

# Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on February 13, 2025

## M.L. 2020 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2024

**Project Title:** Superior Hiking Trail As Environmental Showcase

**Project Manager:** Lisa Luukkala

**Affiliation:** Superior Hiking Trail Association

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**Website:** <https://superiorhiking.org/>

**Funding Source:**

**Fiscal Year:**

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09k

**Appropriation Amount:** \$450,000

**Amount Spent:** \$450,000

**Amount Remaining:** -

### Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

The Superior Hiking Trail Association completed four major reroutes, over 2,000 feet of boardwalk replacement, and eight miles of tread repair to keep people on, and water off, the trail. The impact of this work is safer trail corridor for users, reduced environmental impacts, and increased enjoyment for users.

### Overall Project Outcome and Results

Superior Hiking Trail Association pursued the renewal and rebuilding of the most damaged and dangerous segments of our Trail. There are countless board walks, stairways, small bridges and other structures – and, conversely, a lack of them – needing reconstruction and renewal. We focused our activity on replacing weak or decrepit built structures, using construction standards for trail structures developed by the National Park Service and used by most other national scenic trail groups. We also retrofitted the Trail with water management devices (e.g. water bars, drainage dips, swales, ditches) so that water is deflected away from and off the tread (footpath) of the Trail, thereby reducing or eliminating erosion and mud holes.

The major project outcomes of the grant were 20 structures (bridges, boardwalks, staircases) were rebuilt. Eight miles of

trail was retrofitted with drainage management upgrades and four major and 2 smaller reroutes were completed that moved the trail to a more sustainable and resilient alignment. Two of the major reroutes funded in part by ENRTF dollars eliminated road walks for hikers, this is incredibly important for user safety, and aligns with our mission as part of the larger national scenic trail system.

With over 400,000 user visits in 2023, the Superior Hiking Trail plays a vital role in connecting people to Minnesota's public lands and engaging people in the stewardship of these special places. We continue to grow in our understanding of working with the land and water to identify a trail corridor that both showcases some of the most beautiful places in our state while reducing our impact on these special spaces.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

The Superior Hiking Trail Association told the stories of these projects regularly throughout the two year project period via blog posts, Ridgeline publication, and through our social media platforms. In addition, we physically sign sections of the Trail that received trail renewal investments by this state funding. ENRTF signs were installed at key locations along the Trail where ENRTF support helped complete a renewal project. A photo of the signage at both Trailheads of the Silver Creek section of Trail included as an attachment.



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2020 Approved Final Report

### General Information

**Date:** February 14, 2025

**ID Number:** 2020-060

**Staff Lead:** Mike Campana

**Project Title:** Superior Hiking Trail As Environmental Showcase

**Project Budget:** \$450,000

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Lisa Luukkala

**Organization:** Superior Hiking Trail Association

**Office Telephone:** (218) 834-2700

**Email:** lluukkala@superiorhiking.org

**Web Address:** <https://superiorhiking.org/>

### Project Reporting

**Final Report Approved:** February 13, 2025

**Reporting Status:** Project Completed

**Date of Last Action:** February 13, 2025

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2024

### Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09k

**Appropriation Language:** \$450,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Superior Hiking Trail Association to rebuild damaged and dangerous segments and create a new trail segment of the Superior Hiking Trail to minimize environmental impacts, make the trail safer for users, and make the trail more resilient for future use and conditions.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2024

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** Renew and rebuild the Superior Hiking Trail to minimize environmental damage, maximize safety, and increase resistance to impacts of increased traffic and climate change.

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

We plan to renew and rebuild the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) to minimize environmental damage, increase resistance to impacts of traffic and climate change, meet or exceed expectations of public and private landowners to responsibly manage the SHT, and enhance users' experience and safety. Much of the SHT was built before national trail building standards were established. The SHT is hugely popular and was not built to withstand the impact of an estimated 100,000 users annually. As a result, there is considerable environmental damage to the Trail, and damage caused by users of the Trail.

A 2018 ENRTF grant allowed the Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA) to hire trail experts to evaluate root causes of environmental damage and user dangers on the SHT. Their findings: the problems on the SHT were not limited to the miles they evaluated but are endemic along the entire 300-mile length of the Trail. Their advice to the Association: adopt national hiking trail construction standards; change organizational systems and processes to support sustainable trail building; and focus on managing water. This advice dovetailed nicely with the SHTA's own Trail Renewal Program, launched in early 2018, a commitment to reduce natural resource damage.

**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.**

We will commit to environmental responsibility by adopting and implementing national hiking trail construction standards for every project on the SHT and training staff, volunteers and contractors in those principles and practices.

Our first goal is to renew or rebuild the most damaged, dangerous sections where built structures and water management devices are needed. Replacement will be implemented with construction standards for trail structures developed by the National Park Service and used by most other national scenic trail groups.

We also plan to renew the SHT by building new trail in key locations. Some segments of the SHT were simply put in the wrong, unsustainable place from the beginning. We intend to build entirely new sections of trail (1,000 -10,000 feet), because the existing trail simply can't be fortified enough to withstand the natural and human forces undermining it. In these cases, starting over is the best course of action.

These two strategies will lead to a more sustainable trail, a safer user experience, and a decrease in environmental impact.

**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?**

Sections of the Trail showing the most environmental damage will be repaired. Built structures will be constructed to minimize environmental damage and reduce hazards. Wetlands along the SHT will be far less impacted; slopes and stream banks will be better protected. This ENRTF grant would enable the SHTA to continue the renewal work stemming from a 2019 ENRTF grant that focuses on the "worst of the worst" sections of the SHT. If we fulfill the promise of our Trail Renewal Program, the SHTA can be a showcase for how an "old" hiking trail can be renewed and built to last.

## 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?**

Region(s): NE

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Renew and Rebuild the Most Damaged and Dangerous Segments

**Activity Budget:** \$225,000

**Activity Description:**

There are countless board walks, stairways, small bridges and other structures – and, conversely, a lack of them – needing reconstruction and renewal. Our focus in this activity will be to replace weak or decrepit built structures, using construction standards for trail structures developed by the National Park Service and used by most other national scenic trail groups. In addition, this activity will include retrofitting the SHT with water management devices (e.g. water bars, drainage dips, swales, ditches) so that water is deflected away from and off the tread (footpath) of the Trail, thereby reducing or eliminating erosion and mud holes.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
10 to 30 structures will be rebuilt or built anew in areas most in need	December 31, 2023
8 to 20 miles of the SHT will be retrofitted with water management devices	December 31, 2023
4 to 10 short reroutes totaling up to 2 miles will be completed	December 31, 2023

### Activity 2: Renewing the SHT By Making Brand-New Trail

**Activity Budget:** \$225,000

**Activity Description:**

Some segments of the SHT were simply put in the wrong place from the beginning: at the bottom of a slope, through a wetland area, or onto a nearby snowmobile trail for lack of a better route. In this activity, we intend to build entirely new sections of trail (1,000 -10,000 feet), because the existing trail simply can't be fortified enough to withstand the natural and human forces undermining it. In these cases, starting over is the best course of action. There are many vagaries to getting a "reroute" approved, making it difficult to determine exactly which segments would get rerouted. Those listed below are high-priority candidates for rerouting:

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Soggy areas, up to 5 miles, will be rerouted between Britton Peak and Caribou Trail	December 31, 2023
New 2.67 mile segment built between Gooseberry State Park and Split Rock State Park	December 31, 2023
Slumping area, .5 miles will be rerouted between Reeves Rd and County Rd 301	December 31, 2023

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jon Benson	U.S. Forest Service	Liaison to the SHTA for any work done on the SHTA within the boundaries of Superior National Forest.	No
Jim Shoberg	City of Duluth Parks Department	Liaison to SHTA from Duluth Parks to assist in planning and executing trail projects within the limits of the City of Duluth	No
Mike Young	Minnesota DNR Division of Forestry	Liaison to SHTA from DNR to assist in planning and executing trail projects within northeastern Minnesota forest lands	No
Christa Maxwell	Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Division	Liaison to SHTA from DNR to assist in planning and executing trail projects within North Shore state parks	No
Cathy Quinn	U.S. Forest Service	Liaison to the SHTA for any work done on the SHTA within the boundaries of Superior National Forest.	No
Derrick Passe	Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District	Advises on environmental regulatory matters in Lake County	No
Tim Malzahn	Ice Age Trail Alliance	Provides advice and counsel, technical assistance.	No
Matt Davis	North Country Trail Association	Provides advice and counsel, technical assistance.	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.**

Superior Hiking Trail Association would highlight our LCCMR projects as completed through our print materials, website, social media and other media outlets. In addition, we will include recognition of ENRTF in our Request for Proposals. We will comply with ENRTF guidelines.

## 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?**

Our Trail Renewal Program has focused the Association's energy, resources and systems so that the lofty goal of creating and supporting a hiking trail that lasts a century is achievable. The Trail Renewal Program has brought about a significant increase in private donations that will support the operations of the organization. Big trail-building projects will require support from wherever we can get it, including public sources (local governments, IRRRB, ENRTF, Duluth Parks, Greater MN Parks and Trails Commission) and private sources (private foundations, major donors and investors).

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Enhancement Plan for Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09f	\$100,000
Restoring Five Sections of the Superior Hiking Trail	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09o	\$191,000





## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
<b>Personnel</b>										
Trail Operations Director		Trail operations director oversees trail construction work.			25%	0.5		\$27,015	-	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$27,015</b>	<b>\$27,015</b>	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>										
Full Sun Services LLC, Dirt Candy, Trail Eyes LLC	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Trail construction contractors will be experts in recreational trail building. They will be sourced via competitive RFP process. Services would include trail construction, board walk and stairway construction (wood or stone), but could include trail route identification and mapping.				0.73		\$307,953	\$307,953	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$307,953</b>	<b>\$307,953</b>	-
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>										
	Tools and Supplies	Equipment, Tools, and Supplies	This includes lumber, cement, hardware, gravel, metal bog pans and related hardware.					\$108,018	\$108,018	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$108,018</b>	<b>\$108,018</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>										

	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Travel to work sites by SHTA staff	Staff supervision and expertise needed on site					\$7,014	\$7,014	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$7,014</b>	<b>\$7,014</b>	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>	<b>\$450,000</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	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
<b>State</b>						
Cash	Recreational Trails Program, IRRRB	Grants to maintain and improve the Superior Hiking Trail	Secured	\$100,000	\$53,500	\$46,500
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$53,500</b>	<b>\$46,500</b>
<b>Non-State</b>						
Cash	Donations and memberships	Various related expenses, including: materials, tools, volunteer support, lodging, travel, and other professional services to support this project.	Secured	\$160,000	\$13,000	\$147,000
In-Kind	Volunteers	4000 hours of volunteer support for the project, valued at \$20/hr.	Secured	\$80,000	\$65,019	\$14,981
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$240,000</b>	<b>\$78,019</b>	<b>\$161,981</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$340,000</b>	<b>\$131,519</b>	<b>\$208,481</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [f3167afc-305.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

A one-page document with a map of showing locations of trail re-routes and improvements completed during the project....

#### *Financial Capacity*

File: [3ef2a330-2f4.pdf](#)

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
SHTA Board Resolution	<a href="#">634e4555-8e5.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
SHTA Audited Financial Statements FY2019	<a href="#">bf027373-31f.pdf</a>
Background Check Form	<a href="#">950a8926-a4d.pdf</a>
SHTA Gooseberry Reroute Map	<a href="#">6244d1b0-60f.pdf</a>
Spruce Creek Bridge "Before"	<a href="#">57418413-ce4.jpe</a>
Spruce Creek Bridge "After"	<a href="#">d9de66d0-d20.jpe</a>
White Sky Rock Before & After	<a href="#">3da78b20-4ea.pdf</a>
Boardwalk along new Poplar River Reroute	<a href="#">963ef72a-598.pdf</a>
Jonvick Creek Boardwalk "After" photos	<a href="#">1934b2a7-c53.jpe</a>
Jonvick Creek Boardwalk "Before" photos	<a href="#">a73c37db-84e.jpe</a>
ENRTF Signage (1 of 2)	<a href="#">d81cd1f8-6f4.jpe</a>
ENRTF Signage (2 of 2)	<a href="#">b33bc1dc-cb7.jpe</a>
West of Cascade Reroute	<a href="#">ab13f417-a64.jpe</a>
Contractor Officially Opening Poplar River Reroute	<a href="#">caeb72d2-3e9.jpe</a>
New Tread on Poplar River Reroute	<a href="#">fd5e5d6e-82f.jpe</a>
Poplar River Reroute Boardwalk	<a href="#">df116c60-b71.jpe</a>
Map of Completed Project Locations	<a href="#">613c60e8-92e.pdf</a>
Original Visual Component	<a href="#">1ed0d008-ca5.pdf</a>

### Media Links

Title	Link
Fall 2021 Ridgeline Publication	<a href="https://superiorhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Ridgeline-Fall-2021-compressed-2.pdf">https://superiorhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Ridgeline-Fall-2021-compressed-2.pdf</a>
Spring 2022 Ridgeline Publication	<a href="https://superiorhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Ridgeline-Spring-2022.pdf">https://superiorhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Ridgeline-Spring-2022.pdf</a>
SHTA Completes Gooseberry Reroute	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FphHXE9qDI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FphHXE9qDI</a>

SHTA 2023 Fall Ridgeline Publication	<a href="https://superiorhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SHTA-001-Ridgeline-Fall-2023-Final.pdf">https://superiorhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SHTA-001-Ridgeline-Fall-2023-Final.pdf</a>
Spring 2024 Ridgeline Publication	<a href="https://superiorhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SHTA-003-Ridgeline-5-2024_HiRes.pdf">https://superiorhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SHTA-003-Ridgeline-5-2024_HiRes.pdf</a>
Map of Project Locations along Trail Corridor	<a href="https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1aDgRL_rPYYb6xWJN7wOkejqqYK9SRD0&amp;ll=47.526316141886866%2C-91.44018408691404&amp;z=9">https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1aDgRL_rPYYb6xWJN7wOkejqqYK9SRD0&amp;ll=47.526316141886866%2C-91.44018408691404&amp;z=9</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

### *Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage*

Activity Two -- Milestone 2 has changed from 2.5 miles of new trail new Grand Marais to 2.67 miles of new trail between Split Rock State Park and Gooseberry State Park. This change occurred due to project readiness and priority connectivity needs.

Activity Two -- Milestone 3 has changed from 1.5 miles of new trail at the Northern Terminus to .5 miles of new trail to reroute creek slumping between Reeves Rd and County Rd 301 Trailheads. This change occurred due to project readiness and priority connectivity needs.

Budget -- Capital Expenditures, Equipment, Tools and Supplies Details has changed. Because of the delay in the funding allocation, SHTA secured a snowmobile through other means. The \$8,000 for the cost of the snowmobile was removed and the Supplies line item has been adjusted from \$25,000 to \$31,000 to reflect the increased cost of lumber and other construction materials.

Non-ENRTF Funds Contributed to the Project has changed. Because of the delay of the funding allocation, SHTA had to utilize cash-in-hand to pay for projects to proceed in 2020 and 2021. Our cash match in through donations and membership fees has been adjusted from \$200,000 to \$160,000. In addition, cash state grants funds have also been expended that had been originally thought to act as match in 2020/2021. The cash state grants has have been adjusted from \$150,000 to \$100,000.

## Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

**Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?**

N/A

**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

## Work Plan Amendments

Amendment ID	Request Type	Changes made on the following pages	Explanation & justification for Amendment Request (word limit 75)	Date Submitted	Approved	Date of LCCMR Action
1	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts</li> <li>• Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</li> </ul>	SHTA requests to amend the the following budget line items: Project contractors and Tool & Supplies. We request a \$57,000 reduction in Project Contractors and a \$57,000 increase in the Tool & Supplies line item. SHTA has found that it is more cost effective for us to source our own materials versus including them in the scope of work for Project Contractors. This amendment will produce the same grant outcomes.	April 17, 2022	Yes	May 10, 2022
2	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> </ul>	SHTA requests to amend the budget to reflect all "Travel in Minnesota" be dedicated to mileage reimbursement for staff and omit the line item for Contractor Transport. Upon reflection and work with grant reimbursement officer, we found that our bill for transport in the previous report would be better categorized under "Contractor," thus leaving SHTA with no transport costs to bill against "Transport" line item. We do however have a need for more staff mileage.	March 27, 2023	Yes	April 6, 2023
3	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget - Personnel</li> <li>• Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts</li> <li>• Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</li> <li>• Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> </ul>	SHTA requests the following adjustments - reduced Personnel from \$32,500 to \$27,015. Reduce Professional/Service Contractors from \$320,486 to \$307,953. Increase Equipment/Tools Supplies from \$90,000 to \$108,018. SHTA tracking estimates were off slightly on the spend down of these line items and need to be adjusted accordingly. This amendment will produce the same grant outcome.	June 18, 2024	Yes	June 18, 2024



# Status Update Reporting

## Final Status Update August 14, 2024

**Date Submitted:** January 21, 2025

**Date Approved:** January 24, 2025

### Overall Update

SHTA staff, volunteers and contractors were able to complete an incredibly large volume of renewal work on the Trail over the last two years thanks to LCCMR's recommended ENRTF dollars. SHTA followed environmental responsible national hiking trail construction standards for the projects. We focused on renewing the most damaged and dangerous sections of Trail where built structures and water management was needed. When possible, we rerouted sections of the Trail to more sustainable locations that allow for a more resilient trail corridor.

Thanks to this grant, SHTA was able to complete four large reroutes (Silver Creek Reroute (.25 miles), Poplar River Reroute (.75 miles), Gooseberry Gap (2.67-mile) and West of Cascade River Reroute (.76-mile) , over 2,000 feet of boardwalk/puncheon replacement and 8 miles of tread repair to keep people on, and water off the Trail. Two of the four reroutes eliminated a road walk. The impact of this work is a safer trail corridor for users, reduced environmental impacts, and overall better Trail experience for all.

New photo references include Silver Creek Reroute ENTRF signage at both Trailheads. West of Cascade Reroute opening and improvements and post-construction photos of Poplar River Reroute.

### Activity 1

This activity was previously marked complete.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 2

This activity was previously marked complete.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Dissemination

ENRTF signs have been placed at key locations along the Trail where ENRTF support helped complete a renewal project (A photo of the signage at both Trailheads of the Silver Creek section of Trail included as an attachment). In addition, a robust report out on the projects were provided in SHTA's Fall 2023 Ridgeline publication.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update April 1, 2024

**Date Submitted:** June 17, 2024

**Date Approved:** June 18, 2024

### Overall Update

SHTA is incredibly proud of the projects accomplished with these funds. In part because we were renewing some well-known structures and sections of the Trail that are beloved to many, including the White Sky Rock staircase. Through thoughtful design, we were able to add to the scenic value of the Trail, while also increasing the trail's resiliency to erosion and increasing user safety.

### Activity 1

All milestones under this activity have been met. Here is recap:

Milestone 1: 10 to 30 structures were to be rebuilt

Outcome: 20 structures

Milestone 2: 8 to 20 miles were to be retrofitted for water drainage management

Outcome: 8 miles

Milestone 3: 40 to 10 short reroutes were planned

Outcome: six reroutes

The final work took place in late fall and included the completion of West of Cascade Reroute and the remaining miles of tread water drainage improvements.

### Activity 2

The final milestone under this Activity is complete. Silver Creek Reroute, relocating .25 miles of Trail between Reeves Road and Lake County 301, was completed in late fall of 2023. With heavy autumn rains caused some construction woes, the project was completed in full. The section has not yet opened up to the public to allow the new trail tread to settle. The trail will be reopened in June 2024. There is an opportunity for some fun press around this opening and recognition of LCCMR's role in making this reroute a reality.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Dissemination

ENTRF/LCCMR was acknowledged in our Fall 2023 Ridgeline, our print publication that goes out to 6,000 members twice annually. Signs will be installed at time of reroute openings this spring at Silver Creek, in addition, there will be a press release about this reopening and perhaps a ribbon cutting event to celebrate the reconnection. Signs have been installed at Gooseberry reroute in the fall of 2023.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update October 1, 2023

**Date Submitted:** October 27, 2023

**Date Approved:** October 27, 2023

### Overall Update

With record-breaking snowfall over the winter, the snowmelt took its sweet time and contractors were unable to start their projects until mid-summer due to saturated soil. While the Northland welcomed the end of a severe drought that had plagued the North Shore for multiple years, it did slow down trail projects at the start of the season.

Contractors were able to make headway with a seasonably dry summer. Alongside our contractors, volunteers clocked another record-breaking number of hours donated to the care of the Trail. This came in the form of annual maintenance and also the larger renewal projects. Uniquely, this year we also utilized volunteers to conduct trail user surveys and asset inventory assessments as part of the larger Master Planning process. By using a mix of paid contractors and volunteers, SHTA is able to complete more work on the Trail than ever before. The accumulative impacts of multiple years of large-scale construction, partnered with high volunteer participation is really starting to become physically apparent on the Trail. The vision of the Trail Renewal Program is coming a reality.

### Activity 1

In 2023 the following projects were completed:

White Sky Rock Renewal: Completed by Great Lakes Trail Builders with Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa. This project tackled the known program area near the "Lincoln Log stairway," an infamous, aged notched log staircase up a rocky ascent which required a safer solution. We built an impressive 40 stone step staircase following the edge of a rock wall and renewal of 300 ft of trail leading up to the steps. In addition, the intersection with the main trail and the spur at Lake Agnes was reinforced and stabilized with improved access to the lake.

1 mile tread repair, 1 40-stone step staircase, one stone causeway, two fall-line hills repaired and erosion control.

Updated on activity deliverables:

20 structures replaced/renewed

3.2 miles retrofitted with water drainage devices

5 short reroutes

Remaining Active projects to be completed this season are:

1. West of Cascade Reroute
2. Tread Water Drainage (2 miles completed so far)

### Activity 2

Still under construction this season, Silver Creek Reroute is relocating .25 miles of Trail between Reeves Road and Lake County 301, where there has been a temporary road walk for the last three years. This project did experience some setback due to extreme rainfall in late September that saturated the soil and made construction come to a temporary halt. Thankfully, work has now resumed and we are still anticipating finishing the project by the end of the construction season.

Poplar River Reroute was completed by Trails Anonymous during the 2023 construction season. This project moved the trail away from the Poplar River along a stretch that had many failing structures to a higher, more sustainable location.

The result was a .75 mile reroute, 340 feet of boardwalks and puncheon installed. Blazing and signing (including ENTRF) will be installed this fall.

**Dissemination**

ENTRF/LCCMR was acknowledged in our Spring 2023 Ridgeline, our print publication that goes out to 6,000 members twice annually, In addition, ENTRF/LCCMR will be acknowledged in our upcoming Fall 2023 Ridgeline. Signs have been purchased and will be installed on the new section of the Gooseberry Gap along with the Poplar River Reroute and other key locations along the Trail acknowledging ENTRF's support for these projects this fall.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update April 1, 2023

**Date Submitted:** March 27, 2023

**Date Approved:** April 6, 2023

### Overall Update

We made great progress in implementing the recommendations from the 2018 ENRTF-funded trail assessments to address the most damaged and vulnerable sections of Trail along our 300 mile corridor. We partnered with some of the best trail builders in the region to renew these sections of trail. Our volunteer program is stronger than ever, with the development of a Volunteer and Education Coordinator position we had record-breaking 8,000 volunteer hours reported by 360 individuals who help maintain and improve the Trail in 2022. We not only increased our hours but also the training and support given to volunteers. Building our base of volunteers and instilling the core competencies of sustainable trail design and maintenance will not only serve our existing projects, but set the Association and the Trail for success in the future as well.

Late snowmelt and thaw caused spring flooding in 2022 which impacted access to one of our projects sites in 2022. We identified an alternative options and conducted materials transport via snowmobile over the winter so the project can proceed in summer of 2023. High wind and snowfall in December 2022 also impacted the Trail and damages have not yet been quantified.

### Activity 1

2022 was incredibly productive year. Thanks to the dedication of a group of returning and new volunteers, we were able to successfully complete a 34' bridge at Spruce Creek in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. The first part of the project focused on building level, square, and very solid abutments. The second part of the project installed the bridge located midway between Caribou Trail and Cascade River State Park. We replaced 200 feet of aged boardwalk at Sundling with Wickcraft boardwalk. At Jonvick we installed 232 feet of boardwalk with 70 feet of puncheon on one side and 110 feet of Trail improvement on the other side. Both the Sundling and Jonvick Boardwalks were critical structure replacements due to the large beaver ponds present at these sites, which would be impassable without a boardwalk.

Updated on activity deliverables:

15 structures replaced/renewed

.2 miles retrofitted with water drainage devices

3 short reroutes

A few of the upcoming 2023 projects include: White Sky Rock 1-mile tread renewal and staircase replacement, West of Cascade .6-mile reroute and structure replacements, Bagley reroute to remove road.

### Activity 2

Gooseberry Gap Project Phase II, 2.67 miles of new tread and boardwalk was completed in September 2022. This landmark project ended a 7-year road walk and the longest reroute in the history of the Superior Hiking Trail to-date.

Contractors are lined up for the remaining two projects to meet the deliverable of this activity which include the Silver Creek Reroute between Reeves Rd and County Rd 301 where we will relocate the the slumping trail which is currently tight to shore line, to a new inland route.

Additionally, the Poplar River Reroute project will move forward between Britton Peak and Caribou Trail, moving the

trail away from the Poplar River along a stretch that has many failing structures (close to 1,000 lineal feet) to a higher, more sustainable location.

### **Dissemination**

ENTRF/LCCMR was acknowledge in our Fall 2022 Ridgeline, our print publication that goes out to 6,000 members twice annually and also press release and all media relations tied to the opening the Gooseberry Reroute in September 2022. In addition, ENTRF/LCCMR will be acknowledged in our upcoming Spring 2023 Ridgeline. Signs have been purchased and will be installed on the new section of the Gooseberry Gap this summer acknowledging ENRTF's support for the project. A video was produced to share the story of the Gooseberry Reroute and ENTRF is acknowledged at the end of the video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FphHXE9qDI>

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update October 1, 2022

**Date Submitted:** September 30, 2022

**Date Approved:** October 11, 2022

### Overall Update

SHTA entered the 2022 trail construction season prepared and energized. A winter and spring of intensive preparation lent to a very fruitful construction season with many shovel-ready projects. A late spring melt, and subsequent flooding caused for some early delays project timelines but all were able to be completed as planned, minus one that significantly impacted by flood (see Activity 2 Update for details).

A high level of coordination by Trail Operations Director, Tamer Ibrahim contributed greatly to the success the projects. The biggest win for the SHTA was the completion of the much anticipated Gooseberry Reroute, a 4.9 mile section of new trail that was constructed over the last year to officially fill the infamous "Gooseberry Gap." This project is one of the five identified in our earlier assessment process (in part funded by ENTRF/LCCMR) referred to as "The Big Bad Five." We are really proud of our achievement of closing the gap, and more so approaching the project through an environmental lens and working with ecologists to assure we identified a route that limited its impact on the adjacent land and water.

### Activity 1

SHTA staff, volunteers and contractors have made significant progress on on Activity 1. Since our last report, the two large boardwalk, Jonvick and Sundling, have been completed by a contractor, a large bridge replacement at Spruce Creek was completed by SHTA volunteers with over 1,300 hours contributed to the project. Photos of the before and after of the bridge replacement are attached on Tab 7.

Additional shorter reroutes and also puncheon and boardwalk replacement which increased safety and increased protection of the adjacent land and water. The updated project stats are as follows:

19 structures replaces/retrofitted (one of these being a 34' bridge -- a very large piece of infrastructure)

1.5 miles retrofitted with water drainage devices

4 short reroutes completed

### Activity 2

Gooseberry Gap Project Phase II is complete and the 2.67 mile section of trail is open as of September 16, 2022. This was a legacy project for the organization that spanned over 7 years. The alignment of the new route was thoroughly vetted and involved the participation of both Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District and Critical Connections Ecological Services, a private environmental consulting company that identified the final alignment.

The 1-mile Poplar River Reroute was set to commence in October 2022, but the project has been postponed due to access issues. In May the entire North Shore experience severe flooding due to heavy rains and spring melt, the flood took out a snowmobile bridge over Poplar River. The snowmobile trail and bridge were the only viable transport route to the project location for our contractor. The project approach is being revisited, including studying the option of winter freighting to haul in a significant amount of materials (approximately ten structures were included in this project).

Reeves Road to County Road 30 is still in the planning phase. The final alignment has been identified and construction is slated for 2023.

### Dissemination

ENTRF/LCCMR were acknowledged in our Spring 2022 Ridgeline, our print publication that is distributed to over 6,000 households twice annually. Additionally, ENTRF was acknowledged in the Gooseberry Reroute Press Release, during the ribbon-cutting event and also in a video that was produced to share the story of the reroute project that has received over 400 views in less than 24 hours of releasing it to the public. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FphHXE9qDI>





# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update April 1, 2022

**Date Submitted:** April 17, 2022

**Date Approved:** May 10, 2022

### Overall Update

SHTA prepared the slate renewal projects that supported our overarching goal of renewing some of the damaged sections of Trail that were initially identified in the ENRTF 2019 funded trail assessment process. SHTA proceeded quickly in implementing a few shovel-ready projects in 2021 as soon as spending was allowable by LCCMR. Smaller shovel-ready project proceeded in July through October of 2021. SHTA solicited proposals and bids for larger projects in the fall of 2021 and early winter of 2022.

SHTA staff made significant progress in teeing up the slate projects tied to the outcomes the grant. Permits, planning and design are all essential steps in the project management process. Four projects were complete in 2021, six are slated for 2022 and an additional five for 2023.

Amendment Request: SHTA requests to amend the the following budget line items: Project contractors and Tool & Supplies. We request a \$57,000 reduction in Project Contractors and a \$57,000 increase in the Tool & Supplies line item. SHTA has found that it is more cost effective for us to source our own materials versus including them in the scope of work for Project Contractors. This amendment will produce the same grant outcomes.

### Activity 1

Thus far, 224 feet of replaced puncheon near Castle Danger, Split Rock River Loop Renewal project installed 24 ft. a wooden bridge, removed, relocated and reused an existing bridge at a nearby location, and installed 180 ft. of stone steps and armoring. Additionally, SHTA removed a compromised bridge at Sargent Creek and replaced with at-grade stone step crossing and short reroute and installed 96 feet of new puncheon near Sawmill Pond.

Stat breakdown:

- 6 structures replaced/retrofitted
- .2 miles retrofitted with water drainage devices
- 1 reroute complete

2022 construction projects include: Caribou-Lutsen Structure Renewal project will renew approximately 1 mile of trail and includes 700 ft. of improvements with approximately 15 structures. The project was bid and awarded. Sundling & Jonvick Boardwalks were bid and awarded. These projects required winter freighting because of their locations. Existing structures will be replaced by Wickcraft Boardwalks. Jonvic is 232' long, with a 70' puncheon on one side and a short reroute (110'). Sundling is 200' long with about 20 steps up the hill on the north side. Spruce Creek Bridge is a replacement project located midway between Caribou Trail and Cascade River State Park. The bridge pieces have already been freighted in this winter.

### Activity 2

Gooseberry Gap Project Phase II, 2.67 miles of new tread and boardwalk will commence construction in June 2022. This landmark project will end a 7-year road walk and the longest reroute in the history of the Superior Hiking Trail to-date. The contractor is lined up and all permissions are in place to commence as soon as conditions allow. Once complete SHTA is planning a ribbon-cutting event along with a community celebration.

The 1-mile Poplar River Reroute will commence in the the fall of 2022. The project was posted for bid and awarded. Project will begin the fall of 2022. The reroute is one part of the larger renewal of this Trail section, once complete it will make the Lutsen Ski Hill Road to Caribou Trail section one of our premier, most-renewed areas.

Reeves Road to County Road 30 is in the planning phase. Additional field study of the final alignment will take place in the spring of 2022 and construction is slated for 2023.

### **Dissemination**

ENTRF/LCCMR was acknowledge in our Fall 2021 Ridgeline, our print publication that goes out to 6,000 members twice annually. In addition, ENTRF/LCCMR will be acknowledged in our upcoming Spring 2022 Ridgeline. SHTA would also like to include ENTRF/LCCMR in the ribbon cutting and celebration of the opening of the new 4.9-mile section of trail that will end the "Gooseberry Gap." Likely this event will take place in early Fall of 2022 and more information will be provided in advance of the event. A sign on that section of trail will be installed to acknowledge ENRTF's support for the project.