



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

## 2024 Request for Proposal

### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2024-081

**Proposal Title:** Acquisition of State Parks In-Holdings

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Brett Feldman

**Organization:** Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota

**Office Telephone:** (651) 370-7900

**Email:** bfeldman@parksandtrails.org

### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Complete efficient, time-sensitive acquisition of high priority State Park inholdings, conduct needed site cleanup, and convey the properties to the state to enhance Minnesota's environment and public recreation opportunities.

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

**Proposed Project Completion:** September 30, 2026

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation (G)

### Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Statewide

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Statewide

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project

## Narrative

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

Minnesota's state parks and trails provide multiple benefits to the people and environment of Minnesota, including high quality natural resources, habitat value, and outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities. However, approximately 16% of the land within statutory state park boundaries remain in private ownership, diminishing the value of these state resources.

When private landowners of park inholdings are willing and ready to sell, it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Without swift action, the property is at risk of being subdivided, developed or taken off the market for decades.

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota (P&TC) has been a proven partner to MN DNR due to our ability to move quickly to purchase lands for state parks, leverage private funds for activities such as debris cleanup and deconstruction (which cannot be conducted with LCCMR funds), and transfer the land to the state once it is prepared for private ownership.

As MN DNR experiences staff shortages, limitations on its funding, and bottlenecks in legal review due to staff shortages, state park inholdings are increasingly at risk. There is an urgent, critical need for P&TC to step up and protect crucial state park inholdings and avoid private development that would have broad negative long-term statewide impact.

**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.**

P&TC and MN DNR have a list of critical park inholdings, currently in private ownership, based on relevant planning documents, technical knowledge, and best practices to achieve multiple benefits and prevent negative consequences for Minnesota's natural and recreational resources. P&TC proposes to purchase these priority state park inholding lands when they become available from willing sellers, clean up the properties, and convey them to MN DNR when the land is prepared for public use.

MN DNR has long relied on P&TC to help save threatened, high-priority land. This proposal seeks to streamline and expand our coordinated efforts to increase the pace and efficiency of acquisition of priority state park in-holdings so they are not sold off and lost forever due to lack of available resources and staffing.

LCCMR funds will allow P&TC to swiftly contact landowners once priority lands are on the market and efficiently complete negotiations including legal review. We will partner with Better Futures Minnesota and leverage non-state philanthropic resources to complete needed cleanup.

By supporting more nimble, efficient acquisition and cleanup of Minnesota state park inholdings, this proposal will solve an urgent statewide issue achieving outcomes with multiple recreation and natural resource benefits.

**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?**

The successful acquisition and cleanup of State Park inholdings will result in permanent protection of high-impact lands for the public, directly reflecting LCCMR's mission to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources for the benefit of current citizens and future generations.

P&TC has the capacity and readiness to achieve these tangible outcomes. As a nonprofit we can act nimbly, avoid bottlenecks, and oversee all facets of cleanup, leveraging innovative partnerships and non-state resources to cover activities that cannot be funded by LCCMR but are needed to prepare land for public use.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Timely Acquisition of State Park Inholdings

**Activity Budget:** \$1,970,000

**Activity Description:**

P&TC’s land acquisition work under this activity includes: 1) Identification and assessment: When a priority parcel becomes available, conduct additional needed evaluation or prioritization. 2) Partnership: Partner with MN DNR to confirm, engage local park “Friends” groups. 3) Landowner negotiations and purchase: Complete needed inspections, legal work, and negotiations needed for purchase. 4) Ownership transfer: Convey lands to the MN DNR for ongoing management for the public. (Site cleanup is described in Activity 2).

The priority parcels to be considered for acquisition under this project are the same as MN DNR’s priority list. Should one of these acquisitions be unsuccessful, P&TC will request an amendment to the Project Work plan that will identify a replacement property selected from a statewide priority list. The list being submitted with this proposal is significantly larger than the LCCMR grant being sought so some of the parcels included are not being purchased. Pending the extent to which there are willing sellers, our rough estimate is that seven parcels totaling approximately 560 acres will be purchased with the requested LCCMR funds. Other projects on the list will be purchased using private funds.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Priority park inholdings identified, Acquisition Process Initiated, Initial Property Assessments completed, Property Owner Interest Secured	September 30, 2024
Other or secondary inholdings identified	December 31, 2024
Complete all acquisition requirements, including appraisals, surveys and environmental	March 31, 2025
Acquisition of priority State Park and State Recreation Area property inholdings complete	December 31, 2025
All lands acquired under this grant conveyed to MN DNR	September 30, 2026

### Activity 2: Site Cleanup/Deconstruction to Prepare Land for Public Use

**Activity Budget:** \$30,000

**Activity Description:**

After parcels are acquired and before they are conveyed to the MN DNR, P&TC will conduct any site cleanup work needed to prepare the land for public use as part of the surrounding State Park. This work will involve engaging in-kind volunteer support and equipment for debris removal through our network of park “Friends” groups. For deconstruction projects that require professional expertise and equipment we will use an RFP process to contract for professional services and/or leverage our innovative partnership with Better Futures Minnesota. (LCCMR funds will not be used for activities disallowed under the LLCMR statute, such as deconstruction of habitable structures.)

All site cleanup activities will focus on material recovery, prioritizing reuse of materials so they are diverted from the waste stream, achieving additional environmental benefits.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Partner with Friends group networks to confirm debris removal that can be conducted by volunteers.	December 31, 2025
Issue RFP for contractors/Better Futures to complete deconstruction/materials recovery and waste stream diversion.	December 31, 2025



## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Shelby Kok	Minnesota DNR	Shelby Kok is the DNR Parks and Trails Division Acquisition Consultant who manages all state park and trail acquisitions. DNR is not receiving funding from this proposal but is providing in-kind support. See attached letter of support from DNR.	No
Dave Lais	Sibley State Park Improvement Association	The Sibley State Park Improvement Association provides volunteer help with in-holding acquisition and site clean up.	No
Jason Allen	Better Futures Minnesota	Better Futures Minnesota (BFM) is a nonprofit that helps reintegrate high-risk adults, primarily African American men, into society by offering them positions in deconstruction services. Together with BFM we can reduce the waste impact of structure removal on lands acquired for state parks by salvaging and repurposing materials.	Yes

## 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?**

P&TC will use LCCMR funds to purchase priority parcels including property surveys, appraisals, title work, legal review, transaction negotiations, and site cleanup for activities allowed under LCCMR statute. We will leverage partnerships and in-kind volunteer support and use non-state funds for cleanup activities that cannot be funded by LCCMR. Because each of the properties identified for potential acquisition are located within existing state park or state recreation area boundaries, all facilities are components of the Outdoor Recreation System which require individual master plans to guide land acquisition, development and improvement, public use and resource management.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Brett Feldman

**Job Title:** President

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

Brett Feldman has been an employee of P&TC since 2005. Initially hired as the organization's Communications Director in 2005, he was promoted to president in 2009. Brett oversees all P&TC programs including Land Acquisition. Under Brett's leadership P&TC developed, and regularly updates, a Land Acquisition Plan that lays out the philosophy, policies and general procedures for the organization's land acquisition activities. Brett actively communicates and coordinates with MN DNR to ensure that State Park and Trail protection priorities align, and he also leads partnerships with regional and local parks agencies, local community "Friends" groups, and other key partners. Brett is committed to moving swiftly to protect priority inholdings within the Minnesota Park and Trail system for the benefit of Minnesotans and the state's natural, cultural, ecological, habitat, and recreation values.

**Organization:** Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota

**Organization Description:**

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota (P&TC) is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to acquire, protect and enhance critical land for the public's use and benefit. Founded in 1954, P&TC works toward a vision for an interconnected system of parks, trails, waterways, natural areas and open spaces that provide all Minnesotans with outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities and that preserve the natural diversity of our state. P&TC's efforts have added nearly 10,000

acres to Minnesota's parks and trails. As a nonprofit that uses multiple funding streams including private philanthropic funds, P&TC can move more quickly than its government partners to secure lands from willing sellers and can efficiently clean up and prepare property for public use and convey it to the appropriate public agency.

We actively partner with the MN DNR, the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission and regional and local parks agencies. Committed to reflecting and advancing park and trail projects where they are needed most, P&TC leads active research on park and trail conditions and use. To strengthen and support community engagement, P&TC serves as an umbrella organization for 53 volunteer park and trail "Friends" groups across Minnesota.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Land Acquisition Manager		Manages all acquisition projects, assists legal counsel and provides technical assistance.			15%	1		\$75,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
Legal counsel	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Creates and reviews all legal documents and provides legal counsel on transaction-related activities				-		\$42,000
Technical contractor	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Conducts appraisals, surveys, title, ESA for required due diligence				-		\$50,000
Deconstruction Materials Reuse Contractor	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Deconstruction and removal of buildings and materials reuse. We intend to partner with Better Futures Minnesota on this work. As noted Better Futures Minnesota may deconstruct and sell salvaged materials from acquisition sites and reinvest in Better Futures Minnesota operations. Cost for deconstruction/materials reuse is an estimate.				0		\$30,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$122,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								

	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 560 Parcels: 7						\$1,803,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,803,000</b>
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</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>\$2,000,000</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	Private contributions	Support for project management including oversight of all land acquisition activities and engagement of partners and volunteer networks.	Secured	\$24,000
Cash	Private contributions	Estimated land acquisition and site cleanup activities not fundable through LCCMR.	Secured	\$290,000
Cash	Private contributions	Travel within Minnesota to visit project sites (estimated 3,000 miles at .655 per mile.	Secured	\$1,965
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$315,965</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$315,965</b>

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Banning	Pine	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	40	-	\$221,600	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Banning	Pine	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	93	-	\$257,700	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Beaver Creek Valley	Houston	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	80	-	\$431,400	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Frontenac	Goodhue	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	93	-	\$449,300	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Itasca	Clearwater	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	224	-	\$495,900	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Maplewood	Otter Tail	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	239	-	\$531,700	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Maplewood	Otter Tail	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	39	-	\$123,200	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Maplewood	Otter Tail	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	126	-	\$451,500	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Savanna Portage	Aitkin	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	120	-	\$360,700	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun

Savanna Portage	Aitkin	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	72	-	\$228,700	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Savanna Portage	Aitkin	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	74	-	\$239,500	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Sibley	Kandiyohi	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	19	-	\$403,600	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Sibley	Kandiyohi	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	22	-	\$51,200	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Sibley	Kandiyohi	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	10	-	\$22,200	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
St. Croix	Pine	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	163	-	\$235,200	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
St. Croix	Pine	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	64	-	\$124,800	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
Tettegouche	Lake	State Park Inholding	Fee Title	21	-	\$740,000	Private	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Has Not Begun
<b>Totals</b>				<b>1,499</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$5,368,200</b>			

## Fee Acquisition

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

Proposed parcels were identified based on the following criteria: located within legislatively defined boundaries and alignments for State Parks, State Recreation Areas, and State Trails; threat of opportunity lost due to factors such as development pressure or threat of rapidly escalating land values; strategic location relative to meeting local needs; preservation of natural diversity and natural resource conservation value such as ecologically rare parcels, unique landscapes, wildlife habitats, endangered species, water quality significance, historic/cultural significance, and connectivity of natural lands and habitat; fills a land gap that will improve continuity and/or provide space for high value end uses. These criteria are outlined in P&TC's Land Acquisition Plan document and the parcel list also uses investment criteria established in the DNR Parks and Trails System Plan and is reflective of other plans as noted below.

**2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.**

Parcels are based on:

P&TC's 2022 Land Acquisition Plan - <https://www.parksandtrails.org/land-protection/plan/>

Parks and Trails Legacy Plan - [https://www.legacy.mn.gov/sites/default/files/resources/parks\\_trails\\_legacy\\_plan\\_0.pdf](https://www.legacy.mn.gov/sites/default/files/resources/parks_trails_legacy_plan_0.pdf)

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan - <https://www.lrl.mn.gov/docs/2021/mandated/210598.pdf>

MN DNR State Parks/Trails System Plan -

[https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/input/mgmtplans/pat/system\\_plan/system\\_plan.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/input/mgmtplans/pat/system_plan/system_plan.pdf)

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) -

[https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/scorp\\_final\\_2024.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/scorp_final_2024.pdf)

Metropolitan Parks and Trails 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan -

[https://metro council.org/Parks/Publications-And-Resources/POLICY-PLANS/2040-REGIONAL-PARKS-POLICY-PLAN-\(2020-version\)/2040-Regional-Parks-Policy-Plan.aspx](https://metro council.org/Parks/Publications-And-Resources/POLICY-PLANS/2040-REGIONAL-PARKS-POLICY-PLAN-(2020-version)/2040-Regional-Parks-Policy-Plan.aspx)

**3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan 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.**

Immediate cleanup of acquired parcels by P&TC will be conducted based on future use and state requirements.

Ultimately, all resource management plans for individual parks and trails facilities are maintained by the MN DNR Division's Resource Management Program. Long term maintenance and management of the selected properties will be assumed by the existing Parks and Trails Division Facility Managers and Staff.

**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.**

Each property purchased will be subject to County Board Approval per DNR administrative direction.

**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.**

Confirmed.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

File: [8112a330-f2e.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

Map of State park in-holdings to be acquired with detail of each state park...

#### *Financial Capacity*

File: [cebe6ef6-001.pdf](#)

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Parks & Trails Council of Mn Board Resolution	<a href="#">e82a9f1c-fd8.pdf</a>

### Optional Attachments

#### *Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
Minnesota DNR Letter of Support for State Park in-holding acquisition	<a href="#">8db99e4d-ab9.pdf</a>
IRS Letter of 501 c 3 status	<a href="#">d7076f03-d25.pdf</a>

## Administrative Use

**Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?**

Yes: Fee Acquisition,

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?**

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 design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more?**

No

**Is the purpose of the acquisition for construction of a building(s), trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more, either now or in the future?**

No

**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?**

No

