

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2020 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 166-DH

St. Croix Terrestrial Invasive Species Awareness, Prevention, and Control

Category: H. Proposals seeking \$200,000 or less in funding

Sub-Category: D. Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species

Total Project Budget: \$ 191,940

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: June 30, 2023 (3 yrs)

Summary:

St. Croix Terrestrial Invasive Species Awareness, Prevention, and Control will engage, educate, and empower key stakeholders to protect biodiversity and native ecosystems against the adverse impacts of terrestrial -invasive species.

Name: Katie Sickmann

Sponsoring Organization: St. Croix River Association

Job Title: Invasive Species Coordinator

Department:

Address: PO Box 655

St. Croix Falls WI 54024

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Web Address: www.stcroixriverassociation.org

Location:

Region: Central, Northeast

County Name: Carlton, Chisago, Kanabec, Pine, Washington

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

This map depicts priority work areas and recorded locations of TIS categorized by the MN Department of Agriculture, along with new "species of special interest" within the St. Croix watershed.

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



PROJECT TITLE: *St. Croix Terrestrial Invasive Species Awareness, Prevention, and Control*

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project will prevent the introduction and reduce the spread of terrestrial invasive species (TIS) that threaten ecological, economic, and recreational integrity of the St. Croix River watershed. The St. Croix River Association will coordinate a comprehensive approach to long-term regional TIS management across Washington, Chisago, Pine, Kanabec and Carlton counties. We will engage, educate, and empower professionals and private landowners to take action against the devastating effects caused by TIS such as riparian erosion; loss of native habitat, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity; diminished value of public and private lands; and degraded working lands.

By establishing a regional partnership of stakeholders among watershed counties, this project will build regional capacity, capitalize on available resources, and facilitate cross-county communication for collaboration and prioritization. We will educate private landowners and other key stakeholders to raise awareness of the threats and impacts of TIS while addressing alternative control techniques. We will also expand the resources, services and methods available to private landowners and increase local professional capacity for TIS management and restoration, enabling and empowering landowners to take action on their properties.

The native ecosystems of the St. Croix watershed remain largely intact, but are under increasing threat from TIS encroaching from more developed areas and spreading along the Riverway and its tributaries. High rates of private landownership, various pathways of introduction, inconsistent local capacity, and limited landscape-level coordination further intensify this threat. Regional coordination efforts have proven successful models for controlling TIS at a landscape-scale, but are absent within Minnesota's St. Croix basin. The St. Croix River Association is uniquely posed to fill this gap and coordinate TIS management across county boundaries, filling a much-needed niche for TIS engagement, education, and assistance for private landowners.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: *Minnesota St. Croix River Watershed Partner Coordination*

Budget: \$36,000

The St. Croix River Association will establish and facilitate a coordinated effort by key stakeholders, including local, regional, and state agencies and nonprofit organizations, to address regional TIS. This team will collaborate on TIS planning, outreach, and control prioritization to maximize TIS awareness, prevention, and management. Annual reports will share changes in invasive species distributions, identify opportunities for growth and increased capacity, and summarize outreach activities, upcoming events, and other accomplishments.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Recruit local, regional, and state stakeholders for coordinated TIS planning, prioritization and management efforts	6/30/2021
2. Facilitate quarterly partner meetings to share information regarding emerging TIS threats, available resources, education opportunities and management efforts	12/31/2023
3. Create and disseminate information on progress and outcomes (ie. Annual Reports)	12/31/2023

Activity 2: *Targeted Outreach and Education*

Budget: \$76,800

The St. Croix River Association will educate landowners about the threats of TIS and provide resources to enable them to take management action. Outreach efforts will include targeted campaigns to prioritized landowners,



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2020 Main Proposal Template

Project Title: St. Croix Terrestrial Invasive Species Awareness, Prevention, and Control

educational workshops, and field trainings. These efforts will result in increased TIS awareness, detection, prevention, and control activities by landowners in priority areas across the watershed.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Develop and distribute targeted outreach campaigns focused on the identification and impacts of priority species; provide available resources to up to 3,000 landowners.	11/30/2022
2. Host at least three regional workshops to educate landowners and key stakeholders on identification, impacts, management alternatives and restoration for priority species	9/30/2023
3. Host at least three field trainings to educate landowners and stakeholders about TIS obligations, impacts, identification, management and restoration.	10/30/2023

Activity 3: Increase Resources for Terrestrial Invasive Species Management by Private Landowners

Budget: \$79,140

The St. Croix River Association will build professional capacities to assist with TIS management and increase the TIS resources available to landowners. By collaborating with agency partners to train local professionals to integrate invasive species considerations into existing land and conservation planning tools, we will increase the management options and resources available to landowners. Where existing planning mechanisms are not available to prioritized landowners, SCRA will offer TIS assessments to help landowners identify present TIS, weigh management options and plan for restoration activities. This work will identify existing gaps in landowner services and help generate long-term solutions and models for landowner assistance.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Host at least two continuing education workshops to teach local professionals and stakeholders about landowners about TIS obligations and significance is created	04/30/2021
2. Connect at least 100 landowners to local TIS-trained professionals for plans or projects with TIS considerations	11/30/2022
3. Deliver at least 30 TIS assessments to prioritized landowners, outlining present TIS, management recommendations, and available resources and professional contacts	11/30/2023
4. Facilitate implementation of at least 10 TIS assessments by prioritized landowners	9/30/2023

III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:

Project Partner Receiving Funds: The St. Croix River Association

Project Partners/Collaborators Not Receiving Funds (All will provide technical support and implement strategies):

- National Park Service at the St. Croix National Science Riverway
- Washington County Conservation District
- Additional local, state, and federal agency, nonprofit organization, and other partners will be sought

IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

In the long term, this St. Croix terrestrial invasive species program will protect, improve, and restore native ecosystems and biodiversity in the St. Croix River watershed. By developing a lasting community awareness, adopting innovative management approaches, and increasing regional capacity for TIS prevention and control, we can empower both key stakeholders and landowners to take action in the long-term protection of public and private lands. These efforts will all either integrate into existing funded programs, or aim to establish community commitment to ensure longevity beyond the funding period. This project has potential to be highly visible to the public, and if successful, could be duplicated in other Minnesota landscapes.

Attachment A: Project Budget Spreadsheet
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
 M.L. 2020 Budget Spreadsheet

Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Katie Sickmann

Project Title: St. Croix Terrestrial Invasive Species Awareness, Prevention, and Control

Organization: St. Croix River Association

Project Budget: \$191,940

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 year; July 1, 2023

Today's Date: April 15, 2019



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET		Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)		\$ 178,680	\$ -	
<i>Program Coordinator, \$135,000 (75% Salary, 25% Benefits), 0.75 FTE each year for 3 years</i>				
<i>Program Assistant, \$43,680 (75% Salary, 25% Benefits), 0.35 FTE for each year for 3 years</i>				
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts				
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment/Tools/Supplies		\$ 3,200		
<i>Workshop expenses such as space rental, program materials, etc. \$400/workshop</i>			\$ -	\$ -
Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000				
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Fee Title Acquisition				
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Easement Acquisition				
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Professional Services for Acquisition				
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Printing		\$ 8,500		
<i>Printing and distribution costs of outreach materials (6000 newsletters and postcards)</i>			\$ -	\$ -
Travel expenses in Minnesota		\$ 1,560		
<i>Mileage within Minnesota: Travel to/from 12 partner meetings and 30 site visits, apx. 2,700 miles total</i>			\$ -	\$ -
Other				
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
COLUMN TOTAL		\$ 191,940	\$ -	\$ -
SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State:		\$ 69,215	\$ -	\$ 69,215
Wisconsin DNR Weed Management Area Program Funding: Supports coordination of five-county Weed Management Area in WI watershed basin (WI only)	Pending	\$ 30,000		
MN Counties (Washington, Pine, Chisago) Funding: Supports coordinator time to assist with invasive species management, and education and outreach when needed (MN only)	Secured	\$ 28,795		
US Fish & Wildlife Service's Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Program: Supports on the ground implementation of invasive species education and outreach, monitoring and control across the watershed (MN & WI)	Pending	\$ 37,420		
State:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
In kind:		\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Partner Involvement: Meeting attendance, workshop attendance/assistance, landowner engagement and assistance, control efforts		\$ 10,000		
	Pending			
Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

St. Croix Terrestrial Invasive Species Awareness, Prevention and Control

St. Croix River Association Proposal, FY 2020

This map depicts priority work areas and recorded locations of TIS categorized by the MN Department of Agriculture, along with new invasive “species of special interest” within the St. Croix watershed.

This project prevents the introduction and further spread of priority invasive species to the largely intact native habitats, prime hunting lands, productive forests, National Park, and other public and private lands of the St. Croix.

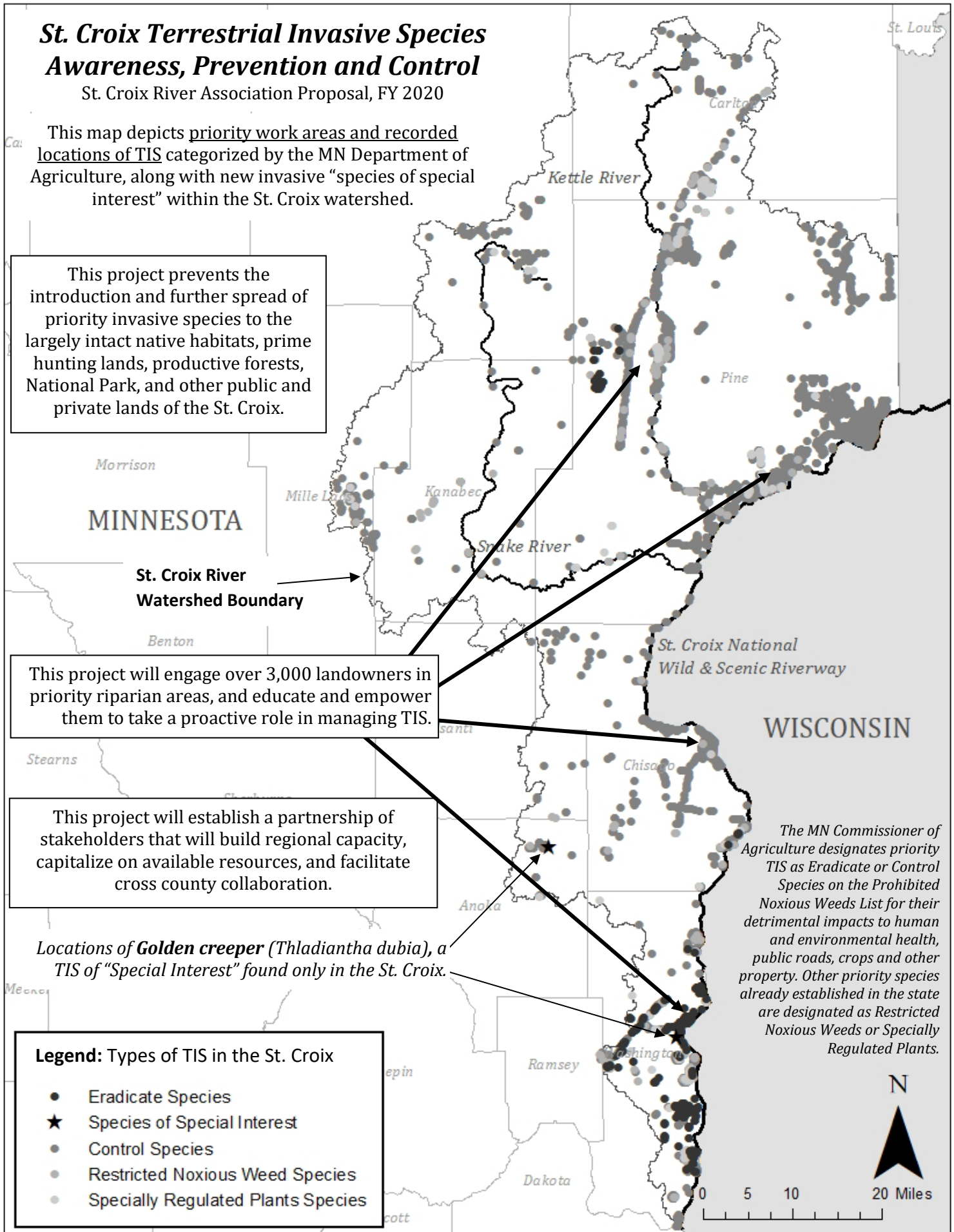
This project will engage over 3,000 landowners in priority riparian areas, and educate and empower them to take a proactive role in managing TIS.

This project will establish a partnership of stakeholders that will build regional capacity, capitalize on available resources, and facilitate cross county collaboration.

Locations of **Golden creeper** (*Thladiantha dubia*), a TIS of “Special Interest” found only in the St. Croix.

Legend: Types of TIS in the St. Croix

- Eradicate Species
- ★ Species of Special Interest
- Control Species
- Restricted Noxious Weed Species
- Specially Regulated Plants Species



The MN Commissioner of Agriculture designates priority TIS as Eradicate or Control Species on the Prohibited Noxious Weeds List for their detrimental impacts to human and environmental health, public roads, crops and other property. Other priority species already established in the state are designated as Restricted Noxious Weeds or Specially Regulated Plants.

St. Croix Terrestrial Invasive Species Awareness, Prevention, and Control

Project Manager Qualifications

Project Manager. Katie Sickmann, Invasive Species Program Coordinator with the St. Croix River Association (SCRA), will act as project manager. Previous experience and her work to date at SCRA have provided Sickmann with key skills needed for this project, including management and coordination of multi-stakeholder initiatives, relationship building with local stakeholders, development of educational materials for the St. Croix River, and implementation of preventing and controlling the spread of invasive species. Sickmann graduated from University of Wisconsin- River Falls in 2018 with a B.S. in Biology and Field Biology. Prior to joining SCRA, she worked for the Prior Lake- Spring Lake Watershed District where she gained experience with water quality monitoring, invasive species management, education and outreach, and maintaining BMPs and restoration sites. Sickmann joined the St. Croix River Association in 2018 to help landowners, local governments, and key stakeholders do their part to protect and celebrate the St. Croix River and its watershed.

Project Support. Sean Griffin, Invasive Species Program Assistant with the St. Croix River Association: Sean graduated from North Dakota State University with a B.S. in Natural Resource Management with a focus in Biotic Resources in the summer of 2016. Starting with SCRA on May 1st in 2017, Sean has paddled well over 400 miles on the St. Croix and Namekagon rivers monitoring and controlling for invasive species. After holding an internship with the MN DNR working with aquatic invasive species in 2016 and river-filled summers in 2017 and 2018, Sean's attention has expanded to include terrestrial invasive species working with the St. Croix-Red Cedar CWMA and MN Department of Agriculture during the fall and winter.

This project also will benefit from the expertise of partnering staff (non-grant funded, in-kind):

- Deb Ryun, Executive Director of the St. Croix River Association: Ryun has 25 years of experience with management and coordination of multi-stakeholder initiatives; watershed-level planning; and implementation of on-the-ground projects to protect land and water. Deb provides overall leadership for and management of the SCRA.
- Tara Kelly, Landscape Restoration Specialist with the Washington Conservation District (WCD): Kelly provides program management for agricultural, rural and habitat management projects on ecologically-based enhancements of rural Washington County.
- Tara Kline, Natural Resource Specialist with the Washington Conservation District (WCD): Kline supports watersheds with natural resource management and water quality protection through BMP design and education outreach throughout Washington County.

Organization Description

The mission of the St. Croix River Association (SCRA) is to protect, restore and celebrate the St. Croix River and its watershed. Since its inception in circa 1911, the SCRA has been a grassroots, citizen-led effort inseparably linked to the St. Croix River. From early petitions to protect fisheries from over harvesting, to hydroelectric dam operations, to new highway construction, to threats of direct sewage discharge, the idea of protecting the river has remained constant.

SCRA works throughout the watershed to protect the national park that flows through its heart. Our staff along with interns, volunteers and partners, conducts activities to meet these objectives:

- Ensure improved water quality and ecological health through thoughtful and strategic private, local, state, and federal investments.
- Raise awareness and create a shared understanding about the threats, needs, resources and value of the St. Croix River and its watershed.
- Establish and implement common sense policies and communication strategies to advance the protection of the St. Croix.
- Create vibrant natural areas where people of all ages and income levels can access the St. Croix, participate in stewardship programs, and enjoy the health benefits of River time.