



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-218

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: May 26, 2026

Project Title: Northwoods and Waters Community Resilience Collaborative

Project Budget: \$1,220,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Joshua Bergstad

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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. 03d

Appropriation Language: \$1,220,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, in partnership with the Headwaters Regional Development Commission and the Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership at the University of Minnesota, to work with and provide technical assistance to northeast and central Minnesota counties, Tribal Nations, and agencies to develop a regional climate resilience plan.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: The Collaborative will create a Regional Resilience Plan uniting NE and Central MN counties, Tribal Nations, and agencies to address climate adaptation with sustainable land, water, infrastructure, and energy solutions.

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

Climate change impacts do not follow borders, yet our responses often do. Northern Minnesota communities face escalating climate challenges, including extreme weather, forest pests, shifting precipitation, and habitat changes that threaten infrastructure, natural resources, and Tribal cultural lifeways. These changes demand proactive planning and adaptation.

In northern Minnesota, average annual temperatures could rise 3.7–4.4°F by mid-century, with precipitation increasing up to 1.3 inches. However, seasonal shifts will bring wetter springs, drier summers, shorter snow seasons, intense rainfall, and prolonged dry spells. Extreme climate disruptions are already occurring—once-rare 500-year floods now happen regularly, while drought and wildfire risks continue to rise.

A major challenge to resilience is the siloed approach of counties, Tribal Nations, and local governments, which often focus on their own budgets and procedures rather than regional collaboration. Without coordinated planning, responses to large-scale threats like flooding, wildfires, and forest decline remain fragmented or reactive rather than strategic and preventative.

Further compounding these challenges, many local governments in the region face significant staffing and financial constraints. Many communities are economically or environmentally distressed, limiting their ability to implement conservation and resilience measures. Addressing these gaps requires cross-jurisdictional partnerships and long-term regional resilience investment.

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.

To address the lack of regional collaboration, we propose forming a Regional Resilience Collaborative uniting 20+ partners across north-central Minnesota. This initiative will develop a cohesive resilience plan to protect and enhance air, water, land, wildlife, infrastructure and community resources. While many valuable projects exist, a coordinated approach will maximize impact by aligning efforts, sharing resources, and fostering long-term resilience.

Regional collaboration is succeeding elsewhere. Recognizing this approach's value, NOAA has invested \$575 million in 19 projects nationwide through the Coastal Climate Resilience Regional Challenge. Northeastern Minnesota, including the North Shore, was selected to establish a regional climate resilience collaborative, resulting in a resilience plan for Tribes and counties along the coastline. This regional collaboration is to share and learn about both proven and new and innovative practices. (see Attachment)

Building on this momentum, our initiative will extend collaboration inland to the Headwaters and Arrowhead region, leveraging shared knowledge and resources to strengthen climate adaptation. To ensure direct local benefits, the collaborative is seeking outside funding for implementation of pilot projects, demonstrating effective long-term resilience strategies while empowering communities to implement adaptive measures tailored to their needs.

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?

Foster a united voice for climate resilience planning among 4 Tribal Nations, 8 counties, 2 regional development commissions, and 4 higher ed institutions.

Produce a Regional Resilience Plan, providing a strategic framework for climate resilience planning.

This high level of integration will position the region for grant opportunities.

Support innovative pilot projects to reduce the impacts of climate change, land use changes, or extreme weather events, through both engineered and natural solutions targeted at critical areas. These projects will serve as models for other Minnesota communities.

MCAP will lead on technical assistance and resource sharing for public and private landowners.

Project Location

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

Region(s): NE

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

Region(s): NE

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Create Regional Resilience Plan

Activity Budget: \$959,367

Activity Description:

The Regional Resilience Plan will integrate climate science, Indigenous knowledge, and local expertise to enhance forest and water management. A dedicated working group within the collaborative will lead plan development, engaging the community to shape priorities and ensure regional needs are addressed. The collaborative will provide technical assistance, funding, and education to strengthen local capacity for climate adaptation. By fostering a long-term network of counties, Tribal Nations, universities, and environmental organizations, the plan will establish a unified approach to resilience. It will serve as a guiding framework for regional collaboration, prioritizing adaptation strategies and outlining pathways for implementation. The plan will also act as a roadmap for infrastructure improvements, environmental conservation, and economic resilience, equipping local governments and Tribal Nations with data-driven tools and increasing access to funding for resilience projects. Success will be tracked through milestone achievements, engagement metrics, and adaptation progress indicators, with built-in monitoring frameworks to assess long-term impact. The Plan will include youth program and curriculum recommendations based on working with the underserved communities. Activity will be led by ARDC and HRDC in their respective regions with assistance from BSU students with support from MCAP on relevant climatological issues.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Form working groups to create structured work plan, compile data, and identify gaps	June 30, 2028
Develop resilience tool kit with recommendations for policy, adaptation actions, and funding strategies	June 30, 2028
Engage stakeholders in multiple ways to insure inclusivity, including a youth advisory board	June 30, 2029
Leadership team will evaluate and refine prioritization and implementation pathways and develop monitoring strategies	June 30, 2029
Conduct outreach and distribute finished plan to agencies, municipalities, and funding entities.	June 30, 2029

Activity 2: Regional Climate Education and Technical Assistance

Activity Budget: \$220,233

Activity Description:

This grant will fund 50% effort for a new or existing MCAP Extension Educator fully dedicated to advancing climate resilience planning and capacity-building across the region. The educator will strengthen collaboration across partners, provide technical assistance to communities, and deliver climate resilience training aligned to regional needs.

The educator will actively participate in bimonthly Collaborative Convenings, contributing MCAP expertise, tools, and resources to support development of the regional resilience plan. They will also lead community capacity-building through structured training programs, including at least eight group trainings and workshops drawn from established MCAP offerings (e.g., Community Climate Leaders, Climate Adaptation Specialist Training).

Additional deliverables include direct technical assistance to local governments, Tribes, and partner organizations, and the development of an online Resource and Referral Hub that centralizes hazard assessment tools, adaptation strategies, funding guidance, and best practices. These efforts will equip communities with actionable resources and increase the region’s capacity to implement effective climate resilience solutions.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Finalize educator workplan and initiate participation in collaborative convenings to support regional resilience planning.	June 30, 2027
Develop and publish a regional climate training and workshop schedule aligned with partner and community	June 30, 2027
Deliver at least eight climate resilience workshops and trainings with documented attendance and evaluation summaries.	June 30, 2029
Provide and document at least twenty technical assistance interactions supporting local and Tribal resilience planning.	June 30, 2029
Develop and launch an online Resource and Referral Hub with curated tools and funding guidance.	June 30, 2029

Activity 3: Pilot Projects

Activity Budget: \$40,400

Activity Description:

Pilot projects will consist of small-scale, locally led demonstration efforts designed to implement priority climate resilience strategies identified through the Regional Resilience Plan. The goals of the pilot projects are to demonstrate practical, place-based approaches to land, water, forest, stormwater, energy, and infrastructure resilience; build local implementation capacity; and provide replicable models for other communities in the region. The two Regional Resilience Planners will provide overall coordination and oversight for pilot project development and implementation. Graduate students and BSU Staff will support day-to-day project activities such as coordination, documentation, monitoring, and evaluation. Physical implementation and long-term maintenance of pilot projects will be carried out by local partners, including local governments and Tribal Nations. Pilot projects will begin in Year 2 and will be implemented using non-ENRTF funds. Grad students and interns work supporting Pilot Projects will be paid with ENRTF Funds.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Identify and Select Pilot Project	June 30, 2027
Start Pilot Projects	July 31, 2027
Complete Pilot Projects	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Naomi Carlson	Headwaters Regional Development Commission	An HRDC Resilience Planner will lead planning and coordination in the five-county HRDC region, co-lead Tribal Nation coordination, and serve on the staff leadership team alongside ARDC and MCAP to advance regional climate resilience efforts. HRDC will also contract with two colleges to provide intern and graduate assistants.	Yes
Nathan Meyer	University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership	A MCAP Extension Educator will work closely with ARDC and HRDC Planners to build community capacity, and provide resources and technical assistance to communities and contribute MCAP expertise and resources to develop a comprehensive regional resilience plan.	Yes

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.

We will engage the public directly in the creation of a Regional Climate Resilience Plan, ensuring that communities most affected by climate and extreme weather impacts are active participants in shaping strategies and solutions. An Extension Educator and a Climate Resilience Planner will provide presentations to community groups and partners, increasing awareness of climate impacts and supporting informed decision-making.

Once complete, the Regional Climate Resilience Plan will be made broadly accessible. It will be shared online through the websites of the Collaborative, ARDC, HRDC, and MCAP. Physical copies will be housed at each project partner's office and will also be provided directly to Tribal partners. In addition, the plan will be distributed to other Regional Development Commissions and MCAP partners to maximize its reach and usefulness across Minnesota.

To ensure the longevity of the plan, digital copies will be archived on multiple partner websites with long-term hosting commitments. Project partners will also maintain records of physical copies and provide them to interested stakeholders upon request. Updates or supplemental materials produced in the future will be added to the online repositories to ensure continued relevance and accessibility. All project documentation and data will follow Minnesota public data retention policies to ensure proper preservation, transparency, and compliance.

All dissemination efforts will acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund in accordance with the ENRTF Acknowledgment Guidelines, including use of the trust fund logo and attribution language on print and electronic materials, presentations, and other outreach products.

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?

This project provides three years of capacity building and technical assistance to prepare the region for future state and federal climate funding. It will unite stakeholders, deliver direct planning support, and connect collaborators with state-funded climate programs. By increasing local understanding of climate impacts and resilience strategies, the project fosters long-term climate action. Regional and local plans will enhance funding competitiveness by identifying clear actionable projects, while strengthened networks ensure continued collaboration. The Leadership Team will explore

sustainable funding options to maintain the Collaborative, ensuring long-term resilience planning and adaptation efforts continue beyond the grant's duration.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Resilience Planner (ARDC)		Co-Project Manager, ARDC Counties and Tribal Areas			35%	3		\$373,111
Principal Planner, ARDC		Senior Manager, Grant and Applicant Lead			35%	0.09		\$15,000
Finance		Provide finance and reporting oversight for grant including of subrecipients and pilot projects			35%	0.36		\$49,105
Planning Director, ARDC		Support grant work, partner relations, and compliance			35%	0.09		\$15,000
							Sub Total	\$452,216
Contracts and Services								
Bemidji State University	Subaward	2 grad student each 20 hours per week for 12 weeks @ \$15/hr (leadership role in regional advisory committee, development of policy or specific part of plan, pilot project implementation) 1 staffing for BSU Faculty for two years (\$20,000 per year) community connection and network with partners and Hub				4		\$80,800
Headwaters Regional Development Commission	Subaward	Staffing (1 Planner \$450,000) - Co-Lead Activity 1 and other activities in HRDC Area. Travel in Minnesota (Mileage/Meals/Lodging \$7,500), Printing (\$5,000)		X		3		\$466,000
Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership	Subaward	Extension Educator (.5 FTE): Community capacity-building, technical assistance, and contributions to regional resilience planning. Director (.04 FTE): Supervision of educator plus program design and project oversight. Research Specialist (.13 FTE): Project administration, grant management, and reporting to UMN. Travel in MN (Miles, Meals, lodging \$7,500)		X		1.53		\$211,734
							Sub Total	\$758,534

Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	ARDC, Meeting and Facilitation Supplies, room rental	Materials and resources needed for meetings, stakeholder engagement, and data collection..Expenses include meeting supplies and presentation materials to facilitate collaboration and room rentals for meetings	X				\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$2,000
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Annually for one person at least - 10 day trips @ 200 miles at 70 cents/mile, 4 overnight trips @ 250 miles @ 70 cents/mile, lodging 5 nights, lunch or dinner at \$13/\$19 for each trip	ARDC staff will have to travel widely across a region that covers approximately 25% of the state in order to lead a regional collaborative. Due to distance and scheduling of meetings some trips will require overnight stays.					\$4,750
							Sub Total	\$4,750
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	ARDC, Printing of General Project materials	Printing will support various project activities, including stakeholder engagement, public outreach, and documentation. Promotional materials					\$2,500

			such as flyers, posters, and informational brochures will be produced to raise awareness and encourage participation. Meeting materials, including agendas, handouts, presentation boards, and sign-in sheets, will facilitate discussions and ensure attendees have access to key information. Additionally, final reports and summary documents will be printed for distribution to partners, decision-makers, and the public, ensuring that project findings and recommendations are effectively communicated.					
							Sub Total	\$2,500
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$1,220,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Contracts and Services - Headwaters Regional Development Commission	Subaward	Staffing (1 Planner \$450,000) - Co-Lead Activity 1 and other activities in HRDC Area. Travel in Minnesota (Mileage/Meals/Lodging \$7,500), Printing (\$5,000)	Meeting Facilitation supplies and room rental \$3,500 - Necessary to convene meetings equitably across the 8 county region.
Contracts and Services - Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership	Subaward	Extension Educator (.5 FTE): Community capacity-building, technical assistance, and contributions to regional resilience planning. Director (.04 FTE): Supervision of educator plus program design and project oversight. Research Specialist (.13 FTE): Project administration, grant management, and reporting to UMN. Travel in MN (Miles, Meals, lodging \$7,500)	Director is generally ineligible but will be act as principal investigator providing direct supervision and program design. Costs will be tracked separately.
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		ARDC, Meeting and Facilitation Supplies, room rental	Meeting supplies for public and partner engagement such as paper, writiting utensils, flip charts, and similar items.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
Cash	University of Minnesota Extension	1/2 FTE funds for Extension Educator to supplement 1/2 FTE funds from ENRTF. These could be state or local funds.	Pending	\$156,065
			State Sub Total	\$156,065
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	\$156,065

Total Project Cost: \$1,376,065

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [bfd10dbb-da3.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

NWWCRC Visual...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
ARDC budget and Audit	dd9280b2-f95.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
ADD - RES - Leg Citizen Comm Received 05-21-2025	a660d070-5f0.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Partners and Letters of Support	a13e9cb9-ad4.pdf
NWWCRC NOAA Narrative	2148a287-aab.pdf
NWWCRC Distressed Communities	7e7fdb1b-44a.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

LCCMR has recommended 80% of the original funding request. To address the remaining 20%, ARDC and HRDC are actively seeking support from foundations. Reductions were made across all budget categories, with the largest changes being: elimination of \$160,000 originally designated for pilot projects to test on-the-ground climate and extreme weather resilience strategies, removal of GIS support and a Planning Assistant position, and a reduction in intern and graduate assistant support from three years to two.

We are currently in discussion with two foundations and are optimistic that additional resources will allow us to restore staffing capacity and some or all of the pilot project funding. Importantly, the core purpose of the project—educating the region about climate impacts and developing a climate resilience plan—remains intact and will not be compromised even if additional funding is not secured.

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:

Dr. Nathan Meyer, Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership, Naomi Carlson, Headwaters Regional Development Commission

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

N/A