



**Request for a Grant from
Midwest Mountaineering Wilderness and Environment Program**

**From Superior Hiking Trail Association
June 2017**

The Superior Hiking Trail runs 312 miles, from the Minnesota-Wisconsin boundary to the boundary with Canada, at the Pigeon River. The SHT is the fulfillment of a 30-year old dream of hikers, North Shore business owners, conservationists and state and federal agencies. The Trail is hiked by tens of thousands of visitors every year, ranging from Chinese graduate students and families camping in a nearby state park, to adventurous souls who hike the Trail end-to-end.

The Trail was built and is managed and sustained by the nonprofit Superior Hiking Trail Association, based in Two Harbors. The SHTA's 5,000+ members donate hundreds of thousands of dollars and thousands of hours of volunteer time to take up the formidable task of sustaining the Trail for decades to come. Sustaining the Trail includes yearly maintenance of worn or eroded stretches of trail; rerouting the Trail due to loss of access (to private land); rebuilding or replacing bridges that are failing the test of time and natural conditions; and constantly reconceiving what is a rich and memorable "Trail experience" for its many and varied users.

We come to Midwest Mountaineering today to seek your support for the reconstruction of a bridge that is a vital link for the Trail. Nearby the Split Rock Lighthouse State Park, the Trail ascends the valley of the Split Rock River. Outside the boundaries of the park, the Trail crosses the Split Rock River, and descends the river valley on the other side of the river.

The bridge that allows hikers to cross the river failed last year. (And there are thousands of visitors to this piece of the Trail, given its proximity to the state park.) Given how wide the river is, and how deep the water is, and the heavy use of the Trail at this site, SHTA is committed to rebuilding a bridge here.

We have a bridge design in mind for the site; our hope to begin construction of the bridge in spring 2018.

But we need funding to commence the project. We expect to need, and to raise, between \$60,000 and \$75,000 to build this bridge from individual donors, businesses and SHTA members.

We sincerely hope Midwest Mountaineering will give its serious consideration to our request. As you know, the SHT is considered a real gem in the jewel box of Minnesota's outdoor recreation offerings. Certainly thousands of MM customers have trod its rocks and roots, and will appreciate the investment MM would make in this project.



Hikers crossing the Split Rock River at the site of the former SHT bridge.



As this picture illustrates, the river is too wide, and in places too deep, for practical "at-grade" crossings.