



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2024 Approved Work Plan

## General Information

**ID Number:** 2024-264

**Staff Lead:** Tom Dietrich

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** June 11, 2024

**Project Title:** Dent and Vergas Spur Trails

**Project Budget:** \$934,000

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Kevin Fellbaum

**Organization:** Otter Tail County

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## Project Reporting

**Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR:** June 20, 2024

**Reporting Schedule:** June 1 / December 1 of each year.

**Project Completion:** December 31, 2025

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

## Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2024, Chp. 83, Sec. 2, Subd. 09j

**Appropriation Language:** \$934,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Otter Tail County to construct a trail along County State-Aid Highway 35 to connect the cities of Dent and Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park to provide recreation and nonmotorized transportation opportunities.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2027

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** Construction of a 6.6 mile bituminous trail along CSAH 35 connecting the cities of Dent and Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park

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

This proposal addresses two problems using recommended strategies from LCCMR's strategic plan.

First, this proposal expands outdoor recreational opportunities through the development of culturally relevant, accessible, and resilient outdoor recreation infrastructure. More specifically, it expands outdoor recreational opportunities by connecting the small communities of Dent and Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park via a bituminous shoulder trail on CSAH 35. As discussed during our presentations, a separated trail was considered and explored but wasn't feasible as neighboring landowners were unwilling to dispose of necessary property. Additionally, due to the road reconstruct timing, it wasn't feasible to delay the project without considerable cost implications.

Second, this proposal will assist Minnesota in achieving reliance on nonpolluting, renewable energy in all sectors, including transportation. This proposal specifically aims to increase non-motorized transportation routes by connecting the cities of Vergas, Dent, Perham, Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State Park. In recent years, non-motorized travel along the highway system has spiked, resulting in significant safety concerns. Safe, appropriate infrastructure is critical if non-motorized transportation is going to continue to expand in rural areas.

**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.**

CSAH 35 connects both Dent and Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park. Unfortunately, the current gravel shoulders of CSAH 35 do not meet MNDOT standards for non-motorized transportation, creating a significant safety concern. In 2025, Otter Tail County will be completing a resurfacing of CSAH 35 between Dent and Vergas. While this would be the perfect time for expanding and paving the shoulders for non-motorized use, neither the cities nor Otter Tail County have a budget to do so.

LCCMR funding will be used to:

- expand and pave 6' shoulders for 3.7 miles along CSAH 35 from CSAH 4 in Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail at 440th Street
- expand and pave 4' shoulders for 2.9 miles along CSAH 35 from State Highway 108 in Dent to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail at CSAH 34

Otter Tail County already owns or has easement on all land being used for the new trail.

If completed, this project will provide a safe, non-motorized alternative for residents and visitors to access the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail, Maplewood State Park, and the Heartland State Trail.

**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 expand outdoor recreational opportunities through additions and connections to state, regional, or local parks and trails.

This project will increase access to and expand opportunities for culturally relevant and innovative connections to the lands and waters of Minnesota.

This project will reduce social, economic, and physical barriers to outdoor recreation for the residents of Dent, Vergas

and the surrounding area.

This project will assist Minnesota in achieving reliance on nonpolluting, renewable transportation alternatives by creating safe, non-motorized routes between Dent, Vergas, Perham, Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State 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?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Engineering, Environmental Review, Permitting and Construction Bidding

**Activity Budget:** \$1

**Activity Description:**

LCCMR funding will be used to design, engineer, permit and competitively bid a widened 4-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 2.9 miles of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 35 from the City of Dent to the Heart of the Lakes Trail at the intersection of CSAH 34 and a widened 6-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 3.7 miles of CSAH 35 from the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail at the intersection of 440th Street to the City of Vergas at CSAH 4.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete Environmental Review	April 30, 2024
Complete Wetland Delineation with OTC BWSR	May 31, 2024
Obtain Wetland Permits	October 31, 2024
Complete Engineering Plans	November 30, 2024
Complete Plan Review	January 31, 2025
Advertise for Bids	February 28, 2025

### Activity 2: Construction of the Dent and Vergas Spur Trails

**Activity Budget:** \$933,999

**Activity Description:**

LCCMR funding will be used to construct a widened 4-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 2.9 miles of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 35 from the City of Dent to the Heart of the Lakes Trail at the intersection of CSAH 34 and a widened 6-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 3.7 miles of CSAH 35 from the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail at the intersection of 440th Street to the City of Vergas at CSAH 4.

The County of Otter Tail intends to resurface 10.8 miles of CSAH 35 from the City of Dent to the City of Vergas and the above widened bituminous shoulder trails will be constructed along with that resurfacing project.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Preconstruction Meeting Completed	May 31, 2025
Culvert Improvements Completed	June 30, 2025
Grading Completed	July 31, 2025
Final Paving Completed	August 31, 2025
Striping and Signing Completed	September 30, 2025
Ongoing Site Monitoring and Construction Meetings (Before, During, and After Photos Submitted to LCCMR)	December 31, 2025
Trail Opening	December 31, 2025

## 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.**

We will acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund through use of the trust fund logo on signage along with corridor and through attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, and other communications and outreach.

## 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 anticipated life expectancy of this trail is 25 years. Once the project is completed, Otter Tail County will assume financial responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the trail. The ability to complete and maintain the project long-term is of utmost importance. Per the attached resolution, the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners have approved this grant application for the Dent and Vergas Spur Trails.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Perham To Pelican Rapids Regional Trail (McDonald Segment)	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a	\$2,245,000
Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail (West Segment)	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09n	\$2,600,000

## 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>								
Contractor selected through competitive bid process	Professional or Technical Service Contract	4-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 2.9 miles of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 35 and a widened 6-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 3.7 miles of CSAH 35				0		\$934,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	\$934,000
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</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>\$934,000</b>

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
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	Otter Tail County	Trail topographical survey, design engineering and construction engineering.	Secured	\$59,000
Cash	Otter Tail County	Trail wetland delineation, wetland credits, archaeological review, MPCA permitting	Secured	\$19,500
Cash	Otter Tail County	Highway design, engineering, construction and related services	Secured	\$4,440,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$4,518,500</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$4,518,500</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [e419b161-d91.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Map and cross sections of the proposed spur trail connecting the Cities of Vergas and Dent to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park...

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
County Board Resolution	<a href="#">58772530-45b.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
City of Vergas Letter of Support	<a href="#">7e8c8e41-ca8.pdf</a>
City of Dent Letter of Support	<a href="#">61057822-dbf.pdf</a>
Property Owner Letter of Support	<a href="#">5b81b493-a21.pdf</a>
GMRPTC Letter of Support	<a href="#">0bf5f74c-2f3.pdf</a>

#### *Media Links*

Title	Link
Otter Tail County Master Trail Plan	<a href="https://ottertailcounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/170228_Otter_Tail_County-wide_Trail_Master_Plan_FINAL-1.pdf">https://ottertailcounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/170228_Otter_Tail_County-wide_Trail_Master_Plan_FINAL-1.pdf</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

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

I've addressed everything except comment 1. See email to Michael on that item and a couple other questions.

## 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?**

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

**Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?**

Yes

**Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?**

No