



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2027-372

**Proposal Title:** Restoration of the Historic Laurentian Environmental Center's Mission

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Paul Brinkman

**Organization:** Northeast Service Cooperative

**Office Telephone:** (218) 749-9259

**Email:** paulb@nescmn.net

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** The Laurentian Environmental Center's unique ecosystem encompasses all aspects of Minnesota's natural resources. Shuttered since 2020, NESC will engage LEC's legacy partners to restore its long-term accessibility, stewardship, and sustainability.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$160,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** December 31, 2028

**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): NE

**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.**

The Laurentian Environmental Center on Arrowhead Lake in the Superior National Forest has a century-long statewide legacy of conservation, outdoor activities, and experiential learning. While the LEC site represents all aspects of Minnesota's natural resources — air, water, land, and wildlife — a five-year gap in operations has resulted in inconsistent access, lapsed partnerships, and a decline in coordinated site stewardship.

Scheduled to reopen in the spring of 2026 when the Northeast Service Cooperative enters a long-term DNR lease, this vital regional asset requires a comprehensive realignment to reestablish and revitalize its educational, cultural, and environmental priorities. With broad authority to develop projects through public-private partnerships, NESC is uniquely positioned to convene legacy users and new collaborators to restore the LEC's mission.

NESC's proposal addresses these challenges through a structured planning process to ensure responsible use and culturally informed stewardship. By engaging initial partners—including the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Range schools, and Mounds View Public Schools—NESC will bridge gaps through aligned relationships and shared stewardship. This partnership lifts the LEC from a closed gate to a conservation gateway, restoring public access, experiential learning, and real-world research to serve and support environmentally informed and engaged Minnesotans.

**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.**

LEC 18-Month Operational & Stabilization Roadmap

Step 1: Talent Mobilization & Team Assembly

Deploy a lean, leveraged governance structure by integrating specialized staff, strategic consultants, and a dedicated volunteer corps. This core team will provide the technical and operational oversight necessary to navigate the site's transition.

Step 2: Stakeholder Alignment & Strategic Refinement

Convene legacy partners and identify key regional stakeholders to recalibrate project objectives. This phase focuses on building a unified vision that honors the site's history while updating priorities and goals that meet current educational and environmental needs.

Step 3: Ecosystem Assessment & Baseline Benchmarks

Conduct an environmental and infrastructure audit to establish sustainable priorities. By setting data-driven benchmarks for site health and facility operations, NESC will implement best practices that ensure the site's long-term ecological integrity.

Step 4: Program Design & Integrated Conservation

Execute work plans and educational programs that align with the conservation priorities of the local ecosystem. Every activity—from student curriculum to site maintenance—will be designed to reinforce the health of the Arrowhead Lake watershed and surrounding forest.

Step 5: Research Development & Stewardship Culture

Engage secondary partners and research institutions to pilot site-based learning and research.

**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 establishes and leverages an ecosystem of collaboration to restore the LEC as a premier regional center for experiential learning and environmental stewardship. The ultimate outcome is a comprehensive sustainability plan that aligns mission with implementation to protect and enhance the site's natural resources including forests, water, and wildlife. Re-engaging LEC's legacy partners — tribal, educational, local government, and conservation — helps ensure a foundation of support, a long-term preservation plan, and enhanced public access. Ultimately, the LEC will serve as a resilient hub for environmental education, cultural history, outdoor learning, and research, securing the site for future generations.

## Activities and Milestones

**Activity 1: Identify and deploy a lean, leveraged, integrated team of specialized staff, strategic consultants, long-time NESC partners, and dedicated volunteers.**

**Activity Budget:** \$25,000

**Activity Description:**

Activity 1: Talent Mobilization & Team Assembly

Objective: Establish a lean, high-capacity partnership structure to help NESC codevelop priorities, navigate transition, scale appropriate use, and assure long-term sustainability for the LEC and in site ecosystem.

Tasks: NESC will identify and integrate a cross-functional team comprising specialized NESC staff, strategic consultants (development, technical and environmental), legacy partners, and volunteers. The team and its work plan will be supported by leveraging project funds, NESC resources, and regional networks through informal mission alignment, formal service agreements, and less formal volunteer charters. This core team will provide planning oversight, relationship networks, and project management necessary to navigate complex site demands and requirements.

Deliverables: The primary output is a formalized Project Governance/Partnership Framework, including a roster of experts and an organizational ecosystem. These outputs provide the "intellectual infrastructure" required to execute the grant. The impact is a resilient management culture that minimizes overhead while maximizing expertise, ensuring the project remains on schedule and fiscally responsible.

Evaluation: Outcomes will be evaluated through quarterly performance reviews against project milestones and a "readiness assessment" conducted at the end of the mobilization phase to ensure all technical and operational gaps are filled.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Form the LEC Project Partnership Collaborative including task recruitment, participation agreements, and recurring meeting schedule.	July 31, 2027
Finalize and publish the board-approved LEC Project Partnership Framework defining roster, roles, and operational resources.	September 30, 2027
Complete and disseminate internal readiness audit to confirm resolution of talent gaps and foundational milestones.	November 30, 2027

**Activity 2: Convene LEC legacy partners and key regional stakeholders to review and recalibrate project mission and objectives.**

**Activity Budget:** \$30,000

**Activity Description:**

Activity 2: Stakeholder Alignment & Strategic Refinement

Objective: Build a unified vision for the LEC by aligning legacy partners and new stakeholders with redeveloped educational, cultural, and environmental priorities.

Tasks: NESC will facilitate a series of structured briefings, planning sessions, and site evaluations. We will convene

established partners (e.g., Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Mounds View Schools) and key regional stakeholders (e.g., Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, area schools) to assess the site’s 100-year history against present needs. These sessions will be managed via a relationship-marketing approach, utilizing NESC’s existing public-sector framework to bridge gaps in communication and site stewardship.

**Deliverables:** The primary output is a Strategic Alignment Report containing a recalibrated mission statement and a prioritized list of project objectives. These outputs serve as the foundation for the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan, ensuring all future programming is culturally informed and scientifically grounded. The impact will shift from internally driven operations to a resilient, partner-driven “evergreen” development project.

**Evaluation:** Success will be measured by stakeholder participation rates, the formal adoption of the recalibrated mission by the NESC Board, and a pre- and post-activity survey to confirm consensus on strategic priorities and project readiness.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete three partner briefings with 75% attendance from legacy and tribal stakeholders for strategic alignment.	September 30, 2027
Board approval of the Strategic Alignment Report and prioritized project objectives for the LEC mission.	November 30, 2027
Finalize post-activity survey confirming 85% stakeholder consensus on strategic priorities and site readiness.	January 31, 2028

**Activity 3: Conduct an environmental and infrastructure audit to establish sustainable project priorities. Implement research-based and best practices.**

**Activity Budget:** \$40,000

**Activity Description:**

Activity 3: Ecosystem Assessment & Baseline Sustainability

**Objective:** Establish an empirical baseline for the LEC’s site habitat and existing infrastructure to prioritize sustainable restoration and long-term ecological integrity

**Tasks:** NESC will conduct a comprehensive environmental and infrastructure audit including:(1) Field Assessments: Monitoring air and water quality, and surveying fish, flora, fauna, and forest health, (2) Infrastructure Analysis: Evaluating existing facility footprints to identify regulatory compliance, required upgrades for energy efficiency and minimal environmental impact, and (3) Stakeholder Consultation: Integrating partner data from agencies like the DNR, the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, MDE, and Minnesota universities to ensure best practices are culturally and scientifically grounded.

**Deliverables:** The primary output is a Baseline Sustainability Report featuring data-driven benchmarks. These outputs provide the technical foundation for the LEC’s Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. The impact is a shift from reactive maintenance to proactive stewardship, ensuring the site remains a resilient, high-quality venue for experiential education.

**Evaluation:** Success will be evaluated by the completion of all baseline metrics and the formal adoption of these benchmarks into the project's long-term implementation strategy, verified by the NESC Board and strategic partners.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete environmental field assessments and facility audits across the 29-acre site and its existing infrastructure.	November 30, 2027
Finalize the Baseline Sustainability Report featuring data-driven benchmarks for ecological health and site restoration.	February 28, 2028
Board and partners formally adopt site benchmarks into the long-term LEC implementation and stewardship strategy.	April 30, 2028

#### Activity 4: Execute work plans and educational programs that align with the conservation priorities of the local ecosystem.

**Activity Budget:** \$40,000

**Activity Description:**

Activity 4: Program Design & Conservation Integration

Objective Execute work plans and educational programs that align with the conservation priorities of the LEC’s 29-acre ecosystem, ensuring all activities reinforce the health of the Arrowhead Lake watershed, adjacent state land, and the Superior National Forest..

Tasks: NESc will collaborate with regional partners (including the Bois Forte Band, outdoor recreation associations, and conservation associations) to audit existing curricula and site maintenance protocols. We will then integrate "best practice" stewardship into every operational layer. This will be accomplished through cross-disciplinary workshops where educators and natural resource experts co-design experiential learning modules and sustainable land-management schedules.

Deliverables: The primary outputs include a Consolidated Educational Framework and a Site Maintenance Manual focused on watershed protection. These outputs provide a roadmap for "stewardship-first" operations, ensuring that student visits directly contribute to forest and water health. The impact is a resilient, culturally informed model for environmental education that turns the site into a living laboratory.

Evaluation: Outcomes will be evaluated through participant assessments, partner feedback loops, and annual ecological health benchmarks. NESc will measure success by the degree of alignment between actual site use and the long-term conservation goals established in the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete the integrated draft of the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan incorporating stakeholder feedback and environmental data.	June 30, 2028
Conduct a final review cycle with the DNR, Bois Forte Band, and key regional partners.	September 30, 2028
Secure Board approval, publish, and disseminate the final Comprehensive Sustainability Plan for public and agency	November 30, 2028

#### Activity 5: Engage secondary partners and research institutions to pilot site-based learning and research.

**Activity Budget:** \$25,000

**Activity Description:**

Activity 5: Research Expansion & Stewardship Culture

Objective: Expand the LEC’s impact by transitioning from foundational planning to active site-based learning and scientific research, fostering a robust culture of environmental literacy and stewardship.

Tasks: NESc will engage secondary partners—including regional universities, community colleges, and research institutions—to pilot field-study protocols. This will be accomplished through a series of "Research Roundtables" and site-based pilot projects designed to integrate academic research with the LEC’s unique 29-acre ecosystem. We will coordinate with specialists to align these pilots with state conservation priorities for water quality, forest health, and wildlife habitat.

Deliverables: Specific outputs include a Pilot Research Portfolio and a Stewardship Framework for external institutions. These outputs serve as a roadmap for long-term academic partnerships (and others), providing baseline data that informs future site use and management. The impact is a revitalized "living laboratory" where students, teachers, allied associates, and researchers generate actionable data, directly enhancing the preservation of the Arrowhead Lake watershed.

Evaluation: Outcomes will be evaluated through partner feedback surveys, the successful completion of two pilot research initiatives, and a formal review of the data’s utility by the NESc Board and DNR stakeholders.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Execute three pilot learning sessions for local school districts and community partner groups.	October 31, 2028
Distribute a comprehensive engagement toolkit to all regional partners to promote LEC public access.	November 30, 2028
Host a regional open house to showcase partner commitments, site restoration, and the learning environment.	December 31, 2028

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jared Mazurek	Minnesota Deer Hunters Association	MDHA, a legacy partner at the LEC, operates its Forkhorn Camps for adventure-loving kids and teens at four sites across Minnesota. Unfortunately, when the LEC closed in 2020, statewide participation in the camps dropped from 1,000 to 500 participants. MDHA shares a stake in resurrecting the LEC.	No
Jeff Anderson, Representative	Minnesota Trappers Association	The Minnesota Trappers Association has spent more than a decade seeking partners and a suitable site for wildlife education, habitat conservation, and experiential learning. The Association has a stake in the region and represents yet another ready planning partner to help codevelop project priorities to resurrect the LEC.	No
Kelly Sather	Mesabi Behavioral Health Network (St. Louis County)	Mesabi Behavioral Health Network is a regional collaboration of schools, counties, tribal communities, health care, law enforcement, community action agencies, and allied partners. Committed to the Minnesota Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights and experiential learning, its mission is to fill gaps in behavioral health and assure care continuity through collaboration.	No
Randy Long	Bois Forte Band of Chippewa	Long-term NESC partner primarily in telecommunications and community development. Along with American Indian youth, educators, tribal leaders, and cultural history, Bois Forte brings 25 years of productive co-planning and co-development experience to the project.	No
Jackie Ward	Northland Learning Center	As a regional school cooperative, the Northland Learning Center represents nine (9) rural school districts providing various educational approaches and support channels for at-risk youth, including experiential learning, life skills, and school-to-work initiatives.	No
Karl Brown	Mounds View Public Schools	As the legacy owner/operation of the LEC, Mounds View brings perspective and experience to the work of the project collaborative. Mounds View also brings both a metro and a statewide perspective to the partnership team and its project goals.	No
Dr. Noel Schmidt	Rock Ridge Public Schools	Rock Ridge ISD borders the LEC site in Britt. Rock Ridge brings an informed perspective to the project with an extensive history as an LEC partner, a recent successful school consolidation, a nationally-recognized educational program in innovation and experiential learning, and a demonstrated commitment to BIPOC students, including Americas Indians.	No
Paul Peltier	Range Association of Municipalities and Schools	Committed to the sustainability and growth of the region, the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) brings over 70 local units of government (15 school districts, 27 cities, and 30 townships) to the project from across 13,000 square miles within the 7-county region of Northeastern Minnesota.	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.**

NESC's dissemination strategy is embedded within the structure of the proposal itself where our role as a regional planning hub brings stakeholders and beneficiaries to the table as co-planners and co-developers, ensuring accountability for project outcomes. NESC's dissemination plan to address this strategy ensures public awareness and engagement on three levels:

- 1) Direct Stakeholder Engagement: We will share research and stewardship data through our existing governance framework, ensuring the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, the DNR, other environmental partners and educational partners receive actionable results to improve resource management.
- 2) Broad Public Accessibility: NESC will leverage our digital platforms and relationship networks to distribute periodic

reports such as the Public Engagement Toolkit and the final Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. By showcasing the LEC as a "conservation gateway," we will promote behavioral changes in stewardship across our 7-county service area and throughout Minnesota.

3) Digital, Physical, and Enterprise Longevity: All data, research, and "living laboratory" results will be documented, retained, and available. As a proven public enterprise, NESC provides the institutional stability to ensure our work remains accessible to Minnesotans long after the ENRTF project funding period ends.

This three-level dissemination model has been embedded in NESC strategy and operations for the past 25 years. We are publicly active and engaged. By integrating project results into our regional, state, national, and global platforms (Association of Education Service Agencies national association and its Global Initiative), we ensure that the work accomplished through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund impacts all potential individual, group, and institutional beneficiaries of LEC's renewal over the project period and long-term.

## 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?**

NESC has a funding and implementation plan in place through June 30, 2029.

Phase 1 funding is secured.

Phase I: Seed Funding & Phase II Project Preparation (Now – June 30, 2027)

- Source: MDE Multi-Purpose Facility Grant + NESC Matching Support
- Focus: Due diligence, infrastructure stabilization, and campus recommission.

Phase II: Project Implementation (July 1, 2027 – December 31, 2028)

- Source: LCCMR Grant Funding + NESC Matching Support.
- Focus: Core team mobilization, "Legacy Partner" engagement, and project implementation.

Phase III: Long-Term Sustainability & Partnership (January 1, 2029 – ongoing)

- Source: Partnership Funding + NESC Operational Support.
- Focus: Stewardship and sustainability (public engagement, partner expansion, and research initiatives)

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Paul Brinkman

**Job Title:** Executive Director

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

Project Manager

Paul Brinkman brings over 35 years of experience in staff, partner, and project development in rural education, healthcare, and telecommunications. His career is defined by the successful deployment of large-scale infrastructure and regional services. As a seasoned project developer, Paul has a proven track record of leading cross-functional teams and recruiting the strategic partners necessary to build sustainable initiatives for Minnesota communities.

Paul is the co-founder of several vital regional entities, including the Virginia Regional Medical Center Foundation, the Minnesota VEBA Trust, the Northeast NET, MSC Online Learning, the NESC Middle Mile Fiber Network, and the NESC Behavioral Mental Health Initiative.

## Regional Innovation

As a service provider, the Northeast Service Cooperative (NESC) has successfully developed, piloted, and scaled high-impact regional projects, including:

**Regional Infrastructure:** Transformed a T1 network pilot into a federally funded, greenfield "middle mile" fiber optic construction project. This network now serves anchor tenants and strategic partners across 10 counties in Northeast and East Central Minnesota.

**Student Retention:** Established a collaborative of local school districts (15 years prior to the Pandemic) to improve retention and graduation rates among at-risk students needing local support rather than being lost to disengaged national online providers.

**Behavioral Mental Health:** Acted as the champion and provided seed funding for a new regional initiative designed to bridge gaps in legacy services through local innovation and collaboration.

**Site-based Tenant Model:** Developed a robust physical on-site tenant model to support telcos, contractors, health & safety, and other partners,

## Operational Readiness

Driven by mission and committed to innovation, under Paul Brinkman's leadership, NESC has cultivated an operational culture designed to support complex, multi-year projects. With the full support of the Board, we have exemplary staff and well-developed operational infrastructure to ensure that the Laurentian Environmental Center (LEC) project finds resilient footing and achieves long-term results.

**Organization:** Northeast Service Cooperative

### **Organization Description:**

Established by the Minnesota Legislature (M.S.123A.21), Northeast Service Cooperative is one of nine regional service cooperatives in Minnesota governed by a seven-member elected board with broad authority to deliver programs and services locally, regionally, and statewide. With a service center in Mt. Iron, a warehouse in Virginia, and other regional sites, NESC has an annual operating budget of \$10M and a staff of 34 employees. NESC serves ten-counties in Northeast and East Central Minnesota, providing essential support to schools, colleges, cities, counties, health care providers, other regional and state agencies, and public/private partnerships. Services include education, CTE, STEM, health safety & environmental management, behavioral mental health, telecommunications, group health pools, and cooperative purchasing. Historically, NESC works through strategic partnerships (co-planning, co-development, and collaboration) including St. Louis County, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Range Association of Municipalities and Schools, Essentia Health, Mounds View public schools, Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, State of Minnesota (MNIT), University of Minnesota, St. Thomas University, Frontier Communications, Consolidated Telephone Company, USDA, and USEDA. NESC is funded through a balanced mix of service fees, partnership resources, competitive grants, and legislative allocations.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Project Manager (Executive Director)		As lead for partnership engagement, alignment, and activities, Paul Brinkman will be accountable for all project deliverables (i.e. milestones). Project roles and responsibilities include strategic coherence, partner engagement, team leadership, team development, change management, and organizational structure.			30%	0.22		\$36,856
Project Development Manager		Project coordination and operational development. With local, regional, and statewide expertise in planning, construction, health care, project management and business development, Suzi Ruper will work closely with the lead Project Manager to coordinate project activities, operationalize project outcomes, and ensure project deliverables (i.e. the grant project plan).			30%	0.3		\$20,000
Education Director		With experience at the local, regional, and state levels with at-risk youth, curriculum development, staff development, school change, and project evaluation, Tara Lindstrom will provide expertise in strategic program development, advising and supporting the team and the project in developing and sustaining the site-based learning environment.			30%	0.15		\$13,470
Program Development Specialist (BMH Manager)		Recognized for her regional and statewide work, Aubrie Hoover will help facilitate project planning and activities reconnecting the LEC to school and community constituencies including youth, families, health care, local governments, law enforcement, and business. Aubrie will help align project goals and activities with critical collaborators fully-engaged in project success as well as state environmental use priorities such as those advanced by the Minnesota Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights.			30%	0.22		\$16,158
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$86,484</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								

TBD	Service Contract	Project facilitation, consultation, and/or evaluation assuring documented third-party review.				0.15		\$16,000
TBD	Service Contract	Funds will support honoraria and travel reimbursements for content experts (ecologists, tribal historians, environmental educators) to lead technical demonstrations and strategic presentations for project collaborators. These engagements, conducted on site and/or virtually, are essential for integrating research-based practices into project planning, ensuring that programming is scientifically and culturally grounded.				0.08		\$9,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Documentation and Monitoring Tools	Aligned with planning goals. Required reporting, monitoring, and compliance.					\$4,000
	Equipment	Erosion and Stormwater Controls	Demonstration project with long-term impact. Aligned with planning goals. Protect soil and water resources.					\$8,000
	Equipment	Cameras and a drone	Support project activities and milestones through a digital record and evidence of project activities, data, and research.					\$2,500
	Equipment	Health & Safety Equipment and Supplies	For project partners, contractors, and guests.					\$2,000
	Equipment	Weather station	Support project activities and milestones through a digital record and evidence of project activities, data, and research.					\$1,000
	Equipment	Dedicated server and digital storage	The dedicated server and digital storage equipment will be integrated within NESC's existing fiber network and support infrastructure.					\$5,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$22,500</b>
<b>Capital Equipment</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-

<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Staff: Over the course of the project, 2 to 3 engagements, discussions, working sessions and/or presentations with partners and project contacts over the 18-month project period at an average of 100 round trip miles per visit.	Supplement virtual and electronic contacts and communications with personal engagement between and among partners and active project participants.					\$3,263
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Partners: Nine (9) planning sessions, project briefings, and/or demonstration "mini-projects" for eight (8) partner representatives at an average of 100 round trip miles per person per on-site session over the course of the project.	Supplement virtual and electronic contacts and communications with personal group engagement session (learning, planning, governance) between and among active partners.					\$5,220
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Site visits at other site-based outdoor learning environments in Minnesota. Over the course of the project, 4 trips at up to 3 vehicles per trip at 300 estimated round trip miles per site visit.	Replicate site design, support structures, and best practices to better inform the project and enhance site sustainability.					\$2,610
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$11,093</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
	Publication	Publish and disseminate periodic reports to document progress, capture outcomes, and demonstrate impact.	.Although committed to digital, web-based content, the project may benefit through publication of semi-annual progress reports. (i.e. 3 semi-annual reports)					\$3,000
	Publication	Dedicated and accessible digital tools including web based platforms, social media applications, and relationship management tools.	To ensure project activities and milestones, NESC will develop and manage a dedicated digital presence to serve as a project dissemination hub. This hub, an essential pillar of our broader engagement strategy, will include the development of a project-					\$11,923

			<p>specific website and integrated digital platforms designed to host the Public Engagement Toolkit and the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan.</p> <p>In addition to the digital platforms, these funds will help create "content loops," dynamic systems for publishing real-time research data, stewardship milestones, and program opportunities to partners, stakeholders, and the public. A robust dissemination hub ensures that Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) results remain transparent, accessible, and actionable, fostering informed environmental stewardship and best practices that protect and enhance Minnesota's natural resources for future generations.</p>						
								<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$14,923</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>									
								<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
								<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>

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
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	Northeast Service Cooperative Operating Budget	Support project activities and/or recommendations not funded by the grant during the project period.	Pending	\$16,000
In-Kind	Northeast Service Cooperative Operating Budget	Dedicated fiscal management and administrative support of grant funds and project activities.	Pending	\$9,500
In-Kind	Northeast Service Cooperative Operating Budget	Create an LEC Digital Commons leveraged by NESC's statewide technology footprint. Utilize dedicated, on-site infrastructure to establish a digital repository for data and information generated at the site's "living laboratory." By integrating site-based research with NESC's carrier-class network, we secure the integrity and longevity of the environmental benchmarks produced. This in-kind support includes the development of secure API and sharing protocols, allowing real-time data access for educational partners, researchers, and state agencies.	Pending	\$9,500
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$195,000**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [c270e35e-47f.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

The attached one-page summary, including site maps and photos, captures the essential elements of the Laurentian Environmental Center restoration project including the vision for the site, partner engagement plan, and long-term public impact....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
NESC audited financial statements FY25	<a href="#">81f28e24-5c1.pdf</a>
NESC board-reviewed financial statements March 2026	<a href="#">745d2b59-430.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
NESC Board Letter of Support	<a href="#">69fa659e-2ca.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
NESC Budget Supplements, Support Letters, Photos, and related documentation as outlined in the Table of Contents	<a href="#">8ffa0f03-0bd.pdf</a>

## 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")?**

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:**

Suzi Ruper, Manager of Strategic Marketing & Business Development, Northeast Service Cooperative

**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