



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-262

Proposal Title: Tamarack Nature Center Raptor Mew Improvement

Project Manager Information

Name: Kristopher Lencowski

Organization: Ramsey County Parks and Recreation

Office Telephone: (651) 266-0330

Email: Kristopher.Lencowski@co.ramsey.mn.us

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Construction of a raptor mew to house and display animal ambassadors at Ramsey County Parks & Recreation's Tamarack Nature Center.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$150,000

Proposed Project Completion: November 30, 2026

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation (G)

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?

In the Future

Narrative

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

Ramsey County's Tamarack Nature Center has an exciting and impactful nature education program that boasts two owls, a barred and tawny owl, as a centerpiece of the program, providing a rare and unforgettable opportunity for Minnesotans in Ramsey, Washington and Anoka Counties to come into contact with a piece of Minnesota's wildlife legacy. The current raptor mew where the owls spend most of their time when not participating in programming is urgently in need of replacement due to ageing condition, and the facility is currently not designed to allow the public to view the owls except while actively involved in programming. Tamarack's highly trained raptor care staff, as well as county project managers and construction project experts stand ready to solve these issues with a new raptor mew if funding can be attained.

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.

Tamarack Nature Center has a long-range plan that identifies replacement of the raptor mew, and in 2019 worked with Shelter Architects to develop concept drawings for the new raptor mew. The proposed facility will allow the public to view the raptors on a daily basis and allow for interpretive signs, giving tens of thousands of people opportunities to learn about these amazing birds and to see natural behaviors that can strengthen conversations around conservation that cannot be seen in other contexts. For the two owls currently in Tamarack's care (they are at Tamarack because they were deemed non-releaseable by a license rehabilitation vet) these proposed changes will better align with current industry standards for animal husbandry and quality of life. Funding through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will enable the county to build a raptor mew that would provide better living conditions for the owls and future raptors, one additional stall for a total of three future raptors, provide improved facilities for the care of Minnesota's injured raptors, expanded programming opportunities, and perhaps the most impactful: the opportunity for the public to view the owls all year long, extending the benefit of contact with wildlife.

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?

Environmental education is the crucible for creating the conservationists of tomorrow, and there is almost nothing that has a visceral and lasting impact as an interaction with a live animal. Supporting facilities that can make these experiences a reality are fundamental to operating a humane and impactful animal ambassador program.

Tamarack's location in the Twin Cities has an added benefit of bringing these experiences to racially and ethnically diverse residents, diversifying the field of natural resources and education. People only conserve what they value and our raptor ambassadors make a powerful bridge between people and Minnesota's natural environment.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Design

Activity Budget: \$20,000

Activity Description:

Current concept drawings developed in collaboration with Shelter Architects and staff will need to be brought to construction level drawings, then permitted and brought to RFP for contractors to build the raptor mew. Construction would complete in 2026.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Concept drawings developed into construction drawings	December 31, 2025
Permitting through Township (Conditional Use Permit already obtained in 2020) & state required reviews	February 28, 2026
Contractor onboarded through RFP process	April 30, 2026

Activity 2: Construction

Activity Budget: \$120,000

Activity Description:

Grading, foundation and construction, adding owl mew onto current building. Close-out activities, including punch list items, ENRTF language and logo installed, and opened to the public for viewing.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Site preparation	August 31, 2026
Construction	September 30, 2026
Close-out and punch list	September 30, 2026

Activity 3: Migrate owls to mew, promotion of owl viewing and program expansion

Activity Budget: \$10,000

Activity Description:

A new raptor mew offers enormous opportunities for Minnesotans living near Tamarack Nature Center to view the owls in a way that they have not had the opportunity to in the past due to limitations of the current owl mew. Advertising and promotion of the owls in the new owl mew will be a positive draw to the nature center and new programming can be built around the current owls without the need to handle the owls. Next steps can look at the addition of a raptor in the third stall of the raptor mew and staff can work with the raptor rehabilitation facilities to identify injured birds that may need permanent care for this purpose.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Install perches, heaters, feeding elements to enclosure and migrate current owls.	September 30, 2026
Advertising campaign to alert current visitors and attract new visitors to the nature center	October 31, 2026
Redevelop programming around the more accessible raptor mew	November 30, 2026

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 grant would provide the capital needed to build the raptor mew. A 25% cost share of \$50,000 has been identified in Ramsey County's Regional Park Operations & Maintenance funds and accounted for in the 2024-25 budget. The Parks and Recreation's planning division's current resources can be used for project management. Ongoing funding is currently built into the operating budget, and the current raptor mew requires an increasing amount of maintenance costs, so a new raptor mew would likely cost the department less maintenance and operations funding.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Kristopher Lencowski

Job Title: Director of Park Operations

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

Kristopher Lencowski is the Director of Park Operations at Ramsey County, and has developed numerous projects with the county, including a \$6.6 million Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area. Kris works with project manager Gus Blumer, Landscape Architect, PLA. Gus manages many of the Ramsey County parks system planning, design, and construction projects, as well as leads internal design, construction, and permitting. Gus was the project manager leading the multi-disciplined design team through improvement plans for the final phase of the Tamarack Nature Center buildout in 2016-2020. In addition, Gus is a registered professional Landscape Architect in the state of Minnesota.

Organization: Ramsey County Parks and Recreation

Organization Description:

Tamarack Nature Center is a Ramsey County facility in the Parks & Recreation Department that provides facilities and programming with a mission of "Helping people discover the value of nature through play, exploration, service and inquiry." Tamarack has free access to trails and offers a variety of programs to many age groups. The animal ambassadors at Tamarack are a popular feature and play a crucial role in engaging our guests in conservational messaging, helping to show that each animal plays an important part in our environment and our lives.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Design services to bring concept designs to construction drawings.				0		\$20,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Contractor to provide construction services				0		\$120,000
							Sub Total	\$140,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Equipment	Perch materials, gravel, tools, heat lamp, camera, etc.	Provide habitat within mew for raptors.					\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$10,000
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								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$150,000

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	Regional Park Operating and Maintenance Funding	Match for design and construction	Secured	\$50,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$50,000
			Funds Total	\$50,000

Total Project Cost: \$200,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [db1c83fc-5be.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Photos of current mew and concept designs of future mew....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
RAMSEY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT	7addd2b9-dc7.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Resolution Authorizing Proposal Submission from Non-State Entities	9b7f06f1-309.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
capital_construction_project_questionnaire	03c167c7-063.pdf
Commissioner Frethem Video Clip	6ec55a3a-e5c.docx
capital_construction_budget_addendum	086441de-707.xlsx

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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

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 pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

Yes

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 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

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

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Gus Blumer, Landscape Architect, Ramsey County Parks & Recreation

