



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2023 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2023-242

Proposal Title: Engaging a Diverse Public in Environmental Stewardship

Project Manager Information

Name: Amy Kilgore

Organization: Great River Greening

Office Telephone: (651) 272-3989

Email: akilgore@greatrivergreening.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We will increase community awareness of natural resources through directed outreach and engagement targeting a diverse audience that more accurately reflects the community in which we are restoring natural areas.

Funds Requested: \$200,000

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): Central, Metro, SE, SW,

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

Region(s): Central, Metro, SE, SW,

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.

Great River Greening will engage 1,000 volunteers and 400 youth through strategic outreach and multiple engagement levels, targeting diverse audiences that reflect local demographics and socioeconomic statistics in Minnesota.

Our overarching goals include introducing underrepresented communities to the amenities public lands offer, reducing barriers and demystifying stigma associated with access while cultivating stewardship experiences in a way that provides sustained connections through relationship building, hands-on events, and environmental education. Through geographic focus, local partnerships, and community outreach, we will work together to educate on the benefits of time in nature and provide hands-on experience restoring public lands. These experiences will connect participants with the land and one another while working toward a common goal. Studies have shown time in nature improves overall wellbeing, psychologically and physiologically. Benefits include stress reduction, lower blood pressure, improved immune systems, and more.

We recognize the need to include all marginalized and underrepresented communities in our work. In 2018, poverty rates were highest for American Indian (34%), Black (27%), and Hispanic communities (19%), three to four times higher than the rates of Non-Hispanic White Minnesotans (7%). 529,000 Minnesotans, including 150,000 children, had family incomes below the poverty threshold. (US Census Bureau)

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.

Great River Greening will focus community outreach and relationship building on engaging underrepresented communities local to our habitat restoration and conservation work throughout Minnesota. We have been actively growing our focus beyond the Twin Cities metro to include greater Minnesota, specifically communities in the Anoka Sand Plain region, Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape, Nicollet County, and the Cannon River Watershed. Additional focus will also be made engaging youth and young adults, primarily from BIPOC communities, in our youth engagement work centered in the Twin Cities metro.

To assist with these increased outreach and engagement priorities, we will host a suite of paid internships supporting the next generation of environmental professionals focused on reaching these geographies and underrepresented communities, introducing environmental stewardship topics and health benefits provided by nature exposure. Great River Greening will host hands-on restoration events and educational opportunities on public lands connecting community members to the natural areas in their backyard. All events will be open to all, free of charge, and provide any necessary tools, training, and PPE.

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?

Engaging a broader diverse base of the population in environmental stewardship and habitat restoration will provide a tangible outcome, and lasting impact as volunteers and interns are engaged in significant restoration, conservation, and enhancement work on natural areas throughout Minnesota. After participating, these stewards will be more connected to their local environment and carry these experiences with them.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Engage 1,000 local volunteers through community outreach, public education and habitat restoration events.

Activity Budget: \$87,000

Activity Description:

A total of 1,000 volunteers, targeting more diverse audiences, will be fitted with necessary protective equipment, tools, and training to participate in hands-on restoration activities successfully. We will distribute educational handouts on restoration techniques and natural history before the event. Day-of training includes a ‘roving presentation and Q&A’ with an ecologist on the importance of the work they are doing, ecology of the site, and the restoration plan. Participants will take home a boot brush/pick tool to raise the level of invasive species prevention protocol.

Demographic data on all volunteers will be collected and documented. At least 90% of the volunteers will be engaged in our outstate programs: a) Nicollet County; b) Anoka Sand Plain ecoregion, c) Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape, and d) Cannon River Watershed.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
300 individuals engaged	June 30, 2023
650 individuals engaged	June 30, 2024
1000 individuals engaged	June 30, 2025

Activity 2: Great River Greening will provide three paid internships during the summer of 2023 and 2024.

Activity Budget: \$71,000

Activity Description:

As another level of engagement, Great River Greening will hire six interns. Three per summer in 2023 and 2024. Great River Greening will work with local education facilities to identify possible students interested in an internship and would benefit from the experience. Supported by Great River Greening’s experienced staff, the interns will each have a geographic focus. They will be exposed to natural resources management and stewardship and increased community engagement reflecting the local demographic and economic trends.

Central Minnesota - Economically disadvantaged communities

Twin Cities Metro - Youth/young adult engagement focused on BIPOC communities

Southern Minnesota - Economically disadvantaged communities

Additionally, the intern(s) will receive career development resources, experience hands-on restoration work, event planning, volunteer training or workshops, and more to gain a big picture understanding of all aspects involved in natural resources restoration and community outreach strategies. We will share internship position announcements throughout a variety of channels across the state as well as through Great River Greening’s extensive network of partners. Concluding the internship, each intern will be tasked with sharing a personal testimonial reflecting on what they learned throughout their internship and how they will carry this experience with them.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Research communities and key contacts, networking.	November 30, 2022

Volunteer base has grown 15% (first time volunteers), 3 new community or outreach partnerships	November 30, 2023
Volunteer base has grown 20% (first time volunteers), 10% being return volunteers, 5 new partnerships	November 30, 2024
Geographic and demographic analysis	January 31, 2025

Activity 3: Youth Engagement

Activity Budget: \$42,000

Activity Description:

Great River Greening will engage 400 youth and young adults in hands-on restoration and monitoring activities. Engagement will include: classroom introduction; on-site restoration and monitoring; technology; exposure to environmental professionals and their careers during the site outing. Great River Greening will partner with other youth education programs designed to introduce youth (primarily from the BIPOC community) to the importance of environmental stewardship and how they can be involved in caring for our shared natural spaces - now and as future professionals. This program will raise our demographic service in the Twin Cities metro to reach >20% people of color.

Testimonials and documentation will be collected reflecting on the participants' experience to ensure we meet their needs and provide a quality experience for all.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Develop strategic partnerships with youth focused organizations and schools	November 30, 2022
Host 2 youth specific engagement events, BIPOC focused	November 30, 2023
Host 2 youth specific engagement events, BIPOC focused	November 30, 2024
Host 1 youth specific engagement event (spring), demographic analysis and dissemination.	January 31, 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?

Ecological and habitat restoration activities are a profound, meaningful, deeply engaging, and rewarding way to interact with the outdoors while gaining an active, working knowledge of habitat and ecology to the point of participation and action. This program will help create an engaged, active, informed community better able to steward Minnesota's legacy. Our post-program surveys show that 95% of volunteers increased their knowledge of restoration and, for youth, 87% are interested in a natural resource-related job. We anticipate returning in ML 2024 and every three years thereafter to support this program if successful.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Upland and Shoreline Restoration in Greater Metropolitan Area	M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 06g	\$300,000
Metro Conservation Corridors Phase VIII - Enhancing Restoration Techniques for Improved Climate Resilience and Pollinator Conservation	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 08f	\$400,000
Upland, Wetland, and Shoreline Restoration in Greater Metropolitan Area	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 08g	\$509,000
Community Stewardship to Restore Urban Natural Resources - Phase Ten	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 08i	\$524,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Amy Kilgore

Job Title: Outreach Program Manager

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

Amy Kilgore oversees Great River Greening's Outreach and Engagement Program including all volunteer events, youth engagement, and intern engagement. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota in Geography, Environment and Society, as well as a graduate certificate in diversity, equity, and inclusion work, also from the UMN.

Professionally, Amy has over eight years of experience conducting community outreach and engagement related directly to environmental stewardship and volunteerism in Minnesota. Amy has participated in in-depth community-based social marketing trainings specializing in barrier reduction and inclusive communications.

Organization: Great River Greening

Organization Description:

Great River Greening's mission is to secure the legacy of Minnesota land and water through community-based restoration, stewardship and partnership, striving to improve Minnesota's natural resources, protect clean air and water, and increase community access to sustainable open space. Since 1995, Great River Greening has engaged 47,000 volunteers (12,500 of them youth) in hands-on education and stewardship activities, helping restore over 12,000 acres of habitat in 400 communities across Minnesota. Great River Greening focuses our work in locations and on activities that provide conservation impact, ecosystem services, and community benefits, with projects including: developing planting designs and/or restoration management plans for natural areas; planting native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and

grasses; stabilizing shorelands and ravines; conducting ecological inventories; implementing conservation practices on farmland; and completing restoration and management activities including exotic species removal, prairie seed collection, and prescribed burns. In addition, Great River Greening engages community members from schools, faith groups, civic groups, businesses, and veterans groups in public volunteer events and engages over 100 youth per year through targeted service-learning programs. Through community education and engagement, Greening is restoring natural resources, while building environmental leaders and stewards of tomorrow.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Outreach Program Manager		Responsible for volunteer recruitment, partner planning, internship oversight and youth engagement.			21%	0.87		\$43,600
Ecologist		Provide ecological oversight at events			21%	0.18		\$9,500
Field Coordinator		On site coordination of restoration activities with volunteers and youth			21%	0.18		\$7,400
Field Technician		Restoration support			21%	0.24		\$9,900
Grant Administer		Mange grant reporting and grant finances			21%	0.12		\$5,600
Intern		3 interns over two summers to assist with community engagment and restoration			20%	1.5		\$59,000
							Sub Total	\$135,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Youth engagement and education				0.24		\$25,000
							Sub Total	\$25,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Restoration supplies (native plants, seed, erosion matting, etc.)	Habitat enhancement					\$26,000
	Tools and Supplies	Restoration event supplies (santiation unit rental, gloves, safety glasses, healthy snack)	Event supplies	X				\$7,000
							Sub Total	\$33,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-

Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging		Vehicle mileage to restoration events and to engage with interns					\$7,000
							Sub Total	\$7,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$200,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Restoration event supplies (sanitation unit rental, gloves, safety glasses, healthy snack)	Healthy snack option (granola bar, fruit) at volunteer events. Volunteers will be at events in remote areas.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
Cash	Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Funded projects.	Site prep ahead of some events at OHF funded restoration and enhancement sites.	Pending	\$30,000
			State Sub Total	\$30,000
Non-State				
Cash	Great River Greening cash match.	Great River Greening direct expenses required to do the work for this grant.	Potential	\$40,000
In-Kind	Great River Greening administrative match	GRG staff indirect administrative expense to do the work for this grant.	Secured	\$5,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$45,000
			Funds Total	\$75,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [a3329d35-964.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Summary of project proposal...

Financial Capacity

File: [3ea24531-67b.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
GRG Board Resolution LCCMR ML2023FY2024	26dc7269-8c9.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Letter of Support - Lower Phalen Creek Project	f7546244-83d.doc
Letter of Support - Spark-Y	a9396fdf-fbb.pdf
Letter of Support - Professor Ahmad, St. Cloud Technical and Community College	e950e111-f86.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

Engaging a Diverse Public in Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Education



Engage 1,000 volunteers & 400 youth through multiple engagement levels, targeting diverse audiences that more accurately reflect the local demographics and socioeconomic statistics in Minnesota.

Introduce underrepresented communities to the amenities public lands offer, reducing barriers and demystify any stigma associated with access while cultivating stewardship experiences in a way that provides sustained connections through relationship building, hands-on events, and environmental education.



Diversify the conservation movement by expanding connections and bolstering partnerships that reflect the changing landscape of Minnesota.

- Geographic focus
- Local partnerships
- Community outreach
- Educate communities
- Benefits of time in nature
- Hands-on restoration experience
- Connection to natural areas

Education and Engagement goal is not solely focused on racial and ethnic diversity; we recognize the need to include all marginalized and underrepresented communities in our work.



Great River Greening inspires, engages, and leads communities throughout Minnesota in conserving and caring for the land and water that enrich our lives.

Engaging a Diverse Public in Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Education



Three levels to engage a more diverse audience as Environmental Stewards

1. General Event Volunteer

Engage 1,000 volunteers, targeting a more diverse audience, at public events, private events (for schools, places of worship, civic groups, and others), and coordinated activities such as acorn and milkweed collection.

General volunteers receive

- All necessary equipment and training, such as techniques for native planting or invasive species removal
- Presentation and Q&A from an ecologist on the importance of this work, the ecology of the site, and the restoration plan
- Access to PlayCleanGo invasive species sanitation kiosks
- Volunteers also take home a boot brush / pick to raise the level of invasive species protocol.

2. Internship

- Work with local education facilities
- Exposure to natural resources management and stewardship
- Assist in community engagement

3. Youth Engagement

Engage 400 youth and young adults in hands-on restoration and monitoring activities.

- Classroom introduction
- On-site restoration and monitoring
- Technology
- Exposure to environmental professionals

