



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2024-264

Proposal Title: Dent and Vergas Spur Trails

Project Manager Information

Name: Nicholas Leonard

Organization: Otter Tail County

Office Telephone: (218) 998-8057

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Construction of a 6.6 mile bituminous trail along CSAH 35 connecting the cities of Dent and Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park

Funds Requested: \$934,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2025

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

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Central

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Central

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.

This proposal addresses two problems using recommended strategies from LCCMR's strategic plan.

First, this proposal expands outdoor recreational opportunities through the development of culturally relevant, accessible, and resilient outdoor recreation infrastructure. More specifically, it expands outdoor recreational opportunities by connecting the small communities of Dent and Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park via a bituminous shoulder trail on CSAH 35. This proposal will also fill a critical gap in the state and regional trail system by eventually connecting the Central Lakes State Trail to the Heartland State Trail. The City of Vergas is currently working on a connection to the Heartland Trail. Once completed, this connection will create one of the most impressive trail systems in the country.

Second, this proposal will assist Minnesota in achieving reliance on nonpolluting, renewable energy in all sectors, including transportation. This proposal specifically aims to increase non-motorized transportation routes by connecting the cities of Vergas, Dent, Perham, Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State Park. In recent years, non-motorized travel along the highway system has spiked, resulting in significant safety concerns. Safe, appropriate infrastructure is critical if non-motorized transportation is going to continue to expand in rural areas.

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.

CSAH 35 connects both Dent and Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park. Unfortunately, the current gravel shoulders of CSAH 35 do not meet MNDOT standards for non-motorized transportation, creating a significant safety concern. In 2025, Otter Tail County will be completing a resurfacing of CSAH 35 between Dent and Vergas. While this would be the perfect time for expanding and paving the shoulders for non-motorized use, neither the cities nor Otter Tail County have a budget to do so.

LCCMR funding will be used to:

- expand and pave 6' shoulders for 3.7 miles along CSAH 35 from CSAH 4 in Vergas to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail at 440th Street
- expand and pave 4' shoulders for 2.9 miles along CSAH 35 from State Highway 108 in Dent to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail at CSAH 34

If completed, this project will provide a safe, non-motorized alternative for residents and visitors to access the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park. This project will also provide for a safe, non-motorized alternative to the Heartland State Trail system.

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?

This project will expand outdoor recreational opportunities through additions and connections to state, regional, or local parks and trails.

This project will increase access to and expand opportunities for culturally relevant and innovative connections to the lands and waters of Minnesota.

This project will reduce social, economic, and physical barriers to outdoor recreation for the residents of Dent, Vergas and the surrounding area.

This project will assist Minnesota in achieving reliance on nonpolluting, renewable transportation alternatives by creating safe, non-motorized routes between Dent, Vergas, Perham, Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State Park.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Construction of the Dent and Vergas Spur Trails

Activity Budget: \$934,000

Activity Description:

LCCMR funding will be used to competitively bid and construct a widened 4-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 2.9 miles of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 35 from the City of Dent to the Heart of the Lakes Trail at the intersection of CSAH 34 and a widened 6-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 3.7 miles of CSAH 35 from the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail at the intersection of 440th Street to the City of Vergas at CSAH 4.

The County of Otter Tail intends to resurface 10.8 miles of CSAH 35 from the City of Dent to the City of Vergas and the above widened bituminous shoulder trails will be constructed along with that resurfacing project.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Finalize Engineering, Environmental Review and Permitting	December 31, 2024
Complete Construction Bidding	February 28, 2025
Initiate Construction	May 31, 2025
Complete Construction	December 31, 2025

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?

The anticipated life expectancy of this trail is 25 years. Once the project is completed, Otter Tail County will assume financial responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the trail. The ability to complete and maintain the project long-term is of utmost importance. Per the attached resolution, the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners have approved this grant application for the Dent and Vergas Spur Trails.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Perham To Pelican Rapids Regional Trail (McDonald Segment)	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a	\$2,245,000
Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail (West Segment)	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09n	\$2,600,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Nicholas Leonard

Job Title: Deputy Administrator

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

Nicholas Leonard, Ph.D. is the Deputy Administrator for Otter Tail County. He oversees the county's Economic Growth and Community Investment team, consisting of Parks & Trails, Highway, Solid Waste, Land & Resource Management, and Housing & Community Development. He has extensive experience overseeing grant funded projects, including state and federally funded projects and programs.

Organization: Otter Tail County

Organization Description:

Otter Tail County is submitting this application in partnership with the Cities of Vergas and Dent. Otter Tail County is located in West Central Minnesota. It has over 10% of Minnesota's beautiful lakes and boasts many miles of scenic highways, rolling hills, and is home to two Minnesota State Parks (Glendalough and Maplewood) as well as historic Phelps Mill County Park. Otter Tail County's mission is to enrich lives, innovate services and enhance resources so people can live their best life here. You can find our long-range strategic plan here: https://ottertailcountymn.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Otter-Tail-County-Long-Range-Strategic-Plan_FINAL.pdf.

The City of Dent (pop. 170) and City of Vergas (pop. 348) are two communities situated in the heart of Otter Tail County. While small in size, they are thriving communities whose residents and businesses are committed to growth and new amenities. These communities swell tremendously in the summer as snowbirds return and tourists from across the country visit neighboring lakes, resorts and state parks.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Contractor selected through competitive bid process	Professional or Technical Service Contract	4-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 2.9 miles of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 35 and a widened 6-foot bituminous shoulder trail on 3.7 miles of CSAH 35				0		\$934,000
							Sub Total	\$934,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
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	\$934,000

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				
Cash	Otter Tail County	Trail topographical survey, design engineering and construction engineering.	Secured	\$59,000
Cash	Otter Tail County	Trail wetland delineation, wetland credits, archaeological review, MPCA permitting	Secured	\$19,500
Cash	Otter Tail County	Highway design, engineering, construction and related services	Secured	\$4,440,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$4,518,500
			Funds Total	\$4,518,500

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [e419b161-d91.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Map and cross sections of the proposed spur trail connecting the Cities of Vergas and Dent to the Heart of the Lakes Regional Trail and Maplewood State Park...

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
County Board Resolution	58772530-45b.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
City of Vergas Letter of Support	7e8c8e41-ca8.pdf
City of Dent Letter of Support	61057822-dbf.pdf
GMRPTC Letter of Support	0bf5f74c-2f3.pdf
Property Owner Letter of Support	5b81b493-a21.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

Does your project include the design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more?

Yes

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7?

No