



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2024-049

Proposal Title: Building Resilient Urban Forests for Climate Change

Project Manager Information

Name: Todd Rexine

Organization: Great River Greening

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We will partner with urban municipalities and school districts to support planting of climate-resilient tree species. Activities include planting trees, gravel bed nursery creation, tree assessment and mapping, and community.

Funds Requested: \$752,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2027

LCCMR Funding Category: Air Quality, Climate Change, and Renewable Energy (E)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Central, SW, Metro,

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

Region(s): Central, Metro, SW,

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.

As our climate changes, heat increasingly threatens the quality of life and ecosystem health, particularly in urban areas. MN is getting warmer, leading to more extreme weather, including extreme heat and heat waves. Increased heat disproportionately impacts urban areas, which experience higher temperatures than surrounding rural areas, known as the "urban heat island" effect. Urban heat islands are caused by the concentration of heat-absorbing surfaces that absorb and retain heat combined with the lack of tree canopy and green spaces.

Climate change, urban heat islands coupled with Emerald Ash Borer now affecting 39 counties and counting, now is the time to look at our urban ecosystems and prepare them for a resilient future. Current trends show that by the end of the century, most tree species' range could shift 300 miles northward. This is the equivalent of having the climate of Nebraska or Kansas (Frontiers in Ecology and Environment, Frelich & Reich). With the loss of so many ash trees and possibly other species as threats arise, our urban ecosystem needs support over the next decade to diversify the urban forest with identified resilient trees to ensure a healthy, robust urban ecosystem for future Minnesotans.

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 (GRG) is partnering with cities and school districts in the St. Cloud, Mankato, and Twin City regions to expedite the planting of resilient urban tree canopies. The project would include an assessment of tree canopies, some removal and site prep as needed, planting, and maintenance.

Assessment: Site assessments will review the current tree canopy and locations for additional canopy enhancement on public land. The team will identify any ash trees that require removal as part of this program.

Tree Removal: There are concerns about addressing soon to be or currently diseased ash trees. GRG will contract to remove a small portion of trees and grind the stumps to prepare the space for replacement trees in areas where replanting is ahead of the current removal plan.

Supply: Partners have identified the need to build and maintain gravel nursery beds with community partner sites.

Planting: GRG will work with partners to create a timeline for planting a diverse mix of resilient tree species in either the spring or fall of the specific year.

Maintenance: Each tree will be staked, include a watering bag, and integrated into a post-planting watering schedule.

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?

Great River Greening will partner with cities in the St. Cloud, Mankato, and Twin City regions and School Districts to plant resilient, diverse tree species on public land. Planting additional trees in urban environments will benefit future generations of Minnesotans by reducing air pollution, reducing urban heat island effects, providing critical urban habitat, and storing and sequestering carbon.

- Engagement of 400 youth and community members through planting and education on urban forests.
- Plant 1200 trees with follow-up watering maintenance plans.
- Construction of four 10'x40' gravel bed nurseries, with community volunteers, to be used during the project and beyond.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Plant Climate-Resilient Trees to Support a Diverse Urban Forest

Activity Budget: \$633,800

Activity Description:

After thoroughly assessing existing tree management plans and site assessments with partners, we will timeline the preparation needs and planting plan timeframe for all locations. The assessment will identify which sites will need any site preparation ahead of any planting activity. GRG will work with partners to map out planting dates and decide which sites are amendable to community planting events and which ones will need to be planted by field crews. Tree selection will be based on climate tree model tools for species that will be suited for a warmer climate in MN. Tools will include the USDA Climate Change Tree Atlas, Climate Change Response Network, and reference existing study plots in MN such as the MNRAA: Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change. Intentionality will be given to native species projected to adapt to future conditions. Tree species that are on the fringe of their current historic growing range as well as looking at utilizing genetic material from a larger geography outside of MN, will also be considered. The goal is to select species that will support the urban forest ecosystem into the next half of this century.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Plant 100 trees (container)	November 30, 2024
Complete assessments of planting locations	June 30, 2025
Plant 450 trees (container and bare root) and maintain planted stock	November 30, 2025
Plant 450 trees (container and bare root) and maintain planted stock	November 30, 2026
Plant 200 trees (container) and maintain planted stock	November 30, 2027

Activity 2: Facilitate the Construction of Community Gravel Bed Nurseries

Activity Budget: \$118,200

Activity Description:

Gravel bed nurseries will be constructed with partnering entities to assist with the long-term installation of lower-cost bare root material. Gravel beds are constructed and planted with larger bare root stock that is nursed until ready for planting. Trees grow a healthy, developed root structure, promoting better success when planted.

We will engage with volunteers on the construction, planting, and watering of the equivalent of four 10'x40' gravel bed nurseries. As part of the engagement, volunteers will learn about the importance of creating a healthy root system, proper handling of bare root stock and the benefits of a healthy urban forest.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Assess possible locations of gravel beds with partners.	November 30, 2024
Source material	February 28, 2025
Construct gravel beds and plant first set of trees	May 31, 2025
Grow out second set of trees	September 30, 2026

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
City of Brooklyn Center	City	Landowning municipality that will be receiving tree plantings on public lands through this program.	Yes
City of Mankato	City	Landowning municipality that will be receiving tree plantings on public lands through this program.	Yes
City of St. Cloud	City	Landowning municipality that will be receiving tree plantings on public lands through this program.	Yes
St. Paul Public School District	Educational Institution	Public school district that will be receiving tree plantings and youth engagement on school district properties.	Yes

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?

If funded and successful, Great River Greening sees this as a recurring program to assist public agencies in urban areas within the State. We anticipate that there will be a critical need and opportunity for future multiple phases, including multiple funding sources. Landowners are committed to the long-term maintenance and success of this program. Information will be disseminated, with grant assistance, with other interested entities, presentations at conservation group meetings and made available through Great River Greening's website and social media posts.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Pollinator Central: Habitat Improvement with Citizen Monitoring	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 08a	\$750,000
Pollinator Central II: Habitat Improvement With Community Monitoring	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08c	\$631,000
Engaging a Diverse Public in Environmental Stewardship	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 05d	\$300,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Todd Rexine

Job Title: Director of Operations & Programs

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

Todd Rexine (M.L.A. Landscape Architecture, U of M) has a diverse set of experience in planning, executing, and funding the restoration of native habitats. Todd oversees and coordinates Great River Greening's programs and conversation staff, ensuring that the conservation programs meet the agency's mission and goals. He works with the programs to analyze the organization's goals from a system-level approach analyzing how natural and human systems interact. Todd is also a project manager on studies focused on sustainable landscape management, alternative stormwater design, shoreline restoration, and river and stream bank restoration.

Organization: Great River Greening

Organization Description:

Great River Greening's mission is to inspire, engage and lead local communities in conserving and caring for the land and

water that enrich our lives.

Using nature-based climate solutions, Great River Greening (GRG) restores, adapts, and sustainably manages ecosystems to address climate change, providing benefits for both people and the environment. Our geographic footprint spans from the Mississippi Headwaters in Minnesota through the Twin Cities and south into the MN River Basin.

To achieve our vision of healthy, climate change resilient ecosystems throughout MN, GRG leans into the practices and projects that can truly impact our shared climate future. Our land-based restoration centers on three pillars of impact: (1) Restoring resilient landscapes, (2) Addressing critical biodiversity loss, and (3) Increasing carbon sequestration and storage.

Environmental stewardship of the land we restore is one of our core commitments. We partner with the communities we serve to increase environmental connection, teach environmental restoration, and ultimately empower committed individuals to join us in caring for our shared natural resources, engaging 3,000+ volunteers annually. GRG is committed to environmental equity, intentionally incorporating DEI goals into our work.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Grant Manager		Oversees Project Managers, Ecologists and Field Coordinator. Approves contracts, invoices and budgets.			21.83%	0.04		\$26,300
Ecologist		Manages day to day project execution, crew, contractors, project budget and timeline.			21.83%	0.14		\$38,400
Field Crew		Conducts on-site work to support project deliverables			21.83%	0.6		\$153,600
Events & Outreach		Manages all tasks related to volunteer acquisition, event development and event execution			21.83%	0.14		\$34,200
Grant Administration		Tracks grant and project budget compliance, develops status reports and amendments, develops documentation for reimbursement, and processes reimbursement requests.			21.83%	0.14		\$30,000
							Sub Total	\$282,500
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Site Preparation and tree management: tree removal, stump grinding and/or watering maintenance				0.72		\$175,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Industry professional speaker(s) stipend for planting events				0.06		\$4,300
							Sub Total	\$179,300
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Equipment	Activity 1 Equipment Rental	Necessary rental equipment to assist planting and maintaining trees and					\$5,000
	Tools and Supplies	Activity 1 supplies	Trees, mulch, water bags, tree stakes					\$210,600
	Tools and Supplies	Activity 2 supplies	Gravel bed material (timbers, gravel, irrigation lines, etc..) and tools for					\$20,000

			activities conducted by GRG crew and volunteers.					
	Tools and Supplies	Activity 1 Tools	Safety equipment and tools for volunteers to assist in planting					\$5,000
	Tools and Supplies	Activity 2 Tools	Safety equipment and tools for volunteers to assist in construction					\$4,000
							Sub Total	\$244,600
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Activity 1 travel	Support site visits as to accomplish deliverables					\$7,600
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Activity 1 travel	Support weekly watering maintenance and monitoring of tree health of trees over 3 years.					\$18,800
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Activity 2 travel	Support site visits as to accomplish deliverables					\$3,200
							Sub Total	\$29,600
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Activity 1 printing	Promotional material for volunteer acquisition, signage for event site instructions and logistics.					\$1,000
	Printing	Activity 2 printing	Promotional material for volunteer acquisition, signage for event site instructions and logistics.					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$2,000

Other Expenses								
		Activity 1 Volunteer event related expenses	Tent, table, chairs, food, latrine, etc., as required to support project volunteer event deliverables and the promotion of LCCMR strategy and objectives to citizen volunteers.	X				\$12,000
		Activity 2 Volunteer event related expenses	Tent, table, chairs, food, latrine, etc., as required to support project volunteer event deliverables and the promotion of LCCMR strategy and objectives to citizen volunteers.	X				\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$14,000
							Grand Total	\$752,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Other Expenses		Activity 1 Volunteer event related expenses	Event-related expenses will support participant and volunteer hours needed to accomplish project deliverables and to provide education to participants and volunteers on the ecological benefits of the project and awareness of LCCMR's commitment and funding to this project.
Other Expenses		Activity 2 Volunteer event related expenses	Event-related expenses will support participant and volunteer hours needed to accomplish project deliverables and to provide education to participants and volunteers on the ecological benefits of the project and awareness of LCCMR's commitment and funding to this project.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Great River Greening - cash match	GRG direct expenses required to do the work for this grant.	Pending	\$150,000
In-Kind	GRG administrative match	GRG staff indirect administrative expenses to do the work for this grant.	Secured	\$10,000
In-Kind	Municipal and other land owning partners.	A variety of expenses directly related to the individual landowner or partner sites, such as staff time, contracting, material purchase, or indirect expenses related to the management projects.	Pending	\$330,000
In-Kind	Volunteers	Volunteer labor directly related to the deliverables of the grant.	Potential	\$20,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$510,000
			Funds Total	\$510,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [8bd379e6-e28.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Summary of the Great River Greening Resilient Urban Forest grant proposal, including benefits of urban trees and outline of proposed activities....

Financial Capacity

File: [19b6f656-92b.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
GRG Board Resolution Building Resilient Urban Forest for Claimate Change 2024-049	d8a25a25-f78.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Letter of Support - City of St. Cloud	4530c2b7-90c.pdf
Letter of Support - City of Brooklyn Center	e617eabc-dd4.pdf
Letter of Support - City of Mankato	c307e3d3-01a.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

Does your project include the design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes