



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-192

Proposal Title: Mikinaake: Connecting Indigenous Youth to Land-Based Learning

Project Manager Information

Name: Hannah Brithón

Organization: Belwin Conservancy

Office Telephone: (651) 478-9075

Email: hannah.brithon@belwin.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Belwin will expand access to experiential outdoor learning opportunities for Indigenous youth and families, while incorporating traditional ecological knowledge in our collaborative restoration work at Belwin's Indigenous Learning Site.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$817,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2030

LCCMR Funding 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.

Mikinaake' in Ojibwe refers to the Turtle who carves a path of lessons to live 'in a good way'. The teachings of this humble trailblazer remind us that Indigenous youth currently face consistent challenges to achieving a culturally-aligned lifestyle.

Indigenous schools and organizations throughout the greater Metro have expressed a lack of access to nature to practice regenerative lifeways, learn and teach about ecology, and share generational knowledge. As the last remaining Dakota and Ojibwe first-language speakers pass on, it is more crucial than ever that youth connect with their elders to preserve cultural ties and minimize the loss of this irreplaceable knowledge source. For our Indigenous partners, ecology, language, and storytelling are all intertwined. These teachings are enhanced when shared in vibrant healthy ecosystems.

Belwin collaborated with Indigenous partners to establish a living 'classroom' for students to learn about traditional ecological practices. While programming already includes K-12th graders, the demand from other schools and Indigenous-led community organizations has increased. Adult relatives of students coming to Belwin for this culturally-rooted programming have requested similar teachings to heal their generation's cultural knowledge gap, pivoting our work to expand beyond the classroom to include the family structures where Indigenous culture thrives best.

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 will provide Indigenous environmental education to K-12 students and their families while restoring an ecologically significant area. Through these programs, we will recover Indigenous communities' access to nature and deepen both Belwin's and community partner's knowledge of land management.

Belwin's Indigenous Learning Site offers space for educators and elders to authentically model Indigenous pedagogy while honoring Minnesota K-12 state standards. Curriculum will include studying the ecological and cultural significance of:

- Impacts of bison on the prairie ecosystem, alongside Dakota and Ojibwe language teachings
- Caretaking of traditional plant medicines and Indigenous foods, such as Cedar, Sage, Chokecherries, and Plum
- Ojibwe and Dakota astronomy, including star storytelling and traditional seasonal moon teachings
- Traditional lifeways and tracking of animal species living in the floodplain and Valley Creek, such as beaver, blue heron, brook trout, and salamander

This project will expand and strengthen growing programs to include more Indigenous-based schools and youth programs in these land-based teachings and habitat restoration. We see great demand to increase the number of field trips and events at the site, and continue to build summer programming with Indigenous elders and families. This program growth will provide greater connections to cultural traditions for a wider community.

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 seeks to continue habitat restoration of 18 acres of wetlands, woodlands, and prairie that directly affect the health of the Valley Creek Watershed, a protected trout stream and tributary to the St. Croix River. Uniquely, this restoration will be done in collaboration with Indigenous experts and elders, and students learning alongside them. The ecological impact of this project stems beyond routine restoration work, and incorporates a path for Indigenous youth to explore innovative, hands-on experiences with the natural world that may further inspire engagement in the natural resource world and with Indigenous organizations doing similar land stewardship work.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Expanding Indigenous Outdoor Education Opportunities - Field Trips and Community Events

Activity Budget: \$601,680

Activity Description:

Students, families and community members from urban Indigenous schools will participate in Indigenous-led programming at Belwin. Programming will continue expanding to include students K-12th grade, and will focus on Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge, languages, ecology, and astronomy.

Collaborative programming will include curriculum designed by local Indigenous ecology experts, elders, educators, and Dakota and Ojibwe language experts. One example is a lesson based on the bison herd that grazes Belwin’s prairie. Families will connect the cultural significance of their ecological interconnectedness to the entire prairie ecosystem. Another example is the completion of bird counts while learning the traditional story of the Blue Heron who left for winter, connecting western data practices with seasonal Dakota teachings.

Lessons are rooted in traditional teachings and adhere to MN state science, math, and social studies standards. Belwin staff coordinate with Indigenous school staff to weave these lessons into yearly curriculum in the classroom and experiential field trips to Belwin’s Indigenous Learning Site. We will continue to measure outcomes through teacher assessment of students, tracking participation numbers in family field trips, and through talking circles that explore Tribal history, culture, values, and practices.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Create outreach materials for Indigenous education programs and schools	December 31, 2027
Solidify program engagement with 5 new Indigenous school programs or community groups	June 30, 2028
Approximately 150 6-12th graders attend 3-4 trips annually	June 30, 2029
Approximately 150 participants from Indigenous community organizations attend 2-3 land-based, immersive trips annually	June 30, 2029
Hold 2-3 annual land-based community events designed for students, families, and community members	June 30, 2030

Activity 2: Habitat Restoration with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, students, and contractors

Activity Budget: \$215,320

Activity Description:

Originally, this parcel was severely degraded with a high density of invasives and lacked culturally significant, native species. Thanks to previous funding by the ENRTF, work has included riparian and prairie restoration, removal of woody and non-woody invasive species, and planting of 1,000 shrubs and 10 eco-patches.

As students and families continue visiting this living classroom, we see the need for further invasive control and more targeted support for the site’s seedbank in the prairie and floodplains. Herbicide applications, some seeding, and annual mowing will be done through contracted habitat restoration.

We will also incorporate Indigenous elders, experts, and students in habitat restoration projects to provide greater student access to both ecologically and culturally significant plants. For example, high school students will gather seeds from more established Belwin prairies in the fall, learn about seed stratification and start plugs over the winter, and then transplant them to the Indigenous Learning Site under the guidance of Indigenous ecological experts in the spring.

Families will learn from Ojibwe and Dakota elders how to phenologically notice changes in the landscape while building a relationship with all plant and animal relatives present at the site.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Contract with Indigenous Elder or Ecological Expert to support educational restoration projects with students	December 31, 2027
Gather/purchase materials for seeding project and students collect seed at Belwin	December 31, 2028
Indigenous elders teach seed keeping lesson, students complete seed stratification activity	June 30, 2029
Woody and non-woody invasive herbicide treatments completed in wetlands, woodlands and prairie by restoration contractor	June 30, 2030
Buckthorn suppression seed mix scattered in wetlands by restoration contractor	June 30, 2030

Dissemination

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

Belwin plans to feature this project in our print and e-newsletters, both when funding is first secured and near the completion of the ENTRF funding to highlight progress. Social media and print fliers will be utilized to disseminate information about ongoing seasonal community events at the restoration and education site to introduce more community members to the project. Belwin Indigenous programming staff will attend community education meetings, such as the Phillips Indian Educators (PIE), and other Indigenous community events in the metro area to continuously share updates and event information with current and potential school partners.

Any curriculum developed in conjunction with this project will be available to other schools and districts to use as a resource as well. We will make a particular effort to share this information with Minneapolis Public Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, Stillwater Area Public Schools, and the Minnesota Department of Education.

Together with partner organizations, we will also present educational resources at regional educational conferences, including Minnesota Indian Education Association (MIEA), as well as share restoration findings with local conservation groups at minimum once a year throughout the duration of the project.

We will acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENTRF Acknowledgement Guidelines. Belwin has already installed signage at the site describing the partnership and acknowledging ENTRF funding.

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?

While we are requesting additional funding through LCCMR, we see many opportunities to fund this work after programs are firmly established, i.e. private foundations and government funding for Indigenous-focused public school programs. We will pursue additional funding opportunities throughout this grant. The ability to leverage ENTRF dollars with other funders will set us up for ongoing success.

Together with Indigenous partners, Belwin will manage the restored land for high plant diversity and low occurrence of invasives. Long-term maintenance of the land will be absorbed into Belwin’s annual budget, which is funded through donations, grants, earned income, and endowment.

Other ENTRF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Restoring Land, Reviving Heritage: Conservation Through Indigenous Culture	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 05f	\$420,000
Restoring Land, Reviving Heritage: Indigenous Conservation - Phase 2	M.L. 2024, , Chp. 83, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 05h	\$688,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Hannah Brithón

Job Title: Indigenous Program Coordinator

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

Hannah Brithon received her bachelor's degree in Spanish Language and Latin American studies at Gustavus Adolphus College. Her education and passion for embracing Indigenous cultures brought her to Mexico to collaboratively develop outdoor education programs with the local Nahua community in Puebla. Additionally, she has over 5 years of experience managing cross-cultural experiences for high school youth and nonprofit education programs for adult learners. More recently, Hannah has managed two previous LCCMR-funded projects at Belwin Conservancy totaling over \$1 million of state funding, weaving together Dakota and Ojibwe teachings with restoration practices at Belwin.

In her current role as Indigenous Program Coordinator of Belwin Conservancy, she is focused on expanding access to Belwin and growing Indigenous community presence for the 1,600-acre nature center and preserve. This role has provided her with specialized expertise in partnership-based programming, conservation practices rooted in Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge, as well as state grant management.

Hannah's leadership and expertise in nonprofit program coordination, Indigenous outdoor education, and community partnerships position her to successfully lead a project that enhances environmental learning opportunities for the Indigenous community. She has a proven track record in fostering collaboration and ensuring the growth and impact of educational programs for all.

Organization: Belwin Conservancy

Organization Description:

Belwin protects 1,600 acres of woodlands, wetlands, oak savanna, and prairie in Afton and West Lakeland, MN, on the ancestral home of the Wahpekute Dakota people.. Amid a rapidly developing and diversifying area of the region, this land provides community access to healthy native ecosystems and acts as a home for regional wildlife.

Since its founding in 1970, Belwin has connected conservation with hands-on science education in partnership with the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS). Through that partnership, young science learners have access to three Minnesota biomes and four different aquatic systems. Access for students who have limited exposure to nature is a key component of our education vision, and Belwin is differentiated by its early and sustained commitment to providing outdoor learning experiences to all students, including those with physical and emotional disabilities.

In recent years, Belwin's programmatic activity has expanded, and now includes local youth athletic fields, public hiking, an array of arts and cultural events, and partnerships with other schools and community organizations. Annually, we host nearly 200,000 visits through our athletic fields, education programs, public hiking trails, and events and programs, and that number is growing.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Indigenous Program Coordinator		Manage contracting processes, development of education program, and grant administration			21%	3		\$240,200
Indigenous Partnerships Coordinator		Coordinate partnerships and programming with urban Indigenous schools and community organizations			20%	3		\$275,100
Program & Partnership Director		Oversee Indigenous Program Coordinator and Indigenous Partnerships Coordinator			22%	0.3		\$34,200
Natural Resources Director		Oversee habitat restoration work			21%	0.15		\$15,700
Natural Resources Staff		Support ongoing restoration at the site			15%	0.12		\$7,600
							Sub Total	\$572,800
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Restoration enhancement activities in the forested floodplain and prairie sections: buckthorn removal maintenance and Indigenous method of seeding/planting upkeep with culturally specific plant materials. Ongoing prairie maintenance and introduction of culturally significant and ecologically appropriate plant material.				1.2		\$112,400
TBD	Service Contract	Educational programming by visiting Indigenous elders, cultural experts, and Indigenous garden/ecology experts. Approximately 3-5 contracts per year for 3 years with individual educators at about \$1000/contract = \$15,000				0.3		\$15,000
Great Lake Lifeways Institute	Subaward	Indigenous knowledge keepers to teach traditional lifeways and woodland teaching lodge assembly to school and community groups for intergenerational land-based teachings. Personnel costs: 2 staff at \$4,500 each. Equipment & Tools costs: \$1,000				0.3		\$10,000

Dakhóta íápi Okhódakičhiye (DIO)	Subaward	Dakota knowledge keepers, with localized Traditional Ecological Knowledge and specialized language ability, to guide seasonal land-based programming year-round (Dakota star storytelling, Bison teachings, etc.) Personnel costs: 3 teaching staff will lead 5-6 programs for \$5000 total per year, for 3 years.				0.3		\$15,000
Mary Moose	Subaward	Ojibwe elder with localized Traditional Ecological Knowledge and specialized language ability, will support seasonal, land-based programming year-round (Maple harvesting, stewarding sacred plant medicines, etc.). Personnel costs: 1 Indigenous Elder at \$5000 per year, for a total of 3 years.				0.15		\$15,000
							Sub Total	\$167,400
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Sanitation Equipment for field trip use, year-round (Biffs)	Year round contract for 1 regular and 1 ADA unit, plus winterization, for a total of 3 years					\$11,400
	Tools and Supplies	Materials for Indigenous Lifeways and Ecology Teachings	Introduce traditional Indigenous ecology and lifeways teachings through supplemental materials for hands-on, land-based activities (For example, cordage for red willow teachings, cups for Cedar tea tasting, canvas bags for gathering harvesting plants, etc.)					\$3,000
	Tools and Supplies	Tribal varieties of plants and seeds	Incorporating students and community groups in rejuvenation of woodlands, wetlands and prairie while reconnecting to traditional plant medicine teachings. (For example planting new plugs of Sweetgrass to be harvested and braided, or cultivating and learning about the benefits of wild strawberries or 'Heartberries', etc).					\$4,000
	Tools and Supplies	Outdoor education program supplies	Weave western ecology concepts into traditional Indigenous teachings during field trips and family events (provide shovels, gloves, etc for plug planting in					\$3,000

			wetlands, guides for bird counts in Ojibwe/Dakota, etc.)					
	Equipment	Materials for traditional Woodland-style teaching lodge	Introduce a temporary Woodland-style teaching lodge for educational purposes made from traditional materials (aspen/birch poles, removable canvas, etc.)					\$5,000
	Equipment	Tipi poles and freight costs for Plains-style teaching tipi (approx. 32 poles)	Introduce temporary teaching space for educational and community groups to learn in a Plains-style structure.					\$5,000
	Equipment	Tipi canvas for temporary Plains-style outdoor learning space	Introduce temporary teaching space for educational and community groups to learn in a Plains-style structure.					\$5,000
	Equipment	Snow gear for high school students / adult sizing	Expand access to cold weather gear (Snow boots, hats/mittens and coats) for 6-12th grade students and adult community members during winter programming and ecology lessons.					\$5,000
	Tools and Supplies	Solar Lanterns (25)	Provide muted light to avoid disrupting eyes during evening astronomy, stargazing and cultural storytelling events. Solar lanterns are necessary as there is no electric power at the site.					\$1,000
							Sub Total	\$42,400
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Other	Busing costs for school and community groups (\$650/bus per trip. 15-20 trips per year for three years)	Field trip transportation from various schools and Indigenous community organizations to Belwin Conservancy for environmental education field trips and cultural community events.					\$30,000

							Sub Total	\$30,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Printing costs for community outreach materials (Fliers, tabling materials for community events, etc.)	Increase publicity and access to Indigenous-led, land-based programming opportunities at Belwin for educational and community groups throughout the greater Metro area.					\$2,000
							Sub Total	\$2,000
Other Expenses								
		Minnesota Indian Educator's Association (MIEA) Conference - Presenter's Fee (\$600 registration fee, two years of attendance for two staff)	Annual state-wide conference to present to fellow Indigenous educators about project findings and shareable learning models.					\$2,400
							Sub Total	\$2,400
							Grand Total	\$817,000

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				
Cash	Minnesota Department of Education - Native Language Revitalization Grant	Grant funding provided for metro area Indian Education programs to participate in Indigenous programming at Belwin. Estimated at \$4500/yr for 3 years.	Secured	\$13,500
			State Sub Total	\$13,500
Non-State				
In-Kind	Belwin Conservancy	Administrative personnel costs associate with overall direction and partnership relationships, 3% FTE	Secured	\$16,000
Cash	St. Croix Valley Foundation	Funding provided to support Belwin's general operating costs that support Indigenous programming (\$5,000/yr for 3 years).	Potential	\$15,000
In-Kind	Belwin Conservancy	Belwin Programming budget covers food, gifts for presenting Indigenous elders, and other non-allowed expenses through ENRTF funding.	Secured	\$6,000
Cash	Mortenson Family Foundation	Funding support for Indigenous programming at Belwin to cover general operating expenses, food and gifts, Ojibwe curriculum development, and additional personnel costs.	Pending	\$48,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$85,000
			Funds Total	\$98,500

Total Project Cost: \$915,500

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
Indigenous Learning Site	Washington	Floodplain forest, upland forest, prairie, and trout stream. Land is situated on a stretch of Valley Creek, a regionally significant trout stream with spawning brown, rainbow, and brook trout.	Restoration	18	0.12	\$220,000	Private	Parcel would stay under Belwin Conservancy ownership.	In Progress
Totals				18	0.12	\$220,000			

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 permanently protected by a conservation easement. Belwin has many permanently protected areas. The area we are proposing to restore is protected under a conservation easement with the Minnesota Land Trust.

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.

This restoration site is divided into three main categories: floodplain forest, prairie, and woodland edge.

The floodplain forest has proven to be challenging to restore. Although it was initially cleared of dense buckthorn and woody invasive thickets in 2023, the land was so degraded that it needs additional enhancements to the native seed bank and additional invasive control. In the absence of woody invasives, we have found that non-native and invasive herbaceous plants have taken hold, such as Canada thistle, dame's rocket, and reed canary grass. We plan to utilize a site specific seed mix that is modeled after the University of Minnesota's Cover It Up program to help suppress the regrowth of new woody invasives, as well as boost the diversity of native plant species within the wetland. It has been documented that invasive plants such as Canada thistle are a symptom of a lack of viable seed bank. By seeding this area, we will reintroduce native species, help stabilize soils in the flood plain, and potentially reduce erosion into Valley Creek and the St. Croix River. In addition to the seeding, we will complete foliar herbicide applications on dense woody regeneration and invasive herbaceous species to control competition for the native trees and shrubs that were previously planted on this site after the initial clearing in 2023.

We expect this to maintain less than 15% cover of woody and herbaceous invasive species. This will also promote an understory of the appropriate southern terrace forest species of shrubs, forbs and grasses.

The prairie portion of the site was reconstructed and seeded in 2024. It is well documented that prairie restorations require the most intervention in the first 4 years of its reconstruction. Twice a season spot herbicide treatments of herbaceous invasive species along with traditional ecological knowledge of land stewardship would help enhance this to a high quality prairie.

We expect these techniques to maintain the cover of warm season grasses such as big bluestem, Indian grass, little bluestem, switchgrass and side oats grama while promoting at least 10% cover of appropriate southern mesic prairie forbs to enhance species richness with the goal to have less than 10% cover of woody invasive species and less than 20% cover herbaceous invasive species.

Belwin Conservancy has land management plans for all of our nearly 1,600 acres. These plans are based on the needs of each parcel and are reviewed periodically and before any major restoration project. Restoration projects are prioritized based on ecological significance, public use, and funding. After we complete initial restoration on an area, we update the management plan for needed restoration enhancements and ongoing maintenance.

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.

Belwin staff are familiar with the Board of Soil and Water Resources guidelines listed and follow these in all of our restoration projects. While we cannot opt out of herbicide use, we make an effort to use the least amount of herbicide possible. We avoid use of pre-emergent herbicides that linger in soils, and will conduct herbicide treatments in a timeframe that limits damage to native plants and pollinators by spraying when these are not active. We also utilize

hand pulling and mowing certain invasive plants to reduce seed spread. Native plant seeds that we cannot source from Belwin habitats are purchased from reputable seed producers that follow the yellow tag laws, and we make efforts to source seeds within 100 miles of Belwin. We also source plant material from local nurseries that specialize in producing native plant species and not cultivars. Occasionally, we are also gifted seeds or plugs from our Indigenous partners that adhere to these standards and provide further enhancement of native seed and plant species.

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.

After restoration enhancements on this parcel are complete, Belwin staff, community partners, the school community, and volunteers will monitor the land to evaluate the success and inform long-term management needs.

Belwin employs a staff with over 60 combined years of experience caring for natural resources. We monitor the land several times a year for specific invasive pests and general habitat health. The long-term maintenance and management of our land is an established and funded part of our organization, with a track record dating back to 1970 of managing our lands back to health. Although we need outside funding to complete initial restoration and restoration enhancements, Belwin is able to fund the long-term maintenance with our general operating budget. Our annual budget is funded through a combination of grants, individual donations, earned income, and endowment. A healthy native landscape requires less care than a non-native landscape, and that stability helps our organizational budget and goals.

In addition to staff expertise, we rely on a community of people to help us monitor and assess our land for restoration success. We have a large coalition of land-based volunteers and education groups that participate in habitat maintenance which includes invasive plant control, seed collection and sowing, and trail monitoring. Indigenous community groups also partner with Belwin to steward the land through methods rooted in traditional ecological knowledge. We also have a number of different scientific studies happening at Belwin. All of these parties report back to Belwin on what they observe or measure so we can adjust our management plan to address any continuing restoration needs.

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

Upon execution of the grant contract, we will notify the Conservation Corps. We will also notify them of any RFPs we put out for restoration activities. Belwin has done this regularly in the past and will carefully consider proposals by the Conservation Corps among any other proposals we receive.

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.

We will evaluate restoration success by monitoring established photo points, conducting a restoration evaluation, utilizing drone photography to assess structural vegetation changes, and refer to long term water monitoring studies.

Photo point monitoring was set up prior to restoration and will be carried out by Belwin staff. We set up 1-3 photos points within each management unit, and recorded the GPS coordinates. We then take photos from those points in the same direction with the same camera (if possible) at the same time each year. Because dame's rocket and common buckthorn are two of the most problematic species in the area, we plan to take the photos in late May or early June when the dame's rocket is in flower, and again in October when the density of buckthorn in the understory is readily apparent.

The restoration evaluation will be conducted by Belwin staff and follows a protocol set up by the University of Minnesota to monitor vegetation at the species level. We will conduct a meandering plant walk to collect species data

and compare it with data taken prior to restoration to see changes in species composition within the different plant communities. We will also utilize a volunteer to take drone photos of the site that we can compare with previously captured photos to compare vegetation structure and general habitat changes, especially in the floodplain and along the stream bank.

In addition, Belwin has hosted a long term water quality monitoring study on portions of Belwin land surrounding Valley Creek. We can use this data to compare changes in water quality of the creek before and after restoration activities.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [404036d6-9f9.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The visual shows two maps - a large view of all of Belwin's land holdings, nearly 1,500 acres of land located in Afton and West Lakeland Township, MN. The holdings are not all contiguous, but are all in the same general area. The small map shows the program site....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Belwin Conservancy Certificate of Good Standing	93349808-436.pdf
Belwin Conservancy 2024 Financial Statements	600fd628-9fd.pdf
2024 Belwin Conservancy 990 Form	93c3b85e-ec2.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Belwin Conservancy - Board Letter	53bf4d85-29a.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Dakhóta íápi Okhódakičhiye (DIO) - Letter of Support	d774c115-95a.pdf
American Indian Family Center - Letter of Support	7d941fff-e5c.pdf
Division of Indian Work - Letter of Support	88984d82-28f.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?

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")?

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:

Katie Bloome, Belwin Conservancy

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