



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2023 Final Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2023-013

Staff Lead: Corrie Layfield

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 6, 2023

Project Title: Community Forestry AmeriCorps

Project Budget: \$1,500,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Sharon Delcambre

Organization: ServeMinnesota

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Web Address: serveminnesota.org

Project Reporting

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. 07a

Appropriation Language: \$1,500,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with ServeMinnesota to preserve and increase tree canopy throughout the state by training, supporting, and deploying AmeriCorps members to local agencies and nonprofit organizations to plant and inventory trees, develop and implement pest management plans, create and maintain nursery beds for replacement trees, and organize opportunities for community engagement in tree stewardship activities.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2026

Narrative

Project Summary: Over three years, we will train, deploy, and support 150 members to build more resilient ecosystems in communities statewide. Members will focus on planting trees and conducting tree inventories.

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

Healthy trees provide numerous economic benefits: they slow and filter storm water, capture air pollution, provide windbreak, and offer shade; in contrast, decaying trees threaten human safety, property, and infrastructure. Minnesota contains over 1 billion ash trees, which are increasingly threatened by emerald ash borer (EAB). As northern Minnesota records many fewer days each year below -35°F, EAB is aggressively spreading to more communities in the state. 98% of emerald ash borer larvae die at -30°F, whereas only 79% die at -20°F. EAB jeopardizes the benefits of a healthy tree canopy and creates burdensome new costs to local communities. Facing a worker shortage, local agencies need support to adequately respond to the EAB infestation and manage care for the trees in their communities.

Community Forestry AmeriCorps directly addresses this challenge by training and strategically placing AmeriCorps members at partner organizations across the state. We measure impact across three related areas: (1) increases in tree canopy management activities across local agencies, (2) the associated economic benefits of increased tree canopy, and (3) the creation of a career pipeline for AmeriCorps members to enter the forestry profession, which currently faces a significant workforce shortage.

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.

We leverage the people power of AmeriCorps to directly bolster local efforts to preserve tree canopy, by deploying service members to community-based sites throughout the state. Members will inventory and plant trees, develop and implement pest management plans, create and maintain nursery beds for replacement trees, and organize opportunities for community engagement in tree stewardship activities. We estimate that each tree planted offers more than \$100 in economic value over 25 years; by this figure alone, each member funded represents more than \$16,000 invested in the community. We provide this service at no cost to the community. In addition to their direct contributions, members also holistically extend the capacity of host sites and empower local agencies to implement strategic plans concerning further aspects of tree health, such as tree removal and community outreach.

There is a shortage of qualified labor in this field. As members serve, they gain practical skills and are afforded networking opportunities, tree inspection certification, and other professional development resources to prepare them for good-paying, careers. A \$10,000 investment from LCCMR pays increasing dividends over time. Two-thirds of last year's members report they are likely to pursue a forestry career as a result of their service opportunity.

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?

We will recruit, train, deploy, and support 150 AmeriCorps service members over three years. Per member, we will inventory more than 1,000 trees and plant more than 160. Per year, we will develop and manage 24 EAB mitigation plans and 5 gravel bed nurseries. Additional outcomes are determined by site partner priorities. Site partners need staffing support to engage in prudent, proactive aspects of tree management. Each member provides strategic assistance in accordance with the specific needs of their site. Our activities will provide generalized capacity support to host sites and direct benefit to Minnesotans throughout the state.

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: Recruit, train, and deploy 150 AmeriCorps service members

Activity Budget: \$500,000

Activity Description:

Recruit 50 members per year for three years. Members are recruited through wide-net strategies, including job search websites, job boards, fairs, presentations at college campuses, social media, and targeted messages on Handshake, a leading career community. Applications are reviewed, candidates are screened, and host sites participate in final interviews. Members are trained throughout the year in community forestry and related topics, including: inventorying, planting, pruning, pathology (including Emerald Ash Borer and Oak Wilt), gravel bed nursery design and management, volunteer management, community engagement, community data analysis, and climate science. Within the first month of service, members receive Minnesota Tree Inspector certification. Throughout the service term, members are supported by host site supervisor, Program Managers, and fellow AmeriCorps members; members are encouraged to request technical assistance from our partners at City Forester, LLC and Tree Trust for further insight on specific projects or questions. Members are deployed statewide to serve at host sites that request members; these sites develop goals and set priorities to ensure that members efficiently address the specific community needs of the host site. Host sites include soil and water conservation districts, parks and public works departments, and nonprofits of varying sizes.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
First year – recruit, train, and deploy 50 service members	January 31, 2024
Second year – recruit, train, and deploy an additional 50 service members	August 31, 2024
Third year – recruit, train, and deploy an additional 50 service members	August 31, 2025

Activity 2: AmeriCorps member supervision to pursue site-specific tree activities that meet the needs and community context of host sites

Activity Budget: \$500,000

Activity Description:

Sites commit to supervise members and ensure they are able to work safely and efficiently towards site goals. The supervisor welcomes the member to the organization, introduces them to staff and stakeholders, and provides an orientation to the site. The supervisor provides member guidance on site, sets a daily schedule for the member, approves timesheets, and supports the member’s data collection. We train AmeriCorps members on a full spectrum of community forestry activities so they are well-prepared to conduct a variety of valuable tree activities; common activities include: inventorying, planting, pruning, watering, mulching, and marking trees for removal. Sites may offer additional training on topics specific to their community context. Some members spend much of their time assessing and mapping community trees during an inventory; others manage community tree sales and teach community members how to plant and care for trees. Most members conduct a broad variety of tree-related activities in support of our goals: “preserving and increasing the urban tree canopy in Minnesota” and “connecting communities to their urban forest.” Trees planted and inventoried are a helpful metric to estimate time-use of members statewide, whereas individual sites and members will set goals that reflect their specific needs.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
8,000 trees planted, 50,000 inventoried	July 31, 2024

Total of 16,000 trees planted, 100,000 inventoried	July 31, 2025
Total 24,000 trees planted, 150,000 inventoried	June 30, 2026

Activity 3: Holistic site-support that builds capacity at host sites

Activity Budget: \$500,000

Activity Description:

Members build host-site capacity by engaging in forestry activities that have critical value and may include significant qualitative outcomes or outcomes that are not easily aggregated outside of a particular community context. Such activities include, but are not limited to, developing and managing EAB plans, gravel bed nurseries, and outreach events. We work closely with sites to set expectations, and we encourage sites to leverage their community role when determining which interventions to pursue. Before host sites are selected and members are placed, our staff determine whether site needs fit within our program model. Sites are provided information acceptable and appropriate interventions; sites select from a “menu of interventions” to tailor member service with site needs. Members are trained on data collection, and program evaluators continually track data entries and flag concerns. We track implementation and impact data weekly, and we monitor program effectiveness to make continuous improvements. This method allows our program to build capacity at host sites, while allowing us to gain insights and share lessons-learned with others sites and partners. We anticipate members will manage EAB plans, gravel bed nurseries, and outreach events over the three-year funding period – but the holistic impact is even more substantial.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
At least 30 EAB plans developed, managed, and/or supported	June 30, 2026
At least 5 gravel bed nurseries developed, managed, and/or supported	June 30, 2026
At least 35 outreach or community events developed, managed, and/or supported	June 30, 2026

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
City of Andover	City of Andover	Site Partner	No
City of Bloomington	City of Bloomington	Site partner	No
City of Edina	City of Edina	Site partner	No
City of Ely	City of Ely	Site partner	No
City of Hopkins	City of Hopkins	Site partner	No
City of Le Sueur	City of Le Sueur	Site partner	No
City of Lakeville	City of Lakeville	Site partner	No
City of Minneapolis	City of Minneapolis	Site partner	No
City of Minnetonka	City of Minnetonka	Site partner	No
City of Moorhead	City of Moorhead	Site partner	No
City of Plymouth	City of Plymouth	Site partner	No
City of Roseville	City of Roseville	Site partner	No
City of Saint Peter	City of Saint Peter	Site partner	No
City of Winona	City of Winona	Site partner	No
Great River Greening	Great River Greening	Site partner	No
Mississippi Park Connection	Mississippi Park Connection	Site partner	No
Rochester Parks & Recreation	Rochester Parks & Recreation	Site partner	No
Tree Trust	Tree Trust	Site partner	No
Karen Zumach	Tree Trust	Contracted forestry trainer	No
Carlton Soil and Water Conservation District	Carlton Soil and Water Conservation District	Site partner	No
City of Belle Plaine	City of Belle Plaine	Site partner	No
City of Brooklyn Park	City of Brooklyn Park	Site partner	No
City of Burnsville	City of Burnsville	Site partner	No
City of Duluth	City of Duluth	Site partner	No
City of Rochester	City of Rochester	Site partner	No
Great River Greening	Great River Greening	Site partner	No
Minneapolis Downtown	Minneapolis Downtown	Site partner	No

Improvement District	Improvement District		
Chad Giblin	City Forester	Contracted forestry partner	No
Dylan Kelly	Ampact	Project manager	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.

ServeMinnesota shares with the ENRTF and LCCMR a commitment to facilitate changes in behavior to better protect, conserve, and enhance Minnesota’s environment and natural resources. We plan to enact this commitment through work done with community partners in communities throughout the state. Our work plan includes meaningful outreach activities which will be designed with host-sites to be appropriate and accessible within the communities being served. We agree that sharing this work and acknowledging ENRTF allows for critical transparency into the use of public funds. We plan to include attributions to ENRTF wherever it is appropriate to do so, including in outreach to prospective site partners, while recruiting service members, and on social media campaigns related to Community Forestry.

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?

Local agencies across the state are working to preserve natural resources so Minnesotans will enjoy active wildlife, clean air, and clear water for generations to come. In recent years, extreme weather has increased the urgency of this work. Bolstering community efforts now offers us the best chance for sustaining and paying for longer-term plans for ecological resiliency. LCCMR funding allows us to leverage powerful, matching funds from the federal government to bring an additional \$3 million dollars to directly support Minnesotans statewide who are engaged in this work. Ongoing efforts will be sustained by federal AmeriCorps funding and community investment.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Impact & Improvement Evaluator		Lead program continuous improvement and evaluation			23%	1.05		\$105,000
							Sub Total	\$105,000
Contracts and Services								
Ampact	Sub award	Since 2003, Ampact has implemented ServeMinnesota's strategic initiatives, including service member compensation and compliance. ENRTF contributions directly compensate AmeriCorps members serving in Community Forestry. ENRTF funds \$9,300 towards each member's living allowance; this contribution activates a block grant of federal AmeriCorps dollars, funding the remainder of this project.				150		\$1,395,000
							Sub Total	\$1,395,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$1,500,000

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				
Cash	Federal AmeriCorps Funding	ServeMinnesota is the state's administrator of AmeriCorps funds. We bring federal AmeriCorps dollars into our state and local communities to support initiatives and projects that serve the interests of Minnesotans. In order to activate these funds and earn federal investments, it is necessary that we show local buy-in and traction within our community; we must generate non-federal, financial contributions in order to leverage Federal AmeriCorps funding. This funding supports Community Forestry initiative expenses including member training, compliance, program management, member health insurance, FICA, mileage, and the remainder of member living allowances not funded by ENRTF funds (\$21,600 per member X 50 members X 3 years).	Secured	\$3,240,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$3,240,000
			Funds Total	\$3,240,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [a889d347-78d.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Document summarizing focus and scope of Community Forestry programming in Minnesota. Members focus on preserving and increasing the tree canopy throughout the state while becoming the next generation of environmental leaders. Members serve at 32 sites and counting, sites include cities, neighborhood associations, and soil and water conservation districts....

Financial Capacity

File: [8e63836c-885.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Signed board resolution	a7f89aee-4c5.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Support letter from Douglas County Park Superintendent	0b45a8b6-234.pdf
Support letter from Carlton SWCD	1fdee169-589.pdf
Support letter from Frogtown Green	c65d01ad-ba3.pdf
Support letter from Ashley Peters	25181146-531.pdf
Background Check Certification Form	1ec18276-a72.pdf
Additional Details for Revision Request Comments 3-4	232e4921-68a.docx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Date: 9/21/22 - Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional details to our workplan. The following changes have been made: (1) Our budget description was modified in response to a question from a committee member to better reflect the fact that LCCMR funds would directly flow to AmeriCorps member expenses by partially funding member living allowance; (2) the Background Check Certification Form was signed by ServeMinnesota CEO, Audrey Suker and uploaded to our attachments page; (3) we added our plans for dissemination.

Date: 11/15/22 - Thank you for the feedback and for the opportunity to revise our proposal. The following changes have been made: (1a) Added Ampact as a sub-award agency to our budgeting section; this change responds to COMMENT ID 1, which asked for additional information on how we intend to distribute stipends to AmeriCorps members. (1b) Removed budget item categorized as Other. (2) Added a Word document to the Attachments page, which responds in significant detail revision requests in COMMENT IDs 2-3. (3) Updated Review page to include a date identifying prior changes to clearly distinguish changes that were made previously from those that are being made presently.

Date 1/26/23: Thank you for working with us to clarify our workplan and to develop our expectations so that we and LCCMR are able to confidently agree on a contract as to what work will be done and what indicators will signal that the

work has been successfully completed. We have updated our activities and milestones to reflect the information that we included in a separate attachment on 9/21/22. We have adjusted the approximate completion date for our first-year recruitment activity to 1/31/2024. We have edited the subaward in our budget to reflect 50 FTE/year for 3 years. We have edited the explanation of Ampact's contribution to our project to clarify the relationship between AmeriCorps, Ampact, and ServeMinnesota. In similar fashion, we updated the description of the non-ENRTF funds sourced from Federal AmeriCorps funding; we describe the relationship between ServeMinnesota and AmeriCorps, and we indicate that AmeriCorps funding is made available only when we earn investments from other sources.

Date: 6/6/23 - Thank you for all the work your office has done to prepare, clarify, and submit our Work Plan. We updated Budget section to explicitly reflect Impact and Improvement Evaluation by Dr. Sharon Delcambre, Project Manager for this Work Plan. Dr. Delcambre is identified in the Personnel section, with 0.35 FTE and \$105,000 in ENRTF funds. Updated Professional/Technical Contracts to reflect this change in ENRTF fund allocation; ENRTF funds will contribute \$9,300 towards each member's living allowance, with the remainder being provided by a block grant of federal AmeriCorps dollars. Updated this section also to correct a grammatical error (corrected from "...each members' living allowances..." to "...each member's living allowance...").

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