

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2015 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 127-F

Empowered Citizens Improve 5 Urban Forests: Statewide Model

Category: F. Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat

Total Project Budget: \$ 835,342

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2015 - June 2018

Summary:

Mobilize citizen volunteers to meet escalating urban forestry needs in Duluth, Mankato, Rochester, Saint Cloud and Saint Paul, ready 40 additional communities and prepare for statewide expansion.

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Location

Region: Statewide

County Name: Becker, Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Olmsted, Ramsey, Sherburne, St. Louis, Stearns

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Urban Forests in 5 cities supported by a cadre of volunteers, upheld by project partners. Details on stress/needs/benefits of urban forests.

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



I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Community forests are in decline. Many cities and towns lack the financial and staffing resources, and are not prepared to adequately address this crisis. Without decisive action, community forests in Minnesota will continue to decline, impacting air, water, public health, and the natural environment now and into the future.

The goal is to protect and improve Minnesota’s community forests. This project creates enduring connections between the ongoing and low-cost contributions of citizen volunteers with their local urban forests.

Project partners will create a program mobilizing citizens to meet community forestry needs in Duluth, Mankato, Rochester, St. Cloud, and St. Paul. ENRTF will seed a Phase 1 effort to:

- A. **Design** a program enabling cities to leverage volunteers to improve community forests
- B. **Mobilize** volunteers in 5 cities to meet local urban forestry needs
- C. **Measure** impact of activities by projecting environmental, public health and economic benefits
- D. **Ready** this program for Phase 2: identify and prepare 40 additional Minnesota communities

The vision is that ENRTF resources will be leveraged through AmeriCorps to sustain and build this program to meet urban forestry needs across the state.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Recruit & train 500 volunteers in community forestry practices, conduct forestry needs assessment in 5 cities, prepare 5 city-specific volunteer workplans **Budget: \$199,725**

Project partners recruit and train volunteers to carry out tree planting, maintenance, pest detection, and inventories. Develop a workplan for each city based on local forestry needs, public health priorities, and affected populations (e.g. elderly, chronic disease, low-income). Each plan identifies the number of volunteers and volunteer hours needed, as well as targeted geographic areas, seasonal considerations and volunteer support infrastructure needs.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Secure 500 volunteers to serve in Duluth, Mankato, Rochester, St. Cloud, and St. Paul	September 2016
2. Train and certify 500 volunteers in required tree skills/knowledge and safety practices	April 2017
4. Customize tools to track & mobilize volunteers	June 2016
5. Develop Forestry Volunteer Workplan for each city	May 2016

Activity 2: Plant 1500 trees, seasonal watering for 1800 newly planted trees, prune 1300 trees, build and maintain 5 community gravel bed tree nurseries, update 5 city tree inventories, conduct early detection in 10 priority areas **Budget: \$441,417**

Trained volunteers work in their respective communities to plant, water and maintain the health of newly-planted trees, install and stock community gravel bed tree nurseries, identify and record tree defects, pests and diseases, and conduct tree inventories or city-wide surveys.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Urban forests in 5 cities will be protected and improved, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1500 new trees planted (native and/or climate adaptive, site-appropriate species) b. 1800 newly planted trees receiving seasonal watering c. 1300 trees developed and pruned d. 5 community gravel bed tree nurseries built and maintained e. 5 new or updated tree inventories f. 10 priority areas (2 in each of 5 cities) receiving early detection for pests/disease 	April 2017- June 2018



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2015 Main Proposal

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Activity 3: Quantify Environmental, Public Health and Economic Impact

Budget \$54,600

Project Manager documents tasks and accomplishments performed by volunteers to identify environmental, public health, and economic value; calculate return on investment.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Quantify value of environmental, public health, and economic benefits of work performed: energy conservation, air quality improvement, stormwater control, urban heat island mitigation, CO2 reduction and property value increase.	June 2018
2. Calculate return on investment based on ENRTF seed funds	

Activity 4: Ready volunteers in 40 additional communities across the state

Budget \$139,600

Project partners identify and prepare 40 additional MN communities to launch tailored community forestry volunteer programs.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Identify lessons learned from Phase 1	June 2018
2. Enhance program to ensure success of expanded scope in 40 communities	
2. Secure AmeriCorps resources to launch Phase 2	

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Partners receiving ENRTF funds include: MPCA, University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources, Tree Trust, Conservation Corps of MN/IA, and Hands on Twin Cities. Partners contributing in-kind resources include: University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources, Tree Trust, Conservation Corps of MN/IA, Hands on Twin Cities, local government and community partners in Duluth, Mankato, Rochester, St. Cloud, and St. Paul, Minnesota state government agencies (MPCA, DNR, MDH), and most importantly, citizen volunteers.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

Urban forests provide many benefits, impacting communities in the following ways:

Urban Forest Benefit	Project Impact
Improve air quality, reduce ozone & fine particles	Protect vulnerable populations (asthma, lung disease)
Mitigate urban heat island effects	Reduce heat stress on residents
Control stormwater and soil erosion	Protect homeowners/businesses from flooding
Conserve energy (less heating/cooling required)	Save costs for individuals/businesses
Sequester carbon	Help MN meet greenhouse gas reduction goals
Address climate change	Support community resilience
Provide native habitat for animals and pollinators	Strengthen local ecosystems

This project represents an upfront investment to **design, mobilize, measure, and ready** a community forestry volunteer program. Project partners will take steps to secure AmeriCorps resources to scale up the program to serve numerous cities and towns, with the ultimate goal of creating strong and sustained urban forestry volunteer programs across Minnesota.

C. Timeline Requirements

This is a three-year project beginning in fiscal year 2016.

2015 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Empowered Citizens Improve 5 Urban Forests: Statewide Model

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years (July 2015-June 2018)

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: All personnel at 70% salary/30% benefits for 3 years	\$ -
MPCA Project Manager: State Program Administrator/Senior; .5 FTE	120,900
U of MN Extension, Dept of Forest Resources Volunteer Coordinator: .75 FTE	157,500
U of MN Extension, Dept of Forest Resources Trainer: .2 FTE	42,000
U of MN Extension, Dept of Forest Resources Professor/Technical Consultant: .1 FTE	30,000
Tree Trust, Volunteer Coordinator (Recruitment, Field Supervision): .75 FTE	157,500
Conservation Corps of Minnesota/Iowa Volunteer Supervisor: .5 FTE	84,375
Conservation Corps of Minnesota/Iowa AmeriCorps Members: 1.5 FTE	117,567
Contracts:	\$ -
Hands On Twin Cities: Citizen volunteer recruitment, volunteer management consulting	15,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ -
10 Ipads @ \$400 each, 5 tree inventory software licenses @ \$1000 each	9,000
Planting & pruning tools (i.e. shovels, hoes, garden hoses, trimming saws) (\$1500 x 5 cities)	7,500
Bare root trees (1500 trees x \$60 each)	\$ 90,000
Additional Budget Items:	
Volunteer management software (additional capacity for existing product utilized by MPCA)	\$ 4,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 835,342

V. OTHER FUNDS *(This entire section must be filled out. Do not delete rows. Indicate "N/A" if row is not applicable.)*

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:	N/A	N/A
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:	N/A	N/A
GreenCorps AmeriCorps Member; \$26,126/year for 3 years	\$ 78,378	pending
Mileage (@ IRS rate) \$6000/year for 3 years	\$ 18,000	pending
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: <i>Project Partners contribute 25%</i>	N/A	N/A
10,000 Citizen Volunteer Hours @ \$20/hour (average value of volunteer hour/Independent Sector)	\$ 200,000	pending
MPCA State Program Administrator/Senior; .5 FTE	\$ 120,900	pending
U of MN Department of Forest Resources: Staff & Travel	\$ 57,375	pending
Tree Trust: Staff & Travel	\$ 39,375	secured
Conservation Corps of Minnesota/Iowa: Staff & Travel	\$ 50,485	secured
Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association: Staff & Travel	\$ 3,750	secured
Hands On Twin Cities: Staff & Travel	\$ 3,750	secured
Funding History:	N/A	N/A
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation:	N/A	N/A
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS	\$572,013	

Stress



- Stronger storms
- Frequent drought
- Emerging pests like Emerald Ash Borer
- Salt

Needs

- Planting
- Watering
- Development & pruning
- Disease & pest management
- Identification & inventories



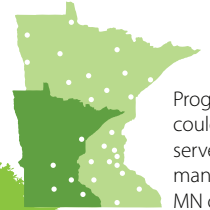
Benefits

- Cleaner air
- Cleaner water
- Cooling shade
- Higher quality of life

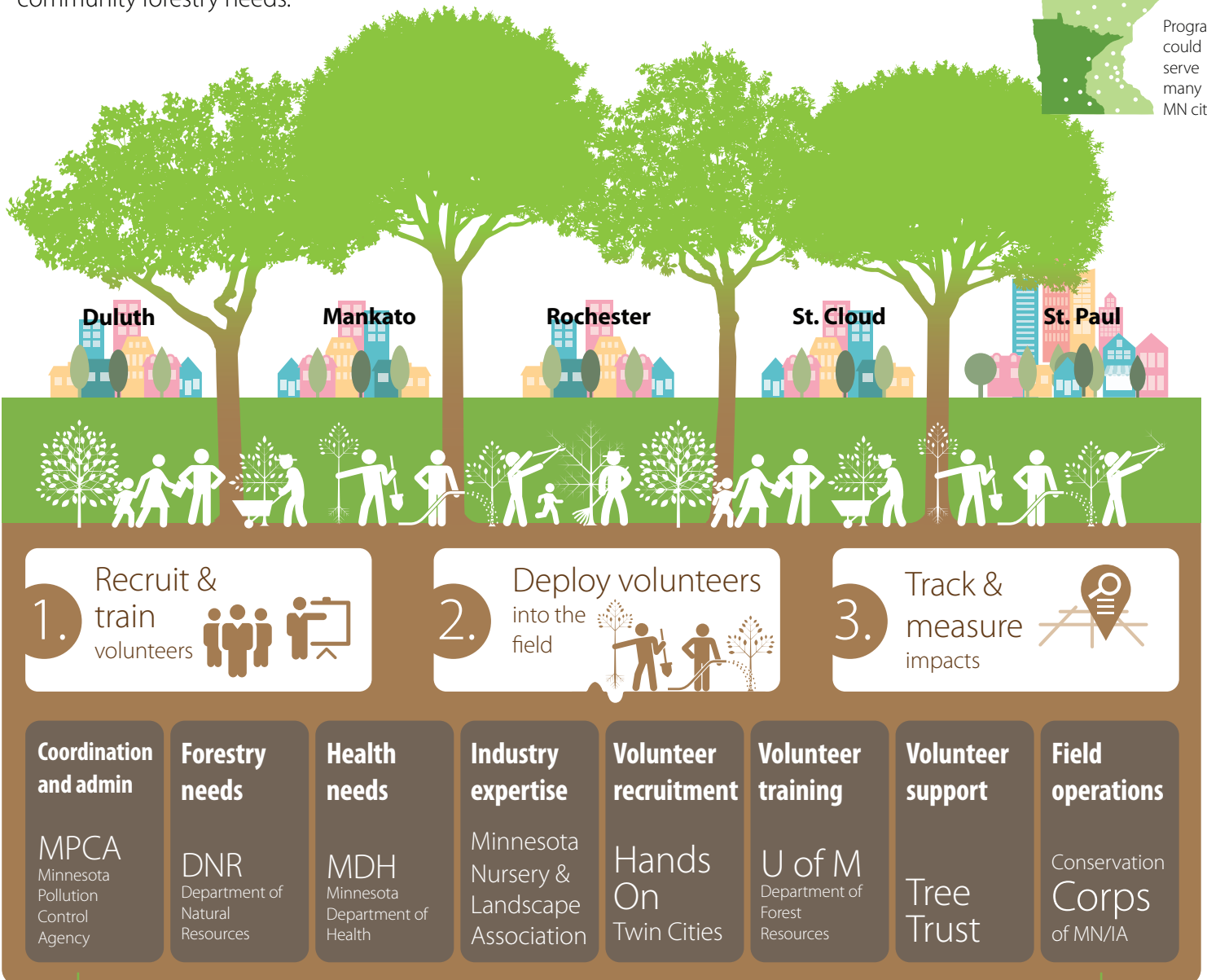


A Model Volunteer Program to Support Community Forestry

Project partners united in a sustainable statewide program mobilizing citizens to meet community forestry needs.



Program could serve many MN cities.



Empowered Citizens Improve 5 Urban Forests: Statewide Model

Project Manager Qualifications

- Proven experience leading program, projects or teams
- Background in volunteer programs, urban forestry, and/or public health issues
- Strong leadership, organizational, research and budgeting skills
- Skilled in establishing measurable outputs, outcomes and milestones
- Working knowledge of the roles, perspectives and interests of partner organizations
- Strong negotiation and collaboration skills, including a willingness to be flexible

Project Manager Responsibilities

- Follow tasks and timelines established in the grant workplan, fulfill staff time commitments, and implement needed procedures for successful implementation
- Prepare reports, summaries, project updates and other documents and materials necessary to implement the grant workplan
- Coordinate project partners to develop and implement the volunteer framework
- Implement procedures to measure project performance and track progress against established measures

Organization Description

Organization	Mission/Organization Description	Proposed LCCMR Role
MPCA -Kevin McDonald -Sarah Rudolf	Protect and improve the environment and enhance human health.	Coordinate partners Program strategy
DNR -Ken Holman	Work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources.	Identify forestry needs, community connections
MDH -Kristin Raab	Protect, maintain and improve the health of all Minnesotans.	Identify health needs & vulnerable populations
UMN Dept of Forest Resources -Gary Johnson -Valerie Price	Advance the science and management of forest and related natural resources, develop the next practitioners and leaders in these areas, and serve the citizens of the state and beyond through broad based outreach.	Training, curriculum, volunteer support
Conservation Corps of MN/IA -Eric Antonson	Provide hands-on environmental stewardship and service-learning opportunities to youth and young adults while accomplishing conservation, natural resource management and emergency response work.	Field operations, volunteer management
Tree Trust -Diana Priesen	Improve the community environment by investing in people.	Recruitment, coordinate volunteer activities
Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Assn. -Tim Power	Minnesota's oldest and largest green industry trade organization.	Connect to local businesses, trade expertise, education/outreach, public awareness
Hands On Twin Cities -Zeeda Magnuson	Promote and facilitate meaningful volunteerism, education and leadership development.	Recruitment, best practices for volunteer management