



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2025 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2025-282

Staff Lead: Tiffany Schaufler

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 5, 2025

Project Title: Minnehaha Park South Plateau Oak Savanna Restoration

Project Budget: \$242,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Adam Arvidson

Organization: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Office Telephone: (612) 230-6470

Email: aarvidson@minneapolisparcs.org

Web Address: <https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/>

Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 24, 2025

Reporting Schedule: April 1 / October 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. 08p

Appropriation Language: \$242,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to improve wildlife habitat, enhance recreational experiences, and restore an area of urban parkland in Minnehaha Park to an oak savanna ecosystem. 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: This project will restore approximately 5.5 acres of urban parkland in the heavily visited and historically significant Minnehaha Park to an oak savanna ecosystem.

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

Minnehaha Park, which is home to the famous Minnehaha Falls and attracts millions of visits every year, is one of the oldest park spaces in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Originally a state park, this Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board owned and managed site attracts a broad diversity of people from across the region. Many come for the waterfall, but the park is home to a mosaic of landscape types including floodplain forest down by the Mississippi River; wetland seeps under the cliffs that are rich with native perennials; restored prairie in Longfellow Gardens; and grand ancient oaks standing sentinel on the broad uplands flanking the gorge of Minnehaha Creek.

One historic landscape type that is missing is a true oak savanna. Much of Minneapolis prior to European settlement was described as "oak openings and barrens." This landscape type, stewarded for uncountable generations by Indigenous people, featured those stately oaks rising from an understory of low grasses and flowers. Today, Minnehaha Park's "South Plateau" area features only mown turfgrass under the oaks. Some research shows that this could make the oaks more susceptible to oak wilt, but certainly the turf does not provide a full habitat spectrum in the park.

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 proposal seeks to take this turf understory and transform it into a vibrant savanna habitat with grasses and wildflowers, as it may have looked more than 200 years ago. The space can serve not only park visitors, but insects like bees and butterflies, birds, bats, and mammals like the fox. Reestablishing a native savanna is no easy task. It takes weeks or months to prepare the soil, kill off weed species that have been growing on site for decades, and eliminate undesired seed species within the soil itself is essential. The new native plant species must out-compete the old weed species. This is accomplished by robust soil preparation, sowing an annual cover crop to shade out weeds, and by planting not only seed, but grown wildflower and grass plugs. The site is rich with oaks already so tree planting will, not be a part of this work. The primary effort is to create a savanna understory that will thrive under the oaks and allow the oaks (and the overall habitat) to thrive in turn. All restoration activities will be upland habitat types.

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?

This project will provide habitat for numerous animal species, including mammals, birds, and insects and other pollinators. Situated as it is atop the Minnehaha Gorge cliffs, the South Plateau is a critical habitat addition. Many animals travel vertically in gorge areas like this, to take advantage of a variety in food and forage options. In addition, this restoration will invite the millions of diverse visitors to the park to enjoy and begin to understand one of the great and largely exterminated landscapes of our region.

This work continues restoration of this rare landscape type, funded by LCCMR at Bohemian Flats.

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: Restoration Planning

Activity Budget: \$1,000

Activity Description:

MPRB will hire an ecological restoration professional through a competitive process and work with them to prepare a restoration plan for the site. The restoration plan will become part of the construction plans for the project that will be publicly bid (Activity 2). The restoration plan will guide all construction, the process for ongoing monitoring, and long-term maintenance. Construction plans will be prepared by MPRB staff and will be based on the restoration plan. A very limited ENRTF budget is provided for this Activity because it will be entirely match-funded. The on-line system requires a number be entered here. Local MPRB match will be used to create the restoration plan, while ENRTF funds will be used exclusively for construction.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Approximate Completion Date |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Selection of Restoration Professional | August 31, 2025 |
| Completion of Restoration Plan | November 30, 2025 |
| Completion of Construction Plans for Bidding | January 31, 2026 |

Activity 2: Site Preparation and Construction

Activity Budget: \$240,000

Activity Description:

The construction phase will include the hiring of a construction contractor through the public bidding process. Following construction contract award by the MPRB Board of Commissioners, Permitting and Construction Mobilization will commence. The Contractor will complete the restoration under the observation of the MPRB hired consultant and MPRB staff that will oversee Construction Administration activities. Construction will likely include one year of site preparation to remove established turf grass and other invasive species, with seeding and planting taking place in the second year. Demobilization from the site will occur when the contractor has completed the Work as described in the bidding documents.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Approximate Completion Date |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Construction Contract Award | March 31, 2026 |
| Construction Commencement | April 30, 2026 |
| Completion of Site Preparation | November 30, 2026 |
| Completion of Plant Installation | May 31, 2027 |

Activity 3: Ongoing Monitoring

Activity Budget: \$1,000

Activity Description:

A baseline plant survey will take place after germination in the first growing season after construction. The only existing plant material on site is mown turf grass so a pre-construction survey is not necessary. The area will be monitored for plant health and diversity for three years after construction, with annual plant surveys taking place for that same

duration. Initial survey work will be performed by the same consultant hired by MPRB under a competitive process to create the restoration plan. Ongoing monitoring after the expiration of the grant will be managed by MPRB natural resources staff. The information gained from these studies will be made public on the MPRB website. A very limited ENRTF budget is provided for this Activity because it will be entirely match-funded. The on-line system requires a number be entered here. ENRTF funds for this grant will be used exclusively for construction.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Approximate Completion Date |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Post-Construction Plant Survey | June 30, 2027 |
| Commencement of Annual Plant Health Surveys and Ongoing Monitoring | June 30, 2027 |

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.

MPRB performs significant community engagement alongside any capital improvement project, and this work will be no different. Multiple electronic notices, a project website, meetings with stakeholders, flyers, and attendance at local events and gatherings will inform the community about the project and solicit input on design elements. During construction, on-site signage will describe the project. All digital, print, and on-site materials will include the ENRTF logo, as required under state statute. Information on plant and animal surveys will be maintained on the project website for public view, then archived at MPRB to be available on request. Permanent signs will be installed on site acknowledging ENRTF. The type and placement of these signs is yet to be determined at this early project stage.

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?

Long term maintenance and management will be performed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as part of its overall natural resources maintenance programs. Such activities do include paid staff work, volunteers, and partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Maintenance and management activities are funded by the MPRB tax levy and are supported by the state and Metropolitan Council through regional parks operations and maintenance (O&M) funding. Additional work necessary after initial construction will be covered by the contractor's warranty and will not require additional funding. Additional restoration and enhancement work after the warranty period will be funded by MPRB.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

| Name | Appropriation | Amount Awarded |
|--|---|----------------|
| Invasive Carp Management Research in Lake Nokomis Subwatershed | M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 06g | \$189,000 |
| Expanding Nature Knowledge and Experience with New Interactive Exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park | M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 05h | \$500,000 |
| Above The Falls Regional Park Acquisition | M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09q | \$950,000 |
| Bohemian Flats Savanna Restoration | M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 08i | \$286,000 |
| Bioblitz Urban Parks: Engaging Communities in Scientific Efforts | M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05h | \$198,000 |
| Enhancing Habitat Connectivity within the Urban Mississippi Flyway | M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08p | \$190,000 |
| Above the Falls Park Acquisition and Restoration Planning | M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09m | \$1,376,000 |

Budget Summary

| Category / Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Purpose | Gen. Ineligible | % Benefits | # FTE | Classified Staff? | \$ Amount |
|--|---------------------|---|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|-------------------|-----------|
| Personnel | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Contracts and Services | | | | | | | | |
| Construction Contractor to be determined | Service Contract | Contractor will be selected by competitive bid and will perform all construction work, as directed by the approved construction plans. Contractor and hired sub-contractors will provide site preparation, planting, erosion control, and other construction tasks. | | | | 0 | | \$242,000 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$242,000 |
| 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 | \$242,000 |

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

| Category/Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--|
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--|

Non ENRTF Funds

| Category | Specific Source | Use | Status | \$ Amount |
|------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------|
| State | | | | |
| Cash | Parks and Trails Legacy Funds | Alongside this major restoration project, MPRB is also making other improvements throughout Minnehaha Park, including with the South Plateau area. These funds will be used for project management, consulting, and construction of recreational improvements, NOT restoration activities. | Secured | \$1,210,000 |
| | | | State Sub Total | \$1,210,000 |
| Non-State | | | | |
| Cash | MPRB Parkland Dedication Fund | These funds will be used for all administrative costs, cost of the restoration professional, and a portion of the total construction budget for the savanna restoration project. | Secured | \$200,000 |
| Cash | MPRB Parkland Dedication Fund | Like the Parks and Trails Legacy Funds, these additional Park Dedication Funds will be used for project management, consulting, and construction of recreational improvements, NOT restoration activities. These have been allocated to the park and will be used for other activities in the South Plateau. | Secured | \$90,000 |
| | | | Non State Sub Total | \$290,000 |
| | | | Funds Total | \$1,500,000 |

Total Project Cost: \$1,742,000

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 |
|-------------------------|----------|---|-------------|----------|------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Minnehaha Regional Park | Hennepin | The site features an extensive and unbroken canopy of oaks, with only turfgrass as understory. The site is a heavily visited public park. | Restoration | 5 | 0.5 | - | Public | Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board | Has Not Begun |
| Totals | | | | 5 | 0.5 | - | | | |

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

All restoration activities will occur on land permanently in public ownership (owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board).

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.

Components of the restoration and management plan will include a description of current conditions, with a focus on soil type and quality (no native vegetation currently exists on the site); description of the target restoration community, an upland savanna system; a timeline for restoration; and guidance for ongoing management of the restored areas. The restoration plan will be included in the creation of construction plans for the project and will guide both construction and ongoing management. This plan will be kept both in MPRB staff project files and in the MPRB archive, as well as posted publicly on the MPRB website.

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.

MPRB and its partners will fully utilize BWSR’s guidance document. Because this project occurs in an urban site but envisions a savanna plant community, we expect that the recommended number of plant species will be on high end of the "Disturbed Sites" row according to the “Minimum Recommended Number of Species” matrix (p.8). The project will utilize and source seed as recommended for the project location (Ecological Section 8, Big Woods Subsection). Primary project type guidance will come from the section on remnant prairie and savanna restoration.

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.

Long term maintenance and management will be performed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as part of its overall natural resources maintenance programs. Such activities do include paid staff work, volunteers, and partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Maintenance and management activities are funded by the MPRB tax levy and are supported by the state and Metropolitan Council through regional parks operations and maintenance (O&M) funding.

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

Prior to the commencement of construction activities, the project manager will contact the Conservation Corps of Minnesota to determine desire and availability to perform applicable work.

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.

As described in Activity 3, evaluations of plant germination and ongoing health will be performed after the first germination after construction, and then annually for three years. Though this timeline extends beyond the allowable grant window, this work will be accomplished by MPRB natural resources staff. Analyses will focus on the long term viability of the restoration and will recommend corrections if problems arise. The three-year summary report will be made public on the MPRB website.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [8976cb19-3e0.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

A graphic showing the adopted Park Plan for the South Plateau, and a second graphic showing the potential restoration area within the South Plateau. The yellow dashed line encompasses approximately 2 acres, which is what can be accomplished with only MPRB funds. An ENRTF appropriation would allow a 150% increase....

Financial Capacity

| Title | File |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| MPRB Financial Report | 1789b15b-6b7.pdf |

Board Resolution or Letter

| Title | File |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Resolution 2024-48: Passed 3/20/24, fully executed | 29e5ffdc-cf7.pdf |

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Resolution updated to include fully adopted/executed version.

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:

James Shaffer, MPRB; Carol HejlStone, MPRB

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