



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-355

Proposal Title: Restored Bluff and Trail at Owámniyómni

Project Manager Information

Name: Kjersti Monson

Organization: Owámniyomni Okhódayapi

Office Telephone: (612) 836-8266

Email: kjersti@duvalcompanies.com

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Acquire, preserve, and improve land on the Central Riverfront in Minneapolis abutting the Upper Lock (but not the Lock structure itself) for conservation, natural restoration, education, and recreation.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$2,500,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2027

LCCMR Funding Category: Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

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?

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.

Owámniyomni Okhódayapi (OO) is fully utilizing \$2.8 million previously granted by LCCMR for restoration of five acres at Owamniyomni (St. Anthony Falls), with construction beginning in 2026 and lasting a year. However, early cost estimates did not foresee an emerging priority: the restoration of Upton Island's limestone bluff. Through Discovery and 35% Design, we have identified the bluff as having scenic, environmental, cultural, and habitat benefits. The bluff will restore the legibility of the original "lay of the land" on Upton Island, and will also provide for an ADA accessible pedestrian trail to ensure that the path to the shoreline, the views along it, and the learning spaces encountered along the way, are accessible to all regardless of age or ability. We are prepared to move forward without the bluff restoration if we cannot secure funding prior to the construction start, but its inclusion would be of enormous value for generations to come.

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.

We propose a 50/50 match with LCCMR funds to advance the design, engineering, and construction of a limestone bluff restoration and ADA accessible pedestrian-only trail, enhancing the planned Oak Savanna and Upland Prairie restoration and multi-purpose trail designed for pedestrians, bikes, and occasional maintenance vehicles (USACE, MNDOT, MPRB, City). Our team has completed concept level (35%) design of the bluff and ADA-accessible trail, and has cost estimated them as separate elements from the broader restoration. We have also designed an interim condition in the event that we are unable to secure funding for the bluff restoration in this phase. However, the ideal outcome is that we are able to advance the design of these features in time to construct them as one with the larger restoration. OO will match LCCMR's commitment dollar for dollar in order to achieve the ultimate outcome: Upland Prairie and Oak Savanna landscapes converging on a limestone bluff, and traversed by an accessible trail to the water; and a regional recreation connection via a multi-purpose trail linking West River Parkway to the shoreline and Water Works Park through this transformative living landscape.

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?

Capital Improvements will be achieved with ENRTF funds. Also funded: Design, engineering, and engagement soft costs to implement capital improvements. Capital improvements will enhance access to the Riverfront; improve connectivity, especially through construction of ADA accessible facilities; and fund environmental and natural restoration improvements of great scenic and habitat value (especially the bluff restoration). Restoration priorities will be responsive to cost and available funds, such that the broader restoration remains on track for planned construction. ENRTF funds will continue to support the development of partnerships & programs enabling education and cultural heritage opportunities on the site to flourish.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Capital Improvements: Bluff Restoration & ADA-Accessible Trail

Activity Budget: \$2,500,000

Activity Description:

We will design and construct a limestone bluff with an ADA-accessible trail to the riverfront as part of the existing plan to transform land at the Upper Lock. The bluff trail will enhance the planned restoration of Upland Prairie and Oak Savanna, which will replace a surface parking lot, abandoned buildings, and industrial remnants. That project is moving ahead, but the bluff and trail will be added only if funding is secured. If funding is not secured, we will build an interim condition where the bluff would otherwise go, and try again in the future. However, that would be less efficient and more costly as a separate bid and construction. We believe the bluff and trail are necessary to fully complete Phase 1 of the restoration. Because the multipurpose trail that is part of the larger project must be vehicle accessible and accommodate Operations movements by USACE, MPRB, & the City, this ADA-accessible trail is important to offer safe and scenic access to the restoration landscape and shoreline for people of all ages and abilities. The bluff will enable visitors to see and experience the original escarpment once again, providing environmental, scenic, habitat, cultural, and educational value.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Consult SHPO	August 31, 2025
Design through Construction Documents for Bluff & Trail	October 31, 2025
General Contractor Bid Completed	December 31, 2025
Construction	June 30, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jeff Johnson	City of Minneapolis	Jeff is our Primary Point of Contact for the collaborative efforts of the Friends with the City of Minneapolis & Meet Minneapolis at the Upper Lock.	No
Tucker Blythe	National Park Service	Tucker is the Superintendent of the Mississippi National River Recreation Area. We are engaging with Tucker and his team on NPS visitor and park programs as well as restoration activities. NPS oversees aspects of the NEPA compliance, and has been engaged in all multi-agency meetings.	No
Maggie Lorenz	Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi	Maggie leads Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi, a synergistic nonprofit in St. Paul. She sits on OO's Board, and served on OO's Consultant Team Selection Committee. Maggie is a powerful connector to First Nations, along with OO's Tribal Working Group, and the Dakota Knowledge Keepers embedded in OO's Consultant Team.	No
Kim Keprios	Wilderness Inquiry	Executive Director. Kim is our Primary Point of Contact in coordinating with Wilderness Inquiry on research, recreation, and place-based education opportunities. The founder of Wilderness Inquiry, Greg Lais, is on the Board of OO.	No
Michael Schroeder	Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board	Michael is the Planning Director at Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board. We have signed a Coordination Agreement with MPRB to ensure that this project and Water Works Park phase 2 (abutting property) are seamlessly aligned in both design and operation to the benefit of the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park.	No
Kevin Reich	Mississippi Watershed Management Organization	Kevin is the Executive Director of MWMO. His staff have been testing and monitoring water health on the site, and will be collaborators on habitat restoration goals for the project.	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?

OO will complete the restoration improvements, and a Restoration Management Plan. The restoration landscape will be maintained permanently by OO using the proceeds of a dedicated endowment. Thanks to OO's Advancement Team, \$8 million of a \$10 million target endowment has already been raised. OO and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board signed a Coordination Agreement with the intention to align and collaborate on the design, operation and maintenance of OO's project and the abutting Park Board property (Water Works Park and Mill Ruins Park) such that a coherent sense of place and coordinated management is achieved.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Upper St. Anthony Falls Enhancements	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09I	\$2,800,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Kjersti Monson

Job Title: Project Advisor

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

Kjersti has been managing this transformative project for Owamniyomni Okhodayapi since its inception, including management of the prior LCCMR grant supporting this project. She works directly with the Board and President of Owamniyomni Okhodayapi (formerly Friends of the Falls), and local government partners (MPRB and the City of Minneapolis), and manages the project and the consultant team. Kjersti was formerly the Planning Director for the City of Minneapolis and brings 25 years of experience implementing urban projects from both public and private sector roles, including managing the implementation of the Downtown Commons Park from RFP through construction just a few blocks away. Prior to her time at the City, she led the Real Estate Strategy market sector, U.S. Eastern region, at AECOM, a multinational architecture and engineering firm headquartered in Los Angeles. Kjersti holds a Masters in Urban Planning (with distinction) and a Masters in Landscape Architecture from Harvard University. She is an Affiliate Researcher of the Minnesota Design Center (UMN), and a Resource Professional for the Mayors Institute on City Design, a nonprofit associated with the US Conference of Mayors.

Organization: Owámniyomni Okhódayapi

Organization Description:

Owámniyomni Okhódayapi (OO) is Dakota-led with a Native American majority board of directors. Former Tribal elected leader Shelley Buck serves as President, and co-founder Mark Wilson is Chair of the Board. Owámniyomni Okhódayapi is working to transform five acres of land at Owámniyomni (St. Anthony Falls) into a place of restoration, education, healing and connection. Owámniyomni means “turbulent waters” in the Dakota language. Okhódaya translates to “to be friends with, to be friendly, or to befriend.” The organization was founded in 2016 by Paul Reyelts and Mark Wilson in response to the closure of the Upper Lock. Over time, the Dakota significance of the site was understood. Convening a Native Partnership Council and hosting a series of Community Conversations brought heritage and non-Native communities together to create a shared vision for the Falls. The transition to the name Owámniyomni Okhódayapi marked an important, intentional, and fundamental shift in how the organization operates, and how the design has unfolded.

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	The general contractor will be selected through a bid process to procure materials, manage subs necessary to complete the work, and construct the enhancements. The bluff and trail will be included as part of the larger Project.				20		\$2,500,000
							Sub Total	\$2,500,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 3 Parcels: 2						-
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$2,500,000

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				
Cash	Owamniyomni Okhodayapi (formerly Friends of the Falls)	Contribution to capital improvements (Bluff Restoration)	Pending	\$2,000,000
Cash	Owamniyomni Okhodayapi	Additional Design & Engineering Scope (GGN Add Service to include Bluff Restoration)	Secured	\$500,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$2,500,000
			Funds Total	\$2,500,000

Total Project Cost: \$5,000,000

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
2302924430004	Hennepin	Riverfront land at Owamniyomni (St. Anthony Falls) guided by adopted plans for a public interest	Fee Title	1	0.2	-	Public	Owamniyomni Okhodayapi / City of Minneapolis and its Park Board	Property Under Contract
2302924430005	Hennepin	Riverfront land at Owamniyomni (St. Anthony Falls) guided by adopted plans for a public interest. Partial Acquisition.	Fee Title	2	0.2	-	Public	Owamniyomni Okhodayapi / City of Minneapolis and its Park Board	Property Under Contract
Totals				3	0.4	-			

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.

All restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

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.

Restoration and management plans will be compiled in partnership with the City of Minneapolis acting by and through its Park Board, and all other appropriate authorities, and will be kept on file by OO and within the appropriate City or Park Board department. Long term plan implementation, maintenance, and management will be coordinated with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, and undertaken by Owamniyomni Okhodayapi. A Coordination Agreement was signed by OO and MPRB in 2024.

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.

Restoration planning, design, and implementation will be done according to Board of Soil and Water Resources guidelines and professional best practices. Guidelines have been provided to the prime design consultant (a landscape architecture firm selected by competitive bid) as part of the design criteria for the site.

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.

Owamniyomni Okhodayapi will be responsible for maintaining the restoration. OO has already raised 80% (\$8 million of a \$10 million target) of its maintenance endowment, which will provide sufficient investment income to fund maintenance year after year. The dollars are being raised on the premise that they will be restricted to expenditures for maintenance.

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

Conservation Corps of Minnesota will be among the resources considered in 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.

Specific restoration activities and goals will be defined by the consulting landscape architect and environmental team as a part of the Project. Any restoration that takes place as a part of the Project will be defined, documented, evaluated after completion, and evaluated again after three years to analyze whether the stated goals have been met. The goals and methodology for evaluation will be designed with input from relevant conservation resources and Tribal representatives. Problems that are encountered will be defined, and useful findings will be documented and shared with on-site managers and others in the interest of future improvement.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [9b07d6fc-891.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The graphic depicts the two subject parcels where the bluff restoration and ADA-accessible trail improvements would be incorporated into a planned restoration of land abutting the Upper Lock at St. Anthony Falls: Hennepin County PID #2302924430005 and PID #2302924430004....

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
OO Board Resolution Authorizing LCCMR Funding Request Passed Q2 Mtg 2025	d62bc712-a7d.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Dakota Nonprofit Works to Reconnect Minneapolis	1f379957-22c.pdf
Support Letter from Minneapolis Mayor	c9762c1c-596.pdf
Support Letter from Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board	bd001637-764.pdf
2026-355_ Bluff and Path in 35% Design Plan	09e0ffa9-258.pdf
2026-355_ Bluff and Path Illustration	0cc546e0-d1e.pdf
2026-355_ Funding Request Enhancements Diagram	545d2bda-22c.pdf
2026-355 Capital Construction Questionnaire	1382d36b-c3b.pdf
2025-355 Capital Construction Budget Addendum	ad2756bf-8fc.xlsx
2023 Form 990	e1b21f3c-f54.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?

N/A

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?

Yes

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:

Shelley Buck, Owamniyomni Okhodayapi

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

