Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-573

Proposal Title: CWF Green Infrastructure Proposal

Project Manager Information

Name: Morgan Schafer

Organization: Clean Water Fund

Office Telephone: (414) 731-4029

Email: mschafer@cleanwater.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This project integrates solar energy and stormwater management on government-owned properties, providing affordable clean energy, reducing runoff, improving water quality, and engaging communities in sustainable practices.

ENRTF Funds Requested: $720,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Water (B)

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?

Region(s): Metro

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.

Minnesota faces two critical environmental challenges: limited access to affordable renewable energy for low- and moderate-income households and urban stormwater runoff polluting local waterways, including the Mississippi River. Many communities lack the infrastructure for clean energy and effective stormwater management, while government-owned buildings often have underutilized spaces suitable for dual-purpose green infrastructure. Stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces carries pollutants like oil, heavy metals, and nutrients, degrading water quality and harming ecosystems. At the same time, high upfront costs and limited infrastructure prevent many residents from accessing solar energy. This project addresses these interconnected issues by transforming underutilized public spaces into sites for solar panels and green stormwater infrastructure, such as rain gardens and bioswales, creating a replicable model for sustainable development.

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 project proposes installing solar panels and green stormwater infrastructure on government-owned properties, prioritizing sites suitable for both. Solar panels will provide affordable energy to 100+ households, with 50% capacity reserved for low- and moderate-income residents, reducing energy costs by 10–20%. Green infrastructure, including rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavement, will reduce stormwater runoff by 30%, improving water quality in local waterways. The project will engage communities through workshops, volunteer opportunities, and school programs, fostering environmental stewardship. Monitoring will track energy production, carbon emissions reductions, and water quality improvements. The project builds on CWFM's proven track record, leveraging partnerships with organizations like the Keep It Clean volunteer group and an incoming board member with solar industry expertise to ensure success and scalability

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?

This project will offset 500 tons of CO2 annually, reduce stormwater runoff by 30%, and improve water quality in local waterways. It will provide affordable solar energy to 100+ households, prioritize low-income residents, and save taxpayer dollars through reduced energy and stormwater management costs. Community engagement will increase awareness of renewable energy and sustainable practices, fostering long-term environmental stewardship. The project will create a replicable model for integrating solar energy and green infrastructure, advancing Minnesota's transition to a clean energy future while protecting and enhancing its natural resources.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Identify and Prepare Dual-Purpose Sites

Activity Budget: $50,000

Activity Description:
This activity involves identifying government-owned sites suitable for both solar panels and green stormwater infrastructure. Tasks include partnering with local governments to select sites, conducting feasibility studies to assess solar potential and stormwater runoff issues, and securing necessary permits and approvals. The objective is to ensure sites are ready for installation, with all regulatory requirements met. Outcomes include a list of approved sites, completed feasibility studies, and secured permits, enabling the project to move forward with installation.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Site Selection Finalized	December 31, 2026
Feasibility Studies Completed	December 31, 2026
Permits and Approvals Concerned	December 31, 2026

Activity 2: Install Solar and Stormwater Systems

Activity Budget: $550,000

Activity Description:
This activity focuses on installing solar panels and green stormwater infrastructure on selected sites. Tasks include designing and installing solar arrays, constructing rain gardens and bioswales, planting native trees, and connecting the solar garden to the grid. The objective is to generate clean energy and reduce stormwater runoff by 30%. Outcomes include fully operational solar panels and green infrastructure, providing energy savings and improved water quality.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Permits and Approvals Secured	September 30, 2027
Solar panel installation complete	December 31, 2027
Green water infrastructure installed	December 31, 2027

Activity 3: Engage and Educate the Community

Activity Budget: $80,000

Activity Description:
This activity aims to educate and engage the community in renewable energy and stormwater management. Tasks include launching a multilingual outreach campaign, hosting workshops, partnering with schools for hands-on activities, and recruiting volunteers for installation and maintenance. The objective is to increase awareness and participation in sustainable practices. Outcomes include increased community knowledge, behavior changes, and active involvement in the project.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date

Outreach campaign launched	April 30, 2028
Workshops and school programs completed	June 30, 2028
Volunteer recruitment and engagement completed	October 31, 2028

Activity 4: Track and Evaluate Project Impact

Activity Budget: $39,999

Activity Description:
This activity involves monitoring the project's environmental, economic, and community impacts. Tasks include tracking energy production, carbon emissions reductions, stormwater runoff, and water quality improvements, as well as conducting community surveys. The objective is to measure the project's success and inform future efforts. Outcomes include comprehensive data on energy savings, water quality improvements, and community engagement metrics.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Energy production and stormwater monitoring completed	June 30, 2028
Community surveys conducted and analyzed	December 31, 2028
Final evaluation report completed	December 31, 2028

Activity 5: Create Replicability Toolkit

Activity Budget: $1

Activity Description:
This activity focuses on documenting the project's process, outcomes, and lessons learned to create a toolkit for replication. Tasks include developing step-by-step guidelines, best practices, and monitoring protocols. The objective is to provide a scalable model for other communities. Outcomes include a comprehensive toolkit shared with stakeholders to inspire similar projects across Minnesota. This will be included in the Track and Evaluate Impact Section.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Toolkit creation	November 30, 2028
Tool kit distribution	December 31, 2028

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's results will be implemented through a replicable model for integrating solar energy and green infrastructure, supported by a toolkit documenting best practices, monitoring protocols, and community engagement strategies. Ongoing efforts will be funded through partnerships with local governments, utilities, and community organizations, as well as potential grants and revenue from solar subscriptions. Findings and results will be shared with stakeholders to inspire similar projects across Minnesota. Additional work, such as expanding to new sites, will be funded through future grants, public-private partnerships, and continued collaboration with organizations like the Keep It Clean volunteer group and solar industry partners.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Morgan Schafer

Job Title: Program Organizer

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.
She has project management experience as well as contextual knowledge of clean energy and green infrastructure projects

Organization: Clean Water Fund

Organization Description:
Clean Water Fund's mission is to develop strong grassroots environmental leadership and to bring together diverse constituencies to work cooperatively for changes that improve their lives, focused on health, consumer, environmental and community problems.

Clean Water Fund's programs build on and complement those of Clean Water Action, a one million member national organization which has helped develop, pass, strengthen and defend the nation's major water and toxics laws such as the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Superfund and others, including their state-level counterparts.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	$ Amount
Personnel								
Program Organizer		Project Assistant			35%	4		$47,000
							Sub Total	**$47,000**
Contracts and Services								
Solar Installer	Subaward	Design and installation of solar arrays, including grid connection				1		$300,000
Environmental Construction Firm	Service Contract	Installation of rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement, and native tree plantings.				1		$150,000
							Sub Total	**$450,000**
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Equipment	Solar panels	Clean Energy Generation					$100,000
	Equipment	Green stormwater infrastructure	Provide effective water infrastructure systems					$70,000
	Tools and Supplies	Monitoring Equipment	Collect data to share with deliverables					$50,000
							Sub Total	**$220,000**
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	**-**
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	**-**
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	**-**

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	**-**
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Final Project Report	50 copies of the final project report for stakeholders					$500
	Printing	Outreach Brochures	1,000 multilingual brochures community outreach					$2,000
	Publication	Semi-Annual Report	Semi-annual progress reports for LCCMR and partners					$500
							Sub Total	**$3,000**
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	**-**
							Grand Total	**$720,000**

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
State				
			State Sub Total	**-**
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	**-**
			Funds Total	**-**

Total Project Cost: $720,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: 3320189a-689.pdf

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Satellite Image of Government Rooftops...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
CWF 990	a4326d8e-657.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
CWF Board	a6940ec3-8b7.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Full Project Proposal	3184cbfb-6a9.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?

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?

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:

Kyle Rosas, Avonna Starck

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