



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-310

Proposal Title: Nature Accessibility Initiative

Project Manager Information

Name: Dave McMillan

Organization: Long Lake Conservation Center

Office Telephone: (218) 429-1661

Email: dave@longlakecc.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The Nature Accessibility Initiative aims to build upon the recent improvements to the Long Lake campus, trail systems and equipment so that people can experience the wonders of nature.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$211,000

Proposed Project Completion: August 31, 2026

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Environmental Education (C)

Project Location

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

Region(s): Central

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.

Access to nature is beneficial to people of all ages, races, income groups and abilities. This project would help Long Lake Conservation Center continue its efforts to make trails accessible to people of all abilities. We say we welcome all students and adults but if we do not have the infrastructure for all people to join us on our adventures it is not very welcoming at all. In recent years we have made efforts to increase our accessibility by obtaining adaptive canoeing equipment, adaptive cross country ski equipment and leveling and packing one of our most popular trails that leads to our amazing bog ecosystem. We would like to continue our plans by upgrading our hiking path down to and all the way around Long Lake. Something about the general public using the trails too and that in rural Minnesota accessible nature areas can be difficult.

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.

The Nature Accessibility Initiative will level and finish all trails and paths at Long Lake, including the three-mile lake loop, install safety railings on the bog boardwalk, purchase two rugged, individual track vehicles that would allow for people with mobility issues to reach all corners of nature, and install passive educational signage along the entirety of the trail system and on campus so the general public can learn about the ecosystems they are exploring.

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 outcome is equal access to the wonders of nature, and the educational programming Long Lake offers to 3,000+ students each year. Physical limitations will no longer prevent any visitor to Long Lake from being able to access our incredible bog ecosystem, or share in a lake hike with their classmates.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Bog trail and campus trails completion

Activity Budget: \$52,000

Activity Description:

A portion of the bog trail loop was completed last year. This activity will complete the campus trail, connecting to the bog trail, and complete the unfinished portion of that loop. Additionally, railings will be added to the bog boardwalk, for the safety of people on wheelchairs. A great deal of leveling and rock and root removal will be needed. A weed barrier will be installed and class 5 (or recycled asphalt) will be spread, smoothed and compacted. Small but important trail sections on campus, including the trails from the path to the lake, the path to the orienteering field, and the path to the cooperation games area need to be made accessible for every student and visitor to Long Lake.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Trail from campus to Bog Trail	August 31, 2025
Complete bog trail loop	September 30, 2025
Bog Boardwalk Railing Installation	September 30, 2025
Lake and Orienteering Race Trail Access	October 31, 2025
Trail to the Cooperation Course complete	October 31, 2025

Activity 2: Complete Lake Loop Trail

Activity Budget: \$151,500

Activity Description:

A nature hike on this three-mile trail is a class itself, but the trails are used for other classes, including survival shelters, wilderness meals and wolf pack. A great deal of leveling and rock and root removal will be needed. A weed barrier will be installed and class 5 (or recycled asphalt) will be spread, smoothed and compacted.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Leveling, root and rock removal	April 30, 2026
Complete south side of trail, weed guard, compact class 5	May 31, 2026
Complete North side of trail, weed guard, compact class 5	July 31, 2026

Activity 3: Directional and Passive Educational Signage Installed

Activity Budget: \$7,500

Activity Description:

The directional signage will help non-school and public visitors to explore Long Lake's ecosystems more easily. The passive educational signage will add to the experience of students and visitors alike. These signs will highlight and explain elements in nature, such as basic bog ecology, unique plants, etc.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
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Bog Trail and Campus Trail signage	May 31, 2025
Lake Loop Trail Signage	August 31, 2026

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Aitkin County Land Department	Aitkin County	Accessible trail planning and labor	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 project will be implemented based on highest usage. The trail from the campus to the bog trail will be completed first, followed by the second half of the bog loop (the first half was completed last summer), and the railings will be installed on the bog boardwalk. After this, the lake trail will be completed. Signage will be installed throughout the project. After completion of the Initiative, trails will be repaired and maintained by the Aitkin County Land Department and Long Lake, out of operating costs.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Increasing K-12 Student Learning to Achieve ENRTF's Goals	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 05b	\$1,602,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Dave McMillan

Job Title: Accessibility Initiative Manager

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

This person will oversee the project from beginning to end, managing budgets and timelines, and working with staff and contracted labor to complete the project to design specifications. The Accessibility Initiative Manager will have experience managing large projects, particularly those with an educational purpose.

Organization: Long Lake Conservation Center

Organization Description:

This person will oversee the project from beginning to end, managing budgets and timelines, and working with staff and contracted labor to complete the project to design specifications. The Accessibility and Landscape Manager will have experience managing large projects, particularly those with an educational purpose.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Aitkin County Land Department	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Chris Johnson and crew will level all and widen the trails, remove roots and rocks as necessary, install weed guard, and spread, smooth and compact Class 5 (or recycled asphalt).				0.8		\$39,000
							Sub Total	\$39,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Equipment	Track haulers, excavator, packer, two skid steers	Rental equipment to prepare					\$36,000
	Tools and Supplies	Soil fabric/weed guard	Base for the new trail. Footprint retention					\$21,000
	Tools and Supplies	Recycled Asphalt	2,500 yards to cover approximately 4 miles of trails.					\$75,000
							Sub Total	\$132,000
Capital Expenditures								
		Purchase of two Track Wheelchairs	So people can navigate the trails	X				\$32,000
							Sub Total	\$32,000
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Design and print directional and passive educational signage	Direct and educate					\$8,000
							Sub Total	\$8,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$211,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Capital Expenditures		Purchase of two Track Wheelchairs	<p>These are rugged off-road track wheelchair that further narrow the gap between the impossible and possible for outdoor enthusiasts with physical or mobility challenges.</p> <p>Additional Explanation : The wheelchairs will be available to students and members of the public until they no longer function.</p>

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	Long Lake Conservation Center operating funds	Long Lake staff will contribute in-kind labor hours in planning, designing signage, and preparing the trails.	Secured	\$5,000
Cash	Long Lake Conservation Foundation	Cash	Potential	\$5,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$10,000
			Funds Total	\$10,000

Total Project Cost: \$221,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [107130fd-e01.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Map of all the trails that will be made accessible at Long Lake...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Aitkin County 2022 Audit.	9729e0e8-a3d.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
The Board supports this application, but due to the storm, were unable to officially sign the resolutions and letter. These are pending and will be approved at April's Meeting of the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners.	ba212fed-1c0.docx
Aitkin County Board Resolution signed	bc0a83df-bf6.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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

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?

Yes, Aitkin County

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

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 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Beth Haasken, Education Director at Long Lake Conservation Center; Chris Johnson, Recreation Specialist Aitkin County Land Department

