



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

## 2024 Request for Proposal

### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2024-152

**Proposal Title:** Red River Basin Nutrient Offset Plan

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Ted Preister

**Organization:** Red River Basin Commission

**Office Telephone:** (701) 356-3183

**Email:** ted@redriverbasincommission.org

### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** The overall purpose of this project is to develop and implement an effective basin-wide plan for the implementation of water quality offset program the Red River Basin of the North.

**Funds Requested:** \$469,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2027

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Water Resources (B)

### Project Location

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

Region(s): NW

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

Region(s): NW

**When will the work impact occur?**

In the Future

## Narrative

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

The Project will demonstrate where investments can be made that are aligned with Clean Water Act regulatory requirements for water quality trading: it will further deploy innovative science-based tools and planning approaches that fill the resource gaps between state frameworks and constructible conservation practices that can be implemented as part of water quality trading. This framework should support progress towards state and international goals set for the Red River and Lake Winnipeg. This project will not directly implement conservation practices. Instead, it will create an innovative basin scale plan that enables resources to be invested into the construction of climate-smart conservation practices. As these innovative science-based tools and planning approaches are deployed, producers will be actively engaged to identify the climate-smart practices that best fit with production agricultural systems and other partners will develop multi-benefit infrastructure solutions that further augment the overall nutrient reductions in the Red River.

### **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.**

In April 2020 the first of five permits to Municipal waste water treatment facilities in the Red River Basin was issued with new language by the MPCA.. "The Permittee is opting to participate in an alternative permitting strategy along with other Permittees within the Red River Basin (Basin). The Permittee is one of multiple facilities whose wastewater treatment facility effluent is either discharged directly to or is discharged upstream of the Red River of the North... has voluntarily agreed to base the allocation of phosphorus reductions on Minnesota's portion of the U.S. total phosphorus load reduction goal for the Red River of the North of 700 metric tons per year to be assessed at the U.S./Canadian Border."

In each case the construction of a new mechanical wastewater treatment facility is prohibitively expensive, and this plan will identify locations in which larger reductions can be secured on the landscape for less investment.

### **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 includes three innovative pathways for tackling these challenges; 1) develop approaches for identifying constructible conservation practices that reduce and store runoff while providing water quality and habitat benefits, 2) establish impactful water quality offset plans that pinpoint opportunities to invest in nutrient reduction practices within regulatory frameworks for water quality trading, 3) demonstrate how our innovations help to attract additional funding, such as private capital pay-for-performance programs and philanthropic contributions, thus accelerating the adoption of practices

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Develop Approach and Pilot Study (Red River Basin Management Plan (RRBMP))

**Activity Budget:** \$309,000

**Activity Description:**

This effort will focus on developing the Red River Basin Management Plan (RRBMP). The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) will actively engage stakeholders during the development of the RRBMP. Year 1 will result in the completion of the RRBMP and the pilot deployment of the RRBMP to one local unit of government (LGU). Through this task, a framework will be developed outlining the RRBMP. The purpose of the framework is to establish the draft content that will be included as part of the final plan.

The framework will be used to develop the draft the RRBMP. First, basin-wide issues and goals will be identified for development of the RRBMP from the framework. Then, based on the ask 1 framework, the Consultant will develop the technical information needed to identify how LGU’s can invest in conservation to improve water quality and increase climate resiliency throughout the Red River Basin, with an emphasis on communicating how conservation investments affect the mainstem of the Red River.

A pilot area will be selected to utilize the RRBMP. The RRBC will support organizations in the pilot area to guide demonstrated investments in conservation that improve water quality based upon the information within the RRBMP.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
DRAFT FRAMEWORK AND ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS	October 31, 2023
DRAFT PLAN AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	May 31, 2024
CONDUCT PILOT STUDY ON WATERSHED	September 30, 2024

### Activity 2: Operationalize The Red River Basin Management Plan

**Activity Budget:** \$160,000

**Activity Description:**

The project will be used to support applying the RRBMP to four more watersheds. Each community will receive support for water quality benefit calculations, contracting, construction, maintenance, and documentation. These projects are intended to focus on multi-benefit or resilient infrastructure concepts.

A summary report will be developed based on the RRBMP and the information learned from working with the five LGU’s in this project. The intent of the summary report will be to describe the results of the project to the funding partners and other stakeholders who may consider adopting a similar approach within the region.

As part of this task, the project will be used to develop materials that can be used by the RRBC to serve in a support role to other communities within the Red River Basin that volunteer to continue to deploy the RRBMP. Support materials developed for the pilot LGU’s in Task 3 will serve as an outline for delivering final-draft support materials, incorporating lessons learned from the five pilot LGU’s. The support materials will be developed for the following support pathways including virtual materials and in-person workshops.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
DEPLOY FRAMEWORK	May 31, 2025
DEVELOP PROJECT REPORT AND SUPPORT MATERIALS	February 28, 2026



## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Brian Holmer	Mayor, Thief River Falls	The city representatives will be a part of the guiding committee seeking solutions with the most benefit for each dollar spent.	No
Andy Bradshaw	City of Moorhead	The city representatives will be a part of the guiding committee seeking solutions with the most benefit for each dollar spent.	No
Dan Trosen	City of Warroad	The city representatives will be a part of the guiding committee seeking solutions with the most benefit for each dollar spent.	No
Todd Peterson	City of Rousseau	The city representatives will be a part of the guiding committee seeking solutions with the most benefit for each dollar spent.	No
Neil Crocker	City of Breckenridge	The city representatives will be a part of the guiding committee seeking solutions with the most benefit for each dollar spent.	No
Brad Jordahl-Redlin	MN Department of Ag	As the administrator of the MDA Water Quality Certification Program, will advise the committee on barriers and incentives that could help for collaborative Urban/Rural partnerships that enhance effort to improve water quality.	No
Warren Formo	Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center	the Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center has partnerships with a wide array of Ag producers across the state, will advise the committee on barriers and incentives that could help for collaborative Urban/Rural partnerships that enhance effort to improve water quality.	No
Rob Sip	Red River Watershed Management Board	The RRWMB has been expanding work in Water Quality as well as securing new LiDAR data to inform the overall prioritization of efforts in the Basin. Will collaborate with water and conservation districts to ensure proposed projects have a path forward.	No
Drew Kessler	Houston Engineering Inc.	Provide overall technical support for loading targets, trade ratios and structural practices.	Yes
Henry van Offelen	Board of Soil and Water Resources	BWSR has extensive experience with edge of field practices as well as barriers and incentives to adoption, will share expertise with the committee on expanding adoption.	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 work be funded?**

This project is intended to develop a framework that future projects can employ to maximize benefits to water quality. By monetizing the nutrients an alternate funding source can be brought to the work that is currently being done. Funding for these future projects will be the purview of future project sponsors.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Ted Preister

**Job Title:** Executive Director

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

The project manager has been in his position for five years and has completed several similar projects with both federal and state funding partners. The most recent is an update to Long Term Flood Solutions report for the Red River Basin. In partnership with the US Corps of Engineers St Paul District the Red River Basin Commission engaged stakeholders, worked with a consultant and integrated data from all levels of government from the Federal government as far down as townships. This particular project was similar in that it adopts a basin approach to the "best" areas to do work that will provide not only local benefits but distributed benefits for the entire basin. The recommendations of the Long Term

Flood Solutions report have been used for over a decade by partners to inform projects groups and this update includes the latest available data as well as revision to law, policy and infrastructure.

The project manager has already established partnerships with a dozen stakeholder groups that have vested interests in the success of the project. Additionally the project is envisioned as a model for the portions of the basin outside Minnesota and the manager also has those relationship with other jurisdictions to potentially build an actual plan for the basin and not only the Minnesota portion of the basin.

**Organization:** Red River Basin Commission

**Organization Description:**

The RRBC is a charitable, not-for-profit organization designed to help facilitate a cooperative approach to water management within the Basin and is a well-established forum for identifying, developing, and implementing solutions to cross-boundary issues. The RRBC is led by 44 directors representing the diversity of this multi-jurisdictional Basin and is comprised of local, state, provincial, and First Nation government representation, the environmental community, and at-large members. It maintains offices in Fargo, ND, and Winnipeg, MB, and is dedicated to innovation in the management of the Red River Basin’s water resources.

The RRBC Vision is to create a Red River Basin where residents, organizations and government work together to achieve basin-wide commitment to comprehensive integrated watershed stewardship.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Executive Director		Coordination and Collaboration			10%	0.3		\$35,000
Outreach Coordinator		coordinate meeting logistics and plan for outreach			10%	0.3		\$14,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$49,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
Houston Eng Inc	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Overall Technical Analysis and Report Generation				0.99		\$370,000
Minnesota Ag Water Resource Center	Internal services or fees (uncommon)	Coordinate Agricultural Producer participation and collaboration				0.1		\$26,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$396,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								

	Conference Registration Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	3 in person conferences, for 2 people, approximately 700 mile each with standard hotel rates and per diem	seek out and communicate with stakeholders at all levels. Share outcomes of project and success stories.					\$6,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		Workshop hosting (venue, audio visual support, lunches)	Collaboration among the diverse stakeholders. Intended to develop understanding and resolve difference of opinion on project.					\$18,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$469,000</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>				
In-Kind	Board of Soil and Water Resources	Data Management Support	Secured	\$59,000
In-Kind	MN Department of Agriculture, Water Quality Certification Program	Staff Participation in Process	Secured	\$13,000
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>
<b>Non-State</b>				
In-Kind	Red River Watershed Management Board	Project Planning activities for water quality improvements	Secured	\$267,000
In-Kind	Partner Cities of (Moorhead, Thief River Falls, Roseau, Breckenridge, Warroad)	Staff participation in processes	Secured	\$54,300
In-Kind	MN Ag Water Resource Center	staff participation in process	Secured	\$8,750
In-Kind	Red River Basin Commission Staff	Participation in process	Secured	\$27,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$357,050</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$429,050</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [2b6e1bf7-92a.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

The Graphic depicts four project elements to build towards improved water quality 1) identify investment opportunities 2) science-based tool calculates offset 3) implement project 4) maintain/monitor. It also reference in-field and edge-of-field practices as well as downstream projects as parts of the solution....

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Board Letter	<a href="#">d3729f3b-d08.pdf</a>

### Optional Attachments

#### *Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
RRBC 2021 form 990	<a href="#">b3a4c4c7-790.pdf</a>
Draft Scope of Work for Red River Basin Management Plan	<a href="#">0f7628eb-96d.pdf</a>

## 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?**

No

