



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-070

Proposal Title: Vadnais Lake: Nature-Based Recreation and Drinking Water Protection

Project Manager Information

Name: Jim Hauth

Organization: City of Vadnais Heights

Office Telephone: (651) 204-6050

Email: jim.hauth@cityvadnaisheights.com

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Project will combine creation of critical water quality improvement ponds with educational and recreational elements, connecting underserved community members with natural resources, protecting drinking water, and promoting water stewardship.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$3,616,000

Proposed Project Completion: July 31, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Water (B)

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.

Since at least the 1930s, farming activities, wetland ditching, residential and commercial development, and other land use trends in Vadnais Heights have resulted in a lack of accessible green spaces and inadequate water quality treatment and retention. Frequent flooding has been documented in the City and is expected to worsen with increased extreme precipitation events.

This project is proposed on 21 acres of public land owned by the City of Vadnais Heights. It is located 0.5 miles from East Vadnais Lake, the primary drinking water reservoir for Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS), which serves approximately 450,000 people across 14 cities in the northeast metro and metro areas. The project location is an unmanaged lot with mature trees and wetlands, and is the only space available to both serve as a potential water quality treatment and retention location and a local nature-based recreation space.

The City maintains active partnerships with VLAWMO, SPRWS, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Ramsey County, which can be leveraged along with new collaborations to create needed water quality treatment and water retention practices as well as educational and recreational assets for the community.

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 proposal aims to construct a series of ponds that will provide water quality treatment and slow water before it reaches East Vadnais Lake. In 2024, about 42% of the SPRWS drinking water supply came from the surrounding watershed. The proposed project is a nature-based solution designed to improve water quality by capturing pollutants before they enter SPRWS' primary drinking water reservoir.

New outdoor recreational opportunities will be created through the installation of a looped trail system with gathering places, seating, and other community-selected amenities. The project will improve accessibility and encourage recreation in a natural space for populations currently underserved by City parks and programs.

Various interactive educational features in multiple languages and locally and culturally connected artwork will be added along the new trail system to encourage public engagement with the natural space. Education will be provided on how the project connects to East Vadnais Lake and drinking water, actions people can take to further protect and enhance the quality of the lake and other water resources, and information about the natural area.

Without ENRTF funding, the City and its partners will not be able to complete all project components within the next five years.

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 will enhance water quality and drinking water protection through a reduction of water runoff and contaminants entering East Vadnais Lake. Preliminary estimates indicate the series of ponds could collect water from 39 acres, reduce annual contributions of total suspended solids by 11,000 pounds, and total phosphorus by 39 pounds, which could reduce up to 19,500 pounds of algae growth in East Vadnais Lake. This project will also enhance outdoor recreational opportunities in an urban area by the addition of a trail system, resulting in more connectivity and engagement with the green space.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Recreation, Interactive Education, and Art Features

Activity Budget: \$85,000

Activity Description:

The City of Vadnais Heights will collaborate with partners to develop interactive educational and recreational features and artwork. A community engagement campaign, with in-person and online participation opportunities, will be conducted to determine the surrounding communities' desired amenities. The City anticipates soliciting proposals from artists, webmap consultants, signage contractors, recreational amenity contractors, and language interpreters to perform work at the project location after completion of the community feedback phase of the project.

Pending community feedback, art, recreation, and educational features may include:

- Interpretative signage along the new trails and at green space entrances
- Art installations
- Nature-based play installations created from natural materials
- Tools for observing nature, like viewfinders and sound collectors
- Seating along trails and in gathering spaces
- Natural log seating along select trail sections
- Information on traditionally valuable and edible native plant species
- Amenities requested by community

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Partnership Development Meetings & Community Engagement Campaign	April 30, 2027
Public Bidding Process for Requests for Proposals/Services	August 31, 2027
Pre-Construction	November 30, 2027
Construction & Installation	July 31, 2029
Interactive StoryMap Creation, Progress Updates	July 31, 2029

Activity 2: Feasibility, Design, and Pre-Construction

Activity Budget: \$571,000

Activity Description:

The City and its partners will work with its consultant engineer to complete feasibility work, pre-design activities, preliminary and final construction designs and specs, and provide assistance with pre-construction activities for the trail system and water quality improvement and retention ponds.

Feasibility will include: data collection and site investigation, model development and refinement, and further analysis to understand groundwater elevations and subsurface conditions. Feasibility analysis of the trails will include review of the pond design against initial trail network design options to ensure compatibility, updating existing hydraulic and hydrologic models if necessary, and meetings with stakeholders on the feasibility of proposed trail locations.

Feasibility, preliminary and final construction designs, and specs for the ponds will be partially completed through a non-ENRTF match from the MPCA's OSG Grant of \$150,000. The remainder of the pond and recreational system design work will be completed with ENRTF and local match funds.

Pre-design, design, and pre-construction activities will include: survey, SHPO consultation, design and specifications preparation and approval, obtaining necessary permits from state and federal agencies, completing a public competitive bidding process, hosting pre-construction meetings, staking, mobilization, clearing and grubbing, traffic control, and installing erosion control.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Pond & Trail Feasibility Design Analysis	February 28, 2027
Preliminary Design Preparation and Consultation with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	April 30, 2027
Permitting and Approval of Final Designs	July 31, 2027
Public Bidding and Award of Contract	August 31, 2027
Site Preparation	November 30, 2027

Activity 3: Construction and Closeout

Activity Budget: \$2,960,000

Activity Description:

The City of Vadnais Heights and its partners will work with its consultant engineer to provide oversight, administration, and management of the construction and closeout activities for the project. Construction activities include pond excavation and grading, material hauling and disposal, infrastructure and boardwalk installation, trail tread material installation, and other construction items.

Construction will include the following features:

- Water quality improvement and retention ponds
- Soft surface and bituminous looped recreational trail system
- Gathering spaces and observation platforms
- Boardwalk sections if needed for wetland trail and/or platform areas

Closeout activities include final review and payment to the construction contractor, as-built plans, updating City GIS files, temporary stabilization, and permanent stabilization with native plant seeding and plug planting.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Begin Construction	March 31, 2028
Construction Completion and Closeout	June 30, 2029
Recreational Trail System Open	July 31, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Lauren Sampedro	Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO)	Lauren serves as Watershed Technician & Program Coordinator. Lauren will work with the City of Vadnais Heights as a project partner.	No
Erin Spry	City of Vadnais Heights	Erin serves as Natural Resource Specialist. She will help to facilitate community engagement and feedback, consult on water quality goals, and consult on native planting plans.	No
Nick Ousky	City of Vadnais Heights	Nick serves as Senior Engineer Technician. He will provide inspection services for compliance with erosion control requirements during construction and provide technical reviews of structural features.	No
Phil Belfiori	VLAWMO	Phil serves as VLAWMO Administrator. VLAWMO will provide a cash match in addition to staff time to support the project if selected for funding. Phil will work with the City as a project partner.	No
Katie Everett	City of Vadnais Heights	Katie serves as Recreation & Facilities Manager. She will help to facilitate community engagement and feedback and consult on recreation amenities.	No
Justine Roe	Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS)	Justine serves as Water Quality Supervisor. Justine will work with the City of Vadnais Heights as a project partner.	No
Molly Churchich	Ramsey County Public Works	Molly serves as Environmental Services Supervisor. Molly will work with the City of Vadnais Heights as a project partner.	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?

The City of Vadnais Heights and its partners will oversee the implementation of the project and provide matching funds. Long-term maintenance of the ponds, trail system, and amenities will be performed by the City of Vadnais Heights as part of its maintenance programs for parks and infrastructure. VLAWMO will collaborate with the City on management expenses through its annual capital improvement budget process. The project will be developed and designed such that City funds will be sufficient for management of the space; no outside funding will be required for maintenance.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Jim Hauth

Job Title: Public Works Director

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

Jim Hauth has worked in public works management for 15 years for the City of Eagan, the City of Columbia Heights, and the City of Vadnais Heights. As Public Works Director, Jim manages complex projects and contracts. His role for this proposal will be to oversee the grant agreement, ensure consistency with the LCCMR-approved work plan and activity milestones, and oversee the completion of project deliverables. Budget monitoring and coordination of local match funding sources will also be vital to the implementation of the proposal.

As Public Works Director, Jim manages a yearly budget of \$10,000,000, with \$1,420,000 of these funds allocated to annual stormwater work as well as the City's capital budget for stormwater improvements. He is currently managing

\$1,400,000 in grant funds including for trails, sanitary sewer, and environmental projects.

Jim Hauth will be responsible for communicating and coordinating among the project's team and partners to accomplish project work including City staff, VLAWMO staff, engineering consultants, and others. This team will be available to consult on water quality improvement goals, trail features, community feedback, construction oversight, and other technical elements of the project. Jim will rely on this team to guide the project's technical elements while ensuring that the project maintains an appropriate scope and timeline with respect to the work plan.

Organization: City of Vadnais Heights

Organization Description:

The City of Vadnais Heights is a statutory city incorporated in 1957 and located in the northeastern portion of Ramsey County, Minnesota. It is bordered by several metro communities including North Oaks, Shoreview, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township, Gem Lake, Maplewood, and Little Canada. Vadnais Heights is a moderately-dense suburb considered nearly fully developed. The City government serves an area covering 8.3 square miles and a population of 13,025 people (2023 estimate). The City has 33 staff and six departments, and is directed by a five-member City Council.

The City of Vadnais Heights' long-term vision is expressed within the 2024 City of Vadnais Heights Strategic Plan Review which identifies the following City priorities that drive this funding request:

- Building resilient stormwater, park, and trail infrastructure and providing multi-modal transportation systems-improving interconnectedness of trails and walkability;
- Increasing adoption of sustainable practices through communication and education around climate change;
- Creating more inclusive systems with increased connectedness and regenerative spaces;
- Improving livability by providing amenities and programming to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities, and providing well maintained parks and green spaces.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Webmap services; contractor will create a Storymap on the project during project development under Recreation, Interactive Education, and Art Features activity.				0		\$19,000
Short, Elliot, and Hendrickson, Inc.	Service Contract	Engineering consultant to perform engineering and administrative oversight for Feasibility, Design, and Pre-construction, and Construction and Closeout activities.				0		\$252,000
TBD	Service Contract	Artwork; contractor will create artwork under Recreation, Interactive Education, and Art Features activity.				0		\$25,000
TBD	Service Contract	Signage; contractor will create signage under Recreation, Interactive Education, and Art Features activity.				0		\$9,000
TBD	Service Contract	Contractor completing pre-construction, construction, and closeout work under Feasibility, Design, and Pre-Construction, and Construction and Closeout activities.				0		\$3,279,000
TBD	Service Contract	Language translation; contractor will provide translation services for engagement and educational signage and materials under Recreation, Interactive Education, and Art Features activity.				0		\$2,000
TBD	Service Contract	Recreation features; contractor will install recreational features under Recreation, Interactive Education, and Art Features activity.				0		\$30,000
							Sub Total	\$3,616,000
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	\$3,616,000

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				
Cash	33 U.S.C §1301 Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant (OSG)	To partially complete feasibility work, preliminary and final construction designs, and specifications for the water quality improvement and retention ponds. Work to be completed under Feasibility and Pre-Design/Design project stages.	Secured	\$150,000
			State Sub Total	\$150,000
Non-State				
Cash	Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO)	For Construction, Closeout, and Contingency project stages in 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029. Future budgets are approved by VLAWMO Board yearly. Funds beyond 2025 are pending.	Pending	\$507,500
Cash	City of Vadnais Heights	For Construction, Closeout, and Contingency project stages in 2027, 2028, and 2029. Future budgets are approved by City Council yearly. Funds beyond 2026 are pending.	Pending	\$302,500
Cash	City of Vadnais Heights	For Feasibility, Design, and Pre-Construction project stages in 2026.	Secured	\$228,000
Cash	Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO)	For feasibility work under the Feasibility, Design, and Pre-Construction project stages.	Secured	\$23,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$1,061,000
			Funds Total	\$1,211,000

Total Project Cost: \$4,827,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [d83c09e2-ae7.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Aerial view of proposed project area south of Vadnais Heights City Hall. Three ponds are outlined within the southeast portion of the project area. Hard surface trails, soft surface trails, and boardwalks loop through green space. Viewing platforms, gathering space, educational signage, nature-based play features, and art are also present....

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire; 2026-070	717720b4-6bf.pdf
Ramsey County Letter of Support; 2026-070	1b68d763-20c.pdf
SPRWS Letter of Support; 2026-07	92e43563-cee.pdf
VLAWMO Letter of Support; 2026-070	2bd0e352-4a6.pdf
Capital Construction Project Budget Addendum; 2026-070	dc08bdc4-fc6.xlsx
Audit Report; 2026-070	7b798e1a-4e7.pdf
Financial Report; 2026-070	8cbc464f-20e.pdf
Resolution Authorizing Submission; 2026-070	13c8895b-05d.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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?

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:

Erin Spry, City of Vadnais Heights; Lauren Sampedro, VLAWMO; Phil Belfiori, VLAWMO

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