



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-198

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 16, 2025

Project Title: Engaging Latine Communities in Conservation and Preservation

Project Budget: \$400,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Carolina Ortiz

Organization: Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Accion Latina

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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. 05o

Appropriation Language: \$400,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Accion Latina to use community-based partnerships and communications platforms to host outdoor events and conduct educational outreach focused on Latine and BIPOC communities about the need to protect Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2028

Narrative

Project Summary: COPAL will utilize community-based partnerships and communications platforms to host outdoor events educating 10,000 Latine and BIPOC participants about the need to protect Minnesota's air, water, and natural resources.

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

Routinely visiting parks and engaging in outdoor activities increases peoples' commitment to water and land conservation (DeVillie et al., 2021). Yet in 2022 only 11% of visitors to Minnesota's state parks identified as BIPOC, while 22% of MN's population is BIPOC (Minnesota DNR, 2022). Barriers included cost, transportation, knowledge of outdoor spaces, language access, and racism.

For Latine families who speak Spanish, the lack of educational resources and Spanish-speaking staff at community parks and outdoor events can make it difficult to navigate the outdoors. Parks and outdoor activities hold a special significance in Latine cultures. Many cities and towns throughout the Caribbean, Central America, and South America host outdoor festivals in town squares, and many cultural traditions include connections to the natural world. Without access to Minnesota's outdoors, Latine communities lose a cultural keystone.

ENRTF funding will allow COPAL to expand programming to create culturally-relevant, accessible avenues to Minnesota's parks and outdoor activities for more Latine and BIPOC communities. Participants will learn key conservation techniques, and based on the impact the work has had thus far, will result in increased participation in preserving Minnesota's land and resources among Latine and BIPOC communities.

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.

COPAL partners with local organizations to provide monthly events that increase access to Minnesota's parks, natural resources, and outdoor activities among Latine and BIPOC communities. We provide the transportation, financial resources, and language services that our communities need. Our curriculum increases civic participation in the agencies that govern pollution and natural resources, and we educate attendees on best practices to preserve Minnesota's natural resources. We also educate park rangers and staff about how to ensure outdoor activities are accessible for our Spanish-speaking communities.

COPAL recently hosted an outdoor event at Bdote (Fort Snelling State Park). By removing parking and transportation fees, and guiding people to the location, over 50 community members participated in the event, many of whom had never been to a state park. Families signed up to attend future events and invited their friends. Park staff learned how to work with translators and about the barriers Latine and BIPOC communities face in accessing parks.

Our impact was not just at the event site, however. Our strong communications presence and our videographer - who has extensive experience documenting conservation efforts in Chile - educate over 10,000 people each month about preserving Minnesota's land and water.

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?

During the grant period, 600 people will attend outdoor events across Minnesota. Post-event surveys will measure changes in knowledge, confidence, and personal conservation actions. Some participants will join COPAL's Environmental Justice committee, deepening their engagement through leadership roles in conservation-focused efforts. This connection ensures event-based education leads to long-term involvement. To expand reach, COPAL will share educational content with over 10,000 people monthly via social media, newsletters, YouTube, and a 24/7 Spanish-language radio station, strengthening conservation knowledge across communities statewide.

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: Connect Latine and BIPOC communities with Minnesota's natural resources and conservation efforts through inclusive outdoor activities and environmental education

Activity Budget: \$267,807

Activity Description:

COPAL will host monthly events at state and city parks, focusing on topics like safe fishing, snowshoeing, and sustainable home practices. Activities will include arts and crafts, recreational equipment, and interactive materials like comic books. Each event will be promoted through COPAL's communication channels and in partnership with local organizations and state park staff to ensure cultural relevance and accessibility. COPAL will evaluate each event through post-event surveys, collecting participant feedback on their experiences and the knowledge gained.

Participants will increase their understanding of conservation and sustainability, with many planning to apply new practices at home. At the conclusion of the project, COPAL will summarize survey results from all events, identifying trends in community engagement and the impact of the programming. This data will inform future efforts to improve park access and develop new initiatives to connect Latine and BIPOC communities with Minnesota's natural resources. A final summary report will be produced, capturing key survey results, participant feedback, and insights for future programming.

ENRTF funds will be used for educational purposes but not to encourage the public to contact members or employees of the legislature or a state agency for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation or policy.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Engage 600 participants throughout Minnesota (Twin Cities metro, southern, western, and northern MN).	June 30, 2027
80% of survey respondents say they will visit a state park in the future.	June 30, 2027
90% of survey respondents understand the importance of conservation efforts.	June 30, 2027
Form 2 new partnerships annually with BIPOC organizations to reach more participants throughout Minnesota.	June 30, 2027
Continue existing partnerships with 3 local organizations.	June 30, 2027
Provide a summary of survey results for all events supported by ENRTF funding	June 30, 2027

Activity 2: Equip members to lead environmental conservation efforts, addressing the specific challenges of access to sustainable resources and education

Activity Budget: \$58,800

Activity Description:

COPAL will educate 40 committee members through culturally relevant workshops focused on energy efficiency, sustainable landscaping, and available rebate programs. Sessions will be bilingual to ensure accessibility. Members will apply their learning in their homes and share insights through peer-led workshops, community events, and digital platforms. As they develop leadership skills, they will take on progressively larger roles, such as organizing educational events and mentoring new members.

Members will become visible leaders in environmental conservation, promoting sustainable practices through peer-to-peer education and outreach. Success will be measured using pre/post surveys to assess knowledge and confidence, a skills rubric to track leadership growth, and participation logs to quantify engagement. Additionally, member-led events

will be tracked for community reach. Long-term sustainability will be ensured as trained members continue to mentor new participants and expand the program.

ENRTF funds will be used for educational purposes but not to encourage the public to contact members or employees of the legislature or a state agency for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation or policy, or for directly advocating the adoption or rejection of legislation or policy.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hire an Outdoor Specialist to increase staff capacity to focus on the EJ Committee	June 30, 2026
Throughout programming, engage 10-15 committee members in leadership roles.	June 30, 2027
50 new attendees engage in the outdoor activities due to committee member outreach.	June 30, 2027
During the second year of programming, 5 committee members lead at least 2 events.	June 30, 2027
2 committee members will serve as engagement ambassadors to increase participation in outdoor activities	June 30, 2027
Educate 600 families about rebate programs and directly connect 20 families with eligible rebates.	June 30, 2027

Activity 3: Educate Spanish-speaking Minnesota residents on conservation efforts and sustainable practices to protect the state's natural resources

Activity Budget: \$73,393

Activity Description:

COPAL will use communications platforms such as social media, radio, videos, and newsletters to reach at least 10,000 predominantly Spanish-speaking Minnesotans. Educational content will cover sustainable living, conservation practices, and simple steps people can take to reduce environmental harm. Materials will be culturally relevant, accessible, and tailored to community needs. Outreach will be supported through local radio partnerships and digital campaigns to maximize reach and engagement.

The goal is to increase awareness of the need to preserve Minnesota's natural resources. Impact will be measured by social media reach, video views, and newsletter open rates. COPAL will also track how the network of people engaged in conservation grows over time. Evaluation will focus on reviewing data and community feedback to adjust approaches as needed.

ENRTF funds will be used for educational purposes but not to encourage the public to contact members or employees of the legislature or a state agency for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation or policy, or for directly advocating the adoption or rejection of legislation or policy.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Social media: 2 posts per week will reach 9,000 people per month	June 30, 2027
Newsletters: 2 newsletters per month will reach 5,650 people per month	June 30, 2027
2 videos per year will reach 500 people per month	June 30, 2027
Weekly show about environmental justice on COPAL's radio station will reach 400 people monthly	June 30, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Luisana Mendez	Huellas Latinas	Outdoor Events	Yes
Raymundo Ruiz	Baztec MN	Outdoor Events	Yes
Vanessa Berrueta	Great River Greening	Outdoor Events	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.

To assess our impact and learn from our mistakes, COPAL uses Airtable and EveryAction CRM (constituent relationship management) software to track participant demographic information, the number of participants served, the number of events and committee meetings, and data about outcomes achieved. This allows us to understand what community members need, where we are consistently meeting these needs, and where we can improve. We also evaluate our services through 1-1 conversations and event surveys. These conversations support staff in understanding strengths and areas of improvement in implementation.

For this specific project, we will also use COPAL's established communication channels—social media, newsletters, YouTube, and our radio station -- to regularly share project updates, conservation tips, and success stories. This will ensure that our findings reach a broad audience, including those who are directly impacted by the project's activities. Results will be shared with key partners such as our Environmental Justice committee, local environmental organizations, park staff, and BIPOC groups via 1:1 conversations, joint events, and presentations. Such interactions will foster collaboration and ensure that our findings are utilized to enhance resource management practices and outreach efforts. We will work closely with our contracted evaluation firm to determine project successes and how to address continual barriers faced by Latine and BIPOC communities in accessing the outdoors and preserving Minnesota's land and resources.

We will acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications and outreach.

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?

We will evaluate our grant activities through our 40-member Environmental Justice Committee, 1-1 conversations, post-event surveys, and data analysis. Results will be implemented to reduce the disparity of BIPOC individuals accessing parks.

After project completion, we will utilize our strong partnerships and membership base - which we expect to grow throughout the outdoor events - to determine the needs of the Latine community in preserving and conserving Minnesota's natural resources. We will continue funding our environmental justice program through grants with which we have a strong relationship and history of funding.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Environmental Justice Coordinator		Coordinating lead acting as a liaison for families and communities to ensure effective implementation of environmental justice initiatives.			20%	0.5		\$31,200
Environmental Justice Director		Project lead overseeing strategic direction and implementation of environmental justice projects, with a focus on community engagement and empowerment.			20%	0.6		\$86,400
Outdoor Specialist		Planning and executing outdoor activities and programs, fostering a connection between communities and the environment.			20%	2		\$124,800
Communications Coordinator		Posting on social media to promote events and educate predominantly Spanish-speaking community members on conservation and preservation efforts. Creating and publishing monthly newsletters.			20%	0.5		\$27,955
Videographer & Photographer		Capturing visuals and testimonials during events, creating compelling videos to showcase community involvement and impact.			20%	0.4		\$25,958
Podcast/Radio Tech		Hosting a weekly environmental justice show and producing post-event audio materials for podcasts and radio broadcasts aimed at increasing community participation and engagement.			20%	0.2		\$12,480
Health and Wellness Navigator		Connecting community members to outdoor events when they call COPAL's hotline for assistance			20%	0.5		\$33,696
							Sub Total	\$342,489
Contracts and Services								
Baztec Fishing	Subaward	Engage Baztec Fishing for sustainable fishing practices and knowledge sharing. The subaward will cover personnel (\$6,500), supplies (\$1,500), and travel costs (\$1,000) for conducting sustainable fishing demonstrations and workshops. All expenses align with project goals and ENRTF guidelines, with no capital or ineligible costs included.				1		\$9,000

Huellas Latinas	Subaward	The subaward will cover personnel (\$7,000), supplies (\$1,500), and travel costs (\$500) for facilitating workshops, sharing cultural insights, and supporting events that promote environmental stewardship. This collaboration will further engage Latine and BIPOC communities in environmental conservation. No capital or ineligible expenses are included.				1		\$9,000
Contracted survey design and analysis	Service Contract	Contract with an evaluation firm to design surveys, collect data, and analyze results to assess the project's impact on the community and conservation efforts.				2		\$10,500
Cultural Performance Per Year	Subaward	Partner with a BIPOC-led organization to host an annual cultural performance highlighting Indigenous and Latine practices of environmental stewardship. Through traditional dances, music, and storytelling, participants will deepen their connection to land, water, and wildlife, fostering long-term conservation mindsets rooted in cultural identity and respect for the environment.				2		\$4,000
							Sub Total	\$32,500
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	360 reusable grocery bags (15 per event)	Collaborate with local grocery stores or markets to offer reusable bags as an alternative to single-use plastic bags, reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable shopping practices.					\$2,000
	Tools and Supplies	360 reusable water bottles (15 per event)	Distribute reusable water bottles as giveaways at events, workshops, or community gatherings, promoting sustainability.	X				\$2,000
	Tools and Supplies	Paint, chalk, paper, pencils, extra supplies	Invest in arts and crafts supplies for creative expression workshops that integrate art with nature, fostering personal connections with the environment through activities like painting, sculpture, and photography.					\$500

	Equipment	20 bikes, fishing gear, or similar natural-resource-based outdoor recreation equipment	Purchase or rent equipment like bicycles or fishing gear that support direct, outdoor engagement with Minnesota's natural resources. Equipment will be used during events to encourage active lifestyles and connection to nature.					\$2,000
	Equipment	25-person translation system with interpreter monitor	Acquire equipment like portable translation devices or headsets to facilitate language interpretation at events, enhancing accessibility and inclusivity.	X				\$2,500
							Sub Total	\$9,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	1 outdoor event per month to different areas in MN, so 24 events to report mileage	Cover expenses for staff members to attend outdoor events or to report findings at events.					\$6,000
							Sub Total	\$6,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	600 event flyers, 300 brochures, and 50 posters	Budget for printing event flyers, brochures, posters, and educational materials in both English and Spanish					\$2,500
	Printing	30 comic books	Create illustrated comics targeting children and families to raise awareness about conservation and outdoor stewardship, fostering a					\$5,000

			sense of responsibility towards nature.					
	Printing	600 multilingual trail maps	Print trail maps and guides in multiple languages to ensure inclusivity and accessibility of outdoor recreation opportunities for non-English speakers.					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$8,500
Other Expenses								
		Parking and entrance fees for 200 participants	To remove financial barriers that may prevent Latine and BIPOC community members from attending outdoor events held at Minnesota state and regional parks. Covering parking and entrance fees ensures events are accessible, inclusive, and reflective of the communities COPAL serves.	X				\$1,511
							Sub Total	\$1,511
							Grand Total	\$400,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		360 reusable water bottles (15 per event)	Water is not always present at parks. Having water on hand reduces the financial barrier of participants having to purchase their own refreshments and ensures participants do not become dehydrated or get heat stroke.
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		25-person translation system with interpreter monitor	Necessary for communicating with Spanish-speaking Latine communities at events where staff only speak English. Expands COPAL's impact and reduces barriers to accessing the outdoors.
Other Expenses		Parking and entrance fees for 200 participants	These fees are directly tied to achieving the project's goal of expanding access to outdoor conservation education. Many participants face economic barriers that could limit their ability to engage with public lands. COPAL will cover parking for all participants who drive and attend events, as well as entrance fees at state and regional parks where required. Support will be provided on-site upon arrival to ensure funds are only used for confirmed participants and not for no-shows.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Trillium Family Foundation	Covers ineligible & prohibited expenses plus part of the remaining personnel costs. All other personnel costs are covered by grants for programming unrelated to outdoor events.	Potential	\$60,000
Cash	McKnight Foundation	Covers ineligible & prohibited expenses plus part of the remaining personnel costs. All other personnel costs are covered by grants for programming unrelated to outdoor events.	Potential	\$168,334
			Non State Sub Total	\$228,334
			Funds Total	\$228,334

Total Project Cost: \$628,334

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [730325ff-88d.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Demonstrates several of the areas where COPAL's outdoor events are held....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Most recent single audit compliance report for COPAL. Only COPAL's c3 applies to this grant.	2f4d6f20-009.pdf
Most recent 990 for COPAL	c803cd76-7db.pdf
Evidence of good standing with the Secretary of State	cabb605d-b2f.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution Letter on behalf of COPAL	e22e0be1-a05.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Summary of Revisions

Activity #1:

Updated activity title to better reflect the objective: "Connect Latine and BIPOC communities with Minnesota's natural resources and conservation efforts through inclusive outdoor activities and environmental education."

Added a final milestone to summarize survey results across all ENRTF-funded events to evaluate community engagement and impact.

Expanded event descriptions to include arts and crafts, natural-resource-based recreation equipment, and comic books to match budgeted items and clarify scope.

Clarified that all equipment is related to natural-resource-based outdoor recreation; removed tennis rackets per guidelines.

Activity #2:

Included ENRTF-required disclaimer: "ENRTF funds will be used for educational purposes but not to encourage the public to contact members or employees of the legislature or a state agency..."

Refined outcomes section to clarify how committee members will apply knowledge, lead peer events, and take on leadership roles; added evaluation tools including pre/post surveys and a leadership rubric.

Aligned outcome language to show how participants become long-term leaders in conservation education.

Replaced outcome language with specific metrics and leadership roles tied to project goals.

Activity #3:

Added ENRTF-required disclaimer to ensure compliance.

Clarified that communications (social media, radio, newsletter) will reach at least 10,000 individuals monthly with bilingual, culturally relevant content.

Emphasized evaluation metrics including reach, engagement, and audience growth over time.

Services & Subawards:

Huellas Latinas: Clarified scope of subaward to include personnel, supplies, and travel for workshops and outdoor events; aligned work with project goals and existing programming; confirmed no capital or ineligible expenses.

Baztec Fishing: Clarified breakdown for personnel, supplies, and travel for sustainable fishing workshops; confirmed compliance with ENRTF guidelines.

Cultural Performances: Updated description to connect performances to environmental stewardship through storytelling, music, and dance; emphasized conservation messaging and cultural identity.

Added clarification that the Project Manager will ensure compliance with allowable expenses for all subawards.

Other Edits:

Added justification requirement for parking and entrance fees as generally ineligible expenses, including how recipients will be selected and which park systems are included.

Removed transportation costs for community members, which are not eligible under ENRTF guidelines.

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:

Maria Bertrand (Grants Manager) - COPAL. Francisco Segovia (Executive Director) - COPAL.

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