

JUL 11 1996

LCMR Work Program 1993

I. PROJECT TITLE: Cooperative Trails Grant Program

Program Manager: Dan Collins, Supervisor, Recreation Services, Trail Recreation Section
 Agency Affiliation: Natural Resources, Department of
 Address: Trails and Waterways Unit, DNR Building - 500 Lafayette Road, Saint Paul, Minnesota
 55155-4052
 Phone: (612) 296-6048

A. Legal Citation: M.L. 93, Chpt. 172, Art. 1, Sect. 14, Subd. 10(p)

Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$800,000.00
 Balance: \$214,579.13

Appropriation Language: This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the commissioner of natural resources for a grant program to assist in the acquisition and development of local connections to planned and existing state trails and other public recreation facilities.

The project is extended to December 31, 1995; on that date the appropriations cancel and no further payment is authorized, Minnesota Laws 1995, Chap. 220, Sec. 19, Subd. 19.

B. LMIC Compatible Data Language: Not applicable

C. Status of Match Requirement: Not applicable

II. NARRATIVE: This program accelerates local trail connections to planned and existing state trails and other public recreation facilities by awarding matching (50/50) grants to local units of government. Grants will be awarded for the acquisition and development of connecting trails and for removal of barriers that might impede full access to these facilities.

III. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES:

- A. Solicit and evaluate local grant proposals.
- B. Award and administer local grant agreements.

IV. OBJECTIVES:

A. Title of Objective: Solicit and evaluate local grant proposals

A1. Narrative: In cooperation with the Outdoor Recreation Grants Section of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), requests for proposals (RFPs) to be funded through this program will be distributed. Responses will be reviewed/evaluated employing decision criteria established by a

previously convened inter-agency panel that established program goals, priorities, and decision criteria, and was further reviewed, as appropriate, with trail user groups. These criteria will complement existing agency trail plans and programs, and be consistent with goals and objectives contained in the *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, the DNR's *State Trail Plan*, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's bicycle plan, *Plan B*.

A2. Procedures: Procedures established for the Outdoor Recreation Grants Program will be utilized for the RFPs. An inter-agency panel will assist in the evaluation and ranking of proposals.

A3. Budget:
 a. Amount budgeted: \$0
 b. Balance: \$0

A4. Timeline:

	July	Jan	June	Jan	June	Dec
	1993	1994	1994	1995	1995	1995
Solicit grant proposals	xx		xxx			
Evaluate and rank proposals	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx					

A5. Status: January 1, 1994: This objective is not yet completed. Solicitations for projects were distributed on September 3, 1993, and returned on November 12, 1993. Total reimbursement requested was \$860,146.30. However, because it appears that many applications are not eligible for funding through this LCMR-sponsored program, it has not been necessary to implement the prioritizing methodology that was devised for this program. Instead, a further solicitation will be required to obligate remaining funds.

May 5, 1994: This objective is now complete. A second solicitation for outstate projects was closed on March 31, 1994 (approximately 50 percent of available funds were committed to projects within the metropolitan area during the first solicitation).

	State Funding Requested (50 percent match minimum)	Funding Awarded
Metropolitan Area	\$ 568,549.80	\$403,322.20
Outstate: Round I	\$ 335,196.50	\$234,976.50
Outstate: Round II	\$ 421,245.00	\$161,701.30
Total	\$1,324,991.30	\$800,000.00

A total of 39 project proposals were received by the DNR for this small grants program (\$50,000 maximum reimbursement). Twenty-two trail projects were selected for funding with an average reimbursement award of \$36,000 per project. A May 4, 1994, list of awardees is attached to this status report.

December 22, 1994: A number of selected projects are no longer being considered due to difficulties the sponsors have experienced in attempting to bring the projects to contract. At this point, approximately \$700,000 has been committed to projects (*see attached table*). Four

communities are presently preparing necessary paperwork to commit their remaining funds (Vadnais Heights, Minnetonka, Maplewood, and Luverne).

August 18, 1995: The selection process continues to this date. Presently \$688,337.38 has been encumbered and under contract. This amount has fluctuated as the June 30, 1995, date approached because a number of communities withdrew from the process toward the end of the biennium and other new projects were added.

Of those presently under contract, some communities may still be unable to complete their trail projects. As a result, efforts are underway to commit remaining funds to Minneapolis (Cedar Lake Trail), and Pine Island (Douglas State Trail as well as ISTEAs in Hutchinson (Luce Line State Trail), Red Lake Falls, Rochester (Silver Creek Trail), and Red Wing (Cannon Valley Trail).

January 1, 1996: Throughout the funding cycle for this program 34 projects were identified for possible funding through the Cooperative Trails Grant Program. Due to timing constraints, fiscal and physical considerations, and reliance on partnerships for land utilization, and other purposes only 19 projects were completed.

	Total Development	Funding Awarded
Metropolitan Area	\$ 718,033.56	\$335,958.56
Outstate	<u>\$2,419,633.56</u>	<u>\$254,925.93</u>
Total	\$3,127,667.12	\$585,884.87

A6. Benefits: Systematic evaluation of grant proposals will ensure that successful projects are focused and consistent with statewide trail system goals and priorities. Opportunities for cooperation and private sector participation in local trail projects will be identified as will opportunities to use grant funds as a "match" in conjunction with other funding source

B. Title of Objective: Award and administer local grant agreements

B1. Narrative: Award and administer local grant agreements. Provide technical assistance as needed. Monitor local trail projects to ensure compliance with grant agreements and consistency with program objectives.

B2. Procedures: Procedures established for the Outdoor Recreation Grants Program will be utilized in awarding grants and monitoring compliance.

B3. Budget:

- a. Amount budgeted: \$800,000.00
- b. Balance: \$214,115.13

B4. Timeline:

July	Jan	June	Jan	June	Dec
<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1995</u>

Award and administer grants xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 Monitor grant agreements xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

B5. Status: January 1, 1994: Staff of the Attorney General are preparing a grant contract for awardees. Borrowing heavily from the Outdoor Recreation Grants Program, a draft financial management manual has been prepared to guide reimbursement.

May 5, 1994: Awardees are completing environmental requirements in preparation for entering into a contractual arrangement with the state. Requirements include (as appropriate) pre-certification by the State Historic Preservation Office, water permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/DNR, and completion of an environmental assessment document.

December 22, 1994: Eleven projects totaling \$318,194.88 have been brought under contract. Thirteen other projects totaling \$381,751.50 have not yet completed necessary documentation.

August 18, 1995: Twenty projects totaling \$612,768.88 have been brought under contract. Three more projects and a supplement totaling \$75,568.42 have also been encumbered but are as yet not fully executed.

January 1, 1996: Nineteen projects were developed between July 1, 1993, and January 1, 1996. Legislative funds contributed \$585,884.87 toward approximately \$3,100,000.00 in trail development.

B6. Benefits: Careful monitoring of local project grants is needed to ensure efficiency, accountability, and consistency with stated objectives. Close cooperation can help ensure compatible trail uses, uniform design and development standards, and consistent trail maintenance, management, and enforcement practices.

V. EVALUATION: The effectiveness of this program should be evaluated for its ability to identify and fund a statewide list of highly desirable trail projects, leverage funds that have been allocated for this project with other sources, and demonstrate the ability of state agencies to cooperatively focus on problems of mutual interest.

VI. CONTEXT:

A. Unless directed within the specific authorizing language, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) generally lacks authority to connect state trails or other significant recreation facilities to nearby communities. Further, the Outdoor Recreation Grants Program, administered by the DNR, can only be used on land under control of the requesting agency. This restriction often discourages/precludes multi-agency trail partnering.

B. This program will make existing state trails and other significant recreation facilities more relevant to nearby communities by providing them a means to share in their social, economic, and recreational benefits. It will also encourage various agencies to cooperatively work together to provide maximum service to trail users.

C. The Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) has recommended funding for an extensive collection of state trails and significant recreation facilities throughout Minnesota. As a result, significant use levels have been attained and considerable social and economic benefit has been generated. Depending on the success of this innovative trail grant program over the biennium, additional funding recommendations from LCMR will be sought.

VII. QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Program Manager: Dan Collins, Supervisor, Recreation Services, Trail Recreation Section, Trails and Waterways Unit
 - a. During the past ten years, Mr. Collins was responsible for the DNR's overall state trail planning efforts. In addition to trail master plans, his section published statewide trail plans in 1984 and 1992. He has also served for the past five years on the city of Shoreview's Trail and Bikeway Committee where he was instrumental in formalizing the community's vision for trails in its so-called "Basic Level of Service Plan", passage of a supportive multi-million dollar bond issue, and securing for Shoreview the first "Alternative Transportation Corridor" within the state.
 - b. Supervisor, Recreation Services, Trail Recreation Section, DNR Trails and Waterways Unit, includes the Adopt-a-River Stewardship Program, special events, publications management, inventory maintenance, and on-site visitor and resource management services. Mr. Collins is also managing two trail planning contracts and serving as the Unit's liaison with several trail user and trail advocacy groups.

2. Cooperators/Other Investigators:
 - Wayne Sames*
 - a. Mr. Sames' experience as a recreational grant program administrator with local units of government brings needed expertise and staffing support for this project and understanding of community recreation needs.
 - b. Director of the Outdoor Recreation Grants Section, DNR, which administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program, State Outdoor Recreation Grants, and the Tourism Loan Program.
 - Robert M. Works*
 - a. Mr. Works' experience in helping to manage the State Bicycle Advisory Board and overseeing development of the recently published state bicycle plan, *Plan B*, ensure his intimate knowledge of the needs of bicyclists. In addition, his experience in administering a statewide program brings administrative expertise and additional sensitivity to local issues.
 - b. Director, Transit Program Section, Office of Transit, Minnesota Department of Transportation which manages the Minnesota Bicycle Program as well as the annual operating and capital assistance contracting process involving sixty-one transit operations in greater Minnesota.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Semiannual status reports will be submitted not later than January 1, 1994, July 1, 1994, January 1, 1995, June 30, 1995, and a final status report by December 31, 1995.