



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

## 2026 Request for Proposal

### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2026-152

**Proposal Title:** Historical Interpretive Loop

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Matt Carter

**Organization:** Dakota County Historical Society

**Office Telephone:** (651) 552-7548

**Email:** matthew.carter@co.dakota.mn.us

### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Work with our qualified consultant to complete the design, fabrication and installation of a Heritage Interpretive Loop through northern Dakota County.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$300,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** November 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): 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.**

In 2024, Dakota County Historical Society contracted with the 106 Group to create a Concept Plan for a proposed 23-mile Heritage Interpretive Loop through northern Dakota County. This includes the cities of Inver Grove Heights, South St. Paul, and West St. Paul. The Concept Plan outlined five major themes that will be followed within the trail to create a combination of waysides, trailheads, and other variations to explore different aspects of the history for each community. The themes are used in different groupings throughout each community along the proposed trail. During this project, we will work with the 106 Group to continue the project by designing the different nodes along the 23-mile trail, then complete the fabrication and installation. The trail will use custom signage built specifically for this loop, as well as include features such as translations and audio for those that need it.

**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.**

With funds provided by LCCMR, we will engage in a contract with the 106 Group firm that worked with us to create the Concept Plan. They will assist us with the remaining steps of taking the Concept Plan and implementing it. We will work closely together to finalize the remaining research needs on the different stops along the Interpretive Loop, then generate all the text needed for the panels. They will follow the industry standard of approximately 150 - 200 words per panel and include appropriate images. Once the writing is complete, we will use the Concept Plan's graphic typical to generate the actual panels for each of these stops. By working closely with us and our stakeholders, we will identify the different stops and determine if they will be wayfinding or a trailhead. This will be decided through the actual information on the panels, but also the areas in which the stops are located. The 106 Group will also assist in design for the custom signs, as well as identifying other languages to include and features that will help these stand out from other trails around the Metro.

**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 signage will be located along existing trails and encourage visitors to get outside and enjoy the state's natural resources. The signage will be located in strategic locations to not damage the surrounding environment, but also in a way to keep visitors on the current trails. We want to make sure that users of the trails along the loop respect the natural environment and by consciously being aware of this, we can make sure that the design is done in a way to make visitors be respectful of the trail and surrounding habitats.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Writing & Design

**Activity Budget:** \$300,000

**Activity Description:**

The writing and design will be the first major milestone for the project. This will take all of the research that has been uncovered through the Concept Plan and begin to write out the actual text for each panel. This will include approximately 150 - 200 words and be completed for each of the stops along the Loop. Once the writing is complete, the design will be next. This includes the design for each of the custom stops, as well as the design of the panels themselves. Each stop along the way will have a similar feature and look so that a user can tell they are on the Loop. These custom designs will be completed for the Wayfinding and Trailheads along the Loop. The wayfinding will be the smaller, single panels that a user can read through with images. A trailhead may be a larger "structure" that features multiple panels. Once the design is complete, the custom stops will be fabricated over the winter (2027) and spring (2028). The installation process of the different stops will take place in late spring and into summer of 2028 and be ready for an Interpretive Loop opening by end of June 2028.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Site Assessment, Research, Draft & Final Design Layout	May 31, 2027
Fabrication, Delivery & Installation	October 31, 2027
Project Closeout	November 30, 2027

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
John Mertens	Dakota County	Assisting with trail location and signage throughout the project	No
Autumn Hubbell	Dakota County	Assist with items related to Greenway and Parks owned by Dakota County	No
Shannon Young	South St. Paul	Assist with items related to South St. Paul and their parks near/on the Loop	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?**

This project will include the final research, writing, and design of the different stops along the Interpretive Loop, as well as the fabrication and installation of the physical pieces. Once that is done, the future of the project will be general maintenance. The signage will be monitored by a variety of partners to ensure that no damage or vandalism is done to them. The stops along the Greenway will be monitored and maintained by Dakota County. Various partners will monitor external signage and the Future development will only be required if damage is done to existing signage.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Matt Carter

**Job Title:** Executive Director

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

Matt Carter has been Executive Director at DCHS for more than 9 years. In that time, he has managed more than \$1M in grants that have ranged from \$5,000 to \$275,000. This includes managing multiple grants in 2024 that totaled more than \$700,000. He will coordinate all contracts and reporting requirements for the grant and utilize additional staff and a project team along the way.

**Organization:** Dakota County Historical Society

**Organization Description:**

Preserve, interpret, and promote the history of Dakota County through interpretive programs, exhibits, presentations, special events, and historic trails.

## 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>								
106 Group	Subaward	The 106 Group will provide all of the necessary work to complete the project. They will complete site assessments for proper locations of the stops. Then they will complete remaining research as they write and design the panels. This will be followed by fabrication, delivery and installation of the signage.				6		\$300,000
							Sub Total	\$300,000
<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	\$300,000

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				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$300,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes



## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [5494fac4-d4f.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

This map shows the overall map of the proposed interpretive loop and approximate location of the different stops. It displays the themes identified in the Concept Plan....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
Organizational 990	<a href="#">e38592dc-45b.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
DCHS Board Resolution Letter	<a href="#">80885b43-e2a.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Interpretive Loop Concept Plan	<a href="#">8f9b4594-ad3.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?**

No

**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:**

N/A

**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**

N/A