



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-235

Proposal Title: Building Resilient Urban Forests for Climate Change 2

Project Manager Information

Name: Katie Edmond

Organization: Great River Greening

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Email: kedmond@greatrivergreening.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Great River Greening will expand climate-resilient urban tree canopies in areas impacted by heat islands and tree loss through planting and establishment in partnership with cities, school districts, and volunteers.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$897,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2030

LCCMR Funding Category: Resiliency (A)

Project Location

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

Region(s): Central, Metro, SE, NW,

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

Region(s): Central, Metro, SE, NW,

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.

As Minnesota warms, extreme heat is becoming a more frequent and dangerous threat to public health and ecosystem function. The impacts of extreme heat are especially acute in cities due to urban heat island effect, in which pavement and buildings trap heat. The burden is not shared evenly. Neighborhoods with fewer trees and more hard surfaces experience higher temperatures and greater heat stress.

A healthy urban tree canopy is one of the most effective nature-based tools for reducing heat. Trees cool neighborhoods through shade and evapotranspiration while providing additional benefits, such as filtering air, reducing stormwater runoff, and strengthening community wellbeing.

In addition to increasing heat, Minnesota communities face major canopy loss from emerald ash borer, now present in 59 counties and counting, along with increasing climate stress. Simply replacing lost trees is not enough. Cities and school districts need to plant climate-resilient, diverse species and follow through with care that keeps young trees alive. The first three years after planting are the critical window for establishment, yet watering and developmental pruning are often underfunded.

This proposal addresses that gap by combining targeted planting with establishment care and community engagement to foster a healthy urban forest that lasts.

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.

Great River Greening will expand climate-resilient urban tree canopies by pairing targeted planting with the follow-through required to keep trees alive and healthy. In partnership with municipalities and school districts across Minnesota, including Brooklyn Center, Owatonna, and St. Cloud, we will plant diverse, climate-resilient trees in heat-impacted areas and provide the establishment care that is often underfunded.

Great River Greening and local partners will confirm locations and sites, select a diverse mix of resilient species, and install trees with mulch and proper staking, as needed. Every newly planted tree will be placed on a watering plan and receive sufficient watering through the establishment window, up to three years or through the project period. We will also conduct developmental pruning on young trees previously planted by Great River Greening to support structure, reduce future risk, and improve long-term survival.

Volunteer events will connect residents and students to their neighborhood canopy through hands-on planting, stewardship, and education. Where necessary to enable replacement planting, we will contract for limited removal of dead or diseased trees. The goal of the project is to have a net-positive planting.

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?

In partnership with Minnesota cities and school districts, Great River Greening will enhance urban natural resources by establishing healthier, more resilient tree canopies on public land. Outcomes include planting 1,000 climate-resilient trees with watering plans that support survival through establishment, improving long-term canopy cover and habitat. This work protects public health and natural systems by reducing urban heat island impacts, filtering air pollutants, intercepting stormwater, and storing carbon. We will complete developmental pruning on 100 young trees to improve structure, health, and longevity. We will engage 200 community members through hands-on planting and urban forestry education that builds local stewardship.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Plant 1,000 Climate-Resilient Trees to Support a Diverse Urban Forest

Activity Budget: \$842,500

Activity Description:

Great River Greening will work with partners to identify public lands where urban heat island effect and low-quality canopy create the greatest need for shade, cooling, and long-term tree health. For each location, Great River Greening will select a diverse mix of climate-resilient species based on site conditions and projected future stressors. Species selection will prioritize native trees expected to perform well across a range of conditions, along with species near the edge of their historic range, where appropriate, to increase diversity and reduce risk from pests and climate impacts. To guide these decisions, Great River Greening will continue to consult MN DNR Urban and Community Forestry staff and established resources such as the USDA Climate Change Tree Atlas and related tools.

Newly planted trees will receive watering through the second summer after planting. If needed based on long-term weather conditions, funds will also support watering for trees planted in Spring 2027, under the previous appropriation. This follow-through protects previous public investment in planting and increases long-term canopy benefits.

Great River Greening will also conduct developmental pruning on select young trees previously planted by Great River Greening to support long-term tree health and reduce future risk.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Plant 100 Trees	November 30, 2027
Plant 450 trees, water and maintain planted stock	November 30, 2028
Plant 450 trees, water and maintain planted stock	November 30, 2029
Water and maintain planted stock	November 30, 2030

Activity 2: Community Connection to Urban Tree Canopies

Activity Budget: \$54,500

Activity Description:

Great River Greening will strengthen community connection to urban tree canopies through volunteer planting events that provide hands-on education and visible neighborhood improvements. Volunteers will be educated on proper planting technique, how to care for newly planted trees, and the value of Minnesota’s urban tree canopies. Opportunities to connect with local tree stewardship programs will be highlighted to promote community forestry connections and stewardship.

Existing relationships with volunteers and community stakeholders will be expanded and deepened in cities where Great River Greening is already working in urban tree canopies, specifically Brooklyn Center, Owatonna, and St. Cloud. New relationships will be pursued in cities in Greater Minnesota affected by urban heat island effect and in need of urban tree canopy improvement. Plantings in Environmental Justice neighborhoods will be prioritized. Demographic data on all volunteers will be requested and documented.

Planting events will be family-friendly. All hands-on volunteers will be equipped with the necessary protective equipment, tools, and training needed to participate in these activities safely. Educational materials promoting actionable tree care and stewardship strategies will be provided at all events.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Host at least one community tree planting event, engage at least 40 volunteers	November 30, 2027
Three total community tree planting events hosted, engaging at least 120 volunteers	November 30, 2028
Five total community tree planting events hosted, engaging at least 200 volunteers	November 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
City of Bemidji	City	Landowning municipality that may receive tree watering and developmental pruning on public lands through this program.	No
City of Brooklyn Center	City	Landowning municipality that will receive tree plantings, watering, and developmental pruning on public lands through this program.	No
City of Mankato	City	Landowning municipality that may receive tree watering and developmental pruning on public lands through this program.	No
City of Owatonna	City	Landowning municipality that may receive tree watering and developmental pruning on public lands through this program.	No
City of St. Cloud	City	Landowning municipality that will receive tree plantings, watering, and developmental pruning on public lands through this program.	No
St. Paul Public School District	Educational Institution	Landowning institution that may receive tree watering and developmental pruning on public lands through this program.	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.

Funding acknowledgments will be included in all outreach, social media, and project reports, and acknowledged verbally at in-person events, consistent with ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines. Great River Greening will share project updates and results through our website, newsletter, and social media, including volunteer and youth tree planting and stewardship events. Documentation will include planting locations and counts, species lists, watering and pruning records, volunteer participation, and photo documentation. We will collect and report participant feedback and demographic information, as appropriate, to improve engagement and ensure the project is meeting community needs. Interim and final reports will summarize outcomes and lessons learned.

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?

If funded, Great River Greening will continue this work as an ongoing program that helps Minnesota communities build and maintain resilient urban canopy on public land. This appropriation will deepen existing partnerships and support expansion to additional municipalities. After the grant period, partners will assume long-term maintenance, with Great River Greening providing technical support as needed. Continued planting and care will be funded through municipal and school district contributions, corporate and foundation support, and future public grants. Tools, learnings, and project results will be shared through Great River Greening's website, partner communications, and presentations to conservation and urban forestry networks.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Building Resilient Urban Forests for Climate Change	M.L. 2024, , Chp. 83, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 07b	\$752,000
Engaging our Diverse Public in Environmental Stewardship - Phase 2	M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05e	\$249,000
Accelerated Genetic Migration of Bur Oak- 10yr Data	M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08e	\$223,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Katie Edmond

Job Title: Program Manager - Urban & Community Forestry

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

Katie Edmond (MPA, Environmental Science and Policy, Columbia University; BS, University of Minnesota Twin Cities) leads Great River Greening's Urban and Community Forestry program and manages implementation of the Cooling Minnesota Communities initiative statewide. She brings 10 plus years of experience delivering urban environmental projects that combine public agency partnerships, community engagement, and on-the-ground implementation. Katie oversees multi-site tree planting on public land, coordinates establishment care including watering and developmental pruning, manages contractors and volunteer events, and ensures projects meet schedules, budgets, and reporting requirements. Her background at NYC Parks building nonprofit and municipal collaborations strengthens her ability to deliver complex, equity-focused urban canopy work that improves neighborhood resilience and long-term tree survival.

Organization: Great River Greening

Organization Description:

Great River Greening's mission is to inspire, engage and lead local communities in conserving and caring for the land and water that enrich our lives.

Great River Greening as a non-profit has been restoring, adapting, and sustainably managing ecosystems to address climate change, providing benefits for both people and the environment since 1995. To achieve our vision of healthy, climate change resilient ecosystems throughout MN, Great River Greening leans into the practices and projects that can truly impact our shared climate future. Our land-based restoration centers on three pillars of impact: (1) Restoring resilient landscapes, (2) Addressing critical biodiversity loss, and (3) Increasing carbon sequestration and storage.

Environmental stewardship is one of our core commitments. We partner with the communities we serve to increase environmental connection, teach environmental restoration, and ultimately empower committed individuals to join us in caring for our shared natural resources, engaging 8,000+ volunteers annually.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Project Manager/ Ecologist		Approves contracts, invoices, and budgets. Manages day to day project execution, crew, contractors, project budget and timeline.			21%	0.7		\$51,000
Field Crew		Conducts on-site work to support project deliverables			21%	0.95		\$73,700
Events & Outreach		Manages all tasks related to volunteer acquisition, event development and event execution			21%	0.67		\$44,800
Grant Administration		Tracks grant and project budget compliance, develops status reports and amendments, develops documentation for reimbursement, and processes reimbursement requests.			21%	0.1		\$7,900
							Sub Total	\$177,400
Contracts and Services								
Watering contracts following state bidding rules	Service Contract	Contracted watering for newly planted trees in Greater Minnesota.				3.5		\$531,000
							Sub Total	\$531,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Activity 1 Supplies	Trees, mulch, water bags, tree stakes					\$171,200
	Tools and Supplies	Activity 2 Supplies	Planting event supplies (sanitation unit rental, gloves, safety glasses, volunteer tools, healthy snacks)	X				\$5,400
							Sub Total	\$176,600
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	-

Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Travel following state of Minnesota rules	Support site visits as to accomplish deliverables					\$11,500
							Sub Total	\$11,500
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Materials and Signage	Promotional materials for volunteer acquisition, signage for event site instructions and logistics.					\$500
							Sub Total	\$500
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$897,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Activity 2 Supplies	Includes healthy snacks for community events related to project deliverables

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	GRG	GRG contribution for expenses related to this project not covered by the grant	Secured	\$135,000
Cash	US Forest Service: Urban & Community Forestry Program	Planting and establishment of trees in urban areas to improve the health and resilience of urban tree canopies	Secured	\$500,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$635,000
			Funds Total	\$635,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,532,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [9d3ff9bd-6c9.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Summary of the Great River Greening Resilient Urban Forest grant proposal, including benefits of urban trees and outline of proposed activities....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
GRG Good Standing	bfd748eb-040.pdf
2024 GRG Audit	b7cddf65-6bf.pdf
2024 GRG 990	67f81608-bf2.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Great River Greening 2027-235 Urban Forests Board Authorization Letter	c1a6e365-92d.docx

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Owatonna Support Letter	633cd687-f5f.pdf
Brooklyn Center Support Letter	37522234-7f3.pdf
St. Cloud Support Letter	430485c0-afd.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")?

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:

Todd Rexine, Great River Greening; Melissa Greenwood, Great River Greening

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