



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-174

Proposal Title: The Bee Line Method: Restoring Small Urban Parcels

Project Manager Information

Name: Jessica Willman

Organization: Como Community Council - District 10

Office Telephone: (651) 252-1479

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The Bee Line Method offers an effective and replicable model for small-scale urban land management, demonstrating how to care for climate-resilient landscapes through community engagement and public sector support.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$297,000

Proposed Project Completion: October 31, 2030

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

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.

Neglected urban parcels in Minnesota's cities and counties are a vast, untapped environmental resource.

Management of native landscapes is widely accepted in our state's large parks and forests, which comprise one quarter of Minnesota's open land. But remaining non-farmed land is fragmented into roadsides, vacant lots, commercial campuses, or residential yards, mostly in urban areas. With proper management, taken together these underused urban parcels could become what ecologist Douglas Tallamy calls a "homegrown national park," offering tremendous benefits in water quality improvement, healthy habitats for wildlife, tree canopy increase, carbon sequestration, native seed development, and more.

Most municipalities and landowners mow their open land, neglecting the potential for higher ecological use. Mowed grass is ingrained in American culture as a tidy way to keep nature at bay. Businesses, homeowners and government agencies together spend millions of dollars each year mowing or applying pesticides and herbicides to acres of ecologically useless turf.

What are the environmental consequences of these practices? High fuel and labor costs, soil erosion; pesticide and herbicide overuse; soil, air and water pollution; loss of wildlife and insect habitat; and spread of invasive species, to name a few.

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.

In urban areas, small parcels of land offer opportunities to create habitat, steward water, soil and air, grow native plants from seed and engage people in "nearby nature." Correctly managed, native plantings on roadways, neglected public parcels and residential yards can be significant sources of ecological resilience.

The Bee Line Method builds on the vision of a "homegrown park"; a network of plantings in a geographic area within four contiguous St Paul neighborhoods. By engaging neighborhood residents as volunteers and offering education and training, the Bee Line Method develops a constituency for a more earth-friendly method of land management. This hands-on educational process helps spread the Bee Line Method's best practices, while stewarding multiple acres of differently managed land.

The Bee Line Method is not hypothetical. It is a tested, 10-year old project that has grown steadily in size and recognition. Since 2016, with support from multiple sources, Frogtown, Como and Midway neighborhood residents have been carefully expanding naturalized sites along and near Pierce Butler Route. Pollinator plots have been established at schools, rec centers, boulevards, places of worship, and other public and private spaces. Funding from ENTRF will ensure the Bee Line's continued growth as a demonstration of ecologically

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?

Outcomes include:

A replicable model with demonstration sites for ecological maintenance of small urban parcels, consisting of:

- Continued maintenance of five acres of existing native gardens

- Strengthening of a substantial native seed bank for harvesting and distribution

- Community events for engagement and education of volunteers performing ecological garden maintenance

- Demonstration sites and best practices opportunities for environmental workers

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Maintenance and Growth

Activity Budget: \$93,000

Activity Description:

Continue to maintain existing “Bee Line” gardens and strengthen substantial native seed bank for harvesting and distribution

Tasks:

Regularly maintain existing Bee Line gardens along Pierce Butler Route, at Snelling and Lexington intersections, and between Grotto and Dale intersections

Regularly harvest, clean, package and disseminate native seeds harvested from Bee Line sites

How tasks will be accomplished:

Human Nature LLC, a community-oriented landscape initiative, will maintain several gardens along Pierce Butler Route

OOIEE, a landscape design firm, will maintain the Test Plot, a garden at Lexington and Pierce Butler Route

MN SEED Project, a seed harvesting and dissemination non-profit, will coordinate seed-related and plant propagation events and training

Outputs and impacts:

Well- maintained garden sites at each node. Seed and plant-related training events and volunteer workdays.

Evaluation:

Independent assessment of ecological properties and benefits of gardens. Data on seed collection and distribution by MN SEED.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Continued maintenance of existing “Bee Line” gardens Annual 2027-2029	June 30, 2030
Monarch City- Continued maintenance of existing “Bee Line” gardens	June 30, 2030
Test Plot- Continued maintenance of existing “Bee Line” gardens	June 30, 2030
PB Meadow- Continued maintenance of existing “Bee Line” gardens	June 30, 2030
Nurturing a native pollinator seed bank	June 30, 2030
Native pollinator seed distribution	June 30, 2030

Activity 2: Major Activity #2: Education and Training

Activity Budget: \$169,000

Activity Description:

Objective: Provide a replicable model and demonstration sites for ecological conservation of native plantings on small urban parcels, through education and training

Tasks:

Develop a robust online “Bee Line Method” library with event information, background and lessons learned.

Update and educate public and supporters with regular social media announcements & calendar updates

Offer regular events for training and education of neighborhood residents, volunteers and landscape workers.
Cultivate a crew of volunteer plant growers by recruiting, training, and supporting community plant propagators

How tasks will be accomplished:

A digital library of native habitat development and maintenance resources will be developed and managed by Human Nature and OOIEE.

Trainings and coaching sessions will be offered by Bee Line partners. Materials will draw on existing resources from authorities such as UMN Extension, Metro Blooms, and watershed districts, as well as on Bee Line partners' own observations and lessons learned.

Outputs and impacts: Well- maintained online library and active social media presence. Training events and volunteer workdays.

Evaluation: Website/library and social media traffic measurements. Utilization of training materials by volunteers and others. Attendance numbers at workdays and training events

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Informational library completed and maintained (digital)	January 31, 2028
Facilitate teaching native landscape skills through the installation process of native pollinator gardens	November 30, 2029
Seed sowing propagation engagement and educational events	April 30, 2030
Updated calendar of educational events and volunteer opportunities for all groups	June 30, 2030
Multiple Social media streams produced regularly	June 30, 2030
Seedling corps - training of a volunteer crew to grow plants for Bee Line plantings	June 30, 2030
Maintenance engagement and educational events for volunteers hosted	June 30, 2030
Education about native plant propagation aftercare for volunteers hosted	June 30, 2030
Native landscaping educational exhibiting at community events	June 30, 2030
Hosting tours and Bee Line visits	June 30, 2030
Art and education laboratory at the Test Plot	June 30, 2030

Activity 3: Administration and Project Management

Activity Budget: \$35,000

Activity Description:

Provide administrative coordination, fiscal sponsorship, and project oversight for Bee Line activities

Tasks:

Process payments and reimbursements

Track budget, timelines, and progress

Prepare reports and maintain documentation

Coordinate partner communication

How tasks will be accomplished:

Como Community Council staff will manage finances, reporting, and compliance

Project coordination through regular check-ins and shared systems

Outputs and impacts:

Timely payments and accurate reporting

Strong coordination and transparency

Evaluation:

Timeliness and accuracy of financial processes

Completion of reports and partner feedback

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Monthly Coalition Support Meetings	June 30, 2030
Annual reporting and financial updates to stakeholders	June 30, 2030
Reporting/reimbursement requests to LCCMR as required	June 30, 2030

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Chris Stevens	Human Nature	Manager	Yes
Stephanie Hankerson	SCKHank LLC	Manager	Yes
Courtney Tchida	MNSEED	Director	Yes
Matt Olson	OOIEE	Manager	Yes

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.

Our goal is to increase awareness of the benefits and importance of native habitat, especially in urban environments in a highly engaged, community participatory way. This will be done through promoting the Bee Line, a series of native habitat installations on the Ramsey County right of way of Pierce Butler Route in St Paul. Acting in these spaces to demonstrate a different model of right of way management, our team will train more stewards in teaching native habitat management best practices and provide a community-harvested seed bank for propagating future plant stock. Through these efforts we will be able to increase the knowledge base of how to care for this critical Minnesota biome. Our deliverables for the dissemination of this information will be:

An ongoing series of training sessions for community or professional stewards

A native plant seed inventory to be shared at no-cost to individuals and community projects to encourage propagation of plants endemic to our area

An educational website, brochures and pamphlets including native plant maintenance guidance materials - which will provide a library of Bee Line learning that stewards have collected through community practice.

A community-propagated native plant supply that will be used to augment native plantings in the Bee Line area.

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?

To date, the Bee Line has been low-cost, relying on a loose coalition of volunteer-powered organizations, including District 10, Human Nature LLC, Hamline Midway Coalition, MNSeed and OOIEE Inc. Support has come from public entities such as Ramsey County, Board of Water and Soil Resources, CRWD and the University of Minnesota.

Continued public-private collaboration on physical maintenance will ensure long-term sustainability. In addition, sharing 'homegrown' and harvested native seeds or plants within Bee Line communities will keep the cost of maintenance low. Through regular volunteer training and events, a supportive constituency for the Bee Line Method will be strengthened.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Jessica Willman

Job Title: Community Organizer

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

Jessica Willman will be the administrative and reporting project manager for this grant. She has hands-on experience leading large, community-based environmental projects, including managing a Pollinator Pathway grant totaling over

\$200,000. In that role, she handled grant oversight, budgeting, reporting, community engagement, and long-term maintenance planning.

Through the Lawns to Legumes and Pollinator Pathways grants, she helped develop the Saint Paul Pollinators of South Como - a team that oversaw the installation and ongoing care of more than 20 pollinator gardens throughout South Como in Saint Paul. This work involved coordinating with residents, volunteers, and landscape professionals to ensure each site was not only well designed, but also cared for beyond the initial planting. A strong focus has always been placed on maintenance and sustainability so that gardens remain healthy community assets over time.

Jessica has built strong working relationships with both community members and public partners, including staff at the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County. These partnerships have helped align neighborhood-level projects with city and county priorities, creating more connected and cohesive pollinator corridors across the area.

At the core of this work is a commitment to practical implementation and authentic community engagement. Jessica understands how to move projects from idea to installation while keeping residents, organizations, and partners involved and informed. Her experience managing multi-site grants, supporting volunteers, and planning for long-term stewardship makes them well prepared to successfully lead this proposed project.

Organization: Como Community Council - District 10

Organization Description:

The Como Community Council is an independent, nonprofit organization accountable to the community. We are dedicated to creating a vibrant, safe, and welcoming neighborhood. The Council provides a voice for renters, homeowners, businesses, and nonprofits to help shape decisions that affect the quality of life for those who live, work, and visit the Como area.

Environmental stewardship is an important part of this work. The Council collaborates with local organizations, volunteers, and public agencies to address environmental issues that matter to the community. Through these partnerships, we support projects that improve neighborhood sustainability, protect natural resources, and encourage community participation.

The Council organizes neighborhood clean-up events that bring residents together to remove litter and care for shared public spaces. We also manage a community compost drop site, giving residents an accessible way to divert food scraps from landfills and reduce waste. These programs make it easier for community members to take part in everyday environmental action.

In addition, the Council secures and administers city, county, and state grants to support environmental initiatives such as pollinator habitat restoration, community gardens, and other neighborhood sustainability projects. By working collaboratively and leveraging public funding, the Como Community Council helps turn community priorities into

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Project Manager		Provide overall financial coordination, including budget oversight, invoice processing, and reporting. Project activities are monitored and managed to ensure timelines and deliverables are met. Regular updates are hosted with partners and stakeholders, and documentation is maintained to demonstrate progress, compliance, and successful achievement of grant objectives.			32.26%	0.6		\$35,000
							Sub Total	\$35,000
Contracts and Services								
MN SEED Project	Service Contract	Facilitate a community-created native plant seed bank, distribute these free seeds to the Bee Line community and beyond, and provide technical support to recipients to propagate their own native plants. Manage the native seed stock and databases, and offer community education around sustainable native landscaping practices.				1.02		\$84,000
Human Nature LLC	Service Contract	Help develop and maintain a digital hub for native vegetation best practices and activities. Nurture ongoing community coaching activities during the grant period, throughout each growing season, to promote the skills needed to develop and maintain native gardens.				1.05		\$86,000
SckHank LLC	Service Contract	Explain what work the entity will be providing: (50 Words): Manage the program to grow 4,500 native plant seedlings to support Bee Line and area plots. Recruit volunteers, teach propagation methods and provide technical support to the 10 volunteer growers annually.				0.21		\$17,000
OOIEE	Service Contract	Manage community stewardship events to maintain existing native plantings, document project work, and develop digital educational resource hub — including weekly social media posts — to communicate ecological science, share best				0.45		\$36,000

		practices, and foster community connection and outreach.						
Como Community Council	Service Contract	The Como Community Council, through its local group the Saint Paullinators, will maintain pollinator gardens on public lands in South Como. This includes community education, native plant propagation, and ongoing garden maintenance to support pollinators, enhance neighborhood green spaces, and foster community stewardship through hands-on engagement and shared environmental responsibility.				0.15		\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$233,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	MN SEED: Seed packing materials for 45,000 seed packets	Materials for creating a native seed bank, distributing seed & education events					\$8,400
	Tools and Supplies	SckHank LLC: Materials and supplies for community propagation of over 4,500 plants	Materials for Bee Line participants to grow our native pollinator plants					\$1,500
	Tools and Supplies	Human Nature: Mulch, amendments, seed and nursery stock, hoses, irrigation and hand tools for native garden maintenance and installation of over 60 gardens	Continued maintenance of native gardens in public right of way and materials to assist volunteers install a native educational habitat					\$13,300
	Tools and Supplies	OOIEE: Mulch, amendments, hoses, irrigation and hand tools for native garden maintenance	Continued maintenance of native gardens in public right of way					\$1,800
							Sub Total	\$25,000
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	1000 single page, native garden maintenance best practices handouts (\$2 each)	Community Information and Education					\$2,000
	Printing	60 posters for event advertisements (\$17 each)	Community Information and Education					\$1,000
	Printing	500 brochures on the benefits of native vegetation landscaping (\$2 each)	Community Information and Education					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$4,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$297,000

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: \$297,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [1f1ab514-c21.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Photos of the Bee Line Community Engagement...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Good Standing	88709c5a-25a.pdf
990	a20a4005-47c.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Como Community Council Board Action Item	50878bfe-8bc.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Letter of Support: Councilmember Molly Coleman	13aaa8b9-dbb.pdf
Letter of Support Xerces Society	c62f782d-5d3.pdf
Letter of Support: Ramsey County Commissioner	dca27689-6b5.pdf
Letter of Support: CRWD	cce29e4c-df5.pdf
Bee Line Photos	01b41811-67a.pdf
Bee Line Memo Context and Opportunity	ca7e43ce-030.pdf
Bee Line Maps	d485b19d-933.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:

Jessica Willman - Como Community Council, Stephanie Hankerson - SckHankLLC, Chris Stevens - Human Nature, Courtney Tchida - MN SEED, Patricia Ohmans - formerly Frogtown Green

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