

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2014 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 184-G**

Mesabi Trail Development - Soudan to Ely Segment

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**Category:** G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

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**Total Project Budget: \$** 1,000,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 3 Years, July 2014 - July 2017

**Summary:**

This project consists of the right-of-way acquisition, design and construction of an 18 mile segment of the Mesabi Trail from Soudan to Ely.

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**Name:** Robert Manzoline

**Sponsoring Organization:** St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority

**Address:** 111 Station 44 Road  
Eveleth MN 55734

**Telephone Number:** (218) 744 - 2653

**Email** bmanzoline@rrauth.com

**Web Address** www.mesabitrail.com

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**Location**

**Region:** Northeast

**County Name:** St. Louis

**City / Township:** Breitung Township, Eagles Nest Township, Morse Township, City of Ely

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<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Base
<input type="checkbox"/> Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgency
<input type="checkbox"/> Capacity Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/> Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> TOTAL <input type="checkbox"/> %



**PROJECT TITLE: Mesabi Trail Development – Soudan to Ely Segment**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

The Mesabi Trail is a 132 mile paved trail that serves as an alternate transportation corridor namely for non-motorized pedestrian, bike, ski, horses, and motorized snowmobile use where designated. The trail extends from the Mississippi River in Grand Rapids to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Ely. Approximately 115 miles of the trail, from Grand Rapids to Embarrass, has been completed since its inception in 1996. The Mesabi Trail is owned and maintained by the ST. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (RRA).

This project involves the construction of a new 18 mile segment of the Mesabi Trail between the cities of Soudan and Ely. Total estimated cost for this segment is \$4,500,000. The trail will extend from the western edge of the new Vermilion State Park in Township 62 North – Range 15 West to the City of Ely. This segment of the Mesabi Trail will begin in phases beginning with a segment starting at the western edge of the Vermilion State Park in Township 62 North – Range 15 West following the Old Highway 169 corridor out to the existing Highway 169. From there the Trail will be built on or near a section of Highway 169 that will soon be partially relocated by MNDOT (The rerouting of sections of Highway 169, along with other private and public land easements, will allow for the construction of the Mesabi Trail up to Robinson Lake located in Township 62 North – Range 13 West). The Regional Rail Authority has been working closely with MNDOT and other local land owners to secure easements in this area. From Robinson Lake the Mesabi Trail plans to follow an abandoned DM&IR rail grade into Ely (See Attached Map).

The monies requested in this application will be used for trail development, design and construction as described in more detail in the project activities section below. The RRA is very experienced at leveraging funds and has to date secured over \$2,400,000 for this section of trail. The RRA was awarded a \$1,000,000 grant from the LCCMR in 2005 and plans to spend the remaining \$200,000 on the McKinley to Biwabik segment of this trail this summer. The RRA was able to secure over \$8,000,000 in funding to match the 2005 LCCMR award.

This project will be constructed to allow for a non-motorized transportation corridor along a heavily traveled and congested portion of HWY 169 near Ely. The trail will address existing traffic safety concerns, provide for more healthy lifestyles, allow for handicapped accessibility and will be constructed environmentally sensitive manner to avoid potential impacts on the property owners land and the pristine natural resources in this region of the state. The trail will allow for access to the large number of tourist attractions located in this region and will add jobs in what is already a predominantly tourism economy.

**II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

**Activity 1:** *Permitting/R.O.W. Acquisition*

**Budget: \$250,00**

*This money will be used for wetland delineation and all necessary permits, securing all easements, licenses or leases needed to construct the trail.*

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<i>1. All wetlands delineated.</i>	<i>July 2017</i>
<i>2. All permits secured.</i>	<i>July 2017</i>
<i>3. All right-of-way acquired.</i>	<i>July 2017</i>



**Project Title: Mesabi Trail Development – Soudan to Ely Segment**

**Activity 2: Project Design**

**Budget: \$250,000**

This money will be used to complete plans, specifications and final design prior to construction.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. <i>Completion of Plans and Specifications.</i>	<i>July 2017</i>
2. <i>Final Design Review and Completion</i>	<i>July 2017</i>
3. <i>Bidding Documents Complete.</i>	<i>July 2017</i>
	<i>July 2017</i>

**Activity 3: Project Construction**

**Budget: \$500,000**

This money will be used for trail construction.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. <i>Project Bid Let</i>	<i>July 2014</i>
2. <i>Project Construction Commencement</i>	<i>August 2014</i>
3. <i>Construction Completion</i>	<i>July 2017</i>
	<i>July 2017</i>

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

Bob Manzoline – Executive Director, RRA – Overall project administrator/director.

Mike Larson – Community Dev. Manager -SEH Engineering – Trail Development/R.O.W. Acquisition – Will Receive Money

Gary Cerkvenik – President, The Costin Group – R.O.W. Acquisition/Trail Development – Will Receive Money

Matt Reid – Senior PE – SEH – Trail Design/Construction Administration – Will Receive Money

Deric Deuschle – Wetlands/Permitting Specialist – SEH Engineering – Permit Acquisition – Will Receive Money

Funding/Trail Development Contributors – DNR, MNDOT Transportation Enhancement, Trail Legacy, State Bonding Bill

**B. Timeline Requirements**

*The schedule for completion of this segment of the trail will be done in 3 or 4 phases. The first phase of this segment will be trail construction from Soudan through the new Vermilion State Park. This phase will be designed and constructed in 2013 and 2014. The R.O.W./Permitting portion of this phase is completed. The Phase 2 will be the design and construction of the segment from the west end of the new state park to Bearhead State Park Road. The R.O.W., design and construction of this phase will be completed in 2014 and 2015. The final phase of the project will be the segment from Bearhead Road into the City of Ely. The R.O.W., design and construction of this phase will be completed in 2017. It may be determined that the final phase may be broken in to 2 phases due to funding/permitting/R.O.W./construction limitations.*

**C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs**

*The long-term strategy of the Mesabi Trail project upon completion of the Soudan to Ely segment will be to complete the last 14 mile stretch of trail from Embarrass Township to Tower. We are currently working with a local snowmobile club to share a section of existing snowmobile trail that would complete about 11 of the 14 miles needed. We will be working on the R.O.W. acquisition for this segment as we are constructing the Soudan to Ely segment. Our plan is to be ready for construction as soon as the trail connection to Ely is completed.*

## 2014 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Mesabi Trail Development - Soudan to Ely Segment

INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE (1 PAGE LIMIT)

Attach budget, in MS-EXCEL format, to your "2014 LCCMR Proposal Submission Form".

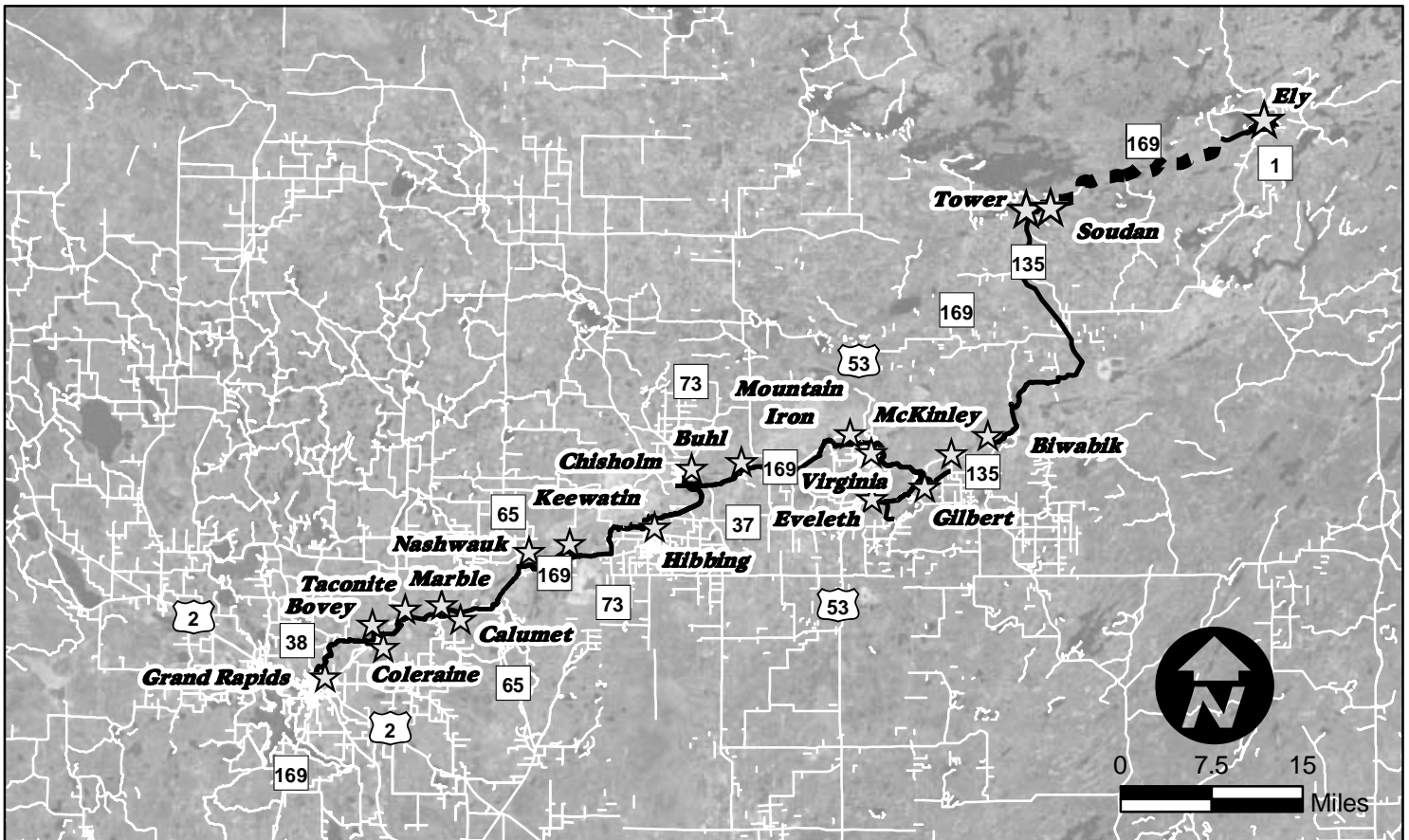
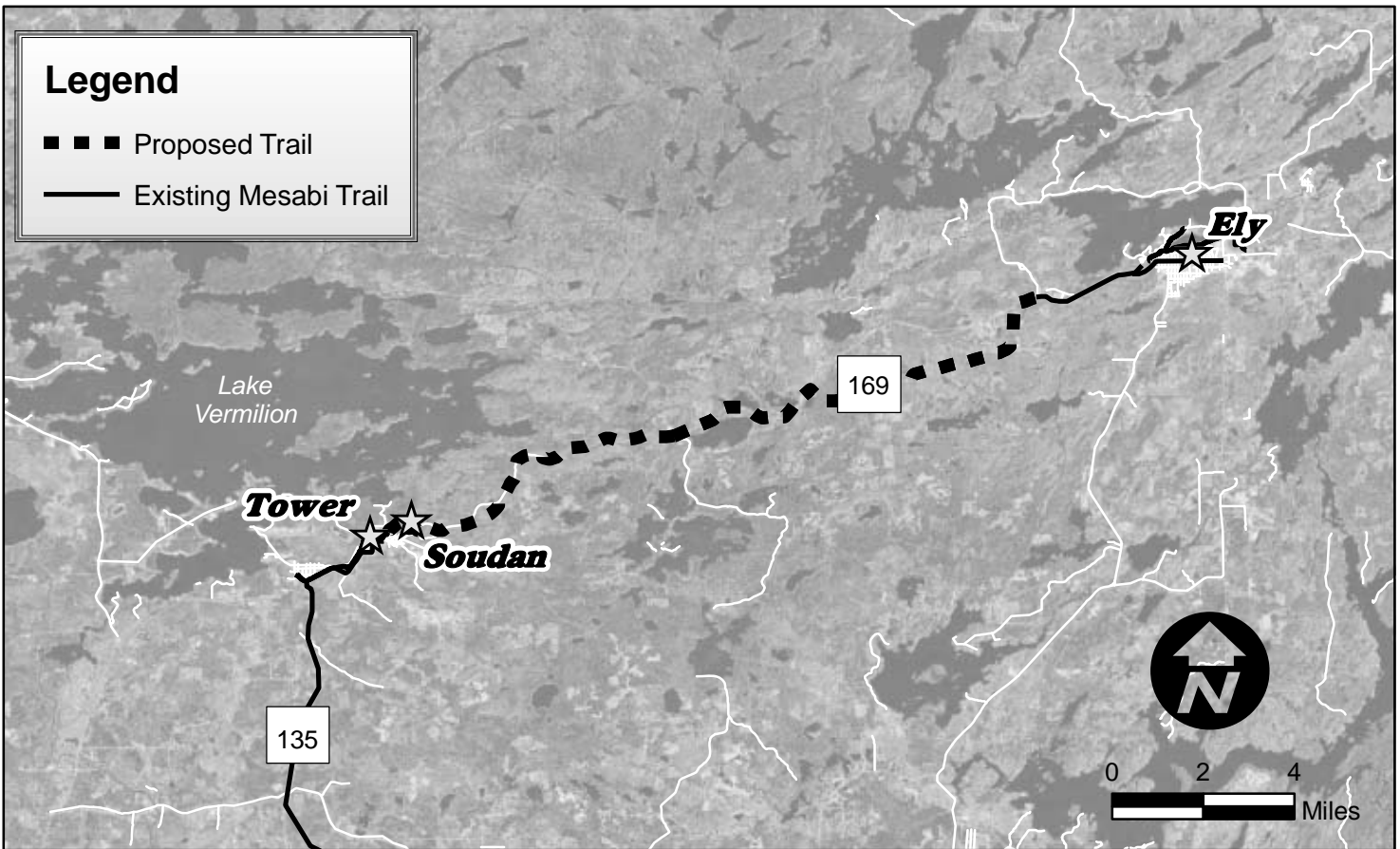
(1-page limit, single-sided, 10 pt. font minimum. Retain bold text and DELETE all instructions typed in italics. ADD OR DELETE ROWS AS NECESSARY. If a category is not applicable write "N/A", leave it blank, or delete the row.)


### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET [Insert # of years for project] years

BUDGET ITEM <i>(See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 13)</i>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Personnel:</b>	
<b>Deric Dueschle Activity 1 (100% Salary) Wetlands Specialist 36Mos. 20% FTE</b>	\$100,000
<b>Matt Reid Activities 1,2,3 (100% Salary) Project Engineer 36 Mos. 30% FTE</b>	\$280,000
<b>Mike Larson Activity 1 (100% Salary) Project Finance/R.O.W. 36 Mos. 10% FTE</b>	\$60,000
<b>Gary Cerkvenik Activity 1 (100% Salary) Project Finance/R.O.W. 36 Mos. 10% FTE</b>	\$60,000
<b>Contracts: Trail Construction Contractor to be selected through bidding process.</b>	\$500,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> <i>In this column, list out general descriptions of item(s) or item type(s) and their purpose - one row per item/item type.</i>	\$ -
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b> <i>In this column, indicate proposed number of acres and name of organization or entity who will hold title.</i>	\$ -
<b>Travel:</b> <i>Be specific. Generally, only in-state travel essential to completing project activities can be included.</i>	\$ -
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b> <i>In this column, list any additional budget items that do not fit above categories. List by item(s) or item type(s) and explain how number was reached. One row per type/category.</i>	\$ -
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	<i>Indicate: Secured or Pending</i>
<b>Federal Recreation Trail Grant</b>	\$150,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>Transportation Enhancement Grant</b>	\$394,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>Transportation Enhancement Grant</b>	\$394,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	<i>Indicate: Secured or Pending</i>
<b>State Bonding Bill</b>	\$950,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>Trail Legacy Grant</b>	\$512,000	<i>Secured</i>
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> <i>Indicate any in-kind services to be provided during the funding period. For each type of service, list type of service(s), estimated value, and indicate whether it is secured or pending. In-kind services listed must be specific to the project.</i>	\$ -	<i>Indicate: Secured or Pending</i>
<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):</b> <i>Specify dollar amount and year of appropriation from any current ENRTF appropriation for any directly related project of the project manager or organization that remains unspent or not yet legally obligated at the time of proposal submission. Be as specific as possible. Describe the status of funds in the right-most column.</i>	\$ -	<i>Indicate: Unspent? Not Legally Obligated? Other?</i>
<b>Funding History:</b> <i>Indicate funding secured prior to July 1, 2014, for activities directly relevant to this specific funding request, including past ENRTF funds. State specific source(s) of funds.</i>	\$ -	



 <p>Short Elliott Hendrickson 21 NE 5th Street, Suite 200 Grand Rapids, MN 55744 Phone: 218.322.4500</p>	<p><b>FILE NO.</b> REGRA COMMON</p>	<p><b>LCCRMR</b> <b>Mesabi Trail</b> <b>Grand Rapids to</b> <b>Ely, Minnesota</b></p>	<p>Figure 1</p>
	<p><b>DATE:</b> 05/24/2013</p>		

## **Project Title: Mesabi Trail Development – Soudan to Ely Segment**

### **Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description**

#### **Project Manager Qualifications**

The manager for this project is Bob Manzoline. Bob has been the Executive Director of the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (see organization description) since 1995. Bob's work as Executive Director consists of the oversight of all RRA activities including, budgeting, planning, project development, construction and all operation and maintenance costs.

Bob's active projects are:

North Shore Scenic Railroad: formerly Duluth, Mesabi & Iron Range Railroad (DM&IR) that operated freight between the cities of Duluth and Two Harbors, MN. The RRA acquired this from the DM&IR and is currently operating the line for passenger and freight rail along with the extension of the Duluth Lake Walk.

Mesabi Trail: The Mesabi Trail is a planned 140 mile trail from Grand Rapids to Ely, MN. The trail is primarily constructed on abandoned railway and roadway corridors. Over 115 miles of this trail has been constructed and the planning and development stage of the remaining trail is underway.

Minneapolis to Duluth Intercity Passenger Rail: This is a proposed 155 mile long passenger and freight rail operation with terminus at Target Field in Minneapolis and the Duluth Depot. Intermittent stations at Coon Rapids, Cambridge and Hinckley, MN as well as Superior, WI are being planned.

#### **Organization Description**

The St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority was established in 1985 after it was made public that the Duluth Mesaba & Iron Range (DM&IR) Railroad planned to sell the railway line between Two Harbors MN and Duluth MN, known as the "Lake Front Line". Reacting to this situation, St. Louis County Commissioners and Lake County Commissioners met to determine what could be done to preserve this historic, scenic railway line along the shores of Lake Superior.

The St. Louis and Lake Counties Board of County Commissioners signed a joint powers agreement and established themselves as a Regional Railroad Authority (RRA), which is a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota, organized under M.S. 398A. The board is composed of three commissioners from St. Louis County and two commissioners from Lake County. The chairperson of their respective county boards appoints these commissioners annually each January. Regional Railroad Authorities have both levying and bonding power. The statutory mission of Regional Railroad Authorities is "to protect and preserve abandoned railway for future transportation purposes".

The St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority was successful in securing the title to and the refurbishing of the Lake Front Line. Since 1990, the RRA, through private contractors, has leased the rail line for operation as a tourist train known as the North Shore Scenic Railroad which operates during warm weather months between Duluth and Two Harbors.

Shortly thereafter, the RRA began to look at other opportunities to preserve railway for future transportation purposes. At the same time several companies which operated railways on the Iron Range area of northern Minnesota were looking at abandonment of their lines. In an effort to preserve the right-of-way before the line became parceled off, the RRA began to research the possibility of a rail-to-trail alignment. With strong community interest and support, the concept of a trail connecting the communities between Grand Rapids and Ely commenced. Today over 100 miles of this new Mesabi Trail is constructed