



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-112

Proposal Title: Pollinator Education for Minnesota's Diverse Cultural Communities

Project Manager Information

Name: Yuzhu Lu

Organization: EcoAlpha

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We deliver interactive pollinator education at Minnesota fairs and festivals, engaging multicultural communities, raising awareness, addressing knowledge gaps, and promoting conservation actions to protect pollinators and biodiversity for future.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$54,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Fish and Wildlife (D)

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?

In the Future

Narrative

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

Pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects, play a crucial role in Minnesota's ecosystems, agriculture, and food security. However, pollinator populations are declining at alarming rates due to habitat loss, climate change, pesticide use, and land development. Many Minnesotans, particularly in underserved and diverse cultural communities, have limited access to pollinator conservation education and sustainable land management practices that support pollinator health.

This project seeks to bridge that knowledge gap by bringing interactive, culturally relevant pollinator education to diverse ethnic communities through fairs and festivals. These events provide a unique opportunity to reach large, multicultural audiences, fostering awareness, engagement, and action.

By incorporating multilingual resources, culturally adapted messaging, and hands-on activities, this initiative will educate the public on pollinator conservation, encourage sustainable practices, and inspire community-led solutions. Through collaborations with educators, conservation groups, and community leaders, we will ensure that pollinator protection becomes an accessible and shared priority for all Minnesotans, regardless of background.

This project aligns with Minnesota's environmental goals by promoting biodiversity, ecosystem resilience, and cross-cultural environmental stewardship, helping communities take an active role in safeguarding pollinators 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.

Our project will deliver interactive, culturally inclusive pollinator education to diverse communities across Minnesota by hosting educational booths and hands-on activities at major fairs and festivals.

A recent survey of 90 Minnesota residents at our Mall of America Lunar New Year booth revealed key gaps in pollinator knowledge: While most recognized bees and butterflies as pollinators, fewer identified birds, bats, flies, and beetles as vital pollinators; and a significant number were unaware of the threats pollinators face. However, many participants expressed strong interest in learning how to protect them.

To address these gaps, we will implement: Multilingual educational materials tailored for Minnesota's diverse communities; Hands-on activities, including pollinator-friendly planting stations and live demonstrations; Culturally relevant storytelling to connect traditional ecological knowledge with conservation.

We will reach diverse ethnic communities by participating in events such as: State/county fairs, cultural & ethnic festivals – Asian Fair, Minnesota Songkran Festival, Minneapolis International Festival, Festival of Nations, Little Africa Fest, Hmong New Year, Irish Fair etc. We will set With LCCMR funding, we will expand our reach and equip Minnesotans with the knowledge of pollinators. A website will be developed as a central hub to educate Minnesota residents from diverse backgrounds about pollinator conservation.

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 pollinator conservation in Minnesota by increasing public awareness and engagement through interactive education at fairs and festivals. Outcomes include:

a). Improved Public Knowledge – Thousands of Minnesotans will gain a better understanding of pollinators, their role in ecosystems, and threats they face.

- b). Sustainable Actions Adopted – Participants will learn how to create pollinator-friendly habitats and reduce harmful practices.
- c). Biodiversity Preservation – Increased awareness and action will support pollinator populations, benefiting Minnesota’s natural ecosystems, agriculture, and food security.
- d). Inclusive Environmental Stewardship – Diverse communities will be engaged, ensuring pollinator conservation efforts reflect Minnesota’s cultural diversity.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Securing Booth Space at County Fairs, Cultural Festivals, and Public Events

Activity Budget: \$4,000

Activity Description:

To maximize outreach, we will secure booth space at 5 major ethnic group fairs, cultural festivals, and public events across Minnesota. These events provide a high-traffic platform to engage a diverse audience, including families, educators, and community leaders, with accessible and engaging pollinator education.

Our team will coordinate with event organizers, ensuring representation at statewide and local festivals such as the Minnesota State Fair, Asian Fair, Festival of Nations, Hmong New Year Festival, and more. The selected events will target diverse ethnic communities, helping to bridge knowledge gaps and promote inclusive conservation efforts.

This activity includes securing booth reservations, event logistics, and planning audience engagement strategies. Our team will schedule participation in multiple events throughout the year, ensuring maximum exposure and community impact. By integrating pollinator education into well-attended public gatherings, we will reach a broad demographic and encourage conservation actions among Minnesotans.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Identify and Compile a List of Targeted Events	August 31, 2026
Prioritize events that attract diverse ethnic communities and high public attendance to maximize impact.	September 30, 2026
Prepare and submit applications and vendor agreements for participation in 5 major events.	November 30, 2026

Activity 2: Designing Interactive Displays and Multilingual Educational Materials

Activity Budget: \$22,000

Activity Description:

To effectively engage diverse audiences, we will design, develop, and produce interactive displays and multilingual educational materials for use at festival booths. Our goal is to make pollinator conservation knowledge accessible to all communities, particularly those with limited access to environmental education resources.

Materials will include pollinator fact sheets, infographics, posters, brochures and digital QR code-linked resources available in multiple languages such as Hmong, Somali, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. Displays will feature pollinator identification charts, life cycle diagrams, and myth-busting sections to correct common misconceptions identified in our Mall of America survey.

We will incorporate visual and interactive elements, such as pollination process simulations, 3D models of native pollinators, and touchscreen-based quizzes, to maximize engagement. The goal is to educate attendees in an enjoyable, hands-on way, increasing pollinator awareness and conservation participation.

We will look at up most factual pollinator information using online sources such as Xerces Society, the Honeybee Society, etc. After the draft materials are developed, we will consult pollinator experts to ensure the accuracy of the educational materials. Besides using Google translate, professional translators will be hired to help translate the educational materials and displays into multiple languages.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Develop Content and Identify Key Educational Messages	August 31, 2026
Translate and Adapt Educational Materials for Diverse Audiences	January 31, 2027
Design and Produce Interactive Displays and Printed Materials	April 30, 2027
Pilot Displays at First 1-2 Events and Gather Feedback	June 30, 2027
Refine and Expand Display by incorporating feedback to improve readability, engagement, and accessibility.	August 31, 2027

Activity 3: Deploying Booths at Public Events and Engaging Attendees

Activity Budget: \$8,000

Activity Description:

To effectively engage diverse communities in pollinator conservation, we will set up booths at 5 key public events across Minnesota, such as the Minnesota State Fair, Asian Fair, Hmong New Year, and Festival of Nations. Each booth will be visually engaging and fully equipped with multilingual educational materials, interactive displays, and hands-on activities to educate and inspire attendees.

At each event, attendees will participate in interactive learning experiences designed to enhance their understanding of pollinators. Activities will include pollinator identification challenges, storytelling sessions, and visual displays that highlight the crucial role of pollinators in ecosystems. The content will be multilingual and culturally relevant, ensuring that people from diverse backgrounds can easily engage and understand pollinator conservation efforts. Beyond education, the booths will encourage participation in conservation efforts by promoting pollinator-friendly practices such as planting native flowers, reducing pesticide use, and creating pollinator habitats.

To measure impact, on-site surveys will assess pollinator awareness, common misconceptions, and willingness to take conservation actions. Data collected will guide future outreach efforts, ensuring continuous improvement and inclusivity in pollinator education across Minnesota.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Conduct interactive learning activities with at least 1000 attendees.	October 31, 2028
Gather at least 500 completed surveys to assess knowledge improvement and conservation interest	October 31, 2028

Activity 4: Develop Online Resources for Pollinator Conservation Education with Multiple Cultural Appeal

Activity Budget: \$20,000

Activity Description:

To expand the reach of pollinator education beyond in-person events, we will develop a comprehensive online platform that provides accessible, science-based, and culturally relevant conservation resources. This initiative will ensure that individuals, schools, and community organizations have ongoing access to educational materials and practical guidance on protecting pollinators.

A dedicated pollinator education website will be designed to feature multilingual resources, ensuring inclusivity for Minnesota's diverse communities. The website will include downloadable brochures, fact sheets, and conservation

guides covering pollinator species, threats, and sustainable practices. Additionally, interactive quizzes and myth-busting content will engage users in a dynamic learning experience. The website will also serve as a hub for event schedules, volunteer opportunities, and community-driven conservation initiatives.

The platform’s impact will be monitored through website traffic, resource downloads, and community feedback. By continually updating content and promoting resources through social media, newsletters, and partner organizations, this initiative will create a lasting, widely accessible pollinator conservation network.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Design the Pollinator Education Website	May 31, 2028
Launch the Pollinator Education Website	September 30, 2028
Promote and Monitor Website Engagement	December 31, 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?

Findings will be shared through community reports, digital resources, and ongoing partnerships with schools, cultural organizations, and environmental groups. Educational materials will be made available online for continued public use.

To sustain efforts, we will seek additional funding from grants, corporate sponsors, and local partnerships to expand outreach. Volunteers and community partners will help continue engagement at future events.

Long-term, we aim to integrate pollinator education into schools, libraries, and community centers, ensuring lasting impact on conservation awareness and pollinator-friendly practices across Minnesota's diverse communities.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Yuzhu Lu

Job Title: President of EcoAlpha

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

The President of EcoAlpha, Yuzhu Lu, is a dedicated environmental leader with extensive experience in conservation, community engagement, and public education. His leadership in developing and executing impactful environmental initiatives makes him highly qualified to lead this grant application.

Lu has led EcoAlpha members in numerous environmental initiatives. Under his guidance, EcoAlpha has successfully carried out invasive plant removal to protect native ecosystems, park cleanup projects to improve urban green spaces, Monarch butterfly habitat monitoring, organic recycling to reduce landfill waste, and native plant restoration at historical sites. These projects not only improve the environment but also educate the public on the importance of ecological conservation and sustainability.

In addition to conservation work, Lu has successfully designed and led public education programs, including large-scale outreach efforts at cultural festivals and environmental events. For example, at the Mall of America Lunar New Year celebration, he spearheaded an interactive pollinator education booth, where EcoAlpha surveyed over 90 attendees to assess knowledge gaps and promote conservation actions. His work highlights the connection between environmental education and cultural heritage, helping diverse communities engage in sustainability efforts through culturally relevant programming.

Expanding EcoAlpha's global impact, Lu played a key role in launching the Global Cultural and Heritage Campaign, a collaborative initiative between the U.S., Egypt, Ghana, Congo and the United Nations YOUNGO. This campaign encourages individuals worldwide to share their traditions and environmental values through storytelling, art, and community action.

Lu has also established strong partnerships with educational institutions, conservation organizations, and cultural groups, including Urban Roots, Joint Action for Diversity and Engagement, the Asian Fair Committee, the Hmong New Year Festival Committee, etc. His ability to mobilize volunteers and engage various ethnic groups will be instrumental in ensuring the success and long-term sustainability of the project.

Organization: EcoAlpha

Organization Description:

EcoAlpha is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to environmental conservation, education, and community

engagement. Through hands-on initiatives, EcoAlpha empowers individuals and communities to protect natural resources, restore ecosystems, and promote sustainability. The organization specializes in pollinator conservation, invasive species management, habitat restoration, and environmental education, focusing on engaging diverse cultural and ethnic communities in conservation efforts.

EcoAlpha has led numerous initiatives, including invasive plant removal, park cleanups, monarch butterfly habitat monitoring, and pollinator awareness programs. At major public events like the Mall of America Lunar New Year celebration, EcoAlpha has successfully educated hundreds of attendees about pollinator conservation through interactive exhibits, multilingual educational materials, and public outreach surveys.

Committed to diversity and inclusion, EcoAlpha integrates multicultural perspectives into environmental education, making conservation accessible to historically underrepresented communities. The organization actively collaborates with schools, community groups, and environmental agencies to implement sustainable solutions and long-term conservation projects.

Through a combination of science-based research, public education, and community-driven action, EcoAlpha fosters a culture of environmental responsibility. By engaging individuals from all backgrounds, the organization works to ensure a healthier, more sustainable future for Minnesota's ecosystems and communities.

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	Translating the educational materials into multiple languages.				0.1		\$5,000
TBD	Service Contract	Hire pollinator experts to check the accuracy of educational materials.				0.1		\$3,000
TBD	Service Contract	Website development				0.2		\$20,000
TBD	Service Contract	Professional designers to help design and develop educational materials.				0.2		\$5,000
							Sub Total	\$33,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Touch Screen Monitor Display	Touch screen display will be used to exhibit facts about pollinators, have interactive games and watch live videos					\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$2,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	5000 miles; meals for volunteers and staff	Travel to different festivals or events, travel to different stores to purchase materials for events.					\$10,000

							Sub Total	\$10,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Printing educational materials	Printing flyers, posters, displays to educate attendees					\$5,000
							Sub Total	\$5,000
Other Expenses								
		Event registration and Booth fee	Secure booth space to conduct interactive activities					\$4,000
							Sub Total	\$4,000
							Grand Total	\$54,000

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: \$54,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [9d4b7d07-4c4.docx](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Table describing the major components of the proposed project....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Nonprofit official letter	42651ee0-594.pdf
990EZ	0ffc9c5-dc5.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Letter	d5f28a09-985.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?

Yes

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:

Not applicable.

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