



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2015 Work Plan

Date of Report: 06/23/15
Date of Next Status Update Report: 1/1/2016
Date of Work Plan Approval:
Project Completion Date: 6/30/2018
Does this submission include an amendment request? No

PROJECT TITLE: Improving Community Forests Through Citizen Engagement

Project Manager: Ken Holman

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Location: Statewide

Total ENRTF Project Budget:

ENRTF Appropriation: \$800,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$800,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 8h

Appropriation Language:

\$800,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to design and pilot a program to mobilize citizen volunteers to protect, improve, and maintain local forests in communities around the state. Participation is open to any municipality in the state and participating municipalities will be selected through a competitive proposal process that will include representation from both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas of the state. Trees planted using this appropriation must be species that are native to Minnesota. Any participating municipality must provide a match of not less than 25 percent, up to half of which may be in the form of in-kind support. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2018, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: Improving Community Forests Through Citizen Engagement

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

This project is designed to be a model program for how Minnesota's cities and towns can mobilize citizen volunteers to conduct urban and community forestry activities that would otherwise go undone due to lack of strategic, financial, and/or manpower resources.

Community forests are in decline. Many cities and towns are not prepared to adequately address this crisis. Without decisive action, community forests in Minnesota will continue to decline, impacting air, water, public health, and the natural environment now and into the future. The goal is to protect and improve Minnesota's community forests.

The DNR will conduct this project in collaboration with its partners: MPCA, MDH, Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association, Hands on Twin Cities, University of Minnesota Department of Forestry Resources, Tree Trust, and Conservation Corps of MN/IA. DNR, together with its project partners, will create a grant program supplying approximately \$400,000 to an estimated 8 to 12 Minnesota cities and towns to support urban and community forestry.

Grant funds will be used in concert with technical assistance provided by project partners to conduct activities to strengthen urban forestry, such as planting new trees, creating and maintaining gravel tree beds, watering new trees, recruiting and training citizen volunteers, developing a citywide urban forestry plan, updating tree inventories, pruning trees, and conducting early detection of pests and disease presence in priority areas. This program will begin on or about July 1, 2015 and conclude on or about June 30, 2018.

The \$400,000 of grant funds will be made available to all political subdivisions of Minnesota as well as non-governmental organizations. Interested jurisdictions will be invited to respond to a request for proposals (RFP) and we expect to select approximately 8 to 12 cities and towns of various sizes and geographic locations across the state to participate.

ENRTF funds will be used toward:

1. Grant program to support urban and community forests in cities and towns
2. Technical assistance to develop grant work plans and carry out the proposed urban and community forestry activities
3. Quantifying impact of activities by projecting environmental, public health and economic benefits

These are further outlined and discussed in Activities 1, 2 and 3 below.

III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of January 1, 2016:

Project Status as of July 1, 2016:

Project Status as of January 1, 2017:

Project Status as of July 1, 2017:

Project Status as of January 1, 2018:

Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Develop RFP and administer grants to provide up to \$400,000 in grant funds to approximately 8 to 12 Minnesota communities to support urban and community forestry.

Description:

Project partners will develop a request for proposals (RFP) for a grant program that will provide up to \$400,000 as well as technical assistance to help communities conduct urban and community forestry activities. LGUs and non-profit organizations will be eligible to apply. Grant amounts are expected to be between \$30,000 to \$50,000 per grant. We expect to fund between 8 and 12 grant projects depending on size and scope of the proposed projects as well as the number of proposals received.

To ensure an adequate number of quality proposals submitted and to optimize program outcomes and impact, designated representatives from project partners will work closely with prospective applicants to develop the grant proposals, including assistance with identifying program activities, goals and projected outcomes. This hands-on assistance will serve as an important first step in building relationships between project partner representatives and prospective communities. ENTRF funds will be used to support this initial investment of time and expertise to develop tailored plans that are suitable for each location as well as for volunteers. An independent review team will be established beforehand to prevent conflict of interest during the selection process. Eligible applicants will include political subdivisions of Minnesota such as cities, towns or counties as well as non-governmental organizations.

The RFP is expected to be released in November 2015 and a press release will accompany the initial announcement. The DNR, along with its urban and community forestry partners, will share the RFP via existing professional networks, email newsletters, and work groups, including University of Minnesota Department of Forestry Resources' existing network of urban forestry professionals (approximately 250 individuals) and Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee members (approximately 500 individuals). These 750 individuals are the most likely candidates to apply for (or identify someone in their community to apply for) this type of grant. In addition, we will share the RFP information with the League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Counties, Minnesota Recreation and Park Association, Met Council, and post it on the DNR website. It will also be shared on the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and Office of State Grants grant databases.

Participating communities will be selected based on demonstrated need of assistance (both financial and technical), local forestry needs, public health priorities, affected populations (e.g. elderly, chronic disease, low-income), readiness to take on a project of this proposed scope and size, ability to provide the required match amount, commitment to sustaining a cadre of citizen volunteers to address local urban forestry needs, and potential impact of the project on the status of urban forestry in the proposed location. It is the intention of the project to work with a diverse mix of Minnesota communities that are of different sizes and geographic locations in order to develop model work plans for a variety of situations and to demonstrate successful utilization of volunteers for urban forestry under various circumstances and in various ways.

Grant funded activities in each community will include some or all of the following: recruit and train volunteers to carry out tree planting, build and maintain gravel holding beds, pruning and other basic maintenance, conduct tree monitoring to detect pests/diseases, and develop/update tree inventories.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENTRF Budget: \$61,090
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$61,090

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Write RFP, develop selection criteria	July-October 2015

2. Issue RFP with open period for 2 months	November-December 2015
3. Review proposals and select recipients of the grant funds	January 2016
4. Develop workplans and grant agreements	January-March 2016
5. Administer grants and ensure compliance with grant agreements	January 2016-June 2018

Activity Status as of January 1, 2016:

Activity Status as of July 1, 2016:

Activity Status as of January 1, 2017:

Activity Status as of July 1, 2017:

Activity Status as of January 1, 2018:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 2: Grantees work with their citizen volunteers to carry out urban forestry activities while project partners provide technical assistance and training.

Description:

Implement grant work plans as designed by each grantee with technical support from project partners. Grantees recruit and train citizen volunteers. Volunteers in each locality will carry out activities such as planting trees, seasonal watering for newly planted trees, pruning trees, building and maintaining community gravel bed tree nurseries, updating tree inventories, conducting early detection in priority areas. All of this work will be done with the support and guidance of project partners, which will each contribute uniquely as follows:

Partner	Role
Hands on Twin Cities	Provide state-of-the-art guidance to grantees for general volunteer management (recruitment, training, tracking, communication, ongoing engagement/retention, best practices)
U of MN Dept. of Forestry Resources	Assist with identifying local needs, developing a tailored workplan and prioritizing grant activities Train volunteers to conduct urban forestry activities Provide ongoing support and knowledge building for volunteers Advise urban forestry professionals in planning and utilization of volunteers to perform community forestry tasks
Conservation Corps of MN/IA	On-the-ground direction for cultivating and planting, pruning, conducting inventories Provide tool library
Tree Trust	Volunteer training (focus on youth engagement) Event planning and coordination (e.g. Arbor Day) Outreach strategies and materials to build public awareness of the multiple benefits of the urban forest
MN Nursery & Landscape Association	Advise on species selection (using natives and climate-appropriate trees)

	Provide network of retail partners as resources in grantee communities
MDH	Identify priority focus areas within cities/towns where urban forestry could especially benefit residents based on health factors
MPCA	Technical advisor, alignment and leveraging with other statewide urban and community forestry opportunities, e.g. Green Step Cities, MN Green Corps, Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) for storm water management and other low impact development and climate-resilient communities programs.
DNR	Overall project management, grants administration, coordinate partners, technical advisor, serve as fiscal agent. Division of Forestry Area staff to monitor local projects, provide technical assistance and perform Compliance Checks on completed projects.

Program partners will work alongside grantees to provide technical assistance to ensure:

- High quality and realistic work plan development
- Prioritization and triage of grant activities to best address local needs
- Inclusion of citizen volunteers, allowing for recruitment, training, and ongoing engagement
- Use of best practices to conduct urban forestry activities (e.g. tree inventory, tree planting)
- Data tracking throughout the project to develop program metrics and allow for evaluation and quantification of impact

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget: \$699,660

Amount Spent: \$ 0

Balance: \$699,660

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Urban forests in cities and towns will be protected and improved. Each city and town will be required to include specific language in the work plan to characterize the work, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. # new trees planted (native and/or climate adaptive, site-appropriate species) b. # newly planted trees receiving seasonal watering c. # trees developed and pruned d. # community gravel bed tree nurseries built and maintained e. # new or updated tree inventories f. # priority areas receiving early detection for pests/disease 	April 2016-April 2018

Activity Status as of January 1, 2016:

Activity Status as of July 1, 2016:

Activity Status as of January 1, 2017:

Activity Status as of July 1, 2017:

Activity Status as of January 1, 2018:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 3: Quantify Environmental, Public Health and Economic Impact

Description:

DNR with its project partners will work with grantees to put in place project baselines and develop performance metrics to track results and measure progress. Outputs and outcomes will be identified, tracked and collected in periodic grant reports.

Final reimbursement payments of grant funds will be made to grantee communities pending completion of grant reports and fulfillment of all other requirements under the grant agreement.

Final grant reports will be collected from each grantee. Outputs and outcomes will be identified and, where appropriate, quantified using tools such as iTree, a state-of-the-art software developed by the US Forest Service to measure the benefits and impact of urban forests.

Activity 3 represents the grant closeout period; we will document tasks and accomplishments performed in each location and by volunteers to identify environmental, public health, and economic value; calculate return on investment.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 3:

ENRTF Budget: \$39,250

Amount Spent: \$ 0

Balance: \$39,250

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Quantify value of environmental, public health, and economic benefits of work performed: energy conservation, air quality improvement, storm water control, urban heat island mitigation, CO2 reduction and property value increase.	March-June 2018
2. Calculate return on investment based on ENRTF seed funds	

Activity Status as of January 1, 2016:

Activity Status as of July 1, 2016:

Activity Status as of January 1, 2017:

Activity Status as of July 1, 2017:

Activity Status as of January 1, 2018:

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description:

All grantee reports will be integrated into a final project report. This final report will document the impact of the program and feature outputs (# trees planted, # municipal inventories completed, etc.) along with outcomes (improved air quality, storm water management, public health, etc.) Whenever possible these impacts will be quantified using tools such as iTree, a software developed by the US Forest Service for this purpose. The final report will be shared with the LCCMR as well as the League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Counties, and Minnesota's urban forestry professional community through the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee. In addition, work plans and results from this project will be collected and made available to other Minnesota cities and towns for reference as model documents.

It is expected that the project manager will have ongoing opportunities (examples: presenting at a conference, representing the project at meetings of state and/or city government) before, during and after the ENTRF funding period to share information about the project with city officials, forestry professionals and others who are interested in urban and community forestry and the use of citizen volunteers.

This project will also be featured on the DNR and MPCA websites as an important community assistance program.

Status as of January 1, 2016:

Status as of July 1, 2016:

Status as of January 1, 2017:

Status as of July 1, 2017:

Status as of January 1, 2018:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget Overview:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Overview Explanation
Personnel:	\$ 120,900	Unclassified, temporary program staff
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$ 279,100	Contract with Tree Trust, University of Minnesota Department of Forestry Resources, Conservation Corps of Minnesota/Iowa, Hands on Twin Cities for volunteer management consulting
Other:	\$ 400,000	Grants to LGUs and nonprofit organizations
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$800,000	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: none

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: none

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: 0.5 per year for 3 years for a total of 1.5 FTEs

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: 1.8 per year for 3 years for a total of 5.4

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state			
Required cash/in-kind match from participating cities and towns (minimum 25%)	\$100,000	\$	For participating communities to share in costs of implementing local projects
In-kind Services from project partners, non-state	\$ 292,549		Professional/Technical Services Contractors' share in project costs

Cash match, DNR	\$120,900		DNR Project Manager, 0.5 FTE/year for 3 years
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$513,449	\$	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

Simply providing funding for urban and community forestry efforts is not enough: many cities and towns lack adequate staffing capacity and supporting resources to properly develop and urban forestry management plan and to conduct regular and ongoing planting, pruning, and maintenance of their neighborhood trees.

This project will provide funding paired with ongoing access to technical assistance from project partners. Project partners represent a critical piece of this program approach. These partners include: University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources, Tree Trust, Conservation Corps of MN/IA, and Hands on Twin Cities. Project partners will assist in the initial development of a tailored project workplan for each grantee and remain engaged throughout the grant period to provide ongoing consulting and technical expertise. Services provided by these partners include curriculum and delivery of volunteer training, best practices and guidance on utilization of volunteers to meet local needs in a strategic and sustainable manner, oversight and direction for on-the-ground volunteer activities including tree planting, creating gravel tree holding beds, tree pruning, tree watering, conducting a tree inventory, and monitoring trees for the presence of pests and diseases. Specific project partner roles are outlined in the chart in Activity 2.

Project partners will receive ENTRF funding as follows:

Project Partner	Total amount of ENTRF funds received
U of MN Department of Forestry Resources	\$107,630
Tree Trust	\$63,000
Conservation Corps of MN/IA	\$100,970
Hands on Twin Cities	\$7500

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:

Urban forests provide many benefits, impacting communities in the following ways:

Urban Forest Benefit	Project Impact
Improve air quality, reduce ozone & fine particles	Protect vulnerable populations (asthma, lung disease)
Mitigate urban heat island effects	Reduce heat stress on residents
Control stormwater and soil erosion	Protect homeowners/businesses from flooding
Conserve energy (less heating/cooling required)	Save costs for individuals/businesses
Sequester carbon	Help MN meet greenhouse gas reduction goals
Address climate change	Support community resilience
Provide native habitat for animals and pollinators	Strengthen local ecosystems

This project represents a statewide effort to bolster the capacity of cities and towns in maintaining, sustaining, and growing their urban and community forests.

The long term strategy of this project is to provide successful ongoing citizen volunteer models for urban forestry that can be referenced and replicated by many other cities and towns across the state. DNR and its project partners will work with grantees to put in place long term plans to sustain their citizen volunteer efforts into the future. Results of the project and model program plans will also be shared to communities across Minnesota through urban forestry professional networks, Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee annual conference and/or monthly training meetings, and other conferences/meetings where sharing of best practices occur. The goal is to bolster urban forests in the 8 to 12 grantee communities through the development and activation of citizen volunteers, and to encourage similar efforts in additional cities and towns across Minnesota.

C. Funding History: This is a new program which has no prior funding history.

VIII. FEE TITLE ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION EASEMENT/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS:

Does not apply to this project.

IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S): Infographic being updated for handout at June 25, 2015 LCCMR meeting.

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: None

XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

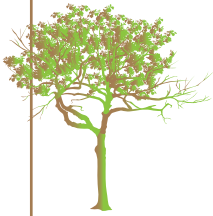
Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than January 1, 2016, July 1, 2016, January 1, 2017, July 1, 2017, and January 1, 2018. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2018.



Project Title: Improving Community Forests Through Citizen Engagement
Legal Citation: M.L. 2015, Chapter 76, Section 2, Subdivision 8h
Project Manager: Ken Holman
Organization: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
M.L. 2015 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 800,000
Project Length and Completion Date: 3 Years, June 30, 2018
Date of Report: 06/12/15

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 1 Balance	Activity 2 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 2 Balance	Activity 3 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 3 Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	RFP process, ID cities and write workplans			Enhance/protect urban forests			Measurement/impact evaluation				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)	\$24,180	\$0	\$24,180	\$84,630	\$0	\$84,630	\$12,090	\$0	\$12,090	\$120,900	\$120,900
DNR Project Manager, 0.5 FTE per year for 3 years for a total of \$120,900. 70% salary, 30% benefits											
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts											
U of MN Dept of Forest Resources: \$107,630. For assistance with proposal and workplan development, volunteer curriculum and training sessions in urban forestry work practices, technical expertise for urban forestry planning and management	\$14,566	\$0	\$14,566	\$82,301	\$0	\$82,301	\$10,763	\$0	\$10,763	\$107,630	\$107,630
Tree Trust: \$63,000. For on-site volunteer training and tree planting oversight, procurement and selection of native trees, outreach strategy and materials for educating the public about tree care and the role of the urban forest	\$7,150	\$0	\$7,150	\$49,550	\$0	\$49,550	\$6,300	\$0	\$6,300	\$63,000	\$63,000
CC of MN/IA: \$100,970. For operationalizing workplan activities, providing in-house AmeriCorps crew members to assist with on-the-ground tree activities such as planting, trimming/pruning, safety protocols, and provision of tool library	\$14,194	\$0	\$14,194	\$76,679	\$0	\$76,679	\$10,097	\$0	\$10,097	\$100,970	\$100,970
Hands on Twin Cities: \$7500. For sharing best practices and conducting training on volunteer management. Providing guidance on tools and strategies for recruiting, training, event signups, tracking, retaining, valuing, and evaluating volunteer contributions	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$6,500	\$0	\$6,500				\$7,500	\$7,500
Other											
Grants (8 to 12 grants @ \$30,000 to \$50,000 each for a total of \$400,000) to support urban forestry efforts in Minnesota communities				\$400,000	\$0	\$400,000				\$400,000	\$400,000
COLUMN TOTAL	\$61,090	\$0	\$61,090	\$699,660	\$0	\$699,660	\$39,250	\$0	\$39,250	\$800,000	\$800,000

Stress



- Stronger storms
- Frequent drought
- Emerging pests like Emerald Ash Borer
- Salt

Needs

- Planting
- Watering
- Development & pruning
- Disease & pest management
- Identification & inventories



Benefits

- Cleaner air
- Cleaner water
- Cooling shade
- Higher quality of life



Improving Community Forests through Citizen Engagement

Project partners united in a sustainable statewide program mobilizing citizens to meet community forestry needs.

