

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2015 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 142-G

Mesabi Trail Development Soudan to Ely Phase 2

Category: G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ 1,000,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2015 - June 2018

Summary:

This project consists of right-of-way acquisition, design and construction of Phase 2 of a segment of the Mesabi Trail from Soudan to Ely.

Name: Robert Manzoline

Sponsoring Organization: St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority

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Eveleth MN 55734

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Location

Region: NE

County Name: St. Louis

City / Township: City of Ely, Morse Township, Eagles Nest Township, Breitung Township

Alternate Text for Visual:

The map shows the route of this section of trail from Soudan to Ely.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge Base
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urgency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Capacity Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL		



PROJECT TITLE: Mesabi Trail Development Soudan to Ely Phase 2

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Mesabi Trail is a 145 mile paved trail that serves as an alternate transportation corridor namely for non-motorized pedestrian, bike, ski, horses, and motorized snowmobile use where designated. The trail extends from the Mississippi River in Grand Rapids to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Ely. Approximately 115 miles of the trail, from Grand Rapids to Embarrass, has been completed since its inception in 1993. The Mesabi Trail is owned and maintained by the ST. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (RRA).

This project involves the construction of new 18 mile section of the Mesabi Trail between the cities of Soudan and Ely. The construction of this section of trail will be completed in **two phases**. **Phase 1** consists of a portion of trail that extends in an easterly direction from Soudan for 11 miles towards Ely along Highway 169 (See attached map section B). The RRA applied for a \$1,000,000 LCCMR grant in the 2014 grant cycle to help defray the cost of constructing this phase. This request was recommended to be presented to the legislature and is currently being considered for funding. **Phase 2 of this project (This Application) consists of continuing the trail from the end of phase 1 for approximately 7 miles to the City of Ely (Again, See Attached Map Section C). Total estimated cost for this Phase 2 segment is \$1,400,000. The RRA is requesting \$1,000,000 from the LCCMR with this request which will be matched by \$400,000 in monies already secured through the Transportation Alternatives Program.**

The monies requested in this application will be used for trail development, design and construction as described in more detail in the project activities section below.

The RRA is very experienced at leveraging funds and constructing trails. Since 1993 the RRA has constructed over 115 miles of trail and has been awarded \$4,500,000 in LCCMR funds. The RRA has matched these LCCMR monies with over \$13,000,000 in other federal, state and local monies.

This project will be constructed to allow for a non-motorized transportation corridor along a heavily traveled and congested portion of HWY 169. The trail will address existing traffic safety concerns, provide for more healthy lifestyles, allow for handicapped accessibility and will be constructed environmentally sensitive manner to avoid potential impacts on the property owners land and the pristine natural resources in this region of the state. The trail will allow for access to the large number of tourist attractions located in this region and will add jobs in what is already a predominantly tourism economy.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Permitting/R.O.W. Acquisition/Wetlands/Legal

Budget: \$100,000

This money will be used for wetland delineation and all necessary permits, securing all easements, licenses or leases needed to construct the trail.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. All wetlands delineated.	July 2016*
2. All permits secured.	August 2016*
3. All right-of-way acquired.	December 2016*



Project Title: Mesabi Trail Development Soudan to Ely Phase 2

Activity 2: Project Engineering Design/Construction Administration

Budget: \$200,000

This money will be used to complete plans, specifications, final design and construction administration.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. <i>Completion of Plans and Specifications.</i>	<i>April 2017*</i>
2. <i>Final Design Review and Completion</i>	<i>May2017*</i>
3. <i>Bidding Documents Complete.</i>	<i>July 2017*</i>
4. <i>Project Construction Work Undertaken As Designed</i>	<i>July 2018*</i>

Activity 3: Project Construction

Budget: \$700,000

This money will be used for trail construction.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. <i>Project Bid Let</i>	<i>July 2017</i>
2. <i>Project Construction Commencement</i>	<i>August 2017</i>
3. <i>Construction Completion</i>	<i>July 2018*</i>

*All work will be completed as funding becomes available.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority Staff
 Funding/Trail Development Contributors
 Consultants as needed to be selected through an RFP process.

B. Timeline Requirements

*Phase 1 will be designed and constructed and completed by 2017 as per the timelines described in the 2014 application. **Phase 2, this application, will be designed and constructed by July 2018 as per the completion dates listed above for activities 1-3.***

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The long-term strategy of the Mesabi Trail project upon completion of the Soudan to Ely segment will be to complete the last 14 mile stretch of trail from Embarrass Township to Tower. We are currently working with a local snowmobile club to share a section of existing snowmobile trail that would complete about 11 of the 14 miles needed. We will be working on the R.O.W. acquisition for this segment as we are constructing the Soudan to Ely segment. Our plan is to be ready for construction as soon as the trail connection to Ely is completed.

2015 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Mesabi Trail Development Soudan to ELY Phase 2

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

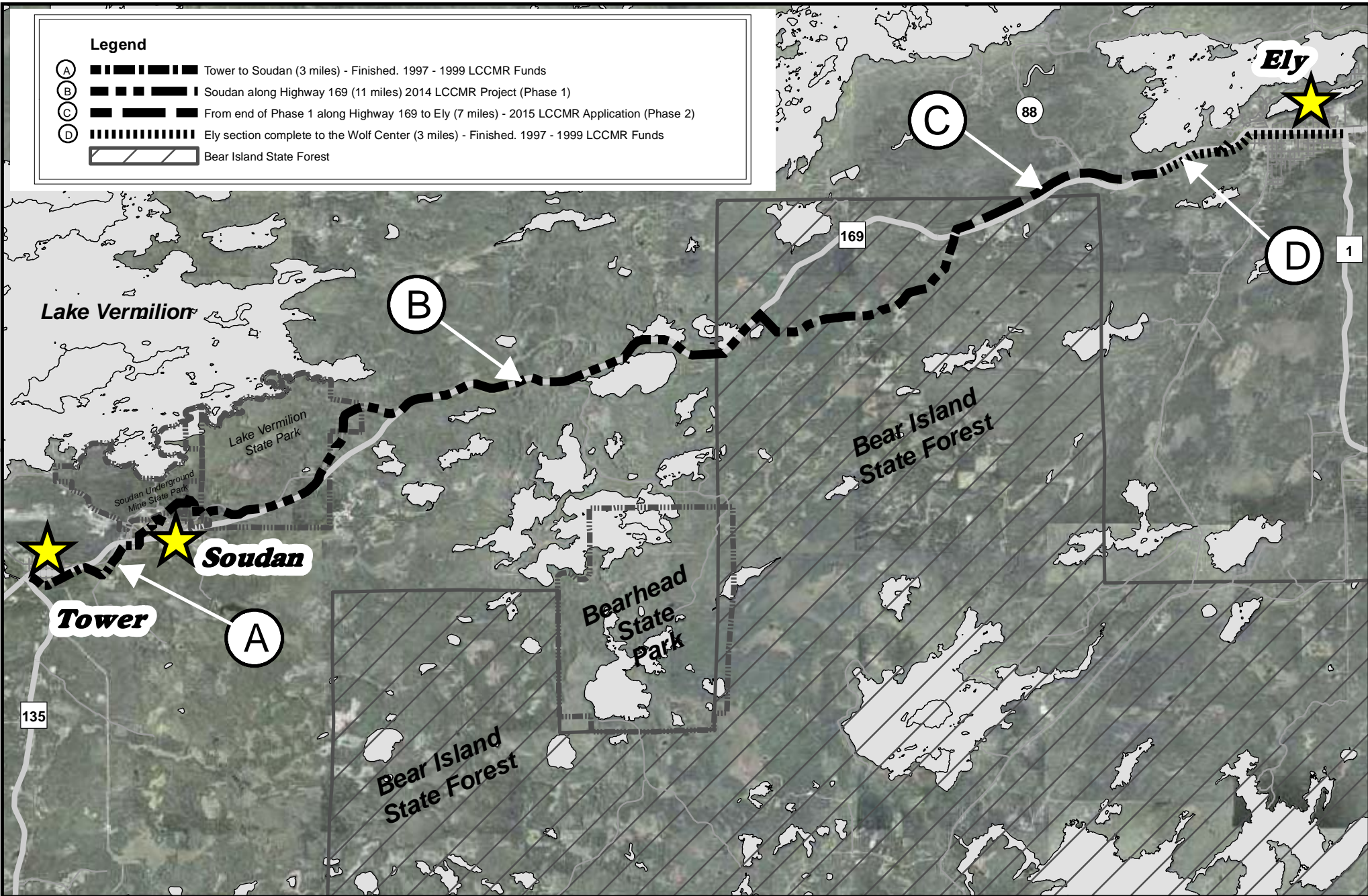
<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Contracts:	
Permitting/Wetlands/R.O.W./Legal - To be hired through a RFP Process - This area of project development includes securing all necessary permits, wetland delineation and easements.	\$100,000
Project Engineering Design/Construction Administration - To be hired through a RFP Process - These monies will be used to design the trail and oversee all construction activities.	\$200,000
Construction - To be selected through a competitive bid process - Construction activities will include right-of-way clearing, grubbing and excavation and bituminous overlay.	\$700,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 1,000,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Federal TAP Grant	\$400,000	Secured
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: <i>Indicate any additional state cash dollars (e.g., bonding, other grants) secured or applied for to be spent on the project during the funding period. For each individual sum, list out the source of the funds, the amount, and indicate whether the funds are secured or pending approval.</i>	N/A	N/A
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: <i>Indicate any additional in-kind service(s) secured or applied for to be spent on the project during the project period. For each type of service, list type of service(s), estimated value, and indicate whether it is secured or pending. In-kind services listed must be specific to the project.</i>	N/A	N/A
Funding History: <i>Indicate funding secured but to be expended prior to July 1, 2015, for activities directly relevant to this specific funding request, including past and current ENRTF funds. State specific source(s) of fund and dollar amount.</i>	N/A	N/A
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation: <i>2005 LCCMR Grant - To be used this construction season on the McKinley to Biwabik trail section.</i>	\$150,000	Legally Obligated
<i>2014 LCCMR Grant Application - To be used for Phase 1 of the Soudan to Ely Trail (From Soudan along Highway 169 towards Ely for 11 miles). This application has been sent to the legislature for approval this session.</i>	\$1,000,000	Pending

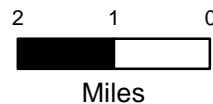
Legend

- (A) Tower to Soudan (3 miles) - Finished. 1997 - 1999 LCCMR Funds
- (B) Soudan along Highway 169 (11 miles) 2014 LCCMR Project (Phase 1)
- (C) From end of Phase 1 along Highway 169 to Ely (7 miles) - 2015 LCCMR Application (Phase 2)
- (D) Ely section complete to the Wolf Center (3 miles) - Finished. 1997 - 1999 LCCMR Funds
- Bear Island State Forest



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04/22/2014



**Mesabi Trail
 Tower Minnesota to
 Ely, Minnesota**

REGRA COMMON

Date:
 03/27/2014

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Project Title: Mesabi Trail Development Soudan to Ely Phase 2

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Project Manager Qualifications

The manager for this project is Bob Manzoline. Bob has been the Executive Director of the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (see organization description) since 1995. Bob's work as Executive Director consists of the oversight of all RRA activities including, budgeting, planning, project development, construction and all operation and maintenance costs.

Bob's active projects are:

North Shore Scenic Railroad: formerly Duluth, Mesabi & Iron Range Railroad (DM&IR) that operated freight between the cities of Duluth and Two Harbors, MN. The RRA acquired this from the DM&IR and is currently operating the line for passenger and freight rail along with the extension of the Duluth Lake Walk.

Mesabi Trail: The Mesabi Trail is a planned 145 mile trail from Grand Rapids to Ely, MN. The trail is primarily constructed on abandoned railway and roadway corridors. Over 115 miles of this trail has been constructed and the planning and development stage of the remaining trail is underway.

Minneapolis to Duluth Intercity Passenger Rail: This is a proposed 155 mile long passenger and freight rail operation with terminus at Target Field in Minneapolis and the Duluth Depot. Intermittent stations at Coon Rapids, Cambridge and Hinckley, MN as well as Superior, WI are being planned.

Organization Description

The St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority was established in 1985 after it was made public that the Duluth Mesaba & Iron Range (DM&IR) Railroad planned to sell the railway line between Two Harbors MN and Duluth MN, known as the "Lake Front Line". Reacting to this situation, St. Louis County Commissioners and Lake County Commissioners met to determine what could be done to preserve this historic, scenic railway line along the shores of Lake Superior.

The St. Louis and Lake Counties Board of County Commissioners signed a joint powers agreement and established themselves as a Regional Railroad Authority (RRA), which is a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota, organized under M.S. 398A. The board is composed of three commissioners from St. Louis County and two commissioners from Lake County. The chairperson of their respective county boards appoints these commissioners annually each January. Regional Railroad Authorities have both levying and bonding power. The statutory mission of Regional Railroad Authorities is "to protect and preserve abandoned railway for future transportation purposes".

The St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority was successful in securing the title to and the refurbishing of the Lake Front Line. Since 1990, the RRA, through private contractors, has leased the rail line for operation as a tourist train known as the North Shore Scenic Railroad which operates during warm weather months between Duluth and Two Harbors.

Shortly thereafter, the RRA began to look at other opportunities to preserve railway for future transportation purposes. At the same time several companies which operated railways on the Iron Range area of northern Minnesota were looking at abandonment of their lines. In an effort to preserve the right-of-way before the line became parceled off, the RRA began to research the possibility of a rail-to-trail alignment. With strong community interest and support, the concept of a trail connecting the communities between Grand Rapids and Ely commenced. Today over 100 miles of this new Mesabi Trail is constructed