Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Draft Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-282

Staff Lead: Mike Campana

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: October 20, 2025

Project Title: Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency

Project Budget: $2,603,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Valerie McClannahan

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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

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Narrative

Project Summary: Project will reduce impacts of EAB through community management (inventory, planting assessment, management plan, removal, non-neonicotinoid treatment) and improve community forests by involving residents and planting a diversity of trees.

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

Emerald ash borer (EAB) continues to spread to new communities each year and it is imperative for communities to protect healthy canopy, remove high risk unsafe trees, and plan for the growth of future canopy in order to meet community canopy cover goals. Managing canopy for the impacts of EAB will benefit the economy, environment, and human health.

It is estimated there were 2.65 million ash trees in populated areas of the state, making EAB potentially one of the most destructive forest pests ever to reach Minnesota.

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 put vital tools in community's hands allowing them to define the way they need to manage EAB and enable them to assist their residents. Funded activities will include: conducting a tree inventory, removing ash trees, treating valuable ash trees with the non-neonicotinoid injectable insecticide emamectin benzoate, and planting trees for diverse forests. Communities will work with partners to assess infestations and provide resident education and engagement to manage and improve community forest canopy.

Assessments will be conducted to identify available planting spaces, as well as estimates for the number and size of trees needed to meet canopy goals. These assessments will provide tangible actions needed to meet statewide canopy goals and will be accessible through a web mapping tool.

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?

ENRTF funds will:
-        Provide planting assessments and strategies for ~350 communities statewide to assist in meeting canopy cover goals;
-        Administer up to $1,703,800 million in grants to support the management of EAB through community forestry activities on public land and in urban and rural communities;
-        Offer education and outreach to engage residents in ash management and community forestry activities;
-        Conduct surveys to identify newly infested areas, notify communities and local units of government and provide technical and field assistance;
-        Provide training workshops with currently infested communities to showcase successful management.

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: Run Request for Applications (RFA) process, administer grant funds, and grantee technical assistance.

Activity Budget: $261,068

Activity Description:
A request for applications (RFA) will be issued for a grant program to provide $1,703,800 in funds to an estimated 32 communities. Grant amounts are expected to be $15,000 to $100,000 per grant.

Eligible applicants will be local units of government, Tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, and schools. Eligible activities will include: tree inventories, management plan development, removing ash or high-risk unsafe trees, treating valuable ash with the non-neonicotinoid injectable insecticide and stagger loss of ash, maintenance on existing canopy such as needed pruning or watering establishment, planting trees for diverse forests, and resident education and engagement.

Participating communities will be selected based on demonstrated need for financial and technical assistance, local forestry needs, collaboration and impact on vulnerable populations (e.g., low income, elderly, etc.), expected impact on creating healthy canopy cover, readiness to take on a project of their proposed scope and size, and commitment to sustainable community forestry programming.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Write RFA, develop selection criteria, issue RFA.	October 31, 2026
Provide grant reviewer training, review proposals, select recipients, develop work plans and grant agreements.	December 31, 2026
Conduct outreach around RFA (targeted emails, one webinar, three workshops)	December 31, 2026
Quantify the value of environmental and economic benefits of work performed and report.	June 30, 2029
Obtain biannual reports, conduct annual monitoring and compliance checks as needed.	June 30, 2029
Provide grantee technical assistance in community forestry work and grant management assistance.	June 30, 2029

Activity 2: Community forest statewide tree canopy gap and planting assessment.

Activity Budget: $207,148

Activity Description:
This project builds on previously funded canopy assessments, and statistically sampled tree surveys, by identifying and analyzing available planting space for ~350 communities that were identified as having an overall tree canopy loss and/or an ash canopy loss statewide. The Department of Natural Resources will conduct this analysis by mapping available planting space, and identifying viable and optimal planting locations. A planting report for each community and an interactive web application will be made available to share with mapped communities.

This project will analyze community forests for the years of 2020-2023 through the use of Minnesota's statewide second generation 3DEP Lidar dataset and 2023 NAIP aerial imagery. The compiled imagery will be processed to produce planting maps that are useable to communities throughout the state who don't otherwise have these resources and will aide in management decisions. The reports and web application produced by the Department of Natural Resources will be user-friendly and accessible.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Available planting space and viability analyzed for ~350 communities statewide.	June 30, 2027
Maps and reports will be developed to showcase analysis.	December 31, 2027
Development of online dissemination tool.	December 31, 2028

Activity 3: Community forest technical support, outreach, and engagement.

Activity Budget: $430,984

Activity Description:

DNR Urban and Community staff will offer webinars and in-person workshops throughout the state to discuss results, and assist communities in developing tailored management strategies to protect and increase canopy. Communities will be encouraged to attend these workshops. Webinars will be recorded and posted on the MNDNR's website so that it can continue to assist communities beyond the life of this project.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture will support grant review work with communities to promote monitoring-based management to slow and monitor EAB population growth and spread. This activity also quantitatively evaluates the impact of management work on the growth and spread of EAB populations in Minnesota. MDA will host EAB monitoring and management workshops with communities, with a focus on communities with new EAB finds.

Technical assistance and engagement support will be provided from project partners including the University of Minnesota, and Tree Trust. Grant funds will be used to conduct activities that strengthen community forests through resident education and engagement. This includes education about EAB and ash management, education and engagement in early detection of EAB, tree planting, new tree establishment and care, and volunteer stewardship of newly planted trees.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
One webinar and 3 regional workshops hosted about canopy gap and planting analysis tool.	June 30, 2029
EAB infestations assessed in selected areas to track the distribution of EAB populations.	June 30, 2029
EAB monitoring and management workshops offered in collaboration with communities.	June 30, 2029
Communities provided residential engagement and community forestry outreach support.	June 30, 2029

Activity 4: Protect Community Forests Community Grant Implementation

Activity Budget: $1,703,800

Activity Description:

Following the RFA process, an estimated 32 awardees will be provided $1,703,800 in funds.

Communities will use funds to reduce the impacts EAB has and will have on their community. Grantees will implement their grant work plans with technical support from DNR and project partners.

ENTRF funds will be granted for community forestry and ash management activities, which can include:
- conducting a tree inventory
- developing management plans
- removing ash, or high-risk unsafe trees
- treating valuable ash with the non-neonicotinoid injectable insecticide and stagger loss of ash

- maintenance on existing canopy, such as needed pruning or watering establishment
- planting trees for diverse forests
- resident education and engagement

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Grantees contracts fully executed and grant work begins.	February 28, 2027
Grantee's implement grant contract work.	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Angie Ambourn	Minnesota Department of Agriculture	MDA will utilize Classified Scientist (0.75/3 years FTE). These staff will provide technical assistance to communities to identify local EAB management needs, community EAB monitoring and management workshops, and monitoring distribution of EAB.	Yes
Lucas Spaete	Department of Natural Resources - Resource Assessment	Staff will be responsible for conducting spatial analysis of canopy gap and planting space viability. This includes assessment of the number of trees and tree size needed to meet canopy cover goals, provide report on assessment, and create useable web application for individual community tree evaluation.	Yes
Ryan Murphy	University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources	Train residents and volunteers in EAB and ash management and to conduct community forestry activities.	Yes
Karen Zumach	Tree Trust	Community tree planting event planning, coordination, and resident engagement.	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.
The canopy and available planting space tool will be leveraged to provide education to communities using the latest technology and most current information about their community forests. This in itself will provide tremendous long-term economic and environmental benefits to the state and its citizens. The methods used in this project are repeatable and the web mapping tool is intended to remain a resource available to communities in perpetuity to help address canopy cover goals. Acknowledgement of the ENRTF will be included in all project communications and outreach per ENRTF guidelines.

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?
There had been an estimated 2.65 million ash in populated areas of the state, making EAB one of the most destructive forest pests ever to reach Minnesota. Managing the impacts of EAB and educating communities using the latest technology and most current information about their community forests will provide tremendous long-term economic and environmental benefits to the state and its residents.

The methods used in this project are repeatable and the analysis of available planting space and viability will remain as an available resource in perpetuity as a web-based application.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Protect Community Forests By Managing Ash For EAB	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 06b	$3,500,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	$ Amount
Personnel								
Project Administrators		Grant administration, contract management, education, and outreach campaign			33%	2.25	X	$225,000
CFM Foresters		Conduct grant compliance checks.			33%	0.75	X	$65,465
Resource Assessment		Conducting spatial analysis of canopy gap and planting space viability. This includes assessment of the number of trees and tree size needed to meet canopy cover goals, provide report on assessment, and create useable web application for individual community tree evaluation.			33%	2	X	$207,148
							Sub Total	**$497,613**
Contracts and Services								
Minnesota Department of Agriculture	Subaward	Provide technical assistance to communities to identify local EAB management needs, community EAB monitoring and management workshops (3-5 workshops), and monitoring distribution of EAB (~100 communities monitored). ($189,232 personnel, $21,320 travel)				2.25		$210,552
University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources	Subaward	Train residents and volunteers in EAB and ash management and to conduct community forestry activities. This will include a total of 9 community volunteer trainings. ($99,000 personnel, $4,000 travel, $2,000 supplies)				0.99		$105,000
Tree Trust	Subaward	Community tree planting event planning, coordination, and resident engagement for approximately 6 communities. ($37,451.30 personnel, $10,094.80 equipment rental/supplies, $1,203.90 travel)				0.48		$48,750
Local unit of government, Tribes, nonprofits, and schools.	Subaward	Grants to help communities manage impacts of EAB infestations and grow healthy community forests.				0		$1,703,800
							Sub Total	**$2,068,102**

Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
-							**Sub Total**	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
-							**Sub Total**	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Vehicle and lodging for 13 work days.	DNR Travel for grant management, education and outreach:					$1,558
							Sub Total	**$1,558**
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Emerald ash borer and tree care handouts.	Printing costs for emerald ash borer and tree focused education and outreach.					$2,000
							Sub Total	**$2,000**
Other Expenses								
		Direct and Necessary expenses	HR Support (~$6,145), Safety Support (~$974), Financial Support (~$3,320), Communication Support (~$1,902), IT Support (~$20,015), and Planning Support (~$1,371) necessary to accomplish funded programs/projects.					$33,727
							Sub Total	**$33,727**

							Grand Total	$2,603,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Personnel - Project Administrators		Grant administration, contract management, education, and outreach campaign	**Classified :** The DNR UCF program has staff that have the expertise to complete the tasks in the allotted time at a high level of competency. Currently, the staff that will be assigned this work are predominantly funded by outside grant money that is not part of the state general fund. These funds are project based and have to be continually applied for in order to support these staff. We feel utilizing several current staff rather than hiring unclassified staff would create efficiencies that reduce overall costs to the project.
Personnel - CFM Foresters		Conduct grant compliance checks.	**Classified :** CFM Foresters conduct on the ground compliance checks of all planting to ensure work matches invoices, was planted correctly, and that the stock is healthy to ensure sound state investment. CFM Forester's time is paid for based on work conducted, this means that the agency will backfill out of federal and state funding, as applicable.
Personnel - Resource Assessment		Conducting spatial analysis of canopy gap and planting space viability. This includes assessment of the number of trees and tree size needed to meet canopy cover goals, provide report on assessment, and create useable web application for individual community tree evaluation.	**Classified :** The DNR Resource Assessment staff have the expertise to complete the tasks in the allotted time at a high level of competency. The staff that will be assigned this work are entirely funded by project by project and is not funded out of the state general fund.

Non ENRTF Funds

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

Total Project Cost: $2,603,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

    Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments
Visual Component

File: 2e1b43dd-802.pdf

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Brief description of the Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency proposal....

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
MDA_Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency_Letter of Support	3984d5e1-945.pdf
Tree Trust_Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency_Letter of Support	7546c4b1-0fd.pdf
UMN_Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency_Letter of Support	dc202fa3-dd3.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Competitive grant funding and supported communities, travel, and printing reduced to meet amended funding.

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:

Patty Thielen, Director, Division of Forestry

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