



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2024-136

**Proposal Title:** Minnesota State Trails Development

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Kent Skaar

**Organization:** MN DNR - State Parks and Trails Division

**Office Telephone:** (651) 259-5636

**Email:** kent.skaar@state.mn.us

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** This project proposes to expand recreational opportunities on Minnesota State Trails through the rehabilitation and enhancement of existing state trails and replacement or repair of existing state trail bridges.

**Funds Requested:** \$5,125,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2027

**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 and In the Future

## Narrative

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

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) is legislatively authorized under MS 85.015 to establish, develop, maintain and operate those State Trails or State Trail systems specifically identified. As broadly defined by MS. 85.015 the authorized State Trail System is to consist of more than 2600 miles of dedicated State Trail when complete. Presently the MN DNR administers more than 1300 miles of improved recreational state trail, including paved, gravel and natural surface, and 300 state trail bridges on a total of 24 separate authorized State Trails or State Trail systems. Many of the improved state trails are now exceeding 25 years in service and approximately 100 of the trail bridges are exceeding 50 years resulting in deteriorating conditions. This Project proposes the improvement and expansion the State Trail system through the safety improvements, upgrading and rehabilitation along about 2 miles of existing trail, the development of 0.2 miles on new State Trail, the design of a 2.3 miles new State Trail and the replacement of 10 trail bridges. Each project in this proposal has been identified by the MNDNR Parks and Trails Division as representing priorities to enhance recreational use and improve user safety.

### **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.**

This proposal will complete the formal engineering and design necessary to develop, improve or replace 2.2 miles of existing state trail and up to ten state trail bridges. While the project is to include the required engineering and design for a total of 16 separate projects, only 15 are proposed for construction. The projects proposed for construction include the rehabilitation or development of 1.4 miles of State Trail, the upgrading of a existing trailhead, the replacement of a large culvert, the replacement of 0.8 miles of safety fencing and the replacement of 10 trail Bridges with culverts. The remaining project, proposes to complete the engineering and permitting for new 2.3 mile segment of the Gateway State Trail that will be constructed as scheduling and funding permit. The trail improvement projects will occur on the Browns Creek, Gitchi Gami, Minnesota Valley, Root River and Cuyuna Lakes State Trails. The bridges to be replaced are located on the Pengilly-Alborn Railroad Trail and the Arrowhead, Harmony Preston, CJ Ramstad - Northshore, Shooting Star, Great River Ridge, Minnesota Valley and Root River State Trails. The bridges to be replaced include 5 small DNR constructed bridges and 5 former railroad bridges.

### **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 individual State Trail projects, once complete, will permit the safe, continued or expanded use of MN DNR administered state trails while also protecting the natural communities and resource areas within the trail corridors, allowing users to enjoy the State Trail and surrounding resources. Each State Trail project is designed to avoid or minimize potential impacts on known natural and cultural resources. State Trail projects are subject to formal resource assessments to identify resources and resource protection options. Each State Trail bridge replacement will be designed to assist wildlife passage, provide public water improvements and anticipate increasing future water conditions.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: State Trail Bridge Replacement

**Activity Budget:** \$1,375,000

**Activity Description:**

This project proposes the replacement of up to ten existing state trail bridges, all are under 70 feet in length and have been recommended for replacement with culverts. The proposed replacements are located on 7 separate State Trails including the Arrowhead, Great River Ride, CJ Ramstad-Northshore, Harmony-Preston Valley, Shooting Star and Minnesota Valley State Trails and the Pengilly-Alborn Railroad Trail. Each of the individual structures have been subject to recent formal inspection and have Overall Conditional Ratings that range from of Poor to Satisfactory. All have been recommended for replacement within 5 years. A total of five (5) of the identified bridges were originally constructed as Railroad structures in the first decades of the 20th century. The remaining five bridges were constructed and installed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) between 1984 and 2005. The proposed replacement culverts will range in size from small 18 inch round pipe to large concrete box and engineered arch structures in excess of 12 feet. The removal and replacement of these existing bridge structures with culverts will essentially eliminate all DNR maintenance responsibilities for several decades, reduce the number of bridges on the DNR inventory, and provide for unimpeded stream flows.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Project Engineering Complete / (Represents milestone completion for all Bridges)	June 30, 2025
Construction Contract Awarded (Represents milestone completion - all Bridges)	December 31, 2025
Project Construction Complete / (Represents milestone completion - all Bridges)	June 30, 2027
Project Closeout and Final Reporting / (Represents milestone completion All Bridges)	June 30, 2027

### Activity 2: Root River State Trail – Root River Bank Stabilization / Houston Segment

**Activity Budget:** \$750,000

**Activity Description:**

This project proposes the engineering, design, permitting and construction necessary to stabilize approximately 1600 linear feet of the south bank of the Root River, located west of the Community of Houston. The Root River State Trail in this area is located within a corridor that is situated immediately adjacent to the Root River. The current bank failures have resulted in damage to the bituminous trail surface in several areas and will eventually result in the closure of the State Trail and the severance of the community of Houston from the remainder of the Root River Trail System. Preliminary Engineering for the proposed rehabilitation was completed in 2021.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completion of required project engineering – Root River State Trail / River Bank Stabilization	June 30, 2025
Construction Contract Awarded – Root River State Trail / River Bank Stabilization	December 31, 2025
Project Construction Complete – Root River State Trail / River Bank Stabilization	December 31, 2026
Project Closeout and Final Reporting – Root River State Trail / River Bank Stabilization	June 30, 2027

### Activity 3: Browns Creek State Trail – Large Culvert Rehabilitation

**Activity Budget:** \$150,000

**Activity Description:**

This project proposes the rehabilitation and repair of an existing 66 foot long (7' x 7') precast concrete arch culvert originally installed by the railroad. The existing culvert was constructed as a railroad structure prior to State acquisition. a formal inspection of the culvert has determined that the culverts precast sections have begun to separate. The resulting separations have allowed for the soil / fill above over the culvert that supports the Browns Creek State Trail has begun to collapse into the culvert. In 2020 a large sinkhole developed along the margins of the bituminous trail surface. While MNDNR staff have been able to temporarily stabilize the embankment failure and the trail remains open to use, the soil/fill loss is anticipated to accelerate and has the potential to catastrophically fail during a extreme rainfall or winter runoff event. Given there is no alternative corridor that could provide for a trail reroute and the avoidance of this culvert, a failure of this culvert would require the state trail be closed to all uses. The completion of this project will include utilize a \$150,000 Federal Recreational Trail Grant, awarded to the MNDNR, Parks and Trails Division in 2022.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completion of Project Engineering – Browns Creek State Trail / Large Culvert Rehabilitation	June 30, 2025
Project Construction Contract Awarded – Browns Creek State Trail / Large Culvert Rehabilitation	December 31, 2025
Project Closeout and Final Reporting / Browns Creek State Trail Large Culvert Rehabilitation	June 30, 2026
Project Construction Complete - Browns Creek State Trail Large Culvert Rehabilitation	December 31, 2026

**Activity 4: Gitchi Gami State Trail – Safety Fence Replacement**

**Activity Budget:** \$350,000

**Activity Description:**

This activity proposes the replacement and upgrading of approximately 4100 linear feet (0.78 Miles) of existing safety fencing located along the Gitchi Gami State Trail that provides protection for the trail user from steep slopes located along the trail corridor. The existing fence to be subject to replacement is confined to 8 discrete trail segments ranging from 100 to 1600 feet in length and originally installed between 2001 and 2010. Existing damage includes vehicle collisions, snow plow-snow impacts, fence foundation movement and fence material failure. The defined trail segments include those located in the City of Grand Marais, Split Rock State Park and the community of Beaver Bay. The replacement of these existing safety fence segments will greatly enhance the safety of the State Trail user, substantially limit DNR staff maintenance responsibilities and improve the aesthetic quality of this popular state trail corridor. No modification to the existing State Trail Corridor is anticipated.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completion of Project Engineering – Gitchi Gami State Trail Safety Fence Replacement	December 31, 2024
Construction Contract Awarded – Gitchi Gami State Trail Safety Fence Replacement	June 30, 2025
Project Construction Complete - Gitchi Gami State Trail Safety Fence Replacement	December 31, 2025
Project Closeout and Final Reporting -Gitchi Gami State Trail Safety Fence Replacement	June 30, 2026

**Activity 5: Cuyuna Lakes State Trail – Development City of Crosby Deer Trail Road Connection**

**Activity Budget:** \$250,000

**Activity Description:**

This Activity proposes to complete the engineering, design and construction of 900 foot long segment of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail located within the Community of Crosby, Crow Wing County. This proposed trail segment will extend

the existing State Trail to the intersection of 8th Street/Deer Trail Rd and Crow Wing Co Hwy 31. Presently the State Trail terminates approximately 900 feet east of this intersection, requiring trail users to utilize the shoulder of 8th St./Deer Trail Road and traverse of the uncontrolled Co Hwy intersection. While this condition has been satisfactorily given the historically low traffic volumes. Traffic volumes in this area have increased dramatically recently due to both improvements to TH210 east of the Deer Trail Rd. trail segment and the development of a new Grocery Store at the 8th St./Deer Trail Rd/Co Hwy 31 intersection. As proposed, this new recreational trail segment will be developed adjacent to 8th St./Deer Trail Rd., separated from the roadway but confined entirely within the Twp/City/County owned road rights-of-way. The construction of this proposed trail segment will significantly improve user safety and the trail experience, providing a clearly defined recreational trail corridor and intersection crossing.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completion of required project engineering – Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Crosby Trail Connection	June 30, 2025
Construction Contract Awarded – Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Crosby Trail Connection	December 31, 2025
Project Construction Complete – Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Crosby Trail Connection	December 31, 2026
Project Closeout and Final Reporting – Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Crosby Trail Connection	June 30, 2027

**Activity 6: Gitchi Gami State Trail – Lutsen Trailhead Improvement**

**Activity Budget:** \$500,000

**Activity Description:**

This project proposes the upgrading and improvement of the existing user developed trailhead for the Gitchi Gami State Trail, located on the southern limits of the Community of Lutsen at the intersection of TH61 and Ski Hill Road. The existing unimproved, gravel surfaced trailhead parking area is located immediately adjacent to the existing State Trail corridor which currently terminates at Ski Hill Road. This property was acquired by the Department of Natural Resources in 2022. As defined, this project is to include all required engineering, design, permitting as well as the construction of a formal, fully accessible, bituminous surfaced parking area, containing up to 25 parking stalls, and the realignment of the current ingress/egress to Ski Hill Road in an effort to improve intersection sightlines and user safety. No modification to the existing State Trail Corridor is anticipated. Conceptual engineering and design has been previously completed.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completion of Project Engineering – Gitchi Gami State Trailhead Improvement	June 30, 2025
Construction Contract Awarded – Gitchi Gami State Trailhead Improvement	December 31, 2025
Project Construction Complete - Gitchi Gami State Trailhead Improvement	December 31, 2026
Project Closeout and Final Reporting - Gitchi Gami Trailhead Improvement	June 30, 2027

**Activity 7: Minnesota Valley State Trail – Carver Segment Improvement**

**Activity Budget:** \$1,250,000

**Activity Description:**

This project as proposed will consist of the improvement of up to a 0.75 mile long segment of the existing Minnesota Valley State Trail (MVST) located on the east bank of the Minnesota River, immediately east of the community of Carver. This project is to be a cooperative project with Scott County and will be completed in conjunction with the County's development of the Carver Crossing Segment of the Merriam Junction Regional Trail (MJRT). The County is proposing the

development of a 2.5 mile long trail segment, extend from Carver to TH169 at 147th Street, connecting to an existing county trail. The MVST in this area is a natural surfaced multi-use recreational trail that parallels the Carver Crossing Trail corridor east of the Minnesota River. In consideration of potential future upgrading and improvement of the State Trail and to limit future environmental and floodplain impacts that would result from two distinct and separate trail corridors, the MnDNR and the County have recommended that the identified 0.75 mile trail segment be developed cooperatively. This cooperative effort will also limit seasonal maintenance required of each of the flood plain stream crossings. The project will include a shared trail embankment.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completion of required project engineering – Minnesota Valley State Trail Carver Segment Improvement	December 31, 2024
Construction Contract Awarded – Minnesota Valley State Trail Carver Segment Improvement	June 30, 2025
Project Construction Complete – Minnesota Valley State Trail Carver Segment Improvement	June 30, 2027
Project Closeout and Final Reporting – Minnesota Valley State Trail Carver Segment Improvement	June 30, 2027

**Activity 8: Gateway State Trail – William O'Brien State Park North Segment Design**

**Activity Budget:** \$500,000

**Activity Description:**

This project proposes to complete the engineering, design and permitting required to construct a proposed 2.3 mile segment of the Gateway State Trail that is to extend between Washington CO. Rd. 52 (Oakhill Road) and the William O'Brien designated use area. The entire proposed trail corridor is to be confined to existing DNR administered property. Concept engineering and design has identified a preferred corridor which utilizes existing minimally developed maintenance roads, existing natural surface trail corridors and natural topography that presently appears to avoid significant resource impacts and limits landscape disturbance. At the conclusion of this project, it is expected that final construction plans and specifications will be completed, all permitting completed and the project prepared for construction contract bidding. When initiated, construction of this 2+ mile trail segment is anticipated to take 3-4 months to complete.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completion of required project engineering – Gateway State Trail William O'Brien State Park North Segment Design	June 30, 2027
Project Closeout and Final Reporting – Gateway State Trail William O'Brien State Park North Segment Design	June 30, 2027

## 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?**

Each of the identified projects are all existing components of the Outdoor Recreation System and will be implemented through the MN DNR Parks and Trails Division staff. All project engineering, design, contract administration and construction inspection will be completed by or under the direct oversight of the MN DNR Operation Services Division. The MN DNR will operate, maintain and protect each of the facilities when complete. The implementation of these projects will also significantly reduce the Parks and Trails Division's annual operational costs for the defined trail segments and bridges for 10 to 25 years.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Minnesota State Trails Acquisition, Development and Enhancement	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09d	\$1,038,000
Minnesota State Trail Development	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09j	\$2,500,000
Minnesota State Trails Development	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09d	\$5,000,000
Minnesota State Trails Development	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09i	\$994,000
Minnesota State Trails Development	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09s	\$4,266,000

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Kent Skaar

**Job Title:** Parks and Trails Division - Senior Project Manager

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

Kent Skaar has been an employee of the State of Minnesota for more than 30 years. For the last 23 years, as an employee of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Division he has been principally responsible for the development of MNDNR administered public water accesses, state trails and motorized off-highway recreational facilities. His experience includes facility design, construction, and project management for project of all sizes. Many of the projects include multiple disciplines and local partners. Mr. Skaar has extensive experience with the grant management, procedures and the requirements associated with a variety of federal and non-federal funding.

**Organization:** MN DNR - State Parks and Trails Division

**Organization Description:**

The Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Trails Division operates 67 state parks, 8 state recreation areas, more than 650 miles of surfaced, improved state trail, 1,610 water access sites, 30 water trails and 9 state waysides throughout Minnesota. The Parks and Trails Division connects people to the state's natural resources by providing access to outdoor recreation, conservation education and natural resource restoration and management. The vision of the Parks and Trails Division is to create unforgettable park, trail and water recreation experiences that inspire people to pass along the love for the outdoors to current and future generations. More information on the Minnesota DNR can be found at [MNDNR.gov](http://MNDNR.gov)

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
MNDNR Operation Services Division	Professional or Technical Service Contract	All proposed project engineering, design, contract administration and construction inspection will be completed by or under the direct oversight of the MNDNR Division of Operation Services / Construction and Design				7.5		\$1,070,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,070,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
		Replacement of up to 10 State Trail Bridges with Culverts	Replacement of existing deficient Trail Bridges under 70 feet in length with culverts. The replacement culverts will range in size from 18" to 12 feet.	X				\$1,083,368
		Root River State Trail / Root River Bank Stabilization - Houston	This project proposes the stabilization approximately 1600 linear feet of the south bank of the Root River, located west of the Community of Houston	X				\$640,192
		Browns Creek State Trail / Large Culvert Rehabilitation	The rehabilitation and repair of an existing 66 foot long (7' x 7') precast concrete arch culvert originally installed by the railroad.	X				\$98,294
		Gitchi Gami State Trail / Safety Railing Replacement	The replacement and upgrading of approximately 4125 linear feet of existing safety railing	X				\$324,883
		Cuyuna Lakes State Trail / Development Crosby 8th St.-Deer Trail Road Segment	Proposed construction of a new 900 foot long segment of the Cuyuna Lakes	X				\$197,015



			State Trail located within the Community of Crosby					
		Gitche Gami State Trail / Lutsen Trailhead Upgrading and Rehabilitation	Proposed improvement of the existing trailhead located in the Community of Lutsen	X				\$418,603
		Minnesota Valley State Trail / Development Carver Segment	Proposed improvement of up to a 0.75 mile long segment of the existing Minnesota Valley State Trail located immediately east of the community of Carver. This project is to be a cooperative project with Scott County.	X				\$1,250,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$4,012,355</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</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>								
		MN DNR Direct and Necessary Costs	Pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. Direct and necessary costs cover HR Support (~\$0), Safety Support (~\$0), Financial Support (~\$39,486), Communication Support (~\$2,123), IT Support (~\$0), and Planning Support (~\$1,036) that are					\$42,645

			necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects					
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$42,645</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$5,125,000</b>

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Capital Expenditures		Replacement of up to 10 State Trail Bridges with Culverts	All anticipated costs are considered to be eligible. <b>Additional Explanation :</b> The proposed trail improvements will be maintained by the MnDNR for the improvements with a useful life.
Capital Expenditures		Root River State Trail / Root River Bank Stabilization - Houston	All anticipated costs are considered to be eligible. <b>Additional Explanation :</b> The proposed trail improvements will be maintained by the MnDNR for the improvements useful life.
Capital Expenditures		Browns Creek State Trail / Large Culvert Rehabilitation	All anticipated costs are considered to be eligible. <b>Additional Explanation :</b> The proposed trail improvements will be maintained by the MnDNR for the improvements useful life.
Capital Expenditures		Gitchi Gami State Trail / Safety Railing Replacement	All anticipated costs are considered to be eligible. <b>Additional Explanation :</b> The proposed trail improvements will be maintained by the MnDNR for the improvements useful life.
Capital Expenditures		Cuyuna Lakes State Trail / Development Crosby 8th St.-Deer Trail Road Segment	All anticipated costs are considered to be eligible. <b>Additional Explanation :</b> The proposed trail improvements will be maintained by the MnDNR for the improvements useful life.
Capital Expenditures		Gltchi Gami State Trail / Lutsen Trailhead Upgrading and Rehabilitation	All anticipated costs are considered to be eligible. <b>Additional Explanation :</b> The proposed trail improvements will be maintained by the MnDNR for the improvements useful life.
Capital Expenditures		Minnesota Valley State Trail / Development Carver Segment	All anticipated costs are considered to be eligible. <b>Additional Explanation :</b> The proposed trail improvements will be maintained by the MnDNR for the improvements useful life.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	Federal Transportation Alternatives Grant	Rehabilitation of a large culvert on the Browns Creek State Trail	Secured	\$150,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [c55c26de-3e6.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

The attachment includes one map of the State of Minnesota with the specific State Trail project locations identified. Reduced scale inset maps are included that identify each State Trail Bridge location and State Trail Segment with a brief project description....

### Administrative Use

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

No

**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?**

Yes

**Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7?**

No

