



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-049

Proposal Title: Restoration Park Net Zero Energy Building

Project Manager Information

Name: Melissa DeVetter

Organization: Dodge County

Office Telephone: (507) 635-6253

Email: melissa.devetter@dodgecountymn.gov

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Construction of a 1600 sf net-zero energy building with an environmental classroom providing public educational opportunities while promoting sustainability, green energy, and the beneficial reuse of reclaimed and recycled materials.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$794,000

Proposed Project Completion: July 31, 2030

LCCMR Funding Category: Energy (E)

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.

The net-zero energy environmental classroom will anchor the six-acre Environmental Learning Area, which eventually will include an amphitheater, native plant identification gardens, rain gardens, rain barrels, interpretive exhibits, and a sculpture constructed from recycled materials which all reinforce sustainable resource use.

This project addresses a significant waste-reduction opportunity. Each year, approximately 3 million pounds (1,500 tons) of demolition materials are transported from the Dodge County Transfer Station to a landfill (for reference is equal to roughly 75 semi-truck loads or debris generated from approximately 375 homes.) Many of these materials are usable, and some are even brand new!

By reclaiming and repurposing suitable materials in the construction of the park building, the project will reduce landfill disposal, conserve the energy required to manufacture and transport new materials, and demonstrate practical resource efficiency. The net-zero facility will incorporate solar energy, optimized building orientation, and high-efficiency systems to minimize energy demand.

As a permanent public asset, the classroom will provide hands-on education for residents, schools, and visitors, modeling sustainable construction, habitat restoration, and waste reduction strategies that could be replicated in communities across Minnesota once ours is proven to be successful.

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.

Dodge County seeks funding to construct a net-zero energy environmental classroom within Restoration Park for a permanent public facility that directly addresses landfill waste, energy consumption, and the need for accessible environmental education. The building will demonstrate sustainable construction by incorporating reclaimed and recycled materials diverted from the demolition landfill, reducing waste and avoiding the additional energy required to process new materials.

Designed in partnership with the University of Minnesota's Center for Sustainable Building Research and informed by community input, the facility integrates solar energy, strategic window placement, optimized building orientation, and high-efficiency systems to minimize energy demand. Energy modeling using Sefaira software estimates annual energy needs at approximately 18,500 kWh, covering heating, cooling, lighting, water heating, and plug loads.

Beyond its physical performance, the classroom will serve as a regional hub for hands-on learning in habitat restoration, conservation, sustainable land use, and material reuse. Programming could include "fix-it" clinics which would promote practical waste reduction strategies. State investment from LCCMR will deliver measurable environmental outcomes, long-term resource stewardship, and lasting public benefit through a durable, low-impact educational asset.

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?

The net-zero energy building will divert reusable materials from landfills and reduce energy via renewable energy sources. Outcomes include, reduced waste and energy consumption, increased public stewardship through hands-on learning in conservation, restoration, and sustainable resource management for area students, residents and visitors. To meet the net zero energy goal, the design suggests a 17.5 kW photovoltaic system (PS) would generate slightly more energy than the building uses on an annual basis, resulting in an energy use intensity (EUI) of -1.63 kBTU/sf/yr. For comparison, a typical school building has an EUI of 50 kBTU/sf/yr.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Design Phase

Activity Budget: \$73,000

Activity Description:

OBJECTIVE: The Design Phase will develop complete contract and construction documents for the net-zero energy park building/environmental classroom, finalize schematic and detailed designs, and prepare the project for the Construction Phase.

TASKS: Dodge County will create a Request for Proposal for architectural, structural, mechanical, and electrical engineering services, advertise for bids, select contractors, and execute contracts in accordance with statutory requirements. Project management will include oversight of contracts, progress monitoring, payment of contractors, and reimbursement requests.

OUTPUT: Completion of final construction documents, schematics, and design plans; executed contracts with design professionals; and a defined plan for Construction Phase implementation.

IMPACT: These outputs will directly influence project cost, timeline, and quality while ensuring sustainable, energy-efficient, and educational features are incorporated. The designs will guide construction, demonstrate environmental stewardship, and provide a model for future public resource projects.

EVALUATION: Progress will be evaluated through milestones, including approval of design documents, adherence to budget and schedule, and successful completion of contracting requirements, ensuring the project is fully prepared for construction and long-term public benefit.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Contracting with the State of Minnesota	August 31, 2027
Contracting with the architect and engineers	October 31, 2027
Completion of documents	December 31, 2027

Activity 2: Pre-Construction

Activity Budget: \$64,000

Activity Description:

Objective: The Pre-Construction Phase will complete all processes required to initiate physical construction of the net-zero energy park building/environmental classroom.

Tasks: Dodge County will develop a Request for Proposal for trade contractors based on finalized construction documents, advertise for bids, select contractors, and execute contracts in compliance with statutory requirements. Contractors will obtain all necessary connection agreements, state reviews, and local and state permits, submitting approvals to the County. Project management will ensure timelines, budgets, and regulatory compliance are maintained.

Outputs: Executed trade contracts, required permits and approvals, and a fully prepared construction schedule and plan.

Impact: These outputs will enable the timely and compliant start of construction, ensuring sustainable, energy-efficient, and educational features are implemented. They will also provide a clear framework for tracking project progress and resources.

Evaluation: Success will be measured by completion and approval of all permits, execution of contracts, readiness for

construction, and adherence to budget and timeline, ensuring the project advances efficiently to the Construction Phase.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Contracting	March 31, 2028
Obtaining all reviews, permits and approvals	June 30, 2028

Activity 3: Construction Phase

Activity Budget: \$657,000

Activity Description:

Objective: Complete installation of infrastructure and construction of the net-zero energy park building/environmental classroom, ensuring it is fully operational, accessible, and compliant with all building codes.

Tasks: Contracted entities will perform site preparation and grading, complete all work according to construction documents and contracts, obtain required inspections, and submit reports to the County. Contractors will secure final inspection and building code official will be hired to sign off on project and demonstrate compliance with ADA requirements. County staff will verify prevailing wage compliance, process contractor payments, and submit reimbursement requests. Project management will oversee quality control, schedule adherence, and budget compliance throughout construction.

Outputs: Fully constructed structure, accessible, net-zero energy environmental classroom with infrastructure completed, inspections passed. Documentation of compliance with contracts, permits, and prevailing wage requirements.

Impact: Building will provide a functioning example of sustainable construction, energy efficiency, and beneficial reuse of materials. It will provide a community space available for school curriculum, community education, and long-term environmental stewardship.

Evaluation: Success will be measured by completion of construction on schedule and budget, inspection approvals, ADA compliance, and documentation of all required contractor and project management activities, ensuring readiness for public use.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Site Prep/grading	July 31, 2028
Construction, installation of infrastructure and utilities	March 31, 2030
Final inspections, punch list items	June 30, 2030

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Laura Qualey	Community & Economic Development Associates	Economic Development Coordinator/Grant Writer	No
Jay Portz	J.A. Wedum Foundation	Project Partner	Yes
Dodge County	Government	Land Owner/Donor of Land for project	No
Andi Sutton	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	No
Dan Handeen & Richard Graves	University of Minnesota Center for Sustainable Building Research (CSBR)	Community engagement, architectural renderings and report	No
Duke Harbaugh	Dodge County	Facilities & Fleet Manager	No

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

Dodge County will acknowledge and promote funding support from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), in all project communications and outreach efforts. Recognition will be included in press releases, media interactions, interpretive displays, publications, event invitations, websites, newsletters, printed materials, presentations, and social media. ENRTF support will be acknowledged using the required attribution language and logo, including statements such as: "Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)." Dodge County will also tag and mention ENRTF on social media to help share project progress and accomplishments statewide. Temporary signage during construction and permanent signage at the project entrance may also be installed to ensure the public is aware of the ENRTF's role in supporting Restoration Park.

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 qualified professionals to construct the building and will provide at least the required 25% non-state match, with additional pending non-state funds. Future work will be funded with a combination of state, local, private foundation and non-profit funding sources. Upon completion, the environmental classroom will be

operated and maintained by Dodge County Environmental Services, Highway/Parks, and Facilities and Fleet Management. ES staff will continue existing partnerships to support ongoing programming, maintenance, and long-term public access, ensuring sustainable conservation and educational outcomes.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Melissa DeVetter

Job Title: Environmental Services Comp Plan Project Manager

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

Melissa DeVetter joined Dodge County in 2007 as a Land Use Compliance Officer. During the 10 years previous, she worked for counties and the Department of Natural Resources in both Wisconsin and Minnesota administering DNR protected waters rules, the Wetland Conservation Act, and serving as the Project Manager for development of a complex Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed mine in northern Wisconsin. Since joining Dodge County she has served in various positions related to land and water use regulation and management. For the past 5 years she has been Dodge County's dedicated Comprehensive Plan Project Manager, completing various projects and initiatives to further goals and priorities of the county identified in the 2019 Dodge County Comprehensive Plan. She is currently administering the 2.1 million dollar grant between Dodge County and the Minnesota Historical Society for the Wasioja Seminary Ruins Stabilization project, as well as administering several grants from numerous state agencies, non-profits, educational institutions, and private foundations for wide variety of comprehensive plan related projects.

Organization: Dodge County

Organization Description:

The Finance Office, under the direction of the Finance Director, Kevin Venega, is responsible for overseeing Dodge County's financial operations and election administration.

Financial responsibilities include cash management and investment of county funds; monitoring and reconciling all county bank accounts; preparing and mailing tax notices and statements; calculating, collecting, and disbursing taxes for real estate, personal property, mobile homes, and ditch systems; collecting special assessments and delinquent taxes; and managing forfeited properties resulting from tax delinquency. The office also oversees all funds received and disbursed by the county, accounts receivable and payable, county capital asset records, grant funding and related governmental financial reporting, annual budget summaries, year-end audits, and preparation of the County's annual financial statements.

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	Preparation of construction documents (design)				0		\$73,000
TBD	Service Contract	Pre-Construction				0		\$64,000
TBD	Service Contract	Construction				0		\$657,000
							Sub Total	\$794,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Equipment								
							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	\$794,000

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	J A Wedum Foundation	cash toward ELA building	Pending	\$100,000
In-Kind	Dodge County Renovation ReUse Center	reclaimed materials to construct the building	Potential	\$60,000
In-Kind	Dodge County	Land	Secured	\$200,000
In-Kind	Dodge County	Advertising/Outreach	Secured	\$5,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$365,000
			Funds Total	\$365,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,159,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [3084bc82-c93.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Parcel in Restoration Park where project will be located; Specific Project area dedicated for Environmental Learning Area; Estimated area for building seeking funding from ENRTF...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Dodge County Enviro Services Budget	d77ffef-493.pdf
Dodge County Financial Document _ Audited	1d18ea1c-2b8.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution 2026-008	f1b539ad-e11.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Construction Questionnaire_Net Zero Bldg Dodge County	b0a41cad-0c8.pdf
Capital Construction Budget Addendum_Net Zero Bldg Dodge County	9f4f9ab9-f80.pdf
Restoration Park Map	7871f295-ffc.pdf
DC Enviro Learning Area Renderings_Process Report	bf516c2e-f86.pdf
SHPO Review Letter of Determination	5db1b785-33d.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?

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:

Laura Qualey, Community & Economic Development Associates

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