



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-416

Proposal Title: A Showcase for Resource-Sensitive Trail Construction

Project Manager Information

Name: Denny Caneff

Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Renew and rebuild the Superior Hiking Trail to minimize environmental damage, maximize safety, and increase resistance to impacts of increased traffic and climate change.

Funds Requested: \$450,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2023-12-31

LCCMR Funding Category: Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat (F)

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 and In the Future

Narrative

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

We plan to renew and rebuild the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) to minimize environmental damage, increase resistance to impacts of traffic and climate change, meet or exceed expectations of public and private landowners to responsibly manage the SHT, and enhance users' experience and safety. Much of the SHT was built before national trail building standards were established. The SHT is hugely popular and was not built to withstand the impact of an estimated 100,000 users annually. As a result, there is considerable environmental damage to the Trail, and damage caused by users of the Trail.

A 2018 ENRTF grant allowed the Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA) to hire trail experts to evaluate root causes of environmental damage and user dangers on the SHT. Their findings: the problems on the SHT were not limited to the miles they evaluated but are endemic along the entire 300-mile length of the Trail. Their advice to the Association: adopt national hiking trail construction standards; change organizational systems and processes to support sustainable trail building; and focus on managing water. This advice dovetailed nicely with the SHTA's own Trail Renewal Program, launched in early 2018, a commitment to reduce natural resource damage.

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.

We will commit to environmental responsibility by adopting and implementing national hiking trail construction standards for every project on the SHT and training staff, volunteers and contractors in those principles and practices.

Our first goal is to renew or rebuild the most damaged, dangerous sections where built structures and water management devices are needed. Replacement will be implemented with construction standards for trail structures developed by the National Park Service and used by most other national scenic trail groups.

We also plan to renew the SHT by building new trail in key locations. Some segments of the SHT were simply put in the wrong, unsustainable place from the beginning. We intend to build entirely new sections of trail (1,000 -10,000 feet), because the existing trail simply can't be fortified enough to withstand the natural and human forces undermining it. In these cases, starting over is the best course of action.

These two strategies will lead to a more sustainable trail, a safer user experience, and a decrease in environmental impact.

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?

Sections of the Trail showing the most environmental damage will be repaired. Built structures will be constructed to minimize environmental damage and reduce hazards. Wetlands along the SHT will be far less impacted; slopes and stream banks will be better protected. This ENRTF grant would enable the SHTA to continue the renewal work stemming from a 2019 ENRTF grant that focuses on the "worst of the worst" sections of the SHT. If we fulfill the promise of our Trail Renewal Program, the SHTA can be a showcase for how an "old" hiking trail can be renewed and built to last.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Renew and Rebuild the Most Damaged and Dangerous Segments

Activity Budget: \$225,000

Activity Description:

There are countless board walks, stairways, small bridges and other structures – and, conversely, a lack of them – needing reconstruction and renewal. Our focus in this activity will be to replace weak or decrepit built structures, using construction standards for trail structures developed by the National Park Service and used by most other national scenic trail groups. In addition, this activity will include retrofitting the SHT with water management devices (e.g. water bars, drainage dips, swales, ditches) so that water is deflected away from and off the tread (footpath) of the Trail, thereby reducing or eliminating erosion and mud holes.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Up to 10 short reroutes totaling up to 2 miles will be completed	2023-12-31
Up to 20 miles of the SHT will be retrofitted with water management devices	2023-12-31
Up to 30 structures will be rebuilt or built anew in areas most in need	2023-12-31

Activity 2: Renewing the SHT By Making Brand-New Trail

Activity Budget: \$225,000

Activity Description:

Some segments of the SHT were simply put in the wrong place from the beginning: at the bottom of a slope, through a wetland area, or onto a nearby snowmobile trail for lack of a better route. In this activity, we intend to build entirely new sections of trail (1,000 -10,000 feet), because the existing trail simply can't be fortified enough to withstand the natural and human forces undermining it. In these cases, starting over is the best course of action. There are many vagaries to getting a "reroute" approved, making it difficult to determine exactly which segments would get rerouted. Those listed below are high-priority candidates for rerouting:

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
A new northern terminus route (1.5 miles) to the Pigeon River/Canadian border	2023-12-31
A 2.5 mile segment built near Grand Marais to get off a snowmobile trail	2023-12-31
Soggy areas, up to 5 miles, will be rerouted between Britton Peak and Caribou Trail	2023-12-31

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Matt Davis	North Country Trail Association	Provides advice and counsel, technical assistance.	No
Tim Malzahn	Ice Age Trail Alliance	Provides advice and counsel, technical assistance.	No
Derrick Passe	Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District	Advises on environmental regulatory matters in Lake County	No
Cathy Quinn	U.S. Forest Service	Liaison to the SHTA for any work done on the SHTA within the boundaries of Superior National Forest.	No
Christa Maxwell	Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Division	Liaison to SHTA from DNR to assist in planning and executing trail projects within North Shore state parks	No
Mike Young	Minnesota DNR Division of Forestry	Liaison to SHTA from DNR to assist in planning and executing trail projects within northeastern Minnesota forest lands	No
Jim Shoberg	City of Duluth Parks Department	Liaison to SHTA from Duluth Parks to assist in planning and executing trail projects within the limits of the City of Duluth	No
Jon Benson	U.S. Forest Service	Liaison to the SHTA for any work done on the SHTA within the boundaries of Superior National Forest.	No

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?

Our Trail Renewal Program has focused the Association's energy, resources and systems so that the lofty goal of creating and supporting a hiking trail that lasts a century is achievable. The Trail Renewal Program has brought about a significant increase in private donations that will support the operations of the organization. Big trail-building projects will require support from wherever we can get it, including public sources (local governments, IRRRB, ENRTF, Duluth Parks, Greater MN Parks and Trails Commission) and private sources (private foundations, major donors and investors).

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Restoring Five Sections of the Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09o	\$191,000
Enhancement Plan for Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09f	\$100,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Denny Caneff

Job Title: Executive Director

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

Denny has been executive director of the Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA) since June of 2017. He led the creation

of the Trail Renewal Program, the framework by which the SHTA has improved, rebuilt and rehabilitated the Superior Hiking Trail, and the systems and processes that support trail renewal. He has also hired new staff with passion for and expertise in trail renewal and fundraising; recruited and developed volunteers committed to trail renewal; and has committed the SHTA to honoring all land and water conservation regulations that affect the SHT. Denny is in the process of managing two other ENRTF grants -- one to evaluate the most damaged sections of the SHT (grant expires in June 2020), and the other to rebuild and rehabilitate those sections of the SHT that are the most damaged, threaten the safety of trail users, or are called for by (private and public) landowners.

Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association

Organization Description:

Superior Hiking Trail Association is a member-based organization, headquartered in Two Harbors, that manages, renews, promotes and supports the Superior Hiking Trail. The SHT is a 300-mile long natural footpath running from the Ontario border to the Wisconsin border, passing through Duluth. Started in 1986, The SHT features 94 backcountry campsites and several loops and spurs. A beloved and popular Minnesota recreational amenity, the Trail is enjoyed by people age 6 to 86 -- long-distance hikers and backpackers, trail runners, church youth groups, and adventure travel enterprises all enjoy the stunning scenic beauty and the physical challenge that the SHT affords.

With most sections built 30 years ago and sustaining heavy use, the SHT is worn out and showing its age. Built structures are failing, environmental damage is occurring, and a few spots on the Trail are becoming hazardous to users. The Association is committed to renewing every mile of the SHT that requires it and reducing or eliminating the environmental damage caused by heavy use and poor initial construction and placement.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Trail Operations Director		Trail operations director oversees trail construction work.			25%	0.5		\$32,500
							Sub Total	\$32,500
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Trail construction contractors will be experts in recreational trail building. They will be sourced via competitive RFP process. Services would include trail construction, board walk and stairway construction (wood or stone), but could include trail route identification and mapping.				0.73		\$381,000
							Sub Total	\$381,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Equipment, Tools, and Supplies	This includes lumber, cement, hardware, gravel, metal bog pans and related hardware.					\$25,000
							Sub Total	\$25,000
Capital Expenditures								
		Used Snowmobile	Necessary to transport materials to remote locations on frozen ground.					\$8,000
							Sub Total	\$8,000
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-

Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Travel to work sites by SHTA staff	Staff supervision and expertise needed on site					\$1,200
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Material vendors' transport costs	Necessary to transport needed materials to site					\$2,300
							Sub Total	\$3,500
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$450,000

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				
Cash	Recreational Trails Program, IRRRB	Grants to maintain and improve the Superior Hiking Trail	Pending	\$150,000
			State Sub Total	\$150,000
Non-State				
In-Kind	Volunteers	4000 hours of volunteer support for the project, valued at \$20/hr.	Secured	\$80,000
Cash	Donations and memberships	Various related expenses, including: materials, tools, volunteer support, lodging, travel, and other professional services to support this project.	Secured	\$200,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$280,000
			Funds Total	\$430,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [dcc04401-9fd.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

A one-page document with a map of undesirable trail conditions - an overwhelming number of them. Includes 2 photos of worn-out trail and failed built structures that must be replaced for user safety and erosion concerns.

Financial Capacity

File: [3ef2a330-2f4.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
SHTA Board Resolution	634e4555-8e5.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
SHTA Audited Financial Statements FY2019	bf027373-31f.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

Below: The red and yellow dots represent “undesirable trail conditions.” From a 2018 assessment funded by ENRTF grant.



