



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-281

Proposal Title: Expanding Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Containment and Shielding

Project Manager Information

Name: Sami Selter

Organization: Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Use technology, education, and collaboration to prevent new aquatic invasive species (AIS) infestations on high-risk lakes while teaching Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose best practices through tools and regional civic pilots.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$1,445,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2030

LCCMR Funding Category: Water (B)

Project Location

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

Statewide

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

Statewide

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.

AIS are present in 9% of Minnesota's water bodies, disrupting native plants and fish while limiting recreation. Annual management is costly and species such as starry stonewort, zebra mussels, and spiny water fleas have not been eradicated in any Minnesota waterbody, making prevention the most effective strategy.

A study conducted by the Minnesota AIS Research Center (MAISRC) in 2025 found that consistently practicing prevention behaviors can form habits that reduce AIS spread over time, but many boaters fail to take action if watercraft inspectors are not on site, even with AIS signage present. Staffing every boat launch is not feasible, especially when agencies are working to protect un-infested waters with limited resources.

Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose (CD3) cleaning stations address this gap. Research from MAISRC and the Natural Resource Research Institute show they effectively remove 96% of residual water and AIS surrogates within minutes. Reports by Hennepin County show that, when paired with community education and strategic inspections, these stations make prevention easier and increase compliance with AIS laws.

By providing boaters with tools and building civic infrastructure for regional AIS prevention, this project aims to contain AIS on highly traveled lakes and protect sensitive regions from future spread.

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.

With ENRTF support, MLR implemented a statewide AIS containment strategy from 2019-2025, successfully coordinating the installation of CD3 stations on 22 lakes infested with starry stonewort—covering 66% of all lakes affected by this invasive species. MLR also worked to close the gaps among resource managers and citizens through regional working groups. In the 2026 strategic planning sessions with these working groups, partners identified shielding of high risk/high priority waters and expansion of regional coordination as key goals.

Given this feedback, MLR is seeking to expand this program with a 3-part statewide strategy to shield against AIS threats:

- (1) Partner with lake associations, Tribal nations, colleges, and local, state, and federal governments to install and maintain CD3 stations and other tools on priority public boat launches in the Rainy River Watershed and waters threatened by starry stonewort.
- (2) Use pilots like Stop Starry Stonewort Program and the AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative to engage civic partners in building sustainable AIS prevention networks and strategies.
- (3) Increase public awareness of Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose practices through meetings, community events, emails/newsletters, and digital media, targeting lake home and cabin owners, recreational boaters, and anglers to maximize behavior change.

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 three-year project will install 15 new CD3 watercraft cleaning stations and build local partnerships to ensure long-term maintenance. Data from at least 40 stations statewide will measure behavior change and the effectiveness of education initiatives. Monthly meetings of the AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative and Stop Starry Stonewort Program will strengthen leadership and coordinate regional prevention strategies. Annual public events will share results and engage lakeshore communities. At the end of the project, a final case study will document outcomes and guide future aquatic invasive species prevention and management efforts.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Install Watercraft Cleaning Stations and Access Enhancements to Increase Clean, Drain, Dry Compliance

Activity Budget: \$855,000

Activity Description:

This activity will deploy watercraft cleaning infrastructure at priority public water accesses to reduce the spread of AIS and strengthen prevention efforts across high-risk watersheds. The Project Manager will coordinate with site owners to determine interest and complete any necessary permitting, ownership transfers, or no-cost lease agreements required to install access improvements. The project will install 15 watercraft cleaning stations statewide, prioritizing locations using the AIS Explorer tool developed by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota. This tool identifies high-risk movement pathways using watercraft inspection data and will guide placement to protect vulnerable lakes in the Rainy River Watershed and contain starry stonewort infestations. Where feasible, stations will include Internet of Things (IoT) monitoring technology that transmits real-time usage data via cellular connection. Software licenses will support monitoring of up to 40 stations statewide, including stations previously deployed through MLR programs. Where appropriate, partners may install signage, tool boards, or monitoring devices to ensure prevention infrastructure matches local site conditions and boater use patterns.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Enable IoT to track usage data for 35 stationary CD3 waterless boat cleaning stations	September 30, 2027
Complete permitting, lease agreements, ownership transfers, and CD3 installation at 5 new public water access	June 30, 2028
Expand IoT tracking to include 40 stations statewide	March 31, 2029
Install 5 additional CD3 stations at priority sites, reaching 10 total new stations	June 30, 2029
Install final 5 CD3 stations, reaching 15 total new stations	June 30, 2030

Activity 2: Build Civic Capacity for AIS Prevention through the Stop Starry Stonewort Program and AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative

Activity Budget: \$360,000

Activity Description:

This activity will strengthen civic leadership and regional capacity to prevent AIS through the Stop Starry Stonewort Program and the AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative. The project will engage lake associations, local governments, Tribal partners, and natural resource managers in coordinated program planning and implementation across jurisdictions. Using the Civic Organizing Model, the project will provide a structured leadership development curriculum for collaborative meetings and trainings. This process will equip local partners with tools to jointly identify priorities, develop regional work plans, and coordinate and evaluate AIS prevention strategies across jurisdictions.

MLR staff will coordinate and expand participation in both working groups and facilitate collaborative planning to support the installation of watercraft cleaning stations (Activity 1) and communications (Activity 2). Partners will share AIS management practices, inform new prevention strategies, and identify opportunities to share resources to improve monitoring and coordination.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Convene working groups, train Stop Starry and ABC lead organizers, and finalize the annual strategic	March 31, 2028
Yearly midpoint evaluation with partners to update strategic plan	July 31, 2028
Year-end evaluation and disseminate annual outcomes	December 31, 2028
Convene working groups and co-lead strategic planning with trained pilot Lead Organizers	March 31, 2029
Second yearly midpoint evaluation with partners to update strategic plan	July 31, 2029
Conduct second year-end evaluation and disseminate annual outcomes	December 31, 2029
Complete development of third annual strategic plan and pilot Lead Organizer work plans	March 31, 2030
Produce case study summarizing project outcomes, leadership development, engagement numbers, and lessons learned	June 30, 2030

Activity 3: Statewide Communications and Outreach to Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species in Minnesota's Waters

Activity Budget: \$230,000

Activity Description:

This activity will reinforce prevention practices and strengthen stewardship by expanding statewide communications and outreach to increase public awareness of aquatic invasive species. MLR will engage local partners by attending lake association meetings, outreach events, and field visits. MLR staff will attend lake association meetings, outreach events, and field visits statewide to engage partners and volunteers. The organization will also maintain and utilize its 50,000-contact stakeholder database to distribute communications and educational resources to lake communities across Minnesota. The 2029 Aquatic Invaders Summit will serve as a forum for statewide collaboration and the dissemination of best practices. The summit will bring together lake leaders, AIS professionals, researchers, and resource managers to share prevention strategies, research updates, and monitoring approaches. Finally, the project will also implement an annual five-month “How Well Do You Know MN?” AIS public service campaign using targeted digital media through Leighton Engage. The campaign will deliver engaging online content focused on AIS identification, prevention behaviors, and responsible recreation.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Host 3 AIS webinars focused on monitoring/early detection	June 30, 2030
Host 3 AIS webinars focused on management/prevention planning	June 30, 2030
Host 3 Statewide Lake and River Summits	June 30, 2030
Implement 3 “How Well Do You Know MN?” digital media series	June 30, 2030
Attend ~150 lake association meetings/event to promote Clean, Drain, Dry practices	June 30, 2030

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Kit Ferber	Big Fish Lake Association	Stop Starry Stonewort Partner	No
Steve Henry	Cass County AIS Program	Stop Starry Stonewort Partner	No
Jon Utecht	North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District	AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative Partner	No
Kali Lawver	Beltrami County AIS Program	Stop Starry Stonewort Partner	No
Matthew Shultz	Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters	AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative Partner	No
Mark Apfelbacher	CD3 Systems	CD3 System Contact	Yes
Christoph Ender and Byron Karns	White Iron Chain of Lakes Association	AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative Partner	No
Noah Bauman	Lake shield	I-LID System Contact	Yes
Sharon Natzel	Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations	Stop Starry Stonewort Partner	No
Doug Jensen	Department of Natural Resources AIS division	Stop Starry Stonewort and AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative Partner	No
Liz Anderson	Lake County AIS Program	AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative Partner	No
Erika Gilsdorf	Leighton Media/Engage	"How Well Do You Know MN?" digital AIS PSA production and distribution	Yes
Amanda Weberg	Cook Soil and Water Conservation District	AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative Partner	No
Bill Grantges	Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District	Stop Starry Stonewort Partner	No
Elizabeth Anderson	Lake Soil and Water Conservation District	AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative Partner	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.

Digital Media Series – Using targeted IP addresses through Leighton Engage, campaigns will educate Minnesotans on AIS

identification and prevention. The ENTRF logo will be placed largest next to sponsors who will support production to maximize reach. The digital ads will appear on websites, social media, and streaming.

CD3 Stations - The ENTRF Logo will be included on the wrap of CD3s installed through this project and materials produced with data collected from IoT tracking will be attributed to ENTRF.

AIS Webinars – Annual July and October webinars will provide timely education, highlight outcomes, and engage partners statewide - ENTRF will be attributed in presentations related to this project.

Statewide Lake and River Summits – Yearly statewide summits will present program results, share best practices, and provide networking opportunities for lake associations, resource managers, and other civic partners. The ENTRF logo will appear as a sponsor on all materials and websites.

Lake Association Outreach – Summer outreach visits (~50 annually) will directly engage local communities through presentations and flyers with the ENTRF logo, and reinforce Clean, Drain, Dry behaviors.

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?

This project will create lasting AIS prevention infrastructure and partnerships that will endure beyond the grant period. MLR will collaborate with site hosts, equipment owners, and local partners—including lake associations, local governments, watersheds, and soil and water conservation districts—to facilitate long-term operation and maintenance of CD3 stations. Data collected through internet-enabled CD3 stations will inform partners’ future prevention strategies and investments. The AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative and Stop Starry Stonewort Program will sustain ongoing outreach and prevention efforts through in-kind contributions from partners and local AIS prevention funding.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Stop Starry Invasion - Community Invasive Species Containment	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 06g	\$1,000,000
Emerging Issues Stop Starry Invasion	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 10b-1	\$385,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Sami Selter

Job Title: Associate Executive Director

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

Sami Selter has extensive experience developing management plans for aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention, complemented by hands-on fieldwork in AIS control projects in Minnesota. She holds an M.A. in Natural Science and Environmental Education and a B.S. in Environmental Science, Policy, and Management.

As Associate Executive Director of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers, she oversees AIS prevention initiatives including the Stop Starry Stonewort Program and AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative, and serves as an educator for Minnesota Lakes and Rivers’ leadership training. She is also a certified Project Water Education Today (WET) Facilitator, teaching K–12 water

science curriculum with educators and students through lake associations.

Through these roles, Ms. Selter has coordinated with diverse stakeholders across public and private sectors, leading equipment and signage installations at public boat launches, and fostering partnerships with lake associations, local governments, and state agencies. As Project Manager, she will serve as the primary contact for LCCMR, overseeing reporting, tracking project progress, and ensuring project objectives are met efficiently.

Organization: Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates

Organization Description:

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLRA) protects the legacy of our lakes and rivers because we believe that thriving waters are essential to our identity, economy, and way of life—and safeguarding them takes people, relationships, and strong local leadership.

MLRA protects Minnesota’s lake and river heritage for current and future generations by forging powerful links among lakes, lake advocates, and policy makers. Members include over 300 lake associations with an estimated 55,000 households, including anglers, conservationists, marina owners, Tribal members, and others. We understand that water management is siloed among many different federal, state and local governmental bodies. The citizens engaging in water protection are also siloed by lake, or fish species, or area of concern. Water flows around and between these different roles and jurisdictions and becomes impaired. MLR is a designated Civic Organization per the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative, and we use a civic organizing framework to collapse these siloes in support of the clear public good of clean and healthy lake ecosystems. Our strategic plan includes three pillars; science, education/awareness, organized engagement.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
MLR Lead Organizer		Overseeing project implementation, coordination of AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative and Stop Starry Stonewort Program, pilot leadership training (PLOT), and ensuring milestones and reporting requirements are met.			25%	3		\$330,000
MLR Admin		Managing all grant administration, financial tracking, invoicing, and compliance with LCCMR reporting requirements.			0%	0.39		\$15,000
							Sub Total	\$345,000
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Annual software costs for onboarding and usage data \$1,000 per unit for 30-40 units, scaling for each year of the project	Ensure public access to cleaning tools, track the effectiveness of local AIS outreach, and inform AIS prevention reporting for local partners.					\$105,000
							Sub Total	\$105,000
Capital Equipment								
		15 Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose (CD3) units \$50,000 per unit (buffer added to account for potential changes in costs for CD3 units over a 3-year period) including hardware, delivery, and maintenance as well as optional winterizing covers, signage, or cameras requested by civic partners. Current CD3 model pricing available upon request.	Provide self-serve tools and enhancements at high-risk public water accesses to prevent the spread of AIS.	X				\$750,000
							Sub Total	\$750,000

Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Travel for 4 staff to Lake Association meetings, field visits, and outreach events across Minnesota \$10,000/year	Engage stakeholders, visit CD3 locations to verify delivery and installation, and support effective communication, coordination, and implementation of AIS prevention strategies.					\$30,000
							Sub Total	\$30,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Publication	Maintenance and use of MLR 50,000-contact database and implementation of a five-month digital public service announcement campaign using IP-targeted advertising through Leighton Engage (Production costs are offset through matching funds from recruited sponsors).	Broad statewide outreach targeting specific lake users—anglers, sport boaters, paddlers, lakeshore property owners, etc.—to promote AIS identification and prevention behaviors.					\$180,000
							Sub Total	\$180,000
Other Expenses								
		\$5,000 in annual dues for membership in the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI), providing access to the Civic Organizing model leadership training, strategic planning tools, and work plans templates.	Build long-term sustainability by providing a structured framework for staff and partners to implement and sustain regional AIS monitoring, inspection, prevention, and management coordination efforts.					\$15,000
		Planning and implementation of the Aquatic Invaders Summit, a state-level event to educate and network with stakeholders, lake associations, and the public.	Forum for statewide collaboration and the dissemination of best practices among diverse stakeholders					\$20,000

							Sub Total	\$35,000
							Grand Total	\$1,445,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
<p>Capital Equipment</p>		<p>15 Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose (CD3) units \$50,000 per unit (buffer added to account for potential changes in costs for CD3 units over a 3-year period) including hardware, delivery, and maintenance as well as optional winterizing covers, signage, or cameras requested by civic partners. Current CD3 model pricing available upon request.</p>	<p>The solar-powered, waterless watercraft cleaning stations, including vacuum and air-pressure hoses, are not standard equipment for any individual organization but are essential tools for removing surrogates of AIS targeted by this project, including starry stonewort, zebra mussels, and spiny waterfleas. These stations are integral to the statewide containment strategy and directly support the project’s mission by providing public access to clean, drain, and dry watercraft. Their costs are necessary and directly related to the project’s success, justifying an exception for reimbursement.</p> <p>Additional Explanation : The CD3 stations purchased with this appropriation will continue to be used for AIS prevention throughout their useful life by remaining installed and operable at high-use public water accesses. Continued use is supported through ownership and maintenance contracts and integration into statewide AIS outreach and education programs, ensuring the stations consistently provide self-serve cleaning access and support inspection and reporting efforts for local partners.</p>

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
In-Kind	AIS Prevention Aid	Itasca County AIS Coordinator staff time, funded by AIS Prevention Aid, for Itasca project coordination within county, outreach, inspections, and regional AIS prevention planning.	Potential	\$268,000
In-Kind	AIS Prevention Aid	Cass County AIS Coordinator staff time, funded by AIS Prevention Aid, for project coordination within county, outreach, inspections, and regional AIS prevention planning.	Potential	\$512,000
In-Kind	AIS Prevention Aid	Cook County AIS Coordinator staff time, funded by AIS Prevention Aid, project coordination within county, outreach, inspections, and regional AIS prevention planning.	Potential	\$207,000
In-Kind	AIS Prevention Aid	Beltrami County AIS Coordinator staff time, funded by AIS Prevention Aid, project coordination within county, outreach, inspections, and regional AIS prevention planning.	Potential	\$204,000
			State Sub Total	\$1,191,000
Non-State				
Cash	White Iron Chain of Lake Association	Maintenance and coordination of 2 trailered units in St. Louis County	Secured	\$3,000
Cash	Local sponsors	Video production of the "How Well Do You Know MN?" AIS PSA	Potential	\$27,000
Cash	Hennepin County	AIS prevention communications and summit sponsorship	Pending	\$15,000
Cash	Wright County	AIS prevention communications	Pending	\$5,000
Cash	Cass County	AIS prevention communications	Pending	\$5,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$55,000
			Funds Total	\$1,246,000

Total Project Cost: \$2,691,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [476cec4f-95d.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

This image shows one of the 35 CD3 boat cleaning stations that the Stop Starry Stonewort Program and AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative have distributed with the support of LCCMR....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
MLRA Certificate of Good Standing	a07c6b83-184.pdf
MLRA Form 990	068aa595-e45.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
MLRA Board Resolution and Authorization Letter	2159fb4b-175.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Lake Soil and Water Conservation District Support Letter	8c72a058-b22.pdf
Annotated Bibliography	bf2f8731-87d.pdf
Leech Lake Band Of Ojibwe Division of Resource Management Support Letter	ed27821a-d4d.pdf
Cook Soil and Water Conservation District Support Letter	0646b9f4-92f.pdf
Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District Support Letter	625f5e76-05a.pdf
Map of CD3s placed by Minnesota Lakes and Rivers	a5688c2f-dbf.pdf
AIS Video Series "How Well Do You Know MN" 2025 Results	58745a14-061.pdf
Beltrami County AIS Support Letter	1683200f-885.pdf
Big Fish Lake Association Support Letter	69a89a17-2be.pdf
Cass County AIS Support Letter	d89adc89-6d1.pdf
Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters Support Letter	42a252af-b9a.pdf
North St Louis Soil and Water Conservation District Support Letter	eab0dfba-19a.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?

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:

Dylan Kinny, Jeff Forester, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates

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