



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-028

Proposal Title: Mesabi Trail CSAH 88 to Ely

Project Manager Information

Name: Robert Manzoline

Organization: St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority

Office Telephone: (218) 744-2653

Email: bmanzoline@rrauth.com

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This project is for the construction of an approximately 2.8 mile long segment of the Mesabi Trail beginning at the intersection of County State Aid Highway 88 to Ely.

Funds Requested: \$2,200,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2024-06-30

LCCMR Funding Category: Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation (G)

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

Narrative

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

Running from the Mississippi to the Boundary Waters, the Mesabi Trail is a planned 10' wide, 155 milelong paved trail that serves as an alternate transportation corridor and recreational facility for non-motorized use namely pedestrian, bike, ski, and horses and in designated areas, winter snowmobile use. The trail will connect twenty-nine (29) communities across two counties starting in Grand Rapids and ending in Ely. Approximately 126 miles of the trail has been constructed and 13.7 miles are currently under construction since its inception in 1996. The Mesabi Trail is owned and maintained by the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (RRA). The annual trail maintenance budget is \$390,000. The trail has been constructed in cooperation with local landowners, local governments and State and Federal lands with no eminent domain proceedings.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

The County State Aid Highway 88 to Ely Segment (hereafter known as the "Project") is a planned approximately 2.8 mile long, 10 feet wide bituminous paved surface with 2 foot gravel shoulders. The Project will begin at County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 88 and then traverse easterly approximately 2.8 miles to Ely. This segment will make connection to the North American Bear Center, the planned Ely Visitors Center and the International Wolf Center. It will connect to the existing Mesabi Trail on the West (to Tower) and the existing Mesabi Trail in Ely.

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?

The Mesabi Trail is constructed in accordance with the MN DOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual. The trail connects communities, provides a transportation corridor, promotes healthy lifestyles and is ADA compliant. The trail traverses multiple landscapes, natural settings, state parks, state and county and federal forests, lakes and streams. The trail travels through many cultural settings that are interpreted including Native American, European settlers, logging era, former iron mining era and current iron mining operations. The trail currently connects 29 communities with yearly users exceeding 220,000 per year of which, 34% arrive from outside of the Northeast MN region.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Environmental and Permitting

Activity Budget: \$130,000

Activity Description:

Environmental work needed to comply with the Federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State of Minnesota Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) involving those compliance agencies namely the Federal Departments of Environmental Protection, Highway Administration & Fish & Wildlife and the Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation & Historic Preservation.

Other oversight agencies that will become involved include the Federal Army Corps of Engineers, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Local Board of Soil and Water Conservation.

The environmental work will be supported by engineering work to locate alternative trail routes, survey cultural resource locations, survey wetland boundaries, establish property lines and identify land ownership.

Geotechnical work may occur if unsuitable soils or ledge rock is encountered.

Work will be performed by a person or firm accredited by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) hereafter known as "Consultant". Consultant will perform work needed to comply with NEPA and MEPA documenting trail route alternatives, cultural resource identification, wetland delineation & mitigation, endangered species, social impacts, economic impacts, state waters impacts, land use (4f) and other. Consultant will further evaluate and assure compliance with local ordinances, planning, zoning and codes.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
1. Approvals and permits from various agencies	2022-06-30

Activity 2: Right-of-Way Acquisition

Activity Budget: \$30,000

Activity Description:

Acquire right-of-way in sufficient width for trail construction by way of permits, easements, leases or purchase. The minimum right-of-way width is forty feet. Land purchase is not anticipated but if needed, lands will be acquired by the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority. No LCCMR funds will be used for land purchase. Right-of-way work includes land surveys, legal descriptions, title searches and recording. Majority of this work will be performed by a registered land surveyor and attorney. It is understood attorney and appraisal fees are not eligible for grant reimbursement.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
1. Acquire approximately 14,600 lineal feet by 40 feet wide of trail right-of-way	2022-06-30

Activity 3: Engineering survey, design, plans and construction management

Activity Budget: \$310,000

Activity Description:

Engineering will be done in accordance with the MN DOT Standards for Bicycle Trails. Engineering work begins with route(s) identification and support of environmental work and then to more specific survey work once a preferred trail route alternative is selected. The project engineer will design the trail in accordance with MN DOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ASHTO standards while taking into account on-site conditions such as waterways, wetlands, hills, valleys and other features to determine the final trail location and design.

Engineer, working in cooperation with the environmental contractor, will perform design, provide construction plan and specifications. Engineer will also perform construction management, on-site inspections, testing oversight and other functions in accordance with FHWA standards.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Support for environmental work	2022-06-30
Plans and specifications	2022-12-31
Final inspection and project documentation	2024-06-30
Construction management	2024-06-30

Activity 4: Trail construction

Activity Budget: \$1,730,000

Activity Description:

Construct a 10' wide bituminous surfaced trail approximately 14,600 lineal feet in length built in accordance with the engineering plan. Trail construction will include 2' wide gravel shoulders, base preparation, grading, gravel base, ditch ways, slopes, culverts, fencing, signing, landscaping, seeding and all else necessary for a complete trail.

Construction will be performed by a licensed and bonded contractor. Project bidding, contractor selection and contracts will be performed in accordance with the St. Louis County Public Project Procurement Process.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Construct approximately 14,600 lineal feet (~2.8 miles) of bituminous surface trail	2024-06-30

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 be funded?

Long term strategy for the Mesabi Trail has not changed since 1995 which is to construct a trail from Grand Rapids to Ely connecting 29 communities along the way. Seeking eligible grants to complete the trail is an on-going process. A key component is to maintain the trail to last for a period of 20 years. The Regional Railroad Authority has committed to maintain the trail and currently budgets over \$390,000 per year for maintenance costs.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Historic Bruce Mine Park and Mesabi Trailhead	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09q	\$1,000,000
Mesabi Trail Extensions	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g	\$3,000,000
Develop Mesabi Trail Segment From County Road 88 to Ely	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b	\$600,000
Mesabi Trail Development	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g	\$2,269,000
Mesabi Trail Segment from Highway 135 to Town of Embarrass	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 09e	\$1,200,000
Mesabi Trail Development Soudan to Ely - Phase II	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 09i	\$1,000,000
Mesabi Trail Development - Soudan to Ely Segment	M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 07c	\$1,000,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Robert Manzoline

Job Title: Executive Director

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

The Project Manager is Robert Manzoline, Executive Director of the St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority.

Organization: St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority

Organization Description:

The St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority is a local government unit of Minnesota organizes and operating under MN Laws M.S. 398A.

The Regional Railroad Authority has been working on the development of the Mesabi Trail since year 1995 and has constructed 126 miles and 13.7 miles currently under construction thus far.

The 2021 proposal includes a new approximate 2.8 mile segment of the Mesabi Trail similar to most other trail segments constructed to date. The Regional Railroad Authority is experienced with all aspects of this project including public involvement, agency contacts, environmental, engineering, construction, budgets and funding.

The Regional Railroad Authority has worked with many granting agencies over the years including LCCMR, MN State Bond, MN Legacy, MN DEED, MN IRRRB and Federal Enhancement, TAP and Recreational Trails grants.

The Regional Railroad Authority has hired a full-time employee to track, report and maintain grants along with a half-time auditor for grant accounting purposes.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Contract with firms TBD for environmental work and permitting				0.1		\$130,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Right of way acquisition				0.2		\$30,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Engineering for trail				3.8		\$310,000
							Sub Total	\$470,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
		Construct bituminous surface trail	For completion of the Mesabi Trail					\$1,730,000
							Sub Total	\$1,730,000
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	\$2,200,000

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				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [dd64e609-524.docx](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Trail segment map of CSAH 88 to Ely

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
RRA Board Resolution	46ba2dd9-a00.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Overall location Map on the Mesabi Trail	6dcb7a99-b63.docx

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have patent, royalties, or revenue potential?

No

Does your project include research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No



TRAIL LENGTH
14,531.79 LF - 2.75 MI

DRAWN BY: --				
DESIGNER: --				
CHECKED BY: --				
DESIGN TEAM	NO.	BY	DATE	REVISIONS



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**ELY,
MINNESOTA**

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CSAH 88 - ELY**

FILE NO.
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