



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-404

Proposal Title: Mesabi Trail Mckinley to Biwabik

Project Manager Information

Name: Bill Dahl

Organization: St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority

Office Telephone: (218) 744-6150

Email: bdahl@rrauth.com

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This project is for the construction of an approximately 5.5 mile-long segment of the Mesabi Trail beginning at the City of McKinley and ending at the City of Biwabik.

Funds Requested: \$1,000,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2022-10-31

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.

This project was submitted as part of the 2020 Request for Proposal process, and now resubmitting per the recommendations of the LCCMR staff.

Running from the Mississippi to the Boundary Waters, the Mesabi Trail is a planned 10' wide, 155 mile-long 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 McKinley to Biwabik segment (hereafter known as the "Project") is a planned approximately 5.5 mile-long, 10 foot wide bituminous paved surface with 2 foot gravel shoulders. The Project will begin at the City of McKinley and then traverse easterly approximately 5.5 miles to the City of Biwabik. This important segment will make connection to the existing trail from the City of Gilbert to McKinley from the East to the existing trail from Biwabik traversing to the West through the Giants Ridge Recreational Area to Embarrass.

The Activity completion dates have changed from the 2020 project proposal with project completion projected to be October 2022.

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: McKinley to Biwabik

Activity Budget: \$1,000,000

Activity Description:

This approximate 5.5 mile-long segment of the trail will make connections to the existing Mesabi Trail in the City of McKinley and traverse easterly to the City of Biwabik. Due to right-of-way issues, part of the proposed trail has been relocated to a new location. The new trail location length is approximately 3,900 feet passing across the Cave Lake water inlet and adjoining wetlands. We are proposing to construct a 900 feet long floating bridge to cross the wetlands minimizing impacts to the wetland and water flowage. The new trail location has increased project costs primarily for the floating bridge, wetland mitigation and fencing along the trail of mining operations.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Environmental and wetland mitigation	2020-08-31
Design Engineering	2020-10-31
Trail Construction	2022-10-31

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Robert Manzoline	St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority	Executive Director and Project Manager Office phone: (218) 744-2653 bmanzoline@rrauth.com	Yes

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: Bill Dahl

Job Title: Deputy 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 2020, now 2021 proposal includes a new approximate 5.5 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 design engineer for final design for trail realignment, floating bridge, additional wetland mitigation, construction management and staking				0.6		\$100,000
							Sub Total	\$100,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
		Trail bituminous surface trail	For completion of the Mesabi Trail					\$900,000
							Sub Total	\$900,000
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	\$1,000,000

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
State				
Cash	MN Legacy Grant	Used for completing this portion of the Mesabi Trail	Secured	\$179,763
			State Sub Total	\$179,763
Non-State				
Cash	Federal TAP	Used to complete the Mesabi Trail	Secured	\$1,004,976
			Non State Sub Total	\$1,004,976
			Funds Total	\$1,184,739

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [c1ab36d2-2dc.docx](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Map of the proposed Mesabi Trail Segment from McKinley to Biwabik

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution Letter	2f75cbdc-698.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
McKinley to Biwabik	dd2e2274-57b.docx
Overall Mesabi Trail Map noting McKinley to Biwabik	d5e748df-c66.pdf

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



Main St

BIWABIK

Existing Trail to
Giants Ridge
Recreational Area

715

135

McKINLEY

BIWABIK Hwy 135

Vermilion Trl

20

4

Existing
Trail to
Gilbert

