



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2027-209

**Proposal Title:** Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail Development

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Brent Larson

**Organization:** City of Blaine

**Office Telephone:** (763) 785-6188

**Email:** blarson@blainemn.gov

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Construction of an ADA compliant bike/pedestrian connection via a wetland boardwalk and trail connecting various neighborhoods to city trails, regional trails, and other recreational and environmental resources.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$2,350,000

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

**LCCMR Funding 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 Blaine Wetland Sanctuary is a 500+ acre natural open space area located in the east-central region in the City of Blaine. The location of the wetland complex creates great recreational and environmental education opportunities. The size and seasonally fluctuating water levels in the wetlands create difficulties for people to access all the open space has to offer. The large wetland complex also acts as physical barrier, isolating some adjacent neighborhoods and making access to parks and trails and other recreational opportunities on the opposite side of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary difficult. Currently some pedestrians and bikers must navigate the shoulders of CSAH 12 (109th Avenue), which is a 55 mph heavily traveled county road, or travel 5+ miles to safely traverse to the many other recreation opportunities throughout the City.

### **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.**

Construction of an ADA compliant bike/pedestrian wetland boardwalk and trail connecting people to neighborhoods, city trails, regional trails, and other unique recreational and environmental resources. The proposed project will consist of furnishing and installing approximately 3,600 ft of boardwalk and 3,000 ft of aggregate trail in Phase 1 (segments 1 and 2) through the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. Phase 1 will make connections to neighborhoods and existing parks and trails on the east and west sides of Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. All phases will include overlook sections along the boardwalk and educational signage and monumentation.

We anticipate this to be a destination for the public to visit. Blaine will partner with local organizations that have shown interest to add educational signage and monuments to the boardwalk and utilize the system for volunteer and educational programs. Discussions regarding regular cleanup of the trails, school field trips, removal of invasive species and planting of native species, and other organized events are in progress. The proposed boardwalk/trail system will provide great opportunities for pedestrians/bikers to experience and enjoy the outdoor recreational options offered in the area.

### **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?**

A wetland boardwalk and trail system through the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary to provide access to otherwise inaccessible areas of the natural wetland complex. The boardwalk and trail will provide minimally invasive, safe routes to connect existing neighborhood residents, and other regional pedestrian and bikers, to additional environmental and recreational opportunities including multiple City parks, regional Lexington Avenue trail system, the existing Blaine Wetland Sanctuary boardwalk system, City Hall and the Blaine Veteran's Memorial Park.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Preliminary and Final Design Process

**Activity Budget:** \$1

**Activity Description:**

The City has worked with a consulting engineering firm, Stantec, to decide on a best fit alignment for the trail. Preliminary plans were prepared and neighborhood meetings were held to receive public input and comment. City hired a geotechnical firm to conduct soil borings along the alignment to assist with the trail and boardwalk design. Stantec completed wetland delineations along the alignment and worked with the Rice Creek Watershed District and has received approval of the delineations. Based on the preliminary alignment, public feedback, geotechnical and wetland reviews, a final design was agreed upon. Final plans, specifications, and cost estimates have been prepared and Stantec continues to work towards approval of a wetland impact/replacement plan with the watershed district as well as all other agencies (DNR, Army Corps, etc). Final plans and specifications will need approval by all appropriate agencies before bidding the project. The approval process and timeline will depend if grant funding is received. Once approval of plans and specifications has been received the project can move forward. Funding for this the preliminary and final design are 100% locally funded by the City of Blaine.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Preliminary Design and Public Outreach	April 30, 2025
Geotechnical Exploration, Wetland Delineation, and SHPO Review	May 31, 2026
Complete Predesign Review through the Dept. of Administration	August 31, 2026
Final Design	September 30, 2026
Approval of Final Plans and Specifications	December 31, 2026

### Activity 2: Bidding and Construction

**Activity Budget:** \$2,349,999

**Activity Description:**

Once final plans, specifications, and permits have been completed and approved the City will competitively bid the project. Once awarded, the project will be completed in segments with most construction completed during the winter months of 2027, 2028 and 2029. Final completion is anticipated by spring 2030 or earlier.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
All Construction Funds Secured	August 31, 2027
Bid Project and Award Contract	October 31, 2027
Complete Construction	June 30, 2030

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Eric Raymond	Aveda	Community/Volunteering Partnership/Sponsorship of Interpretive Signage	No
Jacob Burgstahler	Stantec	Consulting Engineer/Landscape Architect for trail design and plan preparation	No
Joleen Munce	Anoka Hennepin Schools	Coordinator of the Center for Advanced Professional Studies Business program at Anoka Hennepin Schools, teaches Creative Design course that will partner on draft interpretive signage design.	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.**

If funded, all City communications regarding the boardwalk, including signage, newsletter articles, and print, web, and video media will include attribution language consistent with the ENRTF requirements.

Promotion of the new boardwalk is expected to include:

Citywide newsletter articles

Social media posts

Video promotion with North Metro TV

Senior walking and/or biking clubs

Continuation and expansion of existing interpretive programs and field trips in the wetland sanctuary. Current programs are offered through collaboration with Wargo Nature Center and Growing Green Hearts.

The proximity of the wetland sanctuary to the City's primary water treatment plant allows for a unique field trip experience for students to learn about surface water and ecology and drinking water in one trip. During summer 2025, three days of field trips were completed with Forest Lake Schools summer program totaling 200 students.

Aveda, a skin and haircare brand headquartered in Blaine, has agreed to financial sponsorship of interpretive signage and collaboration to promote the benefits of rare plants in the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary and Anoka Sandplain more generally. The City is also partnering with the Center for Advanced Professional Studies Creative Design course in Anoka Hennepin School District to design potential small interpretive signs highlighting individual plant species. The partnership will provide valuable real world design experience to students while also providing a fresh design perspective aimed at younger audiences.

As opportunities arise, the City expects to continue working with the Anoka Sandplain Rare Plant Rescue Program, and with our expanded partnership with Aveda, increase educational and promotional opportunities related to rare plant ecology in conjunction with plant rescue efforts.

## 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 result in the construction of a wetland trail system connecting the public to one of Blaine's greatest recreational, environmental, and educational resources. No results, findings or other unanswered questions are anticipated to result from this project. The proposed construction will complete the southern trail system within Blaine

Wetland Sanctuary. An additional trail segment may be completed in the future using local funding and/or other grant opportunities available but are not considered as part of this phase of the project. Maintenance of the trail/boardwalk will be included in operations and capital budgets going forward.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Brent Larson

**Job Title:** Project Engineer

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

Project management will be completed by Brent Larson, PE, Project Engineer. He has managed multiple state and federal aid projects including new street and reconstruction projects, roundabout projects and Safe Routes to School trail projects. Brent has completed all aspects through the State Aid processes and Federal Aid DCP process including preparation of Project Memorandums and initial environmental documentation, full design, plan and specification preparation, construction administration, and project completion and closeout. Brent has worked with SALT and MnDOT Office of Civil Rights to meet prevailing wage compliances and document DBE and OJT goals.

Brent will have the aid of Blaine's Engineering Department which include 5 additional professional engineers on staff as well a stormwater and environmental coordinator. The engineering department regularly completes projects of similar size and complexity, including managing a capital improvement budget for projects, typically exceeding \$8 million annually.

**Organization:** City of Blaine

**Organization Description:**

The City of Blaine's mission is to deliver exceptional public services with the highest degree of professionalism and accountability. This is accomplished through core values of transparency, openness, creativity, innovation, fairness, impartiality, respect, and efficiency. The City was established in 1961 and has grown to over 70,000 residents and now employs approximately 250 staff. The City values the preservation of natural areas and habitats, advancement of recreational opportunities and providing the opportunity to appreciate the natural environment evident by its network of 800 acres of protected open spaces, 65+ parks, and 77+ miles of trails. Initial acquisition of open spaces and development of trails within the open spaces is funded by a voter approved bond sale and a portion of park dedication fees for residential development allocated specifically for open space development, reflecting the City's goal to preserve high quality open spaces throughout the city as mitigation for private development elsewhere. These open spaces are essential community infrastructure that provide multi-faceted value.

## 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	Construction of Boardwalk and Trails in Segments 1 and 2				6		\$2,350,000
							Sub Total	\$2,350,000
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Capital Equipment</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							Sub Total	-

<b>Other Expenses</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,350,000</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	City of Blaine	Preliminary and Final Design	Secured	\$100,000
Cash	City of Blaine	Construction of Segments 1 and 2	Secured	\$3,750,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$3,850,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$3,850,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$6,200,000**

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

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [873d4a2c-383.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail Project location exhibit showing the proposed project location, future project location, as well as existing trails, sidewalk and regional trail system. Page two shows a larger area surrounding the proposed project and the nearby parks, trails and other amenities....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
City of Blaine Audit Report	<a href="#">3c48fd32-41a.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
City Council Resolution	<a href="#">b8451936-c84.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Construction Budget Addendum	<a href="#">e8022508-114.pdf</a>
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire	<a href="#">63e514f7-058.pdf</a>
SHPO request for review	<a href="#">b35f60cf-883.pdf</a>
Aveda Partnership Letter	<a href="#">254de557-503.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:**

Elizabeth Showalter, Planner, City of Blaine

**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