



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2023 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2023-229

Proposal Title: Bioblitz Urban Parks: Engaging Communities in Scientific Efforts

Project Manager Information

Name: MaryLynn Pulscher

Organization: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: MPRB will work strategically with allies and volunteers to collect baseline biodiversity data for urban parks to inspire stewardship and inform habitat restoration work.

Funds Requested: \$198,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2025

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Environmental Education (C)

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

Narrative

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

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board's recent community engagement work to develop a new comprehensive plan, Parks for All, shows that residents have a strong interest in nature and protecting wildlife, and a desire to gain more knowledge about the environment. The MPRB currently lacks baseline biodiversity data for its parks which makes it difficult to monitor the impacts of increased park usage, climate change, or the effectiveness of habitat restoration efforts. Based on the community's indicated interest in nature, their desire to learn more, and the MPRB's desire for biodiversity data, the MPRB sees an opportunity to work with allies and community residents to address their needs and interests and at the same time address the MPRB's need for baseline biodiversity data.

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

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board will work with community allies and volunteers to plan and implement a series of BioBlitzes. BioBlitzes provide participants with an engaging outdoor experience while learning scientific inquiry methods and gaining knowledge about Minnesota's natural resources. The proposed project centers on community involvement in volunteer scientific efforts at various size urban parks.

We propose to:

- Recruit and train volunteers
- Plan and host a series of BioBlitzes
- Collect biodiversity data for urban parks
- Share findings with project participants, park staff, and park visitors

The MPRB's project goals are to develop new allies within underserved communities interested in the protection and enhancement of natural resources, to advance a framework that enables the public to regularly engage with scientific monitoring of park biodiversity, and to deepen partnerships with current park and natural resource advocates.

The MPRB plans to continue BioBlitzes after the grant period ends to monitor changes in parks such as impacts of habitat enhancement projects, the effects of extreme weather events, or impact of invasive species. Ongoing monitoring with volunteers would help inform MPRB land management decisions about invasive species, urban wildlife, better protection of intact native plant communities, or shoreline erosion control.

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?

BioBlitz participants will gain an understanding of scientific survey practices and local biodiversity, get to know new parks, develop a stewardship ethic, and entice people to participate in other community science efforts. The community as a whole will gain a better understanding of their local ecology, will strengthen in-person neighbor to neighbor connections, and similar to how neighborhoods share concerns through the Nextdoor app, BioBlitz participants will learn to use apps like iNaturalist to share nature observations. These experiences will result in a more knowledgeable and informed citizenry who can make better decisions to protect the state's natural resources.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Coordinate community involvement and logistics for BioBlitzes

Activity Budget: \$70,000

Activity Description:

The project objectives are to assure broad community involvement that includes the communities that live near, or frequently visit, selected BioBlitz locations, and to plan a series of inclusive, safe, and meaningful outdoor community science experiences.

- Assemble representative groups to collaborate on recruiting and training volunteers; accomplished with MPRB staff and project coordinator, and by working with existing community allies such as Friends groups, partner agencies, and neighborhood groups; with an outcome of broad community involvement in the BioBlitzes.
- Host a series of mini-BioBlitzes to train volunteers on how to use iNaturalist, field guides, dip nets, microscopes, and other tools; accomplished with MPRB staff, project coordinator, groups and individuals that are community allies. The outcome is trained volunteers ready to engage in the ‘big’ BioBlitzes, and strengthened relationships between non-profits, allies and government entities.
- Identify locations for ‘big’ BioBlitzes; accomplished based on intensity of interest within the community, willingness of community to enthusiastically participate in the BioBlitzes, distribution of sites across the park system, and the ability for community science volunteers to discover and engage with a variety of natural features. The outcome will be a representative sampling of urban parks that encourage broad community involvement with scientific efforts.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
3. Identify specific locations where the ‘big’ BioBlitz series will occur	March 31, 2024
2. Host mini-bioblitzes to train volunteers how to use iNaturalist and other tools	May 31, 2024
1. Work with community allies to recruit and train volunteers (ongoing during project)	May 31, 2025

Activity 2: Host BioBlitzes, collect biodiversity data and share findings

Activity Budget: \$128,000

Activity Description:

The project objectives are to host a series of BioBlitzes where a broad cadre of trained volunteers and community allies collects biodiversity data; to analyze the data, share the findings, and impact MPRB decision making.

Hosting BioBlitzes and collecting biodiversity data at urban parks will be accomplished with MPRB staff, project coordinator, community allies, neighborhood groups, trained volunteers, and subject experts. Outcomes will be volunteers that are knowledgeable about scientific inquiry methods, a better-informed citizenry, and a wealth of biodiversity data.

Analyzing data and creating a record of findings for each BioBlitz site will be done with MPRB staff, allies and subject experts to help analyze the data. A graphic designer and/or a videomaker will help develop ways to share findings; the visual record will showcase biodiversity of urban parks.

Sharing BioBlitz findings with volunteers, allies, partners, and park staff will be accomplished and coordinated by MPRB staff and community allies utilizing a variety of means including infographics, social media, videos, articles in language

specific newspapers. The outcomes will be a sense of accomplishment for BioBlitz participants, a means to honor the work of volunteers, and baseline biodiversity data to inform land management decisions by the MPRB.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
1. Host BioBlitzes and collect biodiversity data at urban parks	June 30, 2025
2. Analyze data and create a record for each BioBlitz site (ongoing during project)	June 30, 2025
3. Share BioBlitz findings with volunteers, allies, partners, park staff (ongoing during project)	June 30, 2025

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 work be funded?

The MPRB plans to continue BioBlitzes after the grant period ends. This project will enable us to develop a successful framework to train volunteers, plan and host BioBlitzes of different sizes, and strengthen relationships with community allies. It will be a collaborative effort to continue to host regular BioBlitzes and we look to embed some of the work into MPRB's Environmental Management work group. The findings will be shared with MPRB Planning, Natural Resource and Asset Management staff to help shape land management decisions.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Invasive Carp Management Research in Lake Nokomis Subwatershed	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 06g	\$189,000
Expanding Nature Knowledge and Experience with New Interactive Exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 05h	\$500,000
Above The Falls Regional Park Acquisition	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09q	\$950,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: MaryLynn Pulscher

Job Title: Environmental Education Manager

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

MaryLynn has more than 25 years of experience with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, and for the last 20 years has managed the Environmental Education work group. She is responsible for the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of environmental education programs, projects, events, and sites. Education sites include the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary, JD Rivers' Children's Garden, and the Kroening Interpretive Center at North Mississippi Regional Park. Major programs include the Neighborhood Naturalist Program serving 23,000 youth participants at recreation centers across the city each year, aquatic invasive species education, teen employment through the Mississippi River Green Team, plus community events such as the Pollinator Party: A Celebration of Bees, and the bilingual, bicultural Minneapolis Monarch Festival ~ Festival de la Monarca which attracts 10,000 participants annually. She regularly develops partnerships, coordinates collaborative projects, and implements new programs and projects with neighborhood groups, non-profits, and other government entities.

Organization: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Organization Description:

The mission of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board is to permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations. With 197 park properties totaling nearly 6,744 acres of land and water, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board provides places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment. Each year, approximately 18 million visits are made to the nationally acclaimed Minneapolis park system. Its urban forests, natural areas and waters endure and captivate. Its

Grand Rounds Parkway system, neighborhood parks, recreation centers and diversified programming have made the Minneapolis park system an important component of what makes Minneapolis a great place to live, play and work.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
To be determined through RFP process	Sub award	Overall project and logistic coordination for BioBlitzes including planning meetings with MPRB staff, allies and partners; volunteer trainings at mini-BioBlitzes; promotion, materials acquisition, BioBlitzes day of event logistics, data analysis, record creation, sharing results, evaluation of project				1		\$120,000
To be determined based on BioBlitz sites, community interests	Sub award	This would be a series of small contracts for subject expert entities willing to partner on BioBlitzes, as well as contracts for say a mycological or lepidoptera expert.				0.5		\$50,000
Language translators, ASL interpreters	Sub award	In-person language translation and ASL interpretation for BioBlitzes, translation for print materials.				0.24		\$12,000
							Sub Total	\$182,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-

Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
		Rentals	Tents, tables, chairs, porta-potties, and other to support BioBlitz events					\$6,000
		Project support materials	Event banners, signs, assorted tools to support volunteers at BioBlitzes such as dip nets, insect traps, field guides, also trail cams, hi-vis vests, project t-shirts for volunteers					\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$16,000
							Grand Total	\$198,000

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	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Environmental Management	Will cover costs of graphic designer and/or videomaker to document BioBlitz findings as well as document participants	Secured	\$10,000
In-Kind	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board	MPRB staff time to support the BioBlitz project; includes Environmental Education Manager (.06, 2yrs) Environmental Education Lead (.06, 2yrs), Environmental Educators/Naturalists (.4, 2 yrs), other MPRB staff to support BioBlitz events including Asset Management, Forestry, Natural Resources, Permits, Park Police, Recreation.	Secured	\$50,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$60,000
			Funds Total	\$60,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [f5c2a069-6ba.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The photo montage of typical BioBlitz activities shows people of varying age, ability and ethnicity enjoying the outdoors in a variety of seasons while utilizing binoculars to look for birds, dip nets to scoop up macroinvertebrates, plus close-ups of a mushroom and a dragonfly....

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
BioBlitz Urban Parks	77217088-abb.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Board resolution approving submission of LCCMR proposal	fe35d1e7-ffa.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

BioBlitz Urban Parks: Engaging Community in Scientific Efforts

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

