



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-103

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 17, 2025

Project Title: Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew Program

Project Budget: \$678,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Brian Miller

Organization: Conservation Corps Minnesota

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 24, 2025

Reporting Schedule: March 1 / September 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. 05h

Appropriation Language: \$678,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa to expand a conservation corps program developed to provide natural resources career development opportunities for indigenous young adults and cultivate an enduring action-based conservation ethic through the integration of traditional knowledge, nature immersion, and the implementation of conservation and restoration practices in the field.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2028

Narrative

Project Summary: The Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew Program, developed in partnership with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, provides environmental education and workforce development opportunities for Indigenous young adults.

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

The Fond du Lac (FDL) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI) are engaging in innovative and culturally relevant ways to prepare younger generations to take care of the Tribal communities, including tribal-owned and ceded lands. There is a great need for more opportunities geared towards indigenous young adults that are centered on environmental stewardship and education, as well as (re)connection to the land, culture, and community. This urgent push for more young adults entering the conservation and natural resources field is fueled in part by the upcoming retirement of many tribal resource management staff, who are seeking to mentor the next generation of land stewards in order to ensure the continuation of current management plans and to carry that knowledge base forward to future generations. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, 19% of FDL community members are living in poverty and 14.1% of the community is unemployed. These statistics highlight the need for creating job opportunities for young adults in the FDL community, via culturally relevant programming, that allows them to gain experience and confidence in the natural resources field while also providing employment that aids them in building economic security.

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.

With the responsibility of stewardship and the health of future generations in mind, CCMI has partnered with FDL to develop the Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin (Starting out in Earth Conservation) Conservation Crew Program. This program creates opportunities for indigenous young adults to work with current Tribal Resource Management professionals to gain valuable experience and skills, preparing them for future careers in the natural resources field and as the next generation of stewards in their community.

The program engages indigenous young adults (ages 18 - 30) through place-based experiential environmental education promoting an ethic of stewardship through culturally and community-focused programming. The crew serves on projects that aim to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance tribal air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other relatives through locally led conservation efforts that support and respect Tribal sovereignty and cultural knowledge.

The program's pilot year (2023) was incredibly successful with 3 crew members obtaining jobs with FDL Resource Management after completing the program. There is also a strong possibility of partnering with other Ojibwe Bands and Tribal Nations in Minnesota who have shown interest in bringing this program to their reservation and adapting it to fit their specific community needs.

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 Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew Program provides training that will increase participants' knowledge and skills to restore and maintain a healthy and biodiverse natural environment. The program is designed to cultivate an enduring action-based conservation ethic through the integration of traditional knowledge, nature immersion, and best management practices in the field. The objectives of educating the next generation about the Great Lakes ecosystem, and protecting and restoring species of interest, align with FDL's Integrated Resource Management Plan.

Project outcomes will include a focus on aquatic and terrestrial invasive plant species measured by the number of acres treated and improved.

Project Location

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

County(s): Carlton, St. Louis,

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

County(s): Carlton, St. Louis,

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Recruitment, training and education

Activity Budget: \$50,000

Activity Description:

Conservation Corps will recruit a 4-5 member crew for each year of the project utilizing existing partnerships and recruitment materials and actions that have proven successful in running similar tribal partnerships since 2023. The main focus of the program is to provide members with the training and education they need to not only pursue a career in the natural resources field, but also to become responsible stewards of the land where they live and recreate. The crew begins their 6-month term with 3 weeks of training to prepare them for a season of varied project work. Training includes Wildland Fire training, chainsaw operation and maintenance, herbicide use, wilderness first aid, hand tool operation, leadership skill development, interpersonal conflict, mental health first aid, Invasive plant ID, Leave No Trace, etc. The investment in training members and providing them opportunities for ongoing education will result in program participants developing the workforce, personal, and technical skills and confidence to pursue in demand careers in natural resources with Tribal, state, and federal agencies as well as private natural resource contractors. All activities are tracked using a "Survey of Accomplished Work" tool, which is uploaded to Salesforce daily to provide verified and detailed accomplishment reporting.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Crew attends FDL Ojibwe School Youth at Taking Care of Things Gathering year 1	September 30, 2025
Participants attend and table at the Ganawenjigewin Maawanjidiwin (Taking Care of Things Gathering) year 1	September 30, 2025
600 hours of environmental education and technical conservation skills training year 1	June 30, 2026
Participants attend and table at the Ganawenjigewin Maawanjidiwin (Taking Care of Things Gathering) year 2	September 30, 2026
Crew attends FDL Ojibwe School Youth at Taking Care of Things Gathering year 2	September 30, 2026
600 hours of environmental education and technical conservation skills training year 2	June 30, 2027

Activity 2: Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Crew Members Implement Natural Resource Management Activities on tribal lands and Ceded Territories

Activity Budget: \$628,000

Activity Description:

Once the crew begins working on projects with FDL Resource Management staff, they continue their learning via educational opportunities that are interspersed into their project work weeks. These include visiting the Great Lakes aquarium and Lake Superior Reserve, attending the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's regional conference, visiting the Fond du Lac and Mille Lacs cultural museums, learning from FDL Resource Management staff about FDL Treaty Rights, college campus tours, FDL air quality monitoring tour, site tours of FDL's energy and sustainability initiatives, and attending FDL's wild ricing camp in the fall. All activities are tracked using a "Survey of Accomplished Work" tool, which is uploaded to Salesforce daily to provide verified and detailed accomplishment reporting.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Monitoring and restoring 100 acres of Wild Rice in St. Louis Estuary	June 30, 2027
Dedicate at a minimum 300 hours to aquatic invasive species prevention and surveillance activities	June 30, 2027

Dedicate at a minimum 300 hours to aquatic invasive species prevention and surveillance activities	June 30, 2027
Participants monitor and restore 100 acres of manoomin (Wild Rice)	June 30, 2027
Participants dedicate 300+ hours to aquatic invasive species prevention and surveillance activities	June 30, 2027
Participants monitor and remove terrestrial invasive species from 120 acres of FDL lands	June 30, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jody Karr	Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa	CCMI Grants Manager & Strategic Resource Development	Yes
Kelsey Taylor	Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Invasive Species Coordinator	No
Brian Miller	Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa	AmeriCorps Field Crew Program Director	Yes
Hillary Olsen	Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa	Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Field Crew Coordinator	Yes

Dissemination

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

- Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew 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.
- Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be acknowledged for all dissemination work through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENRTF Acknowledgment Guidelines.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

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

The Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew Program is based on the successful model created by the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, which began in New Mexico over 15 years ago and has continued to expand in the Southwest.

Ongoing efforts will be funded by leveraging CCMI's existing AmeriCorps funding; partnering with Tribal communities to apply for new AmeriCorps Native Nations grants; Bureau of Indian Affairs funding through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative program, or Indian Youth Service Corps; private funding through Northland Foundation, Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, the Ordean Foundation, and the National Park Foundation.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Conservation Corps Veterans Service Corps Program	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 08b	\$1,339,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Program Manager		Providing operational oversight; mentoring and supervision of Field Coordinator; outreach and relationship building w/ Tribal communities in MN			13%	2		\$188,698
Program Coordinator		Providing direct supervision of participants, crew project work, crew cultural activities; leading and/or facilitating crew training			13%	2		\$118,880
							Sub Total	\$307,578
Contracts and Services								
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Subaward	Staff salary expenses for Invasive Species Program Manager (Kelsey Taylor) and Environmental Outreach Coordinator (Anthony Mazzini). Fond du Lac Natural Resource Management staff will be providing training to the crew members, preparing projects, supervising project work on FDL Tribal lands, and reporting on project work outputs/outcomes.				2		\$90,000
							Sub Total	\$90,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Participant work clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) @ \$2629 in year 1; \$2707 in year 2	Garments appropriate for a variety of outdoor conditions, and PPE such as eye protection, ear protection, hard hat, gloves, work boots, etc.					\$5,336
	Tools and Supplies	Camp supplies @ \$1,500 in year 1; \$1,500 in year 2.	Funds used to purchase equipment for crew 'spike kits' used by participants when they camp near project sites for extended periods due to backcountry or hard-to-access project locations					\$3,000
	Tools and Supplies	Program hand tools and power tools @ \$7110 in year 1; \$7260 in year 2.	Tool caches used by Conservation Crews to complete a variety of natural resource management projects					\$14,370
							Sub Total	\$22,706

Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	estimated 10 spike trips per year for the crew of 4-5 people	funds used for lodging on projects requiring overnight stays					\$12,053
							Sub Total	\$12,053
Travel Outside Minnesota								
	Other	(Roundtrip airfare for one person = \$600) + (Lodging, 1 person * \$107/night * 6 nights = \$643) + (Per diem, 1 person * \$42/day * 7 days = \$174) + (rental car, 7 days = 500)	CCMI staff member shadowing Crew Member Training for one week with the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps in New Mexico (the program model we based our program on)	X				\$1,917
	Other	(Round trip airfare for one person = \$480) + (Lodging, 1 person * \$120/night * 3 nights = \$360) + (Per diem, 1 person * 4 days = \$168) + (Rental car, 4 days = \$261)	CCMI Program Manager flying from MN to AZ to attend a training offered by the Native Wellness Institute.	X				\$1,269
							Sub Total	\$3,186
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
		Recruitment	Costs for publicizing program opportunities, fees for tabling at recruitment events					\$2,395
		Program participant training and development	AmeriCorps required Orientation (faciliy expense for facilty rental), DOT health cards (required for fleet operations), 1st Aid/CPR (for remote field operations), additional funds for					\$20,492

			tuition or attendance fees for required skills/safety trainings					
		Program participant personnel expenses	Stipend and benefits for 1 crew leader at approx \$2,600/month (6.5 months/year * 2 years) and 3 crew members at \$2,400/month (6 months/year * 2 years) plus fringe benefits such as health care and PTO					\$147,590
		Lease of fleet vehicles: 3 trucks each year @ \$12K/truck/year. This expense is for the cost to of leasing from Enterprise fleet and includes maintenance contract. This expense does not include insurance or fuel. (1 for Program Manager; 1 for Field Coordinator; 1 for the 4-person Conservation Crew)	Vehicles for travel to and from project sites and other program activities estimated at 15,000 miles/year. These vehicles are assigned to this project and not used for other activities.					\$72,000
							Sub Total	\$242,477
							Grand Total	\$678,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Travel Outside Minnesota	Other	(Roundtrip airfare for one person = \$600) + (Lodging, 1 person * \$107/night * 6 nights = \$643) + (Per diem, 1 person * \$42/day * 7 days = \$174) + (rental car, 7 days = 500)	Our program is based on the successful model of Conservation Legacy's Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps Program based in New Mexico. A peer exchange with the Ancestral Lands program would greatly help us strengthen our participant training strategies and content.
Travel Outside Minnesota	Other	(Round trip airfare for one person = \$480) + (Lodging, 1 person * \$120/night * 3 nights = \$360) + (Per diem, 1 person * 4 days = \$168) + (Rental car, 4 days = \$261)	CCMI is working to build cultural competency that will help us strengthen our relationship with the Fond du Lac community, as well as other Indigenous communities in MN. Training resources are hard to identify, so out of state travel is sometimes needed.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	AmeriCorps	Conservation Corps program operational expenses @ \$50K/year * 2 years.	Secured	\$100,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$100,000
			Funds Total	\$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$778,000

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
Elk Habitat restoration	Carlton	forest restoration activities for elk habitat as part of reintroduction efforts	Restoration	500	-	\$12,000	Public		Has Not Begun
Fond du Lac solar site	Carlton	invasive removal from prairie plantings in a solar array. Provides water quality benefit and habitat as well as public education.	Restoration	5	-	\$10,000	Public		Has Not Begun
manoomin restoration sites	Carlton, St. Louis,	wetland restoration for wild rice health to support cultural and ecological benefits	Restoration	10	-	\$2,000	Public		In Progress
Totals				515	0	\$24,000			

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 will be conducted on Fond Du Lac or other public lands

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 plans include promoting regeneration of native plant communities as well as building habitat suitable for wildlife including pollinators, elk, wolves, and others. Working with our forestry, invasive species and wildlife departments participating members will have direct regeneration experience through plant management and restoration field practices. Fond du Lac has an elk management plan, an invasive species management plan, an ash management plan and others which the crew will help accomplish specific goals laid out in those plans. The main purpose of resource management is to promote native and culturally significant species regeneration within the Fond du Lac Reservation boundaries as well as protect and promote usufructuary rights.

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.

Many of Fond du Lac’s management principles are in line with the BSWR “Native Vegetation and Establishment Guidelines” including increasing native biodiversity, utilizing native seed mixes from locally sourced areas, minimizing the use of herbicides in management, following an invasive species management plan to prevent the introduction of noxious weed and other invasive species during restoration and management projects, focusing on restoring habitat to pollinator friendly species, and having all projects considering climate change and other generational impacts as we plan for seven generations in the future. We also follow the planting schedules as laid out by BWSR, where we focus on grasses and trees in spring, and forbs and other species in the fall for a dormant season planting.

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.

Fond du Lac has several departments in resource management to aid with the long- term goals that the CCMI crew will be aiding with. All departments have outsourced funding or are funded in part by the Band to maintain long term management needs in keeping with the management plans created by Fond du Lac Band.

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

The entire proposal is undertaken in partnership between Conservation Corps and FDL

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.

1) Pictures will be taken of before and after site maintenance to show initial improvements, especially pertaining to areas of invasive species management, forestry regeneration, and habitat restoration.

2) Annual reports are created for alternative funding sources by each department at resource management which tracks projects, including completion standards and implementation. These are completed on an annual basis and would include three years post monitoring.

3) The program manager for the CCMI indigenous programs crew will be responsible for annual reports of what the crew accomplished, which can then be transposed into Fond du Lacs department reports of how their programming aided with reaching management plan objectives.

4) When applicable, such as for invasive species, mapping of species will occur to see long term trends and effectiveness of management strategies, which may be re-evaluated if management is not successful in mitigation and regeneration.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [93018d07-c89.docx](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Map of Fond du Lac Reservation...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
CCMI Form 990	a69c9be5-604.pdf
CCMI Audit Report 2022	e97125fc-a53.pdf
CCMI Good Standing Document	e779573f-913.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
CCMI Board Resolution Letter	48ddc0eb-015.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
CCMI Impact Report 2022	90c4aa46-415.pdf
Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Crew in 2023	f15020c1-5eb.jpg
Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Crew at Community Event	3d3488c1-18f.jpg
Letter of Support- FDL Resource Management- Kelsey Taylor	8852135e-01f.docx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

removed budget items related to fleet fuel and maintenance as well as marketing and awards/recognition dollars to match reduced funding level. These expenses will be covered using non-grant funds. Updated project completion date to June 30th, 2028

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")?

No

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

Brian Miller, Hillary Olsen and Jody Karr with Conservation Corps

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