

Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on December 18, 2025

M.L. 2023 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2025

Project Title: Construction of East Park

Project Manager: Nate Keller

Affiliation: City of St. Joseph

Mailing Address: 75 Callaway St E

City/State/Zip: St. Joseph, MN 56374

Phone: (320) 363-7201

E-mail: nkeller@cityofstjoseph.com

Website:

Funding Source:

Fiscal Year:

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

Appropriation Amount: \$700,000

Amount Spent: \$624,041

Amount Remaining: \$75,959

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

Our project created a paved trail, parking lot and ADA accessible dock/canoe launch. These improvements significantly increased inclusive outdoor experiences while conserving natural resources. Our project turned a non-accessible property to an accessible park while helping protect Minnesota's water, land, fish, wildlife, and overall preservation of a riverfront property.

Overall Project Outcome and Results

Our project presented an opportunity to enhance a 95 acre property directly adjacent to the Sauk River. The intended outcome was to enhance this property by turning it from a non-accessible property to a completely accessible park with ADA access at the forefront. LCCMR funding allowed us to install a completely ADA friendly dock/canoe/kayak launch, significantly enhance access to/entrance to the park, and provide a ADA trail allowing users of all abilities to access the park. The trail is 10' wide paved asphalt trail and is over 1.25 miles in length.

The property is the largest piece of property owned by the City. LCCMR funding allowed the city to make improvements all while enhancing the land, water, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources. Previous to the improvements there was

significant erosion occurring along the banks of the river and parking area (as parking area was all dirt). No stormwater controls existed either. The improvements allowed the city to more effectively control stormwater and prevent continued erosion from occurring. The dock area allows users of all abilities to access riverfront area and do things like fishing, canoeing, kayaking, birding, and more.

Development of the park has also allowed users specifically students from adjacent Kennedy Community School (K-8th grade) access and opportunity for outdoor learning classrooms. Seniors from nearby supportive living facilities have also visited the park due to its accessible nature. These are just a few examples of specific users who have benefitted and provided comments to the city in terms of appreciation for now having access to this park and the improvements made. Users of all types and abilities frequent the park daily. The park showcases a great example of a preservation and enhancement of a passive park where folks can find great peace with nature.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

The city has updated the public on the improvements made to the park by utilizing social media channels, City newsletter (mailed to residents), and at public meetings. The ENRTF logo has been used in these outlets. In addition, various local news agencies have done stories and referenced LCCMR funding and appropriate logos in the dissemination articles.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2023 Approved Final Report

General Information

Date: December 19, 2025

ID Number: 2023-091

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Project Title: Construction of East Park

Project Budget: \$700,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Nate Keller

Organization: City of St. Joseph

Office Telephone: (320) 363-7201

Email: nkeller@cityofstjoseph.com

Web Address:

Project Reporting

Final Report Approved: December 18, 2025

Reporting Status: Project Completed & Additional Update Approved

Date of Last Action: December 18, 2025

Project Completion: June 30, 2025

Legal Information

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

Appropriation Language: \$700,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the city of St. Joseph to increase recreational opportunities and access at East Park along the Sauk River in St. Joseph through enhancements such as a canoe and kayak access, a floating dock, paved and mowed trails, and parking entrance improvements.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2026

Narrative

Project Summary: Construction of East Park amenities along the Sauk River in St. Joseph, MN.

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

East Park presents a wonderful opportunity to enhance 95 acres of land along the Sauk River and to create an opportunity for students, residents, and visitors of all ages and abilities to connect with the natural world in multiple ways. The land is owned by the City of St. Joseph, but is not utilized because it's undeveloped and inaccessible. This severely limits park usage for all people. The City has a vision for creating a park that serves the broader community and region, including those who are interested in canoeing/kayaking, fishing, trails, and picnicking. Development of East Park will provide the city with the ability to host educational classes centered around the river and the prairie restoration area (prairie was restored in 2018 through native plantings) through Community Education and the adjacent Kennedy Community School, the College of St. Benedict, and St. John's University. Those using the park and trails will have an opportunity to learn about the nature through plaques (developed in partnership with St. Benedicts and St. Johns) placed throughout the park. The plaques will be completed in multiple languages including those most commonly used by non-native English-speaking residents.

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.

Construction of new trails will connect the ADA accessible canoe/kayak access, floating dock, parking, and entrance area. Along with the mowed trails the amenities will provide recreational and educational opportunities to the community and region. Accessibility is a priority for the City so that people of all ages, abilities, and income levels can enjoy the park amenities. All paved trails and amenities will be ADA accessible. The City is working closely with groups to ensure that everyone in the community is aware of and feels welcomed at East Park. Specifically, the City has partnered with a senior living facility and three schools to discuss educational programming and recreational opportunities for residents and students and is working with a local organization called Cultural Bridges to help foster connections between park access/amenities and immigrant groups in the region.

Use of the Sauk River as a regional water trail is a great asset to the entire Central Minnesota region and expands opportunities for residents to enjoy the river and East Park. The City is collaborating with other communities in the region on a canoe/kayak share system for residents or visitors who may not have access to their own personal

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?

East Park will enhance 95 acres of land along the Sauk River. Currently there are 20 acres of native prairie area and 10 acres of woodland re-establishment. The trails, canoe/kayak launch, and floating dock will allow residents and visitors access to the park and river for educational and recreational opportunities, providing current and future generations an enjoyment and better understanding of our natural world. The improvements will make the park accessible. At present access is limited due to no parking, trails or amenities. The trails will connect users to the amenities and other natural elements found in park.

Project Location

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

Region(s): Central

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Central

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Canoe, Kayak, Parking and Entrance Improvements

Activity Budget: \$149,600

Activity Description:

Improved parking area and entrance along with new trail, canoe/kayak access, drive aisle, and paved water access will be designed and built. The parking lot will contain approximately 10 Vehicle parking spots and 5 trailer parking spots. Attachment EastParkSitePlan_Updated shows the proposed improvements. Concurrent with the parking lot work, we will construct the ADA accessible canoe/kayak access, floating dock, and parking entrance using funds obtained through the DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant and city match. ENRTF funds will only be used for portions of the parking lot and phase 2 trails as depicted in the Site Plan attachment. The parking lot size has been increased from what was originally envisioned. Because of ENRTF funds we will now be able to add angled parking for trailers/boats. Original scope did not include angled parking. This was because of budget constraints within the DNR grant.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
1. Preliminary Design and Survey	September 30, 2023
2. Final Design	November 30, 2023
3.SHPO Consultation	November 30, 2023
4.Permits Secured	February 28, 2024
5.Project bidding	March 31, 2024
6.Contractor Selection	April 30, 2024
7.Construction Start	June 30, 2024
8.Final Construction	May 31, 2025
9.Certificate of Occupancy/Completion	June 30, 2025
10.Park Opens	June 30, 2025

Activity 2: East Park Trails

Activity Budget: \$550,400

Activity Description:

Construction of approximately 5200 Linear feet of paved trail and expanded parking lot with parking spots for boats and trailers will be designed and built. The paved trail will start at the entrance (Eastern Boundary) of park and provide a looped connection back to the parking lot area. Preliminary design and final design will run concurrently. Preliminary design will include soil borings and flood plain modeling to determine the exact trail location. The parking lot will contain approximately 10 Vehicle parking spots and 5 trailer parking spots. Attachment EastParkSitePlan_Updated shows the overall scope with details on the parking area and trails. Preliminary design will also include wetland delineation and coordination with DNR. Final design will occur after all components of the preliminary design are completed. Permitting will include wetland permitting, if needed, and a DNR Waters permit, if determined necessary during the preliminary design phase. All permits will be obtained by the city. An erosion control permit will also be obtained by both the city and contractor.

May 18th update - soil borings completed, and wetland delineation completed. Impacts to the wetland will be avoided. Trail will avoid the floodway and stay within the 100 year floodplain.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
1.Preliminary Design and Survey	September 30, 2023
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Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Kennedy Community School Staff and Students	Kennedy Community School	Utilize park for outdoor education and recreational opportunities for pre-Kindergarten to 8th grade students	No
Cultural Bridges Leadership Team and Participants	Cultural Bridges	Connecting diverse communities to recreational amenities and outdoor learning opportunities at East Park.	No
College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University Faculty, Staff, and Students	College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University	Utilize park for outdoor education and recreation opportunities for students, alumni, faculty, and staff.	No
Woodcrest Senior Living Facility Staff and Residents	Woodcrest Senior Living Facility	Utilize East Park for recreation and educational opportunities.	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.

All Public Releases and dissemination efforts will be handled by Project Manager (city staff). The Environmental trust logo will be used consistently throughout all public releases and media outreach efforts (print, online, etc.). An LCCMR logo sign will be installed at the park.

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?

If grant funds are awarded, engineering/designs will be finalized, and construction will begin and be completed in 2024 (May 2025 at latest). The ongoing effort of maintaining East Park will be completed and paid for by the City of St. Joseph. Additional Park phases are anticipated in the future and will be funded through grants and the City of St. Joseph. Park will be maintained by funds in the Park and Rec general budget.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
Personnel										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Contracts and Services										
S.E.H.	Service Contract	Permitting and Construction Administration. Work will entail design, permitting, and prep of bidding documents and associated administration activities.				0.5		\$132,200	\$132,000	\$200
General Contractor Selected - CNL Excavating	Service Contract	Construction of East Park including mobilization, site preparation, construction/paving, and landscaping/erosion control. Construction will include paved trail, parking lot, any associated prep/digging work of site, proper erosion and sediment control protection.				0.75		\$567,800	\$492,041	\$75,759
							Sub Total	\$700,000	\$624,041	\$75,959
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
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										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
							Grand Total	\$700,000	\$624,041	\$75,959

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	DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	Construct East Park amenities (canoe/kayak access, entrance, portions of parking lot, portion of trails, signage)	Secured	\$250,384	\$250,384	-
			State Sub Total	\$250,384	\$250,384	-
Non-State						
In-Kind	City of St. Joseph	City staff will mark, clear and mow 4,775 feet of mowed trails at East Park	Secured	\$6,720	-	\$6,720
In-Kind	City funds	DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant (city match)	Secured	\$250,384	\$250,384	-
			Non State Sub Total	\$257,104	\$250,384	\$6,720
			Funds Total	\$507,488	\$500,768	\$6,720

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [0df3b5a1-4c2.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Site Plan for East Park....

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Resolution - City of St. Joseph	d110c88b-75f.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Kennedy Community School Letter of Support	2c0063f2-842.pdf
Cultural Bridges Letter of Support	182db1e0-b18.pdf
College of St. Benedict and St. John's University Letter of Support	72e74808-03a.pdf
Woodcrest Senior Living Facility Letter of Support	15a44440-fbc.pdf
East Park Photos	4b3fad53-d5f.pdf
East Park Amenities	e83819cc-20f.pdf
Background check	1007d0a9-f0c.pdf
SitePlanEastPark_Updated	fd8f7a00-bbb.pdf
Final Design Plans	5f00043a-28b.pdf
River's Bend Final Design document	7590d94f-fd3.pdf
River's Bend Final Site Plan showing LCCMR portion	28ff6b04-7da.pdf
Dock	70622317-315.jpe
Trail picture	23692b0e-f95.jpe
Funding sign	142cd85a-875.jpe
Parking lot picture	92579e66-f12.jpe
Construction documents	e960563f-2cc.pdf
Original Proposed Site Plan	3e1d0dc2-93b.pdf
Canoe Launch Area	dcf02b54-eb2.jpe

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

The most significant change is \$250,384 has been awarded to the city for the project from the MN DNR. This was included in the proposals as "potential" funding source but has now been changed to "secured" funding source. The city is also providing a match to the DNR grant (50/50 match). The additional money from LCCMR will allow an expansion of the proposed trail to be constructed extending from the Eastern entrance of the park to the Western boundary. The trail will connect to the other amenities (canoe/kayak access, parking/entrance, native prairie area, etc.) and provide a looped connection.

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"> • Activities and Milestones 	Previous workplan had the years wrong. I updated the years to 2024, and 2025 for some of the milestones. Previously the years reflected 2023 and did not follow subsequent order.	July 31, 2023	Yes	August 1, 2023
2	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other • Activities and Milestones • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts 	The city has selected an consulting Engineer to complete the design plans. A shift in parking lot orientation has occurred due to results of topo survey, wetland delineation, and floodplain information. The shift better aligns with existing grades and slopes and will allow for a better alignment for the canoe/kayak access.	May 23, 2024	Yes	May 24, 2024
3	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts • Attachments 	Updates provided per request of LCCMR staff. Updates tied to final design plans, general contractor selection, and status of project. All relevant materials have been attached including final design plans, and bidding documents.	October 29, 2024	Yes	October 29, 2024

Additional Status Update Reporting

Additional Status Update October 3, 2025

Date Submitted: October 15, 2025

Date Approved: December 4, 2025

Overall Update

Please see update under the August update which has now been updated to reflect conditions as of October 3rd, 2025.

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)

Dissemination

Please see update under the August update.

Status Update Reporting

Final Status Update August 14, 2025

Date Submitted: October 15, 2025

Date Approved: December 4, 2025

Overall Update

The parking lot has been completed including all ADA parking spots stripped and signed. The dock and canoe area is completed. The trails are completed. Seeding around the trail has been completed. All project outcomes and goals have been completed and approved. Since construction has been completed at the park the park has experienced significant increase in visitors. The park has gone from a not utilized/known asset to arguably the most visited park in the city's park system. People from inside and outside the region are coming to walk the trails or fish from the floating dock. The trail and floating dock especially have seen high usage. Since the project is accessible now staff have also noticed folks in wheelchairs or mobility scooters using the park which has been an pleasure to witness. Teenager are seen consistently at the park fishing from the dock. The park has shown that it is a place for all abilities and ages to come together and experience a peaceful retreat into nature.

Activity 1

Parking lot is complete and paving is finished. ADA parking spaces and signage has been installed. Installation of trails, canoe/kayak, and dock is completed. The canoe/kayak area was installed south of the bridge crossing into Waite Park and at the Eastern area of the park. The canoe/kayak launch connects directly to the parking lot area and the Sauk River. The parking lot area can accommodate regular passenger vehicles but also vehicles with trailers and boats. Please see construction document attachment for greater detail on size of parking lot, trails, and other project components.

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

Activity 2

Trails are paved and completed. Trail is over 1.25 miles in length, 10' wide, and constructed of bituminous pavement. The trail begins at the parking lot and continues straight toward the back of the park. At the midpoint of the trail the trail also curves North and makes a circle around the native prairie grass. The trail location and distance match the original plans. Grass establishment is done. All work has been finalized. We are just awaiting a final payout from the contractor.

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

Dissemination

We have not had any dissemination since the last update. ENRTF sign has been installed. We will be posting updates to the Social Media page of the City and update the Park information on the website in the coming months. We will mention all acknowledgements in the posts and website.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update April 1, 2025

Date Submitted: October 15, 2025

Date Approved: December 4, 2025

Overall Update

All project components are completed (trail, canoe/kayak, parking lot). We are just awaiting final pay apps from the contractor. Once we have these we will know how much funds we have left at project completion.

Activity 1

Installation of trails, canoe/kayak, and dock is occurring in the coming month.

Activity 2

Trails area has been graded.

Dissemination

We have not had any dissemination since last update.

Additional Status Update Reporting

Additional Status Update October 29, 2024

Date Submitted: October 29, 2024

Date Approved: October 29, 2024

Overall Update

General contractor selected and work has started on portions of the project tied to the parking lot and canoe/kayak access.

Activity 1

First lift of parking lot is completed. Final lift/paving of parking lot and trails to occur in Spring.

Activity 2

Trails will be paved in the Spring.

Dissemination

We have not had any dissemination since last update.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update October 1, 2024

Date Submitted: October 29, 2024

Date Approved: October 29, 2024

Overall Update

Since the Spring the City has: solicited bids for the project, City Council has accepted the lowest bid, and a preconstruction meeting was held. A timeline/schedule was also delivered to the City by the contractor. The City has also submitted its first payment reimbursement request and received the funds from the request. The canoe/kayak dock has been ordered as well. Work is expected to start this year and finish up in the Spring and total approximately 3-4 weeks weather pending. Permits needed for the project only consisted of a Stearns County right of way permit. This permit has been obtained and approved.

Activity 1

Since our last update the city has: solicited bids for the project, City Council has accepted the lowest bid, preconstruction meeting has been held, and a timeline/schedule has been delivered to the City. The canoe/kayak dock has also been ordered. Weather pending the work is expected to start this year and finish up in the Spring. Total estimated time to do the improvements is around 3-4 weeks.

Activity 2

For the trails the city has solicited bids, City Council has accepted bid, and preconstruction meeting has been held. Expected work will be a couple weeks for the trails and finish up in the Spring.

Dissemination

We have not posted any additional dissemination information. Right before project starts and construction occurs we will post on Social Media and use follow the proper dissemination requirements.

Additional Status Update Reporting

Additional Status Update August 14, 2024

Date Submitted: October 29, 2024

Date Approved: October 29, 2024

Overall Update

"This status update is waived per guidance from LCCMR staff provided on August 13, 2024."

Activity 1

-

Activity 2

-

Dissemination

-

Status Update Reporting

Status Update April 1, 2024

Date Submitted: May 23, 2024

Date Approved: May 24, 2024

Overall Update

The city has signed a contract with a consulting Engineer firm to complete the final design plans and bidding documents. The preliminary design is complete and final design plans are over 80% complete as of May 16th (final design expected to be complete in Mid June). SHPO consultation has been completed. We are on track to bid the project out early July and begin construction mid-August (completing by the deadline of June 30th, 2025). Topo survey has been completed and as a result of this survey a slight shift in the orientation of the parking lot has occurred. The orientation has changed so the dock and canoe/kayak access is more appropriately lined up with grades and slopes. Attached is a copy of the 80% completed plans. Wetland delineation completed and route of trail/parking lot/etc. confirms avoidance with wetland areas. Improvements will also avoid the floodway areas of the site (stay within the 100 year floodplain). Soil boring results showed nothing unusual or surprises on soil conditions. Permits not submitted yet.

Another change is the city has revised the name of the Park to "River's Bend" this was a name chosen by the community through survey.

Activity 1

Our consulting Engineer firm is completing the final design documents and on schedule to be ready to bid the project out by early July. Actual construction work therefore has not begun.

Activity 2

Our consulting Engineer firm is completing the final design documents and on schedule to be ready to bid the project out by early July. Actual construction work therefore has not begun.

Dissemination

Local news articles have picked up and published stories on the park development. We have continued to use the trust logo on any articles or have informed the news outlets to use the logo.