



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-213

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 10, 2025

Project Title: Lake Byllesby Regional Park Restoration and Recreation

Project Budget: \$1,120,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Niki Geisler

Organization: Dakota County

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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, 2029

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2029

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09i

Appropriation Language: \$1,120,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Dakota County to restore prairie, woodland, and shoreline habitat and design and install trails, birding and picnic areas, and other recreational amenities to enhance the visitor experience and stewardship at Lake Byllesby Regional Park. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2029, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: Improvements in Lake Byllesby Regional Park will involve natural resource restoration, new natural surface trails, birding and picnic areas; in three areas to enhance the visitor experience and stewardship.

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

Lake Byllesby Regional Park is located on the shores of Lake Byllesby, a 1,300 acre reservoir of the Cannon River, located on the southern border of Dakota County, Minnesota. The project area encompasses 366 acres on the western most part of the lake, most of which is undeveloped, floodplain landscape surrounded by agricultural fields and rural residential properties. There are vast natural resources in the park that annually attract troves of hikers, nature photographers, water recreationists, and bird and nature enthusiasts. However, the area lacks access and amenities for visitors. This is creating an unhealthy disruption to the natural environment. People are parking in undesignated areas and exploring unmarked trails, which is disturbing plants and animals and are leaving garbage and waste. These actions have raised concerns for longevity, maintenance, and safety of the West Regional Park. The intent of the project is to provide trailhead facilities in three locations to provide a safer and more enjoyable visitor experience. The project also seeks to restore natural resources which have been impacted by previous property use, invasive species, habitat fragmentation, and stormwater management.

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.

Efforts to providing an improved experience and environment in West Lake Byllesby Regional Park has been underway since the development of the updated Lake Byellsby Regional Park Plan in 2018. The park plan has helped identify opportunities for these new amenities to be offered to maintain visitor activities and access, while also contributing to the preservation of the Regional Park's natural environment. The project proposal seeks to address the currently minimal accommodations within three areas of the park: Cannon Cascades, River Access, and Byllesby Bluff. Improvements will include the construction of new trailheads, birding facilities, boardwalk bridges and trails; the installation of new information and interpretive signage; and visitor amenities including restrooms, picnic tables, and waste receptacles. The proposal also includes natural resource restoration to remove invasive plant species, reestablish prairie areas, woodland enhancement, meadow seeding, and restoration of parts of the Lake Byellsby shoreline. These restoration efforts will decrease the fragmented nature of the park, foster an ecosystem more resilient to pests and non-native species invasions, and improve fish habitat.

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 outcomes of the project shall rehabilitate Lake Byllesby Regional Park's natural habitat through restoration for preservation of the natural environment, fostering a more resilient ecosystem for public use. The new facilities for visitors, will create the opportunity to have designated areas for proper area management contributing to safety, maintenance and monitored protection for the environment. These accommodations will be able to sustain increased visitor attendance as nature – based activities trend, bringing awareness to the diversity of natural resources in the region for future generations to enjoy.

Project Location

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

County(s): Dakota

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

County(s): Dakota

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Lake Byllesby West Regional Park Priority Facility Establishment

Activity Budget: \$753,500

Activity Description:

The objective of the activity shall create a welcoming experience for visitors, by offering necessary public facilities and information within the park. The activities include a handful of amenities distributed in three areas of the park: Cannon Cascades, the River Access, and Byllesby Bluff. These areas are to be constructed with trailhead amenities, natural surface trails incorporating boardwalk bridges as needed, birding and picnic areas, vault toilets, and signage. There will also be an accessible bird blind to be created at Byllesby Bluff. Dakota County Parks staff will accomplish these tasks by working with design consultants to prepare all necessary documentation for reviews and going to bid. The plans will go through the design review process with the Department of Administration and SHPO, for approval of final designs. Park staff will oversee the advertising of the bids and move the project into the pre-construction and construction phase. All acquisition related milestones (surveys, notice of funding restriction recorded, title review/appraisal) are complete.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Consultant selection to complete pre-design and consult/review with DOA and SHPO.	November 30, 2025
Phase I archaeological survey be completed for areas where ground disturbance will occur.	November 30, 2025
Enroll in B3 program. Advertise project for bid. Select a contractor to facilitate construction.	January 31, 2026
All construction funds legally secured, construction, oversight and administration for the project.	October 31, 2026
Close-out: Notice of funding restriction recorded, certificate of occupancy obtained, signage installed, open for use.	April 30, 2027
Final landscaping and restoration.	June 30, 2029

Activity 2: Natural Resource Restoration

Activity Budget: \$366,500

Activity Description:

The objective of this activity is to undergo necessary natural resource restoration to preserve and maintain essential habitat to ensure the park's environment has the opportunity to maintain its natural resilience. Restoration will occur within approximately 53 acres in the West Regional Park. This activity is considered with this project because some habitat has become fragmented due to the influx of invasive species, which is disruptive to the area's ecosystem. The activities will be to remove the invasive woody plants in the floodplain and upland areas, restore areas for wet or dry prairie, undergo soil preparation, seeding, plant installation and long-term vegetation maintenance. The restoration efforts will encourage the return of pollinators, ensure ground stabilization that will also improve the shoreline along Byllesby Bluff. These tasks will be accomplished by Dakota County's dedicated staff that have expertise in natural resource management and programming. Staff will lead implementation of the proposed habitat elements of the project by advertising the project to bid, award the contractor, create a restoration plan and proceed to complete the restoration. All acquisition related milestones (surveys, notice of funding restriction recorded, title review/appraisal) are complete.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Consultant selection to finalize restoration plans and consult/review with DOA and SHPO.	November 30, 2025
Phase I archaeological survey be completed for areas where ground disturbance will occur.	November 30, 2025

Bidding and contracting for restoration activities.	March 31, 2026
All restoration funds legally secured, restoration, oversight and administration for the project.	June 30, 2028
Close-out: Notice of funding restriction recorded, certificate of occupancy obtained, signage installed, open for use.	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Mia Colloredo-Mansfeld	HKGi	Planner	No
Rita Trap	HKGi	Associate	No
Jody Rader	HKGi	Planner	No
Kendra Ellner	HKGi	Planner	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.

Information about this project and ENRTF funding will be presented on Dakota County's parks website using the ENRTF logo, during interpretive programs, with interested media and to natural resource and land management professionals. In addition, Dakota County will display ENRTF signs in several locations within Lake Byllesby Regional Park.

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 long-term implementation of the project will be guided through strategic actions outlined in the 2018 Lake Byllesby Park Plan. Additional capital improvements identified in the park plan will be funded through the annual capital improvement budgeting process. Long term maintenance and management of these improvements will be performed by the Dakota County Parks and Facilities Department as part of the County's ongoing management program. These activities are funded by tax levy, external grant funding, and are supported through regional parks operations and maintenance funding.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Reintroduction Of Bison To Spring Lake Park Reserve	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08q	\$560,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Capital Projects Project Manager		A Dakota County Capital Projects Project Manager will hire consultants through a competitive bid process and oversee the preparation of programming, schematics, and design development.			25%	0.5		\$75,000
Natural Resources Project Manager		A Dakota County Parks Natural Resource Department project manager will hire consultants through a competitive bid process and oversee the preparation of restoration plans and will administer the restoration process. The first two years of the project will be the most staff-intensive and require the additional .25 FTE. After the first two years, the remaining project oversight will be taken on by full-time Natural Resources Project Managers.			25%	0.5		\$60,000
							Sub Total	\$135,000
Contracts and Services								
Natural Resources Restoration Contractor	Service Contract	Natural resources restoration contractor will be selected by competitive bid and will perform all restoration work. Contractor will provide site preparation, planting, erosion control, and other restoration tasks.				0		\$306,500
Park design and engineering contractor	Service Contract	Park design and engineering contractor will be selected by competitive bid and will develop the site design, engineering, and construction specifications for all recreation features (trailheads, trails, bird blind, etc.)				0		\$85,500
Construction contractor	Service Contract	Contractor will be selected by competitive bid and will prepare the site and construct all recreation and access features according to the construction plans and specifications. Contractor will provide site preparation, construction, erosion control, and other construction tasks.				0		\$593,000
							Sub Total	\$985,000

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	\$1,120,000

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	Dakota County	25% match	Secured	\$373,333
			Non State Sub Total	\$373,333
			Funds Total	\$373,333

Total Project Cost: \$1,493,333

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
Lake Byllesby Regional Park West	Dakota	This parcel contains Ferguson Meadow and the Buffer Forest restoration area, which connects between the upper and lower prairie areas. Ferguson Meadow will be restored from former cropland to wet prairie. The Buffer Forest will be restored with focus on invasive species removal.	Restoration	53	2.25	\$306,500	Public	Dakota County	In Progress
Totals				53	2.25	\$306,500			

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 with these funds will occur on land in 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.

For Lake Byllesby Regional Park, the proposal is to restore the Ferguson Meadow and the Buffer Forest restoration area, which connects between the upper and lower prairie areas. Ferguson Meadow will be restored from former cropland to wet prairie. The Buffer Forest will be restored with focus on invasive species removal. The area is approximately 53 acres.

Dakota County completed a Natural Resources Management Plan covering this project area in 2018. Plans guide restoration priorities and activities and are updated as needed and/or approximately every five to seven years. Plans include sections on: geology and soils, natural and cultural history, an assessment of current conditions, ecological quality, issues and opportunities, water resources, prioritized goals and objectives, and management recommendations. Plans are kept on file electronically and are available to the public on our website. The Natural Resources program includes four full-time restoration project managers who work together to identify and conduct projects based on natural resources management plan priorities.

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.

Dakota County utilizes and follows the guidelines of BWSR’s “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in all of our restoration and enhancement efforts in the County parks, greenways, and conservation easements. County staff will continue to restore and enhance these proposed projects in accordance with these guidelines. For instance, alignment with the guidelines for seed and plant source, diversity levels, cultivar use, protecting plant communities, preventing the introduction of invasive species, and planting and management strategies for climate change.

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.

For all restoration and enhancement projects that are implemented in Dakota County, there is a commitment to long-term maintenance and management. Once the funds from the grant program concludes it is just the beginning of the long-term maintenance and management process. In the following years, special attention is given to make sure that these sites continue to grow well, establish maturely and do not revert to their former degraded condition. The County hires and contracts with professional ecological restoration firms that provide experienced crews to maintain these sites. The County also recruits volunteers and Conservation Corps Minnesota crews to help us with these efforts. Funding for ongoing maintenance and management is done entirely with County funds. Dakota County has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars maintaining the restored and enhanced sites within the County over the past several years, and the Dakota County Board is committed to maintaining these sites in perpetuity. The sites proposed in this application are no exception and will be maintained by the County perpetually into the future.

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

Dakota County has an ongoing, multi-year partnership with Conservation Corps Minnesota. The County hosts a full-time crew to perform project work within all County parks. The approach for these projects will be to include them where the required tasks align with their skills, mission and equipment.

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.

The County has a robust monitoring and evaluation program that utilized for restoration and enhancement project sites. There is consistent monitoring of vegetation on these sites by established scientific methods, including using relevés, transects, and timed meanders. Data is collected and evaluated by the Floristic Quality Assessment method. Each year data is collected for a ten-year time span following initial project completion. In addition, inventory recording is captured for everything accomplished on a site, including site preparation methods, seeding rates, seed mixes/lists, planting methods, watering methods, establishment management efforts during the project, prescribed burning, mowings, etc. There is collaborative evaluation to determine what seemed to work well and what did not, with notes to serve as improvements in the future. The Adaptive Management approach is used for all of County projects, which helps guide implementation work. After the proposed project is completed, the County will make an initial evaluation whether the activity was successful or not. If something was not successful, the County will work to uncover the issue, and then remedy the situation in the future. Three years later, we will continue to intentionally monitor and evaluate the sites annually.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [d77812e2-b56.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Map of West Lake Byllesby Project Area...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report	38081b55-324.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	efee26c9-37b.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire	d2deffb1-3cc.pdf
SHPO Response	3c2cac79-1b2.pdf
Project Summary	e2649398-fbe.pdf
SHPO Comment	bed8f106-5af.pdf
Updated Capital Construction Addendum	db3a746a-847.xlsx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

With the reduced funding being recommended, we removed the 48-acre restoration project in East Lake Byllesby Regional Park and will seek other external funding to complete that part of the project.

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?

N/A

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?

Yes

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:

Rita Trapp and Kendra Ellman from HKGi

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