



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

### 2026 Request for Proposal

#### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2026-115

**Proposal Title:** Duluth Traverse Accessibility and Sustainability Improvements

#### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Ansel Schimpff

**Organization:** Cyclists of Gitchee Gumee Shores

**Office Telephone:** (608) 320-2731

**Email:** executivedirector@coggs.com

#### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and preserve water quality of Knowlton Creek, a designated trout stream, by rehabilitating 6,500 feet of the Duluth Traverse to improve accessibility and address erosion.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$85,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2027

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Small Projects (G)

**Secondary Category:** Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

#### 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?**

In the Future

## Narrative

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

Duluth has about 100 miles of multi-use, bike-optimized trails, including the Duluth Traverse, which spans the entire city. However, only 6 miles are accessible for adaptive recreation equipment, creating barriers for individuals with disabilities, despite growing awareness of the importance of adaptive outdoor recreation for physical and mental health.

COGGS is leading efforts to upgrade trails in Duluth to expand adaptive recreation opportunities. In 2024, a 2-mile adaptive-friendly loop was added to the Duluth Traverse. However, the connection between this loop and a formalized trailhead with parking, restrooms, and water remains inaccessible to adaptive equipment. An inclusively designed connection is needed to ensure equitable access to high-quality outdoor recreation for individuals of all abilities.

This project also offers a chance to address environmental issues. Sections of the Duluth Traverse near Knowlton Creek suffer from erosion due to high-clay soil, leading to sediment runoff into the trout stream. Without action, continued trail degradation will harm water quality and threaten the long-term sustainability of the trail system.

By addressing these accessibility and environmental challenges, this project aims to create a more inclusive, sustainable trail network that benefits the entire community.

**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.**

This proposed project will rebuild approximately 6,500 linear feet of the Duluth Traverse between Gogebic Street and the Spirit Mountain Recreation Area to meet Kootenay Adaptive Standards. This reconstruction will create a fully connected, accessible route linking the Spirit Mountain trailhead to newly constructed adaptive-friendly trails between Knowlton Creek and Kingsbury Creek.

The project will address persistent erosion and runoff issues affecting Knowlton Creek, a designated trout stream, by capping high-clay soil areas to improve drainage, reduce sedimentation, and enhance sustainability. Trail improvements will increase accessibility, providing a safe, high-quality experience for riders of all abilities.

Funding will support trail reconstruction, erosion control measures, and surface improvements to ensure long-term durability and environmental protection. The project will be implemented through collaboration with the City of Duluth, COGGS, and the Spirit Mountain Recreation Area Authority, with ongoing maintenance supported by City funding and COGGS' volunteer stewardship program.

By creating a direct, inclusive, and sustainable connection between key trailheads and adaptive-friendly trails, this project will expand outdoor recreation opportunities while preserving natural resources. It aligns with Minnesota's goals of conservation, accessibility, and enhancing public engagement with the outdoors.

**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?**

Project outcomes include:

Rehabilitation of 6,500 feet of the Duluth Traverse to protect and enhance natural resources by reducing erosion and runoff into Knowlton Creek, a designated cold-water trout stream, and improve water quality and habitat health.

Enhance sustainability, preserve surrounding ecosystems, and mitigate soil degradation by rehabilitating the trail with a capped surface.

Expand and foster long-term stewardship of natural spaces for people of all abilities by providing inclusive access and connections to high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities.

These efforts align with the state's goals of preserving natural resources while enhancing recreational opportunities for all users.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Pre-Design/Design

**Activity Budget:** \$1

**Activity Description:**

Evaluate project requirements and objectives, establish project metrics and budget, complete necessary consultations and approval process, and secure funding.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
All Construction Funds Legally Secured	July 31, 2026
Permitting and Other Agency Reviews Initiated	July 31, 2026
Historic, Cultural, and Environmental Reviews Completed	December 31, 2026

### Activity 2: Pre-Construction / Construction

**Activity Budget:** \$82,999

**Activity Description:**

Prepare construction documents to competitively bid and award the construction contract, and hold pre-construction meetings with the contractors, and begin physical construction and construction management.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Pre-construction Meetings	April 30, 2026
Construction Begins	May 31, 2026
Substantial Completion	September 30, 2026
Construction Contractor Selection	December 31, 2026

### Activity 3: Closeout

**Activity Budget:** \$2,000

**Activity Description:**

Post-construction activities to close the project out, including addressing punch list items, addressing all permitting and grant requirements, re-opening the facility to the public, and completing final payments and reports.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Ongoing Reporting / Final Report	June 30, 2026
Stabilization/Punch List Items/As-builts Approved	September 30, 2026
Signage Installed with ENRTF Language or Logo	September 30, 2026
Open for Intended Use	October 31, 2026
Notice of Funding Restriction Recorded	December 31, 2026

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Matt Andrews, Parks and Trails Coordinator	City of Duluth	Manage the City of Duluth's diverse trail network in collaboration with partner organizations, such as COGGS. Coordinate trail improvement projects to promote access to greenspace while conserving natural resources through sustainable trail building practices. Ensure information flows effectively between stakeholders and that projects are completed efficiently.	No
James Shoberg, Professional Landscape Architect and Senior Parks Planner	City of Duluth	Manage all aspects of project implementation including design, permitting, and construction administration. Coordinate contractor solicitation to ensure alignment with applicable procurement requirements. Effectively manage interdisciplinary teams to ensure project outcomes are accomplished on budget and in a timely manner.	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?**

The City of Duluth, COGGS, and Spirit Mountain will implement and maintain the rebuilt trails as part of the City's official trail system. Ongoing upkeep, including erosion control and surface repairs, will be supported by COGGS' volunteer program and City funding. Additional work for continued enhancement of the Duluth Traverse will be funded through local and state grants, local tourism initiatives, and private sponsorships. Community engagement, including educational signage and organized events, will promote awareness and responsible use. These efforts will ensure long-term sustainability, improved accessibility, and continued high-quality trail experiences for all users.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Ansel Schimpff

**Job Title:** Executive Director

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

Ansel will be responsible for grant and project management, including coordinating efforts between the City of Duluth's construction management team, LCCMR, and the Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores (COGGS) to ensure all project elements are completed successfully according to the project work plan.

As the Executive Director of COGGS for 2 years, Ansel leads the organization through thoughtful community building, outdoor recreation advocacy, and skillful coordination of multi-use and bike-optimized trail improvement and maintenance projects to protect natural resources and connect people to the outdoors. By developing strong partnerships with other nonprofits, businesses, and City staff, Ansel creates momentum for community-identified priorities, such as the development of Duluth's first trails to incorporate universal design principles.

Before joining COGGS, Ansel was a professional trail builder and owned a trail construction company where he developed a keen understanding of budget management, effective construction coordination, trail sustainability practices, and creating trails that meet performance and safety standards.

**Organization:** Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores

**Organization Description:**

The Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores (COGGS), established in 1994 as a nonprofit 501c3 organization, has become a leading non-profit mountain bike advocacy organization in the Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin area. COGGS

is committed to sustainable trail development, equitable trail access, and developing a welcoming outdoor recreational culture by promoting opportunities, education, programming, partnerships, and healthy outdoor fun.

COGGS has over 1100 members and provides volunteer maintenance for more than 100 miles of bike-optimized trails within the City of Duluth through close coordination with Duluth Parks & Recreation. The Duluth Traverse is a critical component of the trail system, connecting parks and neighborhoods across the entire city and facilitating an average of 130,000 user engagements each summer.

The City of Duluth manages over 11,368 acres of green space, including 162 parks and over 350 miles of a diverse trail network. The Duluth Parks & Recreation mission is to promote the health and well-being of the Duluth community, environment, and economy by facilitating recreational opportunities and coordinating the enhancement of parks, facilities, and natural areas now and into the future.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD	Service Contract	Trail Reconstruction				0		\$65,000
TBD	Service Contract	Construction and installation of 30 LNFT of 48" wide Boardwalk				-		\$3,000
TBD	Service Contract	Trail capping for 300 LNFT of natural surface trail				-		\$15,000
TBD	Service Contract	Production and installation of signage complying with Kooteney Adaptive signage standards				-		\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$85,000
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								

							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$85,000

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
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
In-Kind	Cyclist of Gitchee Gumee Shores	Phase one of this project built the accessible trail that this next phase will connect to	Secured	\$36,799
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$36,799</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$36,799</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$121,799**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [9331cadb-1a0.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Map showing the Spirit Mountain trailhead, the trail segment identified for sustainability and accessibility improvements, and applicable trail connections....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
COGGS 990	<a href="#">1f44df6a-079.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Board Approval letter	<a href="#">8f53528e-e64.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Letters of Support	<a href="#">6013ccfb-31b.pdf</a>
COGGS Photo Collage	<a href="#">b7cd37ed-3fd.pdf</a>
Capital Budget Addendum	<a href="#">3635293e-4bf.xlsx</a>
Capital Project Questionnaire	<a href="#">a6492bdf-c0e.pdf</a>

## Administrative Use

**Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?**

No

**Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

N/A

**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")?**

No

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

Ansel Schimpff – Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores, Executive Director

Allison Brooks – City of Duluth, Parks & Recreation, Project Coordinator

Matt Andrews – City of Duluth, Parks & Recreation, Trails Coordinator

James Shoberg, PLA – City of Duluth Landscape Architect and Senior Parks Planner

**Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements**

Yes, I understand

