



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-490

Proposal Title: Expanding Paddling Access on the Mississippi River

Project Manager Information

Name: Ellen Reed

Organization: Mississippi Park Connection

Office Telephone: (651) 291-8164

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This project expands access to kayaking along the Mississippi River in Dayton, Champlin, and Hastings, MN.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$299,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2029

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?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

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

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area is a 72-mile stretch of the Mississippi River that runs from Dayton to Hastings, MN. It is a flyway for nearly 1/3 of America's migratory birds - making it an excellent location for birdwatching and paddling. The river provides world-class opportunities for recreation, however, in many areas of the river, paddlers need to own equipment to access the water. This creates inherent inequities in recreational opportunities. In the northern and southern ends of the national recreation area, there are fewer public access points than in its central urban district due to many private residences along the banks. Although the river passes through these suburban stretches, it is rarely utilized for recreation.

We know from experience that creating a low-cost system for kayaking can greatly increase the number of recreational kayakers on the Mississippi River. In 2016, when we first introduced Mississippi River Paddle Share in Minneapolis, we began connecting 2,500 people per year to paddling opportunities through self-serve kayaking stations. However, Dayton, Champlin, and Hastings do not have kayak-sharing stations and therefore there are no public opportunities for kayaking in these communities.

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.

Mississippi River Paddle Share, a Mississippi Park Connection program, was developed in partnership with local park and recreation departments and the National Park Service. The Paddle Share system allows people who do not own a kayak to experience the Mississippi River and the small oxbow lakes within MISS. Paddle Share is a collaborative program developed to increase opportunities for people to get on the Mississippi River.

A grant from LCCMR would allow us to expand paddling access beyond the Twin Cities into the greater metro area and provide paddling access in the cities of Dayton, Champlin, and Hastings - reaching a wider suburban and exurban audience. These areas currently do not have any public kayak-share access points for recreational users near the river. A grant would allow us to install 5 stations at 4 new locations for Paddle Share: At the Crow River and Mississippi River confluence in Dayton, at the Mississippi River Event Crossings Event Center in Champlin, at Lake Rebecca and at the Vermillion River North Water Access in Hastings. It is self-serve, making operating costs efficient. After the stations are installed, there are only minimal operational costs for customer service and safety.

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 addresses RFP sections 1 and 2 of Category C by 1) addressing social, economic, or physical barriers to natural resources-based outdoor recreation through programs that encourage inclusivity and address inequities so that public lands and waters are accessible to all. And 2) Implementing changes to adapt and retrofit them to welcome more people.

We will do this by: Installing 5 new Paddle Share Stations at the 4 locations listed above. Each station holds 8 kayaks. This will build capacity for up to 1,000 new paddlers to kayak on the Mississippi River by the end of the project.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Install new Paddle Share Stations in Dayton (2), Champlin (1), and Hastings (2)

Activity Budget: \$269,000

Activity Description:

Installing 5 new Mississippi River Paddle Share Stations will greatly increase capacity for paddling in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area - opening up access to areas of the Mississippi River that do not currently have access to kayaks and gear. These stations will be added to the Mississippi River Paddle Share program, which allows users to check out a kayak through a self-serve, online platform. Using Paddle Share eliminates the need to transport the kayak and adds to the system of alternative transportation and recreation offered along the Mississippi River.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Purchase kayaks and stations	March 31, 2027
Install kayaks and stations	April 30, 2027
Market the system in partnership with Paddle Share partners	June 30, 2029

Activity 2: 2 Seasons of Paddle Share

Activity Budget: \$30,000

Activity Description:

The first two seasons of the Paddle Share season will need operational support as we adjust the schedules to meet the needs of the local communities and begin marketing new opportunities to the region. Program Specialists will be deployed to the stations to support new kayakers and paddling lessons and day programs will be offered to spread the word about the self-serve system. After year 2, revenue collected in program fees from Paddle Share users will cover the ongoing operational costs in the years after the completion of LCCMR support.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Provide on-site support with Program Specialists at Paddle Share Stations	June 30, 2029
Engage Participants with in-person, on-river programming in 2027 and 2028 seasons	June 30, 2029
Report on first two years of programming and make adjustments based on usage	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Forest Eidbo	Mississippi National River and Recreation Area - NPS	Recreation Planning	No
Dan Glynn	City of Champlin	Director of Parks & Recreation	No
Chris Jenkins	City of Hastings	Director of Parks and Recreation	No
Martin Farrell	City of Dayton	Public Works Director	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?

Once the 5 new Paddle Share Stations are in place, they will serve the public for many years to come. A small user fee will cover the operational costs after the initial start-up years. The other project partners may also invest in the project through in-kind support and through supporting the ongoing operations and maintenance of the stations.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Beavers, Trees and Climate - Increasing Floodplain Forest Resilience	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 03m	\$430,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Ellen Reed

Job Title: Program Director

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

Devin Brown is the Community Programs Director for Mississippi Park Connection. She is responsible for the overall strategy and execution of Mississippi Park Connection's public programs. She creates and implements recreational, educational and community-based initiatives within the park to enrich the life of the river and the lives of all people who experience the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. She manages Mississippi River Paddle Share, an LLC wholly owned and operated by Mississippi Park Connection. She also oversees adaptive paddling programming, affinity group programming, including multilingual programs, and connects the wider community to the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. She is the first black woman to solo the Mississippi River, making it from Headwaters to Hannibal, MO in less than 30 paddling days. She has extensive outdoor leadership experience as a river guide with Clearwater Outfitters and was an adventure trip leader with Frost Valley, YMCA. She is a published writer.

Organization: Mississippi Park Connection

Organization Description:

Mississippi Park Connection is the nonprofit partner of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Our mission is to strengthen the enduring connection between people and the Mississippi River by enriching the life of the river and

the lives of all who experience our national park, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

A major initiative of the organization is Mississippi River Paddle Share, which is a collaborative program developed to increase opportunities for people to get on the Mississippi River. The system is a one-way kayak rental. Reservations are made through the www.paddleshare.org website. Users select the route they would like to paddle and go to the rental location. Their access code unlocks the designated locker, which contains a kayak, paddle, and life jacket. Partners include: the National Park Service, the City of Brooklyn Park, Three Rivers Park District, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. Funding through LLCMR would help us to expand the program to Dayton, Champlin, and Hastings, MN.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
2 Program Specialists		Rebalancing Kayaks, on-water safety, education			15%	0.1		\$30,000
Program Manager		Oversee and Coordinate Station Installation and Program			15%	0.66		\$48,125
							Sub Total	\$78,125
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Equipment	5 Paddle Share Stations	The stations hold up to 8 kayaks and come equipped with wi-fi enabled locks.					\$134,500
	Equipment	Kayaks	30 Solo 12' kayaks for Paddle Share					\$41,970
	Equipment	16 Tandem Kayaks	Tandem Kayaks allows beginning paddlers and families kayak together					\$26,415
	Equipment	Solar Power Panels	Panels Power the wifi enabled locks on the Paddle Share Stations					\$1,250
	Tools and Supplies	50 PFDS in multiple sizes	PFD provide safety to Paddle Share participants					\$3,000
	Tools and Supplies	Paddles	Paddles allow participants to navigate through the water					\$13,740
							Sub Total	\$220,875
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	\$299,000

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: \$299,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [eb15634b-d71.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

This is an image of Mississippi River Paddle Share and describes how to use the system. It shows where current stations are and where our proposed expansion will be if funded through LCCMR....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
IRS Letter	4c6fe572-949.pdf
990	21bafba1-d70.pdf
Financial Statements - Audit	a433c131-36e.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	6d4dd790-79a.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
City of Dayton - LOS	2e30f197-9de.pdf
Letter of Support - City of Hastings	e96da70d-27a.pdf
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area	8cbda5b4-5ac.pdf
City of Champlin - LOS	4bca1ca9-eb7.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?

N/A

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

Yes

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

Yes

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF? If so, describe here (1) the source and estimated amounts of any revenue and (2) how you propose to use those revenues:

Yes, 1) We do not anticipate that Paddle Share will produce any net profit. However, if the program does, 2) We will want the funds reinvested into the ongoing operations of the program for the community to benefit in the long-run.

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:

Anna Waugh: Mississippi Park Connection

Devin Brown: Mississippi Park Connection

Martin Farrell: City of Dayton

Forest Eidbo: Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

Dan Glynn: City of Champlin

Chris Jenkins: City of Hastings

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

