



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Draft Work Plan

### General Information

**ID Number:** 2026-590

**Staff Lead:** Mike Campana

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** October 22, 2025

**Project Title:** Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center

**Project Budget:** \$4,694,000

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Robert Venette

**Organization:** U of MN - MITPPC

**Office Telephone:** (612) 301-1405

**Email:** venet001@umn.edu

**Web Address:** <https://mitppc.umn.edu/>

### Project Reporting

**Reporting Schedule:** April 1 / October 1 of each year.

**Project Completion:** December 31, 2031

**Final Report Due Date:** February 14, 2032

### Legal Information

**Legal Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2032

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** The Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center (MITPPC) requests \$4,694,000 for up to ten new research projects to protect wildlife and plants from high-priority invasive species.

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

Terrestrial invasive species (TIS) threaten the wildlife and plants that sustain Minnesota's environment, economy, and quality of life. Invasive insects, pathogens, and weeds are transforming landscapes and degrading habitat in the state by stunting, killing or outcompeting valued plants (for example, as emerald ash borer and buckthorn have done in forests; Phragmites and purple loosestrife have done in wetlands; and tansy and wild parsnip have done in prairies). In addition, herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides used for the management of invasive species can move offsite and impair adjacent waters and untreated lands. Collectively, TIS cost Minnesotans at least \$3 billion annually through direct damage and increased management costs.

More than 400 terrestrial invasive species are present in Minnesota. Many have limited prevention or response options. To improve efforts to manage, protect, and restore habitats from TIS, land managers need: (1) enhanced techniques and technologies to detect and map invasive species; (2) better management alternatives such as biological control or integrated pest management; (3) reliable cost-benefit analyses of management options; and (4) dependable long-term maps of the potential distribution and impacts of invasive species.

**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.**

MITPPC is a national leader in transformative research solutions to the greatest TIS threats to Minnesota. This request will fund up to ten interdisciplinary research teams to develop new ways to prevent the introduction, reduce the spread, and provide alternative control techniques for terrestrial invasive species. Priorities identified in an annual call for proposals will be determined through a management driven, science-based prioritization process, a hallmark of our previous successes. Only the worst invasive species will be eligible for research.

The progress of MITPPC is due, in part, to its ability to leverage the capacity of the entire University of Minnesota system (including the five campuses and ten Research and Outreach Centers across Minnesota) and of local, state, tribal, and federal partners, industry, and nonprofit organizations, among others. These engagements lead to bold proposals and critical management solutions. MITPPC will continue to expand these interactions under this proposal.

MITPPC also adds value to the course of research by helping teams manage programmatic and financial areas. MITPPC provides long-term accountability for research progress and ensures the results are shared broadly to different audiences, particularly through earned media.

**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?**

MITPPC will fund up to 10 research teams through a competitive grant program in this request. Research teams will develop suites of tools to prevent or mitigate the harmful effects of invasive species by utilizing advances in machine learning, molecular diagnostics, biological control, decision analysis, remote sensing, or integrated pest management. As examples, MITPPC anticipates new diagnostic tools to confirm the identities of cryptic species, biological control options to manage impacts from invasive species, and plant varieties with resistance to invasive species. MITPPC will produce and distribute research publications and user guides to help partners apply these advancements.

## 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?**

In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Accelerate research on high priority, terrestrial invasive species

**Activity Budget:** \$1,435,000

**Activity Description:**

MITPPC will complete Activity 1 through the coordinated work of Center staff. Our staff Researcher oversees the prioritization process that determines which terrestrial invasive species are eligible for research. The staff researcher annually receives public requests for 6-10 new species to be evaluated. In addition, the researcher annually consults local experts and peer-reviewed literature to update existing assessments. The Researcher also conducts ad hoc studies to improve aspects of the prioritization process. All of that information feeds into an updated, prioritized list of TIS to be released in 2026 and 2028. The Researcher communicates findings broadly.

The Director and Associate Director use the prioritization for engagements with University researchers and external partners. The engagements build awareness of untapped talents at the University and pressing needs among interested communities. The Director and Associate Director build multi-disciplinary research teams and the refine research ideas to align with MITPPC goals. They subject pre-proposals to peer review and oversee the pace of research. They communicate results.

The Communications Specialist supports the implementation of MITPPC's Communication Plan and Digital Content Strategy. This person curates digital materials that summarize ongoing research or results from previous work. Communications are directed towards internal (University) or external audiences.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete 6-10 species assessments, update existing assessments and distribute updated prioritization	December 31, 2026
Prepare up to 10 sub-project webpages	February 28, 2027
Ongoing implementation and management of communication strategies to maximize dissemination of research results	June 30, 2027
Complete 6-10 new species assessments for prioritization	December 31, 2027
Ongoing implementation and management of communication strategies to maximize dissemination of research results	June 30, 2028
Complete 6-10 species assessments, update existing assessments and distribute updated prioritization	December 31, 2028
Ongoing implementation and management of communication strategies to maximize dissemination of research results	June 30, 2029

### Activity 2: Awarding sub-awards

**Activity Budget:** \$3,259,000

**Activity Description:**

Research projects will focus on the prediction and prevention of threats that are not yet in Minnesota, the early detection and rapid response of threats that are newly arrived, and solutions to terrestrial invasive species that are well established in the state. Research must address one or more invasive species that pose the greatest threats to Minnesota's forests, prairies, wetlands, or agricultural resources, as identified by MITPPC's prioritization process. The prioritization is revisited and updated regularly.

Proposals will be solicited annually for the two years of the appropriation or as funding is available. Applicants first submit a preproposal which is reviewed and scored by a panel of up to five researchers in Minnesota. Research teams

with the highest scoring preproposals are invited to submit a full proposals which are reviewed by relevant national and international experts. Project selection is based on the outcome of the peer review. Each proposal recommended for funding will be added as its own activity to this work plan for LCCMR review and approval. Budget lines are listed as "to be awarded to sub-projects" and "awarded to sub-projects" in Professional and Technical Contracts.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Issue RFP on high priority research needs	January 31, 2026
Internal and external review of 2025 proposals	August 31, 2026
Award subproject funding to 6-10 proposals from 2024 RFP, subprojects begin January 1	October 31, 2026
Issue RFP on high priority research needs	January 31, 2027
Internal and external reviews of 2026 proposals	August 31, 2027
Award subproject funding based on remaining funds from the 2025 RFP	October 31, 2027

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
TBD	TBD	Each project is strongly encouraged to partner with an external partner. Current examples include the Minnesota Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Transportation, the US Forest Service, Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and Friends of the Mississippi, among others.	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.**

MITPPC will disseminate research findings through multiple outlets. Outlets may vary with the subproject and audience. Common outlets will include a project page on MITPPC's website, <http://mitppc.umn.edu>, and periodic postings through MITPPC's twitter account, @UMNMITPPC. Project features, stories about individual researchers or significant findings, will be prepared by MITPPC communication staff. These features appear on MITPPC's website and have been redistributed through other outlets (e.g., press releases through UMN media relations). Technical findings will be published in the peer-reviewed literature. Researchers are also encouraged to share results through one or more formal in-person meetings or conferences with stakeholders, for example, the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference.

The descriptions provided here are for MITPPC staff and for all current sub-projects. Specific activities are listed by sub-project number.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENRTF Acknowledgment 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?**

MITPPC will share findings with agencies and citizen groups so that public information and decision making is based on the best available science as described in the dissemination section of the work plan. The long-term funding for the MITPPC is dependent upon the ENRTF and other state and federal sources. There is a significant cost share provided by UMN through its contributions of physical space, finance, IT, HR, and communications support for the Center. The federal government contributes funding for the director's salary, as well as a significant amount of lab space for scientists..

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center	M.L. 2014, Chp. 312, Sec. 8	\$1,460,000
Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 06a	\$5,000,000
Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center - Phase III	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 06a	\$3,750,000
Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center - Phase 4	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 06a	\$3,500,000

Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants And Pests Center, Phase5	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 06a	\$5,000,000
Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 06a	\$6,230,000
Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center - Phase 7	M.L. 2024, , Chp. 83, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 06a	\$7,000,000

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Researcher		Provides technical and intellectual support for prioritization process. Prepares and updates species assessments. Conducts research to improve the prioritization process. Communicates findings.			36.6%	3		\$346,830
Associate director		Admin and program support for research projects			36.6%	3		\$451,208
Communications specialist		Communication support for research project's result dissemination			26.6%	2.25		\$245,953
Director		Provides strategic direction to the MITPPC		X	36.6%	1.5		\$391,009
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,435,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
To be awarded to sub-projects	Subaward	Budget reserve for awarding to sb-projects upon approval by LCCMR				1		\$3,259,000
Awarded to sub-projects	Subaward	This is the cumulative budget, spent, and balance for all sub-projects combined. Detailed budgets for subprojects will be managed and submitted in an Excel workbook via the attachments page under "Optional Attachments/ Support Letter or Other" with the file name as the date of submission (for example, YYYY-MM-DD Budget Update)				20		-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$3,259,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								



							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$4,694,000

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Personnel - Director		Provides strategic direction to the MITPPC	Contingency in the event of change in directorship and/or loss of federal funding for MITPPC leadership. ENRTF funding will not be used for this position if federal funding is in place

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
In-Kind	US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	Salary for Director Venette	Secured	\$391,009
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$391,009</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$391,009</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$5,085,009**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [210b360e-d7e.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

The document describes the MITPPC and provides an overview of funded research projects....

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Approval from UMN to submit	<a href="#">1a4f84ee-392.pdf</a>

### Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

#### *Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage*

The maximum number of research sub-projects that can be funded by this appropriation was reduced from 18 to 10.

## 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?**

Yes

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

Yes

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

No

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

Yes

**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:**

Heather Koop, MITPPC - University of Minnesota

**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