



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-100

Proposal Title: Outdoors for All: A Mentored Hunting and Angling Program

Project Manager Information

Name: Nick Bancks

Organization: The Trust for Public Land

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Trust for Public Land (TPL) will lead an inclusive, community-driven mentored hunting and angling program that supports and fosters equitable outdoor spaces on Minnesota's public lands and waters.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$188,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2027

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

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.

Minnesota is home to vast public lands and waters, yet many of its residents—particularly those from urban, regional, historically marginalized and new American communities—remain disconnected from these natural places and the myriad benefits they provide. Recent population data indicates Minnesota continues trending toward an increasingly urban and diverse demographic. Future conservation and safeguarding of our public natural resources depends on fostering a new generation of hunters, anglers, and foragers who use, understand, and help to steward these spaces.

Recruiting and retaining new hunters and anglers has become increasingly important as longtime participants age out of the tradition. However, significant barriers continue to limit diverse participation in these activities, including historical exclusion, limited access to mentorship, and a lack of familiarity with conservation ethics. Traditional recruitment efforts have not fully addressed these challenges, highlighting the need for sustained, community-driven initiatives that intentionally engage historically underrepresented groups and foster a more inclusive outdoor heritage.

This program directly addresses these unique challenges by providing a comprehensive curriculum culminating in inclusive outdoor experiences on public lands and waters. This program empowers new outdoor enthusiasts by fostering community, education, and conservation leadership, ensuring Minnesota's public lands remain relevant and valued for future generations.

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.

TPL seeks funding to expand the Mentored Hunting and Angling program through both in-person mentorship experiences and enhancing access to outdoors education with targeted community outreach and digital learning in a group setting.

Our approach includes:

- Targeted Outreach & Education: Engaging individuals from diverse and underrepresented groups, providing curriculum on conservation ethics, safety, and sustainable hunting, fishing, and foraging practices. Mentors come from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, helping to reinforce and foster a sense of representation, belonging and inclusion in outdoor spaces.
- Hands-On Field Experience: Facilitating mentored hunting, fishing, and foraging excursions on Minnesota's public lands, reinforcing skills while fostering a connection to nature. Mentees will also be encouraged to act as mentors at future events. This framework will help enable and empower participants to develop and maintain their own unique identity and heritage connected to the outdoors.
- Enhancing Outdoor Learning Through Technology: We will explore technology platforms that supplement hands-on experiences by providing accessible web-based learning in a group setting. These tools will help new outdoor enthusiasts continue their education, strengthen connections with mentors and peers, and foster development of the next generation—many of whom have grown up with technology as an integral part of their learning experience.

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 Mentored Hunting and Angling program will foster inclusivity and address inequalities by engaging diverse and underrepresented communities in hunting, angling and foraging, creating a new cohort of conservation-minded individuals who will utilize public lands and advocate for conservation. 4 separate cohorts will be created, each focused on a different outdoor activity. Individual cohorts will include a 15-participant minimum and consist of an 8-week curriculum leading to the capstone event. Several, additional stand-alone outdoor skills events will be held after each capstone event, to aid in sustaining cohort engagement and retention, as well as providing an outreach and educational function.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Cohort Development & Capstone Event

Activity Budget: \$173,000

Activity Description:

Activities focus on upland bird/waterfowl hunting, panfishing, and foraging, with options to pursue other game and fish as the program matures. Event locations are generally nearer to urban or regional areas, though some spots are further outstate. A key component of the program's curriculum is education on game species biology, ecology, and land conservation and management. Ethics, as well as safety, are also emphasized and incorporated into all aspects of the program. Duration of the program curriculum generally extends several months, leading up to a mentored hunt, angling, or foraging experience on public lands and waters in Minnesota. Mentees are paired up with an experienced mentor, not exceeding a 2:1 mentee to mentor ratio.

The following activities are completed by selected applicants prior to the mentored event in order to participate:

1. Group connect with other mentees.
2. Connect with assigned mentor
3. Hunter safety & certification
4. Conservation education (seminar)
5. Game/plant biology (seminar)
6. Land management & stewardship (seminar)

The following activities are completed on the days in field:

1. Range day (shot & pattern)
2. Wildlife or aquatic management area visit
3. Land/resource manager presentation
4. Scouting w/mentor
5. Hunting, fishing, or foraging w/mentor

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Foraging Cohort Development & Instruction	July 31, 2026
Summer Foraging Capstone Experience	August 31, 2026
Small Game Cohort #1 Development & Instruction	September 30, 2026
Small Game Cohort #1 Capstone Experience	November 30, 2026
Panfishing Cohort Development & Instruction	January 31, 2027
Panfishing Cohort Capstone Experience	February 28, 2027
Small Game Cohort #2 Development & Instruction	April 30, 2027
Small Game Cohort #2 Capstone Experience	May 31, 2027

Activity 2: Outreach & Continuing Education

Activity Budget: \$15,000

Activity Description:

Outreach to urban, regional, historically marginalized, and new American communities will take place across a variety of mediums and forums. Targeted program advertisement and participant solicitation will occur online, across social media/digital platforms. TPL and BHA will lead outreach efforts across multiple fronts, tapping into existing networks and previously developed partnerships.

Several pop-up events will also be used to achieve multiple outcomes, as a means to promote the program, to provide continuing points of engagement and skills development for cohort participants, and as community building opportunities. Timing of these events will be interspersed throughout the development of different activity cohorts to aid in programmatic continuity, recruitment, and retention. The events will offer less time-intensive opportunities for continued development of outdoor skills learned while participating in a program cohort, or as an introduction and recruitment tool for new participants.

To further augment the activity cohorts, TPL will explore technology platforms that supplement hands-on experiences by providing accessible web-based learning to create both in-person and online authentic communities. Cohort experience (pre & post event) will be collected via survey. These tools will help new outdoor enthusiasts continue their education, strengthen connections with mentors and peers, and foster development of the next generation.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Pop-up Outdoor Skills Event 1	November 30, 2026
Programmatic Outreach	June 30, 2027
Pop-up Outdoor Skills Event 2	June 30, 2027
Cohort Experience Survey Data Collection & Assessment	June 30, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Aaron Hebeisen	Backcountry Hunters and Anglers	Website administration and outreach, insurance provider	Yes
Peter Martignacco	Minnesota Foraging Alliance	Cohort development, outreach	Yes
Keng Yang	Private Consultant	Cohort development & coordination, outreach and network development, digital platform development	Yes
Brad Gausman	Minnesota Conservation Federation	Advisor	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?

Individuals in our program will be mentored, supported, and cultivated beyond any single event or cohort to continually participate and recruit in the development of an engaged outdoors community. This self-determined, organic community-driven process will help to sustain participation and commitment on the part of participants. The goals and intent of the program are transferable beyond the activities of hunting, fishing, and foraging as the program structure has been designed in a way that allows for insertion of most any outdoor recreational endeavor in place of another, yet still empowers participants and encourages equity in the outdoors.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Turning Back To Rivers: Environmental And Recreational Protection	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09g	\$1,000,000
Minnesota Community Schoolyards	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08i	\$1,433,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Nick Bancks

Job Title: Project Manager

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

Nick currently co-leads the Mentored Hunting and Angling program, a TPL-led, collaborative effort in partnership with Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. He is an experienced outdoorsman, certified EMT, and has hunted or fished across Minnesota for the past 40 years. As a past member of the metro chapter of Pheasants Forever, Nick also helped to lead the chapter's youth wing shooting program, which is a hunter education course focused on introducing youth to the sport of upland bird hunting. He has worked in the conservation field for the past 13 years across Minnesota in both the public and private sectors, managing land acquisition and restoration projects, and leading conservation planning and program development.

Organization: The Trust for Public Land

Organization Description:

Since 1972, Trust for Public Land (TPL) has protected more than 4 million acres, created or transformed 5,000 new public places across America, forged hundreds of active partnerships, and developed more than 2,000 miles of trails across the U.S. TPL has also helped states and local communities generate more than \$68 billion in new public funds for parks and open space.

Our strategic focus on improving outdoor access reflects learning from more than forty years protecting public land to advance our “Land for People” mission. We have heard from communities across America that access to the outdoors is central to a life well-lived, something that should be treated as a basic human right. It is well-documented that there are many other benefits communities gain from America’s lands and waters beyond just recreational access—benefits like clean water, forestry and farming, economic diversity through outdoor businesses, improved mental and physical health, stronger community ties, and spiritual inspiration. The core goals of this proposal align directly with TPL’s mission to create and protect outdoor spaces for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities now and for future generations. Everyone deserves access to the benefits of nature.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Project Management Staff		Coordination, administration and implementation of program, including outreach and events			58%	0.53		\$54,000
Administrative & Finance Staff		Budget administration, contracts, grant report and tracking			58%	0.06		\$9,000
							Sub Total	\$63,000
Contracts and Services								
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers	Subaward	Web administration, insurance coverage, outreach				0.1		\$30,000
Minnesota Foraging Alliance	Service Contract	Cohort development, outreach				0.05		\$5,000
Keng Yang	Service Contract	Cohort development & coordination, outreach and network development, digital platform development, equipment and supplies for outdoor education events				0.4		\$60,000
							Sub Total	\$95,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Event & class supplies, including disposable cutlery, cleaning supplies, temporary food storage containers	For cooking and serving meals during capstone events					\$8,000
	Tools and Supplies	Food for events	For purchasing food that is prepared and served during capstone events	X				\$5,000
	Tools and Supplies	Shooting targets, ammunition	For use during range day instruction and capstone hunting events					\$3,000
							Sub Total	\$16,000
Capital Expenditures								

							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	10 trips 1800 miles 2 people	Covers mileage for round-trip travel to 4 capstone event locations, 2 pop-up event locations, and scouting					\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$2,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
		Volunteer Honorarium	payment to mentors who volunteer time and resources during education and capstone events					\$12,000
							Sub Total	\$12,000
							Grand Total	\$188,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Food for events	The capstone events generally take place over the course of several consecutive days where participants will lodge and eat together. These communal meals are especially important in the participant's experience as they help to cement communal ties and build traditions.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	Volunteer	Volunteer time by mentors during course and capstone events	Potential	\$84,000
Cash	Bass Pro Shops & Cabela's Outdoor Fund	For campsite reservations & other lodging, equipment & supplies	Potential	\$10,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$94,000
			Funds Total	\$94,000

Total Project Cost: \$282,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [671c2654-cfc.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Narrative overview and summary of Mentored Hunting, Angling & Foraging Program. Contains several visuals of past program participants....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Audit	b5e445f5-2d9.pdf
990	4cbef428-286.pdf
TPL Certificate of Good Standing MN	da522447-af4.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
TPL Authorization Letter	8937d962-2d6.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
MNCF Letter of Support	21f1a92b-22b.pdf
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Letter of Support	065f312f-ac3.pdf
Hunters of Color Letter of Support	6b5d6717-877.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:

Aaron Hebeisen, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers; Sara Shaw Meyers, TPL

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