

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2017 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

---

**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 090-C**

Pollinator and Clean Water Stewardship through Community Engagement

---

**Category:** C. Environmental Education

---

**Total Project Budget:** \$ 252,864

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 3 years, July 2017 - June 2020

**Summary:**

This project will promote native plantings, increase the capacity of businesses to supply relevant material and expertise, and create a map of pollinator-friendly stormwater best management practices to support research.

---

**Name:** John Bly

**Sponsoring Organization:** Metro Blooms

**Address:** PO Box 17099  
Minneapolis MN 55417

**Telephone Number:** (612) 242-8637

**Email** john@metroblooms.org

**Web Address** metroblooms.org

---

**Location**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:**

---

**Alternate Text for Visual:**

There are many barriers keeping people from putting native plants in their yards. This image shows the four we've identified and are focused on (lack of knowledge, lack of motivation, structural barriers and social norms), and the tools we'll provide to help people overcome them (educational resources, public commitments and incentives, guides to how to plant and who can help, and a map of plantings to support the emergence of new social values). The image also shows a map highlighting Minnesota's most impervious catchments—the majority of which are in the greater metro area.

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



I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project will: engage Minnesotans state-wide through our “Pledge to Plant” education and engagement partnership to promote and support the establishment of native ecotype plantings on managed land, increasing its ability to clean and capture runoff and provide critical habitat for pollinators; work with partners in greater Minnesota to increase the capacity of nurseries and contractors to supply ecologically resilient landscaping material and expertise; and to aggregate partner data and information from property owners to create a baseline map of pollinator-friendly stormwater best management practices (BMPs) to support research and analysis.

Research shows stormwater runoff from small, frequent rain events conveys on average 70 percent of our annual pollutant load. The EPA identifies runoff as the leading water quality threat to our urban lakes and streams. Concurrently, pollinators are struggling due to loss of habitat and overuse of pesticides. Preserved prairie and grassland remnants are losing plant diversity and resilience due to climate change, invasive species, and lack of appropriate management. Managed landscapes on public and private properties provide the opportunity for increasing diversity through blooming native patches that connect pollinator corridors while helping to keep water clean by capturing and filtering runoff.

Project funding will support continued development of new partnerships in SE MN in 2017-18, and greater MN from 2018-20. This effort piloted in 2016 with members of SE MN Water Resources Board, who identified that the Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water® partnership provides valuable and unmet need in regional population centers. New online and web-based resources will expand our “Pledge to Plant: 10,000 plantings for 10,000 Lakes” challenge, which aims to shift social norms about what a “good-looking lawn” is and encourage property owners to commit to planting at least some part of their yard with native plants. Funding will also create new traveling exhibits and online trainings, tools and incentives for partners. It will fund contractor trainings and native plant incentive programs to expand the demand for and supply of private expertise in installation, maintenance and supply of native plant and stormwater BMPs.

By 2020, this project will have developed new native plant capacity and resources, inspired new plantings and mapped 10,000 native plantings—making progress in protecting Minnesota’s 10,000 lakes and our pollinators. Project funding will support final launch of a new mobile application- in development since 2012- to compile geolocation codes and baseline data of managed native plantings, demonstrate impact and share information with partners, the public, and policymakers about existing plantings, opportunities for new corridor connections, and cost effectiveness of installed practices.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Regional Partner Approach

Budget: \$112,970

Expansion of the Blue Thumb partnership resources throughout Minnesota with incentive programs, trainings, and online sharing of resources through its “one-stop-shop.” Budget is also allocated for project coordination.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Expanded statewide Blue Thumb public and private partnership (50+ new partners)	Jun 2020
2. Partner resources and tools, trainings, downloadable and print educational tools.	Dec 2018
3. Analysis and utilization reports.	Jun 2020

Activity 2: Property Owner Approach

Budget: \$104,944

Roll-out of the Pledge to Plant education and engagement approach to inspire new pledges, incentive programs, and to track and analyze follow through to installation.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Pledges and planting data records (10,000+)	Jun 2020
2. Property owner resources, educational tools, social prompts and incentives	Dec 2017
3. Year-end participation records.	Jun 2020



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

**2017 Main Proposal**

**Project Title:** Pollinator and Clean Water Stewardship through Citizen Engagement

4. Analysis and utilization reports.	Jun 2020
--------------------------------------	----------

**Activity 3:** Data Collection, Compilation and Analysis

**Budget: \$34,950**

Data collection of new pledges, tracking of follow-through, and compilation of existing partner data of installed practices. It also includes a launch of mobile application to track new plantings, including geo-location codes and upload of images, and development of a new database architecture to support research and information needs of multiple partners.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Public launch of GIS-based mobile application	Aug 2017
3. Compile GIS data and map new and existing native plantings	Jun 2020
3. Analysis and Reporting.	Jun 2020

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

The Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water program is an award-winning brand and partnership of nearly 40 governmental units, private landscape contractors, and native nurseries that gather for quarterly meetings and relevant trainings. Blue Thumb promotes raingardens and native and shoreline plantings. Blue Thumb was created by the Rice Creek Watershed District, and is now licensed to and managed by Metro Blooms. Bluethumb.org offers a one-stop-shop with connections to technical assistance, cost share programs, and sharing of information and resources for Minnesota native plants and clean water plantings. The project will be managed by Metro Blooms staff. Other project partners include West Metro Water Alliance, Monarch Joint Venture, Wild Ones Minnesota, and Pollinator Pathways. New pledges will become part of the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge. Partners have experience with workshops, educating and inspiring thousands of property owners each year to plant natives, providing financial incentives, technical assistance, and in tracking new and existing plantings. This project will analyze and report on the approach and its impact to support new private enterprise, and to inform policy makers planning pollinator corridors and watershed management organizations to estimating reduced phosphorus loads for their reporting, and estimate the cost effectiveness of different approaches.

**B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy**

This project addresses the lack resources in Greater Minnesota dedicated to education and engagement in urban areas, and private local resources to supply native plants and expertise to install stormwater practices. By addressing the lack of local resources through statewide deployment of the Blue Thumb shared resources, spurring demand for native plant and stormwater resources, as well as collecting and compiling data, tools, shared resources, and incentives this project is a cost effective and proven successful approach to support private and public partners to make a difference that extends beyond our project term.

**C. Timeline Requirements**

To reach our goal of encouraging and mapping 10,000 native plantings this project will take 36 months to complete.

**2017 Detailed Project Budget**

**Project Title: Pledge to Plant for Pollinators and Clean Wa**

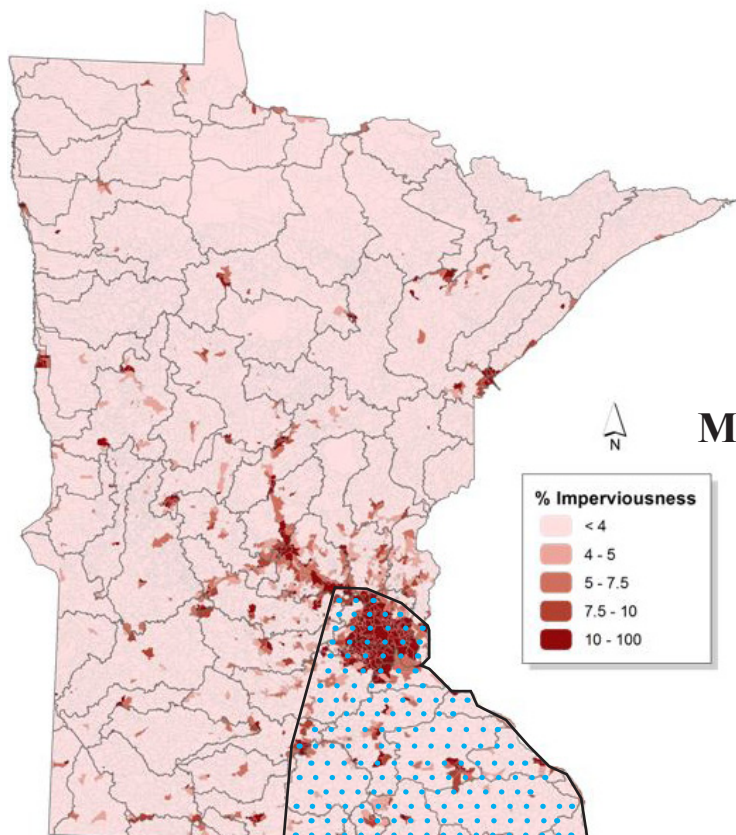
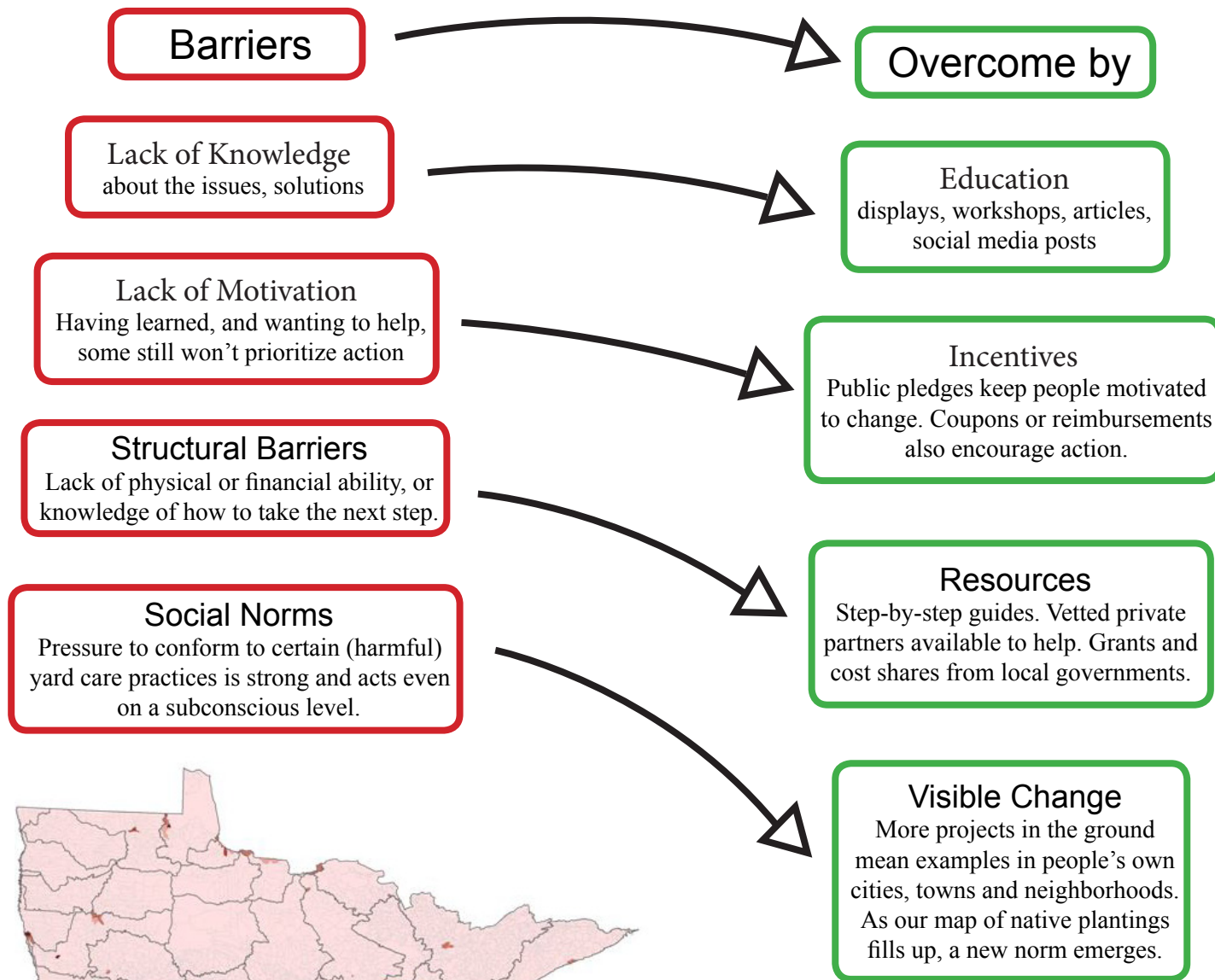
**IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET [3] years**

<b>BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses", p. 1:</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Project Management: .8 FTE (John Bly) for 3 years (salary 88% + benefits 12%)	\$ 99,840
Communications & Technology Specialist (1 staff) 0.25 FTE for 3 years (salary 88% + benefits 12%)	\$ 34,944
Server Administration and Management: Greg Silverman (144 hrs @ \$150/hr.)	\$ 21,600
Data conversion: Paul Stroot (10 hrs @ \$85/hour)	\$ 850
Facilitation, research and reporting, data review, project consultation: University of MN, St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (120 hours @ \$50/hour)	\$ 6,000
Website, landing page and online tools consultant: Haberman (100 hours @ \$250/hour)	\$ 25,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: In this column, list out general descriptions of item(s) or item type(s) and their purpose - one row per item/item type.	\$ -
Educational materials, shared traveling exhibits (4 regional education/exhibit shared resources @ \$2,000/pkg)	\$ 8,000
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): In this column, indicate proposed number of acres and name of organization or entity who will hold title.	\$ -
Travel: Be specific. Generally, only in-state travel essential to completing project activities can be included.	\$ -
Travel for partner engagement, expos and exhibits, etc. 2,000 mi @ \$.54/mil plus 15 overnight accommodation and meals @ \$150/night Registration Fees: 1 @ 800, 4 @ 250	\$ 5,130
Additional Budget Items:	\$ -
Domain and data servers with encryption and developer license fees.	\$ 1,500
Native Plant Incentive Programs (e.g., \$50 reimbursement for 1st 1,000 plantings)	\$ 50,000
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 252,864</b>

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

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: McKnight: \$7,500 (1/2) 2017 secured, Hennepin County: \$20,000.</b>	\$ 27,500	Secured (\$7,500), Pending (\$20,000)
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: N/A</b>	\$ -	N/A
<b>In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: GreenCorps Member \$4,000, (.35 FTE), Dan Shaw (BWSR), advisor \$2,000 (.02 FTE).</b>	\$ 4,000	Pending (\$4,000), Secured (\$2,000)
<b>Funding History: McKnight: \$22,500, 2016 - (1/2) 2017), WMWA (\$12,000)</b>	\$ 34,500	Secured
<b>Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b>	\$ -	N/A

Based on McKenzie-Mohr’s *Fostering Sustainable Behavior* and the MPCA’s “The Psychology of Sustainable Behavior,” the Pledge to Plant project incorporates research performed by Metro Blooms to identify common barriers to installing native plants, and meets people where they are.



### Minnesota’s Impervious Catchments

The blue dots cover the area to be targeted in the first year. Lessons learned will then be applied to the project as it expands across the state.

## **Organizational Capacity**

Metro Blooms is the operator of the Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water partnership under a two year license agreement with the Rice Creek Watershed District. Blue Thumb is an award winning public private partnership of 40+ local water governing bodies, private landscape contractors and native plant nurseries who share resources to promote planting for clean water.

Metro Blooms (MB) engages neighborhoods in gardening that beautifies the community and helps to heal and protect the environment. MB has a strong history of implementing successful citizen-based education and engagement projects to encourage property owners to take action on their own property to improve water quality. MB provides hands on training in the planning and installation of raingardens, engaging neighborhoods in community efforts to educate citizens and install raingardens to improve water quality in local lakes and streams.

MB has worked with project partners and led 25 neighborhood-scale projects to engage residents to install over 500 stormwater BMPs, including raingardens, permeable pavement, trench drains, and native plantings. Our past projects of this scale include the MN Environmental Trust Fund-supported Powderhorn Lake Neighborhood of Raingardens (2009-2012) where 130 raingardens were installed on mostly residential properties in the Central and Powderhorn neighborhoods of Minneapolis. An ongoing project of similar scale includes the Clean Water Fund-supported project Lake Nokomis Neighbors for Clean Water. This project targets alleyway runoff through source control by working with blocks of residents to implement stormwater BMPs adjacent to alleys. The project is focused on community engagement to change social norms and strengthen social fabric. These community-based projects have been successful due to their focus on citizen education and engagement through community leadership.

We maintain large raingarden basins at 15 Minneapolis Public School sites and provide science based, classroom education on principles of stormwater management, soil, flow of water on the landscape native plants to 4th - 6th grade students through our Blooming Schoolyards program.

Much of our success is due to a strong local reputation from more than 30 years recognizing gardeners who beautify our city and help to restore the environment, and more recently through our education programs, neighborhood scale projects, and raingarden maintenance. We rely on strong and enduring partnerships with local units of government, the Conservation Corps of Minnesota, Hennepin County Master Gardeners, MN GreenCorps, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minneapolis Public Schools, and neighborhood partners who have worked with us year after year to educate and engage their residents to install stormwater BMPs.

## **Project Manager Qualifications**

John Bly, Green Infrastructure and Education Specialist, is a Minnesota GreenCorps member serving at Metro Blooms. John graduated from American University with majors in Environmental Studies, Philosophy and International Studies. He began working with Metro Blooms in 2015, bringing two years of editing and publishing experience, and two more in education. John has been instrumental in the development and launch of both MB's and Blue Thumb's new websites, and is in the midst of a qualitative analysis to find if and how MB can improve its citizen-engagement techniques. He is also the lead educator of Blooming Schoolyards. He work with other Metro Blooms staff and current project partners to accomplish project goals.