



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-587

Proposal Title: Terra Nova Schoolyard Prairie Project

Project Manager Information

Name: Grayson Smith

Organization: US Fish and Wildlife Service - Midwest Region

Office Telephone: (320) 828-7276

Email: grayson_smith@fws.gov

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Schoolyard prairie restoration project at Terra Nova School, restoring 2 acres of turf grass to native prairie & enhancing 0.5 acres of previously restored prairie, affording student participation & education.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$11,000

Proposed Project Completion: March 31, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Resiliency (A)

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.

Our schoolyard prairie project benefits are two-fold: 1. We will be converting a wildlife and pollinator food/resource desert of monotypic non-native turf grass to a diverse, local ecotype, native tall and shortgrass prairie providing floral resources throughout all bloom periods as well as soil and water conservation in a location with high visibility to the students of the school, the local community and the general public, and 2. We will be offering the students of Terra Nova School an opportunity to participate in and learn about habitat restoration, pollinators/entomology, biology, botany, the history and current state of land use, climate change and adaptation, land stewardship/ethic, ecology and various other topics surrounding our natural world right on their own property, potentially helping to foster future conservationists.

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 will take 2 acres of non-native, monotypic turf grass and restore it to a highly diverse, local ecotype, native tall and shortgrass prairie in designated locations around the Terra Nova School property for the simple sake of habitat restoration as well as a continual opportunity for education and engagement with the students and the community at large. Additionally, we will perform maintenance activities and a diverse, native seeding enhancement on 0.5 acres of previously restored prairie on the school grounds which will be connected to the 2 acres of newly restored prairie for a total of 2.5 acres of diverse native schoolyard prairie.

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?

2.5 acres of diverse, native, short and tallgrass prairie will be added back to the landscape offering resources in an otherwise native-plant-resource-depleted landscape. About 1% of our native prairie still remains in MN, a loss of almost 99% or 18 million acres. Terra Nova will be doing their part to restore, improve, enhance and conserve what they can and act as an education site as well as an example to the greater community that native habitat can coexist with our current land use needs. Terra Nova's dedicated & passionate staff is committed to conserving and maintaining the prairie following restoration.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: 2 acre initial prairie restoration & 0.5 acre existing prairie enhancement site preparation.

Activity Budget: \$5,000

Activity Description:

The objective of this activity is to prepare the soil for initial native prairie seeding and to target non-native plant species within the existing prairie section for removal or treatment prior to enhancement seeding; this will be accomplished by 2-3 herbicide cover sprays to the current turf grasses each time new growth greens up again in all initial prairie restoration sections over the first year and through non-native woody removal/treatment, prescribed burning the section and spot spraying or mowing all nonnatives within the existing prairie section following the prescribed burn. The outcome of this will be a weed and non-native plant free seed bed and prairie for us to seed into with greatly reduced non-native plant species competition for our prairie establishment and enhancement, respectively. Successful outcomes for this activity will be measured by frequent site monitoring by both the project managers and the selected contractor, noting any adjustments that may need to be made for success of the restoration and enhancement.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Anticipated completion date of Activity 1	June 30, 2027

Activity 2: Drill-seeding initial prairie restoration & broadcast seeding existing prairie enhancement section.

Activity Budget: \$4,000

Activity Description:

The objective of this activity is to plant and enhance the prairie and enhancement by drill-seeding the initial prairie restoration & broadcast seeding the existing prairie enhancement section after the seed bed was prepped and all non-natives were removed and/or treated in Activity 1. The outcome of this will be a seeded prairie restoration and diversified and enhanced prairie, with greatly reduced non-native plant species competition, which will germinate into native prairie with the right environmental conditions. Successful outcomes for this activity will be measured by frequent site monitoring by both the project managers and the selected contractor as the prairie grows and establishes, noting any adjustments that may need to be made for success of the restoration and enhancement.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Anticipated completion date of Activity 2	April 30, 2028

Activity 3: Prairie establishment maintenance and management.

Activity Budget: \$2,000

Activity Description:

The objective of this activity is to continue to monitor and maintain/manage the establishing prairie and prairie enhancement that was seeded in Activity 2; this will be accomplished by performing spot herbicide sprays, maintenance mowing and any other manual or mechanical vegetative management tool, as needed, to manage non-native plant pressures within either the initial or enhanced prairie sections. The outcome of this will be greatly reduced non-native

plant species competition resulting in a much more diverse, resource-rich, resilient, native and self-sustaining prairie ecosystem. Successful outcomes for this activity will be measured by frequent site monitoring by both the project managers and the selected contractor as the prairie grows and establishes, noting any adjustments that may need to be made for success of the restoration and enhancement.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Anticipated completion date of Activity 3	March 31, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Alex Belisle	Terra Nova School	School Representative/contact for the project	No
Eric Mattson	Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District	Project Partner/Co-Project Manager	Yes
Shawna Gibson	MNDOT	Enrolled the ROW into the Highway Sponsorship Program for our 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?

We will monitor the progress and status of the prairie restoration. The grow-in establishment maintenance and management is included in our funding request and job scope as establishment maintenance is just as important as site preparation when restoring prairie ecosystems. If additional funds would be needed, Wright SWCD, USFWS Partners program and Terra Nova could easily apply for additional HELP grants, other grants or use in-house funding for inexpensive maintenance measures. Reporting of results will be documented by the project manager by way of project monitoring, photos and video and in any other way that is required by the grant.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Grayson Smith

Job Title: Private Lands Fish and Wildlife Biologist

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

The project manager is a Private Lands Fish and Wildlife Biologist with the Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program of the USFWS who has been surveying, designing, partnering, cost-sharing/funding, contracting, coordinating, project managing, and competing post-restoration monitoring private and public lands habitat restoration projects for the past four years, successfully completing hundreds of acres of wetland and upland restored habitat. Additionally, the project manager has completed numerous habitat restoration trainings and has trained directly under a dozen or more seasoned habitat restoration specialists over the years, acquiring additional hands-on technical and practical experience.

Organization: US Fish and Wildlife Service - Midwest Region

Organization Description:

The USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provides free technical and financial assistance to landowners, managers, tribes, corporations, schools and nonprofits interested in improving wildlife habitat on their land.

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	We will hire one habitat restoration contractor to perform the entire schoolyard prairie restoration and enhancement scope of work, start to finish.				0.3		\$11,000
							Sub Total	\$11,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-

Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$11,000

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				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$11,000

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
103500184402	Wright	Excellent opportunity for turf-to-prairie restoration on an outdoor schoolyard with large community involvement and high public visibility and support.	Restoration	2.5	-	\$11,000	Public		Has Not Begun
Totals				2.5	0	\$11,000			

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 in public ownership as a non-profit Public Charter School property.

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.

We will prepare the turf grass for native prairie establishment, we will seed the prairie seed mixes, and we will perform establishment management and maintenance activities to ensure successful establishment of the prairie. Additionally, we will perform management and maintenance measures within the prairie enhancement area, we will then broadcast seed an enhancement prairie mix into that area and we will perform establishment management and maintenance activities to ensure successful establishment of the prairie. The outcome will be 2.5 acres of diverse, native short and tallgrass prairie situated on public charter school property to benefit the natural world as well as the students and greater community as a tool for education and inspiration. My organization keep track of all aspects of each habitat restoration projects within a project e-file for permanent safekeeping. For long-term plan implementation, we have designed the restoration and enhancement plan to commence and conclude over a period of three years at which time the prairie will be well established and Terra Nova staff had stated with great enthusiasm that their staff and grounds staff would continue the maintenance, outside of the ongoing support and assistance from both the USFWS and Wright County SWCD.

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.

We will be using local ecotype native short and tallgrass prairie mixes with as great a diversity of species and seeds per square foot as possible, filling all ecological niches and bloom periods, as well as providing multiple milkweed species resources for monarch butterflies. We will also using appropriate timing for our site prep, seeding, and establishment management for the best biological results.

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 proposed timeline/work scope and funding request incorporates one year of establishment management measure; beyond this, the Terra Nova School has enthusiastically committed to managing the site with their staff and grounds staff. The USFWS and the Wright County SWCD will always be available and in contact for support, technical guidance, and financial assistance as needed for any management needs moving forward.

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

We would be happy to have any restoration agency bid our restoration 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 will be completed on the Terra Nova School parcel where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) every year as a follow-up. Evaluations will 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.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [779562eb-6b1.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

This is a combined pdf including a Beacon print-out showing the Terra Nova school location and parcel ID and a pdf of our Terra Nova School Prairie Project overview, showing the initial prairie restoration polygons, prairie enhancement polygon, the right of way line and initial prairie restoration polygons within ROW....

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Board Resolution and Letter	33229048-e8e.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?

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")?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Grayson Smith/USFWS

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