

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2018 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 215-G

Prioritize and Target North-Central Minnesota Lakes for Protection

Category: G. Land Acquisition, Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ 1,492,500

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3.5 years, July 2018 to December 2021

Summary:

This project will complete 18 permanent conservation easements, 30 forest management plans, and 20 best management practices (BMP) around Aitkin and Crow Wing Counties highest quality lakes.

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Sponsoring Organization: Crow Wing SWCD

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Location

Region: Central

County Name: Aitkin, Crow Wing

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Crow Wing and Aitkin Counties High Priority Maps and Watersheds

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



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2018 Main Proposal

Project Title: Prioritize and Target north-central Minnesota Lakes for Protection

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I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The main goal of this project is to increase watersheds protection to 75 percent around 25 at risk lakes. To do this, the Aitkin and Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) will complete:

- 18 permanent conservation easements
- 30 forest management plans
- 20 best management practices (BMP)

Aitkin and Crow Wing Counties contain 880 high-quality lakes, 170 miles of the Mississippi River, public land, over 24 percent private forest land, and countless recreational opportunities. These private lands are threatened by: forest fragmentation, first and second tier development, damaged aquatic habitat, and increasing housing and roads. The MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fisheries has identified a strong correlation between lake water quality that sustains fish populations and maintaining 75 % forest cover in a specific watershed.

We have identified 25 lakes out of 880 lakes that have state wide importance for aquatic and terrestrial habitat, are sensitive to phosphorous, have less than 75 percent of the watershed is protected, and support cold water fisheries. We will focus on the following Minor Watersheds (Hydrologic Unit Code 14 subwatersheds): Round-Big Pine, Dam-Long, Round, Waukenabo-Round, Spirit-Farm Island, Minnewawa, Cedar, Rat-Flowage, Hill Lake, Camp-Smith, Borden, Ruth, Serpent, North Long-Round, Mitchell, Cullen Chain, and Bay to implement private forest management plans to enroll into Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA), complete BMPs, and permanent conservation easements on private lands. Prior to implementation, the Crow Wing SWCD will hire a consultant to complete a conservation atlas for each lake. This will consist of identified aquatic and woodland habitat parcels, Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and SFIA price estimates, and targeted landowner parcel lists. The SWCDs will coordinate this project with a consultant, the Board of Soil and Water Resource (BWSR) RIM Staff, private forest plan writers, and private and public land owners. This project will be successful because of the prioritization process, staff experience and knowledge, and relationships with private landowners.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Hire consultant and complete 17 HUC 14 Atlases.

Budget: \$40,000

The consultant will run water quality models and data analysis on the HUC 14 watersheds to determine best locations for conservation easements, forest stewardship plans, and BMPs. The consultant will also estimate prices for SFIA and RIM and create a parcel targeted list of landowners.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. The Crow Wing SWCD will solicit quotes to a minimum of three consultants.	2018-2019
2. The Crow Wing SWCD hire a consultant.	2018-2019
3. The consultant will complete 17 HUC 14 Atlases.	2018-2019

Activity 2: Advertise and recruit landowners to enroll into conservation programs.

Budget: \$20,000

The SWCDs will complete targeted outreach for forest management plans, conservation easements, and BMPs. This will include letters, phone calls, radio, social media, and press releases. The Aitkin and Crow Wing SWCDs will work with lake associations, environmental groups, and involved citizens to send direct mail, public meetings, and other forms of communication to reach landowners.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Send direct mailing to high priority parcel list to an estimated 50 landowners.	2019-2021
2. Attend an estimated 10 meetings to discuss the program.	2019-2021

Activity 2: Complete 30 targeted Private Forest Management Plans.

Budget: \$32,500



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Outcome	Completion Date
The SWCDs will coordinate with private foresters to write forest stewardship plans and enroll landowners to into the SFIA program. The SWCDs will follow MN DNR requirements for forest management plans. All plans will be registered with the MN DNR.	
1. Write Private Forest Stewardship Plans (15) by Crow Wing and Aitkin SWCD Staff (MN DNR Certified)	2019-2021
2. Write Private Forest Stewardship Plans (15) by private foresters (MN DNR Certified)	2019-2021

Activity 3: Implement an estimated 20 BMPs.

Budget: \$100,000

The Aitkin and Crow Wing SWCDs will work with targeted landowners to install BMPs that filter runoff and manage woodlands for water quality. We will follow BWSR State Cost-Share Policies for BMPs which includes a 10 year contract, site inspection, practice standards, plans, cost estimates, and SWCD Board approval.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Install 8 riparian buffer projects. (i.e. shoreline buffers, native planting, and erosion)	2019-2021
2. Complete 12 forest management projects. (i.e. planting, thinning, and pollinator habitat)	2019-2021

Activity 4: Complete an estimated 18 RIM Conservation Easements.

Budget: \$1,300,000

Landowners will agree to put their land in a perpetual easement that restricts the development of that property. In return the landowner will be paid 60 percent of the county assessed land value of the property (excluding buildings). We will utilize an easement scoring sheet to rank all conservation easements. A technical review team will review and rank all conservation easements prior to submittal to BWSR. The SWCD staff will work with BWSR staff to complete legal documents and record easements on the deed. The BWSR will hold the easements through the RIM Program. The SWCDs will monitor completed easements each year according to BWSR RIM Policy.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Permanently protect an estimated 540 acres.	2019-2021

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Crow Wing SWCD, Aitkin SWCD, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and MN DNR Forestry.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

The MN DNR Fisheries research indicates that lakes that have less than 75 percent of the land protected will not be able sustain long term cold water fisheries. Currently, 40 percent of all streams and lakes in Minnesota no longer meet state standards for conventional pollutants (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency). This project will have a direct impact on keeping 25 lakes off the state impairment list. This project will also help sustain the long term cold water fisheries. This project will also influence the one million Minnesotans' who receive drinking water from the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed was ranked 5th out of 81 major watersheds for its importance of private forests to provide clean drinking water to downstream users (US Forest Service). These private forest and riparian lands are the cornerstone of the local economy generating over \$225 million in sales tax revenues (Explore Tourism Minnesota 2015). A Bemidji State University study, determined that there is a direct correlation between property values and water clarity. A one meter increase in water clarity will increase property by \$ 50 a frontage foot. A greater loss will occur with a decrease in water clarity. The local property tax is base for schools and local governments. This project will have a direct effect on property values and maintaining the local tax base for future generations.

C. Timeline Requirements

This project will follow a three year timeline.

2018 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Prioritize and Target north-central Minnesota Lakes for Protection

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET: 3 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel:	\$ 201,300
BWSR Program Management (60% Salary, 40% benefits) 0.13FTE/yr. for 3 years	
BWSR Easement Processing Staff (60% Salary, 40% benefits) 0.25FTE/yr. for 3 years	
BWSR Direct Support Services (60% Salary, 40% benefits) 0.04FTE/yr. for 3 years	
Personnel District Manager: SWCD (25% EFT* 1 position (80% salary % 20% benefits)* 3 yrs. [Targeted outreach, complete semi-annual reports, hire consultant, and project management.] Funding for this position is not provided by county or other state funds.	
Personnel District Technician: SWCD (35 % EFT*1 position (80% salary & 20 % benefits) *2 yrs. [Write private forest stewardship plans and assist and inspect practices erosion restoration, forest restoration, invasive species mitigation.] Funding for this position is not provided by county or state funds. Payment for technician to write plans is \$ 200 plus 6.50 an acre (based off DNR payment schedule).	
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$ 157,800
Easement Implementation: Follows BWSR RIM Policy to pay SWCD staff to complete: required title work, application materials, easement documents, landowner communication, legal documents, and recording of final easement (Payment Rate is \$ 2,000 per easement)	
The SWCD will have a contract with a engineer water quality firm to run water quality water model and develop targeted parcel list. Follow state process for contracts and BIDs.	
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: The SWCDs will provide grant funds [Riparian Buffer Erosion (8) and forest management (12), projects. Subcontract amounts will be determined after parcel list is completed. Each SWCD will than subcontract with landowners to complete BMPs. Funds will be paid to landowners after projects are completed follow BWSR State Cost-Share Policies. Estimated prices are based off local Natural Resource Conservation Service EQUIP Payment rates.	
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ 4,300
Miscellaneous Equipment	
Miscellaneous Supplies	
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):	
Estimated 18 easements, totaling approximately 540 acres to be held by BWSR	\$ 1,009,800
Travel:	\$ 2,300
In-state travel, mileage, lodging and meals	
Additional Budget Items:	\$ 117,000
Easement Stewardship: Estimated at \$ 6,500 per easement for annual monitoring, BWSR oversight, and enforcement.	
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 1,492,500

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: US Forest Service Grant	\$ 50,000	Secured
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: TSA Area VIII Funds	\$ 50,000	Secured
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:	\$ 10,000	Secured
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation: Forest Management for Mississippi River Drinking Water Protection (M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 08f).	\$300,000	Ongoing
Other Funding History:	N/A	N/A

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2018 Proposed Acquisition/Restoration List

Project Title: Prioritize and Target north-central Minnesota Lakes for Protection

Project Manager Name: Melissa Barrick

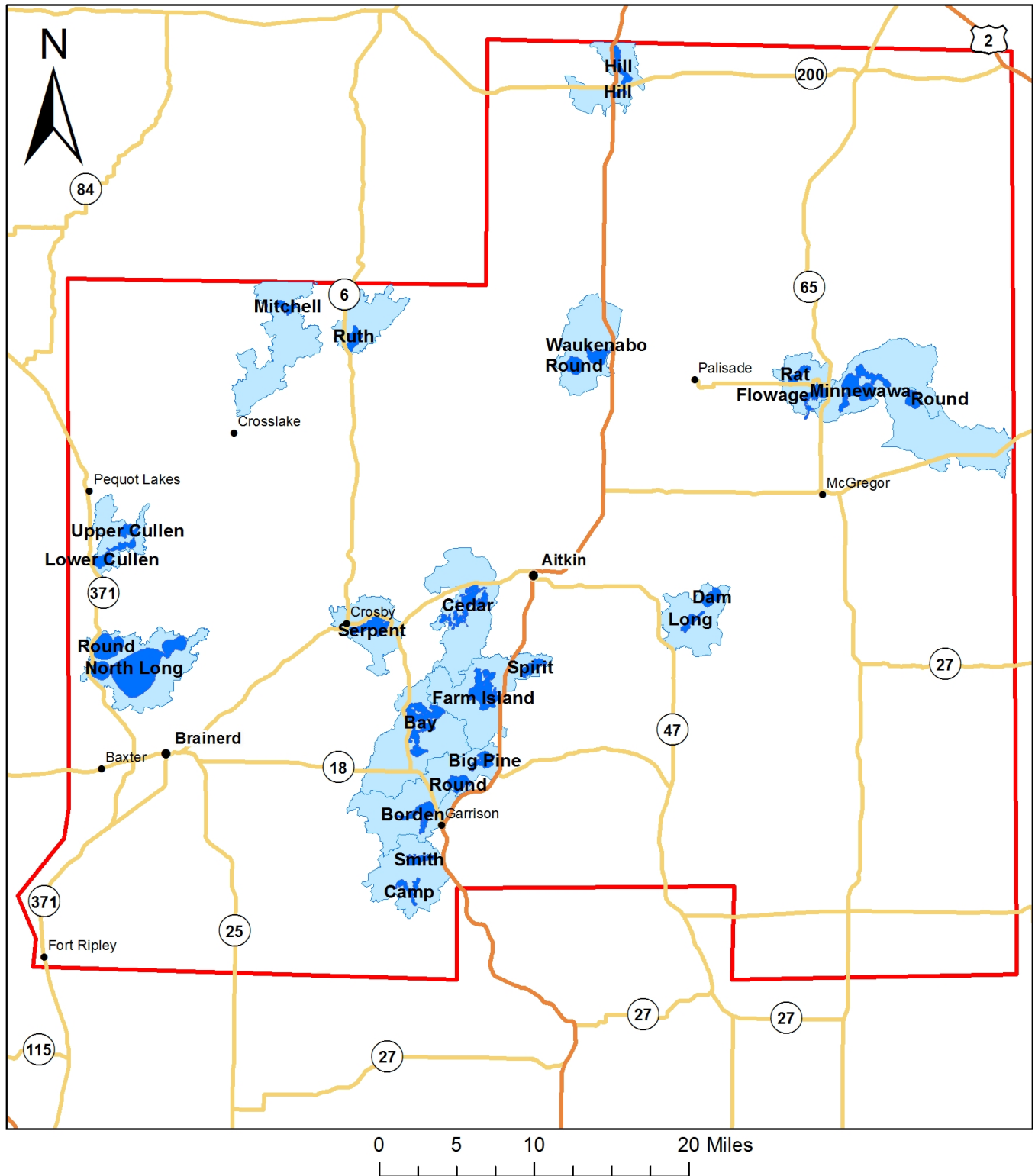
Organization: Crow Wing SWCD

ENRTF \$ Request: \$ 1,492,500

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates		Estimated Cost	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)
		Latitude	Longitude								
1	Round-Big Pine Minor Watershed HUC 14				Aitkin-Crow Wing	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
2	Dam-Long Minor Watershed HUC 14				Aitkin	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
3	Round Lake Minor Watershed HUC 14				Aitkin	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity, declining water quality trend	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
4	Waukenabo-Round Minor Watershed HUC 14				Aitkin	MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity, declining water quality trend	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
5	Spirit-Farm Island Minor Watershed HUC 14				Aitkin-Crow Wing	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
6	Minnewawa Minor Watershed HUC 14				Crow Wing	MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity, declining water quality trend	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
7	Cedar Minor Watershed HUC 14				Aitkin-Crow Wing	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
8	Rat-Flowage Minor Watershed HUC 14				Aitkin	MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
9	Hill Lake Minor Watershed HUC 14				Crow Wing	MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
10	Camp-Smith Minor Watershed HUC 14				Crow Wing	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity, declining water quality trend	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
11	Borden Minor Watershed HUC 14				Crow Wing	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity,	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
12	Serpent Minor Watershed				Crow Wing	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity, declining water quality trend	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
13	Mitchell Minor Watershed				Crow Wing	MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity, declining water quality trend	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
14	Ruth Minor Watershed HUC 14				Crow Wing	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
15	North Long-Round Minor Watershed HUC 14				Crow Wing	MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity, declining water quality trend	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
16	Cullen Chain Minor Watershed HUC 14				Crow Wing	MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity, declining water quality trend	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM
17	Bay Minor Watershed HUC 14				Crow Wing	Tullibee Lake, MCBS Terrestrial Biodiversity,	conservation easement			Private	BWSR-RIM

NOTES:

Crow Wing and Aitkin Counties High Priority Lakes and Watersheds



Legend

- High Priority Lakes
- HUC 14 Watersheds
- Aitkin and Crow Wing County

Created By: Nicholas Johnson
Crow Wing SWCD
15 May, 2017

07/29/2017



The mission of the Crow Wing and Aitkin Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are to assist public and private landowners in soil and water land management. This project will be successful because of the SWCD staff experience, expertise, ability to garner community support, engage citizens and nonprofit groups, build partnerships, and work with private landowners. The SWCD staff have over 30 years of experience working with conservation programs in Minnesota. Since 2010, Crow Wing SWCD has leveraged over three million dollars in grants to complete best management practices and improve water quality of the Brainerd Lakes Area. Since 2008, the Crow Wing and Aitkin SWCDs have been leaders in lake protection activities and prioritization process. Both SWCDs have well trained staff with the expertise to carry out the grant activities which includes: Reinvest in Minnesota Easement processing and forest plan writing.

