

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2010 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

LCCMR ID: 160-E2

Project Title:

Building Next Generation Nature-based Parks, Trails Open Spaces

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

E. Natural Resource Conservation Planning and Implementation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$530,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, 2010 - 2013

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$0

Summary:

The project will establish guidelines for planning, designing, and developing a system of next-generation, nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future Minnesotans.

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Sponsoring Organization: DNR

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Location:

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

_____ Knowledge Base	_____ Broad App.	_____ Innovation
_____ Leverage	_____ Outcomes	
_____ Partnerships	_____ Urgency	_____ TOTAL

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Building Next Generation Nature-based Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Participation in nature-based outdoor recreation is static or even declining in Minnesota and across the country. Where the causes may be many, remaining relevant in people's lives is one of the most pressing challenges facing public providers of parks, open space, trails, and recreational facilities across the state. Coupled with the prospect of limited public funding for the foreseeable future, the need to rethink past planning approaches, better coordinate services, fill in research gaps, and collectively improve performance has never been more pronounced.

This proposal seeks to establish guidelines for planning, designing, and developing a system of next-generation, nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities for Minnesotans. The project will create an updated understanding of how these opportunities and facilities fit within the recreation system. **The goal of this project is to establish guidelines to:**

- **Provide greater assurance that nature-based recreation opportunities provided across the state are relevant to and valued by current and future generations of Minnesotans**
- **Encourage establishment of an interconnected network of parks, trails, waterways, open spaces, and complementary recreational facilities that serve the evolving needs of Minnesotans**
- **Ensure that future directions are consistent with established organizational missions**

Through an inclusive, well-coordinated process engaging public providers at all levels, this project will advance best practices to meet current and next generation needs of Minnesotans. A project taskforce and peer reviewers will be identified to help define desired outcomes and guide project direction. This proposed guideline supports the goal of the 2008 – 2012 Minnesota SCORP. It will pick up where the *LCMR 2005 Best Practices for Parks and Recreation Project* left off, to establish a critical reference tool for Minnesota's outdoor recreation community. It will complement the nationally-recognized MN DNR's *Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines* (2007). And it will establish an up-to-date, well-reasoned planning and development guideline that ensures public dollars are well spent.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Create Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines for Next Generation Park, Trail, and Open Space Systems Budget: \$430,000

Nature-based Park, Trail, and Open Space, and Recreational Facilities Classifications – update our understanding of the interrelationships between nature-based providers at the local (city, township, county), regional, state, and federal parks, open space, and trail system levels. Encourage a well-reasoned, collaborative, efficient, interdependent outdoor recreation system that meets public needs.

Planning, Design, Development, Operations, and Maintenance Guidelines – establish guidelines for all common elements of nature-based park and open space systems; define the nuances between various types of facilities relative to different park classifications and settings; focus on green technologies, sustainability, low-maintenance designs, and maximize facility lifecycles; emphasize high-quality best practices, safety, accessibility, and universal design.

Guiding Principles for Ecological Sustainability – establish a set of core principles to ensure consistency of managing resources within local, regional, and state park and open space systems; provide best practices for stewardship of natural resources at various levels.

Performance Standards and Measures – establish a set of performance standards and measures to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness in meeting public needs; intent is to expand upon current practices in tracking the value and cost-benefit of what is being provided; results will serve as a basis for making changes to guidelines in response to new insights.

Deliverable #1 – Draft of guidelines **Completion Date:** 2 ½ years from start
Deliverable #2 – Final version of guidelines **Completion Date:** 3 years from start
Deliverable #3 - 1000 Printed Copies of Guideline **Completion Date:** 3 years from start

Result 2: Value-added Research to Support Result 1 **Budget: \$100,000**

Supports result 1 work effort; consolidate and fill gaps in existing research and best practices; focus on development of tools to better evaluate and justify system components at all levels; approaches include:

- Structured interviews/surveys with leaders in local, regional, state, and federal park agencies
- Expansion of the research and best practices repository initiated under the *2005 Best Practices for Parks and Outdoor Recreation* project
- Formal survey research related to select subjects/user groups to fill gaps in knowledge
- Interviews with subject matter experts to understand evolving or state-of-the-art practices

Deliverable #1: Analysis report/research findings **Completion Date:** Concurrent with result 1

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The Minnesota DNR will lead this project in collaboration with Minnesota's nature-based outdoor recreation community. A first step for this project will be to create a project team to guide decision making and ensure the engagement of Minnesota's recreation professionals. This will include local, county, regional, state and federal providers. It will also include key organizations such as the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association, the University of Minnesota and other academic institutions, the Trust for Public Land, Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, Metropolitan Council, Greater Minnesota Counties, and others.

B. Timeline Requirements

In order to achieve the results listed above, it is proposed this project be conducted over a 3-year period.

C. Long-Term Strategy

The initial goal is to complete and distribute the guidelines and resources widely. Ultimately, the goal is to create a proactive (not prescriptive) guideline that may be used by public providers across Minnesota as they deliver high-quality, nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities. The long-term strategy is to enable a dialogue among the community of recreation professionals focused on meeting the nature-based outdoor recreation needs of all Minnesotans, today and into the future.

Project Budget: Building Next Generation Parks, Open Spaces & Trail		
IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET: 3 years		
<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	
Personnel:		
DNR project coordination, promotion, contract management; 1/4 FTE	\$75,000	
Contracts:		
Overall project facilitation and development of Next Generation Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces System Guidelines as outlined in Result 1.	\$250,000	
Conduct or oversee research/survey as outlined in Result 2.	\$100,000	
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:		
Office Supplies	\$2,500	
Printing, includes project printing as well as publication of final guideline.	\$100,000	
Travel:		
Mileage, lodging, meals as required to complete project (in-state)	\$2,500	
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$530,000	
V. OTHER FUNDS		
<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
In-kind Services		
In-kind services represent staff time from various project stakeholders including staff from MN DNR, MN Recreation and Park Association, Parks and Trails Council of MN, Metropolitan Council, Greater MN Counties, regulatory agencies, academics, and subject matter experts who will contribute their expertise to creating the guidelines	\$40,000	Pending

Project Manager Qualifications

As Planning, Acquisition, and Development Manager for the Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Trails, Stan Linnell oversees the acquisition of lands, cooperative agreements with local units of government and the planning and development of new outdoor recreation facilities.

Organization Description

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Trails operates 66 state parks, 7 state recreation areas, 575 miles of surfaced state trail, 1610 water access sites, 316 fishing piers and 27 shore fishing areas, 30 water trails and 9 state waysides throughout Minnesota. The Division connects people to the state's natural resources by providing access to outdoor recreation, conservation education and natural resource restoration and management.

Our mission is to create outstanding outdoor recreation and education experiences, support healthy people and communities, and conserve Minnesota's unique natural and cultural resources.

