



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-207

Proposal Title: Resilient and Biodiverse Community Spaces

Project Manager Information

Name: Dan Shaw

Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources

Office Telephone: (612) 236-6291

Email: dan.shaw@state.mn.us

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The project focuses on resiliency and biodiversity planning for community spaces statewide and addressing several Minnesota Climate Action Framework initiatives.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$675,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Resiliency (A)

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

Narrative

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

There is significant interest from Minnesota communities for increasing climate resiliency and mitigation, and protecting biodiversity at community parks, schools and green spaces, shorelines and roadsides through vegetation restoration, soil health practices and other strategies to address human and ecosystem health concerns from climate change, chemicals and pollutants, high input lawns, decreasing biodiversity, and impacted water resources. Several Initiatives in Minnesota's Climate Action Framework (3.1,3.2,3.3) are focused on the need for funding and technical support to increase the resiliency of landscapes within Minnesota communities. Increased guidance, technical resources, case studies, and training is needed about climate resiliency, adaptation, and mitigation strategies, and biodiversity protection in community spaces.

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.

This will build momentum for statewide climate and biodiversity strategies through collaboration with a diverse advisory team to develop a "Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces" that will include a framework for site assessment and resiliency scoring, and plan templates for community spaces. The guide will focus on building five key aspects of resiliency including human health, plant diversity, pollinator and wildlife health, soil health and protection of water resources.

Assessment, resiliency scoring, planning and implementation using the new framework will be conducted at five case study projects that will act as long-term training locations. The projects will act as case studies to guide future resiliency and biodiversity projects.

Two on-site trainings at case study projects and two webinars focused on climate and biodiversity assessment, planning, implementation and management will be conducted to build the knowledge of professionals, students, and community partners statewide. Outreach and guidance will also be provided to at least fifteen Minnesota communities by the project team to build future collaboration for climate and biodiversity planning.

The new "Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces" sample plans and case study information will be added to BWSR's Climate Resiliency web pages.

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?

- 1) Planning templates will provide guidance to partners statewide for resiliency and biodiversity planning.
- 2) Assessment, resiliency scoring, and development of Climate Resiliency and Biodiversity plans for five case study sites.
- 3) Implementation of climate resiliency and biodiversity strategies at five case study sites covering around 50 acres.
- 2) 500 professionals and community partners trained through two field trainings and two webinars focused on climate and biodiversity assessment, planning, implementation, and management.
- 3) The climate and biodiversity planning guide, sample plan templates, and case studies available on BWSR's webpages

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Project Coordination and Development of a Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces

Activity Budget: \$65,000

Activity Description:

Advisors from PCA, Minnesota Department of Health, BWSR, the University of Minnesota, Great River Greening, Metro Blooms, Audubon, Metropolitan Council, and interested communities and other partners will develop a Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces. The guide will include a framework for site assessment, resiliency scoring, calculating sequestration potential, and project plan template for community spaces. Five key aspects of resiliency (ability of landscapes to withstand and recover from climate impacts) will be emphasized in the guide including human health, plant diversity, pollinator and wildlife health, soil health and protection of water resources. The plan will also include information for adaptation strategies and measuring mitigation benefits. The resiliency scoring method will provide an approach for measuring sites before and after implementation. The new resources will build on experience from BWSR's current Habitat Friendly Solar and Ecological Health Assessments, as well as their Pollinator and Biodiversity Toolbox, Lawns to Legumes guidance, and other resources on vegetation establishment and pollinator protection, as well as the Minnesota Stormwater Manual and Green Step Cities Program. The framework will also be beta tested in a University of Minnesota Ecological Restoration Planning and Management Course. The guide will be made available on BWSR's webpages.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Develop advisory team for guide development	June 30, 2026
Development of the Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces	June 30, 2028

Activity 2: Case Study Project Assessment and Planning

Activity Budget: \$69,000

Activity Description:

Five community spaces with different site conditions and climate challenges will be used to implement the new planning framework and develop example Climate and Biodiversity Implementation Plan Templates. Ranking criteria for selection of the projects will have an emphasis on 1) vulnerability to climate change, 2) environmental justice 3) potential for acting as long-term monitoring and training locations, 4) statewide distribution, 5) match, 6) potential for community engagement 7) potential for building regional momentum for successful climate resiliency and biodiversity projects. Projects will be located on permanently protected lands at parks, green spaces, schools, shorelines, and roadsides. Projects will incorporate several project types based on site conditions including prairie plantings, climate adapted woodland groves, pollinator plots, turf alternatives, soil health practices, shoreline protection, sustainable lawn care, diverse roadsides, and heat island mitigation, and will act as models to be included on BWSR's Climate Resiliency Toolbox as case studies. Project assessment and planning will be conducted by Great River Greening, Metro Blooms, Audubon, BWSR, and the University of Minnesota on the five case study projects and guidance will be provided to additional communities statewide.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Assessment and Planning of Case Study Sites	January 31, 2027

Activity 3: Case Study Project Installation

Activity Budget: \$449,000

Activity Description:

Climate and Biodiversity strategies will be implemented at each of five case study sites. BWSR will hire contractors for installation through the State Restoration Service Contract or through Conservation Corp of Minnesota as needed to alleviate staff capacity needs at smaller communities. Project oversights will be conducted by BWSR Metro Blooms and Great River Greening. Projects will be maintained through project funding and then maintained by staff from local communities that are trained through the program.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Installation of case study project resiliency strategies	June 30, 2029
Add ENRTF signage at all project sites	June 30, 2029

Activity 4: Two on-site Trainings and Two Webinars

Activity Budget: \$20,000

Activity Description:

Two on-site trainings will be held for professionals and community partners involved in the planning and management of landscapes and will focus on climate resiliency assessment, carbon sequestration calculations, planning, installation, and management. Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guides will be provided to participants. The trainings will be held at two case study sites. Details of the case study assessment, planning and installation will be held indoors, followed by a field discussion of project installation and management. Two webinars will also be held that summarizes the new planning guide and framework, and results of the case study projects. The new guide and planning framework will also be used in a University of Minnesota restoration planning and management course.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hold two on-site climate resiliency trainings and two webinars and incorporate content into a course	June 30, 2029

Activity 5: Writing Case Study Information and Developing a Story Map for BWSR's Climate Resiliency Toolbox

Activity Budget: \$36,000

Activity Description:

University of Minnesota Research Assistants in the Department of Landscape Architecture will collaborate with BWSR staff to develop a story map for case studies and write case study information documenting assessment, planning, installation and management results to be included on BWSR's Climate Resiliency Toolbox. The story map will provide a framework for highlighting future case study projects demonstrating effective strategies for climate resiliency, adaptation and mitigation.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Adding of story map and case study information to BWSR Climate Resiliency Toolbox	June 30, 2029

Activity 6: Community Climate and Biodiversity Planning Assistance

Activity Budget: \$36,000

Activity Description:

Community assessment and planning assistance will also be conducted for at least fifteen projects statewide by BWSR and project partners to further increase momentum for climate resiliency and biodiversity projects. The new assessment and planning guide and resiliency plan templates will be used as the foundation for providing guidance to communities to help them plan community spaces.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Planning assistance provided to at least fifteen Minnesota Communities	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Laura Scholl	Metro Blooms/Blue Thumb Partnership	The organization will collaborate on the development of the Resiliency and Biodiversity Assessment and Planning Guide, provide technical assistance to communities working on case study projects, and lead training.	Yes
Todd Rexine	Great River Greening	The organization will collaborate on the development of the Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide, provide technical assistance to communities working on case study projects and collaborate on training	Yes
Kristine Miller	University of Minnesota Landscape Architecture Department	Coordination of Department Research Assistants	Yes
Dale Gentry	Audubon of Minnesota	Collaboration on development of the Resiliency and Biodiversity Planning Guide, and provide community planning assistance focused on enhancement for protecting declining bird species	Yes
Sharon Stephens	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Guiding project planning to ensure the planning guide and programs will benefit PCA programs	No
Joanne Boettcher	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Green infrastructure expert participating on the advisory team and guide development	No
Eric Wojchik	Metropolitan Council	Advisory team member and assisting with guide development	No
Crystal Myslajek	Minnesota Department of Health	Advisory team member and assisting with guide development related to human health considerations	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?

The project will be implemented through an advisory team guiding the new guide and planning framework, and selection of case study projects. Non-profit organizations Metro Blooms and Great River Greening, and University of Minnesota Research Assistants will assist with the assessment, planning and installation of case study projects. This project will build knowledge and momentum for assessing and planning of projects sites statewide, and lead to implementation of climate resiliency projects through additional public and private funding sources. State agencies will pursue additional funding sources to plan and implement projects.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Pollinator and Beneficial Insect Strategic Habitat Program	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 08b	\$750,000
Lawns To Legumes Program Phase 2	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08p	\$993,000
Lawns To Legumes Program Phase 2	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 08m & 20b	\$1,040,000

Strategic Framework to Guide Local Water Storage Implementation	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 03o	\$200,000
Watershed and Forest Restoration: What a Match!	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 08j	\$3,318,000
Conservation Reserve Program State Incentives	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 10e	\$750,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Dan Shaw

Job Title: Senior Ecologist/Vegetation Specialist

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

Dan Shaw, is the Senior Ecologist and Vegetation Specialist for BWSR where he works on invasive species, restoration, native vegetation, wetland, agricultural practices, stormwater design, pollinator habitat, and climate adaptation programs through conservation partnerships. Dan has also taught classes at the University of Minnesota for the last twenty-five years and currently teaches a course on "Ecological Restoration Project Planning and Management".

Related projects include:

- Establishment and management of BWSR's Cooperative Weed Management Area Program
- Establishment and management of BWSR's Habitat Friendly Solar Program
- Establishment and management of BWSR's Lawns to Legumes Program
- Establishment of the BWSR Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)
- Coordination of BWSR's Living Landscapes Initiative
- Development and updating of BWSR's Native Vegetation Establishment and Management Guidelines
- Development of BWSR's Pollinator and Biodiversity Toolbox and Landscape Resiliency Toolbox
- Development of State Seed Mixes
- Author, co-author or contributing author of "Plants for Stormwater Design", "The Minnesota Wetland Restoration Guide", "Native Vegetation in Restored and Created Wetlands", The Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens", "Ecological Restoration in the Midwest, Past, Present and Future"

Before coming to BWSR experience included being Conservation Director at Great River Greening, working for environmental consulting firms, restoration companies, native plant nurseries, research at the University of Minnesota, and over 20 years of farming experience.

Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources

Organization Description:

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is Minnesota's state agency dedicated to conserving and enhancing soil and water resources. In partnership with local organizations and private landowners, BWSR implements programs that prevent sediment and nutrient pollution in lakes, rivers, and streams, restore wetlands, and improve fish and wildlife habitats. The agency's 20-member board includes representatives from local and state government agencies, along with engaged citizens, ensuring a collaborative approach to environmental stewardship.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Program Coordinator		Program Implementation, partner coordination, approval of activities and payments			22%	0.51	X	\$82,000
Resource Conservationist		Development of project technical resources			22%	0.6	X	\$69,000
							Sub Total	\$151,000
Contracts and Services								
Blue Thumb/Metro Blooms Partnership	Subaward	The organization will collaborate on the development of the climate biodiversity guide leading topics related to urban green infrastructure, collaborate on the planning of two case study projects and coordinates two in-person trainings.				0.15		\$30,000
State Restoration Services Vendors	Service Contract	The state of Minnesota Restoration Services Contract will be used for contracting the implementation of climate and biodiversity strategies.				0		\$400,000
Great River Greening	Subaward	The organization will collaborate on the development of the climate and biodiversity guide focusing on the topics of ecosystem restoration, collaborate on the planning of three case study projects, and present at two in-person trainings.				0.18		\$34,000
University of Minnesota	Subaward	A research assistant will develop the Climate Resiliency Assessment Guide, a story map and document case study results for BWSR's Climate Resiliency Toolbox				0.18		\$24,000
Audubon of Minnesota	Subaward	Assist with development of the Climate and Biodiversity Planning Guide for Community Spaces focused on bird conservation, providing assessment and planning guidance to five communities				0.12		\$26,000
							Sub Total	\$514,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								

							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	12 trips, 18 hotel nights, 2000 miles, 2 people	Travel to case study projects					\$3,500
							Sub Total	\$3,500
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Printing of approximately 600 climate and biodiversity guides	Use of the resources at trainings					\$5,500
	Printing	Printing of 50 signs with ENRTF logo	Provide signs at each case study project and signs where project assistance is provided					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$6,500
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$675,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Personnel - Program Coordinator		Program Implementation, partner coordination, approval of activities and payments	Classified : This position is essential for this new program to conduct program implementation, and program oversight or funding recipients. ENRTF funds are not being used to supplant other sources of funds traditionally used to pay for the classified staff salary.
Personnel - Resource Conservationist		Development of project technical resources	Classified : This position is essential to this new program to conduct program implementation, and program oversight or funding recipients. ENRTF funds are not being used to supplant other sources of funds traditionally used to pay for the classified staff salary.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	25% Match from community partners where case study projects will be implemented	Funding will be used as part of the enhancement of green infrastructure projects	Pending	\$100,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$100,000
			Funds Total	\$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$775,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
TBD				-	-	-			
Totals				0	0	-			

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

Project funded through this project will be conducted on lands with public ownership or other permanent protection.

2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.

Implementation plans will be created for projects using the new planning framework for projects to provide guidance to landowners for long-term management of the project. The plans will be maintained by BWSR with other case study information that will be posted to BWSR's website.

3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.

Projects will require that high quality native seed and appropriate species are selected for the project and that the seed source sequence, diversity recommendations, seed specifications and climate considerations in the Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines be followed for projects. Seed tags must also be retained for documentation of what seed was installed.

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

The implementation and management plans developed for projects will include long-term management guidance. Any projects being enhanced through the project will be required to sign a stewardship agreement stating that long-term management will be conducted and how the work will be funded in the future.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

Conservation Corps of Minnesota's website link will be added to the BWSR webpage for the project and promoted as an option for conducting restoration work as part of the project.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

Evaluations of projects will be completed initially after activity completion and three years later to assess goals, identify problems and gather information about successful strategies that can be included in BWSR's What's Working webpage. This evaluation is consistent with site assessments conducted for BWSR funded projects.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [7fd09811-b19.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The attached map/graphic summarizes the need for this project and proposed outcomes....

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Blue Thumb Letter of Support	52cc0e3b-2c0.pdf
PCA Letter of Support	98657d42-d4c.pdf
GRG Letter of Support	295ea046-0dc.pdf
UMN Letter of Support	2014ca40-b38.pdf
Audubon Letter of Support	ac75d786-d3c.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Restoration,

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:

Sharon Stephens, PCA; Joanne Boettcher, PCA; Jason Beckler, BWSR; Todd Rexine, Great River Greening; Laura Scholl, Blue Thumb; Dale Gentry, Audubon

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

