



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-229

Proposal Title: Woodcrest Trail Expansion and Prairie Restoration

Project Manager Information

Name: Sara Gabrielson

Organization: Country Manor Foundation

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Country Manor requests \$92,000 to restore nine acres of native prairie, and extend groomed trails through adjacent woodlands on the property of a senior living facility in Central Minnesota.

Funds Requested: \$92,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2023-07-31

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary 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 and In the Future

Narrative

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

Nearly half of all Americans participate in some form of outdoor activity each year resulting in an increased reliance on access to public lands for recreation opportunities. A 2016 study published by Nature Sacred and the TKF foundation, found that the number of people living in towns and cities hovers around 80%, stressing the importance of the availability of parks and green space. The study also found that there are unmatched benefits to older populations in close proximity to nature, including affordable physical activity, improved mental health, and increased social interaction.

However, the emphasis on user-benefits and heightened energy around the demand for outdoor recreation opportunities highlights the importance to conserve the natural landscape, promote environmental stewardship, and work to create managed green spaces. As a result, there is an unprecedented need for private landowners and managers to further efforts to protect and preserve, as well as provide access to, natural areas. Woodcrest of Country Manor has a unique opportunity to address both concerns by offering safe and accessible outdoor recreation and education, in addition to conserving and restoring the surrounding ecosystems and native habitats.

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 goals of this project are to restore and protect the natural landscape surrounding Woodcrest of Country Manor, as well as create a safe and accessible community trail system. Phase one will connect the trails to previously established paths to create 1.1 miles of groomed walkway, suitable for hiking, running, biking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, geocaching, and other outdoor recreational activities. Trails will be excavated and graded for maximum safety and stability, as well as marked with directional and interpretive signage to discourage users from disrupting local ecosystems, and to provide education about native species of plants and animals. The second phase of the project will include construction of bathroom facilities and the installation of outdoor seating and safety lighting. The third and final phase will involve the guided conversion of a nine acre meadow to a native Minnesota prairie. Restored via controlled burn, the existing meadow will be reseeded to propagate indigenous grasses and wildflowers, and encourage the presence of native pollinators. Printed guides will provide residents, visitors, and enthusiasts information on the entire project, including trail maps, local history, and the underlying conservation efforts and benefits of outdoor recreation.

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 intends to protect and preserve native woodlands and restore natural prairie on the 137 acre property of Woodcrest of Country Manor. By creating managed green space for outdoor recreation, and reestablishing crucial feeding and breeding grounds for native pollinators, both the trail system and conservation restoration of the prairie will protect the habitats of indigenous plants and animals, as well as provide ecological value and diversity to the surrounding environment.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Trail Extension and Interpretive Signage

Activity Budget: \$16,000

Activity Description:

The addition of 0.4 miles of trail to the existing 0.7 miles will include excavation, grading, and supply and installation of class II granite. Utilizing the existing trail and service access, Henkemeyer Excavating will perform site preparation by clearing the proposed length of the trail and hauling away any unusable, non-compostable material. Henkemeyer will then grade the trail for walkability. Once grading is finished, Class II granite will be hauled to the work site, and poured over the cleared path to create the trail bed. With the trail completed, directional signage and markers will be added to guide trail users. Interpretive signage for native plants and wildlife will also be posted at a later date, after research and identification. This step is not part of the project proposal, and will be performed in collaboration with the Stearns County Extension of Master Gardeners and various local educational institutions (unidentified at this time).

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Installation of Trail Markers and Directional Signage	2021-10-31
Supply and Installation of Class II Granite Trail Bed	2021-10-31
Excavation and Grading	2021-10-31

Activity 2: Outbuilding Installation and Acquisition of Grooming and Maintenance Equipment

Activity Budget: \$52,600

Activity Description:

The second phase of the project will include the installation of a single-unit vault restroom. Prefabricated and delivered, this 6' 6" x 14' 8" includes one toilet riser (ADA), ADA grab bars, one waste clean out hatch, and one 1,000 gallon concrete waste vault. The cost of installation is included in the proposed budget. Using the following recommended guidelines for installation: Excavation of restroom site will take place at a predesignated area along the trail. After compacting the natural ground, aggregate bedding material will be added for building support. Once the vault is set in place, excavated material will be back-filled around the structure. The building will then be set and assembled on the vault. Additionally, two off-grid solar lights will be installed along the trail, providing safety and security for users.

Also included in this phase is the purchase of a Bobcat Toolcat for necessary trail maintenance. This model has several optional attachments that will allow for trail grooming, future excavation, if necessary; and scheduled upkeep.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Installation of Single-Unit Vault Style Restroom	2022-05-31
Installation of Solar Lights	2022-06-30
Purchase Maintenance Equipment	2022-06-30

Activity 3: Conservation Restoration of Native Prairie

Activity Budget: \$23,400

Activity Description:

The final activity proposed is the conservation restoration of 9 acres of existing meadow to native prairie and pollinator habitat. Using the services of Minnesota Native Landscapes, non-native and noxious plants will be removed using various methods including herbicide application and prescribed burning. Once cleared, additional tilling will be done, if necessary, to prepare the seedbed. A custom pollinator seed mix will be cultivated to maximize native species diversity, as well as introduce a variety of habitats. Management of the prairie will take 5-7 years. However, in the first year, regular mowing and weeding will be part of the maintenance and monitoring regimen.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Controlled Burn/Removal of Existing Non-Native Plants	2023-04-30
Seedbed Preparation and Planting	2023-06-30
Establishment and Aftercare (Completion Date Aligns with Proposal Timeline - Actual Task is Ongoing)	2023-07-31

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Master Gardener Volunteer	Extension Master Gardener Program	Upon the completion of the trails and prairie restoration, the Stearns County Extension of the Master Gardeners volunteers will conduct field research to identify plant and wildlife species. Signage of identified species will then be marked along the trail and the perimeter of the prairie for education purposes.	No
Scott Keho	Country Manor Campus, LLC	Mr. Keho serves as the Capital Project Coordinator for Country Manor Campus, and will oversee all technical, construction, and maintenance elements of this project. Scott will be responsible for organizing all sub-awards, as well as providing supervisory leadership on-site.	No

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?

Ongoing implementation efforts will be funded and overseen by Country Manor Campus, LLC. Per the budget section of this proposal, equipment specific to the maintenance of the trails and prairie will be purchased as part of the grant. Depreciation, upkeep, and other related costs will be the responsibility of Woodcrest of Country Manor. If additional funding is necessary, Country Manor Foundation will solicit cash and in-kind contributions from the serviced communities.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Sara Gabrielson

Job Title: Foundation Director

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

Sara Gabrielson is the Director of Country Manor Foundation, a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization established to support the communities of Country Manor Campus. Sara oversees all development efforts, including the solicitation of charitable contributions, organization of fundraising events and campaigns, and grant writing.

Prior to joining the Country Manor family, Sara worked as a secondary school teacher and administrator. She holds a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, as well as an Educational Specialist Degree in K-12 Administration. She spent 11 years in the classroom, where she honed the management skills necessary for school administration. Sara served in several building and district-level leadership positions before seeking work in the non-profit sector.

Since stepping into her new role in January 2019, Ms. Gabrielson has successfully led Country Manor Foundation in a number of accomplishments. In just one year, the Foundation experienced an increase in total revenue of 13.5% and saw the largest year-over-year growth in number of donors since 2015. Additionally, Ms. Gabrielson coordinated the highest-grossing fundraising event in Foundation history, collecting nearly \$60,000 for End-of-Life services at Country Manor's Health and Rehabilitation Center. She is currently working to develop a planned giving program and legacy society.

In preparation for this proposal, Ms. Gabrielson completed research on the impact of coordinated conservation efforts, including the ecological benefits of trails and outdoor recreation areas, and the positive effects of native landscape restoration. Sara's knowledge of natural resource protection, coupled with her administrative skills and experience as a financial steward, duly qualify her to manage this project.

Organization: Country Manor Campus

Organization Description:

For 50 years, Country Manor has been a leader in senior care and living facilities in Central Minnesota. What began as a 64-bed skilled nursing facility in 1970 is now a multi-site, comprehensive health care organization. Informed by the mission to enrich the quality of life for the individuals and families they serve, Country Manor provides superior services and amenities tailored to meet the needs of the individual on his/her personal continuum of care. The main campus, located in Sartell, MN boasts a 165-bed nursing home, 174 standard apartments, 45 luxury apartments, on-site full-service restaurant, 22 Memory Care units, assisted living programming, a home care agency, non-emergency medical transportation, chapel, child care center, and pharmacy and retail store. The newer St. Joseph campus is positioned on 137 acres of scenic woodlands, and features senior apartments and patio homes, a memory care community, coffee shop, wellness center, salon and spa, and place of worship.

Country Manor Campus is overseen by a Board of Directors and run by a team of executive officers. The daily operations are performed by a dedicated staff of health care professionals and senior housing personnel. The operating budget for Country Manor Campus is \$37.7 million.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Henkemeyer Excavating	Sub award	Trail addition to include excavating, grading, supply and installation of class II granite bed.				1		\$15,000
CXT Concrete Buildings	Sub award	Design, build, transport, and installation of single unit vault style restroom.				1		\$15,000
Minnesota Native Landscapes	Sub award	Experts in prairie restoration, MNL will remove existing non-native and noxious plant life using various methods including the application of herbicides and controlled burning. Following removal, cultivation of native grasses and pollinator friendly native wildflower species will begin.				1		\$23,400
							Sub Total	\$53,400
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Equipment	Bobcat Toolcat 5600	The Bobcat Toolcat is an important item in the maintenance and upkeep of a trail system. The many available attachments and accessories will aid in all of the maintenance tasks.					\$34,000
							Sub Total	\$34,000
Capital Expenditures								
		Solar Illuminations SL12 Solar Parking Lot Light with Pole - Quantity of 2	Off-grid solar lighting for safety and security of nature trail overlook area and trail intersection area.					\$3,600
		Trail Signs and Wood Mounting Posts	Trail signs will provide location markers and directional navigation to users.					\$1,000

							Sub Total	\$4,600
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$92,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Country Manor Foundation	These funds will be used for full-color printed brochures to be used as trail guides and provide educational information about the conservation project and process. These brochures will be available at the trail-head, in the lobby of Woodcrest of Country Manor, as well as published on the Woodcrest website. Additionally, this money will be used to supply the interpretive signage of native species, once research and identification are concluded.	Secured	\$1,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$1,000
			Funds Total	\$1,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [8c170b6d-041.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The attached image is a satellite view of the 137 acre property at Woodcrest of Country Manor, prior to construction of the senior living facility. The wooded portion of the property has a .7 mile nature trail with a proposed addition of .4 miles of trail, a restroom facility, security lighting, and maintenance equipment. The proposed area for the prairie restoration is located on the northern portion of the property and covers 9 acres of existing meadow.

Financial Capacity

File: [5afb7cce-8b6.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Country Manor Authorization Letter	fc60a2ed-2ee.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
References	a225b340-d70.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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

No

Does your project include research?

Yes

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No



3/4" = 1000'



Proposed
Prairie
Restoration
Woodcrest of
Country Manor

Proposed
Prairie
Restoration

Proposed trail
Extension

Rosewood
Nursery & Floral

121

52

94