



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

## 2027 Request for Proposal

### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2027-270

**Proposal Title:** Outdoors For All: Collaborative Partnerships Increasing Out-Of-Doors Access

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Nick Bancks

**Organization:** The Trust for Public Land

**Office Telephone:** (651) 760-0179

**Email:** nick.bancks@tpl.org

### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** A partnership of outdoor and conservation organizations will expand hunting, angling, & conservation leadership pathways that reduce barriers and engage Minnesotans of all ages in stewardship of public lands & waters.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$1,034,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2030

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

### Project Location

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

Statewide

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

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

**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.**

Minnesota has extraordinary public lands and waters, yet access to hunting, fishing, and conservation leadership opportunities are not accessible to all. Many residents, particularly urban, historically marginalized, immigrant, first-generation communities, and women face barriers that limit participation. These barriers include lack of mentorship, limited generational exposure to outdoor traditions, financial constraints, cultural exclusion, and unfamiliarity with conservation systems.

At the same time, Minnesota must address declining participation in hunting and angling as longtime participants age out. Without intentional recruitment and retention efforts, the long-term stewardship and funding base that supports conservation in Minnesota is at risk.

Traditional recruitment efforts have not fully addressed these challenges, highlighting the need for sustained, community-driven initiatives that intentionally engage historically underrepresented groups and foster a more inclusive outdoor heritage.

For example, a young person may be introduced to fishing but lack a pathway to continue interest. A college student interested in conservation may not have hands-on field access to gain leadership skills. A woman, African-American, or Hispanic adult interested in hunting may not have safe, welcoming mentorship.

Minnesota needs coordinated, community-oriented, culturally responsive pathways that allow residents to enter outdoor recreation and conservation leadership at any point in their lifetime.

**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.**

A coalition composed of the Trust for Public Land, Baztec, and Minnesota Wildlife Federation will work in coordination to create a comprehensive entry to outdoor recreation, conservation leadership pathways, and natural resource stewardship. Each organization brings distinct expertise and serves a specific demographic, ensuring barriers are addressed across age, identity, and experience levels.

Trust for Public Land will lead hunting and angling cohorts of adults, drawing on its extensive conservation and public land access expertise to deliver structured mentorship on Minnesota's public lands and waters. Baztec will focus on youth through culturally responsive angling programs that build early confidence, water stewardship, and outdoor skills. Minnesota Wildlife Federation will engage emerging and adult leaders through its Conservation Leadership Academy for college students and its Women in Conservation Leadership program, strengthening appreciation of the outdoors, and long term stewardship.

Our approach includes targeted outreach and education that engages diverse and underrepresented participants with curriculum on conservation, ethics, safety, and sustainable hunting, fishing, and foraging. Mentors reflect the communities served, fostering belonging and representation. Hands on field experiences reinforce skills and connection to nature, while alumni are encouraged to return as mentors, sustaining engagement across a lifetime.

**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 program will foster belonging, bonding and generate equity within the outdoor pursuits by engaging underrepresented communities in hunting and angling, creating new cohorts of conservation-minded individuals who will use public lands and becomes advocates for conservation. Four programmatic tracts, focused on different demographical groups and outdoor activities will begin to build new communities over time. In addition to cohort

engagement and retention, this program will create opportunities for the separate cohorts to annually come together, fostering cross-pollination among groups and extend the sense of community through these shared outdoor experiences.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Adult Mentored Hunting, Angling, Foraging Programming & Capstone Event - Trust for Public Land

**Activity Budget:** \$463,000

**Activity Description:**

Over three years TPL will lead 12 mentored adult-aged cohorts through educational programming focused on upland bird/waterfowl hunting, panfishing, and foraging, culminating in a capstone event for each cohort. Each cohort will number 10-15 adults from diverse & underrepresented communities. A key component of program curriculum for each cohort is education on game species biology, ecology, and land conservation and management, which takes place over 5 separate seminars prior to the cohort capstone event. Ethics, as well as safety, are also emphasized and incorporated into all aspects of the program. Duration of the program curriculum extends six weeks, leading up to a cohort mentored hunt, angling, or foraging experience on public lands and waters in Minnesota.

The cohort capstone event takes place over 1-2 days where participants have the opportunity to hunt, fish, or forage with a mentor. Capstone event locations are generally nearer to urban or regional areas, though some spots are further outstate. Individuals from each cohort are paired up with an experienced mentor, not exceeding a 2:1 mentee-to-mentor ratio. Following the outdoor activity each cohort will gather together to share in a communal meal and "camp fire" discussion as part of the capstone event.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Foraging Cohort #1 Programming & Capstone Experience	August 31, 2027
Small Game Cohort #1 Programming & Capstone Experience	November 30, 2027
Panfishing Cohort #1 Programming & Capstone Experience	February 28, 2028
Turkey Hunt Cohort #1 Programming & Capstone Experience	May 31, 2028
Foraging Cohort #2 Programming & Capstone Experience	August 31, 2028
Small Game Cohort #2 Programming & Capstone Experience	November 30, 2028
Panfishing Cohort #2 Programming & Capstone Experience	February 28, 2029
Turkey Hunt Cohort #2 Programming & Capstone Experience	May 31, 2029
Foraging Cohort #3 Programming & Capstone Experience	August 31, 2029
Small Game Cohort #3 Programming & Capstone Experience	November 30, 2029
Panfishing Cohort #3 Programming & Capstone Experience	February 28, 2030
Turkey Hunt Cohort #3 Programming & Capstone Experience	May 31, 2030

### Activity 2: Youth Ice Angling Programming & Events - Baztec

**Activity Budget:** \$357,000

**Activity Description:**

Baztec will coordinate, implement, and lead up to 30 youth-focused events over 3 ice-angling seasons.

Program planning, coordination, and outreach will occur during the months of April to December. Tasks include setting event dates/locations, outreach to area schools for participation in each event, and recruiting event volunteers from police/fire/sheriff departments, state & city agencies, and school staff and parents.

Program events will take place during the months of January through March over 3 ice-angling seasons. A minimum of 10 events per season are planned, each event will have approximately 1,000 youth participating. Tasks during events

include setting up fishing equipment on sites, instruction and education of participants, and coordination with site volunteers.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
School Outreach, Recruitment, and Coordination - Year 1	December 31, 2027
Event Programming - Year 1	March 31, 2028
School Outreach, Recruitment, and Coordination - Year 2	December 31, 2028
Event Programming - Year 2	March 31, 2029
School Outreach, Recruitment, and Coordination - Year 3	December 31, 2029
Event Programming - Year 3	March 31, 2030

**Activity 3: Women in Conservation & Conservation Leadership Academy Programming - Minnesota Wildlife Federation**

**Activity Budget:** \$211,000

**Activity Description:**

MWF will recruit and lead separate cohorts of women and college students participating in hunting and angling experiences that deepen outdoors skills and broaden connections to conservation.

The Women in Conservation Leadership programming focuses on a cohort of 10-16 women interested in learning and expanding hunting or angling skills through annual two-part courses for both pheasant hunting & spring fishing. Hunting activities include visiting a shooting range and training on gun safety, skills/tactics, followed by a second, weekend-long session at a hosted location where participants have an opportunity to hunt together followed by a shared dinner. Fishing activities include skills/tactics instruction, followed by a weekend-long fishing excursion and shared meal.

The Conservation Leadership Academy programming focuses on cohort of 12-18 enrolled college students with an interest in conservation in a year-long experiential learning process. Activities include instruction of aspects of hunting, fishing, and foraging, and of Minnesota statewide wildlife regulation and stewardship programs, followed by participation in each outdoor pursuit. The objective is to create a community of learning, exposing students to the practices and broaden their understanding of conservation and its connection to those who fish, hunt, and forage.

Both programs offer opportunities for participation alongside conservation mentors.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Women in Conservation Gun Safety/Hunting Training Day & Hunting Weekend Experience - Year 1	October 31, 2027
Women in Conservation Fishing Training Day & Weekend Experience - Year 1	April 30, 2028
Conservation Leadership Academy Cohort Completion - Year 1	May 31, 2028
Women in Conservation Gun Safety/Hunting Training Day & Hunting Weekend Experience - Year 2	October 31, 2028
Women in Conservation Fishing Training Day & Weekend Experience - Year 2	April 30, 2029
Conservation Leadership Academy Cohort Completion - Year 2	May 31, 2029
Women in Conservation Gun Safety/Hunting Training Day & Hunting Weekend Experience - Year 3	October 31, 2029
Women in Conservation Fishing Training Day & Weekend Experience - Year 3	April 30, 2030
Conservation Leadership Academy Cohort Completion - Year 3	May 31, 2030

## Activity 4: Annual Outdoors for All Partnership Event

**Activity Budget:** \$3,000

### Activity Description:

An annual event held on public land will be used to achieve multiple outcomes, as a means to promote the respective programs, to provide continuing points of engagement and skills development for program participants, and as a community-building opportunity.

The annual event will be held on Keystone Woods WMA in the north metro. It will be an all-day event held on President's Day that will offer participants opportunities to try multiple outdoor activities, including ice-angling, small game hunting, and foraging. Baztec, MWF, and TPL will lead the event, with TPL playing a coordinating role across the partners. The event will offer a less time-intensive opportunity for continued development of outdoor skills, and as an introduction and recruitment tool for new participants. It will provide a multi-generation opportunity for the various program participants to come together with friends and family and celebrate positive outdoor recreation experiences on our shared public lands and waters together in one pluralistic, vibrant outdoor community. We anticipate 100 participants in each annual event.

### Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Annual Partnership Event #1	February 28, 2028
Annual Partnership Event #2	February 28, 2029
Annual Partnership Event #3	February 28, 2030

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Brad Gausmann	Minnesota Wildlife Federation	Project Partner	Yes
Ray Ruiz	Baztec	Project Partner	Yes
Keng Yang	Private consultant	Cohort development, instruction & coordination, outreach and network development	Yes

## 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.**

In the course of producing materials for outreach the program partners will prominently acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on all our project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications.

## 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?**

Participants in our programming will be trained, mentored and engaged beyond any single event or specific cohort, promoting ongoing participation. Each separate program has a proven record of success in engagement and retention of individuals in outdoor pursuits. By combining and scaling our programs, we anticipate increased traction among individuals and cohorts, bringing fresh perspectives to not only hunting and fishing practices, but long-term stewardship and appreciation for conservation. This community-driven process will sustain individual participation and commitment while the goals and intent of the programming transfer beyond the activities of hunting and fishing to most any outdoor recreation.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Minnesota Green Schoolyards	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08g	\$250,000
Minnesota Community Schoolyards	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08i	\$1,433,000

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Nick Bancks

**Job Title:** Project Manager

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

Nick currently co-leads the Mentored Hunting and Angling program, a TPL-led, collaborative effort in partnership with Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. He is an experienced outdoorsman, certified EMT, and has hunted or fished across Minnesota for the past 40 years. As a past member of the metro chapter of Pheasants Forever, Nick also helped to lead the chapter's youth wing shooting program, which is a hunter education course focused on introducing youth to the

sport of upland bird hunting. He has worked in the conservation field for the past 15 years across Minnesota in both the public and private sectors, managing land acquisition and restoration projects, and leading conservation planning and program development.

**Organization:** The Trust for Public Land

**Organization Description:**

Since 1972, Trust for Public Land (TPL) has protected more than 4 million acres, created or transformed 5,000 new public places across America, forged hundreds of active partnerships, and developed more than 2,000 miles of trails across the U.S. TPL has also helped states and local communities generate more than \$112 billion in new public funds for parks and open space.

Our strategic focus on improving outdoor access reflects learning from more than fifty years protecting public land to advance our “Land for People” mission. We have heard from communities across America that access to the outdoors is central to a life well-lived, something that should be treated as a basic human right. It is well-documented that there are many other benefits communities gain from America’s lands and waters beyond just recreational access—benefits like clean water, forestry and farming, economic diversity through outdoor businesses, improved mental and physical health, stronger community ties, and spiritual inspiration. The core goals of this proposal align directly with TPL’s mission to create and protect outdoor spaces for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities now and for future generations. Everyone deserves access to the benefits of nature.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Project Management Staff		Coordination, administration and implementation of program, including outreach and events			58%	1.59		\$220,000
Administrative & Finance Staff		Budget administration, contracts, grant report and tracking			58%	0.06		\$6,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$226,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
Baztec	Subaward	Personnel Baztec staff \$160,000 Event staff \$60,000  Equipment Propane for events, fuel/gas, jigs, live bait & terminal tackle \$12,800  Capital Expenditure Lease/Purchase of 2 trucks \$120,000  Other Expenses Lodging for 5 staff per event \$600 per day or (7) events \$4,200		X		1.5		\$357,000
Keng Yang	Service Contract	Personnel Consultant: Cohort development, coordination & instruction, outreach and network development. \$180,000				1.2		\$180,000
Minnesota Wildlife Federation	Subaward	Personnel Staff \$134,000  Equipment \$13,000  Capital Expenditure (for 10 20-gauge shotguns & cases, and 2 gun safes)		X		0.9		\$211,000

		\$8,500						
		Service Contracts \$10,500						
		Travel, Meals, Lodging \$45,000						
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$748,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Event & class supplies, including disposable cutlery, cleaning supplies, temporary food storage containers	For cooking and serving meals during capstone events & partnership annual event					\$36,000
	Tools and Supplies	Food for events	For purchasing food that is prepared and served during capstone events & for partnership annual event	X				\$12,000
	Tools and Supplies	Shooting targets, ammunition	For use during range day instruction and capstone hunting events					\$6,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$54,000</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	15 trips 2700 miles 2 people	Covers mileage for round-trip travel to 12 capstone event locations, 4 pop-up event locations, and scouting					\$6,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								

							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,034,000</b>

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
<b>Contracts and Services - Baztec</b>	Subaward	<p>Personnel Baztec staff \$160,000 Event staff \$60,000</p> <p>Equipment Propane for events, fuel/gas, jigs, live bait &amp; terminal tackle \$12,800</p> <p>Capital Expenditure Lease/Purchase of 2 trucks \$120,000</p> <p>Other Expenses Lodging for 5 staff per event \$600 per day or (7) events \$4,200</p>	Leasing/Purchase of two trucks is necessary to deliver programming as the amount of gear hauled to each event is substantial (in excess of 2000 lbs.). All gear, including ice-fishing hubs, and trailers have already been secured by Baztec and would be leveraged to the use of the trucks. Additionally, Baztec is not seeking mileage reimbursement as part of this proposal, which is a significant cost.
<b>Contracts and Services - Minnesota Wildlife Federation</b>	Subaward	<p>Personnel Staff \$134,000</p> <p>Equipment \$13,000</p> <p>Capital Expenditure (for 10 20-gauge shotguns &amp; cases, and 2 gun safes) \$8,500</p> <p>Service Contracts \$10,500</p> <p>Travel, Meals, Lodging \$45,000</p>	For 10 20-gauge shotguns & cases, and 2 gun safes; these shotguns can be used from year to year with new cohorts each cycle. Gun safes are for safety, storage and protection.
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>		Food for events	The capstone events generally take place over the course of several consecutive days where participants will lodge and eat together. The annual partnership event takes place over one day and would include a communal lunch. These communal meals are especially important in the participant's experience as they help to cement communal ties and build traditions. Food is purchased in bulk and prepared by staff to serve in communal setting- this is generally less expensive than if meals were purchased individually, or catered.

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	OnX Stewardship Grant	For TPL staff time and indirect costs	Secured	\$25,000
Cash	Bass Pro Shops & Cabela's Outdoor Fund	For campsite reservations & other lodging, equipment & supplies	Potential	\$10,000
In-Kind	Volunteer	Volunteer time by first responders, police, fire fighters, and community members, and mentors during course and capstone events	Potential	\$190,000
In-Kind	Current ice fishing equipment, icehouse, snow dog, shelters from Baztec	For use during ice angling events	Secured	\$80,000
In-Kind	Participating school districts	school bus transportation of youth during ice angling events	Pending	\$95,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$1,434,000**

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

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [1ecc8c3-f6c.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

N/A...

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
Audit	<a href="#">79bc4861-a51.pdf</a>
990	<a href="#">d16e3d99-17f.pdf</a>
Evidence of Good Standing	<a href="#">3359ba92-588.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Authorization Letter	<a href="#">6134e863-923.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
List of Anticipated Participating Schools for 10,000 Ice Anglers Program	<a href="#">65d77a83-e37.pdf</a>
Letter of Support - MN Chapter of BHA	<a href="#">b841a430-566.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:**

Brad Gausman; MWF, Ray Ruiz & Karl Erickson, Baztec; Sophie Harris Vorhoff & Sara Shaw Meyers, TPL

**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