1,375,000) plus matching funds, we will construct 3 additional miles o trail

## Project Location

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

City(s): Duluth

**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: Access and Accessibility Improvements

**Activity Budget:** \$809,000

**Activity Description:**

This projects includes new trailheads at 1. Munger Landing; 2. Blackmer Park; 3. trail accessibility improvements along Strykker Bay, and 4. new accessible trail connection from Indian Point Campground to the newly installed Fishing Pier (located on Waabizheshikana adjacent to the campground). Improvements at Munger Landing and Blackmer Park include directional signage, parking with ABA access, accessible vault toilets and picnic areas, with an accessible paddle launch at Munger Landing with power chair lockers. At Munger Landing, there will be a staging area for outfitting and group education outdoor classroom. Strykker Bay slopes will be regraded to meet ABA standards and Indian Point fishing Pier access will be created to meet ABA accessibility standards. This project includes storm water retention and treatment adjacent to parking lots, and culvert replacement for enhanced drainage/trail protection.

Preliminary design is complete on all four project sites. Final design will take place with other funding sources, and we are currently requesting proposals to perform final design and permitting. Construction and grading permits will be necessary, and we will conduct a tree survey. Shoreline alteration permits may be necessary at Munger Landing to install the accessible dock.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Final Design and Permitting	August 31, 2024
Indian Point Pier accessibility improvements: New accessible trail from campground to Waabizheshikana Trail and Pier	December 31, 2025
Add 10 trailhead parking spaces at Munger Landing, up to 20 spaces at Blackmer Park	June 30, 2026
.27 Miles of Waabizheshikana trail slope regrading to ABA standards (along Strykker Bay)	June 30, 2026
Signage and wayfinding (Munger/Blackmer) 6 signs total including park entrance and directional signage.	June 30, 2026
Four Benches, Four picnic tables, two each of trash and recycling bins (Munger/Blackmer)	June 30, 2026
One Accessible Kayak Launch and two power chair lockers (Munger)	June 30, 2026
Four Vault Toilets (2@Munger/2@Blackmer Park).	June 30, 2026
Construction of Segment 1 of Trail between Spring Street and Clyde Avenue (Munger Landing)	June 30, 2026

### Activity 2: Interpretive Trail Elements

**Activity Budget:** \$244,773

**Activity Description:**

Interpretation is organized around a series of River Places; trailheads, overlooks, and rest stops—that will host outdoor classrooms, community and cultural gathering spaces, or nature play areas. Classrooms will be utilized by the St. Louis River Alliance as well as neighbor youth serving agencies and cultural organizations. Interpretive elements—story poles, cairns, freestanding signs, and concrete inlays—are designed from materials drawn from the estuary and from products of the local industries. By telling stories with materials from the location, the interpretive elements are true to their place and durable. The combination of materials, fabrication techniques, and cultural content promises to enrich educational opportunities.

Preliminary designs for these elements have been completed by a Landscape Architecture firm, Urban Ecosystems, in consultation with the Fond du Lac Tribal Band of Ojibway, for cultural and language references. We anticipate hiring a

firm to final design and manage the construction of these spaces, in order to properly reflect the cultural significance, and partner with tribal members on construction. These items will be constructed at the same time as the trail and accessibility improvements at Munger Landing, Blackmer Park, Strykker Bay and Indian Point fishing pier.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Final Design and Permitting	August 31, 2024
Munger Landing Outdoor Classroom	June 30, 2026
Indian Point Seven Fires Pause Area	June 30, 2026
Turtle mound interpretive landform/pause area	June 30, 2026
Granite cairns	June 30, 2026

**Activity 3: Water Trail Implementation**

**Activity Budget:** \$285,227

**Activity Description:**

Planning for the creation of the St. Louis River Water Trail focused on obtaining designation by the National Parks Service as a National Water Trail, which was received in 2020, including the creation of a leadership board, public information avenues (website, social media, news releases, kick-off event) and creating a water trail route map.

We are currently in implementation phase, to include capacity building of the St. Louis River Alliance, the designated entity to implement and operate the St. Louis River National Water Trail. Requested funding is for the St. Louis River Alliance to hire a new National Water Trail Coordinator to work on implementation of the Water Trail Master Plan and two part-time staff for community engagement. These new positions will provide outreach and education to promote river-related activities, recreation, and education. They will develop programming and events to promote the AOC successes and promote the newly created National Water Trail as a local, regional and national destination. They will also work to remove barriers for low-income and disadvantaged people to access the newly remediated river.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hire Coordinator to implement the St. Louis River National Water Trail 1.0 FTE	December 31, 2023
Hire Community Leaders to promote river access and programming	June 30, 2024
Complete staff training for water/paddling/boating safety for use on events and programming	June 30, 2024
Update and print 10,000 paper maps for water trail users	June 30, 2025
Plan and deliver 4 Day trip events per year	June 30, 2026
Plan and hold bi-monthly advisory board meetings per year	June 30, 2026
Promote river access and programming for at least 50 disadvantaged youth per year	June 30, 2026

**Activity 4: Tribal Monitoring**

**Activity Budget:** \$36,000

**Activity Description:**

This is as needed for tribal monitors to be present during ground disturbing activities. This area along the St. Louis River Estuary has had significant settlements by Indigenous cultures in the past, and we are anticipating an agreement to have tribal monitors present to look for and address any artifacts or burial remains that may be encountered during construction. They City and Fond Du Lac have entered into a Master Services Agreement that spells out process and

procedures to follow in the event that artifacts or burial sites are found, which includes work stoppage, securing the area, and performing additional site investigation. A copy of this Agreement is available and uploaded.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Tribal Monitoring during ground disturbance activities, up to 50 days during construction.	June 30, 2026

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Kris Eilers	St. Louis River Alliance	Executive Director. The Alliance is charged with implementing the St. Louis River Estuary National Water Trail.	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.**

This project has included substantial community involvement throughout the three separate planning processes (Trail, Interpretive Plan, Water Trail Plan). Prior to putting the project out for bid, the City will issue a press release and make the final plans available for review by the public. Comments will be collected, reviewed, and responded to as necessary. The City of Duluth will also create a project website that includes the previous planning documents, final designs, copies of all public notices, and project schedule. Prior to construction start, we will hold a groundbreaking ceremony, with invitations to project funders, partners, and community members. The City will take several actions that will include acknowledgements to ENRTF including a ribbon cutting event, project signage, project website and social media posts, press releases. Dissemination will occur prior to, during and after construction.

## 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?**

Implementation will be executed in segments, with facilities/amenities particular to each trail constructed concurrently. Long-term development and sustainability of the trails depends heavily on strong partnerships. Planning efforts identified over 60 partners in the St. Louis River Watershed alone, all with the capacity to assist in continued planning and implementation, marketing and promotional aspects, and on-going maintenance and stewardship. Funding likely will be from a combination of government partners, leveraging grant dollars, on-going operations of partners like the County and DNR, in-kind dollars from voluntary efforts of supporting nonprofits, and private donations.



## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	1.0 FTE Coordinator \$23/hr, 30% fringe for 3yrs; 2.Two seasonal Comm. Leaders \$20/hr 8 hr/week for 3yrs 3. Update and print paper maps \$8k; 4. Programming 3yrs@\$12k; 5. Training \$1.4k. 6. Director 220 hrs @\$33.65/Program Manager 100 hrs, \$24/hr; +fringe.				4.5		\$285,227
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Strykker Bay trail reconstruction - Existing trail ABA compliant slope modifications, .27 miles. Reroute the existing trail away from the collapsing shoreline.				1		\$190,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Segment 0 and Strykker Bay storm water improvements - Existing trail drainage improvements and culvert replacement.				0.5		\$85,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Indian Point Pier accessibility modifications				0.5		\$100,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Interpretive installations including final design: Indian Point rest stop \$100k; granite cairn \$4,000; Turtle mound landform \$100k.				0.5		\$204,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Munger Landing Outdoor Classroom - Outdoor education, recreation classes. Community gathering place.				0		\$40,773
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Munger Landing Trailhead - Accessible Vault Toilet/Changing Room, New Trailhead Parking Lot (10 ABA spaces), Picnic area - Tables, Grills, waste disposal				1		\$103,000
TBD	Professional or Technical	Blackmer Park Trailhead - New Parking Lot Incl. Curb and Gutter, Green stormwater infrastructure,				1		\$231,000

	Service Contract	Accessible Vault Toilet, Waste management, Signage and Wayfinding, Accessible Picnic Area.						
Fond du Lac Band	Sub award	Tribal Monitoring During ground disturbance activities				0.5		\$36,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,275,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
		Accessible Paddle launch/dock.	Provide access to river for paddlers with disabilities.	X				\$85,000
		Power Wheelchair Storage Lockers (2)	Storage for power wheelchairs while disabled persons are using the kayak launch and paddling.	X				\$15,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-

							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,375,000</b>
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## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Capital Expenditures		Accessible Paddle launch/dock.	<p>This equipment provides access to the remediated St. Louis River Estuary by people with disabilities, who may not otherwise have the ability to benefit from the work completed by the St. Louis River Area of Concern partner agencies.</p> <p><b>Additional Explanation :</b> This equipment will be permanently installed at Munger Landing and maintained by City staff to ensure use by paddlers for the useful life of the equipment.</p>
Capital Expenditures		Power Wheelchair Storage Lockers (2)	<p>This equipment provides access to the remediated St. Louis River Estuary by people with disabilities, who may not otherwise have the ability to benefit from the work completed by the St. Louis River Area of Concern partner agencies.</p> <p><b>Additional Explanation :</b> This equipment will be permanently installed and used for the duration of its useful life.</p>

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
<b>State</b>				
Cash	MN Historical Society	Interpretive elements	Secured	\$130,000
Cash	MPCA/EPA	Munger Landing improvements and remediation	Secured	\$785,000
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$915,000</b>
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	FEMA	Spirit Cove shoreline mitigation	Secured	\$600,000
Cash	City of Duluth	Segment 1 extension construction Fall/Spring 2024/2025 Const Segment 0 (Spring Street Re-route) 2024 Construction	Secured	\$400,000
Cash	US Steel/US EPA	Recreation and interpretive elements (Segment 3) Spring 2024 interpretive element Installation. Segment 3 Trail Construction –Fall 2023 construction completion	Secured	\$605,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,605,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$2,520,000</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [d3a02d03-3fa.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Map depicts the trail segments to be improved with this grant request only, coupled with matching funds....

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
City of Duluth Resolution	<a href="#">a3c414eb-5c7.pdf</a>

### Optional Attachments

#### *Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
Letters of Support	<a href="#">bef377b5-d2b.pdf</a>
Interpretive Landform Concepts	<a href="#">9945c4df-d7c.pdf</a>
Background Check Form	<a href="#">fee69141-d37.pdf</a>
Tribal Monitoring Master Services Agreement	<a href="#">0bd53a05-197.pdf</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

### *Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage*

The scope of work remains the same, budget was adjusted for the Munger Landing and Blackmer Park Trailheads by \$47,000 each. Added clarification language for SLRA sub award, including some budget and time for existing staff to work on grant funded activities, and removed mobile app from the scope/budget, as it is too costly and paper maps serve the same purpose. Added tribal monitoring budget for construction phase.

## 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