



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-022

Proposal Title: Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Forest Restoration and Enhancements

Project Manager Information

Name: Melissa Barrick

Organization: Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This project will build a sustainable inter-agency private and public Camp Ripley landscape forest restoration program which includes:

- Prescribed Fire (750 acres)
- Habitat Restoration (125 acres)
- Forest Management Plans (70)

Funds Requested: \$975,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2024-06-30

LCCMR Funding Category: Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat (F)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Central

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Central

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

This project will mitigate north central Minnesota forest fragmentation, poor interagency planning, inadequate forest management, and fire suppressed habitats for private and public lands within an approximate 10-mile radius around Camp Ripley (805,000 acres). In 2015, this area was federally designated as the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape (CRSL). This area contains 45,000 acres of lakes and streams, 30,825 acres of permanently protected land (Easements and Fee Acquisition), 50 miles of the Mississippi River, 52,000 acres of State Game Refuge, 13 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) Wildlife Management Areas, County, and City Land. Throughout the CRSL, riparian forest areas are threatened by rapid urban and rural development (MN 2010 Census Data). To date, the CRSL partner team has developed relationship with 400 landowners for protection and restoration. However, restoration work funding has been lacking. The CRSL partnership does not have the resources or staff to assist with forest restoration. The CRSL team utilized Landscape Stewardship Plan, State Wildlife Action Plan, county water plan, MN DNR forestry plan, The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Multiple Benefits Analysis, and CRSL Strategic Plan to target restoration projects which will maintain local economy and the Camp Ripley training needs.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

The Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (CW SWCD) will partner with TNC, Great River Greening (GRG), Todd, Morrison, and Cass SWCDs to complete:

- 70 forest stewardships plans (FSPs) and 30 best management practices (BMPs)
- Restore and enhance 125 acres of public land
- Implement prescribed fire on approximately 750 acres of protected forest lands

This Phase II proposal builds off the success of the CRSL protection work and the CW SWCD 2016 Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund grant that completed 70 private FSPs and enrolled private landowners into Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) or county 2c tax programs, and restored forest on private and public lands. This project will utilize an existing landowners list and prioritize public sites. The ranked sites will provide the greatest habitat and clean water values within targeted minor watersheds. The CW SWCD will partner with GRG to restore and enhance 125 acres (two cities, two agencies) of public land. TNC will develop prescribed fire implementation (approximately 750 acres) on fire-dependent systems. The CW SWCD will follow MN DNR requirements for FSPs and Board of Water Soil Resources (BWSR) State Cost-Share Policies for BMPs. This includes contracts, site inspection, plans, cost-estimates, and SWCD Board approval.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

This project will focus on the following outcomes:

1. CW SWCD and private consultants will develop 70 FSPs with private landowners and have landowners enroll into SFIA or county 2c to ensure forest and habitat protection. The landowners will implement 30 BMPs. All projects will have a life span of 10 years.
2. GRG will focus on forest restoration and enhancement of 125-acres of public lands within the project focus area.
3. TNC will develop and implement prescribed fire on approximately 750 fire-dependent forested acres of public and conservation easement lands within the project focus area.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Landowner outreach, private forest management plan writing, and landowner enrollment in forest programs and forest restoration on private lands.

Activity Budget: \$375,000

Activity Description:

CW SWCD or private forest consultants will outreach to prioritized private forest landowners, develop 70 FSPs, 30 BMPs, and enroll landowners in local county 2c or SFIA programs.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
1. Convene and coordinate six partner meetings and three community landowner meetings.	2024-06-30
2. Targeted landowner solicitation, civic engagement, and project management (minimum of 50 landowners).	2024-06-30
3. Write 35 FSPs by CW SWCD and 35 FSPs by private foresters.	2024-06-30
4. Implement 30 BMPs on private lands (riparian buffer, forest management, and invasive species mitigation).	2024-06-30

Activity 2: Restoration/Enhancement on Public Lands including Volunteer Engagement

Activity Budget: \$350,000

Activity Description:

GRG will restore and enhance 0.4 mile of shoreline and 125 acres of forest and other habitat on federal, state, and local government land. Activities include:

- prairie restoration with emphasis on pollinator needs
- thinning of jack pine to convert to a savanna
- planting in forest gaps
- controlling overabundant hazel
- controlling non-native invasive species
- tree planting and forest thinning

A total of 75 volunteers will be engaged in appropriate, impactful, educational, and engaging portions of the work such as seed collection, forb planting, and tree planting.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Participant agreements executed.	2022-02-28
Management plans written.	2022-06-30
Implementation completed.	2024-06-30

Activity 3: Enhancement of public lands and private easements with prescribed fire

Activity Budget: \$250,000

Activity Description:

TNC will focus on increasing fire-dependent native plant communities throughout the forested ecosystems of the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape. TNC will collaborate with local partners and private landowners to determine priority of treatment areas. TNC will conduct prescribed fires in forested communities to help improve understory conditions to

enhance regeneration of desirable species such as oak and pine. On sites where invasive species are present in the understory, TNC crews will use mechanical and chemical treatments to restore site conditions to make fire management effective.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Author ten prescribed fire burn plans and identify scope of work for each site.	2022-06-30
Acquire appropriate equipment, personnel, and supplies to prepare for implementation.	2022-12-31
Implement forest enhancement through prescribed fire and fuels treatments on roughly 750 acres.	2024-06-30

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Wiley Buck	Great River Greening	Activity 2: Sub-award Project Manager	Yes
Matt Graeve	The Nature Conservancy	Activity 3: Sub-award Project Manager	Yes

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

The CRSL partnership will leverage federal, state, local and private funds, and programs. Current pending applications are the following:

- Natural Resource Conservation Service -Regional Conservation Partnership Program for Health Forest Reserve (applied for)
- Readiness Environmental Protection Integration Pilot project, Camp Ripley restoration program and local/private in-kind support (\$300,000).
- US Forest Service restoration and enhancement (\$250,000)

It is critical to leverage state funds in order to draw federal fund support for this large forest management/restoration initiative. The combination of state and federal funds produces measured results for land and water habitat, water quality, and the local economy.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Forest Management for Mississippi River Drinking Water Protection	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 08f	\$300,000
Protecting North-Central Minnesota Lakes	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09h	\$750,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Melissa Barrick

Job Title: District Manager

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

This project will be successful because of the SWCD's staff experience, expertise, and ability to garner community support, engage citizens and nonprofit groups, build partnerships, and work with private landowners. Since 2012, the SWCD has been a leader in forest management plans for water quality and completed 30 FSPs for 5,536-acres. Furthermore, the SWCD continues to provide excellence project management for private and public BMPs including riparian buffer erosion restoration, pollinator habitat, riparian forest buffers, and tree planting (managed 50 projects). Since 2014, the SWCD managed over 90 different grant programs and funding sources. Melissa Barrick has 10 years of experience in grant management, reporting requirements, grant procedures and policies, and one of the most sophisticated time tracking systems in the state. She also has been a leader in civic engagement in the Crow Wing and Pine River Watershed. The SWCD will utilize all these skill sets to enhance, protect, and restore forest habitat engaging CRSL residents. This project reflects lessons learned from previous community projects which include, onsite

evaluations, maintenance agreements, civic engagement, and community awareness. The Cass, Todd, and Morrison SWCDs have comparable skill sets and abilities.

Organization: Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District

Organization Description:

The Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (CW SWCD) is a leader in private and public restoration activities. Since 2011, the SWCD has leveraged over \$14 million dollars for conservation projects which includes: easement programs, stormwater runoff, water quality testing, and forest restoration projects. The SWCD has excelled at grant writing and management, reporting, contracting, time tracking, and invoices. Currently, the CW SWCD manages over 30 contracts and grants on a given year. Furthermore, the SWCD has a certified forest plan writer on staff with excellent communication skills with landowners and private consultants. He has completed over 30 forest stewardship plans and written over 30 project management plans. In 2017, the CW SWCD received the Minnesota Association SWCD of the Year award (prospective out 86 SWCD in Minnesota). The CW SWCD is comprised of five staff and five elected official board members that are dedicated and believe in the mission of CW SWCD. Our mission is to implement voluntary soil and water conservation projects and to protect the local tax base of Crow Wing County adjacent areas. The SWCD has policies, procedures, landowner and partner connections, and systems in place to be successful at this project.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
SWCD Technician		Activity 1: Coordinate landowner projects and forest stewardship plans.			28%	0.96		\$80,000
Administration		Contract/Administration			28%	0.36		\$50,000
							Sub Total	\$130,000
Contracts and Services								
Great River Greening	Sub award	Activity 2: Restoration services on public forest land and grasslands including volunteer engagement. Funds for competitive and potential CCMI subcontracts, personnel, travel, mileage, and supplies. Other Expenses include: Volunteer Event Expenses including healthy food, beverage, and toilet and tent rental.		X		2.1		\$350,000
The Nature Conservancy	Sub award	Activity 3: TNC Field Crew Salary and benefits for field crew members, misc. supplies, mileage, and implement prescribed fire.				4.5		\$250,000
Private Consultant Forest Stewardship Plan Writers	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Activity 1: To write forest stewardship plans for private landowners.				0		\$75,000
Best Management Practices	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Activity 1: Provide landowners Cost-Share Funds to implement 30 habitat and forest BMPs.				0		\$160,000
							Sub Total	\$835,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-

Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Activity 1: Action items 3 and 4: Travel to sites for projects 4,000 miles.	To visit sites and help landowners complete BMPs and FSPs					\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$2,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Publication	Activity 1: Action item 2: Mailings, maps, and brochures 3000.	Landowner outreach about conservation programs.					\$5,000
	Printing	Activity 1: Action Item 2: Printing of program materials 3000 copies.	To complete landowner outreach and grant requirements					\$3,000
							Sub Total	\$8,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$975,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Contracts and Services - Great River Greening	Sub award	Activity 2: Restoration services on public forest land and grasslands including volunteer engagement. Funds for competitive and potential CCMI subcontracts, personnel, travel, mileage, and supplies. Other Expenses include: Volunteer Event Expenses including healthy food, beverage, and toilet and tent rental.	Healthy food and beverage are a recruitment tool and safety item as we do not want volunteers hungry or thirsty. Toilet rental where otherwise not available; tent rental when weather forecast indicates the need.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Federal, local government units, foundation, and corporate	Activity 2: primarily for GRG personnel costs, volunteer events, and plants.	Potential	\$14,000
In-Kind	Landowners	Activity 2: project management assistance and heavy equipment.	Potential	\$24,000
In-Kind	Total of 200 volunteer hours at \$24/hr (MN-DNR NCLI posted rate).	Activity 2: seed collection, forb planting, and tree planting.	Potential	\$5,000
In-Kind	General support funds (foundations, corporations, and private donations).	Activity 2: GRG overhead costs covered by General Operating Support grants.	Secured	\$36,000
In-Kind	TNC indirect expenses.	Activity 3: TNC indirect expense to do the work for this grant will be leveraged in support of the project. These expenses will not be tracked or reported, and are not to be considered match.	Secured	\$59,000
In-Kind	Landowner share to the project cost.	Activity 1: Landowner contribution to the project in labor or material cost. The CW SWCD requires a 50 percent match for the project.	Pending	\$100,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$238,000
			Funds Total	\$238,000

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Department of Military Affairs	Cass	Series of habitat blocks adjacent to Camp Ripley, with hunting.	Restoration	20	-	\$55,000	Public		Has not begun
Lake Alexander Woods SNA	Morrison	Large forested preserve part of larger complex; rolling moraine topography; rare plants; Minnesota Biological Survey Significance (MCBS) rating of high; important bird areas with robust migrant and resident birds; fungi research site.	Restoration	10	-	\$15,000	Public		Has not begun
Pillager Point	Cass	Underutilized natural area with quality terrace forest and shoreline at the confluence of Pillager Creek and Crow Wing River.	Restoration	14	0.3	\$34,000	Public		Has not begun
Ripley Esker SNA	Morrison	Premiere example of rare esker geology; habitat mosaic of prairie, oak woodland, forest, and wetland; MCBS rating of high;	Restoration	40	-	\$120,000	Public		Has not begun
Scenic River Jack Pine Savanna	Crow Wing	Under utilized and unnaturally dense jack pine stand very near and paralleling Mississippi River. Within avian flight distance of Paul Bunyan Jack Pine Savanna.	Restoration	28	-	\$84,000	Public		Has not begun
Whipple Beach	Crow Wing	Forest reserve portion of popular city park on Whipple Lake.	Restoration	14	0.1	\$42,000	Public		Has not begun
Totals				126	0.4	\$350,000			

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

All GRG and TNC restoration work will take place on land in public ownership or permanently protected by a conservation easement.

2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.

All sites that are enhanced and restored through this work will see improved habitat conditions for wildlife and pollinators, reduced invasive species populations, and improved conditions for forest regeneration. Management activities will be based on management plans and recommendations from each site's respective land manager(s), and will utilize most current BMPs. Records of management activities will be kept on file both with the implementing agency and the respective land manager(s). Utilizing adaptive management, activities will be evaluated after implementation and will provide input for adjustments to management plans and future planned activities for each site.

3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.

All restoration and enhancement work will be done in accordance with the BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines. All project will utilize all native seed mixes for all BMPs. All projects will follow the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Practice Field Guide. Management will focus on restoring ecological processes such as prescribed fire and reducing invasive species populations. These management activities will enhance native ecosystem function by improving soil health and nutrient cycling, while creating enhanced growing conditions for more vigorous native plant growth. Overall efforts will be aimed at improving function and resilience within the larger landscape to improve habitat conditions for pollinators and wildlife.

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

CW SWCD will utilize the BWSR State Cost-Share Contract and process which includes:

- 1) A Cost-Share Contract and maintenance plan between the SWCD Board and landowner/land occupier.
- 2) SWCD will complete maintenance inspections on the 1, 3, and 9 year after project completion.
- 3) Landowner will be required to have a 50 percent match towards the project.

After the second year, the project participant will be required to maintain the site annually.

After the appropriation, long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds become the responsibility of the landowner, as part of a written agreement between the landowner and GRG. GRG continues to monitor the sites, communicates with landowners, and seeks to assist with maintenance when possible. On public lands, resources that are currently available resources to public land managers will allow for completion of long-term maintenance and management needs after the initial restoration and enhancements are made on these sites.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

CCMI will be contacted once the grant funding is secured to seek their interest in the various restoration activities. Projects will incorporate CCMI field crews when applicable to assist with the enhancement and restoration activities. Habitat enhancement crews may at times be a blend of hired staff and CCMI crews.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or

elsewhere.

CW SWCD will complete project evaluations on all restoration activities and follow BWSR inspection schedule which requires inspection year 1, 3, and 9. An evaluation report will be filed with the project folder. An adaptive management approach will be utilized, all phases of restoration and enhancement work will be evaluated to help inform future management efforts.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [b880e2ab-817.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape and Project Area Boundary for Activity 1, 2, and 3.

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
CW SWCD Board Minutes 03.18.20	aa30f067-a86.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Camp Ripley Letter of Support	2e3fb413-e92.doc
GRG Board Resolution	67eeb09b-5d7.pdf
GRG Qualifications	ae163405-1bd.pdf
Northland Arboretum Letter of Support	97a8afe0-eda.pdf
Cass SWCD Letter of Support	7dd507a7-f04.pdf
Morrison SWCD Letter of Support	9bfe28fe-27f.pdf
Todd SWCD Letter of Support	1be18ff3-856.pdf
City of Pillager Letter of Support	0f108e0d-9fe.pdf
TNC Leverage Support Letter	58a08bcb-ba1.pdf
TNC Qualifications	bf3b2bcd-2d3.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Restoration,

Does your project have patent, royalties, or revenue potential?

No

Does your project include research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

