



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Approved Work Plan

## General Information

**ID Number:** 2026-571

**Staff Lead:** Tom Dietrich

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** May 28, 2026

**Project Title:** Lakewood Elementary School Trail Renewal and Community Engagement

**Project Budget:** \$288,000

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Darren Sheldon

**Organization:** Duluth School District #709 - Lakewood Elementary

**Office Telephone:** (218) 336-8870

**Email:** darren.sheldon@isd709.org

**Web Address:** <https://lakewood.isd709.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. 05kk

**Appropriation Language:** \$288,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Duluth Public Schools to improve the Lakewood School Forest Trail and carry out erosion stabilization and restoration activities along the trail at Lakewood Elementary to ensure continued opportunities for safe outdoor education and community usage. Before costs for this appropriation are incurred, a fiscal management plan must be approved in the work plan, unless otherwise determined by the commissioner.

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



## Narrative

**Project Summary:** Rehabilitate an unsafe outdoor education trail to be resilient and accessible in all 4-seasons to serve students and community users for many years to come.

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

This proposal expands youth education and community recreation opportunities by replacing aged boardwalks and unsafe bridges that are well past their serviceable life. The improved 0.5-mile nature trail will eliminate existing physical barriers to natural resource-based outdoor education and make the 7-acre Lakewood School forest more accessible to community members.

**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.**

The proposed solution utilizes contemporary material and design practices to meet or exceed the trail building standards defined in MN DNR's Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines. Structures will be constructed using quality materials, sound craftsmanship, and be built to withstand the ravages of the elements. Examples include galvanized steel pan footings that do not rot and limit ground disturbance, installing flashing to the top of wood structural supports, and using rot-resistant tamarack boards harvested and milled locally. Naturally occurring hydrological patterns will be retained and enhanced by raising the elevation of built-structures above grade to establish adequate freeboard distance for high-water conditions. Bridge and boardwalk components will be prefabricated off-site in controlled fashion to limit damage on-site. Overgrown sections of the trail will be made clear and passable by employing sound pruning techniques. Biomass (woody invasive plants) will be removed from the trail corridor to promote ongoing stewardship. Environmental education efforts will reinvigorate and foster a lasting conservation ethic for students and community members by engaging them in professional trail construction and stewardship practices. MN DNR's Operational Order 113, which requires preventing or limiting the spread of invasive species, will be followed.

**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?**

Three (3) existing bridges will be replaced (pending an engineering study of the school forest). Potentially (3) additional new bridges may be built. Over 1,000 linear feet of hydric soils prone to erosion will be stabilized. Environmental education efforts at Lakewood Elementary School will be reinvigorated by cultivating a lasting conservation ethic for students and community members. The awareness of all trail users will be elevated to appreciate wetlands for their intrinsic value. The processes of planning and building the trail will be a catalyst that leads to the removal of invasive plants and restores school forest lands.

## 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?**

Region(s): NE

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Engineering, Environmental Review, Permitting, Construction Bidding, Stakeholder Empowerment

**Activity Budget:** \$18,000

**Activity Description:**

LCCMR funding will be used to update the 2024 trail-damage assessment to reflect current conditions, conduct environmental and trail infrastructure design reviews, apply for and secure permits as-needed, create comprehensive material lists for procurement, prepare and distribute a RFQ, and solicit competitive bids from qualified contractor(s). Stakeholders will be updated and community input encouraged during each activity phase of the project. A volunteer data base and emergency response plan will be established.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
A stakeholder and volunteer data base is established using non-ENRTF funding.	May 31, 2025
Trail Damage Assessment is updated by volunteers with non-ENRTF funds at our own risk	June 30, 2026
Environmental and Design Reviews are completed, stakeholders are apprised, permits obtained	November 30, 2026
RFQ is distributed, construction documents completed, and contractor(s) selected along with ESA Phase 1	February 28, 2027
All Construction Funds Legally Secured	February 28, 2027

### Activity 2: Trail Construction and Restoration

**Activity Budget:** \$268,000

**Activity Description:**

Community volunteers will manage construction material deliveries, pre-fabricate bridge and boardwalk components, and stage said components on-site in coordinated fashion with project leaders oversight. Plans and timelines will be publicly disseminated and discussed with community stakeholders. A pre-construction meeting will occur onsite. One or more "Open House" gatherings to walk-and-talk the trail, take input, and showcase what is planned and why it is planned, will be conducted. Existing structures will be decommissioned, removed, and disposed of appropriately off-site. New structures will be built with durable materials and sound craftsmanship. Tread hardening with stone may be employed. Invasive plants, principally seed-bearing buckthorn and honeysuckle, will be eradicated from the Trail Stewardship zone (TSZ). The TSZ is the +/- 50-ft wide area that moves 'with the land' from the centerline of the trail. The Buckthorn Baggie technique will be used to reduce or eliminate use of herbicide and limit ground disturbance. Small brush piles will be thoughtfully sited at least 20 steps from the trail. Northern white cedar, tamarack, burr oak, and red maple species will be planted to improve habitat lost from the mortality of native black ash due to emerald ash borer infestation.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Preconstruction Meeting Completed	February 28, 2027
Consultation with SHPO	May 31, 2027
Materials are procured; trail corridor is cleared; pre-fabrication completed; construction has started	July 31, 2027
Trail Stewardship Zone restoration is completed	May 31, 2028
Deconstruction and removal of old structures and construction of new structures is completed	May 31, 2029

### Activity 3: Project Closeout

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

**Activity Description:**

Complete any construction loose ends, remove flagging, temporary signage, and all debris from the project site. Document and physically measure as-built outcomes. Reconcile all financial and reporting needs. Prominently install ENTRF acknowledgment sign(s). Acknowledge and thank donors, volunteers, vendors, contractors, project supporters, stakeholders, school and district staff and families. Finalize a trail maintenance, stewardship, and outreach plan. Finalize the project completion report. Hold a celebratory trail renewal event.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
The project site is free of debris, measurements and photos are taken for as-built documentation.	May 31, 2029
Internal and public thank you and acknowledgments are made. ENTRF signs are installed.	June 30, 2029
Public trail renewal celebration is held. Project completion report is finalized. Open for Intendend Use.	June 30, 2029
Trail maintenance, stewardship, and outreach plan is finalized.	June 30, 2029
Stabilization, as-builts approved, notice of funding restrictions recorded, On-going reporting completed.	June 30, 2029

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Melissa Bergman	Lakewood Elementary School	Collaborator	No
Sara Socha	Lakewood Elementary PTA	Collaborator	No
Mary Beth Lizakowski	Lakewood School Forest Committee	Collaborator	No
Brandon Keinath	Lakewood School Forest Committee	Collaborator	No
Tim Malzhan	Trail Eyes LLC	Consultant	Yes
Jim Rich	Lakewood Foundation	Collaborator	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.**

We will start a committee solely for the efforts of this grant on the fall of 2025. This committee will help decide 1) volunteer efforts and dates, 2) offers for bids, 3) dates/timelines of work done by students, parents, and the Lakewood Community. This committee will also help with advertising efforts and will help with the part of the forest reconstruction on the east end as bids will be taken for the west end. Our goal is to start construction on July 1, 2026 (per LCCMR guidelines). The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be acknowledged through many facets: 1) Singage entering the school forest (and on the school forest trail as feasible); 2) On the Parent-Teacher Facebook Page; 3) On Parent Square (district and school sites), at various committee, school, and district meetings. We are also hoping to put something up within the school building as well as this is a milestone for our school.

## 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 Lakewood School and Community consists of many workers in the trades who readily volunteer their time and expertise when projects arise at Lakewood School. These volunteers will be integral to the new construction process and the ongoing maintenance process. Long-Term implementation would consist of these families and individuals in the trades maintaining the trail; hence, funding would be in-kind, supplemented by Lakewood Parent Teachers Association, Lakewood Elementary Foundation, and financial contributions from the community when needed.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
1 Lakewood Elementary Staff		Project Manager			35%	0.2		\$3,500
2 Lakewood Elementary Staff		Coordinator			35%	0.2		\$3,500
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$7,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD	Service Contract	Owners Representative Services including pre-construction coordination and planning, creating construction documents, assisting the project manager with contractor selection, quality control, and volunteer coordination processes				0.3		\$18,000
TBD	Service Contract	Prepares bridge and boardwalk PE-stamped drawings for construction				0.3		\$5,000
TBD	Service Contract	Implements the approved trail work plan by constructing and installing trail structures and related trail improvements				3		\$158,800
TBD	Service Contract	Implements restoration plans by eradicating buckthorn + honeysuckle in areas adjacent to the trail				0.2		\$7,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$188,800</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Includes lumber, hardware, galvanized steel bog pans, stone, freight, and incidentals	All items will be used to craft durable long lasting trail infrastructure					\$91,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$91,000</b>
<b>Capital Equipment</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-

<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Estimated 25 trips, 45 miles per trip, up to six people depending # bids, = 1,100 miles.	Travel for Managing various projects					\$1,200
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,200</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>\$288,000</b>

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
---------------	---------------------	-------------	--

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
In-Kind	Volunteers - procure materials, prefabricate and stage materials, construction	Labor	Pending	\$59,000
Cash	Lakewood Elementary Foundation	Restoration and Construction	Potential	\$8,500
Cash	Lakewood Rotary Club	Construction and Closeout	Potential	\$7,000
Cash	Lakewood Parent Teachers Association	Restoration and Construction	Potential	\$9,000
Cash	Lakewood Elementary Foundation	Development Consultant	Secured	\$2,500
Cash	Lakewood Community Businesses	Construction	Potential	\$5,000
Cash	American Trails Grant (NGO)	Construction	Potential	\$5,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$96,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$96,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$384,000**

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

Yes

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
415-0010-05520	St. Louis	The Lakewood School Forest provides environmental education that connects classroom learning to the natural environment. The 7-acre site lies with the Northshore Highlands subsection of the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province of northern Minnesota. It is less than 5-miles to the shoreline of Lake Superior. Site soil types include loamy and/or silty material over friable loamy till over dense loamy till. The site has excellent beaver habitat.	Restoration	7.12	-	-	Public	NA	Purchased
<b>Totals</b>				<b>7.12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>			

## Restoration

**1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.**

All restoration activities will occur on publicly owned land.

**2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.**

Invasive plants will be removed. Native trees, consistent with the 2016 UMD management plan for the Lakewood Elementary School Forest and current MnDNR guidance, will be planted to improve habitat. Project plans and reports will be retained by Lakewood Elementary School and ISD #709 district office.

**3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.**

BWSR resources will be drawn upon to select shrub and ground cover vegetation types and best practice guidelines.

**4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.**

By eradicating invasive plants within +/- 50 feet of proposed trail improvements and targeting seed-bearing plants future restoration needs will be diminished.

**5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.**

The MCC may, pending funding availability, be engaged in the future.

**6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.**

1) Brian Allen, SAF Certified Forester #3862, or equivalent subject matter expert, will be engaged to evaluate 2016 Management Plan outcomes to date, and suggest efficiencies regarding Trail Stewardship Zone management strategies associated with this funding. 2) A summary statement of 2026-2028 actions taken, observable outcomes, and future direction, will be included in the LCCMR project closeout report.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

File: [6d9874d7-00b.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

A map with legend and north symbol showing the trail and locations of structures to be built, and a photo log showing existing conditions with brief descriptions....

### Supplemental Attachments

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

<b>Title</b>	<b>File</b>
Long Range Management Plan	<a href="#">d9e71808-b41.pdf</a>
Environmental Pre-Screening	<a href="#">20843b75-635.pdf</a>
Capital Project Questionnaire	<a href="#">3f274142-f30.pdf</a>
Budget Attachemtn-LCCMR	<a href="#">d5aa9046-f2d.xlsx</a>
Long Range Management Plan	<a href="#">681b6284-0aa.pdf</a>
Letters of Support	<a href="#">57f6f84b-311.pdf</a>
Monthly ISD709 Financial Report	<a href="#">4f5452d3-664.xlsx</a>
Resolution Letter	<a href="#">1daca275-1f8.pdf</a>
Lakewood Foundation Financial Document	<a href="#">7608f242-4b0.pdf</a>

### Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

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

The workplan stage will probably change from the individuals above as we will probably create a separate committee for our LCCMR Grant.

## 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?**

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?**

Yes, Duluth Public Schools

**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")?**

Yes

**Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?**

Yes

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

Darren Sheldon, Principal-Lakewood Elementary School; Sara Socha, Friends of Lakewood Elementary Parent Teachers Association; Mary Beth Lizakowski and Brendon Keinath, Lakewood School Forest Committee; Melissa Bergman, Lakewood Elementary School Foundation; Tim Malzhan, Trail Eyes LLC.

**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