



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-256

Proposal Title: Reviving Indigenous Sustainability in Wood Use and Native Plants

Project Manager Information

Name: Alexander Mehne

Organization: Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Office Telephone: (218) 878-7105

Email: alexandermehne@fdlband.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The Fond du Lac Forestry will do a pilot trial to familiarize itself with numerous plants historically used by the Indigenous People while creating natural energy resource to the community.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$1,525,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2030

LCCMR Funding Category: Energy (E)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): NE

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): NE

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.

Due to climate change and environmental degradation are stressing conventional farming practices in Minnesota. More specifically, the Fond du Lac Reservation that lacks the culture knowledge surrounding Indigenous practices for vegetation management that has been erased over generations. The Band believes with the current climate change that stronger wildfires will occur, on our tribal lands and neighboring towns. Additionally, the fuel loading will increase and energy prices are increasing rapidly in communities with low income.

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.

The proposed solution to the current problem that the Band is facing is to do a pilot trial to get familiar with establishment of several plants historically used by indigenous tribes. Take the fuel loading, and put it use by turning it into the following; woodchips to create biochar and help the gitigaan program (the Band's agriculture 36-acre farm that is a space for a community hub dedicated to building tribal food sovereignty) produce food, firewood to provide fuel for the community members. While also providing the Band with a system to self-supply cultural use firewood going forward in the future.

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?

Using local wood sources means less imported wood and the potential to sell firewood and chips. The knowledge gained by the garden experiment will enable better management of indigenous-utilized plants anywhere where that is a management goal. It will also aid in the cultivation of the plants so they can be utilized in restoration activities.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Reduce fuel loading around houses

Activity Budget: \$1,513,000

Activity Description:

We take the fuels around houses and turn them into useable chips or biochar. This is done with brushing equipment we currently have and the grapple tractor to drop brush and ladder fuels. We then either burn it in a kiln onsite to produce biochar and then transport the biochar to either local community members or the gitigaan program. Some sites that are not suitable for the kiln will be chipped and transported to the gitigaan program. Heavy fuels will be loaded and transported to the cultural firewood program, where the firewood processor will be, and the cultural program can then use that firewood for funerals and other cultural activities.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
acquire wood chipper, firewood processor, trucks, atvs, grapple tractor and trailer.	April 30, 2028
Clear around \$10,000,000 worth of houses	November 30, 2028
Supply over 10 tons of chip and/or biochar to gitgaan and community members	November 30, 2029

Activity 2: Garden experiment

Activity Budget: \$12,000

Activity Description:

Grow a ~1 acre pilot garden of perennial indigenous food plants. experiment with different soil disturbances such as modern tilling, indigenous prescribed burning, and others to see if any disturbance regime can increase the yield or facilitate the dominance of any of the culturally sought-out species. Experiment with different soil amendments like biochar, compost, and other supplements to see if any of them can increase the yield of or facilitate the dominance of culturally sought-out plants.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
attempt to establish 10 different species. test climate adaptability	July 31, 2028
attempt to establish 20 different species, test aggression and climate adaptability	July 31, 2029
assess longer-term impact of treatments on perennials	July 31, 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 ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

Activities will be showcased and funder acknowledged at venues such as powows, Symposiums at the Cloquet Forestry Center, and Gitigaan public events (Fond du Lac's food sovereignty program hosts classes and events tailored to community members). Some of the results will be shown to students at Fond du Lac Ojibwe School and the Fond du Lac Tribal Community College.

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?

Once the equipment is acquired, maintaing this capacity will have a fraction of the cost and will be funded as part of FDL forestry's DOI-funded wildfire program

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Alexander Mehne

Job Title: Forest Manager

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

Alexander Mehne is the Forest Manager for the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. He will be the project manager for the duration of this project.

Organization: Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Organization Description:

Tribal government for the Fond du Lac Reservation. The Forestry Department within Resource Management will be leading this project.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Forestry Aides		operate equipment and do transportation			0%	4.5		\$168,000
							Sub Total	\$168,000
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Equipment	Two Equipment trailer	The purpose of the two equipment trailer is to safely transport the equipment and raw materials gathered from this project					\$52,000
	Equipment	Wood chipper	A wood chipper would help the Band recycle materials into something that will continue to support the project					\$600,000
	Equipment	Firewood Processor	To help automate and speed up the firewood production for the Band during this project.					\$100,000
	Equipment	tractor with grapple	The tractor with a grapple will help the Band for land clearing, debris management, and material handling during the project.					\$70,000
	Equipment	Four 3/4 ton trucks	The four 3/4 ton trucks allow the employees that work for the Band to not obtain certification driver licenses to operate the vehicle while also providing the ability to help with the project's transports and clean up.					\$340,000
	Equipment	two four-wheeler/quad	The two four-wheeler/quad will help to get around the wetlands that the Reservation has and other hard to reach locations by vehicle.					\$40,000

	Tools and Supplies	Gas, oil, and equipment maintenance	keep equipment running					\$19,000
	Tools and Supplies	hand tools	for working the garden					\$200
	Tools and Supplies	planting stock of various plants	to plant in garden					\$9,762
	Tools and Supplies	supplies for fuels work- gas cans, drip torches, repair parts for trucks, PPE	PPE is worn while operating and around some equipment. Gas cans are used on remote site where driving to refuel is time-limited. Drip torches are used to light the fire in the kilns that make biochar, etc.					\$9,000
							Sub Total	\$1,239,962
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Other	travel to sites to observe and collect plants in the event that they cannot be found from a store source. 1 to 2 trips						\$800
							Sub Total	\$800
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								

		Indirect Cost	This covers costs in FDL's accounting, HR and IT departments that will support the personnel doing this project					\$116,238
							Sub Total	\$116,238
							Grand Total	\$1,525,000

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: \$1,525,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [9ca1ac90-392.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The project will involve treating some of the areas in red across the reservation with the equipment...

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Tribal council resolution	f6378a6f-48a.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
financial audit	3600b805-413.pdf
Resolution on behalf of the Band	5718fd98-9a0.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?

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?

Yes

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

No

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

No

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:

Jasmin Budreau, Jeremiah Rule, Amanda Rosebrock, Lyndsey Edwards

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

N/A