



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-570

Proposal Title: Forestry for Minnesota Birds

Project Manager Information

Name: Michael Lynch

Organization: Forest Stewards Guild

Office Telephone: (608) 449-0647

Email: mike@forestguild.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Connecting public and private forestland stewards with detailed, data-driven, forest management recommendations developed by a group of foresters and professional biologists to enhance Minnesota's forest bird habitat.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$213,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Fish and Wildlife (D)

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.

North America has lost nearly three billion birds, or roughly one in four birds, since 1970. Bird populations are declining for a variety of reasons including habitat loss and fragmentation. Migratory birds face habitat loss throughout their full life cycle: on their breeding grounds (here in Minnesota), along migration routes, and on their wintering grounds. Enhancing forest habitat on the breeding grounds can help to mitigate the impacts of habitat loss in other regions by increasing reproductive success and health entering migration.

Minnesota has an estimated 17.6 million acres of forestland and approximately six million of these acres are managed as private family forestlands. A recent survey indicates 81% of private landowners identify wildlife as a primary reason for owning forest lands and 62% would like to use forest management to improve wildlife habitat; however, only 21% of these forestland owners have undertaken forest management in the past 20 years. This disconnect indicates there is an important need to synthesize and share existing research on how forest management can benefit wildlife and provide this information to professional foresters, public land managers, and private landowners to maximize the benefits of sustainable forest management in Minnesota.

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.

Forestry for Minnesota Birds (FMNB) is a program that formed with initial funding from the Upper Mississippi Great Lakes Joint Venture (UMGLJV) to address this decline in North American bird populations and the lack of detailed, data-driven, forest management recommendations for the growing audience of public and private land managers focused on stewarding forests to benefit birds and other non-game wildlife. The FMNB developed a thoroughly researched and reviewed Conservation Guidebook with this initial funding that uses the best available science on avian ecology and sustainable forest management to provide strategies for creating bird habitat in contemporary forests. We are seeking a second phase of funding to support delivery and outreach related to the project and to establish demonstration sites that will aid in the restoration and enhancement of habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife.

We compiled information into a Conservation Guidebook through the initial funding phase provided by the UMGLJV and we are requesting LCCMR support to print additional free guides, host a series of workshops, develop video content, and establish demonstration sites.

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?

We will host at least six full-day workshops annually using classroom and field-based learning to train 360 practitioners in forest management methods that enhance forest bird habitat. We will cater separate events for private landowners, professional forestland managers, and loggers. We will work in conjunction with existing outreach and education programs to amplify the impact of this project. This model has been highly effective in other states at promoting forest stewardship and enhancing bird habitat while supporting the production of local forest products. We will develop supplemental video content and establish six demonstration sites to support the field-based learning component.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Train practitioners at workshops and demonstration sites.

Activity Budget: \$213,000

Activity Description:

Objective: Maintain and improve Minnesota’s forest habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Task: Train private landowners, professional forestland managers, and loggers on forest management techniques that enhance bird habitat and encourage their implementation.

Method: Host six full-day training workshops per year using classroom and field-based learning. We will work in conjunction with existing outreach and education programs to increase the impact of this project. We will develop supplemental video content and establish six demonstration sites to support the field-based learning component.

Outcome: At least 360 practitioners over the three-year period are knowledgeable in forest management methods that enhance forest bird habitat. We will use a train the trainer model and share free FMNB Conservation Guidebooks with participants to amplify the impact of these trainings.

Evaluation: Participant feedback will be crucial for continuous improvement of this program. Participation and implementation will be key metrics to track.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Identify six forest management demonstration sites to be used for outreach training.	October 31, 2026
Host the first six workshops.	June 30, 2027
Produce supplemental video content to augment the FMNB Conservation Guidebook.	June 30, 2027
Complete final training workshops.	May 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 Forestry for Minnesota Birds Conservation Guidebook is already complete and available for free in print or online. The project builds off the steering committee's ongoing dedication, the success of "Forestry for the Birds" programs in several other states, and the Natural Resources Research Institute's long-standing reputation as a resource for bird expertise and management-driven research. The materials and trained practitioners resulting from this project will not require continued funding to have a long-lasting impact after the grant period. Additionally, the Forest Stewards Guild has made a commitment to the ongoing maintenance of the website and other products.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Michael Lynch

Job Title: Great Lakes Region Director

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

Michael Lynch has spent the last ten years as the Great Lakes Region Director for the Forest Stewards Guild managing multiple complex projects and budgets. Michael has specialized experience developing integrated solutions to balance the multifaceted ecological, economic, and social needs of the nation's forest resources. He focuses on regional research needs, collaboration opportunities, and natural resource planning and implementation at a landscape-scale. Michael holds a BA in Biology from Gustavus Adolphus College and an MS in Biological Integration from the University of Minnesota. Michael has been managing the Forestry for Minnesota Birds effort since its inception and led the development of the recently completed Forestry for Minnesota Birds Conservation Guidebook.

Organization: Forest Stewards Guild

Organization Description:

Forest Stewards Guild ('the Guild') is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization whose mission is to practice and promote responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. The Guild engages in education, training, policy analysis, research, and advocacy to foster excellence in stewardship, support practicing foresters and allied professionals, and engage a broader community in the challenges of forest conservation and management. We are a national organization headquartered in the Southwest with regional offices that support ecological forestry in the Southeast, Northeast, Lake States, and Pacific Northwest. The Guild has led similar Forestry for Birds efforts in other states with great success.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Lake States Coordinator		The Lake States Coordinator will provide project planning, coordination, and delivery for the Forestry for Minnesota Birds program to accelerate and amplify the development of critical forest bird habitat.			35%	1.5		\$125,000
Lake States Director		Lake States Director will provide additional planning, coordination, oversight, and delivery support.			35%	0.45		\$60,800
							Sub Total	\$185,800
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Includes : Lodging (10 nights @ \$120/night = \$1,200), Per diem (10 days @ \$65/day = \$650), Mileage (3,500 mi @ federal rate of 70 cents/mile = \$2,450) per year for two employees.	Travel will be required for team members to host workshops and document demonstration sites throughout the region.					\$12,900
							Sub Total	\$12,900

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Consumable printing for workshops	Agendas, field worksheets, etc					\$300
	Printing	Printing 2,000 copies of the Conservation Guidebook	Printing 2,000 additional copies of the free Conservation Guidebook for Workshop Participants					\$14,000
							Sub Total	\$14,300
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$213,000

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				
In-Kind	Forest Stewards Guild Unrecovered Overhead. Source: Internal non-profit funding.	General operating expenses to support this project.	Secured	\$53,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$53,000
			Funds Total	\$53,000

Total Project Cost: \$266,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [c8efbbf9-1c5.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

This visual shows the Forestry for Minnesota Birds Conservation Guidebook, practices it promotes, and how those can lead to positive wildlife habitat outcomes....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Guild_Cert_GoodStanding	eb1e822d-d48.pdf
Guild_IndependentAudit	f2f82338-09a.pdf
2023_Guild_990	36455f40-8b3.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
GuildBoardAuthorization	0980553b-98d.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?

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:

Zander Evans, Executive Director, Forest Stewards Guild

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

N/A