

## **General**

This section provides the basic information about the park or trail and the organizations responsible for it.

Park/Trail ID #

15-023D

Funding Application

17-0079-F

Park/Trail Name

Big Falls Campground and Horse Camp

Last Update July 11, 2017

District

1

**Project Name** 

Land Acquisition, Expansion, Facility Construction and Infrastructure Rehabilitation

## **Project Description**

The City of Big Falls is seeking grant funding consideration to begin implementation of the Big Falls Campground and Horse Camp Master Plan by acquiring a property adjacent to the existing campground. This would add 9.8 acres of scenic riverfront land and 770 feet of Big Fork River shoreline to the park. It would enable formal access to the Big Fork River State Water Trail directly from the campgrounds. This is supported by Action Step DS 1 in the implementation plan. The map included in the master plan identifies the strategic location of the proposed acquisition in relation to the existing park. Additional attached parcel maps and photos better demonstrate the quality of land and river frontage. The current owners would like to see their long-held family land become part of the regional park for public benefit; in turn, they are willing to work with the City during the grant funding cycle to sell the land. This offer is time sensitive and the property will be sold to a private party if funding is not secured soon, since the owners cannot be expected to hold it indefinitely for the City. The City believes that this is a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to set aside high-quality land for public recreation. The city is also requesting funding to complete Action Step DM 4, to construct a new restroom/shower house located in the center of the park. This building would be compliant with ADA standards and meet MN Department of Health requirements for capacity and distance to camp sites. It has been determined that trying to enhance and update the existing restroom to be ADA compliant (Action Step DS 2) will not be feasible, due to the age, size and condition of the building. (Photos of the existing building are attached.) In order to construct the new facility at a central location, water and sewer infrastructure will need to be upgraded and extended. The existing small capacity Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) would be abandoned, and new facilities connected to the municipal sanitary system. While the connection to the city sanitary system is necessary to expand the campground, it is also crucial to protecting the clean waters of the Big Fork River. The city and city engineer feel that while this major construction is being done with the water and sewer lines, it would be prudent to plan concurrent implementation of Action Step DM 1, 1.1 and 1.2, to further expand the number

of campsites, provide water and electric hookups where feasible and construct an RV dump station. All of this development is interrelated, and should be incorporated into one bid contract to ensure consistency and overall cost savings. This would also minimize the total construction time and disruption to campground visitors. We are further requesting funding to implement Action Steps DS 4.1, development of the "River's Edge Area" to include a large group pavilion. The pavilion design would reflect the elements of the natural surroundings, including rock veneer and wood timbers. We feel that the development of this area is important to the overall success of the expanded park, by offering the public a truly unique venue for special events. The City realizes that this is an extensive funding request, and understands that implementation may need to occur in phases due to limited funds available.

## **Project Area Maps**

Location in the State of MN

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/MN Map 3155e0.jpeg Koochiching County Recreation Map

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/Outdoor Recreation

Map (PDF) 201505131146022463 (1) f364e9.pdf

State Water Trail Map with Campground at center

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/bigfork canoe

map\_dbe347.pdf

Local Area Map

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/General Area

Map\_a87e47.pdf

Organization Lead Contact Lead Contact

City of Big Falls Full Name Title

Joan Nelson City Clerk/Treasurer

Mailing AddressCityStatePO Box 196Big FallsMinnesota

Zip Phone Email

56627 2182763300 bigfalls@paulbunyan.net

## **Funding**

## **Legacy Pillars:**

- Connect People and the Outdoors
- Acquire Land and Create Opportunities
- · Take Care of What We Have

## **Project Outcomes**

#### Connection to Pillars

The proposed expansion and enhancements would be an ideal project to help fulfill the vision of the 25-Year Parks & Trails Legacy Plan. This project adheres to the guiding principles of the Legacy Plan, of accessibility, stewardship, connectivity, inclusiveness and regional significance.

ACQUIRE LAND AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES. The acquisition of the 9.8-acre parcel would provide opportunities for members of the public to gain access to a very unique area along the Big Fork River and scenic surrounding natural land. This property has approximately 700 feet of pristine, natural shoreline, with additional island footage off shore. It is the only property that abuts the current park that would allow river side expansion to supplement this existing regional park. Photos have been attached to demonstrate the scenic, high-quality natural setting that can be found in this parcel. Due to the unique nature of this parcel, if it is not purchased by the city in this grant funding cycle, the owner's will place it on the market, and it will inevitably be sold to a private party. The city believes that this is one of those "once in a lifetime" opportunities to set aside high-quality land for recreational purposes for the public, and would qualify as one of the strategic acquisitions identified in the Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails Legacy Plan.

CONNECT PEOPLE AND THE OUTDOORS. The additional land would enable the city to increase the number of campsites, create programs and host various events, creating opportunities for more campers and visitors to enjoy and experience the great northern Minnesota outdoors. In order for this to happen, the aging, under sized, non-ADA compliant restroom building and infrastructure must be replaced. Per MN Department of Health campground regulations, the current facilities cannot support additional campsites. A new facility would provide ADA compliance, as would new camp sites in near proximity, with accessible paths. The design also includes family friendly, non-gender specific shower rooms separate from the restrooms. These enhancements would remove barriers, and enable persons with disabilities to have equal access to our park. This building would also have an outdoor alcove for visitor information, such as maps and area brochures. The city proposes to work with local organizations, such as the Community Education & Recreation Committee (CERC), to develop programs to encourage outdoor, active lifestyles. Several ideas have already been envisioned by the CERC, including children's community flower beds, nature walk programs and concert or art events at the "River's Edge" area. The land would also encourage use of the Big Fork River State Water Trail, as it is situated below the rapids and suitable for canoe or kayak launching. Currently, visitors have access only at a point on the other side of the river, as shown on the attachment "access map." The land would also provide an area for future development of rustic hiking trail loops, with paths along the shore, and through forested areas.

TAKE CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE. City ownership would enable more control and protection of this pristine natural resource as outlined in the Natural Resources Management section of the Master Plan. The city would be able to work with the guidance of the Big Fork River Board to monitor and preserve the natural vegetation and shoreline. The city could also work to eradicate invasive species from the the shoreline and wooded areas. All future campsite development will be away from the Big Fork River, with preservation of the natural shoreline.

Rehabilitation of the sanitary system to include abandoning the aging Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) and connecting to the municipal sanitary system is critical to protecting the water quality of the Big Fork River. A letter from Koochiching County Environmental Services is attached to further demonstrate the importance of connection to the municipal system. As stated in the letter, the SSTS has an expected life span of 20 years under ideal conditions, which the campground is not, and the current system is now 17 years old. Its abandonment would help to ensure reduced possibility of impacting the clean waters of the Big Fork River.

Rehabilitation of the current facility to include accessibility components would help to ensure a high-quality camping experience in an existing regional park - one of the stated goals of the Legacy Plan.

## **Connection to Regional Values**

As demonstrated in the Big Falls Campground Master Plan, the park is a highly valued, popular regional hub, offering incredible connectivity and accessibility, whether traveling by motorized vehicle, off-highway vehicle, or a canoe or kayak. The proposed land acquisition would enable the diverse group of park users to have increased access to the river's scenic, natural features that are currently not accessible, due to private ownership. The additional acres and shoreline would allow development of programs or facilities to meet the needs of residents and visitors to the region, such as hiking trails and carry in water access. It would also serve as a site to develop campsites or future camper cabins to accommodate more visitors to the park.

Guest data from prior years suggests that the park serves a wide audience, from many areas of the state and county, and even other countries. Guest data from our 2016 season demonstrates that a high percentage of guests originate from our local tri-county region of Koochiching, Itasca and Beltrami, approximately 50%. Many guests visit multiple times per season, and come back year after year. Due to the fact that we continue to have various dates throughout the season in which the campground is full to capacity, with guests having to be turned away, or not enough electric hookups, we are confident that our park is truly a valued and utilized regional facility. In addition to camping, group day events are also common at the facility, including weddings, reunions, nursing home resident field trips, and other social gatherings. Completion of the proposed "River's Edge" event pavilion would benefit these groups by providing more open space, a spectacular river view, and increased parking capabilities.

As mentioned above, a large portion of guests visiting the park are from a tri-county region. Our location provides a very unique opportunity to camp and connect with nature, without having to travel long distances - less than an hour for a large number of repeat guests. For many in the region, it is a weekend destination that offers premier recreational options, without having to take time off from work, or incur large travel expenses. Many are able to leave from cities such as Bemidji or International Falls on Friday after work, and still have time to enjoy an evening campfire, hike, sunset kayak ride or fishing off the rocks. It also serves as a headquarters or rest stop along the way for ATV or horseback riding enthusiasts along the Blue Ox ATV Trail, or many miles of open marked and unmarked forest trail system in the area. It is an important portage for water traveler's as they make their way along the Big Fork River State Water Trail. For these river travelers, the expanded park would provide camp sites near a carry in access with canoe and kayak storage.

As with many small communities in Minnesota, our city is experiencing economically tough times. In the past several years, we have seen the loss of two of our major employers, Page and Hill Forest Products and Big Falls Mink Ranch. Our population has experienced a decline, and local businesses struggle. Tourism is one area that offers a chance for economic growth for Big Falls. Due to the high quality of natural, outdoor activities available here, people are drawn to the region. There is also a current movement by local DNR offices and communities to explore the possibility of developing a birding trail throughout the county, which would draw a whole new clientele. The funding of this project would enable the city to continue implementing the master plan to create more campsites, and offer more programs and recreational opportunities. Increased tourism would result in a much-needed higher traffic flow for the local businesses, and may spur opportunities for new growth.

There is currently a collaborative effort throughout Koochiching County called "Voyage Forward." (www.voyageforward.org), which began after a major layoff by the county's largest employer, and involved an in-depth study by the consultant firm, Newark-Grubb, to determine the best course of action to move forward with economic growth. Tourism came out in the study as a top area of focus. The result of this study has been a cooperative effort with representatives from all communities within the County to develop a plan of action to move Koochiching County forward through economic distress. In involves several "Destiny Driver" groups to address varied needs of the community, with one such group focusing on efforts to increase tourism. Several members of the Big Falls community participate on this team, including the Big Falls mayor and city clerk. The recent designation of our campground as a Regional Park, and the proposed project tie in perfectly with the vision of Voyage Forward. As the City moves forward to implement the master plan, it will benefit from the plans of the group to actively promote the entire County as a premier tourist destination using specific marketing strategies. The City will continue to work with this collaborative effort to promote the hybrid campground/wayside/park by increasing awareness of and use of this scenic, natural park.

## **Project Readiness**

#### **Project Lead**

The city clerk, Joan Nelson, under the authority of the City Council, will be the city's project manager. Ms. Nelson has been the city clerk for over 14 years, and is very familiar with all aspects of the city and campground. She will be working closely with the city engineers at Widseth, Smith & Nolting (WSN) to manage the project. Over the past 5 years, the clerk has successfully worked with this firm to complete a \$2.8 Million water project that included a new water tower, treatment plant, distribution lines and water meters.

Work on the water project included federal grants and loans through USDA RD, and required interim financing and bonding. Qualifications have been attached the city clerk and city engineers, Curt Meyer and Denise Koenigsberg.

The project manager heads a campground committee made up of two city council members, the city maintenance supervisor, city engineers and two members of the public. This committee has met over the last 6 months to develop the plans and concepts presented in this application. All plans and recommendations from this committee were presented to the city council at a public meeting, for discussion and/or revision and for final approval. This committee will continue to meet throughout the implementation of the Master Plan.

#### Implementation Timeline

The survey, design and permitting work for the infrastructure and buildings would begin as soon as the DNR contract was fully executed, no later than July of 2018. The design phase would continue through fall and winter. The land would be acquired as soon as funding was approved and the purchase agreement signed in July or August of 2018. The city could then begin working to make the river access point available to the public. Project bidding would occur in February or March of 2019, with construction to begin that spring, as soon as weather permits. The project closeout is expected to be complete by October of 2019.

#### Design Standards

All projects will be designed by registered Architects and Engineers licensed in the State of Minnesota. The water and sewer construction will follow MDH, MPCA, Minnesota City Engineer's Association and the 10 States Standards guidelines. Facilities will comply with applicable building codes and standards, including Minnesota Building Code, Energy Code, Accessibility Code, Plumbing Code, Electrical Code, Fire Code, as well as MDH Park Sanitary Requirement and Americans with Disabilities Act. The qualifications of the project engineers are attached.

## Project Cost Breakdown

**ACQUISITION** 

\$143,000 To acquire the 9.8-acre Riverside Parcel adjoining the existing campground.

\$12,000 For demolition, well sealing and septic abandonment on acquired land.

#### MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMPONENTS

\$570,200 For design and construction of an ADA compliant Restroom/Visitor Information Building to be centrally located to meet MN Department of Health Regulations. A conceptual sketch, plans and cost details are attached. This phase must be completed before any site expansion can occur in the park.

\$552,830.00 For Infrastructure and Site Updates. This includes 18 new sites, all sites with water and 50-amp electric hookups, 4 sites with sewer hookups, 3 ADA compliant camp sites, an RV dump station, abandonment of the SSTS and connection to municipal sewer system, lighting and driveways. A detailed preliminary engineer's estimate is attached. This estimate shows separate breakdowns of improvements to the existing primary campground and those to the addition. However, due to the interconnection of the design, significant engineering and construction cost savings would be realized by completing both areas simultaneously utilizing one design phase and one contractor. This implementation step must coincide with the new restroom construction due to its proposed centralized location, and to meet sanitary needs of the larger capacity facility.

\$385,100 For design and construction of the River's Edge Pavilion Park Shelter and Event Venue. A conceptual plan, sketch and cost details are attached. While the city feels this step is vital to the economic development of our community, if funding is not available, this could be implemented in a subsequent application.

## **Funding Request Breakdown**

Please use valid currency formats (e.g. \$100,000/100,000/100000)

## **Grant Funding Request**

\$1,663,130

Local Match #1 Funder #1

Local Match #2 Funder #2

0

Local Match #3 Funder #3

Local Match #4 Funder #4

0

Local Match #4 Funder #5

0

## Non-Eligible Local Match

18000

## **Non-Eligible Item Description**

The City of Big Falls has already or will utilize it's economic development and tourism monies to fund the following Non-Eligible items:

\$4,000 Appraisal Cost paid in 2017

\$3,000 New entrance sign already built and to be installed in 2017 - (Master Plan implementation element DM 6)

\$4,500 Projected Boundary Survey Costs (The city is trying to work with the Koochiching County Surveying Office to help with this item as a County match)

\$4,500 Projected Archeological Survey Costs

\$2,000 Projected Legal Fees

#### **Total Funding**

\$1,663,130

#### Percentage of local match

0

## **Completion Timeframe**

16

## Funder #1

City of Big Falls

**Funder #1 Resolutions** 

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/2017-10 GMRPTRESOLUTION 1a342c.pdf

## Funder #2

n/a

Funder #3

n/a

Funder #4

n/a

Funder #5

n/a

# **Attachments**

Doc Name	Description	Url
Additional Attachment	Koochiching County Letter of Support	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/Koochicing Co. Letter of Support_ccf6df.pdf
Project Area Map	Location in the State of MN	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/MN Map_3155e0.jpeg
Project Area Map	Koochiching County Recreation Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/OutdoorRecreation Map (PDF) 201505131146022463 (1) f364e9.pdf
Project Area Map	State Water Trail Map with Campground at center	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/bigforkcanoemapdbe347.pdf
Additional Attachment	Proposed area of new hookups in existing sites	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20160623_134224671_ee5bac.jpg
Additional Attachment	Current deteriorating/uninsulated structure	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170606_132734361_HDR_b15c7b.jpg
Additional Attachment	Existing shower is not ADA compliant	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170711_144507384_52e6e7.jpg
Additional Attachment	Exisiting toilet facilities are not ADA compliant	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170711_144532371_afe12d.jpg
Additional Attachment	Existing Restroom Building	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20170727 114122006 180503.jpg
Additional Attachment	Proposed River's Edge Area	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20150611_183859253_c49e70.jpg

Additional Attachment Tree line of future proposed forest http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u walking trail ploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20 160817 102227751 HDR 33bd0 2.jpg Additional Attachment Off shoreline river island http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u ploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20 160818 130506687 HDR b1606 8.jpg Additional Attachment Shoreline view from across the http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u ploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20 River 160816 162839076 HDR e18cd 0.ipa Additional Attachment Acquisition Property Photohttp://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u ploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20 Riverside Gathering Space 160816 161101650 b0b63d.jpg Additional Attachment http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u River Access Map ploads/funding/17-0079-F/Access Map 21dead.png Additional Attachment Photo of Proposed Water Access http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u ploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20 160818 125044625 HDR 37d97 c.jpg Additional Attachment **Acquisition Land Appraisal** http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u ploads/funding/17-0079-F/Hufnag el Appraisal Rpt 6ad3ee.pdf http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u Project Area Map Local Area Map ploads/funding/17-0079-F/General Area Map a87e47.pdf Funder Resolution One http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u ploads/funding/17-0079-F/2017-10 GMRPTRESOLUTION 1a342c.pd Additional Attachment http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u Big Falls Master Plan ploads/funding/17-0079-F/Big Falls Municipal Campground Master Plan 2016 e0b924.docx Additional Attachment http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u Bigfork Valley Hospital Letter of ploads/funding/17-0079-F/Bigfork Support Valley Letter of Support Big Falls 9ef5f1.pdf Additional Attachment http://dms.amrptcommission.org/u Representative Letter of Support ploads/funding/17-0079-F/Bakk Ecklund Support df5da3.pdf Additional Attachment City Clerk- Resume/Qualifications http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/u ploads/funding/17-0079-F/Joan Nelson Qualifications 585cf1.pdf

Additional Attachment	The Big Fork River at the Big Falls Campground during spring high water.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20 150520 204258313 HDR 3d82f5 .jpg
Additional Attachment	Kayaks just down river from the proposed access site on the acquisition property	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20 150613 123353853 HDR db808 0.jpg
Additional Attachment	View from picnic site on the park's river island. Accessible only from the highway 71 bridge pedestrian crossing.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20150601_191247833_44f00d.jpg
Additional Attachment	Unique walking/ATV trail over a historic rail bridge across the Big Fork River.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170403_172138238_HDR_0ba5d7.jpg
Additional Attachment	Even winter time draws visitors for the spectacular winter views.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/img_47_09_c238ce.jpg
Additional Attachment	Spring time visitors watching the spawning fish make their way upstream. In the background is shore of the acquisition property.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20170415 141939704 HDR 4d66ff.jpg
Additional Attachment	Voyage Forward Letter of Support	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/VoyageForward Letter ofSupport_08f22c.pdf
Additional Attachment	Riverside Parcel Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/RiversideParcel Map_ee3c9a.pdf
Additional Attachment	Fall color surround the remnants of the historic spillway alongside the Big Falls Park	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/fallcamp15280b8.jpg
Additional Attachment	Wayside rest visitors take a break to enjoy to view.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_0016 copy_d51600.jpg
Additional Attachment	Engineer's Resume	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/MeyerCurt Resume cf3321.pdf
Additional Attachment	"The Falls" along side the Big Falls Campground.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/deephole4fd02c.jpg
Additional Attachment	Proposed Pavilion Budget	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/1CPavilion Budget170725_1ded40.pdf

Additional Attachment	Proposed Restroom Budget	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/2CRestroom Shower Laundry BldgBudget 170725_42c205.pdf
Additional Attachment	Restroom Floor Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/RestroomFloor Plan 15d4d3.pdf
Additional Attachment	Restroom Design Concept	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/RestroomConcept Design_08704c.pdf
Additional Attachment	Architect Resume	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/KoenigsbergDeniseResumeOfcb3e.pdf
Additional Attachment	Pavilion Floor Plan	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/PavilionFloor Plan_d2a1db.pdf
Additional Attachment	Pavilion Design Concept	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/PavilionDesign 2 538f70.pdf
Additional Attachment	The driveway connecting the existing park with the proposed acquisition	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170726_145122461_a7b04f.jpg
Additional Attachment	Building for demo	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170726_144950512_221f59.jpg
Additional Attachment	Native vegetation along the rocky shore during low water season. A favorite place for visitor to climb and hike. A great place to fish in the spring high water	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170726_145653573_78cde1.jpg
Additional Attachment	View from off-shore island looking toward the existing campground.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170726_145944185_c875cb.jpg
Additional Attachment	Driveway and wooded area on proposed acquisition property	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG_20170726_144338872_48d6af.jpg
Additional Attachment	Letter from Koochiching County Environmental in support on connecting to municipal sanitary system	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/KoochEnvironmental Letter_5cbc6e.pdf
Additional Attachment	Preliminary Engineer's Estimate	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/Preliminary Engineer Estimate 28d269.pdf
Additional Attachment	View from off-shore Island. During low water seasons, it is accessible by rustic paths.	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0079-F/IMG 20170726 145535919 45e8be.jpg