



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

### 2026 Request for Proposal

#### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2026-480

**Proposal Title:** Restoration Park Environmental Classroom

#### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Melissa DeVetter

**Organization:** Dodge County Environmental Services

**Office Telephone:** (507) 635-6253

**Email:** melissa.devetter@dodgecountymn.gov

#### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Construction of a “net-zero energy” park building/environmental classroom which promotes green energy and demonstrates the beneficial reuse of materials by utilizing, where feasible, reclaimed and recycled materials.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$750,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** October 31, 2029

**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): 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.**

In 2019, Dodge County updated and adopted its Comprehensive Land Use Plan. During the planning process, citizens identified trails and parks as the top recreational opportunities. ES staff proposed transforming 32 acres of DCTSRC buffer land, consisting of 12 acres of a neglected, vegetated screening planting and 20 acres of eroded cropland, into a public nature-based park (Restoration Park) with an environmental learning area (ELA) which would have educational features and programming demonstrating environmentally sustainable practices. The six-acre ELA would have a park building/environmental classroom, amphitheater, native plant identification gardens, rain gardens, rain barrels, exhibits and a sculpture made from recycled materials.

Every day, approximately 5 tons of demolition material is shipped from the DCTSRC facility to a demolition landfill. Over the course of a year, this equates to over 3 million pounds. Frequently, ES observes far too much good (and even new!) building materials, including shingles, cabinets, windows, doors, counter tops, siding and other building supplies disposed of in the demolition pile. By reclaiming and repurposing material ES staff saw the features of the ELA, specifically the park building/environmental classroom, as an opportunity to highlight the importance of reducing waste, energy consumption and promoting the beneficial reuse of materials.

**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.**

While the goal of the Renovation ReUse is to reduce waste by diverting good useable building materials from the demolition landfill, the goal of Restoration Park's proposed "net-zero energy" environmental classroom building is to physically demonstrate the beneficial reuse of these reclaimed and recycled building materials.

In 2022, ES Staff submitted an idea brief to the University of Minnesota Extension's Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (SERSDP) for design of Restoration Park's environmental classroom located within the ELA. ES proposed design of a "net zero energy" building that, would include solar energy and, where feasible, incorporate in its construction recycled and reclaimed materials that might otherwise end up in a landfill. The environmental classroom building would be one of the many educational features of the ELA showcasing DCTSRC campus environmental priorities. The proposal was selected for funding and the SERSDP paired ES staff with experts from the University of Minnesota's Center for Sustainable Building Research (CSBR) for the project. CSBR staff held community input meetings soliciting input on the design and features of the building based on anticipated use. The CSBRs Final Report and Renderings for Restoration Park's environmental classroom building and features of the ELA are attached to this application.

**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?**

Restoration Park's goal is to become an educational hub demonstrating the multiple benefits of conservation, habitat restoration, protection of natural resources and the beneficial reuse of materials through its design and features. ES wants to promote conservation, restoration and protection of natural resources by inspiring people to restore habitat of neglected and degraded lands and to give new life to discarded materials by repurposing them.

ES staff view the features of the ELA, specifically the park building/environmental classroom, as an opportunity to highlight the importance of reducing waste, energy consumption and promoting the beneficial reuse of materials.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Restoration Park Environmental Classroom Design Phase

**Activity Budget:** \$70,000

**Activity Description:**

The objective of the Design Phase is completion of the schematic, design development and contract documents for construction of the park building/environmental classroom. Tasks will include creating a Request for Proposal for architectural, structural, mechanical and electrical engineer services, advertising for bids, selection of the contractor and contracting per the county's statutory requirements. Tasks will also include project management, contract oversight, payment of contractors and reimbursement requests. The completion of the construction documents and schematics will impact the costs and timing of the project and will be utilized to define tasks necessary to complete the Construction Phase of the project.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Contracting with the state	August 31, 2026
Contracting with architect and engineers	September 30, 2026
Completion of documents	November 30, 2026

### Activity 2: Restoration Park Environmental Classroom Pre-Construction Phase

**Activity Budget:** \$60,000

**Activity Description:**

The objective of the Pre-Construction Phase is completion of all processes and tasks necessary to start physical construction of the park building/environmental classroom. Tasks will include creating a Request for Proposal for trade contractor's based on the construction documents, advertising for bids, selecting contractors and developing contracts per the county's statutory requirements. Tasks for the contracted entities will be obtaining any necessary connection agreements, state reviews, and state and/or local permits. All permits and approvals shall be provided to the county. The completion of the pre-construction tasks are necessary to be completed prior to the Construction Phase.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Contracting	February 28, 2027
Obtaining all reviews, permits and approvals	June 30, 2027

### Activity 3: Restoration Park Environmental Classroom Construction Phase

**Activity Budget:** \$620,000

**Activity Description:**

The objective of the Construction Phase is completion installation of infrastructure and construction the building. Tasks for the contracted entities will include site prep/grading, completing work per construction documents and contracts, obtaining inspections and submitting copies to county, submitting status reports, obtaining final certificate of occupancy and proof of compliance with ADA requirements. County staff will verify prevailing wage is met, process payments to contractors and submit reimbursement requests. The completion of the construction phase is required prior to utilization of the building.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Site Prep/grading	July 31, 2027
Construction, installation of infrastructure and utilities	July 31, 2029
Final inspections, punch cards	October 31, 2029

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Dodge County	Dodge County	Donation of Land	No
Jay Portz	JA Wedum Foundation	Project Partner	Yes
Dodge County	Dodge County	In-Kind labor	No
Andi Sutoon	University of Minnesota Extension Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership	Funded Environmental Classroom Report prepared by the University of Minnesota's Center for Sustainable Building Research	Yes
Dan Handeen & Richard Graves	University of Minnesota Center for Sustainable Building Research (CSBR)	Community engagement, architectural renderings and report	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?**

Dodge County will contract with qualified architects, engineers and other trades for construction of the building. The county is currently able to meet the minimum 25% non-state match required and also has additional non-state sources of funding that are pending. The county will also apply for the DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant and understands that this grant cannot be utilized as a match for LCCMR funds. After construction the building will be operated and maintained by Dodge County Environmental Services, Highway/Parks and Facilities and Fleet Management. ES staff will continue to pursue grant funds and partner with willing entities.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Melissa DeVetter

**Job Title:** Project Manager

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

Multiple Dodge County Departments will work jointly in managing various aspects of the project based on their areas of expertise. The main point of contact and coordination between the state and the county will be Melissa DeVetter, Project Manager for the Environmental Services Department. She has extensive experience with land use planning, permitting, environmental review, as well as grant writing and management. She is currently managing grant compliance and reimbursement requests for the 2.1 million dollar grant between Dodge County and the Minnesota Historical Society for the Wasioja Seminary Ruins Restoration project, as well as several other smaller grant projects with various state agencies.

Duke Harbaugh, Facilities and Fleet Manager, oversees construction, operation and maintenance of all of Dodge County buildings and grounds. Mr. Harbaugh manages bidding, contracting and project management involving construction of county buildings. Most recently, he recently completed all aspects regarding construction of Dodge County's Midway

Event Center, located on the Dodge County Fairgrounds.

Guy Kohlhofer is the County Highway Engineer/Park Supervisor. Mr. Kohlhofer has extensive experience in planning, construction, maintenance, coordination, and grant management through supervision of his department and numerous local transportation projects. Bidding contracting, prevailing wage compliance, and management and payment of the contractors for the 2.1 million dollar Wasioja Seminary Ruins Restoration Project is currently handled by the Highway/Parks Department.

**Organization:** Dodge County Environmental Services

**Organization Description:**

Dodge County Environmental Services (ES) is a Department of Dodge County, a local governmental unit located in southeastern Minnesota. ES administers programs that protect the public health, safety and welfare through education, technical services and regulatory programs. Staff are engaged in various initiatives to protect and restore the environment, as well as projects that address community needs, priorities and long-term goals.

ES operates the Dodge County Transfer Station and Recycling Center (DCTSRC) "campus" encompassing the buildings, MPCA closed solid waste landfill, brush dump, compost site, recycling drop-off areas, and self-serve waste depot. It also serves as a collection site for demolition materials which are hauled off-site due to the recent closure of the county's demolition landfill. Adjacent properties serve to buffer the DCTSRC from nearby land uses that may not be compatible with operations. These properties contain an accessory solar array, sixteen acres of restored native prairie habitat, the Renovation ReUse center which diverts good, useable building materials and household items from the waste stream, and Restoration Park- a thirty-six acre nature park and environmental learning area currently under development. ES's goals are to complete innovative multi use projects to protect and restore natural resources while serving the community.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD	Service Contract	Preparation of construction documents				-		\$70,000
TBD	Service Contract	Pre-construction tasks and Construction of buildings and infrastructure				0		\$680,000
							Sub Total	\$750,000
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								

							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$750,000



Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
---------------	---------------------	-------------	--

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	JA Wedum Foundation	Secured non-state match for building	Secured	\$100,000
In-Kind	Dodge County	Donation of land for building- non-state match	Secured	\$200,000
Cash	Taylor Family Farm Foundation	Potential non-state source of match funds for building	Potential	\$50,000
In-Kind	Dodge County	Dodge County staff time for project management and administration- non state match	Secured	\$50,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$1,150,000**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [85ae0f47-6f0.docx](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Renderings of Restoration Park Building from Exterior and angles including interior rendering of classroom area...

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
Dodge Financial Statement	<a href="#">0731d296-18d.pdf</a>
2020 Dodge County Audit	<a href="#">86314bf6-e4e.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Placeholder Letter from Board	<a href="#">f7bf7972-21a.pdf</a>
Dodge County Placeholder Resolution	<a href="#">789b1df6-d6b.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Dodge Budget Supplement	<a href="#">1b4d9739-57d.xlsx</a>
Restoration Park StoryMap Info	<a href="#">a9df3411-f19.docx</a>
Capital Project Questionnaire	<a href="#">23619cca-8e6.pdf</a>
Final Report from U of M CSBR	<a href="#">c04dcf81-ad4.pdf</a>

## 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?**

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?**

Yes, Dodge County Finance

**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:**

Duke Harbaugh/Facilities and Fleet Manage, Kevin Venenga/Finance Director

**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