



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Draft Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-207

Staff Lead: Tiffany Schaufler

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: October 23, 2025

Project Title: Resilient and Biodiverse Community Spaces

Project Budget: \$612,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Dan Shaw

Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources

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Project Reporting

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:

Appropriation Language:

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: The project focuses on resiliency and biodiversity planning for community spaces statewide and addressing several Minnesota Climate Action Framework initiatives.

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

There is significant interest from Minnesota communities for increasing climate resiliency and mitigation, and protecting biodiversity at community parks, schools and green spaces, shorelines and roadsides through vegetation restoration, soil health practices and other strategies to address human and ecosystem health concerns from climate change, chemicals and pollutants, high input lawns, wildfire risk, decreasing biodiversity, and impacted water resources. Several Initiatives in Minnesota's Climate Action Framework (3.1,3.2,3.3) are focused on the need for funding and technical support to increase the resiliency of landscapes within Minnesota communities. Increased guidance, technical resources, case studies, and training is needed about climate resiliency, adaptation, and mitigation strategies, and biodiversity protection in community spaces.

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.

This project will build momentum for statewide climate and biodiversity strategies through collaboration with a diverse advisory team to develop a "Climate Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces" that will include a framework for site assessment and resiliency scoring, and plan templates for community spaces. The guide will focus on building five key aspects of resiliency including human health, plant diversity, pollinator and wildlife health, soil health and protection of water resources.

Assessment, resiliency scoring, planning and implementation using the new framework will be conducted at four case study projects that will act as long-term training locations. The projects will act as case studies to guide future resiliency and biodiversity projects.

Two on-site trainings at case study projects and two webinars focused on climate and biodiversity assessment, planning, implementation and management will be conducted to build the knowledge of professionals, students, and community partners statewide. Outreach and guidance will also be provided to at least fifteen Minnesota communities by the project team to build future collaboration for climate and biodiversity planning.

The new "Climate Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces" sample plans and case study information will be added to BWRS's Climate Resiliency web pages.

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?

- 1) Planning templates will provide guidance to partners statewide for resiliency and biodiversity planning.
- 2) Assessment, resiliency scoring, and development of Climate Resiliency and Biodiversity plans for four case study sites.
- 3) Implementation of climate resiliency and biodiversity strategies at four case study sites covering around 35 acres.
- 2) 500 professionals and community partners trained through two field trainings and two webinars focused on climate and biodiversity assessment, planning, implementation, and management.
- 3) The climate and biodiversity planning guide, sample plan templates, and case studies available on BWSR's webpages

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

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Project Coordination and Development of a Climate Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces

Activity Budget: \$65,000

Activity Description:

Advisors from PCA, Minnesota Department of Health, BWSR, the University of Minnesota, Great River Greening, Metro Blooms, Audubon, Metropolitan Council, and interested communities and other partners will build on BWSR resource to develop a Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces that will include a framework for site assessment, resiliency scoring, calculating sequestration potential, and project plan template for community spaces. Five key aspects of resiliency (ability of landscapes to withstand and recover from climate impacts) will be emphasized in the guide including human health, plant diversity, pollinator and wildlife health, soil health and protection of water resources. The plan will also include information for adaptation strategies and measuring mitigation benefits. The resiliency scoring method will provide an approach for measuring sites before and after implementation. The new resources will build on experience from BWSR's current Habitat Friendly Solar and Ecological Health Assessments, as well as their Pollinator and Biodiversity Toolbox, Lawns to Legumes guidance, and other resources on vegetation establishment and pollinator protection, as well as the Minnesota Stormwater Manual and Green Step Cities Program. The framework will also be beta tested in a University of Minnesota Ecological Restoration Planning and Management Course.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Creation of Advisory Team for guide development	December 31, 2026
Develop guide draft for partner review	December 31, 2027
Completion of the Climate Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces	December 31, 2028

Activity 2: Case Study Project Assessment and Planning

Activity Budget: \$69,000

Activity Description:

Four community spaces with different site conditions and climate challenges will be used to implement the new planning framework and develop example Climate and Biodiversity Implementation Plan Templates. Ranking criteria for selection of the projects will have an emphasis on 1) vulnerability to climate change, 2) environmental justice 3) potential for acting as long-term monitoring and training locations, 4) statewide distribution, 5) match, 6) potential for community engagement 7) potential for building regional momentum for successful climate resiliency and biodiversity projects. Projects will be located on permanently protected lands at parks, green spaces, schools, shorelines, and roadsides. Projects will incorporate several project types based on site conditions including prairie plantings, climate adapted woodland groves, pollinator plots, turf alternatives, soil health practices, shoreline protection, sustainable lawn care, diverse roadsides, and heat island mitigation, and will act as models to be included on BWSR's Climate Resiliency Toolbox as case studies. Project assessment and planning will be conducted by Great River Greening, Metro Blooms, Audubon, BWSR, and the University of Minnesota on the five case study projects and guidance will be provided to additional communities statewide.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
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Meet with projects teams to plan assessment and planning of case study sites	December 31, 2026
Assessment and Planning of two case study projects completed	May 31, 2027
Assessment and planning of final two case study sites	December 31, 2027

Activity 3: Case Study Project Installation

Activity Budget: \$386,000

Activity Description:

Climate and Biodiversity strategies will be implemented at each of four case study sites. BWSR will hire contractors for installation through the State Restoration Service Contract or through Conservation Corp of Minnesota as needed to alleviate staff capacity needs at smaller communities. Project oversights will be conducted by BWSR Metro Blooms and Great River Greening. Projects will be maintained through project funding and then maintained by staff from local communities that are trained through the program.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Start of installation of project case study projects	May 31, 2027
Completion of installation of case study sites	June 30, 2029
Installation of ENRTF signs at project sites	June 30, 2029

Activity 4: Two on-site Trainings and Two Webinars

Activity Budget: \$20,000

Activity Description:

Two on-site trainings will be held for professionals and community partners involved in the planning and management of landscapes and will focus on climate resiliency assessment, carbon sequestration calculations, planning, installation, and management. Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guides will be provided to participants. The trainings will be held at two case study sites. Details of the case study assessment, planning and installation will be held indoors, followed by a field discussion of project installation and management. Two webinars will also be held that summarizes the new planning guide and framework, and results of the case study projects. The new guide and planning framework will also be used in a University of Minnesota restoration planning and management course.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hold two on-site climate resiliency trainings	June 30, 2029
Hold two program webinars	June 30, 2029
Incorporate project experience and resiliency guide into a University of Minnesota class	June 30, 2029

Activity 5: Writing Case Study Information and Developing a Story Map for BWSR's Climate Resiliency Toolbox

Activity Budget: \$36,000

Activity Description:

University of Minnesota Research Assistants in the Department of Landscape Architecture will collaborate with BWSR staff to develop a story map for case studies and write case study information documenting assessment, planning,

installation and management results to be included on BWSR's Climate Resiliency Toolbox. The story map will provide a framework for highlighting future case study projects demonstrating effective strategies for climate resiliency, adaptation and mitigation.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete project storymap	May 31, 2029
Complete project case study descriptions	May 31, 2029
Add case study information and storymap to BWSR Climate Resiliency Toolbox	June 30, 2029

Activity 6: Community Climate and Biodiversity Planning Assistance

Activity Budget: \$36,000

Activity Description:

Community assessment and planning assistance will also be conducted for at least fifteen projects statewide by BWSR and project partners to further increase momentum for climate resiliency and biodiversity projects. The new assessment and planning guide and resiliency plan templates will be used as the foundation for providing guidance to communities to help them plan community spaces.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Planning assistance provided to five Minnesota Communities	June 30, 2027
Planning assistance provided to five additional Minnesota communities	June 30, 2028
Planning assistance provided to five additional Minnesota communities	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Laura Scholl	Metro Blooms/Blue Thumb Partnership	The organization will collaborate on the development of the Resiliency and Biodiversity Assessment and Planning Guide, provide technical assistance to communities working on case study projects, and lead training.	Yes
Todd Rexine	Great River Greening	The organization will collaborate on the development of the Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide, provide technical assistance to communities working on case study projects and collaborate on training	Yes
Kristine Miller	University of Minnesota Landscape Architecture Department	Coordination of Department Research Assistants	Yes
Dale Gentry	Audubon of Minnesota	Collaboration on development of the Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide, and provide community planning assistance focused on enhancement for protecting declining bird species	Yes
Sharon Stephens	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Guiding project planning to ensure the planning guide and programs will benefit PCA programs	No
Joanne Boettcher	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Green infrastructure expert participating on the advisory team and guide development	No
Eric Wojchik	Metropolitan Council	Advisory team member and assisting with guide development	No
Crystal Myslajek	Minnesota Department of Health	Advisory team member and assisting with guide development related to human health considerations	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.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will implement a comprehensive dissemination and documentation plan to ensure that the outcomes and lessons learned from the Biodiverse and Resilient Community Spaces Project are accessible, beneficial, and impactful for a wide range of audiences.

1. Partner Engagement

This project will allow BWSR to build on the popular Lawns to Legumes Program to reach thousands of Minnesota Residents and communities across the state to guide their efforts to make their landscapes more resilient to climate change and other stressors. This outreach will be accomplished through social media posts, blogs, and Ecology Update publications.

2. Data Sharing and Research Integration

Project data, including case study outcomes, monitoring metrics, and lessons learned, will be compiled into accessible reports, maps, and case studies. BWSR will share this information through its websites and presentations at relevant conferences. Results will also be incorporated into BWSR guidance documents that will be used to inform statewide resource management strategies. BWSR staff will also present results of this project through two webinars as well as other presentations in University of Minnesota Classes, the BWSR Academy, and other conferences and summits.

3. Promoting Behavioral Change and Environmental Stewardship

To encourage widespread adoption of best practices and behavior change, BWSR will encourage residents across the state to be part of building landscape resiliency. Materials will be developed that demonstrate attainable, and effective techniques, and highlight the benefits of community and resident participation in long-term management.

4. Public Outreach and Accessibility

Results of case study projects will be included in a storymap with detail about the case studies to be located on BWSR's website. The Climate Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide will be located on BWSR's website as a PDF document but copies will also be distributed at workshops that are part of the project and to students in ecological planning classes. All materials developed will include attribution language and/or the ENRTF logo in accordance with the ENRTF Acknowledgment Guidelines. Social media promotions will tag @mnentrf and use approved hashtags to amplify reach and visibility.

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?

The project will be implemented through an advisory team guiding the new guide and planning framework, and selection of case study projects. Non-profit organizations Metro Blooms and Great River Greening, and University of Minnesota Research Assistants will assist with the assessment, planning and installation of case study projects. This project will build knowledge and momentum for assessing and planning of projects sites statewide, and lead to implementation of climate resiliency projects through additional public and private funding sources. State agencies will pursue additional funding sources to plan and implement projects.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Pollinator and Beneficial Insect Strategic Habitat Program	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 08b	\$750,000
Lawns To Legumes Program Phase 2	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08p	\$993,000
Lawns To Legumes Program Phase 2	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 08m & 20b	\$1,040,000
Strategic Framework to Guide Local Water Storage Implementation	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 03o	\$200,000
Watershed and Forest Restoration: What a Match!	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 08j	\$3,318,000
Conservation Reserve Program State Incentives	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 10e	\$750,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Program Coordinator		Program Implementation, partner coordination, approval of activities and payments			22%	0.51	X	\$82,000
Resource Conservationist		Development of project technical resources			22%	0.6	X	\$69,000
							Sub Total	\$151,000
Contracts and Services								
Blue Thumb/Metro Blooms Partnership	Subaward	The organization will collaborate on the development of the climate biodiversity guide leading topics related to urban green infrastructure, collaborate on the planning of two case study projects and coordinates two in-person trainings. Costs are for \$29,000 in personnel time and \$1,000 in travel expenses.				0.15		\$30,000
State Restoration Services Vendors	Service Contract	The state of Minnesota Restoration Services Contract or other bidding processes will be used for contracting the implementation of climate and biodiversity strategies.				0		\$341,000
Great River Greening	Subaward	The organization will collaborate on the development the climate and biodiversity guide, collaborate on the planning of two case study projects, present at one in-person trainings, and provide assessment and planning guidance to five communities. Costs are for \$29,000 in personnel time and \$1000 of travel expenses.				0.18		\$30,000
University of Minnesota	Subaward	A research assistant will develop the Climate Resiliency Assessment Guide, a story map and document case study results for BWSR's Climate Resiliency Toolbox. Costs are for \$24,000 in personnel time.				0.18		\$24,000
Audubon of Minnesota	Subaward	Assist with development of the Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces focused on bird conservation, providing assessment and planning guidance to five communities. Costs are for \$26,000 in personnel time.				0.12		\$26,000

							Sub Total	\$451,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	12 trips, 18 hotel nights, 2000 miles, 2 people	Travel to case study projects					\$3,500
							Sub Total	\$3,500
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Printing of approximately 600 climate and biodiversity guides	Use of the resources at trainings					\$5,500
	Printing	Printing of 50 signs with ENRTF logo	Provide signs at each case study project and signs where project assistance is provided					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$6,500
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$612,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Personnel - Program Coordinator		Program Implementation, partner coordination, approval of activities and payments	Classified : This position is essential for this new program to conduct program implementation, and program oversight or funding recipients. ENRTF funds are not being used to supplant other sources of funds traditionally used to pay for the classified staff salary. We anticipate that the position will continue after project funding, but the work may shift if future funding is not available for the program specifically.
Personnel - Resource Conservationist		Development of project technical resources	Classified : This position is essential to this new program to conduct program implementation, and program oversight or funding recipients. ENRTF funds are not being used to supplant other sources of funds traditionally used to pay for the classified staff salary. We anticipate that the position will continue after project funding, but the work may shift if future funding is not available for the program specifically.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	25% Match from community partners where case study projects will be implemented	Funding will be used as part of the enhancement of green infrastructure projects	Pending	\$84,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$84,000
			Funds Total	\$84,000

Total Project Cost: \$696,000

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
TBD				-	-	-			
Totals				0	0	-			

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.

Project funded through this project will be conducted on lands with public ownership or other permanent protection.

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.

Implementation plans will be created for projects using the new planning framework for projects to provide guidance to landowners for long-term management of the project. The plans will be maintained by BWSR with other case study information that will be posted to BWSR's 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.

Projects will require that high quality native seed and appropriate species are selected for the project and that the seed source sequence, diversity recommendations, seed specifications and climate considerations in the Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines be followed for projects. Seed tags must also be retained for documentation of what seed was installed.

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.

The implementation and management plans developed for projects will include long-term management guidance. Any projects being enhanced through the project will be required to sign a stewardship agreement stating that long-term management will be conducted and how the work will be funded in the future.

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

Conservation Corps of Minnesota's website link will be added to the BWSR webpage for the project and promoted as an option for conducting restoration work as part of the project.

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.

Evaluations of projects will be completed initially after activity completion and three years later to assess goals, identify problems and gather information about successful strategies that can be included in BWSR's What's Working webpage. This evaluation is consistent with site assessments conducted for BWSR funded projects.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [7fd09811-b19.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The attached map/graphic summarizes the need for this project and proposed outcomes....

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Audubon Letter of Support	ac75d786-d3c.pdf
UMN Letter of Support	2014ca40-b38.pdf
GRG Letter of Support	295ea046-0dc.pdf
PCA Letter of Support	98657d42-d4c.pdf
Blue Thumb Letter of Support	52cc0e3b-2c0.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

The term "Resiliency was added to the name of the Guide to be developed, it is now the Climate Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces. Fire Risk was added as a problem addressed under the topic of opportunities and problems addressed. To address the decreased budget the project will focus on four case study sites instead of five overing 35 acres instead of 50 acres; and the budget for the case studies was decreased from \$449,000 to \$386,000. The budget for Great River Greening was decreased from \$34,000 to \$30,000 as they will be involved in planning two case study sites instead of three. The amount of contributing non-ENRTF funds was decreased from \$100,000 to \$86,000 due to decreased match from having one less case study project. Information was added to the workplan related to subawards and what the funds will be used for and justification for the classified staff request. Additional milestones were added for activities to ensure that at least three were listed for each activity; and milestone dates were adjusted based on the updated list of milestones.

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:

Sharon Stephens, PCA; Joanne Boettcher, PCA; Jason Beckler, BWSR; Todd Rexine, Great River Greening; Laura Scholl, Blue Thumb; Dale Gentry, Audubon

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