



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-268

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 5, 2025

Project Title: Enhancing Preservation and Accessibility at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve

Project Budget: \$155,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Katie Bennett

Organization: City of Duluth

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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. 09I

Appropriation Language: \$155,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the city of Duluth to develop accessible trails and remove invasive species to enhance outdoor recreation and education opportunities that promote conservation of raptors and preservation of natural resources at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2028

Narrative

Project Summary: Enhance outdoor recreation and education opportunities that promote conservation of raptors and preservation of natural resources through development of an accessible trail and removal of invasive species at Hawk Ridge.

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

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory (Observatory) was established to further bird research, preservation, education, and stewardship at the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve (Hawk Ridge), an internationally recognized observation site for bird migration. The Observatory has monitored bird population health for 50 years through migration counts and banding research at Hawk Ridge, and educates thousands of people from around the world on the ecological importance of birds and bird conservation each year.

A community-based planning process for Hawk Ridge revealed three primary challenges: 1) Limited accessible facilities and trails for education programs and outdoor recreation; 2) Visitor safety and conflicts with vehicle traffic; and 3) Limited space and resources for high-quality conservation-based education programming.

This Phase 1 proposal addresses the problem that people of all abilities do not have access to high-quality outdoor recreation and conservation-based education at Hawk Ridge, and the negative effects of invasive species on native plant species. Accessibility to facilities at Hawk Ridge is challenging or non-existent. Accessible viewing areas are limited to the unsafe roadside and one small education program area; the viewing platform is not accessible. There are no accessible trails and, therefore, trail-based education, programming, and research opportunities are not available to all people.

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.

This funding will support Phase I improvements of the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve Plan to provide visitors of all abilities with access to high-quality outdoor recreation and conservation-based education opportunities. Approximately 1,300 linear feet of universally accessible trail will be constructed, including an accessible loop and access to the viewing platform. The loop will be established through a combination of newly constructed trail, segments of new boardwalk to protect and preserve wetlands, and upgrades to existing trail to meet the firm and stable surface requirements for an accessible trail. All trail will be designed to meet the ABA recreational trail accessibility standards and MN DNR sustainability guidelines. Approximately 1.25 acres of invasive species removal will be completed along the accessible trail corridor.

With the implementation of future project phases, the accessible trail loop will connect a variety of new accessible facilities, including: parking, educational spaces, an amphitheater, permanent restrooms, a playscape, and an overlook area.

Phase I improvements will make the uniquely situated natural area of Hawk Ridge a safer, more sustainable, accessible, and equitable space, allowing the Observatory to expand outdoor conservation-based education opportunities to more people and inspire new stewards of birds and our natural spaces.

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?

Phase 1 improvements at Hawk Ridge will:

- Sustain and expand outdoor environmental education opportunities that enhance youth and family understanding of the importance of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of local natural resources.
- Construct 1,300 linear feet of new accessible trail to expand outdoor education opportunities and promote protection and conservation of local natural resources for people of all abilities.

- Protect and preserve the hydrological integrity of wetlands by constructing 180 linear feet of raised boardwalk.
- Protect nature resources and native plant species by removing invasive species on approximately 1.25 acres of land.

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?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Pre-Design / Design

Activity Budget: \$13,000

Activity Description:

Evaluate project requirements and objectives, establish project metrics and budget, complete necessary consultations and approval process, and secure funding.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Dept. of Administration Pre-Design Review*	July 31, 2024
Consultation with SHPO*	July 31, 2025
All Construction Funds Legally Secured*	July 31, 2025
Approval of Plans	August 31, 2025
Other Permitting / Agency Review	August 31, 2025

Activity 2: Pre-Construction / Construction

Activity Budget: \$140,000

Activity Description:

Prepare construction documents to competitively bid and award the construction contract, and hold pre-construction meetings with the contractors, and begin physical construction and construction management. Approximately 1,300 linear feet of universally accessible trail will be constructed, including an accessible loop and access to the viewing platform. The loop will be established through a combination of newly constructed trail, segments of new boardwalk to protect and preserve wetlands, and upgrades to existing trail to meet the firm and stable surface requirements for an accessible trail. All trail will be designed to meet the ABA recreational trail accessibility standards and MN DNR sustainability guidelines. Approximately 1.25 acres of invasive species removal will be completed along the accessible trail corridor.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Advertisement for Bid	September 30, 2025
Construction Contractor Selected	October 31, 2025
Pre-construction Meetings	April 30, 2026
Construction, Oversight, & Administration Begins	May 31, 2026
Mobilization/Site Preparation/Staking	May 31, 2026
Substantial Completion	June 30, 2026
Construction, Oversight, & Administration Ends	July 31, 2026

Activity 3: Closeout

Activity Budget: \$2,000

Activity Description:

Post-construction activities to close the project out, including addressing punch list items, addressing all permitting and grant requirements, re-opening the facility to the public, and completing final payments and reports.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Stabilization/Punch List Items/As-builts Approved	July 31, 2026
Certificate of Occupancy or Equivalent Obtained*	July 31, 2026
Signage Installed with ENRTF Language or Logo*	July 31, 2026
Open for Intended Use* / Grand Opening	July 31, 2026
Notice of Funding Restriction Recorded*	December 31, 2026
Ongoing Reporting / Final Report	June 30, 2028

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Janelle Long, Executive Director	Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory	Manage Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in collaboration with the City of Duluth; Provide programming and nature-based education to promote conservation, research, and stewardship of raptors, migratory birds, and natural spaces; Seek grant funding and fundraise for implementation of future facility improvements identified under the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve Mini-Master Plan.	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.

Acknowledgement of ENRTF funding will be included in all project communications and outreach through the use of the ENRTF logo, attribution language, or by tagging ENRTF on social media. The City and the Observatory will take several actions to include acknowledgements to ENRTF funding, including project signage, a project webpage, social media posts, a presentation before Duluth Parks and Recreation Commission, press releases, media interviews, and a ribbon cutting event. The Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve project webpage will include a project description, key project updates, a timeline, funding acknowledgements, and links to relevant documents, such as the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve Mini-Master Plan, copies of public presentations, and final design documents.

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?

Long-term implementation of the multi-phased Hawk Ridge Plan will be a collaborative effort between the Observatory and the City of Duluth (City). The Observatory will continue to seek grant funding and fundraise to support future project phases to improve accessibility, safety, and conservation/educational facilities.

For this Phase 1 project, the City will be the project's fiscal agent, procure a qualified contractor, and oversee construction. The City is committed to this role for future project phases, and will continue to coordinate future improvements.

During and post-construction, the Observatory will continue to manage Hawk Ridge and provide programming and educational services.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
St. Louis River Re-Connect	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 09d	\$500,000
St. Louis River Re-Connect - Phase II	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09j	\$1,375,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Landscape and Design Consultant				0.05		\$13,000
TBD	Service Contract	Trail Construction Contractor				0.46		\$140,000
TBD	Service Contract	Invasive Species Removal				0.02		\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$155,000
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	\$155,000

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				
Cash	Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory / Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation	Accessible Trail Planning	Secured	\$1,932
Cash	Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory / Lloyd K Johnson Foundation (2019-20)	Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve Mini-Master Plan Development	Secured	\$10,000
Cash	Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory / Lloyd K Johnson Foundation (2021-22)	Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve Mini-Master Plan Development	Secured	\$10,000
In-Kind	Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory	Project Coordination	Secured	\$5,079
Cash	City of Duluth	Landscape and Design Plans	Secured	\$25,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$52,011
			Funds Total	\$52,011

Total Project Cost: \$207,011

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [064d44f7-f02.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Site plan showing an aerial view of Hawk Ridge and Skyline Parkway, elevation contours, and three phases of improvement. Phase 1 includes an accessible trail loop. Phase 2 includes new educational/gathering spaces, restrooms, and road safety improvements. Phase 3 includes new educational/gathering facilities, a playscape, and connector trails....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
City of Duluth Management and Compliance Report	1660ef46-732.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Resolution 24-0226R	0dd853a4-975.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire	5e49226d-5f2.pdf
Capital Construction Project - Budget Addendum	5ab67da6-66b.xlsx
Letters of Support	76ab8b91-8a4.pdf
Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve Photos	18027ed9-8b9.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

There are no major changes from the proposal to the workplan stage.

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

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:

Allison Brooks – City of Duluth Project Coordinator

James M. Shoberg, PLA - City of Duluth Landscape Architect and Senior Parks Planner

Janelle Long – Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory Executive Director

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