

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2012-2013 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 077-D

Vermillion Landing: Community-Based Stewardship and Restoration

Topic Area: D. Land Acquisition & Restoration

Total Project Budget: \$ 138,400

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2013 - June 2016

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Community-based project improving local ecological health while connecting citizen action and behavior to the Vermillion River, Hastings. Installation of 30 raingardens, enhanced riparian buffer strips, and "Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices" assessment.

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Sponsoring Organization: City of Hastings

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Location

Region: Metro

County Name: Dakota

City / Township: Hastings

<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Base
<input type="checkbox"/> Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgency
<input type="checkbox"/> Capacity Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/> Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> TOTAL <input type="checkbox"/> %



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2012-2013 Main Proposal

PROJECT TITLE: Vermillion Landing: Community-based stewardship and restoration

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

In partnership with Metro Blooms and the Conservation Corps of Minnesota (MCC), the City of Hastings will use a community-based strategy to install up to 30 raingardens on private properties and install improved riparian buffer strips to improve stormwater runoff quality along a 56 acre city-owned stretch of parkland in the Vermillion River Conservation Corridor (see map). The project will then measure the effectiveness of our education and outreach methods and deliver these results in a report which will guide the long-term success of future restoration efforts and ensure continued citizen involvement in park stewardship activities.

This site along the Vermillion River is an important asset to the City of Hastings as it is the ‘missing link’ in a greater chain of locally protected park and recreation lands in the city (and beyond). This project will begin to provide greater habitat and recreational connections to both upstream and downstream land units along the river, as well as increase user awareness of how local action can affect regional natural resources. Within the site boundaries we will create or improve nearly 1 linear mile of riparian buffer zones to treat stormwater runoff from Hwy 47 before it drains into the Vermillion River. This buffer expansion will be the catalyst for a series of future restoration and recreation development activities that will take place on the entire 56 acre site.

Metro Blooms will utilize engagement tools that have been demonstrated effective in engaging neighbors in efforts to protect local water bodies. As a way to connect residents to environmental issues in the Vermillion River, our project will address changes in local citizen behavior that can influence larger, regional changes in behaviors to improve the ecological health of the greater Vermillion Corridor. Residents will be involved in the design and installation process to install up to 30 raingardens and to restore their local parklands. Buffer restoration labor and raingarden excavation services will be provided by the MCC. Local citizens will be involved with the planting and maintenance of raingardens, assist in the development and implementation of a long-term vegetation management plan, and help identify critical pedestrian and canoe access points for future park improvements. Before-and-after assessments of knowledge, attitudes and behavior of participants will be performed to determine effectiveness of our approach and results will be used to inform future educational outreach campaigns in the region.

This project directly addresses the goals of the local and regional watershed protection plans (and TMDL plans for above and below the Vermillion Falls) which list the need to improve water and habitat quality through riparian buffer improvements, habitat restoration, increased connectivity and user access, and citizen education and participation. Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District supports this project and will collaborate with Metro Blooms to provide education, technical design and installation assistance as requested by the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Riparian Buffer Expansion

Budget: \$49,400

This task involves 1) clearing of invasive shrubs, forbs, and trees, 2) erosion control, seeding, and plant restoration activities, 3) long-term maintenance strategy development and final report assembly, and 4) project management.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Removal and monitoring of invasive forbs, shrubs, and trees (ongoing thru yr3)	May 2016

2. <i>Planting of woods, upper river banks, and prairies</i>	May 2016
3. <i>Long-term maintenance strategy guide development</i>	June 2015

Activity 2: Community-based Strategy

Budget: \$89,000

Promote and host community-based strategy to engage neighbors in protection of local natural resources. This task involves 1) workshop coordination and facilitation, 2) residential site review and design, 3) raingarden construction, 4) pre and post installation Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys, and 5) record keeping and final report assembly.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. <i>Installation of up to 30 raingardens on private property</i>	Oct 2015
2. <i>Implementation and Evaluation of KAP surveys</i>	Feb 2016
3. <i>Final report assembly</i>	May 2016

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

****City of Hastings** – Barry Bernstein (Parks and Recreation Director): Primary applicant and recipient of all ENRTF funds. Point of contact & reporting agent. Contributing in-kind matches to project activities.

****Metro Blooms** – Bryan Pynn (Project Manager for project activities). Metro Blooms will be contracted as the Project Manager for all activities listed above.

****Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District**– Mike Isensee (Urban Conservationist) Workshop and BMP design partner. Potential Cash Match and In-Kind support through Blue Thumb grant process to support design and installation of raingardens.

****Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization** – Travis Thiel (Watershed Specialist) advisory partner in project and future partner for long term management strategies

****Conservation Corps of Minnesota (MCC)** – excavation and restoration assistance for entire project

****Local citizens and Regional ‘Friends’ groups** – Assisting in stewardship and maintenance activities long-term.

B. Timeline Requirements

The buffer restoration timeline will take place over 36 months, giving ample time for weed control before the final planting phases. Future management of weed species within the site will be transferred to the city and/or park stewardship groups and the likelihood of an MCC/Metro Blooms/City of Hastings partnership for maintenance duties is high. Raingarden installation will be performed over two seasons to spread out funding capabilities of the Blue Thumb cost-share program through the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District (homeowner cost-share is an application process and funding limited annually).

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The long-term strategy for this project is two-fold:

- 1) With the proposed creation of a long-term vegetative maintenance and enhancement plan, public and private groups will have the tools to make informed decisions at the appropriate time intervals in regards to managing the long-term ecological health of the site.
- 2) Through the additional site analysis incorporated into the final report for the City of Hastings, the path will be set for long-term commitment to acquisition of the Kittzman site (see map) and expanding upon this project to complete the vision for the Vermillion Landing as a safe final destination for a canoe landing/recreation access hub above the Vermillion Falls (utilizing a mix of capital improvement funds from local and state sources).

2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

Community Based Strategy for Vermillion Landing Park Restoration

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

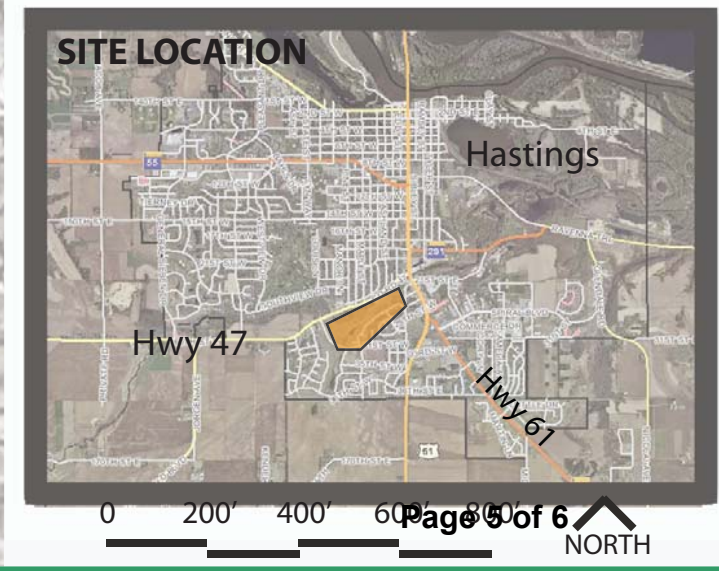
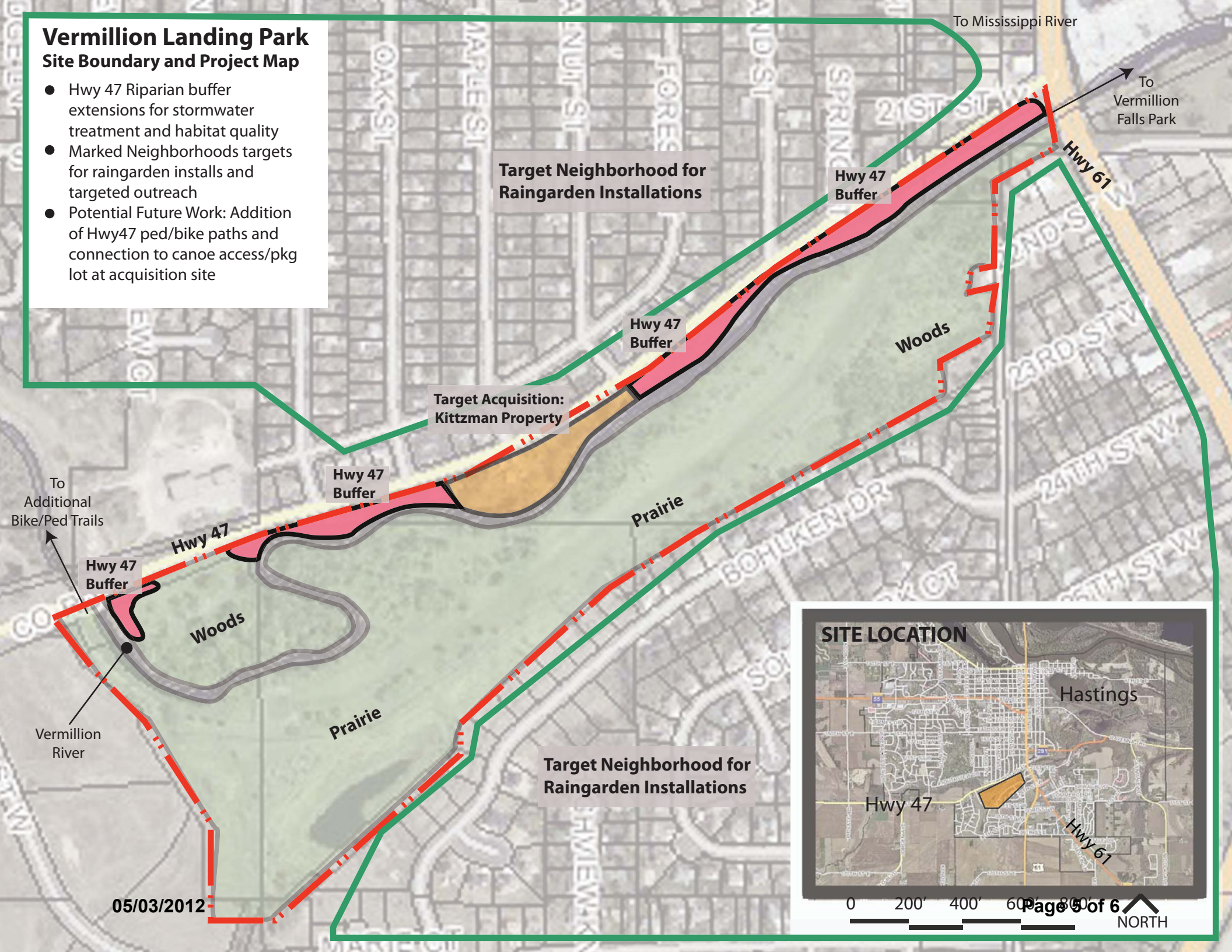
BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: City of Hastings - Admin and Reporting	\$ 3,000
Contracts:	
Minnesota Conservation Corps - invasives species control and all restoration labor	\$ 31,400
Metro Blooms - Contracted for Project Management, Construction Oversight, Outreach, and Engagement, Final report development	\$ 55,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	
Landscape Supplies - erosion control materials, herbicide, exclusion fencing	\$ 8,000
Plants - Native seed mixes (for woodlands and prairies)	\$ 5,000
Plants - Plugs and shrub/tree seedlings (for woodlands and prairies, incl delivery)	\$ 8,000
Plants - Raingarden plants and materials (plugs, shrubs, mulch, compost; delivery)	\$ 22,000
Additional Budget Items:	
Printing, educational materials, and interpretive signage	\$ 6,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 138,400

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: yes	\$ -	
Vermillion River Watershed JPO- Cash match for raingarden materials through Blue Thumb grant application (pending Dakota County SWCD approval after homeowner applies for match) \$250 per homeowner, up to 30 gardens	\$ 7,500	<i>pending</i>
Homeowner-cash match for raingarden materials costs, \$100 per homeowner (30 homes). If accepted for install cost-share through Dakota County SWCD, cash match will trigger.	\$ 3,000	<i>pending</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: None	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period		
Vermillion River Watershed JPO - In Kind match for Dakota SWCD hosting workshops, promotions, performing site assessments, design and pre-install assistance	\$ 14,700	secured
City of Hastings - all in-kind contributions including: mowing, watering, tree chippers, promotional assistance for events (flyers, website, periodicals, etc), soil and waste disposal services	\$ 13,400	secured
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):	\$ -	
Funding History:	\$ -	

Vermillion Landing Park Site Boundary and Project Map

- Hwy 47 Riparian buffer extensions for stormwater treatment and habitat quality
- Marked Neighborhoods targets for raingarden installs and targeted outreach
- Potential Future Work: Addition of Hwy47 ped/bike paths and connection to canoe access/pkg lot at acquisition site



Community based strategy for ‘Vermillion Landing’ Park Restoration

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

The City of Hastings will contract Metro Blooms to manage all project activities related to the restoration, long-term maintenance planning, and educational outreach and stewardship. Bryan Pynn will be the project manager for Metro Blooms.

Bryan Pynn is currently a project manager and landscape designer for Metro Blooms. He manages many of the Metro Blooms installation, restoration, and maintenance projects around the Twin Cities metro area; including budgeting, planning, project conceptualization and implementation, and develops long-term maintenance strategies for these projects. He possesses a Master’s degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Minnesota, and a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Policy also from the University of Minnesota. Additional emphases throughout his academic studies have been in stormwater management and water quality protection, landscape ecology, and ecological vegetation management.

Through his work with Metro Blooms, the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources, The Metropolitan Design Center, and Great River Greening he has developed a breadth of skill that translates well into a project manager role of this scale. Through his past experience in stormwater management and BMP design, wetland monitoring, ecological restoration, and landscape design he has been able to effectively manage and troubleshoot issues as they arise and operate projects within budget and deliver them in a timely manner.

Metro Blooms is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. The bulk of their recent work has been in educating and organizing citizens in relation to water quality and connecting them to their local water bodies. Metro Blooms has undertaken projects of this scale in the past, most notably a paired watershed study in the Powderhorn neighborhood of Minneapolis where citizen engagement was employed as the main vehicle to improve water quality within Powderhorn Lake. This project designed and installed 130 raingardens on private properties in an effort to reduce stormwater runoff volumes and pollutant loads flowing into the lake. The majority of Metro Blooms’ projects thereafter have taken this citizen engagement approach and employed it on smaller scales around the Twin Cities to link citizens to their local water bodies and improve water quality and address TMDL goals region-wide.