

**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 Engagment**

**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. Ineli gible** | **% Bene fits** | **# FTE** | **Class ified Staff?** | **$ Amount** |
| **Personnel** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Outreach Program Manager |  | Responsible for volunteer recruitment, partner planning, intership 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 (santiation 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](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/map/a3329d35-964.pdf)

#### ***Alternate Text for Visual Component***

Summary of project proposal...

#### ***Financial Capacity***

File: [3ea24531-67b.pdf](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/financial_capacity/3ea24531-67b.pdf)

#### ***Board Resolution or Letter***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **File** |
| GRG Board Resolution LCCMR ML2023FY2024 | [26dc7269-8c9.pdf](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/attachments/26dc7269-8c9.pdf) |

### **Optional Attachments**

#### ***Support Letter or Other***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **File** |
| Letter of Support - Lower Phalen Creek Project | [f7546244-83d.doc](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/attachments/f7546244-83d.doc) |
| Letter of Support - Spark-Y | [a9396fdf-fbb.pdf](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/attachments/a9396fdf-fbb.pdf) |
| Letter of Support - Professor Ahmad, St. Cloud Technical and Community College | [e950e111-f86.pdf](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/attachments/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