



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-088

Proposal Title: Twin Cities PBS Almanac Environment and Natural Resources Desk

Project Manager Information

Name: Kari Kennedy

Organization: Twin Cities Public Television

Office Telephone: (651) 229-1308

Email: kkennedy@tpt.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: TPT's Almanac proposes a new, statewide Environment & Natural Resources Desk, amplifying stories of Minnesota's water, environment, and other natural resources, and the issues, policies, solutions, and people that intersect.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$673,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Water (B)

Project Location

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

Statewide

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.

While hyped as a “climate refuge” rich in water and other natural resources, Minnesota faces ongoing threats to its environment. Rising temperatures, recurrent drought, and pollution have widespread impacts – on livelihoods, tourism, water supply, forest health, and the survival of wild rice, a crop integral to Tribal communities. Concurrently, Minnesota is a leader in clean energy, water quality improvement, and equity-driven solutions to mitigate environmental risks in BIPOC, low-income, and rural communities. These environmental issues in Minnesota are highly intersectional, affecting everything from health to immigration, water to transportation, agriculture to manufacturing.

At a time when the impact of climate change is becoming increasingly urgent, and when Minnesota is stepping up as a regional leader, it is critical to deliver reliable, fact-based information about environmental issues and available solutions. Almanac’s 2024 audience survey showed that 65% of viewers want more climate and environment coverage. Further, the Minnesota Climate Action Framework calls for accelerating public awareness, accessible information, and equitable opportunities for collective action in mitigating climate change. When many local news outlets are closing, Almanac – Minnesota’s only statewide television news broadcast – is well-positioned to provide Minnesotans with essential context to understand the complexities of environmental issues and viable solutions.

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.

Almanac proposes a new Environment & Natural Resources Desk: focused reporting on environmental issues and solutions and dedicated resources to deliver such coverage. A critical resource for Minnesota’s public health, economy, and recreation, the desk will provide significant coverage around water-related issues. This desk will also cover land, wildlife, energy, and other intersecting topics. New reporting will maintain three key elements:

- 1) Policy coverage. The desk will investigate the efficacy of current policies to address water and environmental challenges and assess their impact across communities.
- 2) Community solutions. The desk will highlight diverse ways in which local communities are addressing, adapting to, and mitigating water and environmental challenges.
- 3) Statewide reach. Almanac will travel across Minnesota, examining how water and environmental issues and proposed solutions are uniquely experienced in different communities.

The desk will include:

- 1) Environmental Reports: Almanac will produce two stories per month on average on a range of water and environmental issues, solutions, and impacted communities (24 per year).
- 2) Almanac Specials: Almanac will package stories into two one-hour themed specials.
- 3) Community Conversations: Almanac will convene communities for focused conversations on water and environmental issues to generate awareness, appreciation, and action (2 per year).

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?

As a result of engaging with Almanac’s environment and natural resources coverage, we seek to generate:

1. Awareness: Grow audiences’ awareness of:
 - a. issues facing water quality, natural resources, and the environment;
 - b. policies to address water and environmental protection and sustainability; and
 - c. the people and communities who are working to develop solutions to protect our water and other resources.

2. Appreciation: Grow Minnesotans' appreciation for the wealth of water and other natural resources in our state.
3. Action: Help Minnesotans understand possible actions to protect water and the environment, generate solutions, and engage with others in their community.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Produce original environment and natural resources reports for Almanac and Almanac at the Capitol

Activity Budget: \$567,993

Activity Description:

To launch this desk, Almanac seeks to hire a full-time journalist with a strong background in science reporting who can understand and translate research to a broad audience. With support from the Almanac staff and crew, the dedicated reporter will travel across Minnesota to produce on average two stories per month (4-7 min each) for local and statewide broadcast and digital distribution (24 per year). Stories will span a range of environmental issues and geographies, with a special emphasis on and intersection with water. For example, stories might cover topics like:

- How are policymakers managing economic and environmental tradeoffs of mining, forestry and power production in areas like the Canadian Shield in northern Minnesota?
- How are Native communities and Tribal Nations protecting wild rice from climate change and pollution – and what challenges/opportunities are they encountering?
- How does climate change disproportionately impact communities' access to clean drinking water, stormwater drainage, and treated wastewater?

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hire a full-time journalist for Almanac and Almanac at the Capitol	August 31, 2026
Complete annual Almanac audience survey with additional evaluation on environmental reporting impact	April 30, 2027
Produce and distribute 24 reports (average 2 per month) via broadcast and online (Year 1)	June 30, 2027
Complete annual Almanac audience survey with additional evaluation on environmental reporting impact	April 30, 2028
Produce and distribute 24 reports (average 2 per month) via broadcast and online (Year 2)	June 30, 2028

Activity 2: Host four public Community Conversations focused on Minnesota's environment and natural resources

Activity Budget: \$71,153

Activity Description:

Almanac will host a series of four community conversations focused on environmental issues to generate awareness, appreciation, and action (2 per year). These free, public events will be hosted in the metro area as well as greater Minnesota and expect to attract up to 200 attendees (locations TBD). Hosted by the new environment reporter, Almanac will curate a panel of lawmakers, Tribal leaders, experts, and/or impacted communities who can speak to the political, social, economic, and cultural connections to the issues. Audiences will be invited to participate in the discussion with questions, stories, and concerns.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Identify locations and venues	February 28, 2027
Recruit panelists and participants for events; prepare panelists for discussion	May 31, 2027
Distribute invitations and promote event across marketing platforms	May 31, 2027
Host events in metro area and greater Minnesota (2 per year)	June 30, 2028

Activity 3: Produce and distribute two one-hour Almanac Environment & Natural Resources specials

Activity Budget: \$33,854

Activity Description:

To extend the impact and reach of the monthly environmental reports, the Almanac team will package stories for two one-hour themed specials via broadcast and online distribution. The two distinct and focused specials will air on TPT2 and the MN channel and will be posted online for streaming.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Curate environmental reports (5-7 total) and edit into one-hour special (Year 1)	June 30, 2027
Publish, distribute, and promote one-hour specials via broadcast, online, and social media	July 31, 2027
Curate environmental reports (5-7 total) and edit into one-hour special (Year 2)	June 30, 2028
Publish, distribute, and promote one-hour specials via broadcast, online, and social media	June 30, 2028

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?

Almanac has made strategic growth in recent years, including the launch of One Greater Minnesota in 2017, an initiative focused on connecting rural and urban communities across Minnesota, which has continued to the present. Like this initiative, Almanac intends to integrate the Environment & Natural Resources Desk into the organizational plan and embed efforts into ongoing programming.

Almanac is funded by a combination of sponsorships, grants, and individual donations. TPT's Development team is working to grow overall restricted funding from major donors for Almanac as well as securing additional support from local and national environmental-focused foundations.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Kari Kennedy

Job Title: Supervising Producer for Public Affairs

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

Kari Kennedy, Supervising Producer for Public Affairs and Series Producer of Almanac, has worked at Twin Cities PBS (TPT) since 1990. Starting in the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour unit based out of TPT, Kennedy transitioned to Almanac in 1994, public media's longest running public affairs program. In 2008, Kennedy became the series producer of Almanac: At the Capitol, a weekly live program broadcast from the House Gallery during the legislative session. Almanac's sister program has also been honored with several awards for its legislative coverage, including regional Emmy awards. In 2023 Kennedy moved into the role of Supervising Producer for Public Affairs and Series Producer of Almanac. In addition to producing the series, Kennedy manages all public affairs staff, including two full-time reporters.

Beyond public affairs, Kennedy has produced a series on parenting preschool-aged children, worked on an historical documentary on the city of Minneapolis, and numerous political debates for more than three decades. Kennedy has won multiple regional Emmy awards for her work on Almanac, Almanac at the Capitol and other TPT productions. Kennedy earned a B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communication with an emphasis on Broadcast Journalism from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in 1988.

Organization: Twin Cities Public Television

Organization Description:

Established in 1957, Twin Cities PBS (TPT) remains one of the most innovative public media organizations in the country. TPT reaches 2 million people in Minnesota and nationwide every month through five broadcast channels, multiple digital platforms, national broadcast initiatives, and community engagement. TPT provides free and universal access to original content, educational resources, and information services that uplift the arts and culture, history, and public affairs of our region.

Now in its 41st year, TPT's Almanac is the longest-running public affairs program in the PBS system. The one-hour, weekly, primetime show airs simultaneously on all 6 of the public television stations that serve Minnesota, reaching virtually every community statewide. With a focus on long-form stories and interviews, Almanac reports on, analyzes, and provides vital context around a broad range of issues facing Minnesota. The sister program, Almanac at the Capitol, focuses specifically on political coverage during legislative sessions. Almanac is highly respected by audiences, leaders, and policymakers across Minnesota for its exploration of complex topics from multiple perspectives. Almanac has an

annual broadcast audience of approximately 627,000 unique viewers statewide and a social media following of more than 27,000 people.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Supervising Producer Almanac		Lead producer for Almanac			43.95%	0.06		\$11,978
Almanac Environment Reporter		Lead reporter/producer for bi-weekly environment stories, community events, and specials			43.95%	1.7		\$197,652
Media Asset Management		Media movement between field work to editing to broadcast			43.95%	0.04		\$6,357
Production Manager		Responsible for scheduling crew and equipment for shoots, editing, managing contracts and invoices, forecasting and balancing project expenses, and financial project oversight.			43.95%	0.14		\$18,541
Events Specialist		Assists with all community conversations (hospitality, registration, etc.).			43.95%	0.06		\$7,601
Evaluation Director		Responsible for all surveys, data collection of community conversations, qualitative and quantitative reporting			43.95%	0.06		\$8,292
Special Project Producer		Producer responsible for working with editor, reporter, and supervising producer to create the 1-hour specials. Will also participate in the community conversations.			10.65%	0.18		\$23,900
							Sub Total	\$274,321
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Stipends for three panelists for the community conversations at two community conversations per year. Each panelist will receive \$280. $3 \times \$280 = \$840 \times 2 \text{ community conversations} = \$1,680 \times 2 \text{ years} = \$3,360$				0		\$3,360
TBD	Service Contract	Contracted production staff for special camera (drone) or audio work. Contracted staff for any special needs on location. Allowing \$250/month x twelve months = \$3,000 x 2 years = \$6,000				0		\$6,000
							Sub Total	\$9,360

Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Media Storage/Tapes	SD cards, LTO Tapes, Firewire drives for media in cameras and/or editing					\$600
	Tools and Supplies	Props/Materials	Subject related environmental props or materials to enhance story telling, participant knowledge, and/or community conversations.					\$1,200
							Sub Total	\$1,800
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	One trip per month x two years in Greater MN for reporter, camera, and audio to location of filming site. Per person: One hotel night \$500 + Meal allowance \$119 + Mileage 300 miles x \$0.70/mile = \$210 = \$829/trip x three people = \$2,487/trip x 12 trips = \$29,844 (or \$9,948 per person) x two years = \$59,688.	One story to be produced/filmed in Greater MN					\$59,688
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	One trip per month x two years in local/metro area of MN for reporter, camera, and audio to location of filming site. Per person: Mileage 150 miles x \$0.70/mile = \$105 = \$105/trip x three people = \$315/trip x 12 trips = \$3,780 (or \$1,260 per person) x two years = \$7,560	One story to be produced/filmed in Twin Cities Metro or next tier cities.					\$7,560
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	One trip per month x two years in Greater MN for reporter, producer and event staff to location of community conversation. Per person: One hotel night \$500 + Meal allowance \$119 + Mileage 300 miles x \$0.70/mile = \$210 = \$829/trip x three people = \$2,487/trip x 1 trips = \$2,487 (or \$829 per person) x two years = \$4,974.	One Community Conversation to be in Greater MN					\$4,974

							Sub Total	\$72,222
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	\$300/year x two years = \$600	Printing of scripts, appearance releases, contracts, etc.					\$600
							Sub Total	\$600
Other Expenses								
		Captioning \$16.13/story x 24 stories = \$387.11	Closed captioning of all stories.					\$387
		Rental of Space: two locations x \$500 = \$1,000 x two years = \$2,000	Space rental in Greater MN and Twin Cities Metro/Local for Community Conversations.					\$2,000
		Hospitality two community conversations x \$750 = \$1,500 x two years = \$3,000	Hospitality costs for community conversations (food and beverage)					\$3,000
		Parking allowances \$200/year x two years = \$400	Parking for panelists, community conversation attendees, and/or others for community conversations.					\$400
		Broadcast Engineer four hours x \$71.46 = \$285.84 x two years = \$571.70	Broadcast Engineer will check closed captioning, complete special packages, and ensure compliance for Broadcast.					\$572
		Camera Operator 60 hours/month x 12 months x \$70.03/hour = \$50,423.42 x two years = \$100,846.83	Camera operator who will film all content at locations.					\$100,847
		Audio Operator 60 hours/month x 12 months x \$61.17/month = \$44,042.02 x two years = \$88,084.03	Audio Operator who will gather sound/audio at all locations.					\$88,084
		Camera Operator Overtime Five hours/month x six months x \$93.75/hour = \$2,812.45 x two years = \$5,624.89	Per Union rules and allowed working hours the camera operator will have scheduled overtime.					\$5,625
		Audio Operator Overtime Five hours/month x six months x \$81.88/hour = \$2,456.52 x two years = \$4,913.04	Per Union rules and allowed working hours the audio operator will have scheduled overtime.					\$4,913
		Editor Three days per story x two month = six days x \$706.95/day = \$4,241.70/month x 12 months = \$50,900.27 x two years = \$101,800.54	Video editors take raw footage and assemble it into a coherent narrative,					\$101,800

			following scripts and instructions from reporter and/or producers					
		Editor Five days for one-hour special x \$706.95/day = \$3,354.74 x two years = \$7,069.48	Editor will combine stories to create an one-hour special that can air on broadcast.					\$7,069
							Sub Total	\$314,697
							Grand Total	\$673,000

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: \$673,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [ef24234b-e5d.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

N/A...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
TPT Certificate of Good Standing	62f9dcf1-f71.pdf
TPT FY23 990	5260981a-8f3.pdf
TPT FY24 Audited Financial Statements	10db3109-663.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
TPT Resolution Letter	b8019288-67b.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
TPT Almanac Sample Segments	3cbe899d-f75.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?

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

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:

Claire Eder, Senior Development Officer, Twin Cities PBS; Ellen Whitted, Division Finance Manager, Twin Cities PBS

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

