

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2020 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 264-G

Grants for Local Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas

Category: G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Sub-Category:

Total Project Budget: \$ 3,000,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: June 30, 2023 (3 yrs)

Summary:

Provide approximately 25 matching grants for local parks, acquisition of locally significant natural areas and trails to connect people safely to desirable community locations and regional or state facilities.

Name: Audrey Mularie

Sponsoring Organization: MN DNR

Job Title: _____

Department: Parks and Trails

Address: 500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul MN 55155

Telephone Number: (651) 259-5549

Email: audrey.mularie@state.mn.us

Web Address: mndnr.gov

Location:

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Brief description of the Outdoor Recreation, Natural and Scenic Area and Local Trail Connections grant programs with a sample project photo for each program.

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL	_____ %



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
2020 Main Proposal Template**

PROJECT TITLE: *Grants for Local Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas*

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Outdoor Recreation (Local Parks), Natural and Scenic Area and Local Trail Connections Grant Programs provide competitive matching grants for local parks, natural areas and trails to local governments for land acquisition and improvements related to parks and trails statewide. Local governments provide at least a 50 percent cash and/or in-kind match for local parks and natural areas and at least a 25 percent cash match for local trails, as required under MN Statutes 85.019. Many projects include renovation of existing recreational amenities to improve safety and accessibility, acquisition of locally significant natural and scenic areas, completion of trail linkages to safely connect where people live to desirable locations within the community and/or connecting local trails to regional or state facilities. Demand for these programs are significant. Historically, we have able to fund between 20-25% of the applications submitted but with the 2018 LCCMR funding we were able to increase the applications funded to 33% funding 33 applications out of the 90 submitted.

These programs are at the front line of the DNR's effort to partner with local communities in providing access to outdoor recreation opportunities. It is especially important given that most funding sources have greatly diminished for these local programs, and they are not eligible for the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, which only funds projects of state or regional significance. Connecting citizens with the outdoors through parks and trail connections to the State Outdoor Recreation System, Regional Parks and Trail Systems and significant local resources enhances Minnesota's stewardship ethic and furthers the goals of the Department's Strategic Conservation Agenda.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1 Title: *Grants for the Local Parks, Natural and Scenic Areas and Trail Connections.*

Description: This request will provide approximately 25 matching grants to cities and counties for acquisition, development and/or redevelopment of natural resource based local park projects, natural and scenic areas and trail connections. If needed, two grant rounds will be held. The local match for projects funded at the requested level would exceed \$2 million.

Outdoor Recreation (Local Parks): Local governments are struggling to acquire, develop and redevelop their local and community parks. The goal of this funding is to increase and enhance close-to-home natural resource based recreation facilities, not including athletic facilities such as sport fields, courts, and playgrounds, to provide safe and accessible recreation amenities. Parks acquired and developed under this program are retained for public use in perpetuity.

Natural and Scenic Areas: Opportunities for local governments to acquire and protect natural and scenic areas statewide are diminishing due to development, especially in high growth areas, shore lands, bluff tops and areas where land use changes may limit future opportunities. The goal of this program is to ensure protection of natural and scenic resources by helping and encouraging local governments to acquire and protect such land for appropriate public use, protection of natural communities, species protection, appreciation of scenic vistas, and scientific and environmental education purposes. Land acquired and natural resources are retained for public use in perpetuity. These areas complement state protected areas and provide close-to-home natural resource-based benefits.



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
2020 Main Proposal Template**

Local Trail Connections: Local Trail Connections grants fund projects to acquire, develop and re-develop local trail connections across Minnesota. The projects are primarily for shorter distance connections between residential areas, schools, businesses, parks, and the regional park and trail system and/or the State Outdoor Recreation System. These projects help to expand the connections between individuals and the outdoors by providing funding for local outdoor recreation infrastructure that also provides for alternative transportation options. Trails developed under this program are retained for public use for a minimum of 20 years. Land acquisition is permanent.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 2,925,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Provide approximately 11 matching grants for Local Parks.	Fall 2020/2021
2. Provide approximately 3 matching grants for Natural and Scenic Areas.	Fall 2020/2021
3. Provide approximately 11 matching grants for Trail Connections.	Fall 2020/2021

Activity 2 Title: Grant Program Administration

Description: The requested funding will be used to support personnel costs for administering the grant programs and DNR direct and necessary costs associated with this funding. Grant staff are involved in grant solicitation, evaluation and ranking, grant agreement management, project billings, project inspections, compliance monitoring and project close out.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 75,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Administer RFP, application process and grant contracts	June 30, 2023

III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS: Partners are local governments, primarily counties and cities. They will acquire, own, develop, and manage the parks or trails. The local governments will provide at least \$2 million match with approximately \$1.9 million in cash match and approximately \$100,000 in in-kind services. In addition, they cover the costs of appraisals, land transaction costs, and required archeological/historical surveys and assume all ongoing operations and maintenance costs.

IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING: The local government recipients are responsible for the ongoing operations and maintenance costs. All property acquired must be kept for public outdoor recreation purposes permanently.

V. SEE ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL COMPONENTS:

- A. Proposal Budget Spreadsheet**
- B. Visual Component or Map**
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet**
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements**
- E. Research Addendum (Not required at proposal submission stage. Required later in process, if proposal is recommended. Staff will provide further information at that time)**
- F. Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description**

Attachment A: Project Budget Spreadsheet
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
 M.L. 2020 Budget Spreadsheet



Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Audrey Mularie

Project Title: Grants for Local Parks, Trails and Natural Areas

Organization: MNDNR

Project Budget: 3,000,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years, June 30, 2023

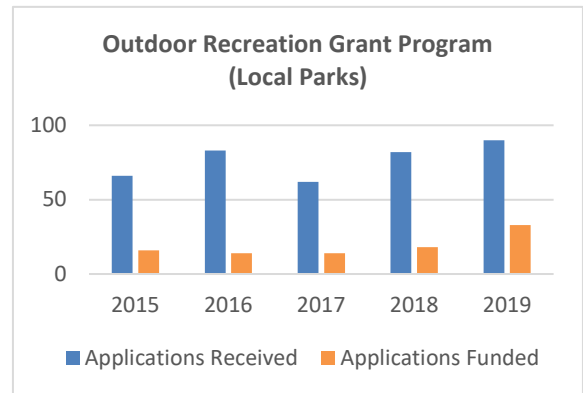
Today's Date:

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET		Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	
BUDGET ITEM					
Personnel (Wages and Benefits): .25 FTE Grant Specialist position each year for the three year project period.		\$ 67,574	\$ -	\$ 67,574	
Capital Construction Costs: Development/ Redevelopment of Parks and Trails. Estimated amount, final amount TBD based on grant applications.		\$ 1,950,000	\$ -	\$ 1,950,000	
Fee Title Acquisition or Permanent Easement Acquisition: Acres and grantees to be determined through the application process each grant cycle. Estimated amount, final amount TBD based on grant applications.		\$ 975,000	\$ -	\$ 975,000	
Additional Budget Items: To support the costs related to the program administration *Direct and Necessary expenses: HR Support (~\$1149), Safety Support (~\$208), Financial Support (~\$808), Communication Support (~\$1,388), IT Support (~\$2,734), and Planning Support (~\$1,138) necessary to accomplish funded programs/projects.		\$ 7,426	\$ -	\$ 7,426	
COLUMN TOTAL		\$ 3,000,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000,000	
*Direct and Necessary expenses include Department Support Services (Human Resources, IT Support, Safety, Financial Support, Communications Support, and Planning Support). Department Support Services are described in the agency Service Level Agreement and billed internally to divisions based on rate that have been developed for each area of service. These services are directly related to and necessary for the appropriation. Department leadership services (Commissioner's Office and Regional Directors) are not assessed. Those elements of individual projects that put little or no demand on support services such as large single-source contracts, large land acquisitions, and funds that are passed through to other entities are not assessed Direct and Necessary costs for those activities.					
SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT		Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State: Local Match		Pending	\$ 1,900,000	\$ -	\$ 1,900,000
State:			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
In kind: Local Match		Pending	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000
Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS		Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 02, Subd. 09a, Grants for Local Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas		\$1,341,575	\$2,000,000	\$9,973	\$1,990,027
2019 Grants for Local Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas - Awarded pending Legislative Approval		\$0	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$3,000,000
			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Grants for Local Parks, Trails and Natural Areas

Outdoor Recreation Grant Program (Local Parks):

Local governments are struggling to acquire, develop and redevelop their local and community parks. The goal of this program is increase and enhance close to home recreation facilities to provide safe accessible recreation opportunities. Demand for grants has been increasing each year.



Local Trail Connections Grant Program:

Local connections grants help local governments provide trail linkages to safely connect people from where they live to desirable locations within the community, to regional or state facilities and provide alternative transportation options.

Natural and Scenic Area Grant Program:

Opportunities for local governments to acquire and protect natural and scenic areas statewide are diminishing due to development, especially in high growth areas, shore lands, bluff tops and areas where land use changes may limit future opportunities. These areas complement state protected areas and provide close to home natural resource-based benefits.



Photo:
Mississippi River Overlook, City of Baxter

Attachment C: Template

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2020 Acquisition/Restoration Parcel List Spreadsheet

Project Title: Grants for Local Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas

Legal Citation: Staff will update the legal citation upon work plan approval by the LCCMR following the MN Legislative Session.

Project Manager: Audrey Mularie

Organization: MNDNR

College/Department/Division: Parks and Trails

M.L. 2020 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 3,000,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 Years, June 30, 2013

Today's Date: Insert the current date.



Instructions: Please include on the following list all targeted parcels that you are currently considering for acquisition (fee title or easement) or restoration (all phases) using the appropriation. The list may include more parcels than you will ultimately acquire or conduct restoration work on with the funds. To be eligible as part of your project, however, a parcel must be included on the list. Changes may be requested through the amendment process. Please update the status column and submit with your periodic workplan updates. Include any significant issues related to any particular parcel in your activity and project status sections of your Main Workplan Document.

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates (preferably from the center of the parcel) Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	County	Site Significance (please include what ecosystem (e.g., prairie, forest, wetland, savanna) is represented as well as the ecological significance, site importance, conservation value, and public benefits)	Activity Description (e.g. fee title acquisition, conservation easement acquisition, site preparation, restoration)	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner (private individual or trust, non-profit organization, for-profit entity)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status of work (e.g. engaged in landowner negotiations, no longer in consideration, restoration activities underway)
		Latitude	Longitude										
1	*TBD - See Notes												
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													
7													
8													
9													
10													

NOTES: Acquisition and development sites will be determined during the application and selection process. Information will be provided for all grants awarded.

Attachment D. Additional Work Plan Information for Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration

Acquisition/Restoration Information:

Fee Title and/or Permanent Easement Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

Acquisitions under the Natural and Scenic Area Grant Program are reviewed and ranked by program staff using selection criteria developed with guidance by a group of internal and external people when the program was created. The project review assesses the natural resource qualities of the site such as endangered, threatened, rare or special concern species or communities, high quality native terrestrial or aquatic ecosystems, ecological viability, outstanding geological or physiographic features, protection of water quality and potential vulnerability to exotic species. Scenic qualities such as, blufflands or other elevated terrain that afford an opportunity for viewing scenic vistas, viewing unique natural features, viewing unique historical or cultural features, and shoreland properties that offer scenic vistas across lakes or streams will be assessed. Other review components include adjacent lands, educational and scientific values, open space and historical/cultural values and local government commitment. Any acquisitions under the Outdoor Recreation Grant and/or Local Trail Connections Grant Program are selected based on program criteria. Projects are recommended based on the highest ranking and reviewed and approved by the Commissioner.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.

Land Acquisition projects selected for funding under the Outdoor Recreation and Natural and Scenic Area Grant Program are based on priorities in the [State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#).

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

These acquisitions provide public natural and scenic area, open space and park areas. Natural resource restoration is not a required component of the programs. In some instances restoration may occur but otherwise most are primarily maintaining the resources on the site which may be natural or scenic qualities. If applicable, a restoration plan will be required and maintained in the project file available upon request.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

N/A

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

All grants are approved by the Commissioner prior to contract.

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

Any restoration activities completed would be on land permanently protected for public parks and/or public natural and scenic areas.

2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.

A restoration and management plan will be required for restoration activities and kept in the project file. Grantees must commit to the long term operation and maintenance of all property acquired for the intended purpose under the contract into perpetuity.

3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.

All restorations will be required to follow the guidelines. This will be outlined in our program manuals and in our contract for restoration projects.

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

Long term management and maintenance is committed by the local unit of government under the contract.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

Program manuals and the contract will have language to indicate the grantee should consider contracting with the Conservation Corps of Minnesota for restoration activities.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

This will be incorporated as a requirement under the restoration and management plans for any proposed restorations and kept with the project file.

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Project Manager: Audrey Mularie
Affiliation: Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Trails
Telephone Number: 651-259-5549
Title: Grant Coordinator

Experience:

Audrey Mularie has worked for the State of Minnesota for over 30 years. She administers federal and state grant programs to local units of governments for park, natural areas and trail acquisition and improvements. She has extensive experience with the grants management policies, procedures and additional requirements associated with a variety of funding sources including federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON), Future Resources Fund, Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund, Park and Trail Legacy Fund, Lottery in Lieu funding, Remediation Fund, bonding and general fund dollars.

Organization Description:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Division's vision is to create unforgettable park, trail, and water recreation experiences that inspire the public to pass along the love for the outdoor to the next generation. More information on the Minnesota DNR can be found at MNDNR.gov

