



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2019 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

Today's Date: 7-11-19

Date of Next Status Update Report: March 1, 2020

Date of Work Plan Approval:

Project Completion Date: June 30, ~~2022~~ 2023

Does this submission include an amendment request? Yes, for one year

PROJECT TITLE: Lawns to Legumes Program

Project Manager: Dan Shaw

Organization: Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

College/Department/Division: Resource Conservation Section

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Location: Statewide with an emphasis on areas within the USFWS Priority Areas for the rusty patch bumble bee

Total Project Budget: \$900,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$0

Legal Citation: M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08f

Appropriation Language:

\$806,000 in fiscal year 2019 and \$94,000 the first year are from the trust fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for demonstration projects that provide grants for payments to plant residential lawns with native vegetation and pollinator-friendly forbs and legumes to protect a diversity of pollinators. The board must establish criteria for grants or payments awarded under this section. Grants or payments awarded under this section may be made for up to 75 percent of the costs of the project, except that in areas identified by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as areas where there is a high potential for rusty patched bumble bees to be present, grants may be awarded for up to 90 percent of the costs of the project.

I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Minnesota's State Bee, the Rusty patch bumble bee, as well as many other pollinators, are at risk and many Minnesota landowners are motivated to establish habitat to support these species. The Lawns to Legumes Program has received significant attention from the public as well as local and national press as a potential model for benefitting pollinators on residential landscapes while replacing lawns and associated maintenance. A large number of landowners have contacted the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources about their interest in receiving funding to establish pollinator habitat, while many others are seeking technical information so they can start projects on their own. Ultimately, this program has the potential to significantly widen adoption of residential pollinator habitat and alternative groundcovers to traditional lawns in Minnesota. Through funding opportunities and technical assistance this program is being designed to accomplish this goal. Other key goals of the program include:

- A) Increase populations of rusty patched bumble bee and other at risk pollinators
- B) Restore important pollinator corridors/pathways through residential areas
- C) Develop high profile neighborhood demonstration projects and build overall interest in ecological landscaping
- D) Assist approximately 1,050-1,500 landowners with funding and technical assistance to restore valuable pollinator habitat while also assisting landowners who want to conduct projects on their own through technical information and guidance (involving over 5,000 landowners)
- E) Involve a wide range of conservation partners in the program, including Master Gardeners, Master Water Stewards, Wild Ones and Blue Thumb Partners
- F) Ensure the long-term success of projects
- G) Establish a pilot effort that can be successful and be expanded into the future

BWSR recognizes that the long-term success of this program will directly correspond to the knowledge and understanding residents have about installing and managing their pollinator habitat projects. As a result, a wide range of organizations/conservation partners will be involved in the program and providing landowner coaching. The Blue Thumb Partnership, which includes 50+ local government agencies, landscape contractors and native plant nurseries, will play a significant role in expanding the scope and impact of the program. The partnership has been working with landowners since 2007 to offer do-it-yourself and train-the-trainer workshops, with technical, design, installation and maintenance assistance to expand awareness, adoption and long term success of raingardens, native plantings, landscape resiliency and turf conversion. The Blue Thumb Partners will be involved in promotion of the program through their outreach networks and Minnesota State Fair exhibit, disbursement of funding to landowners, expanding their residential and train-the-trainer workshop programs state-wide, providing and coordinating landowner coaching and technical assistance and providing matching funds.

To meet the goals of the program, the needs of landowners and the long-term success of projects this program is designed with three components:

- 1) **A competitive RFP for Local Partners to Build Targeted "Demonstration Neighborhoods"** with landowners. Eligible applicants will include cities, counties, watershed districts, conservation districts, tribes and non-profit organizations. They will provide technical and financial assistance to around 300 landowners to establish successful and resilient plantings that build pollinator pathways and provide high quality habitat for at-risk pollinators.
- 2) **Individual Landowner Support** coordinated by Blue Thumb Partnership that will include two pieces, 1) Native Plant/Pollinator Lawn funding and coaching and/or 2) Workshops, funding and coaching (including twenty landowner and four train the trainer workshops). Funding and/or guidance provided to 700-1200 landowners as

well as project recognition through signage. The goals of this component are to establish successful projects that will provide high value to at risk pollinators while increasing neighborhood support for the establishment of pollinator habitat.

3) **A Public Education Collaborative** coordinated through BWSR, the Blue Thumb Partnership and other conservation and education partners, provide impactful outreach to increase momentum for the adoption of residential pollinator habitat and alternatives groundcovers across Minnesota. This component will encourage and assist landowners who want to conduct projects on their own through outreach, technical information and guidance (involving over 5,000 landowners).

II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

First Update March 1, 2020

Second Update September 1, 2021

Third Update March 1, 2021

Fourth Update September 1, 2022

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Sixth Update September 1, 2022

Seventh Update March 1, 2023

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2023

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1 Title: Competitive RFP for Local Partners to Build Targeted “Demonstration Neighborhoods”

Description: This component of the program will involve development of a competitive RFP for Local Partners to Build Targeted “Demonstration Neighborhoods” with landowners. Eligible applicants will include cities, counties, watershed districts, conservation districts, tribes and non-profit organizations. They will provide technical and financial assistance to around 300 landowners to establish successful and resilient plantings that build pollinator pathways and provide high quality habitat for at-risk pollinators.

A technical advisory team hosted by BWSR will rank proposals based on:

- A) Location within rusty-patched bumble bee priority areas
- B) Location within or connecting to other key habitat corridors and/or public investments in habitat
- C) Technical Expertise involved in projects
- D) Likely longevity of projects
- E) Strength of partnerships and match
- F) Demographic, social equity, geographic distribution
- G) Potential to build community interest/momentum

A 10% cash or in-kind match will be required for landowners in rusty patch bumble bee priority areas, 25% for out of priority areas.

After grants are made, the recipients will coordinate with landowners to plan, install and provide reimbursements for the pollinator-friendly plantings.

There will be 2.5 years to use funding; if not used within six months prior to the end of the program, the remaining funding will be used for other interested landowners through the Individual Landowner Support component of the program.

Landowners will have access to technical resources developed through Activity #3 of this workplan, including the program guide, and planting templates, as well as signage (part of activity #2) to increase their engagement and knowledge about pollinator plantings.

ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$450,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Develop grant criteria	Completed
2. Online versions of BWSR Lawns to Legumes Habitat Guide and three planting templates made available that include maintenance guidance to help guide landowners.	November 2019
3. Ten to Fifteen awards (\$20,000 - 40,000 each) for plantings in pollinator pathways (zones/corridors/sweet spots) reaching around 300 landowners.	January 2020
4. Approximately 10-15 Demonstration Neighborhoods established with new plantings within high priority pollinator zones/corridors/sweet spots with a summary included in the final LCCMR report of the final number of landowners involved and estimated acres.	December 2022

ACTIVITY 2 Title: Individual Landowner Support

Description: This component of the program has two reimbursement and recognition pieces, 1) Native Plant/Pollinator Lawn Funding and Coaching and/or 2) Workshops, Funding and Coaching (including twenty landowner and four train the trainer workshops). This component will be coordinated through the Blue Thumb Partnership (50+ conservation members that have been conducting landowner workshops since 2007 and have run a Native Plant Reimbursement and Recognition Program). Funding and/or guidance will be provided to 700-1,200 landowners as well as project recognition through signage to all participants. The goals of this component are to establish successful projects that will provide high value to at risk pollinators while increasing neighborhood support for the establishment of pollinator habitat.

Twenty-four workshops to be initiated in the fall of 2019 located at Rochester, Duluth, St. Cloud, New Ulm and Mankato and the Twin Cities, involving 450-500 landowners and 30-40 coaches. Blue Thumb schedules and coordinates workshops, with cost share partners and volunteer Master Gardeners, Master Water Stewards, and Blue Thumb Partners. Their role includes website programming, online and onsite registration and check-in, emails and phone calls regarding registration and workshop questions, email confirmations and reminders as well as technical assistance at workshops. The website they create will also include links to BWSR developed mapping platform of priority areas for Rusty patch bumble bee and other native pollinator priority corridors and functions for data collection and evaluation, auto reminders for landowners, information and links to information including a Lawns to Legumes Habitat Guide and planting templates with maintenance information developed by BWSR.

Workshops include detailed presentations on a variety of pollinator friendly yard practices and do-it-yourself alternative turf installation methods. The 75 minute workshop is followed by 30 minutes for question and answers, and one on one assistance from a volunteer (Master Gardeners and Master Water Stewards).

Homeowners walk away with a personalized plan for incorporating native plants in their yard. Social media included as well as distribution of promotional materials; Includes promotion of the Native Plant Reimbursement grants, and exhibit at MN State Fair.

Technical information such as a Lawns to Legumes program guide and pocket planting templates with maintenance information will be provided to landowners to guide their projects.

Applicants will be eligible for three categories of funding to cover plants, seed, mulch and weed barriers: \$500 when within the rusty patch bumble bee priority areas, \$350 when in secondary pollinator priority areas, and \$150 for other parts of the state. Landowners will be expected to provide at least 25% cash or in kind match.

Signs will also be distributed to landowners who have been provided funding through the program (approx. 1500) as well as some landowners that have conducted projects on their own without funding but are willing to submit images of their projects as well as information about the project location, size of planting and plant species installed.

ACTIVITY 2 ENRTF BUDGET: \$450,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Targeted distribution of funding to landowners through Native Plant and Pollinator Lawn Funding and Coaching, 700 - 1,200 applicants to receive funding. (approximately 250 - 400 per year)	June 2023
2. Finalization and printing for workshops of BWSR Lawns to Legumes Habitat Guide and Three pollinator planting templates for “pocket plantings” that include maintenance information.	November 2019
2. Webpage established for landowner participants	January 2020
3. Twenty-four workshops delivered, located at Rochester, Duluth, St. Cloud, New Ulm and Mankato and the Twin Cities, involving 450-500 landowners and 30-40 coaches.	September 2019 – December 2022
4. Coaching calls delivered for all landowners to assess their knowledge and needs related to technical information and additional coaching. Also follow-up coaching calls/check-in.	June <u>2023</u>
5. Landowner before after images and receipts processed & site visits made by technical experts.	June <u>2023</u>
6. Approximately 2000 signs distributed	June <u>2023</u>

ACTIVITY 3 Title: Public Education Collaborative

Description: Coordinated through BWSR, the Blue Thumb Partnership and other conservation and education partners, provide impactful technical resources and outreach to increase momentum for the adoption of residential pollinator habitat and alternatives groundcovers across Minnesota. This component will encourage and assist landowners who want to conduct projects on their own through outreach, technical information and guidance (involving over 5,000 landowners). Key aspects of this component will include a communications and marketing plan, social media, articles, displays and other communication with landowners as well as promotion of the program habitat guide. These resources will also support components 1 and 2 of this program. Staff time will be provided with non-ENRTF funds. Printing costs for signs and technical information will be paid for with ENRTF funds as part of Activity 2.

ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$0

Outcome	Completion Date
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1. Coordination and development of a communications plan to guide this public education collaborative between BWSR, Blue Thumb Partners, and other conservation and education partners to maximize the impact of communications. The communications plan will guide use of social media including Facebook, Instagram Posts, Blog, city and neighborhood newsletters etc. Also attending state fair and other events and writing articles for the Northern Gardener and Conservation Volunteer. Providing impactful outreach to at least 5000 people.	December 2019
2. Collaboration with a marketing firm through the Blue Thumb Partnership and a social marketing class during the fall of 2019 to refine the communications plan and outreach.	December 2019
3. Conduct partner coordinated outreach to the public at least six times a year.	<u>June 2023</u>

First Update March 1, 2020

Second Update September 1, 2021

Third Update March 1, 2021

Fourth Update September 1, 2022

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Sixth Update September 1, 2022

Seventh Update March 1, 2023

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2023

IV. DISSEMINATION:

Description:

The final report to LCCMR will summarize the final outcomes of this pilot program. BWSR will also present the results of the program at regional presentations and likely at national conferences.

The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the [ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines](#).

First Update March 1, 2020

Second Update September 1, 2021

Third Update March 1, 2021

Fourth Update September 1, 2022

Fifth Update March 1, 2022

Sixth Update September 1, 2022

Seventh Update March 1, 2023

Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2023

V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION:

A. Personnel and Capital Expenditures

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: N/A

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: N/A

Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:

Grant Coordinator: ..10

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 208	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: .10
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Program Coordinator: .11

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 228	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: .11
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Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: .28

Enter Total Estimated Contract Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 582	Divide total contract hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: .28
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VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:

A. Partners outside of project manager’s organization receiving ENRTF funding

Blue Thumb Partnership/Metro Blooms – This partnership consists of over 50 conservation partners working on the topics of planting for water quality, pollinator habitat, soil health and landscape resiliency and is run through the non-profit organization Metro Blooms. The partnership is involved to expand program impact through increased public communication, technical expertise and matching funds.

B. Partners outside of project manager’s organization NOT receiving ENRTF funding

VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING: This is a pilot project that will be establishing a new grant program for the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. The agency will seek additional funding sources in the future to maintain the program’s momentum. If there is significant landowner interest in this program it is possible that an additional LCCMR application will be submitted in coming years.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- Project status update reports will be submitted March 1 and September 1 each year of the project
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2023

IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:

- A. Budget Spreadsheet**
- B. Visual Component or Map**
- C. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements**

Attachment A:

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2019 Budget Spreadsheet

Legal Citation: M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08f

Project Manager: Dan Shaw

Project Title: Lawns to Legumes Program

Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources

Project Budget: \$900,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years, June 2023

Today's Date: 7-11-19



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM			
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)	\$ 70,000	\$ -	\$ 70,000
BWSR Grant Coordinator (78% salary, 22% benefits, 10% FTE), \$25,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
BWSR Program Coordinator (78% salary, 22% benefits, 11% FTE), \$45,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts			\$ -
Neighborhood demonstrations funding to cities, counties, watershed districts, conservation districts, tribes and non-profit organizations through a competitive RFP to grant funding and work with landowners. 10% match required for landowners in rusty patch bumble bee priority areas, 25% out of priority areas. (Approximately \$72,000 provided as match).	\$ 400,000		\$ 400,000
Contract with Metro Blooms (on behalf of the Blue Thumb Partnership) for targeted distribution of funding to landowners through a Individual Support component of the program that will provide reimbursement for native plant and pollinator lawn establishment, as well as project guidance through workshops and coaching. 450-500 landowners to be involved in 20 workshops (also eligible to receive funding) as well as 4 train the trainer workshops. A total of 700-1,200 applicants may attend workshops, receive funding and/or coaching and technical assistance. Funding: \$430,000 will be used for this component of the program with the following breakdown of funding -\$324,430 to be distributed to landowners according to levels outlined in work plan -\$45,000 for coordination of the Individual Assistance Program and landowner recognition. -\$20,000 for 24 workshops, including 4 train the trainer workshops for coaches. -\$27,600 for follow-up landowner coaching and and site visits (300-350 visits). -\$20,000 for recognition signs (2000) to be placed at every project receiving funding and for some projects where landowners restore habitat on their own. -\$1750 for -shipping Recognition Signs (2000) -\$3930 for Printing of technical information for workshops and recognition. -\$4320 Travel to 24 workshops and for site visits Match: Landowners will be provided funding for plants/seed, weed suppression fabric, and woodchips. Landowners will be responsible for installing plants and seeds or hiring a contractor to do this work; as well as the maintenance of projects (this will generally involve at least 25% match based on current industry estimates)(\$79,000 provided as match).	\$ 430,000	\$ -	\$ 430,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies			\$ -
Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000			\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Fee Title Acquisition			\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Easement Acquisition			\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Professional Services for Acquisition			\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Printing			\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
Travel expenses in Minnesota			\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
Other			\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
COLUMN TOTAL	\$ 900,000	\$ -	\$ 900,000

OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State: Local government co-sponsoring of workshops	pending	\$37,000	\$ -	\$ 37,000
Non-State: Blue Thumb Boulevard Program	secured	\$ 24,000	\$ -	\$ 24,000
Non-State: Minimum 10% for projects in the Rusty patch bumble bee USFWS priority areas; 25% cost-share requirement for projects outside priority areas	pending	\$ 72,000	\$ -	\$ 72,000
Non-State: 25% match for Individual Support component of program	pending	\$ 86,000	\$ -	\$ 86,000
State:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
In kind: Minnesota BWSR Senior Ecologist (9% FTE) of time over three years BWSR has and will be contributing additional time from field, communications, contract, and leadership staff).	secured	\$ 36,450	\$ -	\$ 36,450

PAST AND CURRENT ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
Current appropriation:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Past appropriations:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Attachment D. Additional Work Plan Information for Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration

Acquisition/Restoration Information:

The information to be included in this section is to help fulfill specific requirements pertaining to fee title acquisition, conservation easement acquisition, and restoration efforts completed using Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars. More detailed information explaining these requirements is available in separate documents that are available on the "Project Manager Info" page of the LCCMR website under "Requirements for ENRTF Land Acquisitions and Restorations": http://www.lccmr.leg.mn/pm_info/manager_info_index.html. Please fill out the relevant portions below. Please delete any sections that do not apply to your project. For example, if your project only involves fee title acquisition, answer all five items under fee title acquisition and then delete all of the text for the portions relating to conservation easement acquisition and restoration.

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

This program is focused on residential properties so the lands will remain in private ownership but there will be an emphasis on working with landowners to ensure long-term success of projects.

2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.

This program will have two main components that will be used to initiate and manage projects. The first component involves a competitive RFP where local governments and non-profit organizations will be awarded grants to work directly with landowners. As part of this component, planting plans will be developed for each residence; these plans will be kept with organizations who are working with landowners and will be available to BWSR upon request. The second component of the program is a Native Plant and Pollinator Lawn Reimbursement grant (landowners eligible for \$500, \$300 or \$150) where detailed installation guidance will be provided for all landowners, including a Lawns to Legumes program guide, planting templates and fact sheets with long-term maintenance information. There will be less of an emphasis on plan development for this component of the program but the technical guidance provided to landowners will be combined with design workshops and coaching by technical experts to guide successful project implementation and management.

3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.

Lists of acceptable species will be included in the Lawns to Legumes Program Guide to keep the information easily accessible to landowners. The species information in the guide will correspond to BWSR guidance in the Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines.

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

For the first component of the program involving the competitive RFP, the lead organization will conduct site visits to assess maintenance needs of projects and remain as the contact long-term to answer maintenance questions. For the second component of the program involving the Native Plant and Pollinator Lawn Reimbursement Program, landowners will be assessed at the beginning of their projects to determine how much coaching and other assistance they will need. Landowners in need of more project management assistance or undertaking more complex projects will be directed to workshops and site visits by conservation professionals. Many relatively simple "pocket plantings" that will involve installing native plants, weed barrier and mulch will be funded through this

portion of the program (particularly for landowners only receiving \$150) and these projects will require less coaching and coordination to make sure that they are successful (compared to more complex pollinator lawns and meadows). Signage will be included at all funded sites to showcase projects but to also act as motivation to landowners to keep their projects looking good.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

The Conservation Corp of Minnesota will be a contracting option for landowners to assist with the installation and maintenance of their projects. Corp members will be invited to participate in the train the trainer workshops so they can help coach landowners.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

For the first component of the program involving the competitive RFP the lead organization will conduct final site assessments after installation and follow-up assessments three years later after projects are established. For the second component of the program involving the Native Plant and Pollinator Lawn Reimbursement Program, communication/coaching with landowners through the planting and maintenance phases of projects will play an important role in their success. Landowners will be responsible for sending before and after pictures (after establishment) to receive reimbursement and these images will help document the successful establishment of the project. Site visits will also occur on at least one-third of the projects funded through this component of the program that will provide for another level of assessment for more complex plantings. Landowners and conservation professionals who are coaching projects will be encouraged to submit information about practices that were successful for them, to be incorporated into BWSR's What's Working Webpage.

