



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Approved Work Plan

## General Information

**ID Number:** 2026-115

**Staff Lead:** Tom Dietrich

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** May 19, 2026

**Project Title:** Duluth Traverse Accessibility and Sustainability Improvements

**Project Budget:** \$85,000

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Ansel Schimpff

**Organization:** Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores

**Office Telephone:** (608) 320-2731

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## Project Reporting

**Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR:** June 17, 2026

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

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2029

**Final Report Due Date:** August 14, 2029

## Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2026, Chp. 104, Sec. 2, Subd. 05I

**Appropriation Language:** \$85,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores to rehabilitate a section of the Duluth Traverse Trail to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities, improve accessibility, reduce erosion, and improve water quality.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2029

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** Enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and preserve water quality of Knowlton Creek, a designated trout stream, by rehabilitating 6,500 feet of the Duluth Traverse to improve accessibility and address erosion.

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

Duluth has about 100 miles of multi-use, bike-optimized trails, including the Duluth Traverse, which spans the entire city. However, only 6 miles are accessible for adaptive recreation equipment, creating barriers for individuals with disabilities, despite growing awareness of the importance of adaptive outdoor recreation for physical and mental health. COGGS is leading efforts to upgrade trails in Duluth to expand adaptive recreation opportunities. In 2024, a 2-mile adaptive-friendly loop was added to the Duluth Traverse. However, the connection between this loop and a formalized trailhead with parking, restrooms, and water remains inaccessible to adaptive equipment. An inclusively designed connection is needed to ensure equitable access to high-quality outdoor recreation for individuals of all abilities. This project also offers a chance to address environmental issues. Sections of the Duluth Traverse near Knowlton Creek suffer from erosion due to high-clay soil, leading to sediment runoff into the trout stream. Without action, continued trail degradation will harm water quality and threaten the long-term sustainability of the trail system. By addressing these accessibility and environmental challenges, this project aims to create a more inclusive, sustainable trail network that benefits the entire community.

**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 proposed project will rebuild approximately 6,500 linear feet of the Duluth Traverse between Gogebic Street and the Spirit Mountain Recreation Area to meet Kootenay Adaptive Standards. This reconstruction will create a fully connected, accessible route linking the Spirit Mountain trailhead to newly constructed adaptive-friendly trails between Knowlton Creek and Kingsbury Creek.

The project will address persistent erosion and runoff issues affecting Knowlton Creek, a designated trout stream, by capping high-clay soil areas to improve drainage, reduce sedimentation, and enhance sustainability. Trail improvements will increase accessibility, providing a safe, high-quality experience for riders of all abilities.

Funding will support trail reconstruction, erosion control measures, and surface improvements to ensure long-term durability and environmental protection. The project will be implemented through collaboration with the City of Duluth, COGGS, and the Spirit Mountain Recreation Area Authority, with ongoing maintenance supported by City funding and COGGS' volunteer stewardship program.

By creating a direct, inclusive, and sustainable connection between key trailheads and adaptive-friendly trails, this project will expand outdoor recreation opportunities while preserving natural resources. It aligns with Minnesota's goals of conservation, accessibility, and enhancing public engagement with the outdoors.

**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?**

Project outcomes include:

Rehabilitation of 6,500 feet of the Duluth Traverse to protect and enhance natural resources by reducing erosion and runoff into Knowlton Creek, a designated cold-water trout stream, and improve water quality and habitat health. Enhance sustainability, preserve surrounding ecosystems, and mitigate soil degradation by rehabilitating the trail with a capped surface.

Expand and foster long-term stewardship of natural spaces for people of all abilities by providing inclusive access and connections to high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities.

These efforts align with the state’s goals of preserving natural resources while enhancing recreational opportunities for all users.

## 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: Pre-Design/Design

**Activity Budget:** \$1

**Activity Description:**

Evaluate project requirements and objectives, establish project metrics and budget, complete necessary consultations and approval process, and secure funding. This portion of the project will be done in-house and in collaboration with the City of Duluth's landscape architect to ensure all environmental and functional improvement objectives are included in the design. The City of Duluth will complete the Pre-design Review. This project has been approved by the City of Duluth and Spirit Mountain Recreation Area. The City of Duluth will supply all necessary permits. This trail will maintain an existing corridor, which has already gone through the SHPO review process. The initial design of this project was completed with non-ENRTF funds, as specified in the budget.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Permitting and Other Agency Reviews Initiated - Done without ENRTF Funding	January 31, 2026
Historic, Cultural, and Environmental Reviews Completed - Done without ENRTF Funding	May 31, 2026
Approval of necessary, secured Funding for completion of project in its entirety	July 31, 2026

### Activity 2: Pre-Construction / Construction

**Activity Budget:** \$82,999

**Activity Description:**

The objective of this activity is to deliver a high-quality, adaptive-inclusive natural surface trail that reduces environmental impacts and provides equitable access for all riders. COGGS will prepare construction documents with the City of Duluth, incorporating specifications from the Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association to ensure the trail accommodates adaptive riding equipment. Bid documents will be shared through the Professional Trail Builders Association, outreach to past contractors, and the COGGS website to encourage competitive, transparent bidding.

A pre-construction meeting will be held with the City of Duluth, COGGS, Spirit Mountain, and the contractor to review requirements, coordinate with potential events, and align on project goals. During construction, COGGS and the City will conduct weekly site visits to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and adaptive specifications. Northland Adaptive Recreation will provide consultation and ride-test key sections to verify usability and deliver the best possible rider experience.

Expected outcomes include a competitively bid contract, compliant construction, and a trail that is sustainable, accessible, and designed for riders of all abilities. Results will be shared through partners, events, and communications to promote best practices. Evaluation will monitor progress, incorporate ride-testing feedback, and conclude with a partner-led post-construction review.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Bid documents prepared - Done without ENRTF Funding	December 31, 2025
Construction Contractor Selection	July 31, 2026
Pre-construction Meetings	July 31, 2026
All Construction Funds Legally Secured	July 31, 2026

Construction Begins	August 31, 2026
Substantial Completion	October 31, 2027

### Activity 3: Closeout

**Activity Budget:** \$2,000

**Activity Description:**

Post-construction activities to close the project out, including addressing punch list items, reviewing all permitting and grant requirements, re-opening the facility to the public, and completing final payments and reports. This process will include a final walkthrough and test ride with our partners at Northland Adaptive Recreation to ensure the highest quality user experience. Signage and wayfinding will be installed with ENRTF logo, and digital maps will be updated to include new adaptive riding standards and recommended routes. The notice of funding restriction will be recorded by the City of Duluth.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Notice of Funding Restriction Recorded	December 31, 2026
Stabilization/Punch List Items/As-builts Approved	August 31, 2027
Signage Installed with ENRTF Language or Logo	September 30, 2027
Open for Intended Use	October 31, 2027
Ongoing Reporting / Final Report	October 31, 2027

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Matt Andrews, Parks and Trails Coordinator	City of Duluth	Manage the City of Duluth’s diverse trail network in collaboration with partner organizations, such as COGGS. Coordinate trail improvement projects to promote access to greenspace while conserving natural resources through sustainable trail building practices. Ensure information flows effectively between stakeholders and that projects are completed efficiently.	No
James Shoberg, Professional Landscape Architect and Senior Parks Planner	City of Duluth	Manage all aspects of project implementation including design, permitting, and construction administration. Coordinate contractor solicitation to ensure alignment with applicable procurement requirements. Effectively manage interdisciplinary teams to ensure project outcomes are accomplished on budget and in a timely manner.	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.**

This project will focus on sharing adaptive trail design and sustainability practices with regional land managers and trail centers while engaging the community through inclusive events and programming. A key component will be hosting the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) Trail Labs seminar, scheduled in Duluth through the 2027 season. This training will draw land managers, planners, and advocates from across the region, highlighting adaptive design principles and sustainable construction practices demonstrated in this trail overhaul.

To engage the public, COGGS will organize community events introducing families, new riders, and adaptive cyclists to the upgraded trails with our partner organizations, Northland Adaptive Recreation, Duluth Devo, and Duluth Parks. These events will showcase the role of inclusive recreation in expanding access while also emphasizing how sustainable trail design protects water quality and natural resources. Construction progress, reopening, and programming will be shared through COGGS promotional and fundraising media. Project outcomes will be documented through updated trail maps, online resources, and social media to ensure broad access to both the environmental and accessibility benefits of the project.

Acknowledgment of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be included on all project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications, using the ENRTF logo or attribution language in accordance with ENRTF Acknowledgment Guidelines. In addition, permanent trailhead signage and updated digital maps will prominently display the ENRTF logo, ensuring long-term public recognition of the Trust Fund’s support.

## 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 City of Duluth, COGGS, and Spirit Mountain will implement and maintain the rebuilt trails as part of the City’s official trail system. Ongoing upkeep, including erosion control and surface repairs, will be supported by COGGS’ volunteer program and City funding. Additional work for continued enhancement of the Duluth Traverse will be funded through local and state grants, local tourism initiatives, and private sponsorships. Community engagement, including educational signage and organized events, will promote awareness and responsible use. These efforts will ensure long-term sustainability, improved accessibility, and continued high-quality trail experiences for all users.



## 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>								
TBD	Service Contract	Trail Reconstruction				0		\$65,000
TBD	Service Contract	Construction and installation of 30 LNFT of 48" wide Boardwalk				-		\$3,000
TBD	Service Contract	Trail capping for 300 LNFT of natural surface trail				-		\$15,000
TBD	Service Contract	Production and installation of signage complying with Kooteney Adaptive signage standards				-		\$2,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Equipment</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>\$85,000</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>				
In-Kind	Cyclist of Gitchee Gumees Shores	Phase one of this project established the first sections of accessible trail within the system. Phase two, for which we are seeking funding through this grant application, will complete the critical connection between the existing accessible trails and the accessible trailhead facilities and parking at Spirit Mountain.	Secured	\$36,799
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$36,799</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$36,799</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$121,799**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [9331cadb-1a0.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Map showing the Spirit Mountain trailhead, the trail segment identified for sustainability and accessibility improvements, and applicable trail connections....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
COGGS 990	<a href="#">1f44df6a-079.pdf</a>
Evidence of Good Standing	<a href="#">73966a99-5e0.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Board Approval letter	<a href="#">8f53528e-e64.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Project Questionnaire	<a href="#">a6492bdf-c0e.pdf</a>
Capital Budget Addendum	<a href="#">3635293e-4bf.xlsx</a>
COGGS Photo Collage	<a href="#">b7cd37ed-3fd.pdf</a>
Letters of Support	<a href="#">6013ccfb-31b.pdf</a>
SHPO Letter for trail corridor	<a href="#">d7f41ac3-702.pdf</a>

### Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

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

Added evidence of good standing with the MN Secretary of State and updated the dissemination section.

## 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:**

Ansel Schimpff – Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores, Executive Director

Allison Brooks – City of Duluth, Parks & Recreation, Project Coordinator

Matt Andrews – City of Duluth, Parks & Recreation, Trails Coordinator

James Shoberg, PLA – City of Duluth Landscape Architect and Senior Parks Planner

**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