



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2027-148

**Proposal Title:** Duluth Traverse Three Year Sustainability Program

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Ansel Schimpff

**Organization:** Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores

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

**Email:** executivedirector@coggs.com

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Establish a dedicated trail crew for the Duluth Traverse to carry out targeted projects that improve long-term sustainability, enhance accessibility, reduce environmental impact, and maximize resource efficiency.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$232,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** December 31, 2030

**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?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Narrative

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

The Duluth Traverse is a world-class, multi-use, mountain-bike-optimized trail that stretches 45 miles across the City of Duluth connecting parks and high-quality natural areas. It generates more than \$46 million in economic impact annually and sees an estimated 130,000 trail visits each summer, making it a critical piece of infrastructure for residents and visitors. As the trail has aged, erosion and heavy use have degraded the tread surface, exposing rocks and ledges that diminish the experience for all users. In many locations, this erosion has increased the trail's difficulty well beyond its intended role as a beginner-friendly, neighborhood connector. This unintended increase in difficulty reduces the accessibility for many residents and visitors, and imposes an unnecessary barrier to less experienced trail users. With a total of 35 stream crossings and trail segments adjacent to designated cold-water trout streams, it is imperative that old trail be updated to meet national best practices to ensure preservation of Minnesota's natural resources. Ongoing erosion in these areas increases sediment runoff, negatively impacting these high-priority waters.

### **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.**

Establishing a dedicated, multi-year-funded trail renewal crew will enable us to address priority needs across the trail system through targeted, high-impact projects. Many of these projects are too small to justify external maintenance contracts, yet too large or technically complex to be completed through volunteer workdays alone. Bundling them into larger bids results in complex contracts with multiple mobilization fees and high per-unit reconstruction costs. Securing new, dedicated funding over a three-year period allows us to efficiently complete these critical sustainability projects while building the organizational capacity necessary to transition the crew toward partial or full cost recovery through earned revenue in the future.

### **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 the establishment of a fully funded, seasonal trail crew and the restoration of 3–5 miles of the Duluth Traverse per season to its intended level of difficulty. The project will protect and enhance natural resources by reducing erosion and runoff into designated cold-water trout streams, improving water quality and habitat health. Trail rehabilitation will enhance long-term sustainability through improved drainage and surface capping where needed, preserving surrounding ecosystems while expanding inclusive access to high-quality outdoor recreation and fostering long-term stewardship for people of all abilities.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Grant Award & Project Launch

**Activity Budget:** \$10,000

**Activity Description:**

Finalize the grant agreement and complete a comprehensive assessment of existing trail conditions to inform a prioritized task list. This effort will result in a clear, site-specific implementation plan that directs rehabilitation to the trail segments most in need, improving safety, accessibility, and the overall quality of the outdoor recreation experience. By restoring trails to their intended level of difficulty and design, the project will support a wider range of users and abilities while reducing user conflict and unsanctioned trail impacts. The finalized work plan will guide crew deployment, equipment use, and seasonal scheduling throughout the grant period, ensuring efficient use of public funds and consistent delivery of recreational benefits. Project outcomes will be evaluated by comparing baseline trail condition data to post-work assessments, including measures of tread condition, erosion reduction, and user experience. This evaluation will help ensure trails remain safe, enjoyable, and sustainable for long-term public use and will inform adaptive management in future maintenance seasons.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Priority Assessment & Work Plan Finalization	September 30, 2027
Consultation with SHPO	November 30, 2027
Lease of crew vehicle	December 31, 2027

### Activity 2: Crew Hiring and training

**Activity Budget:** \$10,000

**Activity Description:**

Hire and onboard a seasonal trail renewal crew, complete required safety training, and mobilize equipment necessary for project implementation. This phase will result in a trained, well-coordinated crew and fully operational equipment, ensuring maintenance and rehabilitation work is completed safely, efficiently, and to a consistent standard. Proper onboarding and training will emphasize safe tool operation, environmental stewardship, and sustainable trail construction practices, directly supporting high-quality outdoor recreation infrastructure. Mobilized equipment and trained staff will enable timely response to maintenance needs, reduce trail closures, and minimize disruptions to public use during peak recreation seasons. These outputs will be used to deliver reliable, on-the-ground improvements that enhance trail safety, accessibility, and user experience across the system. Project outcomes will be evaluated through documentation of training completion, safety compliance, and equipment readiness, as well as performance tracking during the field season, including adherence to work plans, productivity benchmarks, and incident reporting. This evaluation will ensure public investments support safe, durable trails that provide long-term recreational benefits.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Job posting	December 31, 2027
Interviews and hiring	March 31, 2028
onboarding and safety training	April 30, 2028

### Activity 3: Year 1 Trail Rehabilitation on Priority Segments

**Activity Budget:** \$64,000

**Activity Description:**

Complete 3–5 miles of targeted trail maintenance, beginning with high-priority segments identified during the Fall 2027 trail conditions assessment. Initial work will focus on approximately 9,500 linear feet of trail along Keene Creek and 3,168 linear feet of trail paralleling Brewery Creek, both designated cold-water trout streams. These efforts will restore trail tread, drainage, and surface consistency to improve safety, accessibility, and overall trail quality while supporting sustainable recreational use in sensitive environments. The estimated 14 weeks of work on these priority segments represents a cost-effective alternative to contracted maintenance, which would total approximately \$174,200 at current market rates. The remaining 12 weeks of the typical build season will be used to support volunteer maintenance efforts, address weather-related trail damage, and respond to emerging maintenance needs across the system, maximizing recreational availability during peak use periods. Outcomes will be evaluated through post-work trail condition assessments, including tread stability, drainage performance, and user experience, ensuring maintained trails remain safe, enjoyable, and resilient for long-term public recreation.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Mobilization	May 31, 2028
rebuild first segments of trail	October 31, 2028
Assist volunteer trail work groups	October 31, 2028
Winterization and storage of all equipment	November 30, 2028

### Activity 4: Year two mobilization and training

**Activity Budget:** \$7,000

**Activity Description:**

Conduct replacement hiring for any vacant positions, including onboarding and safety training. This will maintain full staffing capacity and ensure trail maintenance work proceeds safely and on schedule, minimizing disruptions to public recreation. Outcomes will be evaluated through documentation of successful hires, training completion, safety compliance, and continued alignment with the approved work plan.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hiring for any open positions	March 31, 2029
Safety Training	April 30, 2029
Field Assessments Field assessments, coordination with City Parks, work planning	April 30, 2029

### Activity 5: Year two trail rehabilitation and maintenance

**Activity Budget:** \$64,000

**Activity Description:**

Complete machine-assisted rehabilitation of 3–5 miles of trail, beginning with approximately 9,000 linear feet of high-priority trail between Enger Tower and Lincoln Park. Remaining project time will be used to rehabilitate approximately 6,400 linear feet of trail between Observation Hill and West 8th Street. These trail segments have experienced significant erosion, resulting in unsafe conditions and a level of difficulty exceeding original design intent. Rehabilitation

activities will restore trail tread, drainage, and alignment to improve safety, accessibility, and overall user experience while supporting sustainable, long-term recreational use. Machine-assisted work will allow efficient completion of complex repairs, reducing the likelihood of recurring damage and minimizing future maintenance needs. Outcomes will be evaluated through post-work trail condition assessments, including erosion reduction, tread stability, and alignment with intended trail difficulty, ensuring trails provide safe, enjoyable, and durable outdoor recreation opportunities for the public.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Mobilization of equipment	May 31, 2029
Trail maintenance of Enger Park Segment	August 31, 2029
supplemental corridor clearing for events	September 30, 2029
Trail Maintenance of Observation Hill segment	October 31, 2029

**Activity 6: Closeout, Winterization of equipment and future planning**

**Activity Budget:** \$6,000

**Activity Description:**

Complete final erosion control measures and address all punch list items from the maintenance season, followed by identification and prioritization of trail work for the 2030 season. These activities will ensure rehabilitated trails are fully stabilized, safe, and ready for continued public use, while protecting long-term trail performance. The resulting prioritized work list will be used to guide future maintenance planning, resource allocation, and scheduling, supporting consistent, high-quality outdoor recreation experiences. Outcomes will be evaluated through post-season inspections confirming completion of erosion control and punch list items, and through documentation of a ranked work plan for the 2030 season.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Final work complete	October 31, 2029
future planning	October 31, 2029
winterization of equipment	November 30, 2029

**Activity 7: Year three mobilization and training**

**Activity Budget:** \$7,000

**Activity Description:**

Conduct replacement hiring for any vacant positions, including onboarding and safety training. This will maintain full staffing capacity and ensure trail maintenance work proceeds safely and on schedule, minimizing disruptions to public recreation. Outcomes will be evaluated through documentation of successful hires, training completion, safety compliance, and continued alignment with the approved work plan.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hiring for any open positions	March 31, 2030
Onboarding and Safety training	April 30, 2030

## Activity 8: Year Three Trail Rehabilitation and Maintenance

**Activity Budget:** \$64,000

### Activity Description:

Complete machine-assisted rehabilitation of 3–5 miles of trail based on priorities identified during the previous season’s assessment. Anticipated work will include approximately 2.3 miles of trail along Hawk Ridge to address significant erosion and restore safe, sustainable trail conditions. An additional high-priority focus will be the 1.6-mile Fairmont segment, where rehabilitation will open the trail corridor to improve sight lines and address drainage issues near Kingsbury Creek, a designated cold-water trout stream. These activities will restore trail tread, drainage, and visibility, improving safety, accessibility, and overall user experience while supporting long-term recreational use in environmentally sensitive areas. Machine-assisted methods will allow efficient completion of complex repairs and reduce the likelihood of recurring damage. Outcomes will be evaluated through post-work trail condition assessments, including erosion reduction, drainage performance, and alignment with intended trail difficulty, ensuring trails remain safe, enjoyable, and resilient for public recreation.

### Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Supplemental corridor clearing for events	September 30, 2030
3-5 miles of Trail maintenance completed	October 31, 2030
Planning for 2031 season	October 31, 2030

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
James Shoburg	City Of Duluth	permit coordination and compliance	No

## Dissemination

**Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.**

This project will focus on sharing sustainable trail construction practices and natural resource stewardship with regional land managers and trail organizations while engaging the broader community through educational events and social media posts. A key component will be hosting the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) Trail Labs seminar, and Outdoor Recreation Professional conferences hosted by the Duluth Area Outdoor Alliance. Events will draw land managers, planners, and trail advocates from across the region, highlighting sustainable construction techniques, drainage best practices, and low-impact design principles demonstrated through this trail rehabilitation effort.

To engage the public, COGGS will organize community events introducing families, new riders, and volunteers to the upgraded trails in partnership with Duluth Devo, Duluth Parks, and Northland Adaptive Recreation. Construction progress, segment reopenings, and programming will be shared through COGGS promotional and fundraising media to maintain public awareness and build long-term stewardship among trail users.

Project outcomes will be documented through, online resources, and social media to ensure broad public access to information about the environmental and recreational benefits achieved through this work. Acknowledgment of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be included on all project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications, using the ENRTF logo or attribution language in accordance with ENRTF Acknowledgment Guidelines. In addition, permanent trailhead signage and updated digital maps will prominently display the ENRTF logo, ensuring long-term public recognition of the Trust Fund's investment in sustainable trail infrastructure and natural resource protection.

## 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?**

Project results will be implemented immediately by integrating the maintenance crew into ongoing trail management and operations. Priority projects identified through trail assessments and user feedback will be completed during the grant period, with improvements reducing long-term maintenance needs and costs. After the grant period, ongoing efforts will be funded through a mix of earned revenue, sponsorships, public partnerships, and private fundraising. The crew will transition toward partial or full self-funding through contracted maintenance and leveraged matching funds.

## 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 3 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 to developing a welcoming outdoor recreational culture by promoting opportunities, education, programming, partnerships, and healthy outdoor fun.

COGGS 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 wellbeing 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>								
Trail Maintenance Crew Lead		The Trail Maintenance Crew Lead oversees day-to-day implementation of machine-assisted and hand-built trail rehabilitation projects along the Duluth Traverse. This position combines technical trail work, equipment operation, crew supervision, and coordination with City of Duluth Parks staff to ensure projects meet sustainability, safety, and environmental standards.			20%	3.25		\$101,400
Trail Maintenance Crew Member		The Trail Maintenance Crew Member supports trail rehabilitation and maintenance work along the Duluth Traverse through hands-on construction, repair, and finishing work. This position focuses on drainage improvements, tread shaping, armoring, and erosion control under the direction of the Crew Lead.			20%	3		\$75,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$176,400</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Trail maintenance hand tools	general trail maintenance					\$5,000
	Equipment	Vehicle Lease	Transportation of equipment and crew					\$19,400
	Tools and Supplies	Fuel for vehicle and machines	Diesel for excavator, truck, canycom, compactor, chainsaws, etc					\$6,000
	Tools and Supplies	PPE	PPE for trail crew, including chainsaw safety equipment, eye and hearing protection.					\$700
	Tools and Supplies	Erosion Control Blanket	Erosion Control					\$15,060
	Tools and Supplies	Straw Wattle	Erosion Control					\$9,440

							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$55,600</b>
<b>Capital Equipment</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$232,000</b>

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>				
Cash	Coggs Trail Sponsorship revenue. This program was introduced in 2025 and brought in \$19,000 from local business sponsorships. This program continues to grow, and we expect it will fund a substantial portion of this trail maintenance program after the 3 year grant funded period.	Cash to supplement program	Secured	\$57,000
In-Kind	Logged Volunteer hours. Coggs averages over 2000 hours of volunteer maintenance hours/ season.	volunteer trail maintenance crews	Secured	\$115,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$172,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$172,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$404,000**

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

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [e3abcb31-885.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

A Screen shot of shared google map, used to coordinate City of Duluth and COGGS trail updates, rehab projects etc....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
Good standing	<a href="#">f6cecd1e-86c.pdf</a>
Tax return	<a href="#">406da686-cd0.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Board Resolution	<a href="#">986c66de-0e1.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
City of Duluth Letter of Support	<a href="#">a8449d8e-c71.docx</a>
Budget Addendum	<a href="#">b44374d7-597.pdf</a>
Capital Construction questionnaire	<a href="#">05c40b41-160.pdf</a>
Photo story	<a href="#">b1686a89-d8c.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:**

Allison Brooks, City of Duluth. James Shoburg, City of Duluth.

**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