



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2023 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2023-189

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 1, 2023

Project Title: Addressing Erosion Along High Use River Loops

Project Budget: \$368,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Lisa Luukkala

Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 22, 2023

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

Project Completion: November 30, 2025

Final Report Due Date: January 14, 2026

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2023, Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08n

Appropriation Language: \$368,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Superior Hiking Trail Association to rehabilitate and renew popular river loops of the Superior Hiking Trail to withstand high visitor use and serve Minnesotans for years to come.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2026

Narrative

Project Summary: Rehabilitate and renew popular river loops of the Trail for a more resilient future to withstand high visitor use and serve Minnesotans for years to come.

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

Popular river trail loops such as those in or adjacent to state parks and waysides have shown the greatest impacts from high visitor use. These are destinations along the North Shore and serve as a connection to nature for thousands of Minnesotans each year. The majority of the SHT north of Two Harbors was built over 30 years ago and is showing its age. Erosion due to natural causes and visitor use has impacted the trail tread. Tight-to-shoreline trail sections create unique maintenance challenges and require attention. Safety is also a great concern, with aging infrastructure and the loops being most popular with more casual and less experienced hikers. The recent flooding events have only exacerbated the situation along these loops. The need to renew and reset the lifespan of these river loops is vital not only to the health and wellbeing of the land and water but also intrinsically tied to the economic and community vitality of the North Shore.

ENRTF is one of the few funding sources available to the Superior Hiking Trail Association to make these large-scale renewal projects possible.

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.

We will renew, rebuild and reinforce the river loops that see the highest use and user impacts. Our staff, lead volunteers and professional trailbuilding contractors will employ modern sustainable trail building practices that will focus on mitigating the negative effects caused by heavy use. One of the keys to successful implementation is to install infrastructures and features to keep people on the trail and water off. Where infrastructure replacement is needed, SHTA will identify and design solutions that maximize user safety and long-term resiliency and minimize environmental impacts.

Working with our project collaborators, SHTA will address the adverse affects of heavily trafficked sections of the Trail and strengthen visitor use management practices in these popular areas to assure the natural resource is protected. The SHTA is committed to providing meaningful connections to nature and public lands of Minnesota to create life-long stewards of our shared natural resources.

Due to the variability of weather in northern Minnesota for construction projects, we anticipate needing two full trail seasons -- typically June to November -- to complete this project.

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?

Through our Trail Renewal Program initiative, we will ensure that every mile of this natural footpath along the North Shore is sustainably built sustainably to be enjoyed by tens of thousands of annual visitors for decades to come -- all without causing unnecessary harm to surrounding lands and waters. The SHT is where thousands of visitors start to truly value public lands and commit to conserving and enhancing them. Our efforts to make the SHT resilient to climate changes and increase visitor use will help protect and preserve the sensitive habitats and ecosystems through which the Trail traverses.

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?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Renew the Most Popular Looped Experiences Along the Trail Corridor

Activity Budget: \$368,000

Activity Description:

The SHT's looped trail experiences are the most popular sections of trail used within the system. Loops are often used by beginner day hikers and offer the greatest accessibility to diverse populations just starting out in outdoor recreation. These trails sections need to be armored to withstand high traffic use and include up-to-date infrastructure to assure visitor safety and adjacent land and water protection. Improvements to the loops have been identified through formal assessments that were funded in part by LCCMR in previous years. These assessments will serve as a blueprint for planning projects. Work will be completed by a mix of volunteer, staff and professional trail building contractors.

Work will include renewing up to 13 miles with tread repair, armoring and retrofitting with drainage management techniques. Up to 3,000 feet of boardwalk, puncheon or steps will be replaced along the two river loops. The current infrastructure has ended its useful life and is made up of outdated trail designs that are no longer up to industry best practices. This project will reset the lifespan of these popular river loop sections of the Superior Hiking Trail.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Permits/permission with land managers complete for 2024 work	October 31, 2023
Reassessment of damaged locations along river loops due to 2022 flooding	November 30, 2023
Contractors secured for 2024 work (RFP, Bidding process, contract execution)	February 28, 2024
Volunteer recruitment for 2024 projects complete	June 30, 2024
Permits/permissions with land managers complete for 2025 work	October 31, 2024
Contractors secured for 2025 work (RFP, bidding process, contract execution)	February 28, 2025
Volunteer recruitment for 2025 projects complete	June 30, 2025
9 to 13 miles of trail loops will be renewed (tread, armoring, drainage)	November 30, 2025
2,000 to 3,000 linear feet of boardwalk, puncheon or steps replaced	November 30, 2025
One 1-mile wayside spur trail renewed	November 30, 2025

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Mike Young	MN 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
Jonathan Benson	US Forest Service	Liaison to the SHTA for any work done on the SHTA within the boundaries of Superior National Forest.	No
Cathy Quinn	US Forest Service	Liaison to the SHTA for any work done on the SHTA within the boundaries of Superior National Forest.	No
Matt Davis	North Country Trail Association	Provides advice, 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.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 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 Acknowledgment Guidelines. Specifically, SHTA will target the follow audiences to acknowledge the ENRTF: (1) users of the trail through SHTA's e-newsletter "Trail Mix" that goes out monthly to approximately 11,000 individuals. There is no cost to sign up for the newsletter and is most often viewed by users and supporters of the Trail. (2) SHTA members through our twice annual publication "Ridgeline" that is distributed to nearly 3,000 households and (3) general public through press releases, earned media, events and social media.

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?

Advancements in sustainable trail building techniques will allow SHTA to reset the lifespan of the Trail. SHTA continues to diversify its funding streams and strengthen partner relationships with land managers to guarantee a high-quality recreational experience now and into the future. SHTA's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan clearly outlines a road map to secure the trail corridor for future generations of users, address emerging needs around visitor use management all while assuring adequate resources are in place to support the longevity of the Trail corridor and support people to safely and respectfully use Minnesota's public lands.

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
Bioacoustics for Broad-Scale Species Monitoring and Conservation	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 03n	\$305,000

Plumbing The Muddy Depths Of Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08h	\$187,000
Superior Hiking Trail As Environmental Showcase	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09k	\$450,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Trail Operations Director		Oversees all trail construction work (planning, design, implementation)			15%	1		\$35,000
Volunteer Coordinator		Oversee volunteer coordination for construction projects			15%	0.5		\$15,000
							Sub Total	\$50,000
Contracts and Services								
Professional Trail Building Contractor -- 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.				0.6		\$166,300
							Sub Total	\$166,300
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Construction materials and tools	This includes lumber, cement, hardware, gravel, metal bog pans and related hardware.					\$150,000
							Sub Total	\$150,000
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					\$1,700
							Sub Total	\$1,700
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$368,000

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				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	SHTA Volunteer Hours	2,700 volunteer hours valued at \$20/hour	Secured	\$54,000
Cash	Donations and memberships	Various related expenses, including: materials, tools, volunteer support, lodging, travel, and other professional services to support this project.	Secured	\$50,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$104,000
			Funds Total	\$104,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [e3469d56-d7d.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Photos of existing conditions of deteriorated, poorly design Trail infrastructure and photos of the Association's solutions, including examples of enhancement and renewal recently implemented on other sections of Trail that have successfully addressed comparable problems....

Financial Capacity

File: [9d44974e-85d.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
SHTA Board Resolution_May 2022	69d6b7de-42f.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Background Check Certification Form	2e9de6af-a15.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Activity removed: One .8 mile trail section overlook renewed. The removal of this activity reflects the work that can be completed by the recommended \$368,000 allocation.

Updated budget line items to increase the Contractor line item to \$166,300 and reduce the construction supplies/materials to \$150,000 -- still totaling \$368,000.

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