

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

---

**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 106-F**

Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy

---

**Topic Area:** F. Outreach/Education/Training

---

**Total Project Budget:** \$ 186,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 yrs. July 2013 - June 2015

**Other Non-State Funds:** \$ 0

**Summary:**

The apprentice program transfers knowledge from experienced professionals to the next generation of conservation managers. Real-world experience gained with SWCDs during their busy construction season is experience textbooks cannot convey.

---

**Name:** Steve Woods

**Sponsoring Organization:** Board of Water and Soil Resources

**Address:** 520 Lafayette Rd  
St. Paul MN 55155

**Telephone Number:** (651) 297-7748

**Email:** steve.woods@state.mn.us

**Web Address:** www.bwsr.state.mn.us

---

**Location**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:**

---

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL _____%



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2012-2013 Main Proposal

## PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship Academy

### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Conservation Apprentice Academy transfers knowledge from experienced and retiring professionals to the next generation of conservation managers. Real-world experience gained with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) during their busy construction season is experience that textbooks cannot convey. The first year of this program demonstrated the knowledge transfer goes both ways.

Thirty apprentices were funded by the ENRTF for the summers of 2011-12. Another two years received reduced funding for 2013-14 that would support 20 apprentices in 2013 and 13 apprentices in 2014. This proposal seeks \$186,000 in order to support 30 members in each of the 2013 and 2014 field seasons.

Familiarizing future conservation leaders with Minnesota’s various land-use practices, water and soil resources, plant and animal habitats, and landowner concerns is needed to maintain the capacity of local organizations to deliver conservation on the ground. While college graduates with conservation-related degrees are knowledgeable in technology, theory, and research methods, their practical, on-the-ground skills need development. Communicating with landowners and adjusting designs for field nuances are vital to the success of conservation projects and best learned from seasoned professionals. In turn, apprentices will bring knowledge of emerging technologies and other innovations to improve the quality and productivity of current conservation efforts.

This program will build on the success of the current Conservation Academy that enrolled 30 apprentices in the summer of 2011 and is set to enroll 35 apprentices in the summer of 2012. (An additional five positions are possible in 2012 due to the inability to reimburse apprentices during the three-week shutdown of July 2011.)

### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**Activity 1:** Revise academy structure; Recruit participating SWCDs; Develop 30 employment agreements  
**Budget:** \$6,000

**Description:** The intent is to build on the solid foundation of the apprentice program and further enhance program quality. This result is administratively focused as the details of the employment arrangements are critical for all parties—Conservation Corps, SWCDs, and the prospective apprentice.

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. executed contract between BWSR and Conservation Corps	August 30, 2012	\$ 0
2. employment agreement format and program documentation describing schedule and duties; employment agreements and mgmt	October 15, 2012	\$ 0
3. list of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor)	December 30, 2012	\$ 1,000
4. year one employment agreements & mgmt	May 1, 2013	\$ 2,000
5. year two interested SWCDs list and individual agreements	December 30, 2013	\$ 1,000
6. year two employment agreements & mgmt	May 1, 2014	\$ 2,000

**Activity 2:** Recruit, select, and train academy participants; Repeat for year two  
**Budget:** \$180,000

**PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship Academy**

**Description:** BWSR and the Conservation Corps will approach University of Minnesota and MnSCU environmental programs for assistance in recruiting candidates. The Conservation Corps will match participants with SWCDs and Technical Service Areas (TSA – a joint powers entity of SWCDs). Both the SWCD and the apprentices will receive training to clarify expectations and requirements for successful participation in the program. The Conservation Corps will serve as the employer of record and handle all payroll and personnel issues (e.g. AmeriCorps credits) until conclusion of summer employment.

<b>Deliverable/Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>
1. recruiting time and materials for use at educational institutions	October 15, 2012	\$ 2,000
2. match candidates with interested SWCDs in year one	April 31, 2013	\$ 1,500
3. employ and manage 10 additional apprentices in year one	October 15, 2013	\$ 68,000
4. close out year one and evaluate	December 31, 2013	\$ 1,000
5. match candidates with interested SWCDs in year two	April 31, 2012	\$ 1,500
6. employ and manage 17 additional apprentices in year two	October 15, 2014	\$ 105,000
7. close out year two and evaluate	November 30, 2014	\$ 1,000

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

Conservation Corps via contract, MN Association of SWCDs, individual SWCDs, University and State College systems.

In-kind staff hours of the SWCDs and BWSR staff will be the largest direct money. (Indirect funds described in “Project Impact” are very large but more realistically associated with the design and construction of projects more so than the apprentices.)

**B. Timeline Requirements**

The proposed project timeline is October 15, 2012 - November 30, 2014. This allows agreements to be in place between BWSR and the Conservation Corps prior to identifying SWCD location for the 2013 summer season. The end date of November 30, 2014 allows for closeout of year two and evaluation.

The majority of the project planning and preparation will occur in the winter and spring. Apprentices will be placed at SWCDs in May and continue through August of each summer. Closeout, evaluation, and reporting will occur in the fall of each year.

**C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs**

The project was first funded by the ENRTF for the summers of 2011-12. It also received funding for 2013-14 at a reduced amount that would support 20 apprentices in 2013 and 13 apprentices in 2014, respectively. This proposal seeks to increase funding to support 30 members in each of the 2013 and 2014 field seasons.

BWSR and the Conservation Corps are developing long-term funding strategies for the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy that involves a mixture of federal, state, local, foundation, and private support.

## 2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET - TWO YEARS

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>BWSR</b>	
<b>Personnel:</b> <i>Angie Becker-Kudelka, training coordinator @0.05</i>	\$ 4,000
<b>Contracts - Conservation Corps Minnesota</b>	
<b>Professional/technical</b>	
<i>Program Manager @ 0.40 FTE, Program Associate @ 0.30 FTE, Recruiter @ 0.13 FTE, Program Director @ 0.10 FTE, Accounts/Admin @ 0.08 FTE</i>	\$ 43,000
<i>14 SWCD Apprentices for 540 hours per year for two years</i>	\$ 120,000
<b>Other direct operating costs</b>	
<i>Apprentice orientation and training</i>	\$ 14,000
<i>Apprentice recruitment/advertising expense, background checks</i>	\$ 1,750
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b>	
<i>Mileage for 1 staff vehicle @ \$0.50 per mile, food, lodging</i>	\$ 3,250
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 186,000</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> <i>AmeriCorps Education Awards for Apprentices upon completion of term.</i>	\$ 88,080	Pending
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	\$ -	
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> <i>Indicate any in-kind services to be provided during the funding period. List type of service(s) and estimated value. In-kind services listed must be specific to the project.</i>	\$ -	
<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):</b> \$200,000 of the \$200,000 appropriated from the ENTRF in 2011. (Field seasons 13-14)	\$ 200,000	Year 2010, Unspent and Obligated
<b>Funding History:</b> \$231,309 of the \$368,000 remains of the appropriation from the ENTRF in 2010. (Field seasons 11-12)	\$ 231,309	ENRTF

**Project Manager Qualifications**

**Project Manager: Steve Woods, Assistant Director, BWSR**

Steve Woods has 25 years of management, planning, design, and construction experience obtained with private and public sector organizations spanning the Upper Midwest. Strong leadership, inter-governmental, and technical skills are all leveraged in current position as one of two Assistant Directors at the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

**Education:** Bachelor Agricultural Engineering, University of Minnesota  
Masters of Public Administration, Hamline University

Licensed Professional Civil Engineer  
MN Supreme Court list of approved ADR neutrals

**Experience:**

**Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Assistant Director 1999—Present**

As Assistant Director for Statewide Operations, directly supervise three regional supervisors and the agency's performance review coordinator. The 37 regional employees are located in seven field offices and provide financial, technical, and administrative support to a network of 91 soil and water conservation districts, 47 watershed districts, 87 counties, and over 300 wetland regulatory jurisdictions.

**Montgomery Watson Harza, Inc., Supervising Professional 1987—1999**

Served as Office Manager for two years and long-term Manager of the Water Resources Division of this international environmental consulting and design firm's Great Lakes Office. Responsible for managing a variety of hydrologic and environmental restoration projects across the Upper Midwest for on-time and on-schedule completion.

**Organization Description:** MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will serve as the lead state agency for this grant. The BWSR has a strong connection with SWCDs and their implementation role in soil and water conservation. We intend to use existing financial and administrative processes to provide oversight.

**Minnesota Conservation Corps:** Len Price, Executive Director, provides overall leadership and strategic direction. As a former teacher (34 years) and state legislator (20 years), Len's strengths are his public relations skills, knowledge of government agency operations and numerous contacts at all levels of government. He served on the Minnesota Conservation Corps board of directors during its transition from a state agency to nonprofit, and joined the organization as Executive Director in 2005. Len currently serves on the boards of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and the Corps Network, a national association of conservation corps.

