



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-143

Proposal Title: Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Curriculum Development and Pilot

Project Manager Information

Name: Eli Sagor

Organization: U of MN - College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

Office Telephone: (218) 409-6115

Email: esagor@umn.edu

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Increasing access to safe, effective prescribed fire statewide through design and delivery of a Minnesota Certified Prescribed Burn Manager program to improve the collective competence of non-agency prescribed fire practitioners.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$465,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Land (F)

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.

Fire was historically common in Minnesota's wildlands and shaped the character and quality of our native prairies and forests. Fire remains a critical natural process and prescribed fire has become the irreplaceable means of maintaining healthy native grasslands and woodlands for multiple benefits. Meanwhile, there is limited prescribed fire training available to non-agency prescribed fire practitioners. Many landowners and land managers across the state have difficulty finding accessible prescribed fire services.

Roughly 3.7 million acres of native grasslands and forests would benefit from prescribed fire each year across Minnesota. At the same time, 70% of these grasslands and 50% of forests are privately owned or managed by non-government entities with minimal prescribed fire capacity. Training for a non-agency prescribed fire workforce is desperately needed to build capacity for safe and effective prescribed fire across mixed ownerships and jurisdictions.

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 demand for prescribed fire in Minnesota surpasses the availability of qualified prescribed fire specialists. To address this workforce shortage we will develop and deliver Certified Prescribed Burn Manager (CPBM) curriculum for prescribed fire specialists and pilot the curriculum with two cohorts of non-agency trainees. Increased access to professional prescribed fire training and certification will encourage adoption of an all hands, all lands solution to addressing the deficit of beneficial fire in Minnesota.

We will work through the Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council and with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) to formalize this burn manager certification as currently described in the MNDNR Prescribed Burn Handbook and MNDOT prescribed fire policy and procedures and leverage pre-work conducted by the Training Sub-Committee of the Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council.

Curriculum design and delivery will mirror the successes of CPBM programs developed in other states across the country. Coordinated outreach will link the CPBM training program to the Prescribed Fire Planning and Reporting Tool (online portal) currently in development by the MNDNR.

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?

Many of the most cherished landscapes in Minnesota are fire-dependent grasslands and forests that require beneficial fire for their long-term protection, conservation, and enhancement. Most of these fire-dependent landscapes have not seen fire in generations and are degraded and at risk of loss.

Development and delivery of a Certified Prescribed Burn Manager program will help grow the wildland fire workforce with burn managers implementing prescribed fire in the right places at the right times for public good and resource benefit. Many of these certified prescribed burn managers will also meet standards necessary for contracted burns on state lands.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Develop, pilot test, and publish a stakeholder-supported and Minnesota-specific Certified Prescribed Burn Manager curriculum.

Activity Budget: \$150,000

Activity Description:

The University of Minnesota Extension will hire a new fire educator to lead development and delivery of Certified Prescribed Burn Manager (CPBM) curriculum. The fire educator will work closely with the Training Subcommittee of the Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council and training specialists with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) throughout the development and delivery process. The curriculum will follow recommendations outlined in the 2017 Legislative Report on Prescribed Fire Requirements prepared by MNDNR.

Certified Prescribed Burn Manager standards will be identified including the required mix of classroom training and documented participation in and leadership of real-world burns. We will pilot test the new curriculum with target audience members. Based on pilot test results, we will digitally publish:

- CPBM curriculum;
- trainee task books;
- instructor materials;
- training burn evaluation forms.

Anticipated outcomes include:

- 1) publication of a stakeholder validated curriculum and standards to achieve CPBM status;
- 2) relationship building and stakeholder coordination to build support for and recognition of CPBM certification standards statewide.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Compile and synthesize curricula from other states to outline a possible MN CPBM curriculum	January 31, 2027
Finalize curriculum; have stakeholders review curriculum and requirements for real-world burn experience to achieve certification	April 30, 2027
Pilot test and evaluate the CPBM curriculum with typical trainees	July 31, 2027
Publish revised MN CPBM program curriculum, trainee task books, instructor materials, and field evaluation form	December 31, 2027

Activity 2: Build the Certified Prescribed Burn Manager workforce through cycles of program delivery, evaluation, and revision.

Activity Budget: \$270,000

Activity Description:

Deliver a minimum of one CPBM course each in Years 2 and 3. Continue to build collaborative relationships with a diverse set of potential burner manager trainees including but not limited to private companies, local government units, and fire departments regarding CPBM program development, training opportunities, and benefits of burn manager certification as it pertains to prescribed burn planning, permitting, and accomplishment reporting.

This activity will leverage existing collaborative relationships fostered through the Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council, a volunteer coalition of prescribed fire practitioners and supporters located across the state. The Council consists of a growing mix of representatives currently affiliated with the following entities:

- Forest Stewards Guild
- Lake States Fire Science Consortium
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Native Resource Preservation LLC
- National Park Service
- Pheasants Forever
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Prairie Enthusiasts
- Three Rivers Park District
- University of Minnesota

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Deliver CPBM curriculum to a cohort of 30 trainees in early 2028	April 30, 2028
Train new qualified instructors to ensure adequate capacity for training and trained burner evaluation	April 30, 2028
Deliver CPBM curriculum to a cohort of 30 trainees in early 2029	April 30, 2029
Coach and track progress of pilot-trained burners working toward task book completion and subsequent certification	June 30, 2029

Activity 3: Build broad-based support for state-sponsored certification of prescribed burn managers

Activity Budget: \$45,000

Activity Description:

We will build Certified Prescribed Burn Manager curriculum based on the recommendations of the 2017 Legislative Report on Prescribed Burn Requirements prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR). The report identifies the following subject matter to include in a Minnesota-specific CPBM training program:

- Minnesota legal and liability issues
- Open burn permitting
- Minnesota fuels, weather, and fire behavior
- Prescribed burn plan elements
- Pre-burn considerations, complexity and risk analysis, go or no-go factors
- Smoke management
- Contingency planning
- Public relations

Frequent meetings between the project team, Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council, and MNDNR will encourage coordination and alignment between CPBM curriculum and the new Minnesota Prescribed Fire Planning and Reporting Tool (online portal) currently in development by MNDNR. Work under this activity will ensure that key stakeholders, including wildland fire management agencies/organizations, see value in CPBM trainings, and formally recognize burn

managers deemed eligible for state certification. Information about availability of the CPBM program will be actively disseminated through presentations and webinars for key stakeholders.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Host quarterly meetings to engage key agency representatives and other stakeholders throughout the project	June 30, 2029
Engage monthly with Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council to shape curriculum development and delivery	June 30, 2029
Host 8-12 webinars or in-person presentations to communicate with program participants and beneficiaries across Minnesota	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Lane B. Johnson	UMN Cloquet Forestry Center	Prescribed fire specialist and MN Prescribed Fire Council liaison	Yes

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?

Curriculum developed for this project will be made publicly available with qualified instructors able to deliver the course to trainees on an as-needed basis. We anticipate an annual or bi-annual course offering.

The cost of course delivery and program administration will be partly recuperated by course fees paid by trainees and utilized to support future course offerings. To fill any financial gap between fee revenues and program delivery costs, Extension and the Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council will seek federal, state, and not-for-profit grant funds to support course delivery beyond the timeline of this project.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Eli Sagor

Job Title: Extension Forestry Specialist and Extension Natural Resources Program Leader

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

Dr. Sagor has 25 years of experience in developing and delivering natural resources education programming to landowners and professional land managers. As manager of the U's Sustainable Forests Education Co-operative, he has an extensive network of academic and practitioner collaborators and is well positioned to lead the stakeholder engagement and CPBM program development, delivery, and evaluation activities. He is also a member of the Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council. As UMN Extension natural resources program leader, Dr. Sagor also has leadership and supervisory experience suitable to managing the project.

Organization: U of MN - College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

Organization Description:

The Cloquet Forestry Center is the U's 3,500 acre research and experimental forest, and part of the CFANS Research and Outreach Center system. As part of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences, the CFC has the personnel and administrative support, access to researchers and other content specialists, and a network of collaborators suitable to provide the necessary teaching and learning spaces, both indoor and in the field.

About CFANS: Twelve academic departments and 10 research and outreach centers make up our college, along with the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, the Bell Museum, and dozens of interdisciplinary centers. As part of a major urban university located in the heart of the Twin Cities, we also provide immersive study opportunities across the state. Our living laboratories allow students, faculty, and staff to study throughout Minnesota's diverse ecosystems.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Eli Sagor		Project lead / PI			30.46%	0.03	X	\$4,316
Lane B. Johnson		Project coordinator			36.6%	0.3	X	\$29,915
Extension Educator, natural resources		Curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation			36.6%	3	X	\$322,844
							Sub Total	\$357,075
Contracts and Services								
University of Minnesota	Service Contract	Website hosting and web content editing				0		\$5,325
TBD - contracted instructors	Service Contract	Instruction at Certified Prescribed Burner courses. 10 instructor days per cohort @ \$500 per instructor day, 3 cohorts during project period.				-		\$15,000
TBD	Service Contract	Facility rental for annual stakeholder meeting: 3 meetings @ 150				-		\$450
TBD	Service Contract	Facility rental for course delivery - 5 events x \$200 x 3 years				-		\$3,000
USPS	Service Contract	Postage for course promotion - 300 items x \$2 x 3 years				-		\$1,800
TBD	Service Contract	Layout & design of curriculum - 50 hours x \$75				-		\$3,750
							Sub Total	\$29,325
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Lunch & refreshments for annual stakeholder mtg - 10 people x \$23	Necessary for annual stakeholder engagement meetings.					\$690
							Sub Total	\$690
Capital Expenditures								

							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Mileage for stakeholder meetings each year - 5 people x 200 miles x \$.70.	To ensure broad stakeholder engagement and communication throughout curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation.					\$2,100
	Conference Registration Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Registration for one conference per year relevant to the project.	Ensures stakeholder engagement and transparency in project progress and plans.					\$750
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Mileage - 50 locations x 200 miles x \$.70. Lodging - 25 nights x \$125. M&IE - 25 nights x 2 travel days x \$51	To cover check burn travel expenses. We anticipate a requirement for participants to have "check burns" evaluated by CPBM program reps. Generally in other states 2 check burns are required per participant.					\$38,025
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Mileage for UM staff - 2 people x 5 courses x 350 miles x \$.70 Lodging for UM staff - 2 people x 5 courses x 1 night x \$125 M&IE for UM staff - 2 people x 5 courses x 2 travel days x \$51 Mileage for Instructors - 5 people x 1 course x 350 miles x \$.70 Lodging for instructors - 5 people x 1 course x 1 night x \$125 M&IE for Instructors - 5 people x 1 course x 2 travel days x \$51	Travel for project staff and instructors to teach the CBPM course in full 3 times during the project.					\$21,240
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Mileage - 15 trips x 300 miles x \$.70, slightly less in year 3.	General project outreach & engagement. Attending stakeholder group meetings, engaging directly with key stakeholders (e.g. DNR, rural fire departments, others), and related activities to ensure project relevance and alignment with stakeholder priorities.					\$9,408
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Lodging - 5 nights x \$125 x 3 years	General project outreach and engagement (see above)					\$1,875

	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	M&IE - 5 trips x 2 travel days x \$51	General project outreach and engagement (see above)					\$1,530
							Sub Total	\$74,928
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Course promotional materials: 300 pcs x \$2 x 3 years	Printing CPBM course promotional materials.					\$1,800
	Printing	Curriculum materials: Handouts, worksheets, instructional content. 35 people x 75 pages x \$.15	Necessary for effective instruction					\$1,182
							Sub Total	\$2,982
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$465,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Personnel - Eli Sagor		Project lead / PI	Classified : 1% FTE to lead the project. This will redirect the individual's work from other responsibilities to leading the LCCMR-funded work.
Personnel - Lane B. Johnson		Project coordinator	Classified : The funded portion of this individual's salary and fringe will be exclusively focused on the LCCMR-funded work. This individual would not be engaged in this work if the project is not funded.
Personnel - Extension Educator, natural resources		Curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation	Classified : This is a new hire that will not occur if the project is not funded.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$465,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [ca12681f-fec.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The grasslands and forests of Minnesota need fire to be healthy. Training and certification of burn managers provides more options for protection, conservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources with safe and effective prescribed fire....

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
UMN Sponsored Project Administration approval letter	0d74857a-722.pdf
Insights and Suggestions for Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Programs	13afe92a-749.pdf
Minnesota Fire Needs Assessment	57763905-42c.pdf
2017 Legislative Report on Prescribed Burn Requirements	821c1689-bd7.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 UMN Policy on travel 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?

Yes, Sponsored Projects Administration

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:

Kerry Marsolek

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

