



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-182

Proposal Title: A State Trail System for 21st-Century Minnesota

Project Manager Information

Name: Dan Nemes

Organization: Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

Office Telephone: (314) 956-6632

Email: dan@bikemn.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: BikeMN and statewide collaborators will promote the development and use of Minnesota's existing and planned state trail system through community and business engagement and active adult education programming.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$716,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

Project Location

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

Statewide

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.

Minnesota's legislatively-authorized network of state trails is an opportunity for Minnesota to leverage its regional and national reputation as an ecotourism and bicycle-tourism destination. The trail system, as planned, showcases the state's diverse habitats and towns, featuring accessible and affordable places for state residents and visitors to experience the natural world during day trips or multi-day trips, but many segments and trails remain unrealized due to a lack of local leadership, depriving residents and visitors of a healthy, relatively low-cost, and family-friendly way to access and enjoy Minnesota's land, animals and human communities.

Economic impact studies of trails and other infrastructure indicate that visitors spend around \$100-120/day (in 2015 dollars) while bicycling in Minnesota. However, those same studies also record that nearly all trail users are white, skew older, and are primarily from households reporting over \$100,000 in income. Through our statewide work, partners consistently say the idea of an active trip to Minnesota's state trails and the many amenities abutting the trails appeals to people with low-incomes and people of color, but a felt sense of needing more bicycle education, an unfamiliarity with state trails, and a uncertainty of feeling welcome are all barriers.

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.

Through a history of quality bicycle education with community partners, as well as state and local governments, BikeMN has the institutional expertise to connect all Minnesotans with bicycling and other non-motorized recreation on Minnesota's state trails. Work will proceed on two tracks. First, BikeMN's adult education programming occurs primarily in the TCMA. In this proposal, we prioritize partnerships with BIPOC community-based organizations in towns and cities along state trails to adapt our successful Adult Learn to Ride (ALTR) and Open/Popup Shops programs for recreational contexts. Second, all Minnesotans need a fully-realized trail system. Developing state trails will increase equity and spur business development in trail-adjacent communities. In this proposal, we prioritize partnerships with communities along the proposed Stagecoach and Goodhue Pioneer Trails in Southeast Minnesota, the partially completed Heartland Trail in West Central Minnesota, and the Munger and Gitchi-Gami Trails in the Northshore/Iron Range.

Objectives to achieve project solution include:

- a) 15 ALTR and 30 Open/Popup Shops offerings in trail communities with BIPOC partners.
- b) Engage 50+ communities with bicycle education/business opportunities.
- c) Concentrated outreach and education in communities along the above-named trails
- d) Promote awareness, trail user rights, safety and trail etiquette, in local communities.

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?

Getting more people on state managed natural resources, such as state trails and state parks, will encourage residents and visitors to protect natural resources. This project will increase bicycling and other non-motorized outdoor recreation, especially for those who face barriers to enjoying these popular and low-cost means of enjoying the state's natural resources. By nurturing Minnesota's already vibrant bicycling and ecotourism sectors, this project enhances the state's natural resources by encouraging communities to support and seek planned state trails, which often means additional investment at the county level in trails and park facilities that also preserve and enhance natural resources.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Adult Learn to Ride and Open & Popup Maintenance Shops in Minnesota State Trail Communities (STCs)

Activity Budget: \$401,800

Activity Description:

Bicycling and other nonmotorized forms of recreation and transportation are an overwhelmingly white, middle- and upper-class activity. Demographic data from BikeMN events across the state, as well as state produced reports and recreational and bicycle industries bear this out. In pursuit of our mission to make walking, biking and rolling accessible for all Minnesotans, BikeMN has developed and iterated a very successful Adult Learn to Ride (ALTR) curriculum that has reached thousands of people in the TCMA. We partner with nonprofits that primarily serve people of color, immigrants/refugees and women to deliver a 6-8 hour class over 3 sessions. This project will replicate and adapt ALTR for towns and cities abutting Minnesota's State Trails by partnering with organizations serving BIPOC communities in Greater MN. Participants will receive a refurbished or donated bicycle after completing the class. In addition to delivering 15 ALTR classes, BikeMN will hold 30 bike maintenance events open to the public so everyone can use safe equipment on Minnesota State Trails. These events will include education about trail safety and etiquette--including e-bikes--as well as general bicycling and rolling resources. This educational offering will enhance all Minnesotans' access to and experience of State Trails and the outdoors.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Establish Partnerships with 5-10 BIPOC Organizations in Trail Communities	November 30, 2026
Plan 45+ Bicycle & other Non-motorized Education Events in State Trail Communities	May 31, 2027
Refurbish and distribute 200 bicycles and e-bicycles in State Trail Communities	September 30, 2028
Execute 15 Adult Learn to Ride Class Series and 30 Open/Popup Shops	September 30, 2028

Activity 2: Minnesota State Trail Communities Engagement & Development

Activity Budget: \$284,200

Activity Description:

Statistics collected by the DNR for the 2022 State Park Visitor Study indicates that 11% of visitors are people of color; Minnesota's population of communities of color is about 21%. In order to increase access to State Trails for a more diverse set of visitors, BikeMN proposes partnering with a discreet set of trail communities to develop unrealized, but legislatively-authorized, trails. Based on our prior work in this space, BikeMN has identified four trails with high potential for successful community engagement and support: the Stagecoach, Heartland, and Munger/Gitchi-Gami Trails. Using a community-based stakeholder and resources approach, BikeMN will convene and facilitate working groups for each trail to include avid trail users, businesses, property owners, Tribal Nations, DNR, units of local government, and traditionally underrepresented groups. Along with 4-8 large community meetings per trail, deliverables will also include community surveys, transcriptions/recordings of structured interviews with a diverse set of community members, a community resource maps, and articulated/unaddressed barriers to trail developed. All documents and project assets will be branded with the ENRTF logo. By engaging a large cross section of stakeholders and individuals in State Trail Communities, we expect to support future construction of trails for all Minnesotans.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
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Develop Stakeholder Engagement Plans for each identified State Trail	October 31, 2026
Convene and facilitate Community-led Engagement & Development Series (4-8 sessions/series; 3-5 series total)	December 31, 2027
Liaison with DNR, stakeholders & other partners around community-produced State Trail Documents	December 31, 2028
Scope & Document Successor Project(s) Phases	June 30, 2029

Activity 3: Project Evaluation & Publications

Activity Budget: \$30,000

Activity Description:

To support and quantify the above-articulated activities, BikeMN proposes contracting with a third-party evaluator. Incorporating data and analytic tools into the project from the beginning will establish a legible and transparent framework for work that will occur across considerable geographic and temporal spaces; a digital dashboard will track project metrics, including trail visitor counts using BikeMN's Bike/Ped Counter, qualitative surveys solicited from trail users and communities, partners engaged, bikes distributed, and the economic value of bike mechanic services provided. All data and interviews collected and collated will be included in reports to the LCCMR, as well as presentations at relevant conferences and into a book-length report. BikeMN thinks publishing a large, book or booklet-length report is an important deliverable for this project because it can then be used as a resource by other communities with, yet-to-be-built, legislatively-authorized State Trails. Conceived as a how-to guide, this resource will formalize a model other communities can use to develop State Trails that centers equity, community engagement, and economic development. BikeMN and our partners across Minnesota recognize that building and maintaining State Trails is complex, but we also know that a State Trail System for the 21st Century can benefit all Minnesotans.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Contract third-party Project Evaluator	January 31, 2027
Establish project dashboard	April 30, 2027
Present at 3-5 relevant professional conferences in Minnesota	June 30, 2029
Digitally publish book- or booklet-length Project Report	June 30, 2029

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?

BikeMN is a strong nonprofit with statewide reach and funding base. We will hire new staff and nurture current staff to complete this project; ongoing work will be funded through community, family and corporate philanthropy, as well as donations from our 49,000 members, chapter fees, and revenue from our more popular community ride events. The results of the project will be presented in report form prepared with a third-party evaluator and as presentations at conferences (recreation, active transportation, and community development). Expected products, such as all community engagement work, will be preserved by BikeMN for future project phases.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Dan Nemes

Job Title: Development Manager

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

Dan, in his work with food security, education and active transportation organizations, has managed dozens of successful state and foundation grants over the past eight years. Working with the executive leadership at the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota, Dan has the necessary project planning, community development and budgeting experience necessary.

Organization: Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

Organization Description:

BikeMN's mission is to engage, provide education, and advocate for walking, rolling and biking. We envision a Minnesota where every person everywhere can easily walk, bike, and roll as ways to move in daily life. Practically this means: All people experience safety: traffic safety, freedom from community violence, enforcement strategies that are equitable and support walking, biking, and rolling; the culture of getting around values walking, bicycling, rolling, and riding transit by default and instead of defaulting to cars; people of color, especially Black and Indigenous communities, have access to vital daily movement; BIPOC communities have the tools, voice, and support to advocate for better bike and walk policies and infrastructure; rural, urban, and suburban communities thrive due to connected routes that support all ages and abilities; biking and walking are a critical climate mitigation strategy to sustain a healthy planet and community.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
State Trail Communities Education Manager		The State Trails Communities Education Manager, with the Engagement Manager, co-leads the project. They oversee and execute all curriculum development, partner development, educator management, and bicycle asset stewardship for the project. They adapt BikeMN's current Adult Learn to Ride Program with input from BIPOC organizations in communities adjacent to existing or planned state trails; coordinate ALTR classes, Open/Popup Shops, and bike giveaways with BIPOC community partners; manage ALTR educator(s), project intern(s), and volunteers; and collaborate with other BikeMN staff to distribute refurbished bicycles and e-bicycles.			25%	2		\$180,000
Bicycle Assets Manager		The Bicycle Asset Manager position will devote 0.5 FTE to the State Trails Communities Adult Learn to Ride; the remainder of the position's time will be funded by other sources and support other projects. Work with staff and volunteers to solicit and refurbish bicycles appropriate for use in the State Trail Communities Adult Learn to Ride Program; establish and steward partnerships with sources for used bikes; assist Education Manager and volunteers at Open and Popup Community Bike Repair events; coordinate the transportation of donate and refurbished bicycles and e-bikes to State Trail Communities for program use; manage equipment and supply budget and track all refurbishing costs.			25%	1.25		\$80,000
Education Associate		The Education Associate will assist the Education Manager, primarily by coordinating and teaching Adult Learn to Ride Classes, communicating with class participants,			25%	2		\$110,000

		transporting class equipment, and distributing refurbished bicycles.						
State Trail Communities Engagement Manager		The State Trail Communities Engagement Manager, with the Education Manager, co-leads the project. They conduct outreach in all Minnesota trail communities, convene community stakeholders, develop unique Stakeholder Engagement Plans for prioritized trails, liaison with relevant units of local government and state agencies, manage contractors, work with staff to pursue any successor project funding needs, prepare and own all project documentation and reports, and craft and submit presentations for relevant conferences.			25%	3		\$275,000
Community Engagement Undergraduate/Graduate Intern; 1-2 positions for two years (rate determined by experience, may include some tuition or other benefits)		Work with Community Engagement Manager to conduct outreach and community meetings.			0%	1		\$10,000
Education Undergraduate/Graduate Intern; 1-2 positions for two years (rate determined by experience, may include some tuition or other benefits)		Assist Education Manager and Education Associate(s) with Adult Learn to Ride classes, Open Shop & Popup Shops, and community education events			0%	1		\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$665,000
Contracts and Services								
Program Evaluator--TBD	Service Contract	A third-party evaluator will work with staff to analyse and evaluate project goals, efficacy, outcomes, and future project phases. The evaluator will use best practices from data science, economic development, community engagement and development, and placemaking to accurately describe and quantify the project's completed work and impact.				0.24		\$20,000

							Sub Total	\$20,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Helmets & Locks (200 @ \$50/pair)	For use during classes, events and to distribute with bikes.					\$1,000
	Tools and Supplies	Bicycle Lights (200 units @ \$25 each)	For use during classes, events and to distribute with bikes.					\$500
	Tools and Supplies	Bike Repair/Refurbishment Supplies	Tubes, tires, spokes, brakes, brake wires and other supplies and tools to refurbish bicycles.					\$25,300
							Sub Total	\$26,800
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	6,000 miles @ \$0.70	Mileage to travel to class locations, education events, and community meetings					\$4,200
							Sub Total	\$4,200
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$716,000

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	McKnight Foundation	Executive Director & Deputy Executive Director time to initiate, shape and guide the project for two years	Secured	\$40,000
Cash	Compeer Financial Rural Feasibility Study Grant	Funding to conduct feasibility and impact study of Stagecoach Trail, Heartland, and uncompleted segments of Gitchi-Gami Trails.	Potential	\$20,000
In-Kind	Used bicycle donors	Conservative estimate of value of donated bicycles: 200 refurbished bicycles, valued at \$500/bicycle.	Pending	\$100,000
In-Kind	Volunteer Bicycle Refurbishing Services	Volunteer hours valued at market rate for beginner mechanic: 150 hours @ \$22/hour	Pending	\$3,300
Cash	Shavlik Family Foundation	Bike/Ped Counter equipment purchase to quantify trail usage	Secured	\$5,000
Cash	Olmsted County	Contract with Olmsted County to develop community engagement plan for Stagecoach Trail	Pending	\$10,000
Cash	Mayo Clinic Community Engagement	Grant funds to support Stagecoach Trail community engagement development	Pending	\$2,700
Cash	Chapter Fees, Event Revenue & Individual Donations	BikeMN's twelve chapters and 49,000 members contribute to statewide programming through fees, event registrations and individual donations. These General Operating funds will underwrite the project's overhead needs, such as bicycle maintenance space, tools already purchased, and vehicles to transport bikes and equipment. \$10,000/year for entirety of the project: \$30,000	Secured	\$30,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$211,000
			Funds Total	\$211,000

Total Project Cost: \$927,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [53e015d2-9e9.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

A visual of the ALTR program summarizing program goals and outcomes and a map with Minnesota legislatively-authorized State Trails....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Most recent Audited Financial Statements	4ce693ee-f39.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board & ED Letter	bbf9af75-819.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Adult Learn to Ride Program Evaluation_TCMA	a32aed02-f39.pdf

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?

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

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:

Michael Wojcik, Executive Director; angela olson, Duputy Executive Director

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