Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
M.L. 2017 LCCMR Work Plan

Date of Submission: September 14, 2017
Date of Next Status Update Report: January 1, 2018
Date of Work Plan Approval: 06/07/2017
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2020
Does this submission include an amendment request? No

PROJECT TITLE: Mesabi Trail Development

Project Manager: Robert Manzoline
Organization: St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority
Mailing Address: 111 Station 44 Road
City/State/Zip Code: Eveleth, MN 55734
Telephone Number: (218) 744-2653
Email Address: bamnzoline@rrauth.com
Web Address: mesabitrail.com

Location: St. Louis County

Total ENRTF Project Budget: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENRTF Appropriation:</th>
<th>$2,269,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount Spent:</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance:</td>
<td>$2,269,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g

Appropriation Language:
$2,269,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority for engineering and constructing segments of the Mesabi Trail. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2020, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.
I. PROJECT TITLE: Mesabi Trail Segments T.H. 135 to Embarrass; and McKinley to Biwabik; and Soudan to Vermillion State Park Entrance Road.

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Ge neral: The Mesabi Trail is a planned 155 mile long paved trail from Grand Rapids to Ely. Approximately 115 miles of the trail, from Grand Rapids to Embarrass, has been completed since the trail inception in year 1996. The Mesabi Trail is owned and maintained by the St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (RRA). The trail serves as an alternate transportation corridor namely for non-motorized pedestrian, bike, ski, horses, and motorized snowmobile use where designated. The trail extends from the Mississippi River in Grand Rapids to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Ely.

The St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (RRA) performs the trail development work including liaison with agencies & local jurisdictions, public meetings, contract administration, right-of-way acquisition and other administrative functions. LCCMR funds will be used for environmental work, engineering work and construction. The RRA is experienced at leveraging funds, meeting specific funder requirements, matching non-state & non-federal sources and completion dates. The TH 135 to Embarrass segment will be funded using State funds. The Soudan to Vermillion State Park Entrance Road will be funded using State funds. The McKinley to Biwabik segment will be funded by a combination of state, federal and local funds all with varying rules and guidelines. The most prescriptive grantor(s) rules will be used advancing this project.

Do to the extensive Mesabi Trail length, the trail has been divided into attainable segments for development and construction. Segment development entails route evaluations, right-of-way considerations, environmental impacts and other factors. We have experienced development delay because of landownership issues, endangered species avoidance and cultural resource preservation that are beyond our control. When development delay occurs that may jeopardize the use of grant funds (deadlines) we have requested from LCCMR and other grantors funds be shifted to other trail segments ready to be constructed. A funding shift using LCCMR funds is cumbersome do to Legislative procedures/actions necessary for approval. If needed, we request LLCCMR Staff be granted some latitude to approve a funding shift to other Mesabi Trail segments ready for construction.

Specific: grant funds will be used for Mesabi Trail construction within three segments each further described as follows:

T.H. 135 to Embarrass

Grant funds will be used to construct a 4,000 LF floating dock over a wetland and reconstructing the former Lane 51 road bridge (circa 1928) over the Embarrass River. These improvements will used for the Mesabi Trail and users of the MN DNR Darwin Meyers Wildlife Management Area.

The TH 135 to Embarrass segment of the Mesabi Trail is approximately 6 miles in length. The majority of the trail construction work will be done using the 2016 LCCMR appropriation ML 2016, Chapter 186, Section 2, Subd. 9e in the amount of $1.2 million. An extensive environmental study of three alternatives routes was conducted in years 2014 and 2015. The preferred alternate has been selected. All alternative routes involved crossing of the Embarrass River and adjoining floodplain and wetland complexes. The preferred alternative route mitigates wetland impacts by using a floating bridge to cross the wetland. A floating bridge does negatively impact vegetation but allows water movement through the wetland without soil disturbance. The preferred alternative route will reuse parts of an existing roadway bridge that crosses the Embarrass River. The exiting bridge abutments, wing walls and steel girders will be used without new impacts to the Embarrass River. The existing concrete bridge deck will be removed and replaced with a wooden deck and wooden side rails. The
reconstructed bridge will achieve a live load rating of 10 tons and will be from time to time used by the MN DNR for vehicle movements within Darwin Meyers WMA.

**McKinley to Biwabik**

This trail segment is 5.5 miles long making connections to the existing Mesabi Trail in the City of McKinley and within the City of Biwabik. This segment is a “key” piece of trail filling in a gap in the overall trail system that will make the Mesabi Trail continuous from Grand Rapids to Embarrass.

This segment is typical of other trail segments within the Mesabi Iron Range traversing the former McKinley and Mary Ellen mine sites.

This segment is has been worked on for several years resolving many environmental, land ownership and mining related issues. The environmental work on the trail is done with all agency permits/approvals received. Approximately 95% of the right-of-way has been acquired. The engineering work is also approximately 95% complete.

The estimated cost for constructing this segment is $1,500,000. Federal High Priority Funds in the amount of $1,004,976 have been secured for construction. The remaining funds needed to complete construction and project engineering/management will be from the 2017 Trust Fund.

**Soudan to Vermillion State Park (VSP) Entrance Road**

This trail segment is 1.5 miles long making connections to the existing Mesabi Trail in Soudan and the existing trail with the Vermillion State Park.

This segment has also been worked on for several years and is prepared to begin construction in Fall 2016. The environmental work on the trail is done with all agency permits/approvals received excepting for the MN State Historic Preservation Office do on September 19, 2016. The right-of-way has been secured by way of easements and leases from Breitung Township and the State of Minnesota. The engineering work is approximately 98% complete with final plan and specifications revisions being made.

This project is estimated to cost $970,000 which is a very high cost in comparison to other Mesabi Trail miles built. The excessive cost is due to ledge rock removal that needs to occur near the Soudan Underground State Park in order for the trail to meet ADA accessibility. Rock removal costs are estimated to be $300,000. This trail is currently funded by a Legacy grant in the amount of $512,000 and DNR funds in the amount of $300,000. Funds needed to complete construction and project engineering/management will be from the 2017 Trust Fund.

**III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**Project Status as of January 1, 2018**

**Project Status as of July 1, 2018**

**Project Status as of January 1, 2019**

**Project Status as of July 1, 2019**

**Project Status as of January 1, 2020**

**Overall Project Outcomes and Results:**
IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Environmental work needed to comply with the Federal National Environmental Policy Act and the State of Minnesota Environmental Protection Act and Local Rules/Ordinance

Description: Work involves securing the necessary approvals and permits from agencies before construction work can proceed. Agencies involved are the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Fish & Wildlife, Federal Army Corps of Engineers, MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Department of Transportation, MN State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Local Board of Soil and Water Conservation.

The environmental work will be supported by engineering and surveying to locate alternative trail routes, locations of cultural resources, wetlands and land ownership and land use.

Work will be performed by a person or firm accredited by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) hereafter known as “Consultant”. Consultant will perform work needed to comply with NEPA and MEPA documenting trail route alternatives, cultural resource identification, wetland delineation & mitigation, fish & wildlife, endangered species, social impacts, economic impacts, state waters impacts, land use (4f) and other. Consultant will further evaluate and assure compliance with local ordinances, planning, zoning and codes.

As said within the Project Narrative, environmental work for the McKinley/Biwabik and Soudan/VSP Entrance Road segments is complete or nearly complete. Wetland mitigations have occurred on each of these segments.

Approximately 50% of the environmental work needed on the TH 135/Embarrass segment is complete. Preliminary reviews have been conducted by the Corps of Engineers and BWSR. Remaining environmental work will be performed following design. Wetland impacts cannot be avoided and a disturbance will take place. Impacted wetlands will need to be replaced at a ratio of 1.5:1 (1.5 = new wetlands created; 1 = wetlands impacted).

If this budget amount is not used for environmental work, a request will be made to shift remaining funds to Activity 3, Construction.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENRTF Budget:</th>
<th>$ 40,000</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount Spent:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance:</td>
<td>$ 40,000</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. COE, EPA, SHIPO, Easements, MN DNR, MPCA &amp; Other secured</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 1 as of January 1, 2018

Activity 1 Status as of July 1, 2018

Activity 1 Status as of January 1, 2019

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 2: Engineering design, survey, plans, specification and construction management.
Description: Engineering work will be done in accordance with the MN Dot Standards for Bicycle Trails. Engineering work begins with route(s) identification needed for NEPA work and then to more specific survey work once a preferred trail route alternative is selected. Engineer survey includes topographic, paying particular attention to vertical alignment for Americans’ with disabilities access and horizontal curve for minimum speed, and property lines and other features needed for design. Engineer trail design is in accordance with MN Dot Standards, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ASHTO and on-site conditions such as waterways, wetlands, hills, valleys determining the final trail design and plan. Engineer is also required to provide a MN Dot Project Memorandum which is a document summarizing the project including NEPA, right-of-way, design and other elements. Engineer is required to provide a Project Specification document that includes special construction needs, bidding documents, contracts and other. Engineer is required to provide construction management that includes on-site inspections, testing oversight, processing payments and other work for a completed project.

As said within the Project Narrative, engineering design, environmental support and survey work for the McKinley/Biawbak and Soudan/VSP Entrance Road segments is complete or nearly complete. Engineering work for bidding, construction management, on-site inspections, testing oversight and processing payments will be needed.

Approximately 30% of the engineering work on the TH 135/Embarrass segment is complete.

If this budget amount is not used for environmental work, a request will be made to shift remaining funds to Activity 3, Construction.

Description:

| Summary Budget Information for Activity 1: | ENRTF Budget: | $300,000 |
| Amount Spent: | $0 |
| Balance: | $300,000 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Plans, specifications, bid documents for/and construction</td>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Activity 2 Status as of January 1, 2018

Activity 2 Status as of July 1, 2018

Activity 2 Status as of January 1, 2019

Activity 2 Status as of July 1, 2019

Activity 2 Status as of January 1, 2020

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 3: Trail Construction
**Description:** The trail will be constructed by a responsible contractor. Contractor selection is based on a bidding process acceptable to MN Dot, FHWA. Contractor constructs the trail in accordance with engineers plan and specifications. Contractor is responsible to perform construction using methods that are in accordance with OSHA, NEPA and other industry standards. The following is a general description of each trail segment:

**T.H 135 to Embarrass**
Construct a 4,000 LF floating dock over a wetland and reconstructing the former Lane 51 road bridge (circa 1928) over the Embarrass River and related trail connection work to existing trails on either side of the Darwin Meyers WMA.

**McKinley to Biwabik**
Construction of a 5.5 mile long, 10 feet wide bituminous surface trail beginning in the City of McKinley and making connection to the existing Mesabi Trail at County Road 21. The trail will then be constructed easterly to the City of Biwabik ending and making connection to the existing Mesabi Trail at 2nd Street North.

**Soudan to VSP Entrance Road**
Construction of a 1.5 mile long, 10 feet wide bituminous surface trail beginning in Soudan and making connection to the existing Mesabi Trail west of Stuntz Bay Road. The trail will then be constructed easterly to the Vermillion State Park Entrance Road and making connection to the existing Mesabi Trail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:</th>
<th>ENRTF Budget: $ 1,929,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount Spent:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance:</td>
<td>$ 1,929,000</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Construction</td>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Activity 3 Status as of January 1, 2018
Activity 3 Status as of July 1, 2018
Activity 3 Status as of January 1, 2019
Activity 3 Status as of July 1, 2019
Activity 3 Status as of January 1, 2020

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:
Description: Mesabi Trail news and updates are provided through a variety of media, marketing and publications. Web site is: Mesabitrail.com. The following are some of the groups & organizations that disseminate Mesabi Trail information and typically include updates of newly completed trail segments:

- Club Mesabi (15,000 maps & web site)
- Iron Range Tourism (30,000 brochures & web site)
- MN Office of Tourism
- MPR
- Parks & Trails, Home & Away, other private magazines
- 180,000 trail users per year
- Named by the Star Tribune as “Best of Minnesota” in year 2013

Status as of January 1, 2018

Status as of July 1, 2018

Status as of January 1, 2019

Status as of July 1, 2019

Status as of January 1, 2020

Final Report Summary:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:
A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:
*This section represents an overview of the preliminary budget at the start of the project. It will be reconciled with actual expenditures at the time of the final report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category</th>
<th>$ Amount</th>
<th>Overview Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:</td>
<td>$340,000</td>
<td>Consultant services for Environmental &amp; Engineering,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Expenditures over $5,000:</td>
<td>$1,929,000</td>
<td>Trail, bridge and facility construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:</td>
<td>$2,269,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: N/A

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than $5,000: Trail construction costs vary depending on the type of terrain or base being used. For example, constructing trail on an abandon railroad grade may cost a $100,000 per mile while construction through a rocky terrain with bridges may cost in excess of $500,000 per mile. This Project also includes one bridge rehabilitation and construction of a new floating bridge estimated to cost $1.2 million.

Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: 18
Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: 6

B. Other Funds:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>$ Amount Proposed</th>
<th>$ Amount Spent</th>
<th>Use of Other Funds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-state</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>$1,004,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>McKinley/Biabik Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
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<td>Soudan/VSP Entrance Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legacy</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>Soudan/VSP Entrance Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,816,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$0</strong></td>
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**Project Title:** Mesabi Trail Development  
**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g  
**Organization:** St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority  
**M.L. 2017 ENRTF Appropriation:** $2,269,000  
3 years, June 30, 2020  
**Date of Report:** September 14, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUDGET ITEM</th>
<th>Activity 1 Budget</th>
<th>Activity 2 Budget</th>
<th>Activity 3 Budget</th>
<th>TOTAL BUDGET</th>
<th>TOTAL BALANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</td>
<td>Environmental $40,000</td>
<td>Engineering $0</td>
<td>Construction $40,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental work preliminary to construction in accordance with Federal NEPA &amp; EPA; Minnesota MPCA, SHIPO, DNR; Local jurisdictions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer for trail design, plans, specifications, bidding and construction administration.</td>
<td>Environmental $300,000</td>
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<td>Construction $300,000</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
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<td>Capital Expenditures Over $5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLUMN TOTAL</td>
<td>Environmental $40,000</td>
<td>Engineering $0</td>
<td>Construction $40,000</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$1,929,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Mesabi Trail offers an abundance of natural and outdoor experiences. Bike, hike, ski, snowshoe and in some areas snowmobile along the Trail as it traverses over 120 miles through 28 communities. Explore historic buildings, unique art galleries, early industry and ethnic history, plus other treasures well worth the discovery. Forests teeming with wildlife can be found between rolling hills. Streams and creeks provide habitat for birds and animals. Grand heaps of earth provide man-made mountains that are becoming re-grown forests linking the edges of some of the world’s largest mines. These former mines are fast becoming a linked chain of watery passage- ways. Come enjoy a quality guest experience in the Land of Mesabi, via the Mesabi Trail.

Get your Mesabi Trail Wheel Pass:
• Online at mesabitrail.com
• At any local Wheel Pass vendor
• At sell pay boxes along the Trail

Rules for Conduct
• Wheel Pass required for ages 18 and older using a bicycle, Inline skates or other non-motorized wheeled device.
• Passes must be displayed while on the Trail.
• The Mesabi Trail is a non-motorized trail, except snowmobiles where designated.
• Non-motorized vehicles and motorized wheelchairs shall not exceed 36" in width.
• Pets keep a leash no longer than 6" long.
• Helis or traches may not be dug.
• No signs or advertisements.
• Start times only in designated fire rings, stove or grills. Do not leave fire unattended. Be sure fire is extinguished before leaving the area.
• No hunting, loaded weapons or alcohol.
• Do not remove, alter, inactivate or destroy any tree, plant, rock, soil or mineral.
• Campers and horseback riding are allowed only in designated areas.

Emergency Call #11. 
• A call to this number will put you in touch with the Mesabi Trail office at (218) 774-1888.

Snowmobiles allowed within the corridor of these areas only: Grand Rapids to Hay 61, Closterie to connection of Taconite and Hibbing, and Hibbing to Bhli.

A UNIQUE RIDING EXPERIENCE

Ride for fun or for the challenge - either way mark your calendar for August 1, 2015, when Great River Energy and the Mesabi Trail join forces in northern Minnesota to support two state traditions: recreational trails and Ampers - Diverse Radio for a sake Community.

The Great River Energy Mesabi Trail ’15 offers great food, music and family entertainment. Charitable proceeds will be donated to Ampers and the Mesabi Trail.

The “CenturyLink Ride” route is sponsored by:

For more information, registration and event updates: mesabitrail.com or 877-637-2241

What riders said about the 2014 tour:
“Best Ride in Minnesota.”
“A number one, class act event.”
“A delightful tour. Done top notch year in and year out.”

Find a ride near you:

For more detailed schedule information: mesabitrail.com or 877-637-2241

The “CenturyLink Ride” route is not a circular route. Sometimes you will end your ride at a different location from where you start. The goal is to get your bike to your chosen drop-off. Please have your vehicle waiting for you at the finishing point. We can do for you, or you can do it yourself Friday or Saturday morning.

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Mesabi Trail™

From the Mississippi to the Boundary Waters

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Mesabi Trail™ Shuttle Service
Call the Mesabi Trail Shuttle Service and we'll “portage” you or your gear to your hotel or to the Mesabi Trail segment - all you have to do is enjoy the ride! We can also help you plan your trip. Email us at: chris.johnson@glantonridge.com

Hours & Days of Operation
May 1-31: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
June 1 - August 31: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
September 1 - October 10: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information and to make reservations: 218-865-0824 or 800-688-7669 (ext 0824) or 218-790-2461 (cell) or 979-4278 (cell)
The Mesabi Trail Shuttle Service is based out of Giants Ridge Golf & Ski Resort near Biwabik.

Service Areas and Pricing
Shuttle services are available to trail users from Grand Rapids to Aurora and all points in between, up to 12 hours/24 passengers per trip. Prices vary with distance traveled but are packaged into two zones. For regular shuttle service, please call at least one day in advance.

Mesabi Trail™ Shuttle Service

A wheel pass is required for ages 18 and over using a wheeled device such as a bicycle or stroller strollers. Hikers, joggers and walkers are not required to purchase a pass. Cost is $15 for an annual and $5 for a three-day pass. Revenue from Wheel Pass sales helps support the Mesabi Trail. Passes are available at mesabitrail.com, at any of these vendors, or at self-pay boxes along the Trail.

Tour operators are responsible for providing a safe trip. They also have additional requirements including: a liability insurance policy, a valid business license and a trip plan. These requirements are in place to ensure our users have a safe and enjoyable experience. For more information, please contact the Mesabi Trail at 218-774-1888, through mesabitrail.com or by email, chris.johnson@glantonridge.com.