



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-035

Proposal Title: Lake Minnewashta Regional Park Restoration

Project Manager Information

Name: Martin walsh

Organization: Carver County

Office Telephone: (952) 466-5252

Email: mwalsh@co.carver.mn.us

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Funds will support land restoration and invasive species mitigation, including efforts to address EAB, in alignment with recommendations from the LMRP Natural Resource Management Plan (May 2024).

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$400,000

Proposed Project Completion: September 30, 2027

LCCMR Funding Category: Land (F)

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?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

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

The County's landscape has been heavily altered by agriculture and urban development, making its remaining natural areas vital for sustaining ecological functions. However, these preserved habitats have experienced significant degradation due to the loss of natural disturbances, the spread of invasive species, habitat fragmentation, and edge development.

LMRP is threatened by invasive species and climate change, as detailed in the attached Natural Resource Management Plan. The park's northeastern portion has been severely impacted by historical agricultural activity dating back to the 1930s, leading to a highly disturbed plant community. Over time, early successional herbaceous species, aggressive woody plants, and invasive species have spread.

The high concentration of green ash poses an urgent ecological challenge. The inevitable spread of EAB will likely kill these trees within a decade, causing canopy loss, safety hazards, and increased vulnerability to invasive species like buckthorn. This project will restore critical habitat for species such as the northern long-eared bat, tricolored bat, monarch butterfly, and rusty patched bumble bees. We envision this project as a signature restoration effort in Carver County, setting a precedent for future initiatives across the park system.

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.

This project addresses priorities in LMRP's NRMP. We will map and inventory existing vegetation, identifying invasive species, high-risk ash trees, and native vegetation areas. Using this data, we will develop and implement a removal plan for trees, buckthorn and scrub brush, replacing them with native species like oaks to restore forest diversity. Native seeding and planting will further enhance biodiversity.

After planting and reseeding, a three-year maintenance program will remove any regrowth of invasive species allowing time for the establishment of newly planted trees and shrubs. We will also monitor vegetation changes, invasive species recolonization, and native plant establishment. Surveys and data collection will guide adaptive management strategies to ensure restoration success. Outreach efforts will educate the public on the importance of native habitat restoration.

This project will restore LMRP's forest to a healthier, more resilient state. Project tasks include:

- Collect site data (land survey of areas that need treatment and removal) to draft a \restoration and planting plan.
- Remove target trees and invasive vegetation to support native species.
- Control herbaceous invasive species to maintain a healthy understory.
- Conduct native seeding and planting.
- Install native trees to reestablish Mesic Forest.
- Monitor plant establishment and adapt management strategies for long-term

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?

Our goal is to address immediate restoration needs, while establishing a long-term maintenance program that serves as a model for future efforts. Aligned with LCCMR's Land Use (Restoration) priorities, this initiative will educate the public and enhance ecological and recreational value. By implementing effective restoration practices, Carver County will contribute to statewide conservation efforts, preserving LMRP's natural resources for future generations. Additionally, this project will serve as a present model that can be implemented in other parts of the county. Our goal is to also build staff capacity and awareness on how to implement natural resource management plans.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Restoration and Planting Plan

Activity Budget: \$400,000

Activity Description:

The proposed project includes 5 activities:

#1 Restoration and Planting Plan (\$50,000): Funds will be used to hire a contractor to develop a comprehensive site plan (~12 acres) to guide tree and vegetation management efforts. This plan will identify necessary tree removals, including hazardous or diseased trees (~300), and outline areas for scrub and brush clearing to improve site conditions.

#2 Contractor and Bidding (\$5,000): Carver County will issue a bid for the work identified in the restoration and planting plan.

#3 Removal (\$139,000): The contractor will be responsible for removal of trees (~300), brushing (cut and stump treatment, and forestry mowing), spot herbicide, prescribed burns, and tilling.

#4 Planting (\$158,300): The contractor will be responsible for selecting and installing native trees (~300) and understory plants (~400 shrubs) that enhance ecological benefits, improve habitat quality, and contribute to long-term site sustainability. The contractor will follow best practices for site preparation, planting, and maintenance to ensure successful establishment.

#5 Replacement and Monitoring (\$47,700): Funds will be used to monitor and replace plantings over a three-year period. This assumes a 10% replacement each year. After year 3, Carver County will take over the monitoring and replacement.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Activity #1 Restoration and Planting Plan Schedule	July 31, 2026
Activity #2 Contractor and Bidding Schedule	August 31, 2026
Activity #3 Removal Schedule	November 30, 2026
Activity #4 Planting Schedule	May 31, 2027
Activity #5 Replacement and Monitoring Schedule	September 30, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Martin Walsh	Carver County Parks and Recreation Department	Project manager overseeing this request.	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?

Funding will be used to monitor and replace plantings over a three-year period. Thereafter, County staff will monitor and maintain the site. The County has also been strategically planning for short- and long-term funding needs to maintain its parks assets. To ensure ongoing implementation, the County is committed to increasing annual funding for park needs and has been securing grant dollars. This sustained commitment ensures resources are effectively allocated beyond project completion. The attached County Board resolution further reinforces leadership support, ensuring long-term success in maintaining and preserving the County's natural and recreational assets.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Martin walsh

Job Title: Parks Director

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

Martin Walsh has served as the Carver County Parks and Recreation Director for over 20 years, providing leadership in managing, operating, and enhancing the county's park system. He is well-qualified to lead this project based on his extensive experience overseeing personnel and operations, coupled with a deep understanding of the park system and their natural resources. Throughout his tenure, he has successfully guided numerous restoration initiatives, balancing ecological stewardship throughout the County's Regional Park system.

His expertise includes managing large-scale natural resource restoration projects, with a primary focus on prairie restoration and maintenance through planting and prescribed burns. He has also led efforts to control diseased trees, such as oak wilt and emerald ash borer, through removal and injection. Under his leadership, the County has developed and implemented natural resource management plans, including the Minnewashta Regional Park Natural Resource Management Plan and the EAB Management Plan.

In response to the growing impact of emerald ash borer (EAB), Mr. Walsh and County staff have overseen park system-wide mitigation efforts, coordinating the phased treatment, removal and replacement of infected ash trees to maintain the health and diversity of the county's forests. Their approach integrates proactive management strategies, such as tree inventories, natural resource management plans, treatment removal and replanting plans. As part of this project, the County will work with consultants to deliver the prescribed activities.

Organization: Carver County

Organization Description:

The Parks and Recreation Department's mission is to provide a variety of quality recreational experiences, services, and lands that meet the needs of the residents of Carver County and Carver County Regional Park users. The Carver County Parks and Recreation Department operates and manages several regional parks encompassing a total of approximately

705 acres. These include Lake Minnewashta Regional Park (340 acres), Baylor Regional Park (201 acres), and Lake Waconia Regional Park (164 acres). The department also manages sections of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail, Southwest Regional Trail, Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail & Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail comprised of over 300 additional acres.

Carver County's park and trail system is designed and managed around natural resource-based recreation. These spaces offer a variety of amenities, including swimming beaches, forests, prairies, trails, playgrounds, boat accesses, campgrounds, and picnic facilities. However, the system is facing increasing demand and pressure. Carver County is one of the fastest-growing counties in Minnesota, with its population projected to reach nearly 200,000 residents by 2040. Annual use of the County's regional park and trail system exceeds 1.2 million visitors. As part of the department's strategic plan, stronger focus is being emphasized on natural resource protection and

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Consultant/Contractor	Service Contract	A contractor will be hired for Activity #1 to develop a comprehensive plan for removals and plantings and to support the contractor bidding process for project implementation.				0		\$55,000
Contractor	Service Contract	The contractor will manage Activity #3 (tree removal, brushing, herbicide, burns, and tilling), Activity #4 (planting 300 trees and 400 shrubs with site prep and maintenance), and Activity #5 (monitoring and replacing 10% of plantings annually for three years before Carver County takes over).				0		\$345,000
							Sub Total	\$400,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
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	\$400,000

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: \$400,000

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
25.0041300	Carver	Lake Minnewashta Regional Park	Restoration	340	-	\$400,000	Public	NA	Has Not Begun
Totals				340	0	\$400,000			

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.

The land is publicly owned, operated, and maintained by Carver County.

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.

Carver County is actively combating the spread of emerald ash borer (EAB), an invasive pest threatening ash trees in the park. Regular updates are available on the County's website. As part of this project, plan documents and progress reports will also be posted online.

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 at LMRP will follow the BWSR "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement through targeted invasive species removal strategies, including:

1. Assessment & Prioritization – A comprehensive site evaluation will identify invasive species, their extent, and their impact on native plant communities.
2. Selective Removal Methods – Best practices will be employed for invasive species control, including mechanical removal (hand-pulling, cutting, or mowing), prescribed burning, and targeted herbicide application where necessary. Removal efforts will be scheduled to minimize disturbance to native species and pollinators.
3. Minimizing Soil Disturbance – To prevent erosion and the spread of invasive species, removal efforts will incorporate soil protection strategies, such as leaving root structures intact when appropriate or using erosion control blankets in sensitive areas.
4. Follow-Up Monitoring & Adaptive Management – Regular monitoring will track the effectiveness of removal efforts and identify any re-establishment of invasive species. Maintenance strategies, such as spot treatments or supplemental native plantings, will be implemented as needed.
5. Restoration with Native Vegetation – Following invasive species removal, native plants will be reintroduced to outcompete invasives and restore habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. Seed mixes and plant selections will align with BWSR guidelines to ensure long-term ecological health.

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.

A portion of the funds will be allocated for monitoring and replacing plantings over a three-year period, with the County anticipating a 10% replacement rate annually. After the third year, the County will continue monitoring and replacing plantings as necessary.

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

Carver County will collaborate with the Conservation Corps of Minnesota on all activities, with partnership opportunities identified during Activity 1.

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.

Carver County is committed to making this restoration project a signature initiative and a model for the region. To ensure its success, evaluations will be conducted on parcels where activities were implemented at two key intervals: immediately following activity completion and three years later as a follow-up. These evaluations will assess improvements to the park, determine whether restoration goals have been met, and identify any challenges encountered during implementation. Additionally, findings from these assessments will be used to refine and enhance future restoration efforts, both at this site and in other locations, reinforcing Carver County's long-term commitment to high-quality ecological restoration.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [5905a928-31f.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The attached figure is a map from LMRP's Natural Resource Management Plan, highlighting Management Unit #1, where the work will be performed....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
2023 Carver County Management and Compliance Report	50a36882-336.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Carver County Board Resolution Supporting Request	a7d51e1b-614.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Lake Minnewashta Regional Park Restoration Cost By Activity	bf4de12a-573.pdf
LMRP Natural Resource Management Plan	ea013d50-dec.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Restoration,

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

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:

Martin Walsh, Carver County Parks and Recreation Director, and Lance Bernard, Carver County Consultant

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

Yes, I understand