



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-088

Staff Lead: Noah Fribley

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: May 27, 2026

Project Title: Almanac's Statewide Environment and Natural Resources Desk

Project Budget: \$632,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Kari Kennedy

Organization: Twin Cities Public Television

Office Telephone: (651) 229-1308

Email: kkennedy@tpt.org

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

Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 17, 2026

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. 2026, Chp. 104, Sec. 2, Subd. 04d

Appropriation Language: \$632,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Twin Cities Public Television to establish Almanac's environment and natural resources desk that reports on environment and natural resources issues and solutions across the state and hosts community conversations that raise awareness and increase appreciation of Minnesota's air, water, land, and other natural resources.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: TPT’s Almanac proposes a new, statewide Environment & Natural Resources Desk, amplifying stories of Minnesota’s water, environment, and other natural resources, and the issues, policies, solutions, and people that intersect.

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

While hyped as a “climate refuge” rich in water and other natural resources, Minnesota faces ongoing threats to its environment. Rising temperatures, recurrent drought, and pollution have widespread impacts – on livelihoods, tourism, water supply, forest health, and the survival of wild rice, a crop integral to Tribal communities. Concurrently, Minnesota is a leader in clean energy, water quality improvement, and equity-driven solutions to mitigate environmental risks in BIPOC, low-income, and rural communities. These environmental issues in Minnesota are highly intersectional, affecting everything from health to immigration, water to transportation, agriculture to manufacturing.

At a time when the impact of climate change is becoming increasingly urgent, and when Minnesota is stepping up as a regional leader, it is critical to deliver reliable, fact-based information about environmental issues and available solutions. Almanac’s 2024 audience survey showed that 65% of viewers want more climate and environment coverage. Further, the Minnesota Climate Action Framework calls for accelerating public awareness, accessible information, and equitable opportunities for collective action in mitigating climate change. When many local news outlets are closing, Almanac – Minnesota’s only statewide television news broadcast – is well-positioned to provide Minnesotans with essential context to understand the complexities of environmental issues and viable solutions.

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.

Almanac proposes a new Environment & Natural Resources Desk: focused reporting on environmental issues and solutions and dedicated resources to deliver such coverage. A critical resource for Minnesota’s public health, economy, and recreation, the desk will provide significant coverage around water-related issues. This desk will also cover land, wildlife, energy, and other intersecting topics. New reporting will maintain three key elements:

- 1) Policy coverage. The desk will investigate the efficacy of current policies to address water and environmental challenges and assess their impact across communities.
- 2) Community solutions. The desk will highlight diverse ways in which local communities are addressing, adapting to, and mitigating water and environmental challenges.
- 3) Statewide reach. Almanac will travel across Minnesota, examining how water and environmental issues and proposed solutions are uniquely experienced in different communities.

The desk will include:

- 1) Environmental Reports: Almanac will produce two stories per month on average on a range of water and environmental issues, solutions, and impacted communities (24 per year).
- 2) Almanac Specials: Almanac will package stories into two one-hour themed specials.
- 3) Community Conversations: Almanac will convene communities for focused conversations on water and environmental issues to generate awareness, appreciation, and action (1 per year).

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?

As a result of engaging with Almanac’s environment and natural resources coverage, we seek to generate:

1. Awareness: Grow audiences’ awareness of:

- a. issues facing water quality, natural resources, and the environment;
 - b. policies to address water and environmental protection and sustainability; and
 - c. the people and communities who are working to develop solutions to protect our water and other resources.
2. Appreciation: Grow Minnesotans' appreciation for the wealth of water and other natural resources in our state.
 3. Action: Help Minnesotans understand possible actions to protect water and the environment, generate solutions, and engage with others in their community.

Project Location

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

Statewide

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

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Produce original environment and natural resources reports for Almanac and Almanac at the Capitol

Activity Budget: \$552,495

Activity Description:

To launch this desk, Almanac seeks to hire a full-time journalist with a strong background in science reporting who can understand and translate research to a broad audience. With support from the Almanac staff and crew, the dedicated reporter (or special project producer) will travel across Minnesota to produce on average two stories per month (4-7 min each) for local and statewide broadcast and/or digital distribution (24 per year). Stories will span a range of environmental issues and geographies, with a special emphasis on and intersection with water. For example, stories might cover topics like:

- How are policymakers managing economic and environmental tradeoffs of mining, forestry and power production in areas like the Canadian Shield in northern Minnesota?
- How are Native communities and Tribal Nations protecting wild rice from climate change and pollution – and what challenges/opportunities are they encountering?
- How does climate change disproportionately impact communities’ access to clean drinking water, stormwater drainage, and treated wastewater?

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hire a full-time journalist for Almanac and Almanac at the Capitol	August 31, 2026
Complete annual Almanac audience survey with additional evaluation on environmental reporting impact	April 30, 2027
Produce and distribute 24 reports (average 2 per month) via broadcast/online (Year 1)	June 30, 2027
Complete annual Almanac audience survey with additional evaluation on environmental reporting impact	April 30, 2028
Produce and distribute 24 reports (average 2 per month) via broadcast/online (Year 2)	June 30, 2028

Activity 2: Host two public Community Conversations focused on Minnesota’s environment and natural resources

Activity Budget: \$45,677

Activity Description:

Almanac will host two community conversations focused on environmental issues to generate awareness, appreciation, and action (1 per year). These free, public events will be hosted in the metro area as well as greater Minnesota and expect to attract up to 200 attendees (locations TBD). Hosted by the new environment reporter, Almanac will curate a panel of lawmakers, Tribal leaders, experts, and/or impacted communities who can speak to the political, social, economic, and cultural connections to the issues. Audiences will be invited to participate in the discussion with questions, stories, and concerns.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Identify locations and venues	February 28, 2027
Recruit panelists and participants for events; prepare panelists for discussion	May 31, 2027
Distribute invitations and promote event across marketing platforms	May 31, 2027

Host events in metro area and greater Minnesota (1 per year)	June 30, 2028
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Activity 3: Produce and distribute two one-hour Almanac Environment & Natural Resources specials

Activity Budget: \$33,828

Activity Description:

To extend the impact and reach of the monthly environmental reports, the Almanac team will package stories for two one-hour themed specials via broadcast and online distribution. The two distinct and focused specials will air on TPT2 and the MN channel and will be posted online for streaming.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Curate environmental reports (5-7 total) and edit into one-hour special (Year 1)	June 30, 2027
Publish, distribute, and promote one-hour specials via broadcast, online, and social media	July 31, 2027
Curate environmental reports (5-7 total) and edit into one-hour special (Year 2)	June 30, 2028
Publish, distribute, and promote one-hour specials via broadcast, online, and social media	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 ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

Almanac is the only program – news or otherwise – that every Minnesotan can watch. With our statewide reach, the new environmental reports and specials will appear on air on TPT 2 and the MN Channel and/or via streaming online. Almanac has an annual broadcast audience of approximately 627,000 unique viewers statewide. We will further distribute select stories and segments on social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and X - a following of more than 27,000 people.

In recognition of the support of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, TPT will credit this funding on all ENRTF-supported programming across platforms. TPT will prominently feature the ENRTF logo in:

- Weekly Almanac episodes with ENRTF-funded segments and broadcast specials at the top and bottom of programs (broadcast and streaming).
- ENRTF-funded Almanac videos on social media, which include attribution in the description or as a pinned comment to reflect platform norms and expectations.
- ENRTF-funded articles published on TPT.org (as applicable).
- Promotional materials at ENRTF-supported events.
- Full Almanac episodes uploaded to YouTube and Facebook as part of the credits.

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?

Almanac has made strategic growth in recent years, including the launch of One Greater Minnesota in 2017, an initiative focused on connecting rural and urban communities across Minnesota, which has continued to the present. Like this initiative, Almanac intends to integrate the Environment & Natural Resources Desk into the organizational plan and embed efforts into ongoing programming.

Almanac is funded by a combination of sponsorships, grants, and individual donations. TPT's Development team is working to grow overall restricted funding from major donors for Almanac as well as securing additional support from local and national environmental-focused foundations.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Supervising Producer Almanac		Lead producer for Almanac			44.35%	0.12		\$23,215
Almanac Environment Reporter		Lead reporter/producer for bi-weekly environment stories, community events, and specials			44.35%	1.7		\$228,694
Media Asset Management		Media movement between field work to editing to broadcast			44.35%	0.04		\$6,375
Production Manager		Responsible for scheduling crew and equipment for shoots, editing, managing contracts and invoices, forecasting and balancing project expenses, and financial project oversight.			44.35%	0.12		\$14,874
Events Specialist		Assists with all community conversations (hospitality, registration, etc.).			44.35%	0.02		\$4,039
Evaluation Director		Responsible for all surveys, data collection of community conversations, qualitative and quantitative reporting			44.35%	0.08		\$10,393
Special Project Producer		Producer responsible for working with editor, reporter, and supervising producer to create the 1-hour specials; participate in the community conversations; and/or contribute to field reports.			10.65%	0.18		\$23,900
Broadcasting Engineer		Check closed captioning, complete special packages, and ensure compliance for broadcast			44.35%	0.02		\$589
Camera Operator		Film all content at locations			44.35%	0.66		\$98,114
Audio Operator		Gather sounds/audio at all locations			44.35%	0.48		\$63,014
Editor		Edit raw footage, assemble into a coherent narrative.			44.35%	0.5		\$93,204
							Sub Total	\$566,411
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Contracted production staff for special camera (drone) or audio work. Contracted staff for any				0		\$4,000

		special needs on location. Allowing \$250/month x 8 months = \$2,000 x 2 years = \$4,000							
								Sub Total	\$4,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies									
	Tools and Supplies	Media Storage/Tapes	SD cards, LTO Tapes, Firewire drives for media in cameras and/or editing						\$300
	Tools and Supplies	Props/Materials	Subject related environmental props or materials to enhance story telling, participant knowledge, and/or community conversations.						\$1,200
								Sub Total	\$1,500
Capital Equipment									
								Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship									
								Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota									
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	One trip per month x two years in Greater MN for reporter, camera, and audio to location of filming site. Per person: One hotel night \$300 + Meal allowance \$119 + Mileage 300 miles x \$0.70/mile = \$210 = \$629/trip x three people = \$1,887/trip x 12 trips = \$22,644 (or \$7,548 per person) x two years = \$45,288.	One story to be produced/filmed in Greater MN						\$45,288
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	One trip per month x two years in local/metro area of MN for reporter, camera, and audio to location of filming site. Per person: Mileage 150 miles x \$0.70/mile = \$105 = \$105/trip x three people = \$315/trip x 12 trips = \$3,780 (or \$1,260 per person) x two years = \$7,560	One story to be produced/filmed in Twin Cities Metro or next tier cities.						\$7,560
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	One trip per month x two years in Greater MN for reporter, producer and event staff to location of community conversation. Per person: One hotel	One Community Conversation to be in Greater MN						\$3,774

		night \$300 + Meal allowance \$119 + Mileage 300 miles x \$0.70/mile = \$210 = \$629/trip x three people = \$1,887/trip x 1 trips = \$1,887 (or \$629 per person) x two years = \$3,774.						
							Sub Total	\$56,622
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	\$200/year x two years = \$400	Printing of scripts, appearance releases, contracts, etc.					\$400
							Sub Total	\$400
Other Expenses								
		Captioning \$16.13/story x 24 stories = \$387.11	Closed captioning of all stories.					\$387
		Rental of Space: one location x \$500 = \$500 x two years = \$1,000	Space rental in Greater MN and Twin Cities Metro/Local for Community Conversations.					\$1,000
		Panelists will receive \$280 honoraria for each community conversation (CC). 3 panelists per CC x \$280 = \$840 x 1 community conversation = \$840 x 2 years = \$1,680. Panelists will be lawmakers, Tribal leaders, experts, and/or impacted communities who can speak to the political, social, economic, and cultural connections to the issues. TPT pays a standard honorarium of \$250-\$300 for panelists	Honoraria for three panelists for the community conversations at one community conversation (CC) per year. The CC will focus on environmental issues to generate awareness, appreciation, and action.	X				\$1,680
							Sub Total	\$3,067
							Grand Total	\$632,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Other Expenses		<p>Panelists will receive \$280 honoraria for each community conversation (CC). 3 panelists per CC x \$280 = \$840 x 1 community conversation = \$840 x 2 years = \$1,680. Panelists will be lawmakers, Tribal leaders, experts, and/or impacted communities who can speak to the political, social, economic, and cultural connections to the issues. TPT pays a standard honorarium of \$250-\$300 for panelists</p>	<p>TPT provides honoraria in order to recruit panelists with leadership in their respective fields and communities. Honoraria provide recognition of their time, expertise and travel.</p>

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$632,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [a4afee31-0e8.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The attached file is an overview of the new Environment & Natural Resources Desk....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
TPT FY24 Audited Financial Statements	10db3109-663.pdf
TPT FY23 990	5260981a-8f3.pdf
TPT Certificate of Good Standing	62f9dcf1-f71.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
TPT Resolution Letter	b8019288-67b.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
TPT Almanac Sample Segments	3cbe899d-f75.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

The primary change to the work plan is the reduction of community conversations from two per year to one per year. TPT pared down costs in the budget related to the events, including staff time, venue rental, hospitality, and stipends. We plan to produce the same number of environmental reports (24 per year) as well as Almanac specials (one per year) as stated in the original proposal.

We also addressed the revision comments by reducing travel costs, removing parking costs, reallocating Other expenses, and adding recognition plan for ENRTF. We removed food costs and shifted crew from "Other" to "Personnel." Honorariums have been marked as "Generally Ineligible" with an explanation attached.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?

N/A

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

No

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this project:

Claire Eder, Senior Development Officer, Twin Cities PBS; Ellen Whitted, Division Finance Manager, Twin Cities PBS

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