



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2023 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2023-181

Proposal Title: Renewing Access to an Iconic North Shore Vista

Project Manager Information

Name: Lisa Luukkala

Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association

Office Telephone: (218) 834-2700

Email: lluukkala@superiorhiking.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We seek to renew access to one of Minnesota's most iconic vistas, the Bean and Bear Lakes section of the Superior Hiking Trail, using national trail design best practices.

Funds Requested: \$197,000

Proposed Project Completion: November 30, 2025

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary 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?

Statewide

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.

The Superior Hiking Trail is showing its age. Now 36 years old, many sections of the Trail are in need of renewal, particularly those areas on the Trail that experience heavy visitor use and have end-of-lifespan infrastructure. One of these locations is Bean and Bear Lakes. This section of Trail can easily be claimed as one of the most photographed locations along the North Shore. It has earned its popularity because of its relatively easy access, panoramic views and natural beauty.

The construction of the Superior Hiking Trail were some of the very first projects funded by LCCMR over thirty years ago. These funds played an instrumental role in providing 300 miles of recreational access to the rocky ridgeline along Lake Superior. Now, more than ever, the Trail needs assistance from LCCMR to renew and enhance the trail corridor to assure that it provides another generation of Minnesotan's a high quality outdoor recreation experience. Unlike much recreational infrastructure in the state, the Trail is managed and maintained by a non-profit and works with over 200 landowners to provide access. Because of this we are very limited to what types of funding are available on a state and federal level.

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

We will renew, rebuild and reinforce this section of Trail that sees high visitor use and user impacts. Our staff, lead volunteers and professional trail building contractors will employ modern sustainable trail building practices that will will amour the Trail and project the adjacent land and water. Bean and Bear was identified as a problematic area along the Trail corridor during the 2019 assessments conducted in part by an LCCMR funded evaluation. Known as one of the "Big Bad Five," Bean and Bear is noted to have some of the most significant erosion issues on the Trail.

The trail renewal techniques used on this particular section of Trail will utilize primarily natural materials found on site to design a more a more resilient Trail. The use of stone steps, step stone and modern trail water management techniques will help this section of trail withstand adverse weather and increased visitor use. Once complete, the Trail will properly shed water and reduce on erosion on both the Trail itself and the adjacent land.

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?

Through our Trail Renewal Program, the Superior Hiking Trail Association assures that every mile of the footpath along the North Shore is built sustainably to be enjoyed by tens of thousands of annual visitors for decades to come -- all without causing unnecessary harm to surrounding lands and waters. Our efforts to make the SHT resilient to climate changes and increase visitor use will help protect and preserve the sensitive habitats and ecosystems through which the Trail traverses.

The Trail is a space for exploration and education -- it's where thousands of Minnesotans start their lifelong connection to the outdoors.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Increase the resiliency of the Bean and Bear Trail section through stone work.

Activity Budget: \$103,000

Activity Description:

By utilizing nature's own most sustainable building materials, SHTA plans to amour the Trail using stone that can be sourced hyper-locally along the trail corridor. This stone is the most resilient and long-lasting material available to Northeastern Minnesotan trail builders and this section of the Trail has plenty of it to spare. Deeply graded sections of the Bean and Bear section will be retrofitted with stone steps and lower muddier sections of the Trail section will be retrofitted with stone step stones which will allow trail users to traverse through perennial mudholes with ease while also reducing impacts to adjacent land.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
129 stone steps installed along the Bean and Bear trail section	September 30, 2024
18 step stones installed along Bean and Bear trail section	October 31, 2024

Activity 2: Renew tread, install drainage management systems and reroute a small section of the Bean and Bear trail section

Activity Budget: \$90,000

Activity Description:

Due to poor location of the original trail alignment, age of trail infrastructure and erosion due to storm events and heavy visitor use there are portions of the Bean and Bear trail section that require tread repair, drainage work, puncheon (boardwalk) replacement and even a short reroute to avert a particularly challenging areas of the original alignment. These measures will help repair the existing footpath and allow water to stay off the trail. By keeping water off, we keep people on the Trail and reduce impacts to the adjacent land when people try to find alternative routes around a particularly soggy section of trail.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Installation of between 800 to 850 feet of puncheon	November 30, 2024
Renew/repair and provide proper drainage for 3,000 to 3,500 ft of tread	November 30, 2024
Reroute a 1,000 ft. section of trail along a more sustainably located alignment	November 30, 2024

Activity 3: Campsite renewal

Activity Budget: \$4,000

Activity Description:

The campsite located along this trail section sees heavy use and a lot of wear and tear. Just like any other piece of trail infrastructure, campsites require not only annual maintenance but also more intensive repair and renewal over time. The goal will be to reset the tent pads within the campsite to more clearly delineate the campsite boundary.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
One campsite will be repaired and renewed	November 30, 2024

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
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
Nate Eide	Lake County	Liaison to SHTA from Lake County to assist in planning and executing trail projects within Lake County managed public lands	No
Matt Davis	North Country Trail Association	Provides advice, counsel, technical assistance	No
Lana Fralich	City of Silver Bay	Liaison to the City of Silver Bay regarding communications and coordination for site access and staging materials	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 work be funded?

Advancements in sustainable trail building techniques will allow SHTA to reset the lifespan of the Trail and prepare for a more resilient future.

SHTA continues to diversify its funding streams and strengthen relationships with land managers to guarantee a high-quality recreational experience now and into the future. SHTA's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan clearly outlines a road map to secure the trail corridor for future generations of users, address emerging needs around visitor use management all while assuring adequate resources are in place to support the longevity of the Trail corridor and support people to safely and respectfully use Minnesota's public lands.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Enhancement Plan for Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09f	\$100,000
Restoring Five Sections of the Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09o	\$191,000
Plumbing The Muddy Depths Of Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08h	\$187,000
Superior Hiking Trail As Environmental Showcase	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09k	\$450,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Lisa Luukkala

Job Title: Executive Director

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

Superior Hiking Trail Association's Executive Director, Lisa Luukkala has over a decade of experience overseeing large-scale recreational infrastructure projects. Luukkala led in the planning, designing, funding and construction of multi-million dollars recreation improvements during her time as the City of Duluth Parks & Recreation. In addition, she holds over 15 years of managing state and federal grants in the nonprofit sector as well as the public sector. Luukkala is attuned to state environmental and outdoor recreational trends and associated policies. Her expertise has been used, as steering committee member, to help craft the Minnesota Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

2020-2024. She currently sits on the Duluth Tourism Advisory Council and is the new incoming Treasurer for the national nonprofit, Society for Outdoor Recreation Professionals.

Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association

Organization Description:

Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA) is a member-based nonprofit organization, headquartered in Two Harbors, that manages, renews, and promotes the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT). 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.

SHTA has grown in size and services over the years. With over 200 landowners over 300 miles, the nonprofit negotiates access agreements and easements to assure the Trail is not only available now, but for future Minnesotans. The nonprofit coordinates over 300 volunteers annually who provide over 6,000 hours of labor stewarding the Trail. SHTA publishes maps, guides and other materials to help people navigate the Trail, along with maintaining a comprehensive resource rich website that provides the most up-to-date Trail information and safety guidelines. All of this is possible thanks to donations from its members.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Trail Operations Director		Project Manager/Oversee the selection and management of contractors and volunteers			15%	0.15		\$10,150
							Sub Total	\$10,150
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Professional trail building and stone work				0		\$162,360
							Sub Total	\$162,360
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Lumber and building supplies	Construction of puncheon (boardwalk)					\$23,740
							Sub Total	\$23,740
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Up to 10 visits to the site (planning through post-construction)	Mileage and meals for Trail Operations Director for site visits over the course of the project					\$750
							Sub Total	\$750

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$197,000

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				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	SHTA Donations	Additional staff time for project management	Pending	\$5,000
In-Kind	SHTA Volunteer Hours	Project labor valued at \$20/hour	Pending	\$4,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$9,000
			Funds Total	\$9,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [65f3c05a-dbb.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Map of Bean and Bear trail assessment and calls out of specific recommendations and examples of the replacement structures and trail renewal techniques....

Financial Capacity

File: [bf4310c7-ba5.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
SHTA Board Resolution - May 2022	0fbfbfba-0e5.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
DNR District Supervisor Letter of Support	e60d1cb4-6fc.pdf
City of Silver Bay Letter of Support	9e454e26-bf9.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

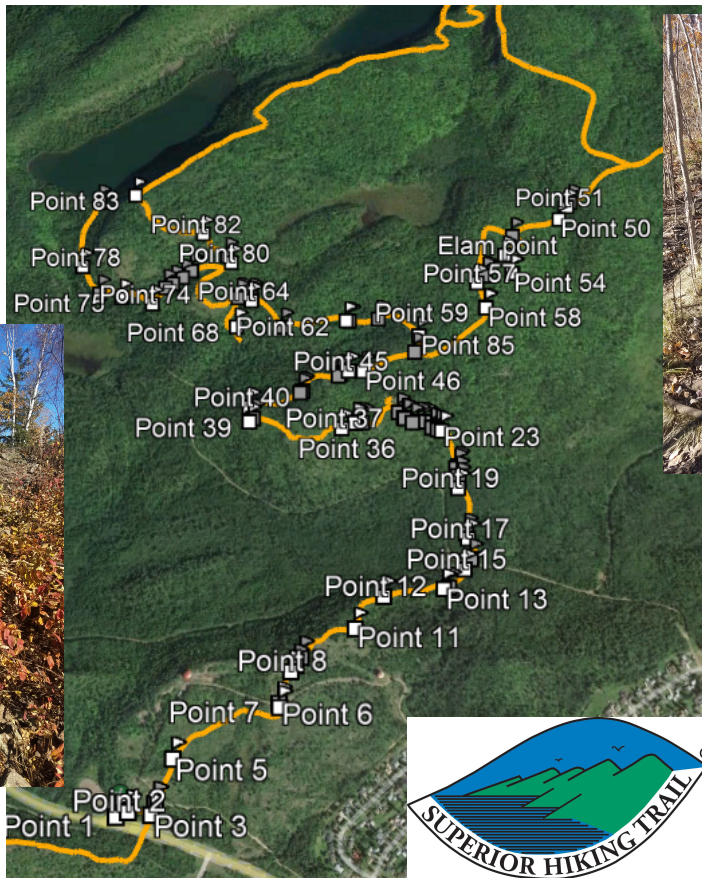
Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Trail Restoration of The Iconic Bean and Bear Loop of The Superior Hiking Trail

Point 6 - Install Stone Steps

Eroded and degraded trail requires durable stone steps to improve user experience, reduce erosion, and reduce the need for future maintenance. This is one example of many locations stone steps will be installed.



Point 25 - Install boardwalk

Due to high use and unavoidable wet areas, there is ponding and muddy sections on the Bean and Bear Loop. Installing boardwalk in these areas removes the foot traffic from these sensitive areas and increases the durability and sustainability of the Superior Hiking Trail. This is one example of many locations where boardwalk will be installed.



Point 75 - Tread Repair

Repairing and defining tread on the Bean and Bear Loop is important for the sustainability of the Trail and will be a substantial increase in user experience. This is one of many locations tread work will be performed.



Example Replacement Structures for the Bean and Bear Loop of the Superior Hiking Trail



Installing Stone Steps

By providing durable steps from stone on site we reduce the potential for erosion, limiting sediment runoff from the Trail and increasing the long term sustainability of the Trail alignment.



Install or Replacing Boardwalk

By installing or replace failing infrastructure and design to modern day standards, using resilient materials like galvanized steel to increase the lifespan and decrease environmental disturbances.



Tread Renewal

Renewing tread and installing water diversion features like the stone water bar pictured prevents water from running down the trail, decreasing the chance of tread erosion.



