



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-216

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 10, 2025

Project Title: Thompson County Park Restoration and Accessibility Improvements

Project Budget: \$867,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Niki Geisler

Organization: Dakota County

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Web Address: <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Pages/default.aspx>

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. 09j

Appropriation Language: \$867,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Dakota County to develop a pollinator promenade with accessible natural surface paths, native plantings, and interpretive signage at Thompson County Park. This appropriation may also be used to conduct stream restoration to enhance visitor experience and provide stormwater storage, sediment and nutrient reduction, and increased habitat and species diversity within the 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: Through a "Pollinator Promenade" and stream restoration activities, this project will incorporate accessibility improvements and natural resource restoration to enhance access to nature within an urban setting.

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

Improvements seek to enhance the ecological and recreational value of land situated in an urban area through thoughtful habitat and stream restoration, and increasing the accessibility of recreational activities.

Thompson County Park is a 58-acre park located in West St. Paul near Highway 52 and Butler Ave East and connected to the 7-mile River to River Greenway. The Park serves more than 50,000 residents in the northern part of Dakota County and had an estimated 300,000 visitors in 2022.

Nearly 90% of the park is natural or semi-natural vegetation, which is unusual for a park surrounded by urban development. However, the site is degraded with little native plant growth. The county is well-positioned to restore the landscape and provide educational opportunities to its visitors related to water quality, native ecosystems, and threatened/endangered species like the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee, which is present in the park, and the Northern long-eared bat, which may be present.

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.

The Pollinator Promenade features an ADA-accessible path, natural surface paths, and native plantings paired with sensory and interpretive signage exploring different pollinator species. The Pollinator Promenade will tie into the River to River Greenway at a new ADA-accessible neighborhood gateway. Through its combination of habitat restoration and emphasis on interactive elements, the Pollinator Promenade will provide a perfect area to support natural resources stewardship and outdoor education.

Stream restoration alongside the Pollinator Promenade will enhance visitor experience and provide ecological services including stormwater storage, sediment and nutrient reduction, and increased habitat and species diversity within the park. If possible, portions of the stream may be daylighted. The county is working with water resource professionals, watershed representatives, and the MN DNR Area Hydrologist to develop designs that meet regulatory approval.

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?

For the Pollinator Promenade, outcomes will include native plantings and enhanced pollinator habitat for threatened and endangered species, like the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee, and increased species diversity. The stream restoration will improve water-quality and provide ecological services that further protect and enhance the existing vegetation of the park, including sediment and nutrient reduction and diversified habitat.

ADA-accessible paths will create spaces for public education and programming that will foster attachment to and stewardship of the outdoors.

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: Construction of Pollinator Promenade and implementation of stream restoration

Activity Budget: \$867,000

Activity Description:

This activity will bring the Pollinator Promenade and stream restoration from design through construction to project completion.

Tasks include contractor selection, acquiring all necessary permits, and site preparation.

Construction of the Promenade includes installing native seeding and plug plantings, constructing ADA-accessible paths, installing interpretive signage throughout the area, and adding ADA-accessible paving, curb cuts, and seating where the Promenade meets the River to River Greenway. The pollinator promenade and stream restoration area will occupy approximately three acres; the length of the corridor will be approximately one-thousand feet long; and the length of daylighted stream will be approximately five-hundred feet long. The ADA accessible path will run the length of the new plantings and restored stream.

Stream restoration tasks include installing a pipe or weir in Thompson Lake; excavating the new stream channel; constructing depressional wetlands, miniature step-pools, and extended riffles, as needed; and installing native vegetation along the stream channel and in wetlands to provide soil stability and water retention and filtration.

County Park staff will oversee the selection of contractors during the bidding process and help as agreed upon with construction administration and oversight. Contractors will complete pre-construction and construction

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Feasibility- EAW, ESA, Project ordering	December 31, 2025
Selection of contractors for pre-construction and construction of project, DOA pre-design review, SHPO consultation	January 31, 2026
Pre-construction processes, permit acquisition, all construction funds legally secured, Construction, Oversight, & Administration Begins	April 30, 2026
Construction, Oversight, & Administration	May 31, 2029
Project closeout and open for intended use	June 30, 2029
Notice of funding restriction recorded, certificate of occupancy obtained, signage installed	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jody Rader	HKGi	Planner	No
Rita Trapp	HKGi	Associate	No
Mia Colloredo-Mansfeld	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 Thompson County 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 results of the projects identified in this grant include full construction and implementation of each improvement. Additional capital improvements identified in the park plan will be funding 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 and external grant 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								
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.			25%	0.5		\$60,000
							Sub Total	\$60,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Natural resources restoration and sustainable trails contractor will be selected by competitive bid and will perform all restoration and accessible trail work. Contractor will provide site preparation, installation of native plantings, accessible natural-surface trail elements, stream restoration, erosion control, and other related tasks.				0		\$807,000
							Sub Total	\$807,000
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	\$867,000

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 Parks Capital Improvement Program	25% match (includes \$15,000 for pre-construction activities, \$247,000 for construction, \$2,500 for closeout, and \$25,000 for contingency)	Secured	\$289,500
			Non State Sub Total	\$289,500
			Funds Total	\$289,500

Total Project Cost: \$1,156,500

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
Pollinator Promenade and Stream Restoration	Dakota	The pollinator promenade and stream restoration area is today comprised of natural vegetation, however primarily as non-native species. The restoration of the area will provide habitat for pollinators (specifically Rusty Patch bumblebee), along with bird and aquatic species habitat.	Restoration	3.2	0.5	\$807,000	Public	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Totals				3.2	0.5	\$807,000			

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.

Dakota County owns the parkland where these proposed restoration activities will take place.

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.

We are proposing to restore or “daylight” part of a stream that was previously forced underground into a pipe. In addition, we are proposing to install a variety of native plants within the riparian corridor of this stream. These plants will be planted and arranged in such a way that will attract the senses of visitors and at the same time provide nectar and pollen resources for pollinators. We are calling it “sensory gardens” and a “Pollinator Promenade.” The entire area will occupy approximately three acres; the length of the corridor will be approximately one-thousand feet long; and the length of daylighted stream will be approximately five-hundred feet long.

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. We will continue to restore and enhance these proposed projects in accordance with these guidelines. For instance, we will be in keeping 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 of our restoration and enhancement projects that we implement in Dakota County, we are committed to long-term maintenance and management. Once a project site is finished with a grant period, this is just the beginning. In the subsequent and following years, we give special attention to making sure that these sites continue to establish well 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. We also use volunteers and Conservation Corps Minnesota crews to help us with these efforts. Funding for ongoing maintenance and management is done entirely with County money. Dakota County has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars maintaining our restored and enhanced sites in 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. We host a crew full-time to perform project work within our parks. Our 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.

We have a robust monitoring and evaluation program that we use at Dakota County for all of our restoration and enhancement project sites. We monitor vegetation in these sites by established scientific methods, including using

relevés, transects, and timed-meanders. We collect data and evaluate it by the Floristic Quality Assessment method. We collect data each year during, and then for at least ten years following project completion. In addition, we record everything that is done to a site, include site preparation methods, seeding rates, seed mixes/lists, planting methods, watering methods, establishment management efforts during the project, prescribed burning, mowings, etc. We also evaluate what seemed to work well and what did not, and make notes on how we can improve in the future. We use the Adaptive Management approach for all of our projects, which helps guide our implementation work. For these proposed projects, we will, initially after activity completion, closely evaluate whether the activity was successful or not, and take notes regarding this. If something was not successful, we will venture to find out why, 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: [61f59834-b79.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

This map highlights two project site locations, both within Thompson County Park, and includes an inset map of the park location in the broader region including Dakota County and its surrounding counties....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report	41a23d8e-0ac.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	c9a82f40-857.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Project Questionnaire	96eccd1c-90f.pdf
SHPO Review Process Confirmation	46172470-db3.pdf
Project and Design Overview	0ffbfb7b-b8d.pdf
SHPO Comment	b52c214c-a96.pdf
Updated Thompson County Park Capital Construction Budget Addendum	840c85c5-6a7.xlsx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

With the amount being recommended by LCCMR for this project at less than the request, we updated the scope of work by removing the paddle launch element and will be focused on the final design and implementation of the pollinator promenade and the stream restoration activities. We also removed the final design activity/milestone as that activity is being covered with state bonding dollars allocated for the design of Thompson County Park master plan improvements. We extended the timeline for the restoration activities, due to the knowledge that Rusty Patch Bumblebee permitting as well as additional water quality testing needed will take longer than originally expected. In addition, we adjusted some of the contracted work to allow for the addition of a .25 FTE for two years to manage the natural resources restoration activities. I have updated all sections per the comments and requested revisions as well.

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:

Jody Rader, Rita Trapp, and Mia Colloredo-Mansfeld 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