

2018 Project Abstract

PROJECT TITLE: Superior Hiking Trail Renewal and Enhancement Plan

PROJECT MANAGER: Denny Caneff, Executive Director

AFFILIATION: Superior Hiking Trail Association

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FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 02, Subd. 09f

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$100,000

AMOUNT SPENT: \$100,000

AMOUNT REMAINING: \$0.00

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

The Superior Hiking Trail is well placed to lessen the environmental impact of trail users and the Association is better equipped to build and maintain a more sustainable hiking trail.

Overall Project Outcome and Results

This LCCMR grant allowed SHTA to conduct assessments by professional trail builders and ecologists, focusing on the most worn-out sections of the Trail. The grant also allowed us to build a trail database – a repository for all relevant documents of the SHT and a place to catalog work projects.

All users of the SHT will benefit from a better built and more resilient Superior Hiking Trail. Their experience should be more pleasant and safer. The SHT is a Minnesota recreational icon; everyone is rooting for its continued existence and good health.

Our database is in use almost daily; it was not intended for dissemination or use outside the SHTA. The trail assessments were heavily scrutinized internally and shared with the affected resource professionals. The educational videos are online for the public. The volunteer manual, once finalized, will serve hundreds of SHTA volunteers and set a new standard for trail maintenance.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

We generally don't make the assessment reports public, but we do provide them to people who ask for them. We certainly supply the state park officials with these assessments.

The videos we produced are on the internet for the world to see. The volunteer trail maintenance manual will be distributed to the hundreds of volunteers who put in time on the SHT. The videos and the manual contain/will contain the requisite language explaining the support of the ENRTF grant.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2018 ENRTF Work Plan FINAL REPORT (Main Document)

Today's Date: June 29, 2020

Date of Next Status Update Report: FINAL REPORT

Date of Work Plan Approval: June 5, 2018

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2020

PROJECT TITLE: Superior Hiking Trail Renewal and Enhancement Plan

Project Manager: Denny Caneff

Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association

College/Department/Division: n/a

Mailing Address: 731 7th Avenue, Suite 2

City/State/Zip Code: Two Harbors, MN 55616

Telephone Number: 218-834-2700

Email Address: dcaneff@superiorhiking.org

Web Address: www.superiorhiking.org

Location: The Superior Hiking Trail runs 312 miles, along the North Shore, from the MN-WI state line to the Canadian border. Project will encompass the entire SHT, with focus on those segments most deteriorated and in need of renewal.

Total Project Budget: \$100,000

Amount Spent: \$100,000

Balance: \$0.00

Legal Citation: M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 02, Subd. 09f

Appropriation Language: \$100,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Superior Hiking Trail Association to evaluate improvements to the 310-mile-long Superior Hiking Trail including routing, safety, water management, maintenance, and other environmental, recreational, and design issues and to develop an interactive trail-management system to capture efficiencies and best management practices.



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I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Background

The Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) runs 310 miles through Duluth and along the North Shore, from Minnesota's border with Wisconsin to the Canadian border at the Pigeon River. Launched in 1986, the SHT gives an estimated 50,000 visitors per year access to spectacular vistas for hiking, camping (94 campsites) and running along Minnesota's rugged Lake Superior shoreline and its significant flora, fauna and geology. It's a fine urban recreational amenity for thousands of Duluth residents and visitors as well. The SHT is not only well known and beloved by Minnesotans; it is recognized by several national running and backpacking magazines to be among the top 20 hiking and trail running destinations in the United States.

The SHT is managed and operated by the nonprofit, member-supported Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA), based in Two Harbors. While about 90% of the trail traverses public (city, county, state, federal) land, the Association is the entity that operates and oversees the Trail, and is almost entirely responsible for its development and upkeep.

The SHT is showing its age. Much of it was built 20 to 30 years ago, before modern hiking-trail standards were developed and implemented. There are a handful of sections of the SHT that see disproportionate use because they are popular and accessible; these segments are especially in need of TLC. Some portions of the trail are degraded to the extent they are a threat to water quality from erosion. While the trail is not dangerous, some deteriorated structures, like bridges, stairways and board walks, need upgrading to keep them safe for trail users.

Our LCCMR-funded project aims to thoroughly assess the condition of the Superior Hiking Trail, with particular focus on those segments that, due to concerns about soil erosion, water quality, user safety and user popularity, will get extra scrutiny. The assessment and evaluation process funded by LCCMR will not only provide the SHTA with specific trail renewal suggestions and remedies and their estimated costs; it will provide the organization with specific and well-established trail management processes and techniques that we can carry forward into the future.

The LCCMR grant will also allow the SHTA to develop a data base to store and organize the considerable amounts of data that comes with operating a 300-mile long hiking trail: detailed notes, photographs, GPS coordinates and other data for every segment of the SHT, along with data about underlying land ownership and the requirements of each landowner has for keeping the Trail on their property. (One 10-mile segment of the SHT could have as many as a dozen landowners, with varying leases, easements, agreements, and other details.)

Finally, the trail management techniques and processes the LCCMR grant enables us to adopt will be codified into documents that will also extend the expertise we gain well into the future: a trail-building and maintenance manual, and a volunteer handbook that will form the basis of our volunteer orientation and training for their work on the SHT.

Quantifiable Outcomes



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1. A thorough conditions assessment of the entire 310-mile length of the Superior Hiking Trail, with particular focus on and detailed renewal plans (including cost estimates) for those trail segments (comprising up to 50 miles of trail) requiring early attention due to conservation, safety and public access concerns. We will use recognized trail experts, private and public sector, to conduct the detailed assessments.
2. A route determined for a new two-mile "loop" -- a circular trail coming off the main SHT -- in a less-used part of the SHT east of Duluth that will expand and enrich trail users' experience.
3. A data base that captures all relevant information and documents that, once compiled and organized, will greatly assist the SHTA in planning for repairing, maintaining and renewing the Superior Hiking Trail; and maintaining positive relationships with the landowners on whose good graces we depend for access. Data include multi-layered maps, built structure inventory and condition reports, trail head and campsite details and condition reports, photographs, and landowner information (e.g. easements, leases and other agreements).
4. Three documents that result from SHTA's new approach to trail conditions assessment and evaluation: a trail maintenance manual for use by volunteers, staff and contractors; a volunteer training manual derived from the maintenance manual; and an up-to-date trail conditions inventory that includes recommendations and timelines for projects.

Beneficiaries and Applications

The primary beneficiaries of this project are the people who now use, or will use, the Superior Hiking Trail: they are runners and hikers of all ages; vacationers to the North Shore who spend an afternoon on the Trail; "end-to-end" hikers who come from all over the country to hike the SHT from beginning to end; and casual dog-walkers and evening strollers in Duluth.

Secondary beneficiaries are the agencies, municipalities and private landowners through whose properties the SHT runs. All of them will be pleased to have SHTA develop and implement a more systematic, resource-conscious and data-based process for renewing the SHT.

Other beneficiaries include people closely associated with the SHTA: volunteers who donate thousands of hours a year in service to the Trail; and the staff and board members of the SHTA who, as primary "owners" of the SHT, will benefit by having new management systems in place that will lead to a more resilient, modern, safe and fun Superior Hiking Trail.

Techniques learned and systems developed by way of this project will be applied to the entire Superior Hiking Trail, ensuring its longevity and durability well into the 21st century.

II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

First Update January 31, 2019

We are generally very pleased with our progress on this project. The evaluations are completed and are extremely helpful for us, not just for the sections that were evaluated. The lessons taught in the 30 or so miles that were evaluated through this process are "lessons learned" for the entire SHT.



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We were thrilled with the offer by Slalom for a *pro bono* data base and project management tool. It is not only more than we could have paid for, but more than we ever envisioned as a trail data management tool. We are using it daily which, as expected, is prompting changes in the format and capability. Slalom has agreed to assist with updates and tweaks as they present themselves.

Finally, we continue to harvest ideas and have begun to formulate an outline and a sort of table of contents for the trail management manual. We're operating under the principle of "less is more" in terms of volume of content and the number of individual publications.

Second Update June 30, 2019

We feel well on the way to fulfilling the work we set out to do with this ENRTF grant. Evaluations are complete, and their influence is felt along not just the sections evaluated but along the entire SHT; we are applying "lessons learned" already. The data base project was a dream come true in getting a very sophisticated data base essentially for nothing, and the data base has already affected our planning and map-making processes. The last element remaining is to develop trail maintenance and management materials.

AMENDMENT REQUEST AUGUST 5, 2019

While our original outcomes for this activity are 100% complete, we propose to transfer the balance of funds from the category of data base development in Activity 2, and all the funds budgeted for trail mileage counters (in Activity 1) for more evaluations (Activity 1) whose need has emerged in the past several months. Many of the original evaluations showed potential reroutes for the Trail which were mapped but not "ground-truthed" – meaning a new route was not precisely determined on the ground. We can ground-truth them (about 7 miles) with more evaluation funding.

In addition, we would like to evaluate the SHT's Cascade River State Park loop trail, inside that state park, the same way we had the Split Rock Lighthouse State Park evaluated in the fall of 2018. It has emerged as a loop trail in serious need of renewal and repair. Also, we have been in contact with an expert in backcountry campsite development expert Jeffery Marion, who has a joint appointment with Virginia Tech University and the U.S. Geological Survey. He would review 8-10 of our existing campsites and 3-4 potential sites and advise on development and long-term sustainability issues.

As for the mileage counters: we just don't need them; indeed, we're not sure why they were in the initial proposal.

- Move \$20,167 from Activity 2 ("contracted data base developer") to Activity 1 ("contracted expert trail evaluators")
- Move \$3,000 within Activity 1 from "trail counters" to "contracted expert trail evaluators."

AMENDMENT APPROVED BY LCCMR 8/18/2019

Third Update January 31, 2020

We're pleased with our overall progress. The evaluations we planned for and executed are already informing our work projects. Our trail data base is being populated with essential trail data, biographical information about



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private landowners, maps, and a “to-do” list of projects. In short, we will easily fulfill the outcomes as originally described.

One outcome – producing trail management manuals – has changed. We explain what that is, and why it’s changed, in the following Amendment Request.

AMENDMENT REQUEST

January 2020 Amendment Request:

While the SHTA never really developed or possessed a trail maintenance or operations manual – hence our request to the ENRTF to create one – we have seen since the inception of this project that high-quality, comprehensive, up-to-date, easy-to-use manuals exist all around the country. Many national scenic trail organizations and government resource agencies have these manuals – for use for free or to purchase. It made no sense to reinvent that wheel for the SHT.

Instead, we decided to create two videos that elaborate our trail renewal story so that all SHTA constituents – funders, donors, members, volunteers – understood the fundamental principles of our Trail Renewal Program. Three other videos have been produced that provide specific trail management techniques for volunteers.

Two videos will be produced that explain SHTA’s management principles for the general public and members, and three videos will be created to explain specific trail management techniques for volunteers

- Create a new category under Professional Contracts (Videographer). Budget amount for this category is \$4,000.
 - Move \$2,000 from Personnel (trail operations director wages) to new Videographer
 - Delete graphic designer under Professional Contracts. Move \$1,500 from that line item to Videographer.
 - In the Budget, **zero out** the category Printing (Trail maintenance manuals). Transfer that \$500 to Professional Contracts (videographer).
- Move \$2559 from Travel Expenses to Professional Contracts (expert trail evaluators). Delete graphic designer under Professional Contracts.

All of the above would be added as a new outcome for Activity 3 to replace the previous trail maintenance and operations manual outcome.

Final Update June 30, 2020

We are entirely satisfied with how this project turned out. In fact, ENRTF funding, when it arrived in mid-2018, was the catalyst for a significant shift in direction for how the Superior Hiking Trail Association manages and plans for the Superior Hiking Trail.



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The evaluations this grant supported not only gave us insights into the sections that were evaluated – those we dubbed the “Big Bad Five” – but they also shaped how we see and carry out maintenance and construction for the entire 300-mile SHT. In short, the grant helped bring about a transformation of the Association.

Also, the “free” data base developed by the data services company Slalom freed up \$25,000 in the original budget, which we happily applied to more evaluations. The data base that Slalom developed is in full use at the Association; it is used as a repository for important documents and maps but also as a planning project tool, as all “issues” faced by the physical aspect of the Trail are cataloged there. This replaced an archaic system comprised of spreadsheets, email messages, and people’s memories of conversations.

Project Abstract

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Our database is in use almost daily; it was not intended for dissemination or use outside the SHTA. The trail assessments were heavily scrutinized internally and shared with the affected resource professionals. The educational videos are online for the public. The volunteer manual, once finalized, will serve hundreds of SHTA volunteers and set a new standard for trail maintenance.



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III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Assess and evaluate SHT renewal and reconstruction needs and develop detailed plans to accomplish them.

Description: Starting in the late summer of 2018 and with about 30 miles of trail already determined to be in serious need of rehabilitation for safety, water and land conservation, and public access concerns, we will engage the services of up to 8 public and private sector trail construction experts to evaluate each of these high-priority segments (2 assessors per segment). (They are the Bean and Bear Lakes loop; Split Rock River wayside loop; a re-routing of the original SHT north of Gooseberry Falls State Park; the Britton Peak to Oberg Mountain segment; and the segment from Oberg Mountain to Lutsen recreational area.)

Their evaluations will include detailed recommendations for all obvious and emerging problem areas. (For example: to control erosion on a slope, they could recommend a stairway, re-routing the trail to a less erosive area, placement of erosion control devices, etc.) Their recommendations will come with fairly precise cost estimates (e. g. labor and materials needed). Because so much of the SHT passes through wetlands, we look forward to these experts’ recommendations for getting the trail through these sensitive areas while doing minimal damage to the wetlands.

All these data will be captured in both the new data base to be developed with LCCMR funds (see Activity 2); the trail building techniques proposed by the experts will be incorporated into internal SHTA documents (see Activity 3).

This process will be repeated in the late summer and fall of 2019, with these experts returning to review and assess additional segments of the SHT in need of rehabilitation, using the same criteria as in 2018. (The segments will be initially identified and described by trained volunteer assessors.) The experts will again provide us with their evaluations and recommendations for rehabbing the Trail in these segments, with cost estimates and suggestions for incorporating new trail building techniques. SHTA will in turn incorporate these ideas into its trail building and planning to ensure the longevity and resiliency of the Superior Hiking Trail for the coming decades.

We also want to use the evaluation process, and a trail expert, to help us create one new segment of SHT – a loop (circular) trail in the Sucker River headwaters a few miles west of Duluth. This loop (with a new campsite) would add new richness to the trail experience in the less-traveled southern (or western) end of the SHT. The expert would not build the trail, but rather will “flag” a route that’s optimal for low environmental impact and high user enjoyment, and recommend where built structures would be needed.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. High priority 30 miles of SHT evaluated by expert evaluators and recommendations captured for SHTA use	November 2018
2. Next priority 20-25 miles evaluated by expert evaluators and recommendations captured for SHTA use.	January 2020



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<p>8-10 existing and potential campsites will be evaluated; mapped trail reroutes will be refined and ground-truthed; and the loop trail in Cascade River State Park will be evaluated.</p>	
<p>3. Route for a new SHT loop near Duluth is flagged for development; it incorporates environmental protection and positive trail user experience.</p>	<p>May 2019</p>

First Update January 31, 2019

Outcome 1: This is 100% completed. The evaluators have submitted very detailed reports and recommendations. SHTA staff and board must now review those recommendations, prioritize projects, and begin work on them should our 2018 ENRTF grant be approved this legislative session.

Outcome 2: Funding wasn't sufficient to formally evaluate another 20-25 miles of the Trail. But a formal evaluation may not be necessary: An especially valuable aspect of the evaluations is that what the professional trail evaluators found in these 30 miles of the SHT apply generally to the entire Trail. In other words, what we learned from the intensive evaluations of the high-priority 30 miles can easily be applied over the other 300 miles of the SHT.

Outcome 3: This is 20% completed. We will not develop a new loop trail near Duluth, as a private landowner has objected to the proximity of their land to the new trail. (The new loop trail would not have crossed their property.) Instead, we will flag (mark and site) a new loop trail on Lake County land (permission granted) near the Section 13 area of the SHT. Another possibility is to mark and site a short spur trail near the northern terminus of the SHT; a new spur trail would take hikers to the Pigeon River that forms the U.S-Canada border.

Second Update June 30, 2019

Outcome 1: This is 100% completed. The evaluators have submitted very detailed reports and recommendations. SHTA staff and board is already using this data to plan for trail projects in 2019 and 2020. In addition (and outside the scope of the ENRTF grant), two of the four evaluators have provided training to SHTA staff and volunteer crew leaders, and we expect to engage two of these evaluators for further evaluations (of new sections).

Outcome 2: 100% completed. As mentioned above, we have selected another 4-6 sections to be evaluated by two of the four evaluators we hired for the first round of evaluations. (An amendment request will come to LCCMR about this work under separate cover.)

Outcome 3: This outcome has been batted around since the project started, but we're pleased to report that it is 90% complete – not only planned and flagged, but nearly constructed (and NOT with funds from this grant). In other words, this outcome came out well ahead of what we'd originally intended. We were compelled to do a reroute within the City of Duluth, at Brewer Park, to get the SHT off a highly eroded hillside. This reroute is better for trail users and better for the environment. This reroute will be complete by the end of August.



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Third Update January 31, 2020

We plan to complete two additional evaluations – for the loop trails at Split Lighthouse and Cascade River state parks. Split Rock’s loop trail was already evaluated and a major reroute was called for. Park management didn’t approve the reroute so the new evaluation will consider what built structures will be needed and how the existing trail should be rehabilitated. This will be the first time we have evaluated the loop trail at Cascade.

Final Update June 30, 2020

In the end, we had seven discrete sections of the SHT evaluated and assessed: Split Rock Lighthouse State Park loop trail (twice, as state park officials rejected the first assessment calling for significant rerouting of the trail); section in the Superior National Forest (Britton Peak to Oberg Mountain, and Oberg Mountain to Lutsen ski complex); the “Gooseberry Gap,” that section of the SHT that was lost due to a landowner asking us to leave his premises in 2016; the evaluation found a new route to reconnect the disconnected SHT between Gooseberry and Split Rock state parks; and the Bean and Bear Lakes loop trail, within the boundary of Tettegouche State Park.

We were able to shift grant funding from the data base and other unneeded items in our budget toward more evaluations in the past few months, resulting in two more evaluations: a second one at Split Rock state park, and a first-time evaluation of the loop trail within the confines of Cascade River State Park. Both these evaluations occurred in May and June of 2020 and are complete.

ACTIVITY 2: Develop a data base that will be the central repository for all essential information for every mile of the SHT.

Description. This data base will be searchable and analytical so that we can, for example, determine the conditions and replacement times for all bridges, or find all private properties that have easements, or determine how many campsite latrines need replacement in a given year. The data to be included in the data base include (but are not limited to) multi-layered maps (e.g. soil types, land forms, ownership and parcel boundaries); photographs; names of volunteers assigned to particular segments; notes and observations from volunteers and hikers; agreements with various landowners (easements, leases); and the condition and presence/absence of signs.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Data base developer is hired and proposes template for data base	November 2018
2. Data base is completed and tested by developer and SHTA staff	March 2019
3. Existing data is transferred to data base (input will be continued beyond this project)	July 2019



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First Update January 31, 2019

Outcome 1: This outcome has been completed. Slalom, a national IT and organizational planning firm headquartered in Seattle with operations in Minneapolis, is providing the data base that also incorporates project planning tools. This is a pro bono offer from Slalom. We will soon submit an amendment request as it is unlikely we will need to spend all the funds allotted in the ENRTF grant for data base development.

Outcome 2: This is in progress. A “beta” version of the data base will be ready by the end of March from the creator, Slalom.

Outcome 3: This process has not begun yet, but a plan is in place, with both volunteers and hourly assistants being engaged for data entry.

Second Update June 30, 2019

Outcome 1: This outcome has been completed. Slalom, a national IT and organizational planning firm headquartered in Seattle with operations in Minneapolis, created, pro bono, the data base that also incorporates project planning tools.

Outcome 2: 85% complete. We are using the data base daily and, in so doing, finding updates and tweaks that data base developer Slalom has agreed to take care of. We will submit an amendment request as we cannot spend all the funds allotted in the ENRTF grant for data base development.

Outcome 3: 50% complete. We have hired a data base assistant to transfer important documents mostly pertaining to private landowner agreements (e.g. easements) and the leases we have with public agencies.

Third Update January 31, 2020

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3: This activity is 95% complete; all that is left is to upload documents from our file storage server to the (cloud) data base. This has been an exceptionally useful tool for the SHTA.

Final Update June 30, 2020

DONE! This data base is fully operational. We would like some tweaks done by its creators at Slalom, but the coronavirus affected their staffing. (This was a pro bono project on their part.)

Another unexpected outcome of this element of our project was the development of new maps of the Superior Hiking Trail. While no ENRTF grant funds were used to produce these maps, it turns out that the intern we hired to upload documents to our data base is a GIS specialist. We asked her to develop simple maps for the data base, which she did. But with separate funding from the Minnesota Coastal Program, we were able to take those simple templates up a few notches to create highly-developed and detailed maps.

ACTIVITY 3: Develop and distribute two documents critical to maintaining a high-quality Superior Hiking Trail.



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Description: The organization will learn a great deal from the trail experts we bring in as trail evaluators. From their recommendations and prescriptions, we intend to learn the latest time-tested trail construction and renewal techniques. Those techniques will be documented and presented in two forms: an extensive, first-of-its-kind (for us) trail operations and maintenance manual that will form the basis of all trail development for the SHT, thereby ensuring sustainable trail work that is consistent from one end of the trail to the other. Part of that assurance is inculcating trail volunteers with new trail building standards (including safe tool use). This content will be encapsulated in a trail volunteer handbook.

Content for both documents will come not only from input provided by the expert trail evaluators, but also from sister trail organizations (e.g. North Country Trail Association, Ice Age Trail Alliance) and natural resource agencies in our region.

Another documentary product of this LCCMR-funded project will be a trail conditions and renewal inventory – you might call it a strategic plan – that will be for internal use only and will guide SHTA’s management of the SHT for the next several years.

Outcomes	Completion Date
Two videos will be produced that explain SHTA’s management principles for the general public and members, and three videos will be created to explain specific trail management techniques for volunteers	January 2020

First Update January 31, 2019

Outcome 1: 25% complete. Our trail evaluators have provided plenty of trail construction and management specifications that can be incorporated into in-house trail building guidance and handbooks.

Outcome 2: Not yet begun.

Second Update June 30, 2019

Outcome 1: 35% complete. We’re at the point now of deciding a broad content outline that includes general trail building principles (including landscape architecture principles) and the U.S. Forest Service’s Trail Management Operations guidelines.

Outcome 2: 15% complete. We will NOT produce an assessment and renewal inventory, as that is being captured in the trail data base. And we’re thinking that rather than a “trail volunteer handbook,” we will instead produce discrete and self-standing handbooks on particular trail maintenance practices that most volunteers will use, e.g. lopping (brush cutting and trimming), and water diversion devices.



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Third Update January 31, 2020

As explained in our narrative on the preceding page, we determined creating printed manuals was not necessary and instead put our education, information and training funds from this grant to producing five videos, four of which can be found on SHTA's web site, superiorhiking.org/who-we-are-shta and superiorhiking.org/volunteer

Final Update June 30, 2020

We achieved this outcome. But in addition to the videos, we decided to develop a published volunteer training manual anyway – a “Trail Maintenance 101” handbook designed for volunteers. This handbook will be finished in late July 2020. We would be happy to provide a final copy to LCCMR; we could also provide a draft copy (though it's just a draft and not looking like it will eventually).

IV. DISSEMINATION:

Though the processes and documents that will be produced as a result of this LCCMR grant are largely for internal purposes, our aim is to make them exemplary and possible models for other trail organizations to emulate. To the extent we apply them on the ground, anyone using the Superior Hiking Trail will know something new and good is happening.

The trail-building processes that emerge from this project will be well known to just about anyone who has a close encounter with the SHT: SHTA staff, trail volunteers, our agency and municipal partners, and discerning trail users. The trail maintenance manual and volunteer handbook will end up in the hands of anyone who does physical (construction, maintenance) work on the Trail.

Progress we make on this project and resulting changes in trail management will be regularly communicated to the nearly 10,000 individuals and households that comprise the SHTA membership and outreach list.

First Update January 31, 2019

Where appropriate, because it's still early in the process, we tell the world of the trail evaluation process and that it is funded through LCCMR. We are just beginning to disseminate the findings of the evaluations to the county, state and federal agencies whose lands the SHT crosses. Any significant changes to the Trail, especially rerouting the Trail onto a new path, must be approved by these landowning agencies. The data we're getting from the evaluations is ideal for them to make regulatory and permitting decisions.

Second Update June 30, 2019 We have gotten significant attention to and “mileage” from the assessments. (In some cases, entire documents, but in most cases, summaries.) They've been shared with partner trail organizations, trail construction contractors, agency and local government officials, and our members and volunteers. Every trail maintenance and construction principle and practice in use heretofore at the Superior Hiking Trail Association has been “disrupted,” in the best sense of the term, because of this project.

Third Update January 31, 2020



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Producing the videos has been a very effective (and reasonably cheap) means to tell our trail renewal story and explain to volunteers new standards for trail maintenance and construction. With each evaluation, we communicate the findings to our supporters so they know what we are learning and how we expect to apply those learnings on the Trail.

Final Update June 30, 2020

We generally don't make the assessment reports public, but we do provide them to people who ask for them. We certainly supply the state park officials with these assessments.

The videos we produced are on the internet for the world to see. The volunteer trail maintenance manual will be distributed to the hundreds of volunteers who put in time on the SHT. The videos and the manual contain/will contain the requisite language explaining the support of the ENRTF grant.



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V. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:

See Budget Spreadsheet

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:

Does not apply

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:

Does not apply

Total Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:

Portions of the time devoted to this project by two FTEs of the Superior Hiking Trail will be supported by LCCMR funds. Per a conversation with LCCMR staff on 11/27/17, the SHTA's trail operations director, as a new staff position (to be hired by April 2018), can be supported in part with LCCMR funds. Trail development director Jo Swanson's time devoted to this project (\$7,000) will be back-filled by another SHTA staffer, who will replace Jo's time in our trail information center in Two Harbors.

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours:	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE:
Trail operations director (over 2 years)	375 hours over two years
Trail development director (over 2 years)	260 hours over two years

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

Does not apply

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours:	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE:
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B. Other Funds:

SOURCE OF AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS	Amount Proposed	Amount Spent	Status and Timeframe
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:			
Superior Hiking Trail Assn funds (member dues and donations)	\$ 50,000	\$	These funds are always available and will be applied where needed through the duration of the project (i.e. staff time, staff expense, non-mileage travel expense, and other contractors not paid by LCCMR funds)
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:			



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MN Lake Superior Coastal Program	\$ 20,000	\$	Grant is pending; could be awarded by March 2019
In-Kind Services to Be Applied to Project During Project Period			
SHTA volunteers (500 hours x \$20/hour x 2 years)	\$10,000		Volunteers form the backbone of physical work on and conditions assessment of the SHTA
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:			
	\$	\$	NONE
Other Funding History:			
	\$	\$	N/A



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VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:

A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role

Does not apply

B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Tim Malzahn	Ice Age Trail Alliance trail operations director	Sister trail organization	Pro bono advice and counsel
Matt Davis and Bill Menke	North Country Trail Association – trail managers	Sister trail organization	Pro bono advice and counsel
Derrick Passe	Project Coordinator	Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District	Wetland protection and mitigation
Park managers and staff		MN DNR Parks and Trails Division	Advice, counsel, collaboration
Jonathan Benson	Asst. Ranger for Recreation and Wilderness	U.S. Forest Service – Superior National Forest	Advice, counsel, collaboration

VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

It's very clear that after these evaluations are conducted and recommendations made that we will have considerable work to do to implement changes. We expect those recommended "repairs" to cost upwards of \$250,000 for the most degraded sections of the SHT. With a clear plan for trail renewal in hand, we are confident donors, members and supporters of the SHT will step up to support the trail they love. We certainly plan to step up our outreach and communication to members and donors. (We are hiring a development and communications director in February 2018.)

We also expect to turn again to the LCCMR to support the trail building work that this project reveals.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- The project is for 2 years, will begin on July 1, 2018, and end on June 30, 2020 (or sooner).
- Periodic project status update reports will be submitted per the schedule on Page 3 of this work plan.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2020.



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IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:

- A. **Budget Spreadsheet** attached
- B. **Visual Component or Map** – not required

**Attachment A:
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2018 Budget Spreadsheet**

Project Title: Enhancement Plan for Superior Hiking Trail
Legal Citation: M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 02, Subd. 09f
Project Manager: Denny Caneff, Executive Director
Organization: Superior Hiking Trail Association
College/Department/Division: N/A
M.L. 2018 ENRTF Appropriation: \$100,000
Project Length and Completion Date: Two years: 7/1/2018 – 6/30/2020
Date of Report: March 13, 2020



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Revised Budget March 13, 2020	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM			
Personnel (Wages and Benefits) - Overall	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$0
SHTA trail operations director – LCCMR funding covers approximately 9% of this position’s total cost over 2 years (\$134K salary and fringe). 375 FTE hours over 2 years. This is a new position as of 4/1/18 (Total estimated amount \$12,000) March 13, 2020 Budget Amendment Amount = \$10,000		\$10,000	
Trail development director (Jo Swanson) – LCCMR funding covers about 6.2% of this position’s total cost over 2 years (\$112,560 salary&fringe). 260 FTE hours over 2 years. Time put to this project by this staff member will be back-filled by SHTA trail information center coordinator. (Total estimated amount \$7,000)		\$7,000	
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts - Overall			
Expert trail evaluators (competitive bid process) (Total estimated amount \$69,626)	\$69,626	\$69,626	\$0
Data base developer (competitive bid process) (Total estimated amount \$2833)	\$2,833	\$2,833	\$0
Data input intern (Total estimated amount \$5,000)	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
Videographer	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$0
Travel expenses in Minnesota			
2,850 miles @ .54 per mile = \$1541	\$1,541	\$1,541	\$0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0