



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2023 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2023-201

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: May 24, 2023

Project Title: North Shore Private Forestry Outreach and Implementation

Project Budget: \$375,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Molly Thompson

Organization: Sugarloaf The North Shore Stewardship Association

Office Telephone: (218) 525-0001

Email: molly@sugarloafnorthshore.org

Web Address:

Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 22, 2023

Reporting Schedule: April 1 / October 1 of each year.

Project Completion: June 30, 2026

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2026

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2023, Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05f

Appropriation Language: \$375,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Sugarloaf: The North Shore Stewardship Association to conduct outreach to private forest landowners, develop site restoration plans, and connect landowners with restoration assistance to encourage private forest restoration and improve the ecological health of Minnesota's North Shore forest landscape.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2026

Narrative

Project Summary: The North Shore Forest Collaborative (via Sugarloaf) seeks to contract foresters to perform a concerted private land forestry outreach to restore ecological health to Minnesota's North Shore forest landscape.

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

Given the magnitude of private landownership's influence on the Lake Superior North Shore ecological landscape it is imperative the NSFC build capacity to reach and engage landowners in forest restoration on their private properties.

Minnesota's Lake Superior North Shore forest landscape health has drastically declined in the last 140 years which adversely affects forest health, wildlife habitat, sense of place, climate resiliency, brook trout streams, and Lake Superior's water quality. The forest is in a state of poor health due to past practice, a unique North Shore microclimate, significant winter deer browsing conditions, and is further threatened due to the effects of climate change. Restoration, as guided by the North Shore Forest Collaborative (NSFC), is a critical need, and serves to restore iconic North Shore landscape aesthetics, enhance wildlife habitat, protect cold water trout streams, and provide long-term climate resiliency.

NSFC natural resource agencies and some private landowners have begun restoration work, but the scope of private land ownership is significant, and requires a shared-stewardship, "all-lands" approach. The geographic scope of this project includes approximately 105,558 acres of private land holdings (39% of the total NSFC focus area), with an estimated 6,000 individual private parcels of various acreages.

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.

Funding would allow for the contracting of private lands foresters to perform a concerted outreach forestry project with up to 1500 private landowners on the North Shore of Lake Superior, with the goal of engagement and implementation of biodiverse forest restoration on their private lands. We intend this proposal to be a catalyst to grow additional community-based capacity using other funding sources to ensure the project is sustainable over time.

Dynamics of landowner interests and site conditions require foresters to remain flexible in their outreach to catalyze and expand landowner engagement. For example, outreach may occur on a given small parcel where the landowner has expressed interest in a modest Outreach Forester-led walk on their land. In this case the final outcome may lead to a small site plan and a limited tree planting regime.

Or, for example, a group of private landowners may be joined together within a given watershed that requires a more comprehensive project along with multi-agency program integration. The Outreach Forester, therefore, must be knowledgeable of the spectrum of available agency incentive programs, community resources, and be able to effectively articulate these opportunities to the landowners.

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?

The primary outcomes will include:

- Seek, connect and educate landowners on methods and NSFC resources to ecologically restore their private North Shore properties.
- Evaluate the viability of biodiverse plantings and longer-lived trees based on site conditions.
- Form a simple site plan for tree planting and protection.
- Connect landowners with trees and fencing/protection materials and planting options.
- Discuss options and make connections to agencies' forestry incentive programs, contractor planting assistance, and follow-up to assure fulfillment of the planting plan.

- Measure, evaluate, and communicate effectiveness of outreach interactions using a North Shore Forest Collaborative geospatial database to seek additional outreach opportunities.

Project Location

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

Region(s): NE

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

Region(s): NE

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Outreach Forestry Program Formation, Administration and Forester Orientation

Activity Budget: \$51,000

Activity Description:

The North Shore Forest Collaborative will formulate a list of prospective private landowner contacts via solicitation of interest in the project using various marketing efforts, such as existing NSFC email lists, social media and direct mailing efforts.

In addition, the collaborative will formulate orientation materials for the Outreach Foresters to use during landowner interactions.

Once the outreach foresters are selected for the project, the North Shore Forest Collaborative Executive Committee and the Project Coordinator will provide a workshop to instill project objectives, technical guidance and project procedures to assure common goals are achieved. Much of these aspects has been previously developed, but will require coalescing materials for project purposes.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Form list of prospective landowner contacts	August 31, 2023
Compile forester orientation materials	August 31, 2023
Perform forester orientation workshop	August 31, 2023

Activity 2: Outreach Forestry Activities

Activity Budget: \$284,000

Activity Description:

Foresters will use the NSFC's contact list to reach landowners. In each interaction with a prospective private landowner, the Outreach Foresters will evaluate the site viability for longer-lived tree species plantings and other ecological restoration efforts that may be recommended. Restoration may be performed entirely by the landowner, but an added incentive may be established by offering a yet to be determined number of trees per site be planted by the Outreach Foresters, or other NSFC (in-kind) contractor, based on other in-kind funding and seedling availability.

Multiple tree seedling sources on the North Shore are available via generous seedling donations as part of community-led initiatives. Trees to be recommended for restoration will most often be White Pine, White Cedar, White Spruce, and Yellow Birch (there will be other species planted less frequently), and other native shrub plantings opportunities will also be determined. The Outreach Foresters will work toward agreement with the landowner on types and numbers of prescribed trees, native shrubs, and protection methods based on site conditions.

Outreach Foresters will complete a simple site plan for the landowner post-visit, which will identify planned plantings, and include eligible natural resource/forestry incentive programs that may be further pursued.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Begin: Outreach foresters site visits and provide Woods Walk Plans for landowners.	October 31, 2023

Complete 600 Site Visits - Woods Walk Plans: Year 1	October 31, 2024
Complete 600 Site Visits - Woods Walk Plans: Year 2	October 31, 2025
Complete 300 Site Visits - Woods Walk Plans: Year 3	May 31, 2026
Document the 1500 landowners' success on carrying-out Woods Walk Plans using geospatial tools.	May 31, 2026

Activity 3: Outreach Forester Activity Reporting

Activity Budget: \$40,000

Activity Description:

Outreach Foresters will enter the landowner contact/site data they visit into the NSFC geospatial database and communicate outcomes to the Project Coordinator. The NSFC will continue to tabulate results and make adjustments to outreach efforts/approaches and seek new landowner engagement opportunities.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Outreach Forester enters site visit plan/data into NSFC Geospatial database and communicate to NSFC.	June 30, 2026
Project Coordinator tabulates results and reports to NSFC Executive Committee results of outreach efforts.	June 30, 2026

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Molly Thompson	Sugarloaf: The North Shore Stewardship Association	Project Manager	Yes
TBD - Various Upon Selection	Contract Foresters	Outreach Forestry	Yes
Jim Manolis/Chris Dunham	The Nature Conservancy	Consulting role with potential to expand to assist with project management/and or provide outreach forestry services.	No
Thor Pakosz (DNR)	DNR - Private Land Forestry	Consulting role	No
Tara Solem	SWCD - Lake County	Consulting role	No
Ilena Hansel	SWCD - Cook County	Consulting role	No
Mike Hup	NRCS Forester	Consulting role	No
Myra Theimer	USFS - Superior National Forest	Consulting role	No
Brian Huberty	MN Forestry Association	Consulting role	No
Steve Weekes	Weekes Family Foundation	Provides a leveraging fund source for tree-protection fencing program.	No
Various	Private landowner participants	Critical grassroots, community members support on NSFC Executive Committee, and those directly working with Outreach Foresters.	No

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.

This project must rely on a robust information sharing/environmental educational process. In all cases, listed below, the project dissemination will follow the ENRTF attribution requirements, as detailed in the instructions for this application. During The Project, we plan to develop and publish a variety of communications that will both inform multiple audiences, but more directly solicit and engage with North Shore landowners for forester/resource professionals to visit and formulate on-site "Woods Walk" Forest Plans for their properties. We intend to utilize the following avenues of communication during the project life:

Sugarloaf Website

Sugarloaf Facebook Page

NSFC Website

NSFC Facebook Page

Updates: NSFC Bi-Monthly Updates of Project Progress

Community Events (e.g. Grand Marais Earth Day Event)

Neighbor to Neighbor Activities

Email Blasts

Landowner Webinar meetings

WTIP Radio Spot/Interviews (free)

Press Releases

After the completion of the project, we intend to broaden knowledge of the project with the purpose of growing awareness, sharing lessons-learned of the project, and building value for other similar private land forestry landscape projects throughout the state of Minnesota. We intend to utilize the following avenues of communication post-project:

*MFRC NE Landscape Committee Meeting Presentation of Project "Lessons-Learned"

Provide a Resource Professional Focused Project "Lessons-Learned" Webinar

Submit Project Report to the MN Forest Resources Council Landscape Committee

Archive the Project Report on the NSFC Website "Resource Library" webpage

Sugarloaf Website link to NSFC Website "Resource Library" webpage

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?

Results of this project are noted above, and will inform ongoing outreach engagement analysis based on real-time activities, in order to continue to grow capacity and landowner involvement in forest restoration. Actual landowner engagements will be leveraged with larger landscape-scale grant solicitations on public and private lands, using an "all-lands" shared-stewardship approach. It is further understood that a percentage of landowners with larger acreages will be eligible for other natural resource agency program support funding (e.g., via DNR private land forestry, SWCD/NRCS programs), which will strengthen program sustainability over time.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Project Manager		Manages all aspects of project including subcontracts, training and reporting			0%	3		\$25,000
							Sub Total	\$25,000
Contracts and Services								
Project Coordinator	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Coordination of outreach forestry project and contracted foresters.				1.05		\$25,000
Various Outreach Foresters - to be determined	Professional or Technical Service Contract	A three (3) year program using private land forester contractors to perform private land forestry outreach.				12		\$240,000
							Sub Total	\$265,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Outreach Forester Mileage on the North Shore.	A three-year program using private land forester contractors to perform private land forestry outreach.					\$84,000

			Contracted foresters will travel to landowner sites ranging from S. St. Louis County to the Canadian border. Distances per trip will vary greatly. Mileage rate will be the federal mileage rate at the time. Number of trips will be up to the 800 -1000 properties plans are written for. We anticipate 2-3 properties could be covered in one day.					
							Sub Total	\$84,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Printing materials as needed. Up to 1500 aerial photography maps.	Parcel and other printed forestry materials needed to give to landowners.					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$1,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$375,000

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
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	Donation of over 50,000 tree seedlings from Minnesota Power's Rajala Woods Initiative; Hedstrom's Lumber; and Castle Danger Brewery.	Donation of approx. 50,000+ tree seedlings/annually made available to the public on the North Shore for forest restoration work.	Pending	\$30,000
In-Kind	Private landowners, TBD, on case-by-case basis.	Acquisition of trees and fencing (required for deer browse protection). Time landowners spend with foresters.	Potential	\$100,000
In-Kind	The Nature Conservancy and private donors.	Contracted field crews, seedlings and other supplies for landowners reached through TNC Forest Program. Ongoing effort with emphasis on public lands, planning to allocate more to private lands in the North Shore Forest Collaborative landscape.	Pending	\$100,000
In-Kind	Weekes Family Foundation	Annual donation for discount fencing. Ongoing since 2016.	Pending	\$135,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$365,000
			Funds Total	\$365,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [4e4d8250-d4f.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The attachment is the single-page project work plan and decision-making work flow for the outreach forestry project proposal....

Financial Capacity

File: [95132b7e-0ca.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board resolution	9c58f380-2e2.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
North Shore Forest Collaborative LOS	1312ee33-820.pdf
The Nature Conservancy LOS	d865fe54-ebf.pdf
Lake County SWCD LOS	65ef593b-1ea.pdf
Cook County SWCD LOS	e018e602-112.pdf
Rob Wight North Shore Private Landowner LOS	6f331375-e4d.pdf
Dana Dickson North Shore Private Landowner LOS	0b8fc85e-76d.docx
Jeff Gniffke North Shore Private Landowner LOS	12fc5b9f-2cb.pdf
Becky Bartol North Shore Private Landowner LOS	d78a5619-9de.pdf
Background Check Certification	07408bd7-7f1.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Drafted the "Dissemination" Section of this proposal; Provided the Background Check Certification; Removed TNC receiving funds in "Project Partner Information" as the TNC, as their role has not been determined to date. Changed NSFC coordinator to Project Coordinator.

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?

Yes, I agree to the Commissioner's Plan.

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