



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-485

Proposal Title: Expanding Fishing Education and Shore Fishing Opportunities.

Project Manager Information

Name: Brian Nerbonne

Organization: MN DNR - Fish and Wildlife Division

Office Telephone: (651) 259-5789

Email: brian.nerbonne@state.mn.us

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Expand fishing opportunities in urban areas, teach more kids and families how to fish, expand accessible shore fishing sites throughout Minnesota, and create a webpage with shore fishing locations.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$4,570,000

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?

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.

Fishing is an important part of the culture of Minnesota, providing a way for people to connect with nature that for many becomes a lifelong passion. Fishing is also an important part of Minnesota's economy, contributing over two billion dollars annually. However, participation in fishing has been shrinking relative to Minnesota's population. Kids may not have someone to teach them how to fish or don't have access to places to fish. This represents what has been called "nature deficit disorder", where people experience nature less and less, missing out on the documented mental health benefits from being in nature. People without a connection to nature are also less likely to make choices to protect it.

Most anglers learn to fish through a family member or other mentor who takes them fishing and teaches them the basics. However, many youth do not have someone to teach them, especially in some recent immigrant communities. People living in urban areas also often lack fishing opportunities close to home, so that people who cannot afford to travel do not have access to places to fish. People without a boat need shore fishing options. Families with limited financial resources may also lack fishing equipment.

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.

DNR's Fishing in the Neighborhood (FIN) program works to eliminate the barriers to people participating in fishing. In urban areas, we select locations where local fishing opportunities are lacking. We stock catchable-sized fish into small lakes and ponds that might otherwise have limited fishing opportunities, and partner with municipalities to make fishing accessible for people of all physical abilities at those locations by installing accessible fishing piers and other structures where people can fish from shore. We partner with cities and organizations to provide fishing equipment that is available on loan or used by partners in fishing education programs. Through partnerships with local organizations we will conduct fishing education events where people are taught how to fish. Recognizing that it is important that kids need an adult to take them fishing, we include adults in these education classes to increase the chances that participants can continue to fish once the class is over. This project will create or upgrade 90 accessible shore fishing sites. Locations of these new sites will be included in a revamped statewide webpage of available shore fishing opportunities.

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?

Create or enhance additional fishing opportunities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and cities in greater Minnesota through fish stocking, control of aquatic plants at 15 shore fishing sites, upgrade infrastructure create 40 accessible shore fishing sites and improve accessibility at 50 existing sites. Expand fishing programming in partnership with local organizations, teaching fishing skills at 100 DNR-led clinics. Donate at least 200 rod/reel combos to community organizations for use at fishing clinics. Fund partner organizations to provide 250 how-to-fish clinics. Publish an enhanced webpage of shore fishing opportunities. At ten locations, install educational signage.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Expand fishing education and outreach programming

Activity Budget: \$883,000

Activity Description:

Many Minnesotans are interested in fishing but lack the knowledge, mentorship, and equipment needed to get started. The Fishing in the Neighborhood (FiN) program will expand fishing education and outreach programming in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and continue to establish programming in additional communities across Minnesota. FiN staff will work with municipalities, schools, and community organizations to deliver hands-on fishing clinics at local waterbodies and additional aquatic education events. Funding will support contracts with partner organizations to deliver up to 80 outreach events annually that reach diverse communities throughout the metro area. FiN staff will also host a minimum of 50 events per year, with at least 10 events taking place in Greater Minnesota, with support from temporary fisheries specialists and interns. Fishing equipment will be purchased for use during programming and approximately 200 rod-and-reel combinations will be distributed to partner organizations so they can continue offering fishing activities independently. These efforts will increase access to fishing education, strengthen partnerships with local organizations, and help participants develop the skills and confidence needed to continue fishing beyond a single event.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Purchase fishing equipment to use at events and for distribution to local partners.	April 30, 2028
Hire interns	April 30, 2028
Conduct 40 outreach events in the Twin Cities Metro.	August 31, 2028
Establish partnerships with 5 new organizations and host 10 outreach events in Greater MN.	August 31, 2028
Donate 100 rod-and-reel combos to local partners.	August 31, 2028
Contracted partner organizations offer 125 fishing clinics.	March 31, 2029
Hire interns	April 30, 2029
Conduct 40 outreach events in the Twin Cities Metro.	August 31, 2029
Establish partnerships with 5 new organizations and host 10 outreach events in Greater MN.	August 31, 2029
Donate 100 rod-and-reel combos to local partners.	August 31, 2029
Contracted partner organizations offer 125 fishing clinics	March 31, 2030

Activity 2: Enhance fishing opportunities at Fishing in the Neighborhood waterbodies

Activity Budget: \$170,000

Activity Description:

The Fishing in the Neighborhood program manages 79 waterbodies in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and is currently expanding into urban communities across Greater Minnesota. This activity will enhance recreational fishing opportunities at these sites through fisheries management and site improvements. Fish stocking will be conducted at selected FiN waterbodies to supplement populations and improve angling experiences, potentially including species such as White Bass or Freshwater Drum. Aquatic plant management will be conducted at up to 15 sites where vegetation around fishing piers limits access, ensuring piers remain usable throughout the summer. Signage will be installed at new and existing FiN waterbodies, especially in Greater Minnesota, to inform visitors of fishing opportunities and ongoing management activities. These improvements will increase awareness of FiN fishing opportunities, improve the quality of recreational fishing, and ensure that anglers can safely and successfully use shore fishing structures.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Private fish purchase to supplement stocking of FiN-managed waterbodies.	June 30, 2028
Conduct invasive aquatic plant removal from around 8 fishing piers to enhance fishing opportunities.	August 31, 2028
Install informational signage at 5 FiN waterbodies.	November 30, 2028
Private fish purchase to supplement stocking of FiN-managed waterbodies.	June 30, 2029
Conduct invasive aquatic plant removal from around 7 fishing piers to enhance fishing opportunities.	August 31, 2029
Install informational signage at 5 FiN waterbodies.	November 30, 2029

Activity 3: Develop and improve shore fishing access statewide

Activity Budget: \$3,417,000

Activity Description:

Safe and accessible shore fishing locations are needed throughout Minnesota, particularly for residents without boats or with mobility limitations. This activity will expand and improve these opportunities statewide through partnerships with local units of government. Approximately 40 new shore fishing sites will be developed, and accessibility will be improved at approximately 50 new or existing locations, including, but not limited to, installation of fishing piers or platforms, construction of ADA-accessible pathways, and addition of accessible parking areas. Projects will be completed through cooperative agreements with local governments, which will require partners to maintain sites for at least 20 years to ensure long-term public access. In some cases DNR will contract for the purchase and installation of a pier (capitol equipment) and at others will do a sub-award to a local government to purchase and install the pier themselves. Site selection will be informed by previous evaluations from the Get Out MORE initiative, and additional assessments will identify locations where infrastructure improvements will expand public access. These investments will create new places to fish across the state and improve accessibility at existing locations, increasing participation in fishing and outdoor recreation for all Minnesotans.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Site selection for improvement projects.	December 31, 2027
Establish partnerships with LGUs and execute cooperative agreements for the development of shore fishing sites.	June 30, 2028
Hire contractors for necessary ADA improvements to new and established sites.	August 31, 2028
Installation of fishing piers and platforms.	June 30, 2030

Activity 4: Improve public access to shore fishing information

Activity Budget: \$100,000

Activity Description:

This activity will modernize how shore fishing information is collected, managed, and shared across the Minnesota DNR by upgrading the existing shore fishing database and public webpage, managed by the Division of Parks and Trails. Fisheries area staff will collect standardized field data at existing and potential shore fishing sites using a database developed with MNIT support, creating an efficient, collaborative process with Parks & Trails staff. The upgraded shore fishing website will provide anglers with detailed accessibility information, including distance from parking, pathway surfaces, restrooms, amenities, and photographs, enabling users to evaluate sites before visiting. The FiN webpage will also be updated to remove redundant information, clarify program details, and improve access to fishing opportunities in the metro area. By streamlining data collection and management, this project will ensure accurate, up-to-date site information, support ongoing site maintenance tracking, and increase public awareness and use of shore fishing

opportunities statewide. Parks & Trails staff will continue managing the public-facing webpage to maintain long-term usability.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Develop upgraded shore fishing database with MNIT support.	April 30, 2028
Collect field data at existing and potential shore fishing sites.	August 31, 2028
Update public shore fishing map with detailed accessibility and site information.	June 30, 2029
Update FiN webpage to remove redundant information and improve public access to metro fishing information.	June 30, 2029
Maintain database and websites to ensure accurate information.	June 30, 2030

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

FiN currently tracks all activities by calendar year and fiscal year for reporting. Keeping with the format used on internal reports and with respect to plain language, this can be continued by making these documents accessible and subsequently available to the public not unlike what one might find via Lake Finder. An expanded work plan (for program expansion) is drafted prior to the start of each biennium. The FiN work plan sets the goals and objectives for the following 2 fiscal years. Once approved, the work plan can be released along with the FiN Biennial Report that summarizes accomplishments from the previous two fiscal years. The Biennial report includes FiN Educational and Angling event totals with the number of participants, all management activities conducted on FiN waters during the biennial timeframe, promotional items created, equipment donated, and information relevant to the growth of the FiN program.

Information on shore fishing sites will be available on the planned webpage. Lake survey reports, creel survey reports, and stocking reports are updated as soon as they are completed. The FiN webpage (once revamped entire) will be a hub for this information (Where to Go sidebar) and will contain the most recent information available. Stocking tables are updated every spring/summer (June) following stocking and any additional fall stocking when it occurs.

Public signage and the development of a QR code will also aid in spread of information about the FiN program.

Participation by FiN staff for public presentations, educational field days, state/county fairs, and other public engagement is ongoing and generally included in the day to day activities of FiN.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENRTF Acknowledgment Guidelines. The ENRTF logo will be included on Youth and Family Fishing Guide and the shore fishing and FiN webpage. The ENRTF sign will be posted the installed fishing piers and platforms, and at new lakes managed by FiN.

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?

The DNR has provided ongoing support to the Fishing in the Neighborhood program through its Game and Fish Fund (fishing license sales and federal match). ENRTF support would allow us to grow the program to reach more people both within the Twin Cities and in cities in greater Minnesota. We will also grow capacity for partner organizations to offer this programming themselves into the future once leaders have participated and become educated on how to offer a fishing clinic. The DNR will continue to support this program into the future at a smaller scale if ENRTF support is not available.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Expanding Youth and Family Fishing Opportunities	M.L. 2024, , Chp. 83, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 05t	\$1,162,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Brian Nerbonne

Job Title: Regional Fisheries Manager

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

I have overseen the invasive carp management team in DNR Fisheries for six years. During that time I have managed two different ENRTF appropriations (one active) for invasive carp management, totalling over \$1.1 million. The previous two projects were successfully completed and final reports were submitted. I also am project manager for a \$1.16 million ENRTF appropriation to expand family fishing opportunities (project # 2024-272). I am experienced in working with staff to complete status updates and final reports required from these projects. Prior to this role, I coordinated stream restoration projects for DNR Fisheries and managed five multi-million dollar Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council appropriations, completing status updates and final reports as required.

Organization: MN DNR - Fish and Wildlife Division

Organization Description:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources works to integrate and sustain the interdependent values of a healthy environment, a sustainable economy, and livable communities. DNR's integrated resource management strategy shares stewardship responsibility with Minnesotans and partners to manage for multiple interests. DNR protects the state's natural heritage by conserving the diversity of natural lands, waters, fish, and wildlife that provide the foundation for Minnesota's recreational and natural resource-based economy. DNR manages natural lands such as forests, wetlands, and native prairies; maintains healthy populations of fish and wildlife; and protects rare plant and animal communities throughout the state. DNR manages the state's water resources, sustaining healthy waterways and ground water resources. DNR provides access to enrich public outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife-watching, camping, skiing, hiking, biking, motorized recreation, and conservation education through a state outdoor recreation system that includes parks, trails, wildlife management areas, scientific and natural areas, water trails, and other facilities. DNR supports natural resource-based economies, managing state forest lands for multiple forest values, and ensuring the maximum long-term economic return from school trust lands.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Fisheries specialist		Inventory shore fishing opportunities, improve fishing sites, lead fishing clinics			33%	6		\$540,000
Fisheries interns		Assist with fisheries enhancement work, lead fishing clinics			0%	1		\$47,000
Shore fishing infrastructure coordinator		Inventory shore fishing opportunities, work with partners to install and improve shore fishing sites.			33%	3		\$390,000
							Sub Total	\$977,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Subaward	Remove invasive vegetation to make fishing piers more suitable for angling on up to 15 lakes. Awardees will be responsible for contracting with firms to provide control/removal of aquatic plant at a cost of up to \$3000 per site. Subwards will be made annually and recipients vary between years.				0		\$75,000
TBD	Subaward	Install up to 20 purchased fishing structures (fishing piers, platforms or shore stations). Awardees will be responsible for contracting with vendors to purchase and install fishing piers.				0		\$1,000,000
TBD	Subaward	Through subawards to local governments, improve accessibility at 50 existing shorefishing sites. This could consist of improving or installing ADA paths, parking spots, etc.				0		\$1,000,000
MNIT	Internal services or fees (uncommon)	Modernization of the DNR Division of Parks and Trails shore fishing and pier finder website and the Fishing in the Neighborhood webpage. This work must be done by the State's IT department,				0		\$100,000
DNR Creative Services Unit	Internal services or fees (uncommon)	DNR Creative Services Unit must be used for the agency's creative projects. They have a template for signs and educational handouts used for the Fishing in the Neighborhood program. Updates may need to be completed for compliance with the revised DNR style guide.				0		\$10,000

TBD	Subaward	Subawards via an RFP process with organizations to provide outreach to key demographics such as underserved populations. Organizations with connections in those communities and staff who reflect those communities will increase the chances of success in attracting participants. This funding would support 250 outreach events over three years.				0		\$250,000
DNR	Internal services or fees (uncommon)	Direct and necessary costs for state agency to administer these funds, determined by agency formula.				0		\$45,000
							Sub Total	\$2,480,000
	Equipment, Tools, and Supplies							
	Tools and Supplies	Fish purchase from private aquaculture vendor and/or commercial angler. Quantity and species will be determined once waterbodies are identified.	Enhance fish community in new lakes/ponds managed through this program to improve fishing opportunities..					\$75,000
	Tools and Supplies	Educational signage purchased and installed at 10 managed waterbodies	Describe fishing opportunities at newly managed waterbodies					\$10,000
	Tools and Supplies	300 fishing poles, line included	For use at fishing clinics and for donating to partner organizations					\$10,000
	Tools and Supplies	Bait for use at fishing events	Used at fishing events, usually worms or wax worms					\$3,000
							Sub Total	\$98,000
	Capital Equipment							
		Purchase and install 20 new fishing piers or similar shore fishing infrastructure.	Piers and other platforms allow people without boats or with disabilities the opportunity to fish away from shore and have a better chance to catch fish.	X				\$1,000,000
							Sub Total	\$1,000,000
	Acquisitions and Stewardship							
							Sub Total	-

Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Fleet costs for 100,000 miles over three years	Travel of staff to conduct activities outlined in this proposal					\$12,000
							Sub Total	\$12,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Printing educational pamphlets, including guides to new FiN waterbodies in Greater MN.	Handouts will include new fishing locations managed by the Fishing in the Neighborhood program					\$3,000
							Sub Total	\$3,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$4,570,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Capital Equipment		Purchase and install 20 new fishing piers or similar shore fishing infrastructure.	<p>Fishing piers are a cornerstone of creating accessible fishing options for anglers. They provide easy access to good fishing spots for people without boats, and for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Additional Explanation : Fishing piers have not use other than fishing. DNR creates contracts with local governments, requiring them to maintain the structure throughout its useful life, preserving the investment as it was intended.</p>

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
In-Kind	DNR Game and Fish Fund	Staff costs for Fishing in the Neighborhood personnel who will lead and assist staff hired by this appropriation in completing outlined work.	Secured	\$300,000
			State Sub Total	\$300,000
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	\$300,000

Total Project Cost: \$4,870,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [0f05d7d9-b6e.docx](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Handout that outlines proposal to enhance urban fishing locations, expand the number of fishing clinics offered and create a publicly available inventory of safe and legal shore fishing sites. Includes photos of kids fishing, kids stocking fish and DNR staff teaching fishing skills....

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:

Rebecca Bullers (MN DNR), Mario Travaline (MN DNR) and Jim Levitt (MN DNR)

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