



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-286

Proposal Title: Civic Organizing to Protect Lake Ecological Integrity

Project Manager Information

Name: Jeff Forester

Organization: Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates

Office Telephone: (952) 854-1317

Email: jeff@mnlakesandrivers.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Pilot the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative's approach among local civic groups and LGU's to drive public behavior change to improve shoreline health and prevent the aquatic invasive species spread.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$436,000

Proposed Project Completion: July 31, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Water Resources (B)

Project Location

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

Region(s): Metro, NE,

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

Statewide

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.

This grant addresses a paradox; riparian owners value healthy lakes and fish habitat but take actions that undermine their values. This multifaceted approach addresses this contradiction and measures the results. The outputs of this approach will provide a roadmap for other local jurisdictions.

Minnesota DNR reports nearly half of Minnesota's natural shorelines have been lost and the remaining are vanishing at an alarming rate. Degraded shorelands such as turf grass to a rocky shoreline, allow 7 to 9 times more pollutants into the lake and removes critical habitat to support lake fisheries and wildlife. This pattern of shoreline development is driving new lake impairments statewide.

AIS have serious economic, environmental, and recreational impacts. AIS harms native plant and gamefish populations, interferes with boating and water recreation, costs millions of dollars annually to manage, and results in lost revenue for surrounding economies.

We will close the gap between awareness and action by bringing together a cross sector base of those impacted by AIS and shoreline development, defining individual agendas, defining the overlapping public good, and aligning roles, capacities and resources to change behavior, using the organizing framework of the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative, MACI and Community based Social Marketing strategies.

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.

Project partners will use the Civic Organizing framework developed by MACI and Community Based Social Marketing strategies to organize key stakeholders (owners, landscapers, landscape architects and local civic leaders) to initiate widespread education and behavior change for natural shoreline buffers and AIS prevention. Civic engagement will add to other ongoing engagement efforts including public meetings, educational events and tours, targeted mailings, and awards. Engagement will connect landowners with local technical assistance and cost share programs for shoreland planning and restoration. Progress will be measured through surveys and focus groups, parcel-by-parcel shoreline monitoring utilizing DNR Shore the Shore scoring metrics, automated use counters at cleaning stations, and fisheries IBI conducted by MnDNR between 2025-2030.

Partners will utilize best practices from sources such as: MnDNR Aquatic Invasive Species Community-Based Social Marketing Project Report, MACI Civic Policy Agenda, and the Natural Shoreline Partnership's Minnesota's Vanishing Natural Shorelines Report. Partners will track the project against MACI Organizing Criteria combined with the number of Lake Steward signs, boat cleaning use data metrics, and Survey 123 results.

Staff will prioritize civic engagement for lakes with the following attributes: public boat launches, public beaches, aquatic invasive species, biotic impairments, nutrient impairments, and/or degraded shoreline.

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?

With the support of the LCCMR, we will expand the Lake Steward Program to include 5% of the lake shore properties in our area (about 30 lake associations in Chisago, Washington counties). 15% of lake shore properties is the number at which adoption of a new practice becomes more widely adopted and spread is more self generating. We will train new volunteers to effectively conduct shoreline evaluations/stewardship audits and assist lake associations in distribution of evaluation/audit results back to property owners. We will educate lake users at public accesses about AIS BMPs.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Civic Organizing

Activity Budget: \$101,000

Activity Description:

Identify and engage civic leaders in the community (LGU resource managers, lake association, community leaders, user groups) to define community gaps to Clean, Drain, Dry best practices and shoreline protection. Develop Community-Based Social Market Outreach to increase awareness within the community. Engage with a total of 300 active citizens.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Create a Climate for Change - Hold 150 1on1 meetings with key stakeholders.	June 30, 2028
Public Meeting: Form and convene ongoing, calendar certain public meeting of Active Citizens.	June 30, 2028

Activity 2: Natural Shoreline Protection/Restoration

Activity Budget: \$264,000

Activity Description:

Shoreline Buffer Restorations/Enhancements on Priority Lakes: Establish Lake Steward volunteer shoreline evaluators, train and support trainers and lake associations on priority lakes. Restore local public shorelines to serve as demonstrations and community organizing focal points in addition to the obvious water quality/habitat benefits.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Implement Publicly Owned Shoreline Restoration Demonstration Sites	June 30, 2028

Activity 3: AIS Prevention at Priority Boat Launches

Activity Budget: \$63,000

Activity Description:

Purchase and utilize enhanced boat cleaning equipment at public launches on priority lakes. Equipment type will be tailored to each individual lake's needs, and different solutions may be utilized for different lakes (e.g., simple grabber claw tool vs automated cleaning unit). Align civic organizing efforts and community based social marketing strategies, including signage, expanded AIS prevention strategies, pavement markings and other actions to reduce the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Purchase and Implement Watercraft Cleaning Tools	August 31, 2025
Collect/Analyze Usage Data	June 30, 2028

Activity 4: Educational Materials/Community Engagement

Activity Budget: \$8,000

Activity Description:

Purchase and distribute at public meetings, events, direct mail AIS and shoreline management Best Practices to area residents and organizations. We will use multiple channels including electronic mailings, social media, US Post, signage and 1on1 connections as determined by the Civic Pilot members.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Education Materials/Community Engagement	June 30, 2028

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Emily Heinz	Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District	Planning Coordinator	Yes
Mike Isensee	Carnelian Marine Saint Croix Watershed District	Administrator	Yes
Matt Oldenburg-Downing	Washington Conservation District	County Wide AIS Coordinator	Yes
Susanna Wilson-Witkowski	Chisago County	County Wide AIS Coordinator	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?

There is often a gap between the resource restoration plans of governmental officials and the planning and programs of citizen groups doing the same work. This project will close that gap by building ongoing partnerships as a first and critical step in resource protection. The Natural Shorelines Working Group recognizes this need for greater alignment, and so brings together state agencies, University of Minnesota Extension, statewide nonprofits and county resource managers to align efforts and resources for a common purpose. These relationships and commitment will continue after the grant expires, creating future opportunities to continue this work.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Stop Starry Invasion - Community Invasive Species Containment	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 06g	\$1,000,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Jeff Forester

Job Title: Executive Director

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

MLR has two staff, and is served by a volunteer board. Jeff Forester, E.D. of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates has been involved in AIS issues for over a decade. He served on the DNR Commissioner's Statewide AIS Advisory Committee for four years and on the Initiative Foundation's grant review committee for their AIS Innovations Grants funded by the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. In addition, Jeff meets regularly with many local County AIS Committees, County Board members, Watershed District and Soil and Water Conservation District Managers. He has strong working relationships at both the state and local levels of government.

In 2019 Forester launched the Lake Steward program through Minnesota Lakes and Rivers. Today over thirty lake associations carry lake Steward. Forester is also lead organizer on the Natural Shorelines Working Group, a diverse cross sector base including Tribes, DNR, MPCA, BWSR, lake associations, counties and others working to protect natural shorelines in MN.

Jeff is a Designated Lead Organizer through the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative. Because of his unique knowledge of AIS issues, and his deep and diverse relationships with both citizen organizations and professional resource managers at all levels of government, Jeff is best positioned to be the project manager for this effort.

Organization: Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates

Organization Description:

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates was formed in 1993 to “Protect Minnesota’s Lake and River Heritage for current and future generations by forging powerful links among lakes, lake advocates and policy makers.” MLR has over 250 lake association members and over 6000 individual members. Over the last 25 years MLR has built a reputation and relationship with key stakeholders and partners across Minnesota.

MLR has organized three Aquatic Invaders Summits, each of which drew over 400 people from across Minnesota and neighboring states. The Summits featured local, national and international experts on Aquatic Invasive Species, AIS issues and programs. The Summits’ goal has been to increase communication, collaboration and cooperation among the many groups working to prevent the spread and manage the current infestations of AIS in Minnesota.

MLR works in the nexus of local government units, academia, state agencies like MN DNR, and local civic groups to address AIS issues.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Outreach and Engagement Staff		Community Based Outreach/Civic Organizing			0%	0.45		\$101,000
							Sub Total	\$101,000
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Choir logs, native seeds, plants, trees and shrubs, grading etc.	Restore natural shoreline conditions to public lands.					\$264,000
	Equipment	Watercraft Cleaning Tools to Prevent AIS Spread	Provide tools for boaters to Clean, Drain and Dry at public water access sites.					\$63,000
							Sub Total	\$327,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								

							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Education and outreach materials.	Civic engagement/education materials on benefits of nAtural shorelines and AIS prevention.					\$8,000
							Sub Total	\$8,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$436,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
---------------	---------------------	-------------	--

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	Partner/Local funds	Community Based Organizing Leveraging Funds	Secured	\$20,000
Cash	Partner Local Funds or Local Grants	Shoreline restoration design and oversight	Secured	\$32,000
Cash	Partner funds or local grants	AIS Prevention leveraged funds - watercraft inspection.	Secured	\$21,000
Cash	Local Funds	Match for education materials	Secured	\$8,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$81,000
			Funds Total	\$81,000

Total Project Cost: \$517,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
City of Forest Lake Shoreline Property	Washington	Shoreland ecosystem providing water quality and habitat benefits.	Restoration	2	1	\$100,000	Public	City of Forest Lake	Has Not Begun
Square Lake Park Shoreline and Shoreland	Washington	Square Lake is a high quality recreational lake with a public access and beach. Thousands of visitors a year visit the lake and enjoy it's exceptional water quality and fishing. A parcel-by-parcel survey of the shoreland using the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Score the Shore methodology revealed over 50% of the shorelines lacked native vegetation, woody vegetation, and emergent vegetation. Washington County Parks is interested in creating a demonstration of how to integrate these critical habitats for the lakes fisheries while maintaining public access and enjoyment of the lake.	Restoration	1	0.06	\$125,000	Public	Washington County	Has Not Begun
Totals				3	1.06	\$225,000			

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

All restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.

Shoreline restoration activities will be designed by watershed district, soil and water conservation district, or consultant staff with the appropriate expertise and job approval authority. Partners will work closely with public landowners, such as cities and counties, to implement shoreline restoration projects on publicly protected lands. Grant partners are experienced in shoreline restoration work and will keep all files in an organized manner, primarily in electronic format. Shoreline restorations will entail Minnesota native plants, coir logs, and other necessary components to ensure buffer establishment.

3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.

Restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement. Examples include site preparation methods, plant species, planting/seeding methods, maintenance guidelines, etc.

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

Shoreline buffer restorations, once established, will be relatively low maintenance. Grant partners will work with the applicable landowner to create a maintenance plan, including maintenance roles and responsibilities.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

The Conservation Corps of Minnesota will be contacted if the grant is awarded. Shoreline restoration projects, including site prep/seeding/planting, will likely be a good fit for CCM work.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

Evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. This will be written into the maintenance plans. Evaluations will analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [cf5380b8-ac5.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Project Area for AIS/Shoreline restoration grant....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
MLR 2022 990	9eaa2590-746.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
CLFL_AIS_LS Board Resolution	14b9792f-33d.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
CLFL Support Letter	f827dea2-692.pdf
Comfort Lake Association Support	13535029-fa9.pdf
Forest Lake Association Support Letter	ce2397ca-82e.pdf
Forest Lake Support Letter2	58da0462-8e0.pdf
Washington Support Letter	3540da67-0fc.pdf
Chisago County Support	7a06f5e3-b4a.pdf
Carnelian Marine Saint Croix SWCD Letter	c9aa4820-aaa.pdf
Capital Construction Questionnaire	67b4f4d2-daa.pdf
Capital Construction Budget Adendum	775a6437-1d4.xlsx

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Restoration,

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?

Yes

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")?

No

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

Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District, Carnelian Marine St. Croix Watershed District