



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-318

Proposal Title: YMCA Camp Northern Lights Ground and Surface Water

Project Manager Information

Name: Kate Ray

Organization: YMCA of the North

Office Telephone: (612) 388-9108

Email: kate.ray@ymcamn.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We seek to protect the ground and surface water at YMCA Camp Northern Lights-- installing a rain garden and septic system--as we renovate and maintain a strong community asset.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$95,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2026

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Water Resources (B)

Project Location

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

Region(s): 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.

According to the Minnesota Land Trust, it is vital to protect Minnesota's increasingly threatened lands and waters, including undeveloped shorelines, shallow lakes, and undisturbed forests. In 2018, the YMCA of the North purchased two resorts near Babbitt on Bear Island Lake on the edge of Superior National Forest and the BWCA to create Camp Northern Lights, preserving the area from commercial development and negative environmental impacts. As we work to renovate this space, we maintain a focus on an environmentally sustainable landscape, including reducing run-off and protecting our surface and ground water system.

For more than 60 years, YMCA camps in Northern Minnesota have provided outdoor experiences and environmental education for thousands of youth/families as we preserve key habitats and natural resources. As we work to renovate Camp Northern Lights—our newest location in this area—we are requesting support to mitigate any environmental repercussions including adding a rain garden and installing a septic system that are appropriate to a location so near a significant lake. We seek to provide opportunities for families across the state to access the natural world while protecting the environment we are educating them about.

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.

As YMCA works to create a camping experience for families from across the state, we also seek to manage surface and ground water effectively. This includes creating a rain garden to manage storm water run off and adding a strong septic system that will protect nearby Bear Island Lake. Our goal is to slow storm water runoff and filter it as it enters the ground water and lake water systems, and to ensure that our septic system is effective without leaks that could pollute the lake. All activities will allow more families to experience environmental education and conservation in action, building future stewards and champions of Minnesota's wilderness areas, while protecting water, fish, and 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?

The project outcome of this work is the protection of Bear Island Lake and our state's water resources while we renovate the campground to continue to provide access to transformative experiences in nature and wilderness for families. The creation of a rain garden will slow and filter any water coming off structures during rain storms. The goal of the septic system is to ensure that all sewage is handled appropriately in a way that will not affect water systems. These aspects of our work at the camp are critical to maintaining healthy water systems at Bear Island Lake and in the region. With

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: New septic system

Activity Budget: \$85,000

Activity Description:

The objective is to design and install a new septic system for Camp Northern Lights. Work will be completed by a contractor. The outcome will be a protection of nearby Bear Island Lake and all adjacent water systems through a high-quality septic system.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Septic System Design and Installation	June 30, 2026

Activity 2: Rain Garden

Activity Budget: \$9,800

Activity Description:

The objective is to design and install a rain garden at Camp Northern Lights. Work will be completed by a contractor. The outcome will be protection of nearby Bear Island Lake by slowing and filtering rainwater run-off from our camp property.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Rain Garden Design and Installation	June 30, 2026

Activity 3: ENRTF Signage

Activity Budget: \$200

Activity Description:

The objective is to post signage recognizing ENRTF funding with ENRTF language and/or logo. Work will be completed by YMCA staff. The outcome will be for guests and visitors at Camp Northern Lights to recognize and appreciate the funding of ENRTF.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
ENRTF Signage	June 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?

The goal of this project is to protect the water system around Camp Northern Lights. We do not anticipate ongoing effort for our septic system beyond routine maintenance and repair as needed. That work will be funded through philanthropic donations, largely from current and former campers at this location. The rain garden will be tended by staff who manage the natural resources of this space, with the assistance of volunteers and campers. Any additional plants or other elements of garden upkeep will be managed by philanthropic gifts to the camp.

The Y benefits from a deep connection with the families who

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
375 Underserved Youth Learn Minnesota Ecosystems By Canoe	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 05f	\$375,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Kate Ray

Job Title: Senior Director, Institutional Partnerships

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

Kate Ray is the Senior Director, Institutional Partnerships, providing support to the programs and funding for the YMCA of the North. She has worked on behalf of camps and nature projects over her 7-year tenure with the YMCA, and previously has secured and managed grants for nearly 20 years, and is point person for this project. Dan O'Brien is the founding Executive Director of Camp Northern Lights and will oversee grant-funded activities. He supports the full-time staff team that manages departments specific to facilities, programming, food service etc. He manages the Community Board to work together in setting the vision and strategy of the overall community and its growth and is the liaison with local groups. Additionally, Dan is responsible for leading and meeting fundraising goals. He also has worked for the YMCA at Camp Heritage and Camp St. Croix.

Organization: YMCA of the North

Organization Description:

The YMCA of the North (YMCA) opened in 1856 in Minnesota and serves the seven-county metro area of the Twin Cities and Rochester plus six camps in rural Minnesota, and in association with all other YMCAs in Minnesota. We are the third largest YMCA in the country, remaining relevant to generations and adapting to meet the needs of Minnesotans. Today, the YMCA is dedicated to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. To many adults and children alike, the YMCA is synonymous with camp. In 2023, 23,042 kids and family households experienced outdoor adventure, learned about environmental and natural resource protection, and connected with nature at YMCA camps: day camps, youth overnight camps, wilderness experiences and family overnight camps.

The YMCA's two family camps are among only a total of eight in the U.S. Family camps expand the opportunity for outdoor experiences for Minnesota families that promote healthy, active living; increase wilderness and environmental appreciation; and strengthen outdoor skills. While Camp du Nord has been part of our YMCA for more than 50 years, Camp Northern Lights was developed in recent years to meet the high demand for family camp opportunities.

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	Septic system design and installation				0.02		\$85,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Rain garden design and installation				0.01		\$9,800
							Sub Total	\$94,800
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	ENRTF Signs	To recognize ENRTF funding for project.					\$200
							Sub Total	\$200
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	\$95,000

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				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$95,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [fee92a5f-a19.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Aerial photo of Camp Northern Lights on Bear Island Lake...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
990	9554059a-abc.pdf
Pre-Award Risk Assessment	3b0845fb-034.pdf
Evidence of Good Standing	8bb4cb89-aad.pdf
Audit	7ffa91a1-cd4.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Letter	3b5c490e-e2c.pdf

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?

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 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:

