



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-116

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 10, 2025

Project Title: SHT Bridge, Boardwalk and Trailhead Renewal

Project Budget: \$532,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Lisa Luukkala

Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 24, 2025

Reporting Schedule: March 1 / September 1 of each year.

Project Completion: June 30, 2028

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2028

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08f

Appropriation Language: \$532,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Superior Hiking Trail Association to renew Superior Hiking Trail bridges, boardwalks, and trailheads to increase user safety, improve the user experience, and protect adjacent land and water.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2028

Narrative

Project Summary: The Superior Hiking Trail seeks to renew bridges, boardwalk and trailheads to increase user safety, improve the user experience, and protect adjacent land and water.

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

The SHT's bridges are its most expensive and complex infrastructure. SHTA, in partnership with land managers, conduct assessments when a bridge has notable signs of aging or potential failure. If a bridge is compromised, it may be assigned a weight restriction, be signed for closure, or be removed. Often a bridge will be closed or removed years before a replacement bridge can be installed. This is primarily due to the challenge is the expense of bridges and the complexity and SHTA's capacity to implement complex bridge projects in remote locations with limited resources.

SHT trailheads are an important component to the trail experience. There are over 50 trailheads within our system, most of which are managed and maintained solely by the Association. Due to compounding deferred maintenance at trailheads there are serious issues including rutting, widening, and pooling. As visitor use increases along the Superior Hiking Trail, we see the need to explore expansion at some of our smaller or more heavily used trailheads. In addition, some trailhead locations are not optimal and identifying new locations is a more viable long-term solution to assure greater safety, reduce impacts on the environment or reduce maintenance costs.

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.

Using asset inventory data collected through our larger Master Planning effort, SHTA will prioritize the replacement of bridges at critical water crossings in high use areas along the Trail near steep and challenging terrain. In 2017 SHTA launched its Trail Renewal Program and a core focus was reducing the number of bridged water crossings along our the Trail by (1) identifying alternative crossing locations (2) rerouting the trail (3) using natural stepping stones in place of a bridge. We have made great progress in reducing our bridges and boardwalk by using these methods, yet there always remain some water crossings that require a bridge or a low area that requires boardwalk. We will use modern, sustainable bridge design and partner with knowledge land management agencies. SHTA volunteers will provide over 4,000 hours to assist with the installations.

Through the Master Planning process the need for trailheads improvements was brought up time and time again by our users. The trail experience begins at the trailhead and SHTA plans to improve that experience by updating our most degraded locations. Applications will include regrading, new signage and, in some cases, small expansions or even relocation. These activities will take part by contractors.

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?

SHTA's Trail Renewal Program strives to build using the most modern, sustainable methods to ensure our 400,000 seasonal visitors do not cause unnecessary harm to surrounding lands and waters. This includes bridges and trailheads, often overlooked elements of the Trail. Our efforts to make the SHT resilient to climate changes and withstand increase visitor use will help protect and preserve the sensitive habitats and ecosystems through which the Trail traverses.

The Trail is a space for exploration and education -- it's where tens of thousands of Minnesotans start their lifelong connection to the outdoors.

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?

In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Replace the most compromised foot bridges along the Superior Hiking Trail Corridor and reestablish the Split Rock River bridge.

Activity Budget: \$358,415

Activity Description:

Over 2026 and 2027 we will replace 3 to 4 bridges of these most compromised. These are bridges that span steep ravines and span in length from 35 - 55 feet.

Bridges priorities have been identified by SHTA staff and land managers. These include, in order of priority:

1. Split Rock River Bridge -55 foot span
2. Onion River Bridge - 55 foot span
3. Baptism River Bridge -- 35 foot span
4. Devil Track River Bridge -- 42 foot span

SHTA will install a 55 foot bridge across the Split Rock River. Trail users have long advocated to reinstate a bridge at this location since its removal in 2016. This will finally complete the full renewal of the popular loop trail experience, the other components of the renewal are being completed in 2024 and 2025 with ENTRF support. The project will include a 225' trail extension on each side of the river adjust to the crossing location, which has already been identified.

Bridge projects, will be project managed by SHTA staff and implemented by staff and volunteers. SHTA has a long history of completing bridge installations. We plan to use bridge manufacturer, Arete, a product we have experience installing.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
All construction funds legally secured for projects	August 31, 2025
Notice of funding restrictions recorded.	August 31, 2025
Permits/permission with land managers complete for 2026 work	December 31, 2025
In partnership with land manager, consultant with necessary parties, including SHPO	December 31, 2025
Contractors secured & materials ordered for 2026 work	March 31, 2026
Volunteer recruitment for 2026 projects complete	May 31, 2026
Replacement 1 to 2 bridges in 2026	November 30, 2026
Construct trail extension to SRR bridge location (approximately 225' on each side)	November 30, 2026
Permits/permission with land managers complete for 2027 work	December 31, 2026
Contractors secured & materials ordered for 2027 work	March 31, 2027
Volunteer recruitment for 2027 projects complete	May 31, 2027
Replacement 1 to 2 bridges in 2027	November 30, 2027
Signage installed with ENRTF language/logo	November 30, 2027
Project sites open for intended use	November 30, 2027

Activity 2: Relocate or improve SHT Trailheads to provide adequate parking and signage and better protect the adjacent land and water.

Activity Budget: \$60,907

Activity Description:

Work will include the relocation of the trailhead at Arrowhead Trail to a more optimal location less than a half mile from its current location. The new relocation will double the parking spots from 6 to 12. The new location will eliminate the

need for the current lengthy spur trail with failing bridges. The new 54' x 60' trailhead will include a new trail kiosk. The project will include the decommissioning of the spur trail and the old trailhead.

SHT will also improve another 3 to 5 trailheads within our corridor. Improvements could include small expansions, culverts, gravel and grading, new trailhead signage.

All projects will involve consultation with the associated land manager and the completion of any required environmental reviews.

Trailhead improvements were one of the most frequently cited issue by trail users through public feedback collected as part of our larger 2023/2024 Master Planning effort. Alongside parking lots improvements, SHTA is committed to providing better wayfinding and trail user "Leave No Trace" education at trailhead kiosks.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
In partnership with land manager, consult all necessary parties, including SHPO	December 31, 2025
All construction funds legally secured	December 31, 2025
Notice of funding restrictions recorded	December 31, 2025
Permits/permission with land managers complete for 2026 work	January 31, 2026
Contractors secured & materials ordered for 2026 work	April 30, 2026
Volunteer recruitment for 2026 projects complete	May 31, 2026
Build new Trailhead on Arrowhead	November 30, 2026
Decommission old trailhead and spur trail on Arrowhead	November 30, 2026
Permits/permission with land managers complete for 2027 work	January 31, 2027
Contractors secured & materials ordered for 2027 work	April 30, 2027
Improve 3 to 5 trailheads with small expansions, grading, and new signage.	November 30, 2027
Signage installed with ENRFT language/logo	November 30, 2027
All project sites open for intended use.	December 31, 2027

Activity 3: Replace failing boardwalk on popular section of SHT.

Activity Budget: \$112,678

Activity Description:

Replace 420' linear feet of boardwalk at East Sawmill Creek, between Sawmill Pond and Section 13 Cliffs. This area is swampy and requires replacement of elevated boardwalk and use of more durable materials. The project requires 108 linear feet of Wickcraft boardwalk product, which is made with a galvanized steel frame guaranteed to last for 100 years. The decking of this type of boardwalk is wide and level, which makes it easier to traverse.

SHTA has installed Wickcraft boardwalk, thanks in part to ENTRF support, in other key swampy, lowland locations along the SHT Corridor. Due to project complexity, the installation will be completed by a paid contractor.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Permits/permission with land managers	January 31, 2026
In partnership with land manager, consult all necessary parties, including SHPO	December 31, 2026
All construction funds legally secured.	December 31, 2026
Contractors secured & materials ordered	April 30, 2027
Notice of funding restriction recorded.	October 31, 2027

108 linear feet of Wickcraft Boardwalk installed	November 30, 2027
305 linear feet of puncheon installed	November 30, 2027
Project site open for intended use	November 30, 2027
Signage installed with ENRTF language/logo	December 31, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jonathan Benson	US Forest Service -- Superior National Forest	Liaison to SHTA within the boundary of the national forest	No
Paul Hansen	Minnesota DNR - Division of Parks & Trails	Liaison to the SHTA within the boundary of state park land	No
Nathan Eide	Lake County - Forestry/Land Department	Liaison to the SHTA within the boundary of Lake County land	No
Mike Young	Minnesota DNR - Division of Forestry	Liaison to SHTA with the project boundary of DNR Forestry lands	No
Matt David	North Country Trail Association	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.

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, ENRTF will be acknowledged through the following SHTA communication platforms: (1) SHTA's monthly e-newsletter that is sent out to 11,000 individuals. There is no cost to receive this newsletter and majority of those who sign up are supporters and users of the Trail. We recognize funders and provide project updates through this publication. (2) SHTA's twice monthly Ridgeline publication that is sent out to 3,000 households. This publication is for members of the Association and we recognize our grant funders and highlight project in each publication. (3) Press releases, social media and earn media around the project. Upon completion of the project we will engage the media through a press release and/or a media event to share the story of this project and its funding partners. (4) Physical signage at the project location(s).

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?

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. Last year over half our annual budget was secured by the generosity of SHT members and donors. SHTA's 2024 Master Plan 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
Restoring Five Sections of the Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09o	\$191,000
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
Renewing Access to an Iconic North Shore Vista	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08m	\$197,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Volunteer Coordinator		Volunteer recruitment, coordination and oversight			15%	0.24		\$11,000
Trail Operations Director		Project managers -- leads permitting, hires contractors, manages contractors and volunteers			15%	0.5		\$35,000
							Sub Total	\$46,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Installation of boardwalk				0		\$69,520
TBD	Service Contract	Construction of new Trailhead				0		\$30,657
TBD	Service Contract	Installation of bridges				0		\$51,550
TBD	Service Contract	Installation and improvements to existing trailhead parking lots				0		\$20,000
TBD	Service Contract	Materials transport and delivery				0		\$6,000
							Sub Total	\$177,727
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Cement for abutments (2 bridges)	Bridge replacements - Devil Track & Split Rock River					\$3,632
	Tools and Supplies	Stone, timber for new sign posts, signage, plantings	Improvements at new trailhead at Arrowhead					\$2,750
	Equipment	Laser Level	Needed for bridge installations					\$900
	Tools and Supplies	Lumber (308 feet of puncheon)	Puncheon is a style of boardwalk to elevate the trail users in wet areas	X				\$5,032
	Tools and Supplies	Timbers for Split Rock River Bridge & Devil Track River Bridge abutments (treated with copper naphthenate)	Heavy duty lumber to extend the lifespan of this bridge that is in a remote location	X				\$15,000
	Tools and Supplies	Hardware for 4 bridge installations	securely construct bridge	X				\$9,000

	Tools and Supplies	Rebar for Split Rock River Bridge abutments	Securely install bridge	X				\$12,121
	Tools and Supplies	Gabion baskets (Onion River & Baptism River bridges)	Bridge abutment materials					\$4,000
	Tools and Supplies	Lumber for abutment (Onion River Bridge)	Needed for abutment design at this bridge location					\$3,000
							Sub Total	\$55,435
Capital Expenditures								
		Wickcraft Boardwalk (108 ft)	Elevated boardwalk, galvanized steel frame	X				\$30,624
		Baptism River Fiberglass Bridge (35' x 4')	replace failing bridge at this river location	X				\$36,350
		Split Rock River Fiberglass Bridge (55' x 4')	provide safe connectivity for trail users over the river	X				\$64,340
		Onion River Fiberglass Bridge + delivery (55' x 4')	replace failing bridge over trail river crossing	X				\$64,340
		Devil Track River Fiberglass Bridge (42' x 4')	replace failing bridge a river crossing	X				\$53,184
							Sub Total	\$248,838
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	2 years of mileage support along SHT corridor	Trail Op Director's mileage for project planning, oversight and implementation					\$3,000
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	2 years of mileage support	Volunteer Coordinator mileage for coordinating and supporting volunteer-led projects within the grant					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$4,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$532,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Capital Expenditures		Wickcraft Boardwalk (108 ft)	Wickcraft is the preferred style of boardwalk to use in incredibly wet areas along the trail corridor, it reduces the need for maintenance and eliminates wood rot issues. Additional Explanation : The boardwalk has a galvanized steel frame with a 50+ year lifespan. Once installed, it will serve hikers for decades to come.
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Lumber (308 feet of puncheon)	Boardwalk is a commonly deployed trail infrastructure to both protect the adjacent land and water and for the safety of hikers. Additional Explanation : Wood puncheon has a typical lifespan of 15 years pending on location and exposure to the elements
Capital Expenditures		Baptism River Fiberglass Bridge (35' x 4')	Bridges are a necessity for safe river crossings Additional Explanation : Bridges typically have a 30+ year lifespan with decking replacement and routine bridge inspections on the abutments. This will serve SHT hikers for decades to come.
Capital Expenditures		Split Rock River Fiberglass Bridge (55' x 4')	Bridges are necessary infrastructure on the SHT to provide safe passage over rivers along the trail corridor. Additional Explanation : Bridges have a 30+ year lifespan with minor repairs to decking. This will serve the SHT users for decades to come.
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Timbers for Split Rock River Bridge & Devil Track River Bridge abutments (treated with copper naphthenate)	safe water crossings are important along the trail corridor Additional Explanation : Abutments are a necessary part of bridge building
Capital Expenditures		Onion River Fiberglass Bridge + delivery (55' x 4')	safe water crossings along steep waterways is necessary on the trail corridor Additional Explanation : Bridges have a 30+ year lifespan, with minor maintenance such as decking replacement. This will serve trail users for decades to come.
Capital Expenditures		Devil Track River Fiberglass Bridge (42' x4')	safe water crossings are necessary at large bodies of water along the trail corridor Additional Explanation : Fiberglass bridges have a 30+ year lifespan with minimal maintenance such as replacing lumber decking
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Hardware for 4 bridge installations	Necessary component of bridge construction Additional Explanation : Bridge lifespan is over 30+ years and its hardware is similar lifespan. These bridges will serve hikers for decades to come.
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Rebar for Split Rock River Bridge abutments	Safe water crossings are necessary in key locations along the trail corridor Additional Explanation : This is necessary component of the bridge construction, bridge

			lifespan is over 30+ years with minor maintenance.
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	Volunteer Hours Contributed to the Projects (4,080 hrs @\$31.80/hr)	Bridge installations, decommissioning old spur trail and installing new signage	Secured	\$129,743
Cash	US Forest Service RAC grant	Support portion of bridge projects taking place on Superior National Forest	Pending	\$40,000
Cash	SHTA Donations	Project Materials	Secured	\$6,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$175,743
			Funds Total	\$175,743

Total Project Cost: \$707,743

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [59cd02bb-97e.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The graphic depicts the problems (failing bridges, boardwalk and trailheads) we plan to address and the solutions we plan to pursue with ENTRF support....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
SHTA Audited Financial Statement	8cf3eda0-396.pdf
SHTA 990	2fba8e9c-b36.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Revised SHTA Board Resolution	872d3497-8f6.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Superior National Forest Letter of Support	907a6a2e-09f.pdf
DNR Division of Parks & Trails Letter of Support	46609a38-bff.pdf
Split Rock River Plan Set	553325f3-f12.pdf
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire	d760dfe5-549.pdf
Capital Construction Budget Addendum	0970739b-c6f.xlsx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

The Dissemination page is now complete. The Board Resolution is now updated with the language required by ENRFT/LCCMR.

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 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?

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

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

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this project:

Tamer Ibrahim, Trail Operations Director (STHA), Barbara Budd, Volunteer & Ed Coordinator (SHTA)

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

Yes, I understand