



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2021-408

**Proposal Title:** Pollinator Habitat Creation Along the Urban Mississippi River

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Betsy Daub

**Organization:** Friends of the Mississippi River

**Office Telephone:** (651) 222-2193

**Email:** bdaub@fmr.org

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** This project creates 26.5 acres of diverse pollinator and wildlife habitat at three sites within the Mississippi River corridor in the Twin Cities urban core.

**Funds Requested:** \$130,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** 2026-06-30

**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): Metro

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

Region(s): Metro

**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.**

This is a re-submission of our 2020 proposal under the same name. Changes made to this from the pending tentative recommendation are changing the end-date by a year later, changing Milestones by a year, and rounding total request to nearest thousand (+\$703 to Supplies).

As pollinator and wildlife habitat is lost across the state and country, research increasingly indicates the value even small acres of native vegetation in urban areas can provide. These areas can be critical habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife when they contain native vegetation and are strategically located (Baldock et al. 2019; Narango et al. 2018). However, urban open spaces are increasingly degraded by non-native invasive species and a lack of native vegetation. Under these conditions, they cannot provide habitat for native pollinators whose populations are in decline. All the project sites in this proposal are located within two strategic corridors: The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, and the Metro Conservation Corridors.

This project is a partnership between FMR, the City of Inver Grove Heights, Longfellow Community Council and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to restore habitat in three natural areas with a focus on using native plants that are important for pollinators.

### **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 entire 7-acre River Heights Park in Inver Grove Heights will be restored to native prairie and pollinator-friendly shrubs. In the Mississippi River Gorge, 17 new acres of forest adjacent to the river will be enhanced, adding to the 10 acres that were previously enhanced immediately to the south. At Ole Olson Park in north Minneapolis, 2 acres of new riverfront prairie will be added to 2 previously restored acres. By expanding upon previous restoration efforts and adding new sites, this project helps create contiguous, high-quality habitat for wildlife and limits further invasive encroachment.

FMR staff will manage and oversee all aspects of the project including adaptive management. Local ecotype native plant material will be used, including diverse seed mixes (minimum 35 species) and species for resiliency. Staff will evaluate restoration results using the LCCMR's restoration monitoring protocol. Previous three-year restoration projects have revealed that five years of initial funded efforts improve the chance of project success and help ensure that projects reach a maintenance stage that require only minimal effort going forward.

### **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 creates 26.5 acres of diverse habitat within the Mississippi River corridor in the Twin Cities urban core. This builds upon previous restoration work FMR has done within the Gorge and at Ole Olson Park by restoring additional contiguous acres. River Heights Park is a new restoration. Invasive plants will be removed at all sites and native vegetation planted and seeded. All sites are surrounded by a heavily populated urban area and offer the opportunity to inform people using these spaces about the value of restoring habitat, providing for pollinators, and creating climate change resilient natural areas.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Minneapolis Prairie Restoration – Ole Olson Park

**Activity Budget:** \$39,785

**Activity Description:**

At Ole Olson Park in north Minneapolis, 2 acres of new riverfront prairie will be added to 2 previously restored acres. By expanding upon previous restoration efforts and adding new sites, this project helps create contiguous, high-quality habitat for wildlife and limits further invasive encroachment. Activities include: non-native/invasive herbaceous and woody plant removal and treatment, silt fence installation for erosion prone areas, seeding with 35+ native prairie species, mowing, and prescribed burning. Using in-kind support, community volunteers will be organized to assist with restoration efforts.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Removal of invasive woody and herbaceous vegetation/seeding of native prairie mix	2022-11-30
Establishment mows and spot spraying	2025-07-31
Prescribed burn on 2 acres and supplemental seeding	2026-06-30

### Activity 2: Minneapolis Forest Enhancement – Mississippi Gorge Regional Park - Sand Flats

**Activity Budget:** \$42,872

**Activity Description:**

At the 17 acres in the Mississippi River Gorge, 17 new acres of floodplain forest adjacent to the river will be enhanced, adding to the 10 acres that were previously enhanced immediately to the south. Activities include: non-native/invasive herbaceous and woody plant removal and treatment, seeding, planting native trees and shrubs. Using in-kind support, FMR will organize volunteer stewardship events to assist with enhancement activities.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Removal of invasive woody and herbaceous vegetation/seeding	2022-10-31
Plant 300 native trees and shrubs	2024-06-30

### Activity 3: Prairie Restoration – River Heights Park

**Activity Budget:** \$47,343

**Activity Description:**

The entire 7.5-acre River Heights Park in Inver Grove Heights will be restored to native prairie and pollinator-friendly shrubs. Activities include: removal of invasive woody plants, seeding to native prairie, prescribed burns and mowing. With an abundance of existing non-native invasive plants, this site will require two full seasons of site preparation. Using LCCMR and in-kind support, we will engage volunteers and citizen scientists to survey pollinators and track changes before and after restoration.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Removal of invasive woody vegetation on 7.5 acres	2022-06-30
Prescribed burn and seeding of native prairie mix/plant 20 pollinator shrubs	2024-06-30
Mow grassland 4 times and conduct 2nd prescribed burn	2026-06-30

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Neighborhood volunteers	Neighborhood volunteers	Local community of volunteers is highly engaged and will assist restoration and monitoring efforts	No
Brian Swboda	City of Inver Grove Heights	City of Inver Grove Heights will assist with invasive woody removal and support for volunteer activities	No
Emily Green	Longfellow Community Council	The Longfellow Community Council (for Sand Flats) will support volunteer activities through match funding and volunteer recruitment	No
Jeremy Barrick	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will support volunteer events with in-kind labor	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?**

FMR strategically focuses on areas within designated conservation corridors. We stay engaged with projects, landowners, partners and communities, ensuring continuous improvement and expansion of the habitat values at these sites, while protecting the public investment. FMR will continue to partner with the City of Inver Grove Heights, the Longfellow Community Council and the Minneapolis Park Board to maintain the restorations. FMR's stewardship program also engages local community members in the restoration process, creating community support for site maintenance.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Mississippi and Vermillion River Restoration of Prairie, Savanna, and Forest Habitat - Phase Ten	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 08h	\$213,000
Metro Conservation Corridors Phase VIII - Prairie, Forest, and Savanna Restoration in Greater Metropolitan Area	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 08e	\$276,000

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Betsy Daub

**Job Title:** Conservation Director

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

Betsy holds a Master of Science degree in Resource Ecology and Management from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment. She has over 25 years of experience working in the environmental/conservation field. In her capacity as FMR's Conservation Director, she leads the organization's efforts to protect and restore land in the Mississippi River watershed. Her conservation work in Minnesota includes serving on the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, leading Audubon Minnesota's Important Bird Areas effort, and with the Minnesota DNR as project manager developing the online rare species guide.

**Organization:** Friends of the Mississippi River

**Organization Description:**

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a leading citizen organization working to protect and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities area. We believe the tremendous ecological, cultural, scenic and recreational values of the river must be carefully tended to ensure that they continue to be shared equally by all citizens and that they endure for future generations. We accomplish these goals through three inter-related programs.

- Land Conservation: We work with public and private landowners to protect, restore and manage important natural areas along the river and its key tributaries.
- Watershed Protection: Working with citizens and local governments, we strive to draw attention to the health of local rivers, lakes and wetlands and bring citizen opinion to bear on decisions that improve water quality.
- River Corridor Stewardship: The Mississippi River cannot protect itself. We engage citizens in a variety of educational, recreational, and volunteer stewardship activities that give them the desire and the understanding to advocate on behalf of the river's public values at City Hall or the State Capitol.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Conservation Director		Grant and Project Manager			16%	0.05		\$2,183
Ecologists		Directing/Overseeing Project Implementation			16%	0.25		\$21,637
Bookkeeper/Accountant		manages expense data, submits invoices, all project accounting			16%	0.05		\$2,294
Volunteer Coordinator		Coordinates all volunteer activities at project site			16%	0.05		\$725
College Intern		Assist with restoration activities and planning			0%	0.05		\$714
Stewardship Coordinator		Oversee all volunteer activities at the sites			16%	0.05		\$465
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$28,018</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Multiple vendors to provide restoration services such as prescribed burns, soil prep., seeding, woody and exotic plant removal, herbicide application, etc. (Vendor contracts will be awarded on a competitive and performance basis).				0		\$77,640
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$77,640</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Plant material (trees, shrubs, seed)	for seeding and planting on restored acres					\$22,953
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$22,953</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								

	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Mileage	Mileage (103 trips for 3 sites over 5 years)					\$1,389
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,389</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>



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
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	Royal Bank of Canada Foundation	To support restoration at River Heights Park	Pending	\$10,819
In-Kind	FMR Stewardship Program staff	FMR staff organize and lead community volunteers in restoration activities at project sites	Pending	\$27,260
In-Kind	Longfellow Community Council	To support restoration in the Mississippi Gorge	Pending	\$4,000
In-Kind	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Support restoration at Ole Olson and Mississippi Gorge sites	Pending	\$4,000
In-Kind	City of Inver Grove Heights	Support restoration at River Heights Park	Pending	\$5,500
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$51,579</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$51,579</b>

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Mississippi Gorge Regional Park	Hennepin	When restored, it will add 17 acres of restored floodplain forest habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. It is located along the Mississippi River, within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Corridor and within identified Metro Conservation Corridors. There is a dedicated group of community members who actively steward the area and value it.	Restoration	17	0.47	\$42,872	Public		Has not begun
Ole Olson Park	Hennepin	When restored, it will add new prairie habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, and provide natural area enjoyment for the community near it. It will be a valued expansion of the restored prairie already adjacent to it. The site is located along the Mississippi River, within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Corridor and within identified Metro Conservation Corridors.	Restoration	2	0.2	\$39,785	Public		Has not begun
River Heights Park	Dakota	When restored, it will be new prairie habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. It is located 0.3 miles from the Mississippi River within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Corridor and within identified Metro Conservation Corridors. It is highly valued and used by the community near it.	Restoration	7.5	0	\$46,640	Public		Has not begun
<b>Totals</b>				<b>26.5</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>\$129,297</b>			

## 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.**

Friends of the Mississippi River's (FMR) work for this project will take place on two sites that are permanently protected and in public ownership. Ole Olson Park is owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and is open to the public for wildlife-viewing activities. Mississippi River Gorge Regional Park Sand Flats is public land owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and is open to the public for wildlife-viewing activities. River Heights Park is owned by the City of Inver Grove Heights and is open to the public for wildlife-viewing activities.

### **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.**

FMR proposes to create 26.5 acres of pollinator and wildlife habitat in three urban locations in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area corridor. At Ole Olson Park in north Minneapolis, two acres of new riverfront prairie will be added to the two acres previously restored in Phase I at this site. Work at this site will remove herbaceous and woody invaders and seed the site to native prairie – the historical vegetation community present in the area. In the Mississippi River Gorge, 17 acres of forest adjacent to the river will be restored for pollinators and other wildlife through the removal of woody and herbaceous invasive plants, and native seeding and planting. At the seven-acre River Heights Park in Inver Grove Heights, we will remove invasive and non-native plants and establish native prairie and pollinator-friendly shrubs. At this site, we will also engage citizen scientists to survey pollinators and to track changes before and after restoration.

The project sites have resource management plans already written for them. These plans are stored on a shared server by our organization.

FMR has been strategically focused on specific areas within designated conservation corridors for over a decade. This has allowed us to stay engaged with projects, landowners, partners and communities, helping to ensure the continuous improvement and expansion of the habitat values at these sites, while protecting the public investment that has been made in them. FMR is committed to ongoing restoration and enhancement activities required at these sites over time.

### **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.**

FMR will use and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement on our project sites. Our project incorporates these guidelines in numerous ways, including:

- Sites are selected to be strategic in providing ecological benefits for the landscape in which they are a part
- Sites are selected within identified conservation corridors in order to make landscape connections to decrease habitat fragmentation and create habitat linkages across the landscape
- Restoration efforts will incorporate plant communities appropriate to the sites to provide food and habitat for species in need, particularly pollinators
- Restoration efforts will include methods to restore and maintain species diversity, including incorporating prescribed fire and the removal of invasive plants that displace native vegetation
- Efforts are designed to restore habitat complexes and natural corridors and buffer natural areas
- The restoration of a former farm field to prairie will help retain water on the land, reduce runoff and improve adjacent Mississippi River water quality
- Efforts include removal of invasive species
- The project practices adaptive management with its focus on monitoring and assessing restoration methods and outcomes

**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.**

FMR has been strategically focused on specific areas within designated conservation corridors for over a decade. This has allowed us to stay engaged with projects, landowners, partners and communities, helping to ensure the continuous improvement and expansion of the habitat values at these sites, while protecting the public investment that has been made in them. Starting with individual parcels, our project areas have grown by orders of magnitude to protect and restore large tracts of land, ultimately creating contiguous greenway corridors. The restoration and enhancement project presented in this work program are all part of larger projects both in the sense of time and area. Because of human induced changes in the landscape, natural areas require management. While it is often the case that initial restoration and enhancement require relatively large investments initially, the costs often decrease over time as the goals for a site are met and the project enters a more maintenance level of activity, such as conducting period burns on restored prairie. FMR is committed to conducting fundraising from both public and private sources, for the ongoing restoration and enhancement activities required at these sites over time.

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

FMR's standard practice when contracting is to always provide the Conservation Corps of Minnesota with our Request for Proposals. We will continue this practice when contracting for restoration work for this project.

**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.**

This project incorporates monitoring and evaluation at these sites. Pollinator surveys before and following restoration will help assess if restoration activities improve habitat for these organisms. Restoration outcomes will be monitored annually for multiple years following completion of the project. FMR's tradition of staying engaged at sites where we do restoration work, results in our being able to assess outcomes for many years following treatments.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

File: [452c4ca8-0ac.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

An aerial photo shows the Mississippi River as it flows through the Twin Cities with the 3 sites identified with stars. A photo of the restored portion of Ole Olson park illustrates how the additional acres will look after the project is completed. Another photo shows volunteers pulling garlic mustard in the Mississippi Gorge. A third photo shows River Heights Park and areas overgrown with invasive buckthorn.

#### *Financial Capacity*

File: [40555f04-abe.pdf](#)

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
BoardResolut2020RFP	<a href="#">3410224d-e23.pdf</a>

## 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

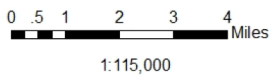
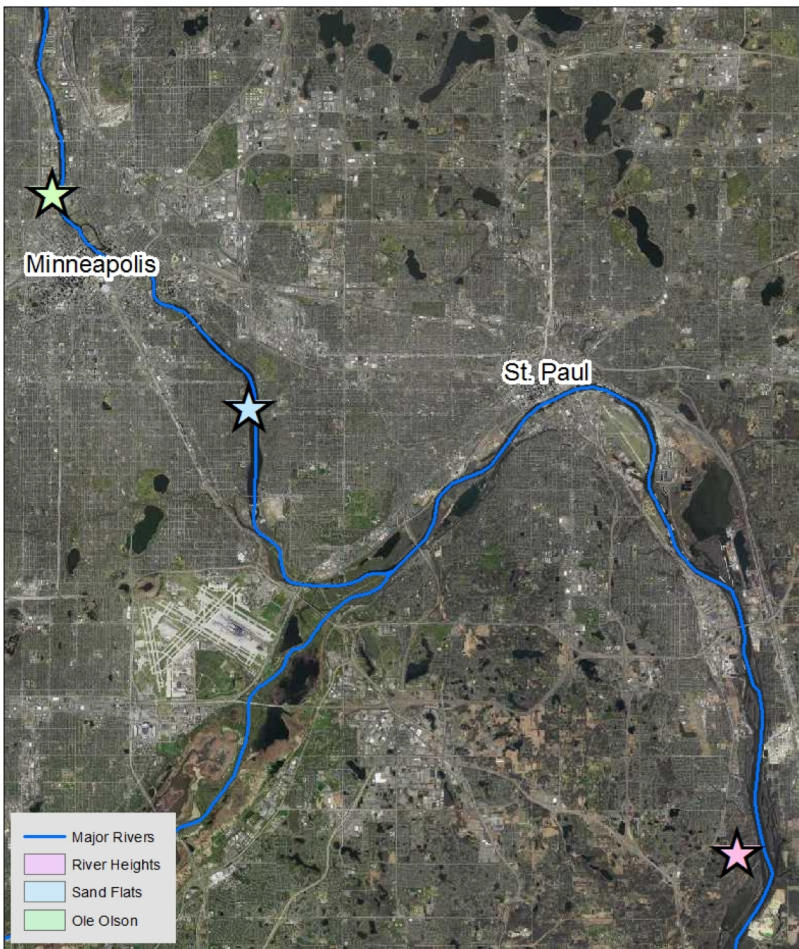
**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

**Project Title: Pollinator Habitat Creation Along the Urban Mississippi River**  
**Friends of the Mississippi River**

26.5 Acres of Habitat Creation for Pollinators and Other Wildlife

2020 ENRTF  
 Funding Proposal



Ole Olson Park, Minneapolis – Additional restored acres will add to, and resemble, this land restored in Phase I.



Minneapolis River Gorge – This project will remove both woody and herbaceous invasive plants - like the garlic mustard and buckthorn pictured here. Native species will be planted, improving wildlife habitat.



River Heights Park, Inver Grove Heights – FMR will establish native prairie and pollinator plantings, and remove invasive and non-native plants such as the invasive shrubs pictured here.

All sites are within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area corridor.

Research indicates urban natural areas provide critical habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.

