



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-125

Proposal Title: St. Croix Community Conservation Project

Project Manager Information

Name: Marc White

Organization: Wild Rivers Conservancy

Office Telephone: (715) 483-3300

Email: mwhite@wildriversconservancy.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The St. Croix Community Conservation Project is a staff-supported volunteer-based project to address declining water quality and fish and wildlife habitat in the St. Croix River and its Minnesota tributaries.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$952,000

Proposed Project Completion: October 31, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Fish and Wildlife (D)

Project Location

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

Region(s): SE

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): SE

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 St. Croix National Scenic Riverway faces both legacy and emerging conservation challenges that will continue to go under-addressed with traditional staff-based approaches. These challenges include climate change, invasive species, non-point source pollution, and habitat loss and fragmentation due to commercial, industrial and residential development. With 3,414 square miles in the Minnesota portion of the St. Croix River Basin, volunteer-based community conservation networks are the most cost effective and sustainable approach to long-term natural resource conservation. Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMPs) have now been approved for the Lower St. Croix River, Snake River and the Kettle and Upper St. Croix River. Developed within BWSR's one watershed one plan framework, these plans layout aggressive goals for phosphorus load reductions, monitoring, public outreach and civic engagement. Staff-supported volunteer-based community conservation networks focused on civic engagement, water quality monitoring and invasive species prevention and early detection will strongly advance CWMP goals and aid in the assessment of plan implementation.

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.

The St. Croix Community Conservation Project is a staff-supported volunteer-based approach to mitigate threats to water quality and fish and wildlife habitat in the St. Croix River and its Minnesota tributaries. Through the St. Croix Community Conservation Project, Wild Rivers Conservancy will establish three volunteer networks, including a River Ambassador Network, a Stream Monitoring Network, and an AIS Prevention and Early Detection Network. The activities of these three volunteer networks will be directly informed by guidance of a re-formed St. Croix Basin Team and Basin Team sub-committees with representatives from DNR, MPCA, BWSR, CWMP Steering Committees, USGS, NPS and Minnesota counties and municipalities. With Basin Team guidance and leadership, training and support from Wild Rivers Conservancy staff, this staff-supported, volunteer-based project will greatly expand hands-on civic involvement in conservation of the St. Croix River and its watershed. The St. Croix Community Conservation Project will empower people of all ages and backgrounds through hands-on conservation activities that strengthen community and build caring relationships with the Riverway for current and future generations.

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 St. Croix Community Conservation Project will establish three staff-supported, volunteer-based community conservation networks. These three networks will inform and advance conservation efforts to address non-point source pollution, curb the establishment and spread of aquatic invasive species, enhance climate resiliency and promote civic engagement in developing goals for watershed conservation and river protection. Project activities will be coordinated with MN DNR, MPCA, BWSR, USGS, NPS and Minnesota counties and municipalities through regular meetings of a multi-jurisdictional St. Croix basin team. This project will identify gaps and adaptations to inform nutrient and sediment TMDL implementation plan progress for Lake St. Croix.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Develop and support a Volunteer River Ambassador Network guided by a multijurisdictional St. Croix Basin Team.

Activity Budget: \$325,000

Activity Description:

With the training and support of the St. Croix River Steward, members of the River Ambassador Network will work within their communities to represent the conservation interests of riverway users and participate in efforts to develop and share up-to date river conservation guidance. The River Steward will coordinate with DNR, MPCA, BWSR, CWMP Steering Committees, USGS, NPS and Minnesota Counties and municipalities to re-form and coordinate regular meetings of a multi-jurisdictional St. Croix Basin Team. The River Steward will facilitate basin team meetings, coordinate basin-wide efforts to reduce sediment and nutrient loading, address current impairments to Lake St. Croix, and produce annual Lake St. Croix TMDL Progress Reports. The River Steward will coordinate the work of the NPS Lands Team, the Conservancy L&W Committee and other partners to develop consistent and up-to-date wild and scenic zoning guidance. The River Steward will support volunteer River Ambassadors and provide them with the training, guidance and informational resources needed to ensure landowner, developer and municipal compliance with established wild and scenic zoning standards.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Re-establish and convene 1st regular meeting of the St. Croix Basin Team	October 31, 2026
Recruit and train a network of 20 Volunteer River Ambassadors	June 30, 2027
Produce 1st annual Lake St. Croix Nutrient TMDL Progress Report	October 31, 2027

Activity 2: Develop and support a Volunteer Stream Monitoring Network for the St. Croix River and its Minnesota tributaries.

Activity Budget: \$311,000

Activity Description:

With training and support of a Stream Monitoring Coordinator, members of the Stream Monitoring Network will collect water quality and stream habitat data on the St. Croix River and its Minnesota tributaries. The St. Croix Stream Monitoring Coordinator will work with DNR, MPCA, Met Council, USGS, NPS, CWMP Steering Committees and other project partners to identify St. Croix stream monitoring priorities, establish monitoring protocols, grow the network, and produce annual State of the River Reports to guide riverway conservation decision making.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Convene 1st meeting of a re-established St. Croix Basin Team Monitoring Committee.	October 31, 2026
Complete stream monitoring goals and methods for the St. Croix River and Minnesota tributaries.	March 31, 2027
Recruit, train and support 1st class of 18 volunteer stream monitors.	May 31, 2027
Produce 1st State of the River Report.	October 31, 2029

Activity 3: Develop and support a Volunteer Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention & Early Detection Network

Activity Budget: \$316,000

Activity Description:

Wild Rivers Conservancy will reach out to the general public and state and local partners to recruit volunteers to support AIS prevention and early detection in the St. Croix Watershed in Minnesota. This expand the successful purple loosestrife biocontrol volunteer science project and empower community scientists to raise, rear, and release biocontrol beetles in areas of heavy purple loosestrife populations to decrease the seed output of the plant and allow native vegetation to repopulate. Wild Rivers Conservancy will also expand purple loosestrife infestation mapping in the St. Croix River Watershed to identify and prioritize beetle release locations.

Additionally, Wild Rivers Conservancy will work with local lake associations, county governments, the MN DNR, and the public to recruit volunteers to conduct zebra mussel veliger sampling and deploy plate samplers at 30 high priority lake and river sites throughout the St. Croix River watershed annually throughout the duration of the project. Volunteers will also be recruited to assist with performing watercraft inspections and educating the public about preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. These watercraft inspections will complement watercraft decontaminations performed by Conservancy staff.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Recruit, train and deploy 1st class of 20 purple loosestrife biocontrol volunteers.	July 31, 2026
Recruit, train and deploy 1st class of AIS survey volunteers.	August 31, 2026
Recruit, train and deploy 1st class of 20 zebra mussel and spiny water flea volunteers.	July 31, 2027
Produce 1st annual AIS Prevention and Early Detection Report.	October 31, 2027
Produce St. Croix River Basin AIS Strategic Plan Update	October 31, 2029

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 results of the St. Croix Community Conservation Project will be implemented through the re-establishment of a high functioning multijurisdictional St. Croix Basin Team and the sustainable growth of three volunteer-based community conservation networks. Staff support needed to sustain these activities beyond the project period will be operationalized through a combination of private philanthropy and grant funding.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Citizen Science Program	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 06b	\$174,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Marc White

Job Title: Natural Resources Manager

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

Marc White is the Natural Resources Manager for Wild Rivers Conservancy and has over 25-years of experience in natural resource project management. Marc has successfully managed and administered five concurrent phases of the LSOHC funded St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Project and the LCCMR/ENRTF funded Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Citizen Science Project. As project manager, Marc has also led the Stormwater Wetland and Ravine Restoration Project at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee, WI and was project manager for the volunteer-based Milwaukee River Lake Sturgeon Rehabilitation Project. As a leader in the management of community conservation and citizen science projects, Marc has received several awards and honors including:

Green Luminary – Fresh Coast Guardians/Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District - 2020

Environmentalist of the Year – Village of River Hills, WI - 2019

Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species - Invader Crusader Award - 2009

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – Fisheries Management Award - 2008

Throughout his career in natural resource project management, Marc has demonstrated the ability to build strong partnerships with state and federal agencies, municipalities and conservation-minded non-profits to advance shared project goals. Marc's leadership history building conservation partnerships, guiding river conservation efforts, training and mentoring conservation staff, building staff-supported volunteer-based conservation initiatives and developing and implementing conservation projects give us every confidence that the St. Croix Community Conservation project will be successfully completed on-time and on-budget.

Organization: Wild Rivers Conservancy

Organization Description:

Wild Rivers Conservancy is the only nonprofit focused specifically and exclusively on conservation of the St. Croix River watershed. As the official nonprofit partner for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, the Conservancy actively partners with the National Park Service on education, land and water protection, invasive species monitoring and control.

The Conservancy fills the need for basin-wide leadership, leveraging resources and crossing political boundaries to work for more effective watershed protection and enhancement. In addition to our strong partnership with the National Park Service, we actively work with more than 75 organizations with an interest in the river - from local soil and water districts, to land trusts, nature centers, schools, sporting groups and nonprofits ranging from small friends groups to national conservation organizations.

The Conservancy's strategic plan guides our efforts to protect and enhance the natural resources and ecosystems in the St. Croix River watershed and to provide opportunities for people to discover, explore, and steward the Riverway. All of the Conservancy's programs are tied to achieving these important goals. The Conservancy's programs engage people of all ages and backgrounds in activities that strengthen community and build caring relationships with the Riverway for current and future generations.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Natural Resources Manager		Project Management			25%	0.65		\$61,000
Stream Monitoring Coordinator		Train and coordinate volunteer stream monitors			25%	3.25		\$194,500
St. Croix River Steward		Train and coordinate volunteer river ambassadors			25%	3.25		\$219,700
Invasive Species Technician		Train and support AIS volunteers			25%	3.25		\$156,000
Climate Resiliency Specialist		Climate resiliency program integration			25%	0.49		\$33,000
Invasive Species Coordinator		Coordinate AIS activities			25%	0.65		\$44,000
Volunteer Coordinator		Volunteer recruitment and support			25%	0.65		\$40,500
Business Manager		Administrative support			25%	0.16		\$13,600
Communications and Marketing Coordinator		Project outreach and promotion			25%	0.33		\$25,200
							Sub Total	\$787,500
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Website and digital media support services				0.16		\$15,000
TBD	Service Contract	GIS support services				0.16		\$15,000
TBD	Service Contract	AIS decontamination unit maintenance agreement				0.16		\$2,500
TBD	Service Contract	Vehicle lease agreement				0		\$13,500
TBD	Service Contract	Laboratory analysis of AIS samples				0.16		\$10,000

							Sub Total	\$56,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Stream monitoring kits (18)	Tools and supplies for stream monitoring					\$27,000
	Tools and Supplies	AIS monitoring tools and supplies	Tools and supplies for AIS sample collection					\$27,000
	Tools and Supplies	AIS sample shipping supplies	Supplies for shipping AIS samples for laboratory analysis					\$500
	Tools and Supplies	AIS roadside survey tools and supplies	Tools and supplies to conduct AIS roadside surveys					\$2,000
	Tools and Supplies	Purple loosestrife biocontrol rearing kits (50)	Tools and supplies to rear biocontrol beetles					\$5,000
							Sub Total	\$61,500
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	2500 miles/year x 3 years x \$0.70/mile	Travel to to provide volunteer stream monitor training and support					\$5,500
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	1429 miles/year x 3 years x \$0.70/mile	Travel for AIS volunteer training and support					\$3,000
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	952 miles/year x 3years x \$0.70/mile	Travel for AIS survey and monitoring					\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$10,500
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								

	Printing	Color printing 1500 pages/year x \$0.75/page x 3 years	Stream monitoring related manuals, flyers, brochures and posters					\$3,500
	Printing	Color printing 1750 pages/year x \$0.75/page x 3 years	River Ambassador related manuals, flyers, brochures and posters					\$4,000
	Printing	Color printing 1100 pages/year x \$0.75/page x 3 years	Basin Team reports					\$2,500
	Printing	Color printing 450 pages/year x \$0.75/page x 3 years	Purple loosestrife biocontrol education and outreach materials					\$1,000
	Printing	Color printing 220 pages/year x \$0.75/page x 3 years	Zebra mussel veliger tow instruction manual					\$500
	Printing	Color printing 900 pages/year x \$0.75/page x 3 years	AIS prevention and early detection training manuals, flyers, brochures and posters					\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$13,500
Other Expenses								
		Insurance coverage for AIS decontamination trailer (3 years)	Coverage to repair/replace AIS decontamination trailer in the event of accident/vandalism etc.					\$1,500
		Auto Insurance coverage for 1 vehicle for (3 years)	Coverage in the event of accident/vandalism etc.					\$3,500
		Liability insurance rider for AIS decontamination Unit (3 years)	Coverage for potential damage and injury due to decontamination activities					\$4,000
		AIS Decontamination unit maintenance parts and labor (3 years)	General maintenance and upkeep of the mobile decontamination trailer					\$9,000
		Social media posts and digital content production (3 years)	Project promotion, volunteer recruitment and outreach					\$5,000
							Sub Total	\$23,000
							Grand Total	\$952,000

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: \$952,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [79db45aa-0a0.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The visual component for the St. Croix Community Conservation Project is a two-page document with a combination of photos and paragraph-style text illustrating the importance of community conservation and explaining the impacts this project will have on increasing comprehensive monitoring, improving environmental resilience, and building a community stewardship ethic....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Wild Rivers Conservancy assumed name	48747cf0-c90.pdf
Wild Rivers Conservancy nonprofit standing	500a40be-093.pdf
Wild Rivers Conservancy Audit	c891c3ca-ac7.pdf
Wild River Conservancy 990	b5ff43da-d47.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	961ecd2e-28f.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway LOR	9b58fa17-518.pdf
Kanabec Co. LOS	335da345-f80.pdf
Washington Conservation District LOS	bcf6fd24-af4.pdf
Pine Co. LOS	18e380d2-11a.pdf
Isanti Co. LOS	6c99da08-375.pdf
Chisago Co. LOS	1a140008-1b8.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:

Maria Young, Wild Rivers Conservancy; Alexis Monti, Wild Rivers Conservancy

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

