

## Qualifying Criteria

### *Lady Slipper Scenic Byway Waysides and Interpretive Sites*

#### ***1. Project Eligibility***

*The project criterion for this project is “Scenic or Historic Highway Programs” which includes projects related to scenic highways such as turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas.*

*The proposed projects sites are within the corridor of the Lady Slipper Scenic Byway which is both a State and National Forest Scenic Byway. The Byway includes Beltrami County Highway 39 and Cass County Highway 10.*

*The project will allow travelers to enjoy and interact with the Lady Slippers Scenic Byway’s important features as identified in the Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. The project will also increase traveler safety along the Byway.*

*These projects were identified in the 2005 Corridor Management Plan. The Plan specifically identifies the following transportation improvements: 1) Create a wayside area outside of the Pennington Bog Scientific and Natural Area where visitors can photograph and view orchids. 2) Create an interpretive site and wayside area for the Mississippi River and 3) Create points of interest wayside areas to feature important natural environments along the byway.*

*Representatives from Beltrami County and the Lady Slipper Scenic Byway have consulted with Matthew Dyrdaahl of the HRDC in Bemidji and have received the application.*

## **2. Project Costs and Local Funding Match**

*Beltrami County is committed to providing the 20% matching funds. Parking lots, interpretive signing and pull-offs are located on National Forest Land or land managed by the State of Minnesota. Both agencies are committed to sustaining these amenities through a long-term maintenance agreement.*

<b><i>Construction Cost</i></b>	<b><i>Unit Cost</i></b>	<b><i>Unit</i></b>	<b><i>Quantity</i></b>	<b><i>Total Cost</i></b>
<b><i>Mississippi River Site Parking Area and Turn Lanes</i></b>	<b><i>\$124,000</i></b>	<b><i>Ea.</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>\$84,000</i></b>
<b><i>Wetland Site Parking Area and Turn Lanes</i></b>	<b><i>\$88,000</i></b>	<b><i>Ea.</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>\$124,000</i></b>
<b><i>Lady Slipper Site Pull Off and Turn Lanes</i></b>	<b><i>\$92,000</i></b>	<b><i>Ea.</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>\$92,000</i></b>
<b><i>Interpretive Signs and Kiosks</i></b>	<b><i>\$5,000</i></b>	<b><i>Ea.</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>	<b><i>\$15,000</i></b>
<b><i>Total Eligible Construction Cost</i></b>				<b><i>\$315,000</i></b>

<b><i>Other Project Costs</i></b>	<b><i>Total Cost</i></b>
<b><i>Easements</i></b>	<b><i>\$4,000</i></b>
<b><i>Environmental Review</i></b>	<b><i>\$21,000</i></b>
<b><i>Design/ Administration</i></b>	<b><i>\$32,000</i></b>
<b><i>Total Ineligible Cost</i></b>	<b><i>\$67,000</i></b>

## **3. Facility Operation and Maintenance**

*Maintenance of the pull-offs and parking areas would be a joint effort between Beltrami County and the U.S. Forest Service. Beltrami County will provide snow removal at pull-offs and parking areas and perform right of way maintenance. The U.S. Forest Service and volunteers from the Lady Slipper Scenic Byway organization will maintain the interpretive signing, trails and recreation related infrastructure. No day to day operations will be required at these amenities.*

#### **4. Submitting Agency**

*Beltrami County is the project sponsor and will be submitting the application on behalf of the Ladyslipper Scenic Byway organization. The useful life of this project will be approximately 50 years for the waysides and trails and 20 years for the interpretive signage.*

#### **5. Relationship to the Transportation System**

##### **Function of the Project**

*This project will enhance the travelers experience along Beltrami County Road 39 and Cass County 10, a State Scenic Byway, by contributing to their safety. Currently people want to explore can't pull off the highway and totally and so creates a significant safety hazard. Creating places for the public to park their vehicles off of the highway shoulder will provide a significant safety improvement. Also, well designed amenities will allow the travelers to stop, walk and visit key interpretive stops along the byway, increasing the positive experience of their visit.*

*The first proposed interpretive wayside site is an expansive wetland ecosystem directly adjacent to the highway.. Wetlands are incredibly diverse and interesting landscapes and this location is a perfect spot to see a hawk, eagle or osprey. Wetlands are a common sight along the byway and this wetland affords a convenient opportunity for interpretation.*

*The second interpretive wayside high lights the Mississippi River, which is an important resource along the Byway. The Lady Slipper Byway shares a corridor with the Great River Road, a national scenic byway at this location. A trail to the river will be constructed from the parking lot. This trail could eventually connect to a proposed pedestrian walkway across the River that leads to the Cass River Local Indian Council Meeting Hall and Forest Service Knutson Dam recreation area on Cass Lake.*

*The third interpretive wayside site is north of the Pennington Bog Scientific and Natural Area. Travelers can stop and see the Byway's trademark, the showy lady slipper orchid. This is an ideal location because it has an existing population of these unique orchids. The area will also be a transplant location for lady slippers that will be re-located because of the highway reconstruction.*

*The Lady Slipper Scenic Byway Board commissioned a Corridor Management plan in 2005 which assessed the resources along the byway and outlined Management goals, objectives and possible future activities. The Byway Board is interested in allowing visitors and residents of the area an opportunity to experience the Byway's natural, recreational and historic sites.*

**Proximity to the existing system**

*Each of these amenities is immediately adjacent to the road. The Byway is programmed for reconstruction beginning in 2009, creating a perfect opportunity to incorporate design and include early stages of the proposed wayside and pull-off construction as part of the highway reconstruction project.*

**Impact on overall transportation system**

*This project will enhance the travelers experience and also improve their safety. Currently, the public uses the narrow highway shoulders to park when stopping to view a lady slipper colony or photograph a scenic view. The chance for a pedestrian/ vehicle accident will be greatly reduced.*

*This project will provide safe places for people and their vehicles to get off the highway to view popular natural and historic attractions.*

#### **4. Transportation Mitigation Projects**

*No portion of this project is related to mitigation of an existing or proposed transportation project.*

## **Project Ranking**

### ***Lady Slipper Scenic Byway Waysides and Interpretive Sites***

#### ***1. Impact on the Transportation System***

*The proposed wayside interpretive sites would have a positive impact on the traveling public using Beltrami County Highway 39. The main benefits would be an outcome of the opportunities to learn more about the unique ecological and historic attributes associated with the highway corridor. In addition, the waysides would provide sites that the traveling public could use as rest areas or for emergency stops as needed. Overall these benefits would support the transportation system and further enhance the investments that are currently programmed for the reconstruction of the roadway.*

#### ***2. Part of a Larger Project Concept***

*Beltrami County Road 39 is programmed to be reconstructed over the next 3-5 years at an estimated total cost of \$11million. Development of these proposed wayside interpretive sites would be an integral part of the overall improvements along this corridor.*

*Additionally the proposed interpretive wayside interpretive sites are part of the Management and Development Goals outlined in the Lady Slipper Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan developed in 2005.*

#### ***3. Planning Integration/Quality***

*The proposed wayside interpretive sites have been proposed and considered in the recently completed Environmental Assessment completed by Federal Highways Lands Division for the Reconstruction of Beltrami County Road 39.*

*This process included public involvement and interagency planning and review including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, U.S. Corp of Engineers, Beltrami County and the U.S. Forest Service.*

*Additionally the proposed interpretive wayside interpretive sites are part of the Management and Development Goals outlined in the Lady Slipper Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan developed in 2005. This Plan was developed to guide the management and future development of the intrinsic resources along the Byway.*

*The Lady Slipper Scenic Byway Board provides guidance with the management and development along the corridor and works cooperatively with the different governmental agencies involved. Membership of the Board includes both public and agency representation which further supports the concepts of integration and cooperation.*

#### ***4. Financial Considerations***

*The total project cost is estimated at \$315,000 with Beltrami County (sponsoring agency) providing a 20% match of \$63,000 and the amount of Enhancement funds being requested providing the balance of funds required of \$252,000 (80%).*

*The 20% match provided by Beltrami County would include a combination of federal Forest Highways and county state aid funding.*

*Considerable time and expenses have been involved with the planning and environmental reviews associated with the programmed roadway reconstruction and the management and development of the Lady Slipper Scenic Byway. These actions represent the commitment and support that exists with the public and private entities involved in these projects.*

*With the proposed project planned to be coordinated with the reconstruction of the roadway, the efficiencies gained in design, contract administration and contract implementation will enhance the likelihood that the proposed project will delivered on time and will result in a final product that meets the original intent of the proposal.*



*Wetland Wayside Interpretive Site Vista*



*Mississippi River Wayside Interpretive Site Vista*



*Lady Slipper Wayside Interpretive Site Vista*