



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-232

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 25, 2025

Project Title: Restoration at Wakan Tipi and Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary

Project Budget: \$669,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Gabriele Menomin

Organization: Lower Phalen Creek Project

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 26, 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. 08m

Appropriation Language: \$669,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Lower Phalen Creek Project to conduct citizen-science natural resource data collection events, recruit and train volunteer site stewards, and enhance habitat at Wakan Tipi and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2028

Narrative

Project Summary: Restoration and management of Wakan Tipi (aka Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary), including invasive species removal, disposal and management, prescription burns, site monitoring and data collection, and native seeding & plantings.

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

Wakan Tipi (aka Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, BVNS), a Dakota sacred site, has seen more than 100 years of neglect and mistreatment after Dakota people were exiled from Minnesota and disconnected as stewards of this place. In 2005 BVNS opened as a public nature sanctuary under a conservation easement with three ponds, a small creek and 6 distinct habitats. However, the stewardship of this site was minimal over the next 20 years and became overrun by invasive species. With strengthened partnerships under Native-led Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi (WTA), a 5-year Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) was developed in 2021. Over the last 3 years, major reductions in invasive species and reestablishment of native plant communities have been accomplished. However, there is continued work needed to maintain and manage invasives, establish native plants in lower quality habitat units on site, and continue to increase biodiversity. As WTA enters into a co-management agreement with the City of St Paul in 2024, a stronger focus on the cultural significance of this sacred site and healing of the land from an indigenous worldview are being incorporated into a NRMP refresh.

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.

Our solutions are outlined in the updated task table as part of the current 5 year NRMP for BVNS, which include the final two years of the management plan tasks, as well as an additional year of invasive species monitoring. One activity we are heavily focusing on is the removal of invasive species through methods such as hand pulling and clipping, mowing, and/or spot spraying as well as disposal of these plant materials, such as burning. Another activity that will take place is native seeding and plantings in targeted sections of lower quality prairie and woodlands. Native seedings and plantings in the woodland area will focus on erosion control of the bluff and hillside as we remove and treat the buckthorn in the area. Invasive species that are being targeted for removal include garlic mustard, buckthorn, sweet clover, crown vetch, burdock, mugwort, Siberian elm, purple loosestrife, Canada thistle, white mulberry, giant ragweed, reed canary grass and smooth brome. Additionally, we will be including more robust methods of monitoring and data collection of the site, both on a professional level and citizen science level through an annual BioBlitz beginning this summer (2024).

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?

Project outcomes include restoring high quality native prairie, savanna, woodland and riparian habitats to 27 acres at BVN, as stated in the 2021 NRMP. We will do this by intensive invasive species management and integrating ecologically and culturally important native plants through plantings and seedings, to meet project goals of supporting local and migratory birds, wildlife and pollinators, erosion control, as well as build towards overall ecosystem resilience health with increase biodiversity and increasing localized carbon sequestration in the face of climate change. Another outcome is building a robust database of species on site.

Project Location

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

Region(s): Metro

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

Region(s): Metro

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Annual BioBlitz at Wakan Tipi

Activity Budget: \$18,000

Activity Description:

A citizen science data collection event that is run by professionals in different fields to lead community members through education and data collection for the project site. This data will be conducted annually (starting in June 2024) to compliment professional data collection and research already being done on site. Data collection activities for the annual BioBlitz will include bird counts, aquatic invertebrate surveys, water quality surveys, small mammal and fish surveys, dragonfly surveys, bumblebee, pollinator and integrated monarch monitoring, vegetation surveys and tree canopy analysis. The data collected at this annual event will also be compared to other data collected on site from professional partners such as bird counts, bumblebee surveys, vegetation survey and invasive species monitoring, which are collected by both professional partners as well as WTA staff. Data will be analyzed and compiled at the end of each year too see how different species are responding to the restoration on site and to see what other habitat needs may need to be met to support robust wildlife, vegetation, and pollinator populations.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete 2025 BioBlitz	July 31, 2025
Compile data and compare to first year data	December 31, 2025
Complete 2026 BioBlitz	June 30, 2026
Compile data and compare to first two years of data	December 31, 2026
Complete 2027 BioBlitz	June 30, 2027
Compile data and compare to first three years of data	December 31, 2027

Activity 2: Habitat Enhancement at Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary with Ecologically and Culturally Significant Plants

Activity Budget: \$142,000

Activity Description:

This project will continue the enhancement of grassland to native prairie and savanna, as well as the degraded woodlands on site to upland hardwood communities. This will be done with strategic invasive species management treatments and prescription burns followed by native seedings and plantings. Invasive species management at the project site includes removal, disposal, and monitoring. Invasive species removal is conducted by both professional contractors who can utilize mowers, herbicide applications, and burn piles for removed materials, as well and WTA-led volunteer events which utilize hand-pulling and clipping methods. Seeding and planting native species is mainly done by WTA-led volunteers as part of our regular programs like BIPOC spring and fall plantings, winter seedings, and indigenous K-12 and youth group site visits. There will be supplemental contractor seedings and plantings as well. Seedings and plantings will happen strategically following invasive species removals, prescription burns and establishment mows. Contractors will also be watering newly planted vegetation on site. Native vegetation enhancement will include at least 30 species in both the prairie and savanna and woodland that have both strong ecological and cultural significance. WTA staff will also be completing restoration tasks and yearly vegetation monitoring separate from subcontractor/volunteer activities

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Prairie planting and seeding (~10 acres)	November 30, 2026
Signage Installed with ENRTF Language or Logo	June 30, 2027
Invasive woody removal (~14 acres treated)	July 31, 2027
Prescription burns (~3-6 acres per year)	April 30, 2028
Woodland planting and seeding (after woody removal, ~10 acres)	June 30, 2028
Second round of prairie planting and seeding (~10 acres)	June 30, 2028

Activity 3: Volunteer work and activities

Activity Budget: \$509,000

Activity Description:

WTA staff will recruit for, prep, and facilitate volunteer events. These events will include anything from invasive species removal, native plantings, native seedings and citizen science events and activities to collect data for site monitoring. Tracking of work completed by volunteers will be recorded through data collected after each volunteer event related to the activity completed, or compilation of any citizen science data collected. To prepare each year, and before each volunteer event, WTA staff will conduct weekly site monitoring and consult the restoration management plan to determine appropriate volunteer tasks and updating restoration tasks as part of the adaptive management strategy. We will host between 12-15 volunteer events per year, with an average of 25 people per event.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
2025 Volunteer Events (5-8 events)	November 30, 2025
Site assessment and recommended restoration adjustments	April 30, 2026
2026 Volunteer Events (12-15)	November 30, 2026
Site assessment and recommended restoration adjustments	April 30, 2027
2027 Volunteer Events (12-15)	November 30, 2027
Site assessment and recommended restoration adjustments	April 30, 2028
2028 Volunteer Events (5-8 events)	June 30, 2028

Dissemination

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

Our plan to announce to the public that we received this funding include announcing through our September newsletter as well as on our social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram). We also plan on doing a press release around the same time.

Our plan to keep the public up to date on the project progress will be to turn our webpage dedicated to BVNS/Wakan Tipi into the main hub for the projects that are part of this grant. We will have updates on the project in the spring, to announce our plans for the season (March), as well as an update at the end of the season in fall (November), to announce everything we were able to accomplish. Additionally, we will have a dedicated section in our March and November newsletters and social media posts also announcing our plans and accomplishments each year with links to redirect the public to our webpage for more information.

Additionally, we will dedicate a section of our 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028 annual reports to the work being done under this funding source. We will ensure the following in addition to our donors will receive a mailed copy of our annual report: St Paul Parks and Rec Director, St Paul Natural Resources Manager, Mayors office, Deputy Mayors office, City Council Rep for Ward 7, Dayton's Bluff Community Council, Ramsey County Commissioner's office for District 13, Capital Region Watershed District, LCCMR Director, each of the LCCMR members, Minnesota House Representative for District 67b, and Minnesota State Senator for District 67.

With the BioBlitz, we will use the baseline data from the 2024 BioBlitz to compare to the next 3 years of BioBlitz, covered under this funding, and will conduct an existing conditions assessments at the end of the project. Additionally, we will conduct a natural resource existing conditions at the beginning of the project and to compare to the end existing conditions assessment at the end of the project.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on all project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENTRF 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?

Ongoing efforts will be funded through increased private and public donors as part of the work of our future Development Director. Findings and results will be implemented in an evaluation of the project site to determine additional restoration work needed. During this 3-year period of restoration work, we will also begin development of a new, long-term comprehensive natural resource and cultural resource management plan for BVNS as part of our co-management agreement with the City of St Paul.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Outreach & Engagement Coordinator		Coordinate volunteer stewardship activities to complete restoration tasks listed in the management plan. Assist Restoration Manager in completing restoration tasks not allocated to subcontractor.			30%	3		\$162,750
Environmental Restoration Manager		Restoration project management and coordination with subcontractor and Director of Land and Environment. Completing tasks in management plan not allocated to subcontractor, as well as helping coordinate with the Outreach & Engagement Coordinator on volunteer tasks.			30%	1.5		\$184,625
Director of Land and Environment		Leading the coordination, project management and tracking between subcontractor, Restoration Manager, and Outreach/Engagement Coordinator to complete restoration tasks outlined in the management plan.			30%	1.2		\$161,625
							Sub Total	\$509,000
Contracts and Services								
MNL corp	Service Contract	Large scale invasive species removal by mowing, hand pulling or clipping, spot spraying and disposal of plants removed. Prescription burns. Watering newly planted vegetation.				0		\$130,000
							Sub Total	\$130,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Native plant seeds	Purchase native seeds to increase biodiversity and introduce new native species to lower quality habitats onsite.					\$6,000
	Tools and Supplies	Native plant plugs/trays	Continue to maintain and increase biodiversity as well as add new species to the project site.					\$6,000

							Sub Total	\$12,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	BioBlitz printing and educational materials	Field guides, educational materials & printing needed for participants who attend the BioBlitz. Field guides are necessary for participants to have resources to help identify different species. Printing supports needs of environmental partners leading survey stations with any data sheet printing or resources they may need for their station.					\$3,000
							Sub Total	\$3,000
Other Expenses								
		BioBlitz stipends for partners (10 total, \$500 for each stipend, # of stipends was determined from the 2024 BioBlitz where invited partners were given the opportunity to accept/decline a \$500 stipend, and 10 out of the 12 partners chose to accept the stipends for future years as well)	Stipends are for environmental professionals/orgs who are leading survey stations at the annual BioBlitz for 2025, 2026 & 2027, and who are collected and compiling accurate species data throughout the event.	X				\$15,000

			Additionally, they are the educators in their specific fields that are teaching and educating participants throughout the event on species ID and other general questions related to their specific survey station.					
							Sub Total	\$15,000
							Grand Total	\$669,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Other Expenses		BioBlitz stipends for partners (10 total, \$500 for each stipend, # of stipends was determined from the 2024 BioBlitz where invited partners were given the opportunity to accept/decline a \$500 stipend, and 10 out of the 12 partners chose to accept the stipends for future years as well)	These environmental professionals/organizations and their expertise is crucial for the overall success of the event, the learning outcomes of participants, and quality of data collected. We view their work at the event as similar to hiring contractors to complete tasks for us, and a stipend for the 4 hour event is an amount that has previously been discussed and accepted by each person/organization.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
Cash	Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Expedited Conservation Project (ECP)	Support the ongoing habitat restoration of Wakan Tipi, mainly supports the subcontractors to help complete restoration tasks as laid out in the natural resources management plan for BVNS.	Secured	\$50,000
			State Sub Total	\$50,000
Non-State				
Cash	Capitol Region Watershed District Partner Grant	Support the ongoing habitat restoration of BVNS, mainly around tasks related to volunteer work to remove invasive species, plant and seed native plants, and trash pick-up.	Secured	\$20,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$20,000
			Funds Total	\$70,000

Total Project Cost: \$739,000

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
Wakan Tipi (Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary)	Ramsey	The site is home to a Dakota sacred site known as Wakan Tipi (Carver's Cave). This cave is directly tied to the burial mounds on the bluffs above. The site itself was an important trade and inter-tribal delegation site pre-settlement. Currently, there are prairie, forest, wetland, savanna represented on the site. Habitat conditions will provide essential habitat for local and migratory birds and pollinators, as well as support traditional indigenous medicinal plants and traditional foods.	Restoration	27	-	\$130,000	Public	City of Saint Paul	In Progress
Totals				27	0	\$130,000			

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.

The site is currently under a conservation easement owned by the City of St Paul and is currently public land. The public land stated in this project will remain permanently protected, and therefore, the completed restoration activities will also be protected.

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.

WTA strategically focuses on the continued ecological restoration and broader sacred site management of Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. As we take on a stronger leadership role with the management and stewardship of the site through a formalized co-management agreement with the City of Saint Paul (expected to be completed July 2024), we will continue management strategies necessary to build robust and healthy prairie, savanna and upland wood habitats. We expect to see the near completion (aside from a final year of prescribed burns in 2029) of the updated task table that is part of the 2020 natural resource management plan which will support quality prairie, savanna and woodland habitat for pollinators, wildlife, and migratory birds. Additionally, we expect 3 years worth of data collection of species counts on site to support adaptive management practices and build a baseline of data for future management planning beyond this project. The health of these habitats ties directly to the overall health and healing of the sacred site, as well as supporting ecological needs of wildlife, pollinators, and water quality. The partnership with the City of Saint Paul will continue beyond the formalization of the co-management agreement and WTA plans to continue to uphold restoration partnership with Friends of the Mississippi River, Urban Roots, and Mississippi Park Connection to continue restoration programs offered to the public and volunteers. Data collection and site monitoring will continue throughout and beyond the project to support adaptive management strategies on the site. All records will be kept in a secured Google Drive, and certain files, such as data collected and event information with partners, will be shareable upon request. Both the completion of the restoration activities and the data collected over the course of this project will ultimately go into the planning and implementation of a long-term natural and cultural resource management plan for Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

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.

WTA will use and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement on our project sites. Our project incorporates these guidelines in numerous ways, including:

- Sites are selected to be strategic in providing ecological benefits for the landscape in which they are a part
- Sites are selected within identified conservation corridors in order to make landscape connections to decrease habitat fragmentation and create habitat linkages across the landscape
- Restoration efforts will incorporate plant communities appropriate to the sites to provide food and habitat for species in need, particularly pollinators and local and migratory birds
- Restoration efforts will include methods to restore and maintain species diversity, including incorporating prescribed fire, removal of invasive plants that displace native vegetation, and strategic native vegetation plantings and seedlings
- Efforts are designed to restore habitat complexes and natural corridors
- Efforts include removal of invasive species
- The project practices adaptive management with its focus on regularly monitoring and assessing restoration methods and outcomes

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.

Following the completion of the restoration we will begin a comprehensive long-term cultural and natural resource management plan of the site, as part of our co-management agreement with the City of Saint Paul as part of the co-management agreement. WTA has a long history of engaging with partners and the community to care for the sacred site and land surrounding it. While restoration and habitat enhancement projects are initially larger investments, the cost decreases with time as project goals are met and the habitats can become more self-sustaining. WTA is committed to fundraising from both public and private sources for any future restoration and land management needs, which could include but are not limited to: maintaining the prescription burn cycles, increasing biodiversity through addition of native plants and seeds not included in this project, and continued site monitoring and species data collection.

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

We currently partner with Mississippi Park Connection, who does connect us with Conservation Corps of Minnesota to do some trail maintenance, buckthorn removal and other invasive species removal currently on site. We intend to continue this partnership and expand upon it where needed.

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 project incorporates monitoring, species data collection and evaluation at this site. Currently, invasive species and native vegetation reintroduction is being monitored throughout the year and will continue on a yearly basis. There is also monthly bird counts conducted by Urban Bird Collective and WTA staff that will continue initially after project completion as well as three or more years following project completion. Bumblebee surveys are conducted twice during the summer and will continue to be conducted at least three years after project completion. Additionally, an annual BioBlitz will happen for at least three years following the project completion which will include small mammal, pollinator, dragonfly, bird, vegetation, monarch, and canopy surveys and assessments. Future management and restoration efforts will be implemented based on both site and parcel monitoring and species data collection results. WTA's will continue to stay engaged at Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and continue the stewardship of the sacred site and surrounding land, as we have been for the past 20 years.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [432fdaa4-503.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Map of the project site as divided by the targeted plant communities, as determined in the 2020 management plan...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
2022 LPCP Audit	2d0ece7c-7cc.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
WTA_ Board Resolution	6db95094-ac9.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
2020 BVNS Management Plan	0e7e6cc4-955.pdf
FMR Letter of Support	90da03e3-dd3.pdf
Updated Restoration Activity Task Table	c299c37f-fef.xlsx
Project one-pager	16bb2876-5ef.pdf
CSP Letter of Support	54ff1a58-5f0.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

We had overbudgeted for the Volunteer Coordinator positions and reallocated \$155,750 (over the 3 years of this funding) to be split between the Environmental Justice Programs Manager and Environmental Restoration Manager salaries. More hours will then be dedicated to both these positions to complete the work proposed in this project. Completed comments made on 5/14 including adjusting and providing more detail to the budget, and updating and providing more detail in the activities/milestones

Completed 6/24/25: a "Signage Installed with ENRTF Language or Logo" milestone was added to Activity #2, all comments related to the budget from 5/27 were also addressed (FTE/yr and # yrs for contract work, BioBlitz printing moved to printing section of budget and more information on BioBlitz stipends), Dissemination section was also updated to include use of Trust Fund logo on printing, communications, electronic media, etc.

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?

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:

Gabriele Menomin - Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi

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