



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2016 Work Plan

**Date of Report:** May 29, 2016  
**Date of Next Status Update Report:** December 30, 2016  
**Date of Work Plan Approval:** June 7, 2016  
**Project Completion Date:** March 30, 2018  
**Does this submission include an amendment request?** No

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**PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy**

**Project Manager:** Jenny Gieseke  
**Organization:** Board of Water and Soil Resources  
**Mailing Address:** 520 Lafayette Road  
**City/State/Zip Code:** St. Paul, MN 55155  
**Telephone Number:** (507) 381-3131  
**Email Address:** [jenny.gieseke@state.mn.us](mailto:jenny.gieseke@state.mn.us)  
**Web Address:** [www.bwsr.state.mn.us](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us)

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**Location:** Statewide

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<b>Total ENRTF Project Budget:</b>	<b>ENRTF Appropriation:</b>	<b>\$433,000</b>
	<b>Amount Spent:</b>	<b>\$0</b>
	<b>Balance:</b>	<b>\$433,000</b>

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 05a

**Appropriation Language:**

\$433,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources in cooperation with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa for the final phase of a program to train and mentor future conservation professionals by providing apprenticeship service opportunities with local soil and water conservation districts in Minnesota. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2019, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

**I. PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy**

**II. PROJECT STATEMENT:** The Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy project provides the opportunity for college students and recent graduates to be mentored by experienced conservation professionals at Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) across Minnesota. In return, the Apprentices bring knowledge of emerging technologies and other innovations to improve the quality and productivity of current conservation efforts. This request will fund cohorts of 30 Apprentices in each of the 2017 and 2018 field seasons. To date, 139 individuals have successfully completed apprenticeships since 2011, and 60 more are anticipated during the cohort years of 2015 and 2016. A 2014 survey of past apprentices indicated that 96% of the program participants were either employed in the natural resources field, or continuing their education in Natural resources.

To deliver the Apprentice Academy Program, the Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) will work under a contract from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to recruit interested SWCDs and university students, and match them by geography and interest. Apprentices will gain skills and experience in areas such as water resource management, conservation inspections, surveying, and habitat restoration. The impact of this program is best described by the participants themselves. Mathias V, a 2012 Apprentice now employed at South Saint Louis SWCD summarized his experience by saying *“I was able to learn first-hand from a wide variety of natural resource professionals including engineers, technicians, specialists from the NRCS, DNR, MPCA, and more: A million times better than a textbook or a lecture hall. And, I got to tangibly help them all too! I learned more in my summer there than in a year or two of environmental engineering class.”* Kayla H, a 2014 Apprentice now employed at Dakota SWCD said *“This opportunity is truly life changing. The hands on experience and networking opportunities are priceless. I have learned countless new things about water monitoring and soil and water conservation methods.”*

The deliberate selection and pairing of SWCDs and apprentices expands this program beyond a typical internship program. It provides opportunities for true mentorship and skills training, and the benefit extends from the apprentices to the districts they serve. Special care is taken to match the needs of these SWCDs with the strengths and interests of the apprentices so that everyone’s goals are met.

**III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**Project Status as of** December 30, 2016:

**Project Status as of** June 30, 2017:

**Project Status as of** December 30, 2017:

**Project Status as of** June 30, 2018:

**Project Status as of** December 30, 2018:

**Final Project Report** March 30, 2019:

**Overall Project Outcomes and Results:**

**IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

**ACTIVITY 1:** BWSR to provide contract, oversight, and technical assistance for CCMI.

**Description:** The intent is to build on the solid foundation of the apprentice program and further enhance program quality. This result is administratively focused, as the contract and employment arrangements details are critical for all parties. BWSR will provide guidance in interpreting evaluation data from previous years and implementing improvements based on the data. Similarly, BWSR will assist with final program evaluation.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 6,000**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 0**  
**Balance: \$**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. <i>Contract executed between BWSR and Conservation Corps</i>	August 30, 2016
2. <i>Employment agreements and program documentation describing schedule and duties updated.</i>	October 15, 2016
3. <i>Year one evaluation complete</i>	December 31, 2017
4. <i>Year two evaluation complete</i>	December 31, 2018

**Activity Status as of** December 30, 2016:

**Activity Status as of** June 30, 2017:

**Activity Status as of** December 30, 2017:

**Activity Status as of** June 30, 2018:

**Project Status as of** December 30, 2018:

**Final Report Summary:**

**ACTIVITY 2:** Recruit participating SWCDs; Develop 30 employment agreements; Recruit, select, and train 30 academy participants; Repeat with 30 participants for year two.

**Description:** BWSR and the CCMI will approach University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and University environmental programs for assistance in recruiting candidates. The CCMI will match students and recent graduates with SWCDs and Technical Service Areas (TSA – a joint powers entity of SWCDs). Apprentices are selected and matched with an SWCD based on skill, area of interest and regional preference. SWCD’s are selected based on quality of experience, skill-training potential and geographic distribution. Participating SWCDs provide final feedback on Apprentice selection prior to hiring. Both the SWCD and the apprentice will receive training to clarify expectations and requirements for successful participation in the program. The CCMI will serve as the employer of record and handle all payroll and personnel issues (e.g. AmeriCorps credits) until conclusion of summer employment.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$427,000**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 0**  
**Balance: \$**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media	November 30, 2016
2. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete	December 30, 2016
3. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs	April 31, 2017

4. Up to 30 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented	October 15, 2017
5. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media; year 2	November 30, 2017
6. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete; year 2	December 30, 2017
7. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs; year 2	April 31, 2018
8. Up to 30 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented; year 2	October 15, 2018

**Activity Status as of** December 30, 2016:

**Activity Status as of** June 30, 2017:

**Activity Status as of** December 30, 2017:

**Activity Status as of** June 30, 2018:

**Project Status as of** December 30, 2018:

**Final Report Summary:**

**V. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** The CCMI will be the primary disseminator and provide a link on their website describing the program ([www.conservation-corps.org](http://www.conservation-corps.org)). The program recruiting through environmental and engineering departments at several universities has been successful in garnering significant student interest from around the state. BWSR and the MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts will also offer descriptions of the program and link to the CCMI site. MASWCD has been spreading this idea nationally through the National Association of Conservation Districts. BWSR has done likewise through the National Association of State Conservation Agencies.

**Status as of** December 30, 2016:

**Status as of** June 30, 2017

**Status as of** December 30, 2017

**Status as of** June 30, 2017:

**Status as of** December 30, 2017:

**Status as of** June 30, 2018:

**Project Status as of** December 30, 2018:

**Final Report Summary:**

**VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. ENRTF Budget Overview:**

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>	<b>Overview Explanation</b>
Personnel:	\$ 6,000	BWSR PRAP Coordinator @0.04 FTE.
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$427,000	Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Two years of Conservation Corps Minnesota for manager time (\$85,000), salary and benefits for 60 Apprentices (\$4,850/apprentice, or \$291,000 total), training (\$25,000), and site visits (\$13,500). Included in contract are funds for recruitment, background checks & recruiting ads (\$12,500).
<b>TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$433,000</b>	

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** Project management and field visit time – none seeking reimbursement

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

**Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:** One BWSR employee will be used to provide consultation and analysis of annual and longitudinal measures being collected. Her time will be approximately 0.04 FTE.

**Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:** This is a two-year program to fund 60 apprentice positions for approximately 520 hours per position. This equates to approximately 15 FTEs. Conservation Corps staff will coordinate the project, manage the apprentices, and work with SWCDs. The CCMI staff time is approximately 50% time per year, equating to approximately 1.0 FTE.

**B. Other Funds:** NA

**VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:**

**A. Project Partners:**

- Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa will receive ENRTF funding for this project via contract.
- BWSR will receive funding through the appropriation.
- Additional partners not receiving funding through ENRTF: MN Association of SWCDs, individual SWCDs, University and State College systems, field staff of NRCS and other agencies

**B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:**

This project proposal will utilize the capacity that has been built and the momentum gained during the first years of the Apprentice Academy. The project will meet the needs of SWCDs with 30 apprentices in each of the 2017 and 2018 field seasons. In addition to the immediate impact at the local level, this project will prepare conservation leaders that will shape environmental strategy and implementation for the next 40 years. BWSR and CCMI are working to develop long-term funding strategies for the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy involving a mixture of federal, state, local, foundation, and private support.

**C.**

**C. Funding History:**

<b>Funding Source and Use of Funds</b>	<b>Funding Timeframe</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
ENTRF	FY 2011	\$368,000
	FY 2012-2013	\$200,000
	FY 2014	\$186,000
	FY 2015-2017	\$392,000

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

**A. Parcel List: NA**

**B. Acquisition/Restoration Information: NA**

**IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S):** Exact locations will not be known until April 2017 and April 2018. Maps of Apprentice locations will be provided as attachments to status update reports as the information becomes available.

**X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: NA**

**XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than December 30, 2016, June 30, 2017, December 30, 2017, June 30, 2018 and December 30, 2018. A final report and associated products will be submitted between January 1, 2019 and March 30, 2019.

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
M.L. 2016 Project Budget**



**Project Title:** Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 05a

**Project Manager:** Jenny Gieseke

**Organization:** BWSR

**M.L. 2016 ENRTF Appropriation:** \$ 433,000

**Project Length and Completion Date:** 2.75 Years; March 30, 2019

**Date of Report:** May 29, 2016

<b>ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET</b>	<b>Activity 1 Budget</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Activity 1 Balance</b>	<b>Activity 2 Budget</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Activity 2 Balance</b>	<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	BWSR to provide contract, oversight, and technical assistance for CCMI.		Recruit participating SWCDs; Develop 30 employment agreements; Recruit, select, and train 30 academy participants; Repeat with 30 participants for year two.					
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b>								
<b>Personnel:</b> BWSR Training Coordinator @0.04 FTE (non-general fund employee).	\$6,000		\$6,000				\$6,000	\$6,000
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</b>								
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Two years of Conservation Corps Minnesota for manager time (\$85,000), salary and benefits for 60 Apprentices (\$4,850/apprentice, or \$291,000 total), training (\$25,000), and site visits (\$13,500). Included in contract are funds for recruitment, background checks & recruiting ads (\$12,500).				\$427,000		\$427,000	\$427,000	\$427,000
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>			<b>\$427,000</b>			<b>\$433,000</b>	<b>\$433,000</b>

