



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2024-174

Proposal Title: Birch Lake Marina Design (Phase 1)

Project Manager Information

Name: Kathy Vraa

Organization: City of Babbitt

Office Telephone: (218) 827-3647

Email: Kathy@babbitt-mn.com

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This project consists of the design of a new marina/dock complex on Birch Lake in Babbitt Minnesota.

Funds Requested: \$197,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2026

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation (G)

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?

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.

The City of Babbitt has been developing their recreation area along Birch Lake for several decades. The recreation area and Birch Lake has provided unlimited outdoor experiences for people of all ages throughout the region, state, and nation. The existing recreation area has a beach house equipped with changing rooms, restrooms, life guard/first aid room and a concession stand. The beach area has two rafts, a water slide, a picnic area with shelters, outdoor grills, a fully equipped playground area with activities for all ages and area lighting. The City of Babbitt has completed a total reconstruction of the boat landing adjacent to the recreation area. The city has also completed a new campground adjacent to the recreation area that has 49 sites that will accommodate recreational vehicles and tent campers. The recreation/campground and Birch Lake are used by numerous people from all over the world to experience all of the activities provided by the lake and recreation area. The city has heard from visitors over the past several years that although there is a variety of amenities in the recreation area and around the lake, there is a real shortage of short term or overnight docks.

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.

Due to the lack of short term and overnight dockage availability, the city council and park and recreation committee have decided to begin the process of designing and constructing a new marina complex. This project will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 would consist of the design of the marina and completion of a site analysis evaluation. Phase 2 would include all of the costs associated with the construction of the marina complex itself. The total cost of the design and site evaluations is estimated at \$197,000. The city is requesting the \$197,000 from the LCCMR through this application. Phase 2 will begin upon completion of the design, site evaluation and fundraising phase. Once completed, the marina would include docks, parking area, access trails, lighting, signage and electrical service. The marina will be connected to an existing paved pedestrian/bike trail that connects to the City of Babbitt and eventually to the Mesabi Trail. The marina will also connect to the new Prospector ATV trail that will serve visitors looking for off trail vehicle opportunities. The City of Babbitt and the surrounding area are very limited in dock space and the completion of this project is much needed.

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 Birch Lake Recreation Area is located on the shores of Birch Lake. Birch Lake is a 7,000 acre lake that is one of the most heavily fished lakes in the Tower Fisheries Management Area. The lake is 75% undeveloped and provides a BWCA experience. The BWCA is only two portages away from Birch Lake. Birch Lake and the Birch Lake Recreation Area serves numerous tourists from all over Minnesota, the U.S. and Canada. The completion of the marina will allow more residents and visitors to enjoy this beautiful lake and the remoteness of northeast Minnesota.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Marina Design and Site Evaluation

Activity Budget: \$197,000

Activity Description:

Design and site evaluation would include engineering design, permitting, environmental review, wetlands delineation, soil borings, geotechnical evaluations and consultation with the DNR and environmental agencies.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Engineer selected through a qualifications process	July 31, 2024
Permits secured	June 30, 2026
Engineering plans and specifications completed	June 30, 2026
All work approved by the city	June 30, 2026

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Mayor Duane Lossing	City of Babbitt	Project Administration	No
Tony Chamberlain	City of Babbitt - Public Works Director	Project Oversight	No
Caitlin Stern	City of Babbitt - Parks and Rec Coordinator	Project Team Member	No

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?

The long-term implementation consists of constructing a new marina at the Birch Lake Recreation Area in Babbitt that will provide a high quality nature and recreation experience for people of all ages. The marina will be open to the general public and will be open annually from May – September. The marina, along with the surrounding facilities, will provide a variety of activities for everyone. The future maintenance and operation of the marina will be provided by the City of Babbitt through their annual budgets. All funding activities will be the responsibility of the city and their stakeholders.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Birch Lake Recreation Area Campground	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09h	\$350,000
Birch Lake Recreation Area Campground	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09v	\$350,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Kathy Vraa

Job Title: Clerk-Treasurer

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

The overall manager for this project will be the City of Babbitt under the direction of the Mayor/City Council and City Staff. Additional project management and over-site will come from the consulting engineer. Kathy Vraa (City Clerk-Treasurer), Caitlin Stern (Parks/Recreation Coordinator) and the city council park committee have been overseeing the development of this project since its initial inception and have many years of experience in overseeing large city construction projects.

Organization: City of Babbitt

Organization Description:

Babbitt is a small community of 1500 residents located at the eastern end of the Mesabi Iron Range near Birch Lake in Northeastern Minnesota. Babbitt lies approximately 100 miles north from the City of Duluth. The vast majority of the land surrounding the City of Babbitt is comprised of forested land, unique geological formations, and abundant water

resources which provide much of the scenic beauty of the area.

Only two portages from the BWCA, its location offers a unique combination of access to outdoor activities and cultural and business opportunities. Outdoor amenities in Babbitt include beaches, little league fields, softball fields, parks, golf course, fishing piers, youth center and an ice arena. The area also offers excellent opportunities for viewing or photographing wildlife such as wolves, moose, deer, bear and a wide variety of birds.

The economy of Babbitt has been built around the traditional resource-based industries of taconite, timber, tourism and transportation.

The City of Babbitt is governed by a Mayor and four council members. Their staff includes a clerk-treasurer, deputy clerk-treasurer, fire chief, library director, parks and recreation director, planning and

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Consulting Engineer Hired Through A Qualifications Process	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Design, site analysis, permitting, plans/specs, wetland delineations				4		\$197,000
							Sub Total	\$197,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$197,000

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
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [96e79e98-507.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Visual Shows Marina Layout...

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Resolution	9cf8f4d8-8a3.pdf

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?

Yes

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

No

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF? If so, describe here:

Yes, Revenues will be reinvested in to the operation and maintenance of the Marina once constructed (Phase 2).

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