

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2018 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 207-G

Harmony State Trail Extension Land Acquisition

Category: G. Land Acquisition, Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ 235,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 1 year, July 2018 to June 2019

Summary:

To acquire fee title to 16 parcels to allow for the extension of the state trail from Harmony south to the Iowa state boarder with a spur to Niagara Cave.

Name: Jerome Illg

Sponsoring Organization: City of Harmony

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Harmony MN 55939

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Location

Region: Southeast

County Name: Fillmore

City / Township: City of Harmony and Harmony Township

Alternate Text for Visual:

Map detailing proposed state trail extension. Map shows proposed route detail and proposed route in context of existing Root River Trail System connecting Harmony, Preston, and Lanesboro among other locations. Caption reads "Harmony Stateline" State Trail Extension. Extension of existing trail south from Harmony to the Iowa boarder with a spur to Niagara Cave.

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL	_____ %



PROJECT TITLE: Harmony State Trail Extension Land Acquisition

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

1. Why is this project needed? To provide funds to the City of Harmony so that they can purchase the fee title interest in the entire land corridor needed to develop the an extension of its state trail (Harmony is calling this extension the “Harmony Stateline” State Trail), which is a legislatively authorized state trail that would extend the Harmony-Preston State Trail south from Harmony to the Iowa/Minnesota border, with a spur to Niagara Cave. This 6 mile trail is the first step in a proposed SE Minnesota- NE Iowa interstate trail system which will connect the Root River Trail system with the NE Iowa Trail system. **Funding through LCCMR is critical now because the City of Harmony currently controls the entire land corridor needed for this trail but will likely forever lose that interest at the end of 2019.**
2. Overall project goals: The Harmony Stateline State Trail will join the Root River Valley and the Upper Iowa River Valley in our Driftless region. It will highlight our unique karst geography and high-diversity biology, making our region a vacation destination which will provide additional economic and health benefits for our area’s visitors as well as our residents. This project will provide a means for trail users to experience Niagara Cave and will connect the Root River Trail system in Minnesota with the Northeast Iowa trail system which includes the Cresco and Decorah trail systems. By creating this interstate trail system, Minnesota’s trail will be opened to an entirely new set of users, create a new attraction for existing users to return, and cause major positive economic impacts for SE Minnesota’s trail towns.
3. How does this project achieve these goals? **The project in this request will forever secure the land corridor to make an interstate connection with Iowa possible.** Once the land corridor is secured, development of the interstate trail connection can proceed. And once this 6 mile extension is completed, it will be Minnesota’s link to an additional 50-60 miles of trail (Iowa’s) without incurring any additional costs for acquisition or maintenance. This trail loop will encourage new and returning visitors to extend their vacation stays and will build upon the enormously successful Root River Trail System which traverses the area’s attractions, scenic Bluff Country, woods, hills, rivers, and valleys.
4. What happens if this project isn’t funded? **Harmony will lose control of the land corridor if it is not purchased by 2019.** Purchase option contracts have been secured on 16 parcels by the City of Harmony in late 2015/early 2016, a process that took local volunteers nearly 30 years and \$25,000 to complete. **These options give the City of Harmony the exclusive right to buy, at any time, the entire land corridor needed to extend the State Trail.** These contracts firmly set the final acquisition price between the City and landowners at the appraised value of the land at the time of sale; if the landowner disagrees with the first appraisal the landowner has the ability to a second appraisal at their own cost and then the final sale price will be the average of the two appraisals. Funding from LCCMR now is critical because the City’s option contracts expire December 31, 2019. While many of the landowners might re-up an option contract beyond 2019, recent ownership changes will likely make it impossible to preserve the current contiguous trail corridor beyond 2019. The Harmony Area Community Foundation has granted the City of Harmony \$15,000 to help with land acquisition – these matching funds will also be lost if LCCMR funding is not awarded.



II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Land Acquisition

Budget: \$250,000

Option contracts are in place and give the City of Harmony exclusive right to purchase the entire trail corridor, but the options expire December 31, 2019. The City must find acquisition funds before the options expire or the trail corridor will be lost. The City of Harmony will utilize its experienced staff to facilitate all the technical aspects of the project and transactions, including but not limited to surveying and appraisals.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Apply for LCCMR Funding	May 2017
2. LCCMR award received	July 2018
3. City of Harmony exercises its option contracts to purchase 16 parcels for the trail corridor.	June 2019
4. City of Harmony facilitates land appraisal, survey, and transactional work for trail corridor purchase.	June 2019
5. City of Harmony donates trail corridor to State/DNR once corridor is acquired.	June 2019

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

City of Harmony is the sponsoring organization and will oversee entire project and provide local funding/legal authority. The City of Harmony has passed a resolution of support for this application and project. The Harmony Area Community Foundation has granted the City of Harmony \$15,000 for land acquisition.

Volunteer partners/non-fiscal stakeholders include: Harmony EDA and Trails Commission handles grant writing and coordination efforts with third parties; they will work with DNR to develop and construct the trail in the future once route is secured. Niagara Cave is a major supporting entity; they have submitted an application to become a National Natural Landmark with the US Dept. of Interior. Northeast Iowa Trails consists of volunteers from Howard and Winneshiek Counties in Iowa and are actively pursuing a connection between their trail system and the Root River Trail system via the Harmony Stateline Trail connection; they will meet the Harmony Stateline Trail at its terminus at the MN/IA border.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

This project provides funding to secure the critical link that will develop a comprehensive interstate trail system; joining the Root River Valley and the Upper Iowa's River Valley in the Upper Midwest's geologically unique "Driftless Region." It will establish a land corridor to connect the existing Harmony-Preston Valley Trail & Root River Trail system to Iowa's existing Cresco and Decorah trail systems.

Once ownership of the corridor is secured by the City of Harmony, it will donate the corridor to the Minnesota DNR and work closely with it for development and construction of the physical trail.

C. Timeline Requirements

Time is of the essence. The purchase option contracts for the entire trail corridor expire December 31, 2019. Because of recent property ownership changes, if the options currently in place expire, the trail route will never be acquirable again.

The City of Harmony can meet this deadline to acquire the land corridor within the timelines the LCCMR program sets.

2018 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Harmony State Trail Extension Land Acquisition

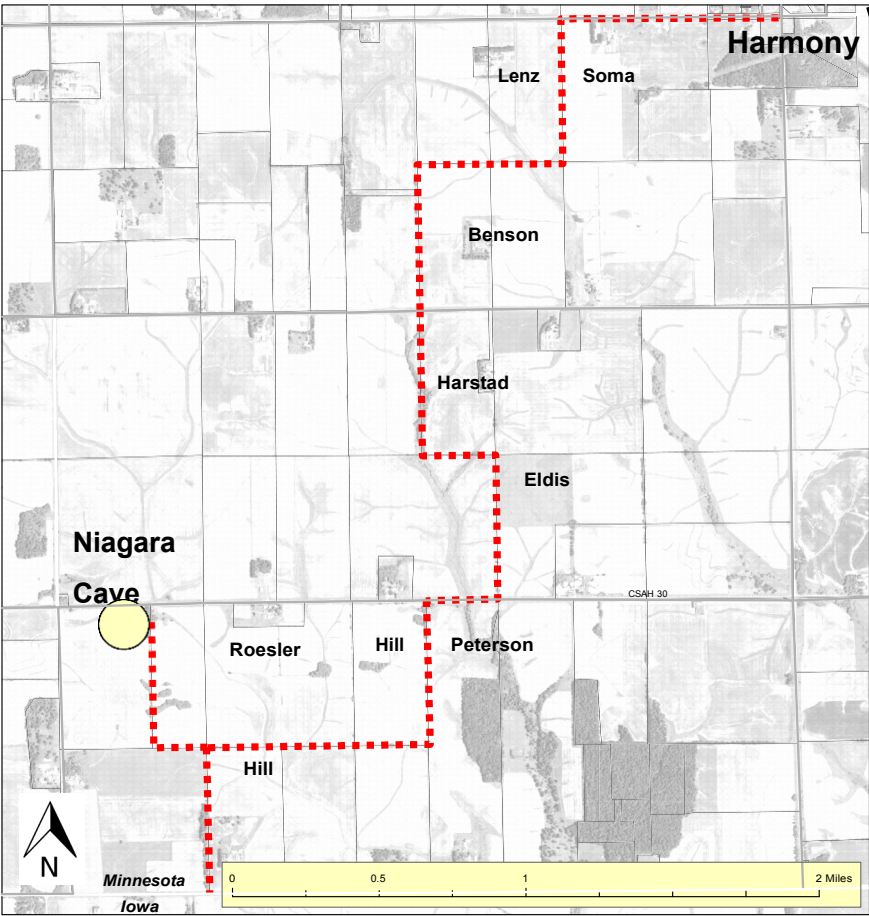
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET - 1 year

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: The City of Harmony will hire a <i>DNR approved appraiser & qualified surveyor to determine acquisition value and legal description of the 16 parcels to be acquired. Experienced City staff will facilitate all transactional details. No contracts for such work are in place at this time with vendors.</i>	\$ 50,000
Acquisition (Fee Title): fee title acquisition price of +/- 24.97 acres in Harmony Township in Fillmore County. City of Harmony will hold title and intends to donate the land to the DNR or hold the title until trail development occurs; whichever method is preferred by DNR.	\$ 200,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 235,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

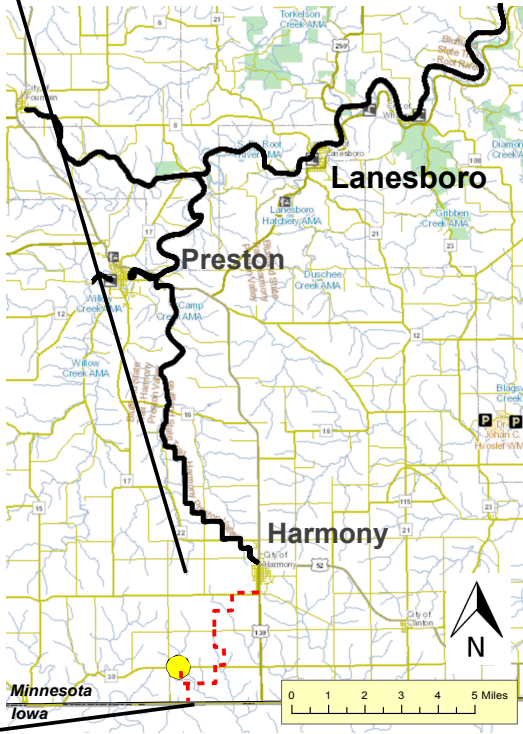
<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: <i>Grant recieved from local community foundation (Harmony Area Community Foundation). Funds are to be used towards trail land acquisition.</i>	\$ 15,000	<i>Secured</i>
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: N/A	\$ -	N/A
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: City staff time (estimated at \$100/hr for two people, for 100 hours total for the entire project duration).	\$ 10,000	<i>Secured</i>
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation: N/A	\$ -	N/A
Other Funding History: Cost of land purchase option contracts. Payments has been authroized by the City Council and made.	\$ 25,000	<i>Secured</i>

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title Holder
1	14.0154.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	0.91	for-profit entity	City of Harmony
2	14.0153.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	2.27	for-profit entity	City of Harmony
3	14.0053.010	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	0.91	for-profit entity	City of Harmony
4	14.0152.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	1.81	for-profit entity	City of Harmony
5	14.0150.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	1.81	private individual	City of Harmony
6	14.0147.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	2.5	private individual	City of Harmony
7	14.0140.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	0.68	private individual	City of Harmony
8	14.0188.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	2.72	private individual	City of Harmony
9	14.0179.010	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	0.02	private individual	City of Harmony
10	14.0178.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	1.81	for-profit entity	City of Harmony
11	14.0212.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	2.72	private individual	City of Harmony
12	14.0213.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	0.9	private individual	City of Harmony
13	14.0214.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	0.02	for-profit entity	City of Harmony
14	14.0215.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	0.9	private individual	City of Harmony
15	14.0210.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	3.63	private individual	City of Harmony
16	14.0209.000	Fillmore	agricultural land	bike trail corridor	1.36	private individual	City of Harmony



“Harmony Stateline” State Trail Extension

Extension of existing trail south from Harmony to the Iowa boarder with a spur to Niagara Cave.



Project: Harmony Stateline Trail Land Acquisition

The City of Harmony is the sponsor of this project. The City Administrator, Jerome Illg will manage the project for the City. Mr. Illg has been with the City of Harmony since 2003 and has actively managed numerous construction, remodel, acquisition, and grant projects that have utilized local, state, and federal sources of funds.

