

# Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on January 28, 2026

## M.L. 2022 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2025

**Project Title:** Conservation Corps Veterans Service Corps Program

**Project Manager:** Brian Miller

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**Website:** <https://conservationcorps.org/>

**Funding Source:**

**Fiscal Year:**

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2022, Chp. 94, Sec. 2, Subd. 08b

**Appropriation Amount:** \$1,339,000

**Amount Spent:** \$582,885

**Amount Remaining:** \$756,115

### Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

The Corps Veterans Program recruited 24 members, performing 24,498 acres of habitat work including invasive species removal, prescription burns, timber stand improvements, seeding and similar activities, 16.3 miles of trails and waterway maintenance, 1,318 hours of emergency response, and 4,552 hours of natural resource skills training.

### Overall Project Outcome and Results

We created the Veteran Service Corps Program to provide increased natural resource restoration in Minnesota to address the problem of excess demand for these services and address increased unemployment in the veteran population. The 3 year pilot program resulted in our members completing 24,498 acres of habitat work including exotic/invasive species removal, prescribed burns, timber stand improvements, seeding and similar activities, 16.3 miles of trails and waterway maintenance, 1,318 hours of emergency response, and 4,552 hours of natural resource skills training. These positive impacts for Minnesota's resources added to the existing capacity of Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI) through the targeted recruitment and training of Veterans and also lead to new partnerships with Camp Ripley and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that expanded our impact in the state and increased partner agency capacity. In addition to these outcomes Veteran Service Corps members received training and

certifications in many areas including wildland firefighting, chainsaw use, truck and trailer, UTV operation, plant identification, and others skills that are valuable to employers and allowed members to seek careers in the field. We learned many lessons about recruiting veterans, how to structure our program to best serve veterans and how best to integrate veterans into our existing programs and provide workforce development and networking skills in addition to supportive services and career advise and support. While the number of veterans serving in the program was ultimately lower than anticipated due to a number of factors we had great success with those who served including many members returning for multiple service terms and finding employment with partners and with CCMI.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

Conservation Corps was able to share the results of the Veterans Service Corps with the public and our partners through multiple blog posts, videos and impact reports (see tab 7). We plan to continue recruiting and serving veterans and will continue to promote the lasting impact of LCCMR funding on our ability to positively impact Minnesota's resources as well as veterans looking to transition to careers in the natural resource field.



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2022 Approved Final Report

### General Information

**Date:** January 30, 2026

**ID Number:** 2022-034

**Staff Lead:** Tom Dietrich

**Project Title:** Conservation Corps Veterans Service Corps Program

**Project Budget:** \$1,339,000

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Brian Miller

**Organization:** Conservation Corps Minnesota

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**Web Address:** <https://conservationcorps.org/>

### Project Reporting

**Final Report Approved:** January 28, 2026

**Reporting Status:** Project Completed

**Date of Last Action:** January 28, 2026

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2025

### Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2022, Chp. 94, Sec. 2, Subd. 08b

**Appropriation Language:** \$1,339,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Conservation Corps Minnesota to create a Veterans Service Corps program to accelerate natural resource restorations in Minnesota while providing workforce development opportunities for the state's veterans.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2025

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** To provide more and better natural resource restoration to Minnesota and create workforce development opportunities for the state's veterans, Conservation Corps proposes to create a Veterans Service Corps program.

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

To support veterans as they transition out of the military, to assist them in developing transferable workforce skills, and further its environmental mission, Conservation Corps proposes to establish a Veteran Service Corps.

Minnesotans are fortunate to have access to high-quality state and local parks, trails, lakes and waterways, and other natural amenities. However, without ongoing maintenance and restoration, Minnesota's public lands, trails, and waterways will quickly become impacted and natural habitat will become degraded. There is already substantially more demand for Conservation Corps' services than the organization is able to meet and due to Covid19, engagement with public lands in Minnesota has never been higher. Without increased investment in organizational capacity, this gap will continue to grow as demands on our public lands increase.

Covid19 has also severely impacted the labor market. Veteran unemployment has risen from a record low of 3.1% to nearly 12% in less than a year. Veterans Service Corps are a proven and effective model for veterans to develop skills, contribute to conservation and natural resource preservation, and receive the support and wraparound services they need to successfully transition out of service.

**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.**

Conservation Corps will develop, pilot and launch an innovative Veterans Corps field crew program to expand and supplement Conservation Corps' existing capacity to carry out natural resource restoration in Minnesota while also supporting veterans' transition from service. In the first year of the three-year pilot, Veterans Corps will recruit and train 2 to 12 veterans (delay in funding reduced recruitment in 2022) based out of Rochester and Mankato offices. Members are paid a stipend and are eligible for health insurance and other benefits. Members receive an education award at the completion of service that can be used to pay for college. Conservation Corps intends to expand the program to a target of 24 members in the second year and 36 members statewide in the third year.

Veterans Corps members will be trained to implement a wide range of natural resource management best practices, including mechanical and chemical invasive species management, prescribed fire and fuels management, and trail-building and restoration practices, including brushing and grading.

Through their service members will gain valuable workforce skills and credentials that are transferable to the professional natural resources management field, equipping veterans to move into high-skill, high-wage careers while expanding Minnesota's natural resource talent pool.

**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?**

Conservation Corps works to restore vital degraded habitat and build and maintain our trails and waterways to better promote public engagement in the outdoors. The Veterans Corps program will result in an additional 72 miles of trails and waterways maintained and an additional 2,100 acres of habitat restored in the first year, with additional environmental outcomes scaling up as the program grows.

In the first year, veterans will gain natural resource management skills and certifications and improve job skills, as assessed in post-program evaluations. Veterans Corps members will also lead 200 volunteers annually.

## 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?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Veterans Corps Members Carry Out Statewide Natural Resource Management and Restoration

**Activity Budget:** \$1,339,000

**Activity Description:**

After completing training, Veterans Corps members will complete natural resource management projects on public lands and/or private lands for public benefit. Carried out in partnership with public natural resource land managers, projects can range from one day to one week, up to several months. Ongoing projects, particularly invasive species removal, may be multi-year to ensure adequate follow-up. Funding will allow “start-up” type investments that are needed to create this program without having to pass those additional costs along to our partners.

Projects and activities are driven by local community need but generally fall into two types of projects—trail maintenance and habitat restoration. Trail maintenance projects typically include brushing and grading, rock removal, water management, erosion control, and trail construction. Water trail activities include snag removal, updating signage, maintaining campsites, and clearing portages to ensure safe passage.

Conservation Corps crews will also maintain and restore native habitat through exotic species removal, planting, nursery activities, seed collection, shoreline and stream bank restoration, rain garden installation, timber stand improvement, prescribed burning, and fire suppression

All activities are tracked using a "Survey of Accomplished Work" tool, which is uploaded to Salesforce daily. The SAW allows Conservation Corps to provide high-quality, verifiable environmental

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Year 1 - recruit and train 2-12 veterans for 3-6 months of service	September 30, 2022
Year 1 - Veterans Corps Members Improve and Maintain 72 Miles of Trails	December 31, 2022
Year 1 - Veterans Corps Members Improve and Maintain 2100 acres of habitat	December 31, 2022
Year 2 - recruit and train a target of 24 veterans for 6-11 month terms	June 30, 2023
Year 2 - Veteran Corps Members Improve and Maintain 144 Miles of Trail	December 31, 2023
Year 2 - Veterans Corps Members Improve and Maintain 4200 Acres of Habitat	December 31, 2023
Year 3 - recruit and train a target of 36 veterans for 6-11 month terms	June 30, 2024
Year 3 - Veterans Corps Members Improve and Maintain 216 Miles of Trail	December 31, 2024
Year 3 - Veterans Corps Members Improve and Maintain 6300 Acres of Habitat	December 31, 2024

## 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.**

- Veterans Corps program results and accomplishments will be shared in several accessible ways with the public and our stakeholders (all communications and outreach activities will appropriately acknowledge the ENRTF):
- PR/media interactions – results may be included in media pitches or press releases to media outlets 1-2 times per year around Minnesota.
- Annual impact report – program results and highlights will be included in our public impact report to be shared with stakeholders, legislators, partners, program alumni, and funders. This report will also be published on our website and shared in our digital communications.
- Digital communications (website, email newsletters, and social media) – accomplishments will be shared throughout the year on our digital platforms.
- Video – we may share program accomplishments and testimonials in short videos to be published on our YouTube channel, and social media platforms, and shared in our digital communications.
- Results may also be shared in a one-page report with legislators and partners, and in public presentations.

## 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?**

Initial funding from LCCMR will enable Conservation Corps to develop, launch and implement the Veterans Corps program, leading to expanded, sustainable, and durable programming that will protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's natural resources. Funding will allow "start-up" type investments that are needed to create this program without having to pass those additional costs along to our partners.

Once established, CCM anticipates the Veterans Corps program will rely on the organization's proven funding model, which relies on a combination of federal AmeriCorps grants and earned fee-for-service revenue generated through partner agreements.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
<b>Personnel</b>										
Program Managers		Program managers will be responsible for recruiting and training Corps members and coordinating natural resource conservation projects. This role will be filled by existing staff until such time as it is determined dedicated staff are needed.			22%	2.5		\$150,450	-	-
Field Coordinators		Assist with personnel management, maintains equipment, and coordinates or provides training in technical and personal development skills. This role will be filled by existing staff to better serve members locally until such time as permanent staff are determined to be a better fit.			22%	2.5		\$101,100	-	-
Recruitment Manager		Develop strategies for recruiting veterans, identify new community partners and organizations to recruit from and develop recruitment calendar including recruitment dates for Veterans Corps programming			0%	0.1		\$6,000	-	-
Recruitment and Outreach Coordinator		Execute recruitment strategy for Veterans Corps program, including attending various career events and meetings with community members connected to the veteran community to recruit potential participants			0%	0.1		\$4,000	-	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$261,550</b>	<b>\$178,340</b>	<b>\$83,210</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>										



	Tools and Supplies	Personal Protective Equipment (Boots, goggles, hard hats, gloves, 300/per member, 72 members)	Veterans Corps member safety					\$19,400	\$9,284	\$10,116
							Sub Total	\$19,400	\$9,284	\$10,116
Capital Expenditures										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Travel In Minnesota										
	Conference Registration Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Veterans job fair registration	targeted recruitment at Veteran focussed events					\$300	-	\$300
							Sub Total	\$300	-	\$300
Travel Outside Minnesota										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Printing and Publication										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Other Expenses										
		AmeriCorps Member Stipends (\$1,876 - \$3,000 per member/month plus benefits)	Provide stipends for participation to Veterans Corps members	X				\$1,056,000	\$395,261	\$660,739
		Online recruitment and awareness efforts	To increase awareness of the program and support recruitment efforts, staff will gather stories/testimonials to be generate in a blog posts on					\$1,000	-	\$1,000

			the website and shared on social media. Funds will also fund boosting social media posts to reach the intended audience.							
		recruitment materials	This expense is to design and print Veteran Corps specific flyers to hand out at career fairs and other places we do in-person recruitment and meet interested candidates.					\$750	-	\$750
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,057,750</b>	<b>\$395,261</b>	<b>\$662,489</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,339,000</b>	<b>\$582,885</b>	<b>\$756,115</b>

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Other Expenses		AmeriCorps Member Stipends (\$1,876 - \$3,000 per member/month plus benefits)	<p>Due to federal AmeriCorps regulations, AmeriCorps members are paid stipends for their service and are not considered employees. National stipend ranges are set by the Corporation for National and Community Services. Members are paid their stipend biweekly during their term of service and are eligible for health insurance, child care assistance, and other benefits.</p> <p>These stipends are supplemented by an education award of approximately \$6,250 (changes annually) provided by the Federal government at the conclusion of service. This education award can be used to pay for college or applied to student loans.</p> <p>The requested amount (\$1,056,000) assumes a stipend rate varying from \$1,876/month - \$3,000/month plus benefits over the course of the funding period, Support for member stipends is crucial to successfully launching the program. Once the program is established and built out, Conservation Corps will be able to sustain the program beyond the grant period and provide member stipends through a mix fee-for-service revenue and Americorps grant funding.</p>

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
<b>State</b>						
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Non-State</b>						
Cash	AmeriCorps Federal Funding	Conservation Corps receives Federal AmeriCorps funding to support program operation expenses, including travel and fleet lease, equipment, AmeriCorps member benefits, administrative costs, and other eligible expenses.	Secured	\$1,114,488	\$230,738	\$883,750
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,114,488</b>	<b>\$230,738</b>	<b>\$883,750</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$1,114,488</b>	<b>\$230,738</b>	<b>\$883,750</b>

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Public Lands	Statewide	varied	Restoration	10,843	16.3	\$132,000	Public		Completed
Totals				10,843	16.3	\$132,000			

## 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.**

I confirm that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

**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.**

All restoration will be planned and completed in collaboration with partner agencies/organizations to meet long term goals. Detailed data will be kept on activities and accomplishments and stored electronically by Conservation Corps.

**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.**

Conservation Corps will work with partner agencies to utilize and follow this guidance. Existing agreement templates with the state already include provisions to support these efforts i.e. Pollinator: Habitat restorations and enhancements conducted on DNR lands and prairie restorations on state lands or on any lands using state funds are subject to pollinator best management practices and habitat restoration guidelines pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 84.973. Practices and guidelines ensure an appropriate diversity of native species to provide habitat for pollinators through the growing season.

**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.**

This responsibility will be carried out by the public agency owner or non-profit that has requested our services

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

N/A as Conservation Corps is the applicant!

**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.**

Conservation Corps will reach out to project partners to solicit evaluation on project completion and again 3 years after completion.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

File: [19c1946d-351.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

Conservation Corps Veterans Service Corps logic model...

#### *Financial Capacity*

File: [dd218f24-4ea.pdf](#)

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
CCMI Board Letter and Resolution	<a href="#">f2eb0a9c-6fb.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

#### *Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
Veterans Corps Whitepaper	<a href="#">d5fbce95-fdd.pdf</a>
Background Check Certification Form	<a href="#">55033421-d05.pdf</a>
Accomplishment report for 3/1/23 status update (reflects 2022 accomplishments)	<a href="#">147e08cc-f9f.xlsx</a>
2022 Impact Report	<a href="#">5ca51aa6-d6c.pdf</a>
Accomplishment report for 9/1/23 status update (reflects accomplishments from 1/1/23 - 8/31/23))	<a href="#">683eb632-0c9.xlsx</a>
Accomplishment report for 3/1/24 status update (reflects accomplishments from 9/1/23 - 2/29/24)	<a href="#">1a57a20e-287.xlsx</a>
Accomplishment report for 9/1/24 status update (reflects accomplishments from 3/1/24 - 8/31/24 plus additional previously unreported accomplishments from 1/1/24-2/29/24)	<a href="#">cb12fee6-44f.xlsx</a>
Accomplishments report for 3/1/25 status update (reflects accomplishments from 9/1/24 - 2/29/25)	<a href="#">0b3acb22-a99.xlsx</a>
Accomplishments report for 6/30/25 status update (final update reflects accomplishments from 3/1/25 - 6/30/25)	<a href="#">9a05a236-e11.xlsx</a>
2023 Impact report	<a href="#">611c00b8-1a8.pdf</a>
2024 Impact report	<a href="#">2e92e144-8e7.pdf</a>

#### *Media Links*

Title	Link
Vet Crew Blog post	<a href="https://conservationcorps.org/updates-stories/wild-animals/">https://conservationcorps.org/updates-stories/wild-animals/</a>
Vet crew blog post	<a href="https://conservationcorps.org/updates-stories/from-burn-piles-to-buckthorn/">https://conservationcorps.org/updates-stories/from-burn-piles-to-buckthorn/</a>
Vet Crew video	<a href="https://conservationcorps.org/updates-stories/oak-wilt-splitting-at-lake-maria/">https://conservationcorps.org/updates-stories/oak-wilt-splitting-at-lake-maria/</a>
Veteran Corps Page	<a href="https://conservationcorps.org/programs/veterans-corps/">https://conservationcorps.org/programs/veterans-corps/</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

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

changes include revisions to budget to reflect reduction from initial request to final appropriation. Proposal included 12 members serving 10 month terms in 2022 and has been revised to include up to 12 members serving 6 month terms in 2022 due to delay in funding decisions.



## 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 understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

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

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

**Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements**

N/A

## Work Plan Amendments

Amendment ID	Request Type	Changes made on the following pages	Explanation & justification for Amendment Request (word limit 75)	Date Submitted	Approved	Date of LCCMR Action
1	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget - Other</li> </ul>	Amendment is being submitted to request an increase in the budget for individual stipends from the original assumption of \$16,000/member/year in an effort to counteract recruitment shortfalls and increase participant numbers and retention.	December 13, 2023	Yes	December 14, 2023
2	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other</li> <li>Budget - Personnel</li> <li>Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> <li>Budget - Other</li> </ul>	A social media outreach push is needed to help spread awareness and overcome the barriers we've experienced with recruiting veteran enrollees as described in our status updates. Additionally personnel expenses have been updated to reflect a change to use of existing local staff to better manage Veteran Corps and direct a portion of recruitment staff to focused efforts.	January 13, 2025	Yes	January 15, 2025
3	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquisition and Restoration - Parcel List</li> </ul>	updated cumulative accomplishment numbers for acres and miles in activity 1 to reflect actual numbers. directions indicated the need to initiate an amendment to change the acre and mile activities.	November 12, 2025	Yes	November 14, 2025

# Status Update Reporting

## Final Status Update August 14, 2025

**Date Submitted:** November 12, 2025

**Date Approved:** November 14, 2025

### Overall Update

Total program participants was 24. Members accomplished an additional 12,932 acres of habitat restoration, 1.3 miles of trails and waterways maintained, 71 hours of emergency response work and 226 hours of skills training. Cumulative project totals are 24,498 (10,843 equivalent to fully restored after removing Rx fire acres) acres of habitat restored 16.3 miles of trails and waterways maintained, 1,318 hours of emergency response work with MN DNR and 4,552.25 hours of skills training. Planned outcomes included serving 62-72 veterans based on conversations with military leadership, we fell short of due to challenges with recruitment attributed to changes in the post military needs of service members from expectations. We held regular meetings with military leaders and solicited direct feedback from our veteran Corps members that led to changes in program design to better meet their needs and experiences. While our numbers were lower than planned the members we did serve reported high levels of satisfaction and have had good outcomes post service. Habitat numbers include activities such as exotic/invasive species removal, Rx fire, timber stand improvement, seeding and other similar activities.

### Activity 1

Members continued progress completing 24,498 (10,843 equivalent to fully restored after removing Rx fire acres) acres of habitat restoration over the 3 year program as well as many other types of work with multiple local, state and federal agency partners. The shift to hosting members in existing program districts rather than managing the Veteran Corps centrally continues to allow for more staff-member interactions and increased opportunities to help veterans find the best fit in our programs for their goals. Overall we fell short of our projected miles of trails but exceeded expected outcomes for acres of habitat restored. Members were able to experience all the other anticipated activities we outlined in this activity such as exotic species removal, planting, nursery activities, seed collection, shoreline and stream bank restoration, rain garden installation, timber stand improvement, prescribed burning, and fire suppression and had more opportunities to participate in Wildland Fire than originally planned. All numbers reported in the accomplishment reports have been verified. Large increases in habitat acres are due to the new partnership with Camp Ripley and USFWS which has included large scale Rx burning and other habitat restoration projects covering thousands of acres in a single day.

### Dissemination

Since our last update, we continue to list the MN ENRTF as a partner on our website and in Veterans Corps recruitment materials. The Veterans Corps program is included in our 2024 annual impact report which will be shared with stakeholders, legislators, partners, program alumni, and funders. This report will be printed and published on our website. In addition, Veterans Corps accomplishment highlights were included in our digital communications content calendar throughout the year, including social media, e-newsletters, and website posts (see web links). Lastly, Veterans Corps accomplishments will be incorporated into org-wide communications to legislators, partners, public presentations, and any media pitches.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update March 1, 2025

**Date Submitted:** March 3, 2025

**Date Approved:** March 11, 2025

### Overall Update

We recruited 2 additional Veterans bringing total program participants to 24. Members have accomplished an additional 1,160 acres of habitat restoration, 4 miles of trails and waterways maintained, 215 hours of emergency response work and 731 hours of skills training. Increase in habitat acres was a result of a new partnership with Camp Ripley allowing members to work on more large scale projects like prescribed burns covering more acres. This update brings cumulative project totals to 12,106 acres of habitat restored 15 miles of trails and waterways maintained, 1,247 hours of emergency response work with MN DNR and 4,326.25 hours of skills training. Updates to our staffing model to focus hiring and management at the regional level vs the centralized approach we took previously seem to have improved member experience and communications in 2025.

### Activity 1

Veteran corps members continued progress on this Activity by completing 1,160 acres of habitat restoration as well as many other types of work with multiple local, state and federal agency partners. Work was expanded to include a new inter-agency partnership between the United State Fish and Wildlife Service Sherburne National Wildlife Complex and Camp Ripley to host a Veterans Corps Biological Field technician and continues to included a variety of other projects with multiple government partners. The planned shift to hosting members in existing program districts rather than managing the Veteran Corps centrally has allowed for more staff-member interactions and increased opportunities to help veterans find the best fit in our programs for their goals.

### Dissemination

Since our last update, we continue to list the MN ENRTF as a partner on our website and in Veterans Corps recruitment materials. The Veterans Corps program is included in our 2023 annual impact report which will be shared with stakeholders, legislators, partners, program alumni, and funders. This report will be printed and published on our website. In addition, Veterans Corps accomplishment highlights were included in our digital communications content calendar throughout the year, including social media, e-newsletters, and website posts (see web links). Lastly, Veterans Corps accomplishments will be incorporated into org-wide communications to legislators, partners, public presentations, and any media pitches.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update September 1, 2024

**Date Submitted:** September 23, 2024

**Date Approved:** October 4, 2024

### Overall Update

We recruited 3 additional Veterans bringing total program participants to 22. Members have accomplished an additional 7,980 acres of habitat restoration, 6.5 miles of trails and waterways maintained, 140 hours of emergency response work and 1,788.25 hours of skills training. Increase in habitat acres was a result of a new partnership with Camp Ripley allowing members to work on more large scale projects like prescribed burns covering more acres. This update brings cumulative project totals to 10,946 acres of habitat restored 11 miles of trails and waterways maintained, 1,032 hours of emergency response work with MN DNR and 3,595.25 hours of skills training. Discussions with current and past members suggest a need to increase recruitment efforts through additional targeted outreach to increase program awareness. We have also learned the centralized staffing model is more effectively handled at the regional level and offers more customized opportunities for members across the state.

### Activity 1

Veteran corps members continued progress on this Activity by completing 7,980 acres of habitat restoration as well as many other types of work with multiple local, state and federal agency partners. Work was expanded to include many projects in Northern Minnesota in partnership with MN DNR, Three Rivers Park District, Camp Ripley, and Ramsey SWCD (see attached accomplishments report) but also included a variety of other projects. The planned shift to hosting members in existing program districts rather than managing the Veteran Corps centrally will allow for more staff-member interactions and increased opportunities to help veterans find the best fit in our programs for their goals. We hope to place Veterans in our North, Central and South Districts as well as our Individual Placements program where they will be managed by local staff with Veteran Corps specific training and additional programming coordinated by a Veteran Corps Program Coordinator who can focus on regular check-ins with members and coordinate Veteran Corps check-ins, trainings, events and projects statewide.

### Dissemination

Since our last update, we continue to list the MN ENRTF as a partner on our website and in Veterans Corps recruitment materials. Veterans Corps recruitment materials have been included at our booth at the MN State Fair, with exposure to hundreds of Minnesotans and all current Vet Corps members participated in Military Appreciation Day at the fair and staffed our booth to talk about the program with attendees and visitors to our booth. The Veterans Corps program is included in our 2023 annual impact report which will be shared with stakeholders, legislators, partners, program alumni, and funders. This report will be printed and published on our website. In addition, Veterans Corps accomplishment highlights were included in our digital communications content calendar throughout the year, including social media, e-newsletters, and website posts (see web links). Lastly, Veterans Corps accomplishments will be incorporated into org-wide communications to legislators, partners, public presentations, and any media pitches.

## Additional Status Update Reporting

### Additional Status Update June 4, 2024

**Date Submitted:** September 23, 2024

**Date Approved:** October 4, 2024

#### **Overall Update**

LCCMR staff directed me to delete this additional update but the system is not allowing me to do so

#### **Activity 1**

NA

#### **Dissemination**

NA

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update March 1, 2024

**Date Submitted:** March 1, 2024

**Date Approved:** March 8, 2024

### Overall Update

We were able to recruit 7 additional Veterans since the previous progress report and accomplish an additional 70 acres of habitat restoration. In addition members accomplished 192 hours of emergency response work with MN DNR and 561 hours of skills training. These additional members include expanded service locations in Duluth as well as a member serving with the Environmental Service staff at Camp Ripley. Overall recruitment continues to be a challenge resulting in fewer than planned members and lower than anticipated accomplishments but we have additional applicants currently being considered for 6 month positions that begin this May and are increasing efforts at recruitment and Program awareness. This update brings cumulative project totals to 2,966 acres of habitat restored 4.54 miles of trails and waterways maintained, 892 hours of emergency response work with MN DNR and 1,807 hours of skills training.

### Activity 1

Veteran corps members continued progress on this Activity by completing 70 acres of habitat restoration as well as many other types of work with multiple local, state and federal agency partners. Work was primarily focused on Central and Southern Minnesota projects in partnership with MN DNR (see attached accomplishments report) but also included a variety of other projects. HI Disaster Response work was funded with federal dollars and while contributed to lower habitat acres and trail miles again presented an opportunity to leverage the experience and skills of a Veteran member to benefit our country's response and provided valuable experience for the Veteran

### Dissemination

Since our last update we continue to list the MN ENRTF as a partner on our website and in Veterans Corps recruitment materials. We will dedicate space to highlighting Veterans Corps results in our 2023 annual impact report which will be shared with stakeholders, legislators, partners, program alumni, and funders. This report will be printed and published on our website. In addition, Veterans Corps accomplishment highlights were included in our digital communications content calendar throughout the year, including social media, e-newsletters, and website posts (see web links). Lastly, Veterans Corps accomplishments will be incorporated into org-wide communications to legislators, partners, and in public presentations as well as any media pitches.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update September 1, 2023

**Date Submitted:** December 13, 2023

**Date Approved:** December 14, 2023

### Overall Update

We were able to recruit 9 additional Veterans since the previous progress report and accomplish an additional 2,405 acres of habitat restored and 4 miles of trails and waterways maintained. In addition members accomplished 277 hours of emergency response work with MN DNR and 1,440 hours of skills training. Overall recruitment continues to be a challenge resulting in fewer than planned members and lower than anticipated accomplishments. This update brings cumulative project totals to 2,896 acres of habitat restored 4.54 miles of trails and waterways maintained, 700 hours of emergency response work with MN DNR and 1,807 hours of skills training.

### Activity 1

Veteran corps members made good progress on this Activity by completing 2,405 acres of habitat restoration and 4 miles of trail and waterway maintenance as well as many other types of work with multiple local, state and federal agency partners. Work was primarily focused on Central and Southern Minnesota projects in partnership with MN DNR (see attached accomplishments report) but also included Wildfire response as well as a variety of other projects. Individual stipends have increased from the original assumption of \$16,000/member/year in an effort to counteract recruitment shortfalls and increase participant numbers and retention. The increased stipends could limit total member numbers funded by the grant (i.e, we couldn't cover stipend and benefit expenses for 72 full-time members at the higher stipend rates with the allotted dollars) but given the lower than planned recruitment in years 1 and 2 the increase should not impact our ability to fund 36 or more members in year 3 if recruitment success improves.

### Dissemination

Since our last update we continue to list the MN ENRTF as a partner on our website and in Veterans Corps recruitment materials. We dedicated space to highlighting Veterans Corps results in our 2022 annual impact report (included in attachments) which will be shared with stakeholders, legislators, partners, program alumni, and funders. This report will be printed and published on our website. In addition, Veterans Corps accomplishment highlights were included in our digital communications content calendar throughout the year, including social media, e-newsletters, and website posts (see web links). Lastly, Veterans Corps accomplishments will be incorporated into org-wide communications to legislators, partners, and in public presentations as well as any media pitches.



# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update March 1, 2023

**Date Submitted:** April 11, 2023

**Date Approved:** April 11, 2023

### Overall Update

We were able to recruit 4 Veterans in 2022 and accomplish 491 acres of habitat restored and .54 miles of trails and waterways maintained. In addition these members accomplished 423 hours of emergency response work and 367 hours of training. Overall recruitment was much more difficult than anticipated based on initial planning conversations resulting in fewer than planned members and lower than anticipated accomplishments. In addition to lower than planned recruitment the opportunity to send a member on disaster response enabled us to leverage the unique skills of veterans but contributed to lower overall habitat and trails accomplishments.

### Activity 1

Veterans corps members made good progress on this Activity by completing 491 acres of habitat restoration and .54 miles of trail and waterway maintenance as well as many other types of work with multiple local, state and federal agency partners. Work was primarily focused on Southern Minnesota projects in partnership with MN DNR (see attached accomplishments report) but also included Wildfire response in Northern MN and Federal response to Hurricane Ian in Florida (all costs related to out of state work were paid by federal funds and not LCCMR grant dollars) as well as a variety of other projects.

### Dissemination

Due to initial delays with our pilot program, most of our plans for disseminating 2022 results and accomplishments will take place in the next several months. However, we have proudly listed the MN ENRTF as a partner on our website and in Veterans Corps recruitment materials throughout the last year. Our upcoming plan for dissemination of 2022 program results includes highlighting Veterans Corps results in our 2022 annual impact report which will be shared with stakeholders, legislators, partners, program alumni, and funders. This report will be printed and published on our website. In addition, Veterans Corps accomplishment highlights are scheduled in our digital communications content calendar throughout the year, including social media, e-newsletters, and website posts. Lastly, Veterans Corps accomplishments will be incorporated into org-wide communications to legislators, partners, and in public presentations as well as any media pitches.