



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-231

Proposal Title: SLPR Bison Prairie Interpretive Center and Platforms

Project Manager Information

Name: Michael Honer

Organization: Dakota County

Office Telephone: (952) 891-7404

Email: michael.honer@co.dakota.mn.us

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This project is for programming, schematics, and design development for a bison prairie interpretive center and two viewing platforms to complement the bison prairie at Spring Lake Park Reserve (SLPR)

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$600,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2026

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): Metro

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

Region(s): Metro

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Narrative

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

Spring Lake Park Reserve is one of Dakota County's largest greenspaces with an abundance of natural and historical resources, roughly 5.5 miles in ADA multiuse greenway, and access to the Mississippi River Recreation Area, Mississippi River Trail, and All-American Great River Road. In 2021, Dakota County applied for and received LCCMR funding to help construct a bison prairie in Spring Lake Park Reserve. Since then, the bison prairie has been a major draw for park visitors who are interested in seeing and learning more about the bison. Currently, the only location to view the bison is along the 10' wide greenway and its 3' mow shoulders on either side. This can be a user conflict for visitors viewing the bison and greenway users traveling through the segment. From this location, the bison are often covered by the prairie grass if they are not within a close proximity of the paddock fencing. Additionally, there are no facilities on site that can provide an indoor space for parks staff to support education and assist visitors at a location that is steadily getting a higher demand for visitation.

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.

The proposed \$800,00 project would use consulting services for programming, schematics, and design development of a bison prairie interpretive center and two bison prairie viewing platforms to support the existing bison prairie and future trailhead. This will:

- Identify the proper location for the interpretive center that complements the other amenities located at the planned trailhead site and provides a positive visitor and operational experience.
- Define the feasible amenities providable within the interpretive center.
- Identify the proper locations for bison prairie viewing platforms that are safe, decongest the greenway, and provide high quality and variable site lines to appreciate the bison, their ecosystem, and the river.
- Ensure that the siting of these two deliverables protects the natural, historical, and cultural resources located in Spring Lake Park Reserve.

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 bison prairie interpretive center will support guided education programs and school field trips that promote the protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the bison, the prairie ecosystem, the Mississippi River, and Spring Lake Park Reserve. The two viewing platforms will provide a point of access to enjoy, appreciate, and learn about these features and values through infrastructure that carries a small footprint but plenty of opportunity that is not currently provided.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Bison Prairie Interpretive Center and Bison Viewing Platforms - Programming, Schematics, and Design Development

Activity Budget: \$600,000

Activity Description:

Dakota County will hire a professional with engineering, landscape architecture, architecture, and other required qualifications through a competitive process and work with them to prepare schematic and final design plans for the bison prairie interpretive center and two viewing platforms.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Programming Effort Complete	August 31, 2025
Schematic Design Alternatives Developed	November 30, 2025
Preferred Schematic Designs Finalized	March 31, 2026
Design Development Finalized	June 30, 2026

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 future design and construction elements necessary to have the bison prairie interpretive center and two viewing platforms built will be managed by Dakota County project managers and carried out by professional consulting and construction services funded by Dakota County and/or possible future grants. Once built, the operation and maintenance of the facilities will be carried out by Dakota County staff. Additionally, if funding is available, guest lecturers may lead some of the guided interpretive experiences.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Reintroduction Of Bison To Spring Lake Park Reserve	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08q	\$560,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Michael Honer

Job Title: Greenways Project Manager

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

The project manager manages and coordinates projects and grants pertaining to greenway and trail improvements for Dakota County. The proposed project is an improvement to the existing bison prairie at Spring Lake Park Reserve that is also planned to be a location for a greenway trailhead. The project manager is currently working on projects in a manager or coordinator role that involves a picnic shelter, parking lot, bison viewing overlooks, wayfinding, and interpretation at or around this proposed project's site. This project would be complementary to those improvements. Additionally, this project manager has been a grant/project manager or coordinator on projects receiving LCCMR funding and other external grant funding revolving around greenway improvements and natural resources restoration.

Organization: Dakota County

Organization Description:

Located in the southeast corner of the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul area, the Dakota County Park System serves the state's third most populous county with more than 400,000 residents, as well as the Region. Dakota County Parks is a nature-based system with more than 5,000 acres and a rapidly growing network of greenways. Dakota County Parks oversees park development to give residents facilities that enable natural resource-based recreation; operates a natural resource program that is restoring, maintaining, and enhancing hundreds of acres of prairie, forest and woodland; and operates a professional outdoor education program that manages and interprets the cultural sites within the Dakota County Park System.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Capital Projects Project Manager		A Dakota County Capital Projects Project Manager will hire consultants through a competitive bid process and oversee the preparation of programming, schematics, and design development.			25%	0.5		\$75,000
							Sub Total	\$75,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Architectural design and engineering contractor will be selected by competitive bid and will develop the site design, engineering, and construction specifications for all recreation features (interpretive center and two viewing platforms).				0		\$475,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Cultural resource professional services contractor will be selected by competitive bid process and will perform all cultural resource research and survey work needed. Contractor will work with County Staff, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, Minnesota State Office of Archeology, and Minnesota Indian Affairs Council to prepare a cultural landscape management plan.				0		\$50,000
							Sub Total	\$525,000
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	\$600,000

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	Dakota County Parks Capital Improvement Program	25% cash match for all project elements	Secured	\$200,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$200,000
			Funds Total	\$200,000

Total Project Cost: \$800,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [897f4892-b84.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Attached is a map from SLPR's Long Range Plan. It depicts all of the existing and planned improvements and amenities that we identified during the planning process. Among those improvements and amenities are the bison prairie interpretive center and overlooks. The sites shown in the map are not final....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Financial Capacity Information	b4145a50-5c1.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	d94757be-551.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
SLPR Long Range Plan Excerpts	ca77e9b8-510.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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

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 pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

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 as "the provision of care,

treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Niki Geisler - Dakota County

Tony Wotzka - Dakota County

Jay Biedny - Dakota County