



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-306

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: May 22, 2026

Project Title: Greater Fountain Lake Aquatic and Trail Accessibility Enhancements

Project Budget: \$1,162,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Courtney Phillips

Organization: Shell Rock River Watershed District

Office Telephone: (507) 379-8782

Email: courtney.phillips@co.freeborn.mn.us

Web Address: <https://www.shellrock.org/>

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. 05aa

Appropriation Language: \$1,162,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Shell Rock River Watershed District to design and construct pedestrian paths, crossings, bridges, and recreational features that improve public access to fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and public green space located along the Shell Rock River Channel in the city of Albert Lea.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: This proposal requests funding the installation of features to safely improve pedestrian access to fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and public park space located along the Shell Rock River Channel.

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

The Shell Rock River Channel between Fountain and Albert Lea Lake is degraded, with erosion and crumbling concrete sidewalls, which poses a safety concern for many who fish from it. Also, there is not a location for the public to access the river recreationally. The SRRWD secured OHF funding for improving the in-stream and streambank habitat portion of the project (Phase 1).

This proposal (Phase 2) will build on that grant funding to implement the recreational access portions of the project. This proposal is requesting funds to complete the project including installing a canoe/kayak launch, providing fishing access and piers, installing a walking path underneath a heavily trafficked highway to create a safe crossing, as well as replacing a bridge that would allow pedestrians to access park space that is currently landlocked by the river channel. All features are located within an environmental justice area as identified by the MPCA understanding environmental justice tool. Additionally, the SRRWD plans to continue partnering with the Community Education Boathouse to implement educational programs by utilizing the proposed features.

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.

Currently the channel is composed of failing concrete with steep side walls and has no portage locations to recreationally use the river. The SRRWD and City of Albert Lea have designated a spot along the channel that would be used for a canoe and kayak launch. Additionally, building on the habitat improvements of the channel from Phase 1, the SRRWD would like to install fishing piers located along the channel. Many youths utilize this channel and are left to climb the steep concrete to access the river, posing safety risks.

Additionally, this project aims to install a pedestrian crossing under Highway 65 along the channel, so anglers can utilize both sides of the river and access city green space on either side of the highway. Currently, no pedestrian crossings exist near the channel. Lastly, the City has over 5 acres of wooded green space that is currently inaccessible to the public due to being landlocked between private ownership and the channel. This proposal funding would replace an abandoned railroad bridge with a pedestrian bridge to allow Minnesotans to recreate and engage with nature by connecting the green spaces seamlessly.

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?

Physical outcomes of this proposal include the installation of a canoe and kayak launch, the installation of two fishing piers, the installation of a pedestrian crossing along the channel, under Highway 65 bridge, and the transition of a railroad bridge to a pedestrian crossing to access currently landlocked City green space. These features will provide anglers with safe fishing locations and safe access under the highway. It also allows Minnesotans the ability to access the river recreationally and opens up new public green space. SHPO review for the project location will be completed with Phase 1.

Project Location

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

City(s): Albert Lea

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

City(s): Albert Lea

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Canoe/Kayak Public Landing

Activity Budget: \$128,000

Activity Description:

The District will be completing this project in-line with the Fountain Lake Channel Restoration Project that is funded with OHF dollars. Following 103D process for watershed districts, the Shell Rock River Watershed will follow procurement policies to award an engineer to design the project and complete permitting and applicable project reviews. A TBD contractor will be selected to complete the construction of the actively, either as a group of all activities listed or could be only one activity.

By installing this canoe and kayak launch in the river channel, it allows residents, and Boathouse funded programs, to experience river systems outside of our chain of lakes. It also opens up canoeing and kayaking downstream of a dam that is currently inaccessible for continuous paddling.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Engineering/Design	December 31, 2026
Permitting	June 30, 2027
Consultation with SHPO	June 30, 2027
All Construction Funds Legally Secured	October 31, 2027
Construction	December 31, 2027
Notice of Funding Restriction Recorded	May 31, 2028
Project Closeout/Retainage	December 31, 2028
Signage Installed with ENRTF Language/Logo	December 31, 2028
Open for intended Use	December 31, 2028

Activity 2: River Channel Fishing Piers

Activity Budget: \$278,000

Activity Description:

The District will be completing this project in-line with the Fountain Lake Channel Restoration Project that is funded with OHF dollars. Following 103D process for watershed districts, the Shell Rock River Watershed will follow procurement policies to award an engineer to design the project and complete permitting and applicable project reviews. A TBD contractor will be selected to complete the construction of the actively, either as a group of all activities listed or could be only one activity. Building on the habitat funding, and following the LCCMR Strategic Planning goals, the District will install two fishing piers located on the river channel where the in-stream habitat work will be installed.

Additionally, the District would like to incorporate signage at the location in multiple languages including English, Spanish, and Karen. Signage would be engaging, describe the native plants and aquatic species that could be found in the river channel, and also incorporate fishing regulations and habitat improvements that were made.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Engineering/Design	December 31, 2026
Consultation with SHPO	January 31, 2027

Permitting	June 30, 2027
All Construction Funds Legally Secured	July 31, 2027
Construction	December 31, 2027
Notice of Funding Restriction Recorded	May 31, 2028
Project Closeout/Retainage	December 31, 2028
Signage Installed with ENRTF Language or Logo	December 31, 2028
Open for Intended Use	December 31, 2028

Activity 3: River Walk Accessibility and Safety Improvements

Activity Budget: \$428,000

Activity Description:

The District will be completing this project in-line with the Fountain Lake Channel Restoration Project that is funded with OHF dollars. Following 103D process for watershed districts, the Shell Rock River Watershed will follow procurement policies to award an engineer to design the project and complete permitting and applicable project reviews. A TBD contractor will be selected to complete the construction of the actively, either as a group of all activities listed or could be only one activity.

By installing access paths parallel to the river, it expands the network of trails, parks, and natural areas to connect green spaces seamlessly, all while improving accessibility and safety to Minnesotans. Additionally, the current streambank system has highly erosive banks, and incorporating the OHF streambank restoration project, this access path will allow those with disabilities the opportunity to engage directly with the riparian components of the river.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Engineering/Design	December 31, 2026
Permitting	June 30, 2027
Consultation with SHPO	June 30, 2027
All Construction Funds Legally Secured	October 31, 2027
Construction	December 31, 2027
Notice of Funding Restriction Recorded	May 31, 2028
Project Closeout/Retainage	December 31, 2028
Signage Installed with ENRTF Language/Logo	December 31, 2028
Open for Intended Use	December 31, 2028

Activity 4: Connecting Public Greenspaces

Activity Budget: \$328,000

Activity Description:

The City of Albert Lea has a 5-acre tract of land that is currently undeveloped and landlocked due to private ownership and the river channel. There is an abandoned railroad bridge that crosses the river, but years of neglect and wear and tear make it an unsafe crossing for pedestrians. As part of the City’s goal in that region to increase trails, parks, and public green spaces, a more suitable, ADA compliant, pedestrian bridge would need to be installed to allow residents new access to the landlocked piece. Opening up this green space would allow for entities such as the Boathouse to teach about riparian corridors as the tract consists of wooded shoreline, floodplain, and upland habitats.

The District will be completing this project in-line with the Fountain Lake Channel Restoration Project that is funded with OHF dollars. Following 103D process for watershed districts, the Shell Rock River Watershed will follow procurement

policies to award an engineer to design the project and complete permitting and applicable project reviews. A TBD contractor will be selected to complete the construction of the actively, either as a group of all activities listed or could be only one activity.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Permitting	June 30, 2025
Design/Engineering	December 31, 2026
Consultation with SHPO	June 30, 2027
All Construction Funds Legally Secured	October 31, 2027
Construction	December 31, 2027
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Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Steve Jahnke	City of Albert Lea	Landowner of project area and supporting in construction administration and oversight.	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.

The SRRWD will acknowledge the Environmental and Natural Sources Trust Fund in all press releases, media interactions, websites, newsletters, printed materials and publications created by the SRRWD during the process of the project. Additionally, being a capital improvement project in nature, the ENRTF sign and logo will be installed at the project site. The SRRWD website will link to the ENRTF website by clicking on the logo and include a project tab of the grant along with a description of the project.

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 proposal outcomes would be of capital improvement nature and included in the City of Albert Lea's maintenance and inspection schedules, as these features are located on City right-of-way or property. Additionally, the Shell Rock River Watershed District is an entity that has taxing authority along with a local option sales tax that could be used for maintenance activities.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Precision Acquisition For Restoration, Groundwater Recharge And Habitat.	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09k	\$467,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Courtney Phillips		Project Manager			0%	0.3		\$14,000
Carmen Christensen		Financial Tech			0%	0.15		\$4,000
							Sub Total	\$18,000
Contracts and Services								
Engineering Firm TBD	Service Contract	Engineering services paid to a professional engineer who has signoff to design a plan set for construction of the capital improvement projects.				0.15		\$192,000
Canoe/Kayak Launch - Contractor TBD	Service Contract	Installation of a canoe/kayak launch to be used by the Community Education Boathouse and the general public to access the Shell Rock River Channel.				-		\$90,000
River Channel Fishing Piers - Contractor TBD	Service Contract	Installation of two fishing piers to highlight habitat work completed with OHF funding and engaging Minnesotans with angling locations.				-		\$230,000
River Walk Accessibility - Contractor TBD	Service Contract	Installation of pedestrian walkway under a highway to improve accessibility and safety while utilizing the Shell Rock River Channel.				-		\$365,000
Connecting Public Greenspaces - Contractor TBD	Service Contract	This bridge will serve as a walkway to connect a City greenspace that is landlocked by private ownership.				-		\$267,000
							Sub Total	\$1,144,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-

Capital Equipment								
							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	\$1,162,000

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				
In-Kind	OHF Funding; ML 2023, Ch. 40, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 5(l)	Instream and Shoreland Restoration	Secured	\$1,600,000
			State Sub Total	\$1,600,000
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	\$1,600,000

Total Project Cost: \$2,762,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [797a57b5-6b3.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Attached is a map that shows the proposed projects between Fountain and Albert Lea Lake, along the Shell Rock River Channel....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
2023 Audit	97784209-8a3.pdf
Financial Statements	8d11189c-fff.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	000d69df-649.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
City of Albert Lea	26768424-2af.pdf
Capital Project Questionnaire	29d43118-373.pdf
MnDot Letter of Support	9c4e7fd3-35d.pdf
Budget Addendum	1e0c8809-449.xlsx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

The SRRWD requested \$1,280,000 in funds but received an allocation amount of \$1,162,000. The SRRWD had to reduce the workplan scope by \$118,000. This included removing \$2,000 for staff, \$18,000 for professional services, \$10,000 for activity one, \$20,000 for activity two, \$35,000 for activity 3, and \$33,000 for activity 4. All proposed projects will still take place.

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:

Courtney Phillips, SRRWD

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