



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-054

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 6, 2025

Project Title: Engaging our Diverse Public in Environmental Stewardship - Phase 2

Project Budget: \$249,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Brennan Blue

Organization: Great River Greening

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 24, 2025

Reporting Schedule: January 1 / July 1 of each year.

Project Completion: June 30, 2028

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2028

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05e

Appropriation Language: \$249,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Great River Greening to increase participation in natural resources conservation and restoration efforts and careers through volunteer, internship, and youth engagement activities, with a focus on diverse audiences that more accurately reflect local demographic and socioeconomic conditions in Minnesota.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2028

Narrative

Project Summary: Through outreach, education, internships and hands-on restoration activities, we will engage Minnesota's diverse population in community-based conservation work and learning that strengthens connection to and restores our natural areas.

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

Great River Greening believes that Minnesota's natural areas and environmental careers should be accessible to and enjoyed by our diverse and changing population. In pursuit of this vision, we recognize that historic and present-day inequities have created systemic barriers of access to natural systems and green spaces for communities of color, Indigenous peoples, and lower-income communities. This includes barriers to equitable participation and representation within the environmental field itself. Likewise, environmental conservation careers and opportunities are often more available to those living in the seven-county metropolitan area, despite the breadth of vital natural areas presenting conservation opportunities and needs through the state.

Our "Engaging the Diverse Public of Minnesota in Environmental Stewardship" program works to address these disparities by developing relationships, projects, internships, and opportunities that will (1) improve access to and enjoyment of natural areas, (2) grant Minnesotans exposure to a variety of conservation career pathways, and (3) strengthen a collective conservation ethic while restoring Minnesota's natural areas.

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.

Great River Greening will develop and host a variety of engagement opportunities that connect Minnesotans to conservation work, learning, internships, and hands-on restoration events. Our overarching goals include (1) community outreach and relationship building to engage communities underrepresented in conservation work and careers, (2) environmental education and hands-on restoration initiatives to connect Minnesotans to the many benefits that public lands and environmental careers offer, (3) cultivating an environmental stewardship ethic in the public, and (4) restoring our shared natural areas through community-based conservation work.

We will engage 1,250 volunteers, 500 youth, and 6 interns with demographic goals aimed to equitably provide conservation opportunities to Minnesota's diverse public. Activities will prioritize engagements in Greater MN, Environmental Justice neighborhoods, and majority BIPOC community groups/spaces, as described in our Activities section.

The conservation and restoration engagements described in Activity 1 will target 65-75% of events occurring outside the seven-county metro area, with the remaining 25-35% of events being provided in the Environmental Justice neighborhoods. Our Activity 2 internship program will target at least 50% BIPOC representation. Our BIPOC youth and young adult education events in Activity 3 will occur in communities or groups with at least 50% BIPOC representation.

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?

As a result of this program, Minnesota's natural resources will be directly conserved and enhanced through at least 20 restoration projects on protected public land throughout Minnesota. Further, by engaging and supporting a broad, diverse population base in environmental education and hands-on restoration work, this program will cultivate a long-lasting, applied conservation and stewardship ethic in Minnesotans. Our community-based, inclusive restoration work invites all participants to view themselves as the ongoing stewards of Minnesota's shared natural systems and resources.

Project Location

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

Region(s): Central, Metro, SE, SW,

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

Region(s): Central, Metro, SE, SW,

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Engage 1,250 local volunteers through community outreach, public education and habitat restoration events.

Activity Budget: \$127,400

Activity Description:

Outreach and event materials will be translated into multiple languages to remove barriers of access. Public, community-based environmental education engagements will be provided to meet groups where they are and build relationships along the way, with the end goal of then recruiting participants to join in hands-on restoration events. When possible, community groups will be invited to co-design restoration events to strengthen community-input and buy-in while nurturing a conservation ethic.

Hands-on restoration events will occur on public, protected land with the goals of (1) increasing a conservation ethic in volunteers (2) by training and educating them in stewardship work that (3) restores Minnesota's natural areas. Events will enhance and restore natural areas through planting, seeding, invasive species removal, and other site enhancements. Restoration events will be family-friendly. Healthy snacks or meals will be provided to reduce barriers to participation. All hands-on restoration volunteers will be fitted with necessary protective equipment, tools, and training needed to participate in these activities safely. Educational materials promoting action-based environmental stewardship strategies at all events.

Activity 1 will target 65-75% of events occurring in Greater MN with the remaining engagements occurring in Environmental Justice neighborhoods. Demographic data on all volunteers will be requested and documented.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Fall conservation events and engagements planned and implemented, 3 events, 100 individuals engaged	December 31, 2025
Full year of conservation events and engagements planned and implemented, 11 events, 675 individuals engaged	December 31, 2026
Further conservation events and engagements planned and implemented, total of 20 events, 1250 individuals engaged	December 31, 2027
Additional spring events developed and hosted, if budget allows	June 30, 2028

Activity 2: Great River Greening will provide three paid internships during 2026 and 2027.

Activity Budget: \$67,500

Activity Description:

Great River Greening will recruit, hire, train, and support at least six interns who will receive conservation career training and experience in community-based conservation work. Interns will be recruited through a variety of channels across the state. Staff will work with local education facilities to identify students interested in internship opportunities, with a particular focus on recruiting BIPOC participants and students in schools in Greater Minnesota. We will target at least 50% BIPOC representation in our intern program to support ongoing efforts to reduce representation disparities in the sector.

Core internships tasks will include supporting community outreach and engagement, environmental education, and conservation events. Interns will support these efforts in both the metro area and Greater Minnesota. Additionally, each intern will be provided the opportunity to meet with leadership in the varying departments of our growing conservation

non-profit, providing exposure and learning in community stewardship, ecological conservation, administration, operations, and funding/finance. To support career exploration and skill development, each intern will design and carryout a “capstone project” that supports conservation work in an area of their choosing. Concluding the internship, each intern will be tasked with sharing a personal testimonial reflecting on the experience.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Program review and refinement, begin networking with Greater MN and BIPOC community groups for recruitment	December 31, 2025
Three interns hired and hosted, three capstone projects and personal testimonies completed	December 31, 2026
Six total interns hired and hosted, six capstone projects and personal testimonies completed	December 31, 2027

Activity 3: Youth Engagement

Activity Budget: \$54,100

Activity Description:

Great River Greening will engage 500 youth and young adults in environmental stewardship work and education. This will include both (1) in-class/in-house introductory conservation lessons and (2) outdoor learning opportunities in the form of habitat monitoring and hands-on restoration work. Lessons and engagements will be designed with teachers and community leaders to fit the youth's needs and grant educators access/support to curriculum design. Additionally, curriculum and engagements will be designed to both increase enjoyment of and conservation commitment to local natural areas.

Students will receive exposure to a variety of environmental professionals through the series of engagements, highlighting a wide range of potential conservation careers to consider for their future. Local BIPOC community leaders and experts will be brought in as consultants or presenters to ensure a wide vary of representation within a sector still working towards equitable representation.

Engagements will be carried in public schools or community groups with at least 50% BIPOC representation. Surveys will be implemented with teachers, community leaders, and/or youth to gauge quality and effectiveness of engagements.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Continue strategic partnerships with youth organizations and schools, outreach to new groups to expand representation	December 31, 2025
Engage 250 students across at least 5 engagements with majority BIPOC schools or community groups	December 31, 2026
Engage 500 total students across at least 10 engagements with majority BIPOC school/community groups	December 31, 2027

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.

Acknowledgement of funding sources will be included in all event postings and recognized verbally on the day of events.

Demographic information for program participants will be collected and tracked through our online registration system and in-person paper registrations. When we join partner or coalition-based events, however, we do not always have direct access to demographics on age, race/ethnicity, etc. When possible and logical, we will use public records to provide demographic benchmarks (e.g. public school demographic reports).

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?

The first iteration of this program is underway and successfully meeting its aims, with a similar set of activities engaging our broad, diverse public in restoration activities, conservation internships, and applied educational opportunities with majority BIPOC youth communities. The second iteration of this program will build on the successes of the first, expanding our outreach, engagements, and hands-on restoration offerings: all resulting in more Minnesotans inclusively participating to restore our natural area while deepening their care and connection to conservation work and enjoyment. We anticipate returning in ML 2027 to support this program, if it continues to prove successful.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Pollinator Central II: Habitat Improvement With Community Monitoring	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08c	\$631,000
Engaging a Diverse Public in Environmental Stewardship	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 05d	\$300,000
Biochar Implementation in Habitat Restoration: A Pilot	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 07b	\$185,000
Pollinator Central III: Habitat Improvement with Community Monitoring	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08g	\$190,000
Restoring Forests and Savannas Using Silvopasture - Phase2	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08h	\$674,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Program Manager		Responsible for project and grant oversight, event support, intern support, and youth event support			21%	0.24		\$31,000
Education and Outreach Coordinator		Outreach to diverse public, youth education engagements, internship supervision, event support			21%	0.36		\$25,000
Field Coordinator		On site coordination and support for restoration activities with volunteers and youth			21%	0.27		\$20,000
Grant Administer		Mange grant reporting and grant finances			21%	0.06		\$6,000
Intern		Interns to assist with community engagement and restoration			20%	0.64		\$35,000
Volunteer Events Coordinator		Volunteer event recruitment, coordination, and leadership			21%	0.36		\$25,000
Ecologist		Provide ecological oversight of restoration projects			21%	0.15		\$12,000
							Sub Total	\$154,000
Contracts and Services								
Propio Language Services	Service Contract	Translation Services				0.24		\$8,000
TBD	Service Contract	Bus rentals for youth transportation to/from restoration sites. Typically school or youth group students. For example, transporting students from the South HS All Nations Program to a restoration and cultural learning opportunity at Oheyawahi.				0.16		\$5,000
TBD	Service Contract	Youth engagement speakers/consultants stipend - culturally appropriate representative				0.04		\$8,000
							Sub Total	\$21,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								

	Tools and Supplies	Restoration supplies (native plants, trees, seed, erosion matting, etc.)	Habitat enhancement					\$41,000
	Tools and Supplies	Restoration event supplies (sanitation unit rental, gloves, safety glasses, volunteer tools, healthy snacks)	Event supplies	X				\$15,000
	Tools and Supplies	Youth Engagement Events Supplies (tools, kids gloves, resource books, binoculars, healthy snacks)	Event Supplies	X				\$9,000
							Sub Total	\$65,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging		Vehicle mileage to community outreach, restoration events, and engagement with interns. Meals and lodging for sites across Greater MN. All mileage, meals, and lodging expenses will abide by the Travel Reimbursement and Documentation Guide for OHF and LCCMR projects					\$9,000
							Sub Total	\$9,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-

							Grand Total	\$249,000
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Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Restoration event supplies (sanitation unit rental, gloves, safety glasses, volunteer tools, healthy snacks)	Healthy snack option (granola bar, fruit) at volunteer events. Volunteers will be at events in remote areas.
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Youth Engagement Events Supplies (tools, kids gloves, resource books, binoculars, healthy snacks)	Healthy snacks for youth participants while we are in remote areas or missing classroom snacks.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
Cash	Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Funded projects.	Site prep ahead of some events at OHF funded restoration and enhancement sites.	Pending	\$10,000
			State Sub Total	\$10,000
Non-State				
Cash	Great River Greening cash match.	Great River Greening direct expenses required to do the work for this grant.	Pending	\$100,000
In-Kind	Private Foundation	Metro Internship funding	Pending	\$5,400
Cash	Private Foundation	Funds supporting youth education	Pending	\$20,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$125,400
			Funds Total	\$135,400

Total Project Cost: \$384,400

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Frontenac State Park	Goodhue	Prairie and oak bluff restoration to support biodiversity	Restoration	80	3	\$5,000	Public	MN DNR	In Progress
Totals				80	3	\$5,000			

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.

All restoration activities completed as a result of our environmental education work in Activity 1 of this program 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.

Restoration initiatives developed in Activity 1 will occur within and support the wider restoration and management plans held at their respective sites (example: initiatives at State Parks will support the MN DNR's ongoing management)

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

Great River Green will follow BSWR's Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines while working in concert with the wider, existing management plans of the respective partner sites.

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.

Long-term maintenance and management of the parcels receiving restoration activity support from this grant program will continue to be maintained and managed by the respective site leaders/plans. If such a plan does not exist on the parcel, then one will be developed alongside the project development and parcel selection.

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

Consideration will be given to contracting with CCM if additional crew support is needed for any of the community-centered restoration work of our Activity 1, though, in general, this will not be necessary as the projects will center on work that is accessible to and engaging Minnesota's public.

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.

Restoration work occurring as a result of this educational grant will be designed to fit within the wider restoration and management plan of the respective sites/parcels, which will be evaluated and maintained by the respective site leaders.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [228c059a-da4.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Summary flyer with inspiring images of Minnesotans engaging in conservation work...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
990 Form Great River Greening	64b8f63f-5b2.pdf
Great River Greening 990	527ef9d2-65b.pdf
Great River Greening Audit	19cdcd42-5c5.pdf
Sec of State-In good standing	d5830b34-6b8.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Approval Letter	3f4563ce-928.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Letter of Support - DIW	ecb385b4-f29.pdf
Letter of Support - Frogtown Green	54e74ff2-738.pdf
Background Check Form	3f1b332c-739.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Program workplace has been corrected to indicate that "Yes" this program will occasionally provide educational programming with children/minors and that "Yes" all employees, contractors, and volunteers involved will complete and pass a background check prior to educational engagement with any children/minors.

Dissemination plan information added.

Reporting schedule change request submitted (shifting to Jan 1/July 1)

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

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this project:

Melissa Greenwood, Grants Administrator for Great River Greening

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

Yes, I understand