**PROJECT TITLE:**

UMD Land Lab Sustainable Food System Project

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

This program will support the UMD Land Lab: a mold-breaking interdisciplinary outreach center that is both an active transitional organic farm and a provider of active-learning environmental and food system programming for school groups, university students and community members from across the state of Minnesota. The UMD Land Lab grows thousands of pounds of produce that is served on the UMD campus and hundreds of college students, elementary school students and community members spend time on the Land lab through classes and internships learning about sustainability, growing organic agriculture, preparing healthy food, and how food production impacts the environment. The goal of the UMD Land Lab is to educate students and community members about the principles of sustainable agriculture and offer active-learning programming about ecosystem preservation, food systems, and how to maintain the ecological health of the environment of Northeast Minnesota.

We achieve this goal through providing internships for student farmers across the region, hosting school groups and engaging community organizations in our established curriculum in environmental education. This project needs to be done because we are the only research and outreach center in Northeast Minnesota that engages students and community members in active-learning based on the unique ecology of Northeast Minnesota. The Land Lab is a space where students and community members engage in active learning based on the unique ecology of Northeast Minnesota. We have ongoing relationships with diverse community organizations that serve marginalized population such as the Intertribal Agriculture Council and CHUM, a Duluth-based provider of transitional housing, homeless services, and food shelves. We also partner with groups such as the Duluth Community Gardening Association, Northeast Beekeepers Association and Extension Education to ensure that we leverage community support in our programming. In a region with high rates of economic inequality and homelessness that is facing climate change, the UMD Land Lab uses the resources of community organizations and the University of Minnesota Duluth to teach participants how we can we ensure that our food system is resilient enough to meet the needs of all community residents.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

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| **Activity 1 Title:** Support for Farming Activities at the UMD Land Lab**Description:**Maintenance of the Land Lab’s capacity to exist as a living classroom where students and community members learn about sustainable agriculture and ecosystem maintenance. The Land Lab consists of ten acres of actively managed transitional organic agricultural fields and a five acre apple orchard. There is also a hoop house to extend the short NE Minnesota growing season, a root cellar, a new wind turbine and a weather station. Sale of produce to UMD Dining Services covers the costs of seeds, fertilizer, and general farm maintenance. The full-time farm manager, program associate, and student farmer positions serve as the platform upon which these other activities flourish. **ENRTF BUDGET: $ 199,860** |  |
| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| UMD Land Lab will continue to function as a demonstration farm during the 2020, 2021 and 2022 growing seasons. Activities include starting seedlings in greenhouse, tilling fields, applying mulch / ground cover, weeding / crop maintenance and harvesting in the fall. | June 2022 |
| Continue to host **Healthy Northland Farm to School**, ISD 709 (Duluth Public School partnership) Farm Field Trip wherein all Duluth 7th graders visit the farm to engage in active-learning activities about sustainability, ecology, and agriculture. | June 2022 |
| Continue to host **Farm Fest Community Engagement Festival**. Annual day-long university/community collaboration open to all where visitors engage in interactive activities around the issues of sustainability, agriculture and food justice.  | June 2022 |
| Continue to provide Student Farmer Internships for 12 student farmers | June 2022 |
| Continue to provide active-learning activities in collaboration with community partners the Intertribal Agriculture Council, UMN Extension, CHUM, Northeast Beekeepers Association, Sustainable Farming Association, UMD Faculty.  | June 2022 |

**III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:**

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**IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

This 2-year proposal is designed to provide sufficient time to maintain farm operations as we develop further funding options. The project proposers are developing stronger relationships with existing partners and conducting research into the efficacy of Land Lab activities in order to develop additional revenue streams. Future funding may be sought from governmental agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), or private foundations such as the Ford Foundation, Duluth-Superior Community Foundation, or Essentia Health Foundation.