



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-177

Staff Lead: Lisa Bigaouette

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 1, 2026

Project Title: Urban Farming Education to Increase Urban Environmental Stewardship

Project Budget: \$300,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Daniel Schmidt

Organization: East Phillips Neighborhood Institute

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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. 05o

Appropriation Language: \$300,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute to (1) design and deliver workshops and youth apprenticeship opportunities related to land and water stewardship and urban farming to reconnect residents to the land and water and foster interest in environmental careers; and (2) conduct soil testing at an urban farming demonstration site. Before costs for this appropriation are incurred, a fiscal management plan must be approved in the work plan, unless otherwise determined by the commissioner.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: EPNI requests funding for hands-on, environmentally-focused urban farming education to reconnect residents of a diverse, environmental justice neighborhood to the land and water, and to foster interest in environmental careers.

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

EPNI is located in the East Phillips neighborhood, an area with excessive pollution, without access to fresh nutritious food, and where people need knowledge and support to safely grow food on polluted land. There's inadequate outdoor natural spaces, and residents lack access to information about sustainable land practices and water stewardship.

The EPA and MPCA designated East Phillips an Environmental Justice community. The City of Minneapolis designated the East Phillips neighborhood a Green Zone. The area was designated a Superfund site by the EPA in 2007 due to a history of excessive contamination by heavy metals.

EPNI utilizes Indigenous and multicultural land stewardship practices to create natural outdoor spaces that showcase best environmental practices, engage the community in urban farming, create a greener neighborhood, and provide apprenticeship opportunities to young people interested in working in these fields. In two years, EPNI has taught 17 hands-on courses on subjects like the three sisters, medicine wheel, composting, and more. EPNI has taught ~300 residents and distributed ~750 lbs of food by growing on three satellite sites in East Phillips.

EPNI is purchasing a 7.6-acre site from Minneapolis, and is working through Purchase Agreement amendments. EPNI anticipates clarity by December 31.

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.

EPNI is increasing access to healthy, biodiverse outdoor spaces for under-served residents through educational programming which uses stewardship practices derived from cultural traditions of the neighborhood. Residents gather in a natural environment to learn about land and water stewardship. EPNI shares a variety of cultural, agricultural, and ecological topics through hands-on activities. Participants receive seeds, plants and educational materials that enhance their knowledge of pollinators and vegetables. East Phillips residents are empowered to create more healthy and biodiverse spaces in their own backyards, which improves water quality, and increases the community's sense of connection to the land within a historically polluted and under-served urban landscape.

EPNI also provides paid apprenticeship programs so local youth and community residents have the opportunity to learn about careers in urban land stewardship and community resilience.

LCCMR funding will improve EPNI's curriculum. By collecting lesson plans in one place and allowing community members to systematically review it, EPNI will revise curriculum to better serve the needs of the community. LCCMR funding will help EPNI expand education to youth in after school and summer camps.

If we are able to acquire the 7.6-acre East Phillips site, EPNI will create a 30,000 ft' demonstration farm.

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?

EPNI will teach 300-500 local residents how to grow healthy food and steward natural resources in a polluted urban landscape, create opportunities for youth to learn about environmental careers that increase resilience and protect natural resources, host monthly workshops to teach environmental stewardship practices, create and steward outdoor green spaces, grow food, increase pollinator habitat, and provide gathering places for local residents. This is a

continuation of existing programs at our current level of reach. If EPNI acquires the 7.6-acre site, it will serve as a demonstration to improve habitat and encourage environmental stewardship throughout Minnesota's urban communities.

Project Location

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

City(s): Minneapolis

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

City(s): Minneapolis

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Curriculum and Education

Activity Budget: \$295,000

Activity Description:

Our focus will be on designing a series of workshops and apprenticeship programs which build on previous years' learning and are responsive to current community needs.

We will be reviewing the previous year's programs to evaluate their effectiveness and the community's engagement. We will research latest developments in land and watershed protection/preservation to develop experiential learning modules that incorporate sustainable ecological land practices. We will review testimonials, surveys, and/or focus groups so that we can build on previous years' learning and improve our reach and education.

Our expected outcomes will be the completion of a year-long land stewardship and urban farm curriculum and apprenticeship plan that will provide education and an appreciation for the local land by the participants and the delivery of workshops and apprenticeships over two years. These workshops, education modules, and curriculum reviews will occur in the East Phillips neighborhood on satellite sites, including the East Phillips community garden, the Little Earth Urban Farm, and Tamales y Bicicletas.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete evaluation of workshop engagement through testimonials, surveys and/or community meetings	December 31, 2026
Design year-long land stewardship and urban-farm curriculum	March 31, 2027
Support 5 youth apprenticeships	March 31, 2027
Educate 150-250 community residents at 12 workshops	March 31, 2027
Complete second evaluation of workshop engagement through testimonials, surveys and/or community meetings	December 31, 2027
Design year-long land stewardship and urban-farm curriculum	March 31, 2028
Support 5 youth apprenticeships	March 31, 2028
Educate 150-250 community residents at 12 workshops	March 31, 2028
Complete third evaluation of workshop engagement through testimonials, surveys and/or community meetings	December 31, 2028
Fiscal Management Plan is to request reimbursement at least quarterly for expenses incurred per contingency	June 30, 2029

Activity 2: Demonstration Site

Activity Budget: \$5,000

Activity Description:

The farm will be a public, living demonstration site right on the Greenway where people can learn about sustainable and decolonial growing practices, eco-restoration, and the history of the East Phillips neighborhood. Neighborhood residents will have the opportunity through seminars and workshops to learn about foods and medicines native to Minnesota. In order to best meet our community's needs, we will work with Hennepin County and the University of Minnesota to conduct soil tests in grow spaces for heavy-metals to inform neighborhood residents about status of pollution in public gardens. If tests come back positive, EPNI will remediate with funds from other sources.

This activity WILL ONLY take place if EPNI purchases the 7.6-acre site.

Using funds from BWSR, MPCA, MDA, Hennepin County, and other sources, EPNI will design and build a site that integrates renewable energy production with stormwater management, urban farming, and cultural education. Funds have already been secured to build raised beds, a greenhouse, and composting systems; and to design resiliency

systems, including stormwater management and renewable energy. EPNI is working with a U of M architect, a master builder, a civil engineer, and landscape architect to finish designs by mid-2026 and begin implementation immediately thereafter.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Purchase 7.6-acre site with non-ENRTF funds	June 30, 2026
Finalize resiliency systems demonstration site design with non-ENRTF funds	September 30, 2026
Build raised beds, greenhouses, and compost system with non-ENRTF funds	September 30, 2027
Complete soil testing at 7.6 acre site with ENRTF funds	December 31, 2027
Renovate the existing warehouse on-site with the resiliency systems with non-ENRTF funds	June 30, 2028
Complete outreach efforts through events, flyers, partner organizations, and social media with ENRTF funds	December 31, 2028
Complete soil testing at 7.6 acre site with ENRTF funds	December 31, 2028

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Kieran Morris	East Phillips Neighborhood Institute	Farm Coordinator	No
Forest Hunt	East Phillips Neighborhood Institute	Lead Educator and Land Steward	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.

In order to promote changes in behavior amongst Minnesotans to protect and enhance the environment and natural resources, we will share educational information to teach 300-500 local residents how to grow healthy food and steward natural resources in a polluted urban landscape. We will also disseminate information to the community through our monthly workshops-- one outdoor community workshop per month during the growing season to teach hands-on environmental stewardship practices through urban farming and one indoor community workshop per month during the winter season to teach environmental stewardship practices through stories and group activities. We will acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund with a written statement on any handouts provided during our monthly workshops as well as verbally mentioning that "Funding provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund." In addition to our other efforts to share our results and information, we will be working with Hennepin County and the University of Minnesota to conduct soil tests for heavy-metals and nutrient content for edible food grow spaces.

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?

Curricula developed with LCCMR funding will be used to continue improving educational programming in future years. Hands-on experiences and take-home materials will support neighbors in creating backyard projects that support long-term, community-wide land and water stewardship.

The EPNI Urban Farm would be a demonstration site for other residents of Environmental Justice neighborhoods in Minnesota who seek information and inspiration on how to create healthy outdoor spaces.

To continue educational programming, EPNI will continue to apply for grants. EPNI has a strong history of securing funds for our programming, and is committed to providing environmental education for under-served residents.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Farm Coordinator		Coordinator of EPNI farm operations, education programs, and partnerships			16.67%	2		\$140,000
Lead Educator and Land Steward		Leads curriculum design and implementation			16.67%	2		\$140,000
							Sub Total	\$280,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Testing soil for heavy-metals and nutrient content. This covers two complete heavy metals tests.				0.2		\$2,000
TBD	Service Contract	Environmental stewardship experts with multicultural backgrounds who are able to give presentations and lead activities that enrich the environmental stewardship and urban farming curriculum				0.2		\$3,000
TBD	Service Contract	Translating workshops and educational materials to increase accessibility for residents who don't speak English				0.2		\$2,000
Performing and visual artists	Service Contract	Performing and visual artists will create educational artwork that describes concepts of conservation and natural resources protection to enhance our education of East Phillips residents.		X		0.2		\$3,000
							Sub Total	\$10,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Educational Supplies	Educational supplies allow EPNI to provide residents materials that improve educational experience, including: identifying and drawing plants, planning garden plots, recording medicinal uses of plants, and/or other uses.					\$3,000

	Tools and Supplies	Farm Supplies	Tools and supplies such as trowels, gloves, seeds, pots, soil, etc. are necessary to demonstrate environmental stewardship and urban farming concepts in a hands-on manner					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$4,000
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Educational materials for workshops which is estimated to be 300 color pages per workshop at \$0.50 per page	Printed hand-outs allow participants to bring information home and share with their friends and family, and to remember information they learned					\$6,000
							Sub Total	\$6,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$300,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Contracts and Services - Performing and visual artists	Service Contract	Performing and visual artists will create educational artwork that describes concepts of conservation and natural resources protection to enhance our education of East Phillips residents.	Performing and visual artists will help protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance the state's natural resources in very much the same way that cultural experts will: they make a meaningful impact on the audience to inspire attendees to change behaviors. EPNI is both driven by the logic demonstrated in our Lead Educator and Land Steward who holds a Masters in Plant Science from UMN, and also driven by the artistry of our community and community leaders. Artists will help EPNI connect with our community to inspire them to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance the state's natural resources.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
Cash	MPCA Wood Waste Utilization. Minn. Stat. § 116.03, subd. 2,	tree preservation, durable wood products, soil amendments, demonstration site preparation. Build raised beds, greenhouse, and composting system. Employing 3 youth apprentices	Secured	\$249,979
Cash	Minnesota Department of Agriculture - AGRI - Minn. Stat. 41A.12	Agricultural education supplies and 2 teachers apprentice stipend	Secured	\$72,932
Cash	Minnesota Session Laws - ML 2023 Chapter 64, Article 15, Sec. 30 (c)	site acquisition for 7.6 acre demonstration site	Secured	\$2,000,000
Cash	FY 2024 and 2025 Clean Water Legacy Partners Grant Program - The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6(m) and the Laws of Minnesota 2024, Chapter 106, Article 2, Section 6(c) appropriated funds to the Board	design demonstration site watershed management aspects	Secured	\$218,000
Cash	TBD	Remediation of 7.6-acre site	Potential	\$1,000,000
			State Sub Total	\$3,540,911
Non-State				
Cash	private capital	site acquisition 7.6-acre demonstration site	Secured	\$3,700,000
In-Kind	City of Minneapolis	site acquisition for the 7.6-acre future demonstration site	Pending	\$5,700,000
Cash	Lynfield Farm Private Donation	Farm and education equipment	Secured	\$10,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$9,410,000
			Funds Total	\$12,950,911

Total Project Cost: \$13,250,911

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [ee621770-626.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

An urban farm design overlaid on a parking lot which describes EPNI's 2025 land stewardship project of transforming a parking lot into a green educational space. An image of our Lead Educator and Land Steward teaching an East Phillips resident. A description of curriculum and impact in 2024....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
EPNI 2023 990	c71f4b3b-cef.pdf
Evidence of Good Standing	afb89924-ef6.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
EPNI Board Chair Letter	084c120c-290.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Letter of Support from Neighborhood Organization	ae8631d9-79b.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

We checked the box in "general information" stating that we provide children's services. Not checking this box previously was a mistake. To date, we have been educating adults and community residents in general, not specifically children's classes and groups. We are beginning our work with children's groups in the Spring of 2026, and will perform all background checks this fall.

We changed the Activities to reflect the fact that the demonstration site is contingent on other funding. We clarified the Activity descriptions, and added detail in the milestones. The Outcomes in the Narrative tab were changed. A phone number was updated in the project collaborators document.

We responded to the comments given us, which were broad-ranging, from narrative section, to the activities and milestones, to the budget.

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")?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes

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

Donna McNamara, EPNI volunteer; Lucy Rogers, EPNI volunteer; Shane McCaffrey, EPNI volunteer; Kedar Deshpande, EPNI volunteer; Joi Latson, EPNI Farm Program Manager.

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