



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2022 Approved Work Plan

## General Information

**ID Number:** 2022-250

**Staff Lead:** Corrie Layfield

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** June 22, 2022

**Project Title:** Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers

**Project Budget:** \$500,000

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Mimi Daniel

**Organization:** MN DNR - Operational Services Division (OSD)

**Office Telephone:** (651) 259-5308

**Email:** mimi.daniel@state.mn.us

**Web Address:** <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us>

## Project Reporting

**Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR:** June 27, 2022

**Reporting Schedule:** March 1 / September 1 of each year.

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2025

**Final Report Due Date:** August 14, 2025

## Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2022, Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 05h

**Appropriation Language:** \$500,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources, in cooperation with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa, to encourage a diversity of students to pursue careers in the environment and natural resources through internships, mentorships, and fellowships with the Department of Natural Resources, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Pollution Control Agency.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 23, 2025

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** This collaborative project creates a college to workforce pathway for under-represented students interested in pursuing Natural Resources careers by reducing barriers that inhibit successful educational attainment.

**Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

While Minnesota's population continues to diversify and STEM-based jobs continue to increase, there has been little increase in the diversity of the State's STEM workforce. Likewise, the State has been unable to attract representative numbers of racial/ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, or women into the professional and technical STEM positions that make up a large percentage of natural resources/environmental jobs at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) project provides a college to workforce pathway for under-represented students (women, racial and ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities) who are pursuing STEM degrees at state and tribal colleges and technical schools. Through a strategic partnership between MNDNR, MPCA, BWSR, and Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), this project intends to reduce and eliminate barriers that inhibit under-represented students from completing STEM degrees and obtaining environmental employment post-graduation.

This project initially received three appropriations totaling \$1,287,000 to serve three cohorts of students, but the funding expires June 30, 2024, before cohort 3 can complete the program.

**What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.**

This current funding will ensure that 8 students in the third cohort can complete their final year in the program, and the funding will fully support a fourth cohort of 15 students. The funding will be used for fellowships, internships, training, program staffing, and final project results.

The MNDNR is the project lead; in consultation with the partners, MNDNR will administer and evaluate the overall project. MNDNR will contract with CCMI to recruit student applicants; administer fellowship/stipends; deliver contracted internships (first-year summer rotational learning experience), and provide outreach and training to participants and their support networks. The state agencies will provide in-kind funding for mentors and the second and third-year state-sponsored internships. In total, this \$500,000 in funding will serve 23 students, provide up to 45 paid internships, 15 of which will be funded through ENRTF dollars to CCMI, and 30 funded by the partner agencies.

Students will gain invaluable skills and direct work experience in areas such as water resources and wildlife management, recreation, conservation practices, surveying, engineering, habitat restoration, and management.

**What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

This program is about fostering the next generation of environmental and natural resources professionals and enthusiasts. As a result of this project, students are prepared for natural resources careers within the public sector upon graduation. The long-term goal is to share these students' experiences within their communities in ways that further awareness of and interest in environmental careers. Students will seek experiential opportunities within state agencies, ultimately resulting in broader diversity among Minnesota citizens engaged in natural resources and environmental careers.

The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers program is one strategy to develop and tap into the diverse labor market.

## Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Statewide

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Statewide

**When will the work impact occur?**

In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Fellowship Program Administration

**Activity Budget:** \$144,191

**Activity Description:**

The fellowship program helps students in the IDEC program overcome barriers to academic success and equip them with professional skills that contribute to career success. IDEC student participants or “fellows” are provided with a supportive community, yearly academic scholarship, and professional development. They work with the CCMI program manager, who coordinates resources and helps them navigate challenges during the journey. Fellows attend in-person cohort sessions every other month during the academic school year to stay connected to their peers and participate in professional development opportunities. Fellows receive a financial award- \$1,000 each academic school year of the program. Fellows remain in the program until they graduate and obtain their STEM degrees.

CCMI’s program manager, in collaboration with the project manager, will coordinate and manage the outreach, fellowship payments, support services, cohort meetings, and professional development opportunities. This funding will allow 8 students in cohort 3 to continue participating in the fellowship program during the 2024-2025 school year and will support a fellowship program for a fourth cohort of 15 students.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
collaborate with CCMI and program partners, recruit and select 15 students for cohort 4	December 31, 2022
Identify, plan and deliver first professional development for cohort 4	August 31, 2023
7 fellows in cohort 4 will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees	May 31, 2024
8 fellows in cohort 4 will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees	May 31, 2025
8 fellows in cohort 3 will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees.	June 30, 2025

### Activity 2: Internship Program Administration

**Activity Budget:** \$317,518

**Activity Description:**

The internship program, which runs from June to August, allows fellows to learn more about environmental and natural resources career paths through paid, on-the-job experience. The internship includes a first-year summer rotational experience and second and third-year summer agency-internships.

After completing the first-year summer rotational experience, fellows choose one of the three agencies (MNDNR, MPCA or BWSR) to intern for their second and third summer. Through the second and third-year summer agency-internships, fellows gain more work experience in their desired career fields before graduating from college.

In consultation with its partners, MNDNR will coordinate the first-year summer rotational experience and summer agency-internships' administration. The project funds will support the first-year summer rotational experience for 15 students in cohort 4. Also, MNDNR, MPCA, and BWSR will provide in-kind funding for the second and third-year summer agency internships. In total, MNDNR and its partners will provide 8 third-year summer agency-internships to fellows in cohort 3 and 30 second and third-year summer agency-internships to fellows in cohort 4.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Collaborate with CCMI and program partners to set up first-year rotational internship for cohort 4	May 31, 2023
15 fellows from cohort 4 complete first-year summer rotational learning experience	August 31, 2023
Plan, identify, and place 15 cohort 4 fellows in second-year agency internships	April 30, 2024
Plan, identify, and place 8 cohort 3 fellows in third-year agency internships	April 30, 2024
8 fellows from cohort 3 complete 450 hours work experience and gain work skills	August 31, 2024
15 fellows from cohort 4 complete second-year summer agency-internship, 450 hours total	August 31, 2024

### Activity 3: Mentorship Program Administration

**Activity Budget:** \$38,291

**Activity Description:**

Fellows in cohort 3 and cohort 4 are paired with MNDNR, PCA, or BWSR employees who serve as their mentors. The mentorship program enhances college success, encourages personal and professional development, and promotes fellows' career advancement. Through regular interactions with their mentors, fellows gain knowledge, skills, and resources to achieve academic and career success. Mentors also benefit from the mentoring relationship by building mentoring skills, translating them back to their workplace and job. The program offers a structured framework to help ensure productive conversations between mentors and fellows. The program uses a one-on-one and group mentoring approach that includes in-person meetings (while practicing social distancing), video conferencing, email, and phone communication. All mentors receive ongoing training and regular support.

MNDNR, CCMI, MNPCA, and BWSR will continue to work collaboratively to administer the overall mentorship program. The project manager and CCMI's program manager will continue to provide leadership and support services to the mentors for the program's duration. Funding will ensure students in cohort 3 and cohort 4 receive the full mentorship experience.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
mentors are recruited and trained	December 31, 2022
Mentors are paired with cohort 4 fellows	March 31, 2023
8 cohort 3 fellows will develop and increase their ability to navigate education and career	June 30, 2025
15 cohort 4 fellows will develop and increase ability to navigate their education and careers	June 30, 2025

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Mark Murphy	Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa	Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa will receive ENRTF funding for this project via contract for program administration to include the fellowship program and on-going student support.	Yes
Katrina Kessler	MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)	MPCA provides mentors and intern supervisors funds second and third-year internships	No
John Jaschke	MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)	BWSR provides mentors and intern supervisors funds second and third-year internships	No
Sarah Strommen	MN Department of Natural Resources	MNDNR will receive funding through the appropriation to coordinate the inter-agency mentorships and internships and overall project administration and evaluation.	Yes

## Dissemination

**Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.**

The MNDNR, MPCA, BWSR, and CCMI will disseminate program information and will provide links on their websites. The partners have experience recruiting STEM students through existing relationships with environmental and engineering departments at several universities. CCMI has been successful at attracting student interest in similar programs, such as the Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy. MNDNR, MPCA and BWSR's websites will offer descriptions of the program and links to CCMI's website for more information. This project will also build on the foundation, work, and achievements of the ENRTF-funded project, Bridges to Diversifying Involvement in the Natural Resources Community. At project end, a report will be provided that summarizes the project, including its successes and challenges, so that others may benefit from any lessons learned.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 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 Acknowledgment Guidelines.

## Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?**

This project breaks down barriers that inhibit under-represented students from pursuing post-secondary STEM education and careers. The project's results and data will be used to identify how to refine our diversity recruitment efforts using the experience-based college-to-careers pathways model. In the years to come, we hope that this becomes our standard model for how we do business and not just a "program." The ultimate objective is that this program's results serve as a model that continues to attract students from under-represented communities to natural resources careers in greater numbers and provides sustainable and meaningful long-term careers.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 05b	\$487,000
Increase Diversity in Environmental Careers to Serve Minnesota's Changing Demographics	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 05l	\$550,000
Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05d	\$250,000

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
1 Project Manager		To manage overall project including administration and evaluation			30%	0.7		\$90,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa	Sub award	1FTE Program Manager to administer the project with the following components: Yearly fellowship; Contracted first-year summer rotational internship, Training & Professional development; Outreach; Wrap-around services and Support.				1		\$402,696
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$402,696</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>



<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		Direct and Necessary	Direct and Necessary for MNDNR's costs to administer the program: HR support(\$1,165); Safety Support (\$180); Financial Support (\$1,161); Communications Support (\$1,311); IT Support (\$2,479); Planning Support (\$1,008)					\$7,304
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$7,304</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
<b>State</b>				
In-Kind	MN DNR, MPCA, BWSR	Award 30 summer agency-internships, mentors	Pending	\$476,137
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$476,137</b>
<b>Non-State</b>				
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	-
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$476,137</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [c0133902-9e5.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

A graphic showing a brief overview of the Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) program. The graphic says “Working Together to Increase Diversity in Environmental Careers: The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) program provides a unique college-to-careers pathway for under-represented STEM college students who want to pursue careers in the environmental and natural resources field. Partnership includes: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Poll...

### Optional Attachments

#### *Support Letter or Other*

Title	File
Background Check Certification Form	<a href="#">028ecd42-e7b.pdf</a>

### Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

#### *Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage*

We originally requested \$182,000 to support the final year for cohort 3. We were eventually awarded \$500,000. For this reason, we added a fourth cohort to the program. Changes to the workplan reflect the addition of a fourth cohort.

## Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

**Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?**

N/A

**Do you agree travel expenses must follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

N/A

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?**

No

**Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?**

N/A

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?**

N/A

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

# Working Together to Increase Diversity in Environmental Careers

The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) program provides a unique college-to-careers pathway for under-represented STEM college students who want to pursue careers in the environmental and natural resources field. Partnership includes: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa.

Find more information at: [www.conservationcorps.org/idec](http://www.conservationcorps.org/idec)



## A Fellowship, Mentorship, and Internship Program

Fiscal Years 2020 - 2024

COHORT 1  
16 students

September 2019

Program fully funded



June 2023

COHORT 2  
16 students

September 2020

Program fully funded



June 2024

COHORT 3  
12 students

September 2021

Program partially funded

June 2025



Fiscal Years 2024 - 2025

**Funding needed to finish Cohort 3**