



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2027-499

**Proposal Title:** Accessible Tree Canopy Walk at Eloise Butler Garden

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Adam Arvidson

**Organization:** Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

**Office Telephone:** (612) 230-6470

**Email:** aarvidson@minneapolisparcs.org

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** This project will create a new accessible tree canopy walk at the entrance of Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden to enhance access to nature and protect a woodland ecosystem.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$705,000

**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?**

Region(s): Metro

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

Region(s): Metro

**When will the work impact occur?**

In the Future

## Narrative

### **Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

Visitors from across the metropolitan area and state cherish their visits to the historic Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary (Garden) to enjoy the flora and fauna and immersive nature experiences found within this one-of-a-kind public botanic garden.

Situated in the rolling hills of Theodore Wirth Regional Park, the Garden was founded in 1907 with the goal of creating a living museum of the plants of the great state of Minnesota in a natural setting. Today the Garden contains a diverse display of over 640 native plant species in a variety of habitats. A rich diversity of wildlife flourishes here, including more than 130 bird and 100 bee species.

The Garden is a well-loved space, with many engagement opportunities, but its entrance along a steep hillside has long been a barrier for visitors and volunteers with mobility needs. Design solutions informed by extensive community engagement have been identified to creatively and sensitively rectify these barriers, including the addition of an Accessible Treetop Canopy Walk. This Canopy Walk provides a unique, high-quality experience while expanding nature-immersion opportunities for those with limited mobility to ensure full access to the rich environment of the Garden and surrounds.

### **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.**

An Accessible Treetop Canopy Walk would guide visitors to the Garden through an immersive journey into a majestic oak woodland canopy from the Garden's parking lot. This fully accessible, elevated path would be designed to celebrate the beauty of the natural areas surrounding the Garden.

Situated within an old growth oak woodland, the Canopy Walk provides an opportunity not only to experience a walk amongst mature oak treetops but also affords a unique view from above down into a restored forest floor. This natural area will be enhanced through plantings of native woodland plants. Ongoing maintenance of invasive species will allow visitors to experience the health and vibrancy of a restored oak woodland.

Its design will encourage a natural slowing of pace, inviting reflection and connection with nature, with seating and learning opportunities provided along the walkway. The walk would offer breathtaking views of native trees and seasonal blooms from a new perspective, including a panoramic view into the Garden from above. An accessible entrance ensures that guests of all abilities can experience the serenity and wonder of nature, embodying the Garden's commitment to removing barriers and creating a welcoming place for all.

### **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?**

The glacial moraines of Theodore Wirth Regional Park create a dramatic landscape, but limit access to treasured places like the Garden for visitors with mobility challenges. Designing equitable access becomes an opportunity to foster stewardship while protecting the site's steep slopes, mature oaks, and sensitive woodland. An elevated path allows movement through the forest without disturbing the ground layer, supporting restoration and highlighting the woodland's ecological story. By extending the Garden experience, the path offers an immersive, parallel encounter with the landscape—inviting more people into the woodland while reinforcing a shared responsibility to care for it.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Long-Range and Restoration Planning and Design

**Activity Budget:** \$35,000

**Activity Description:**

MPRB will hire professional consultants through a competitive process to assist with design planning and preparation of construction documentation. MPRB will work closely with the selected consultants to prepare permit and construction plans for the proposed site improvements. MPRB will lead the overall design efforts and collaborate with a graphic designer to integrate interpretive signage into the new canopy walk design.

The construction plans will be based on the existing tree canopy and current site conditions to ensure environmental impacts within the garden are minimized. MPRB will also lead the design of the surrounding landscape restoration associated with the canopy walk. The environmental and site restoration planning will assess the existing landscape and determine appropriate restoration strategies. These strategies will be documented and incorporated into the construction documents and permitting process.

As part of the permitting process, MPRB will lead consultation and initiate permitting through the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission and the City of Minneapolis. Construction permitting through BCWMC and the City of Minneapolis will bridge this activity and Activity 2.

Consultant selection and initiation of the design process will begin prior to ENRTF funding availability and funded with secured MPRB and philanthropic match funds, in order to accelerate

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Selection of Design Consultants	December 31, 2026
Completion of community engagement	December 31, 2026
Environmental Site Assessment Completed	January 31, 2027
Completion of Construction Plans for Bidding	March 31, 2027
Permits secured	March 31, 2027
Consultation with MN State Historic Preservation Office	March 31, 2027

### Activity 2: Site Preparation and Construction

**Activity Budget:** \$625,000

**Activity Description:**

The construction phase will include hiring a construction contractor through a public bidding process. Following construction contract award by the MPRB Board of Commissioners, permitting and construction mobilization will commence. The contractor will complete the restoration work under the observation of MPRB-hired consultants and MPRB staff, who will oversee construction administration activities.

Specific tasks will include tree protection and erosion control, grading, excavation using air spading to minimize disturbance to tree roots, soil amendment and/or remediation if needed, structural footing placement and installation, and backfilling with the intent of reusing existing native soils. Additional work will include canopy walk construction and installation of interpretive design and signage elements. This activity will also involve coordination with MPRB environmental staff to ensure minimal disturbance to existing trees and vegetation.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Construction Contract Award with Construction Funds Legally Secured	July 31, 2027
Construction Commencement	August 31, 2027
ENRTF signage/logo installed	August 31, 2027
Completion of Construction Work	December 31, 2027
Notification of Funding Restriction (NOFR) recorded	December 31, 2027
Site Opens for Intended Use	February 28, 2028

**Activity 3: Site Restoration and Native Landscape Establishment****Activity Budget:** \$35,000**Activity Description:**

MPRB will lead site restoration and landscape establishment efforts for the project area surrounding the new canopy walk. This phase presents an opportunity to collaborate with local community groups, volunteers, and partner organizations through a community planting event that helps extend the wildflower garden experience beyond the garden gates and into the surrounding landscape. These efforts will support ecological restoration while also encouraging community stewardship and engagement with the site. Planting will take place in two phases at optimal restoration planting times: in May and in October.

MPRB will coordinate with internal staff to install appropriate native plantings surrounding the canopy walk at the proper times of year to ensure the best conditions for plant survival and growth. Installation will occur over two planting seasons to support successful establishment based on the needs and timing requirements of the selected plant species. MPRB staff will monitor plant health, diversity, and overall site conditions throughout the first year to support early establishment, address any maintenance needs, and promote long-term ecological success.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Coordination with Volunteer Groups and Planting Event Planning	April 30, 2028
Procurement of Plant Material	May 31, 2028
Site Preparation and Landscape Construction in Two Phases	October 31, 2028

**Activity 4: Project Close Out and Ongoing Monitoring****Activity Budget:** \$10,000**Activity Description:**

The construction contractor will be responsible for maintenance and addressing any issues related to the construction project during the first year following completion. This responsibility will include monitoring and responding to any disturbance to existing trees and vegetation that may have occurred as a result of construction activities. The contractor will work in coordination with MPRB staff to ensure that any concerns are addressed promptly and that the site remains stable and healthy during the initial establishment period. A final warranty walk will be conducted at approximately 11 months after project completion to review the work, verify that all project elements are functioning as intended, and confirm the long-term performance and durability of installed features.

Following construction, MPRB will continue to monitor plant establishment surrounding the canopy walk for an additional three years. Annual plant assessments will be conducted to evaluate plant health, survival rates, and overall

establishment success. These evaluations will extend beyond the grant window and will be funded by MPRB through its general fund for staff time. The evaluations will help guide any necessary maintenance or adaptive management.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Final Construction Warranty Walk-through	October 31, 2028
Initial Plant Assessment	September 30, 2029
Initiation of Annual Plant Surveys by MPRB staff	May 31, 2030

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Greater Eloise Stewardship Volunteer Team	Friends of the Wildflower Garden	Planting and restoration support, contribution of funds	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.**

MPRB performs significant community engagement alongside any capital improvement project, and this work will be no different. Multiple electronic notices, a project website, meetings with stakeholders, flyers, and attendance at local events and gatherings will inform the community about the project and solicit input on design elements. During construction, on-site signage will describe the project. All digital, print, and on-site materials will include the ENRTF logo, as required under state statute. Information on plant surveys will be maintained on the project website for public view, then archived at MPRB to be available on request. Permanent signs will be installed on site acknowledging ENRTF. The type and placement of these signs is yet to be determined at this early project stage.

## 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?**

Long term maintenance and management will be performed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as part of its overall asset management and natural resources maintenance programs. Such activities do include paid staff work, volunteers, and partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Maintenance and management activities are funded by the MPRB tax levy and are supported by the state and Metropolitan Council through regional parks operations and maintenance (O&M) funding. Additional restoration and enhancement work after the warranty period will be funded by MPRB.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Invasive Carp Management Research in Lake Nokomis Subwatershed	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 06g	\$189,000
Expanding Nature Knowledge and Experience with New Interactive Exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 05h	\$500,000
Above The Falls Regional Park Acquisition	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09q	\$950,000
Bohemian Flats Savanna Restoration	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 08i	\$286,000
Bioblitz Urban Parks: Engaging Communities in Scientific Efforts	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05h	\$198,000
Enhancing Habitat Connectivity within the Urban Mississippi Flyway	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08p	\$190,000
Above the Falls Park Acquisition and Restoration Planning	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09m	\$1,376,000

Shingle Creek Aquatic and Shoreline Habitat Enhancement	M.L. 2024, , Chp. 83, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 08l	\$1,100,000
Minnehaha Park South Plateau Oak Savanna Restoration	M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08p	\$242,000
Shoreline Restoration and Enhancement at Minneapolis Lakes	M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08r	\$819,000

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Adam Arvidson

**Job Title:** Director of Strategic Planning

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

Mr. Arvidson is MPRB’s Director of Strategic Planning, in which role he is responsible for large-scale planning of public lands. He is a registered landscape architect with 20+ years of experience in the public and private sector and has worked on numerous habitat and environment projects, including several funded through LCCMR and the Lessard-Sams Council.

**Organization:** Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

**Organization Description:**

With 185 park properties totaling more than 7,000 acres of land and water, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) provides places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment. Each year, more than 20 million visits are made to the nationally acclaimed Minneapolis park system. Its urban forests, natural areas, and waters endure and captivate. Its Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway, neighborhood parks, recreation centers, and diversified programming have made the Minneapolis park system an important component of what makes Minneapolis a great place to live, play and work.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
MPRB Design Project Manager		Manage all aspects of tree canopy walk construction, including consultant selection, permitting, design document review, bidding, and construction administration.			0%	0.2		\$35,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
Construction Contractor to be determined	Service Contract	Contractor will be selected by competitive bid and will perform all construction work, as directed by the approved construction plans. Contractor and hired sub-contractors will provide site preparation, planting, erosion control, and other construction tasks.				0		\$570,000
Design Consultant Team to be determined	Service Contract	Working as a single overall design team, the design professional(s) will prepare construction documents for the project, will provide some construction administration services, and will prepare restoration plans to guide the landscape restoration work.				0		\$30,000
Graphic Design Consultant to be determined	Service Contract	Design of interpretive signage or elements for tree canopy walk. Installation of designed signage or elements with collaboration of selected construction contractor.				-		\$35,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$635,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Plant materials	Plants will be installed by MPRB staff and volunteers, as part of the restoration work to take place subsequent to the construction of the tree canopy walk.					\$35,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>

<b>Capital Equipment</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</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>\$705,000</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>				
Cash	Parks and Trails Legacy Funds, granted to MPRB by state formula	MPRB will utilize Parks and Trails Legacy Funds to initiate design of the tree canopy walk and to contribute to construction and restoration activities as needed.	Secured	\$100,000
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	Philanthropic Fundraising from Friends of the Wildflower Garden	MPRB will utilize Philanthropic Funds to initiate design of the tree canopy walk and to contribute to construction and restoration activities as needed.	Pending	\$100,000
In-Kind	MPRB General Fund for staff time	MPRB Environmental Management staff associated with the Garden will provide design oversight, volunteer coordination, planting activities, and ongoing monitoring.	Secured	\$35,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$135,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$235,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$940,000**

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

Yes

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden within Theodore Wirth Regional Park	Hennepin	High quality woodland ecosystem adjacent to the oldest public wildflower garden in the nation, all within a public park space.	Restoration	0.5	-	\$55,000	Public	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Has Not Begun
<b>Totals</b>				<b>0.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>			

## Restoration

**1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.**

All restoration activities will occur on land permanently in public ownership (owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board).

**2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.**

Components of the restoration and management plan will include a description of current conditions, with a focus on soil type and quality and existing trees; description of the target restoration community, a woodland floor system; a timeline for restoration; and guidance for ongoing management of the restored areas. The restoration plan will be included in the creation of construction plans for the project and will guide both construction and ongoing management. This plan will be kept both in MPRB staff project files and in the MPRB archive, as well as posted publicly on the MPRB website.

**3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.**

MPRB and its partners will fully utilize BWSR’s guidance document. Because this project occurs in a moderate quality oak forest plant community with potential impact from invasive species, we expect that the minimum recommended number of plant species will be 20, per the "Disturbed Site with High Invasive Species Risk" row according to Table 2.1. The project will utilize and source seed as recommended for the project location (Ecological Section 8, Big Woods Subsection). Primary project type guidance will come from the section on Forest Establishment and Management Practices.

**4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.**

Long term maintenance and management will be performed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as part of its overall natural resources maintenance programs. Such activities do include paid staff work, volunteers, and partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Maintenance and management activities are funded by the MPRB tax levy and are supported by the state and Metropolitan Council through regional parks operations and maintenance (O&M) funding.

**5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.**

Prior to the commencement of construction activities, the project manager will contact the Conservation Corps of Minnesota to determine desire and availability to perform applicable work.

**6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.**

As described in Activity 3, evaluations of plant germination and ongoing health will be performed after the first germination after construction, and then annually for three years. Though this timeline extends beyond the allowable grant window, this work will be accomplished by MPRB natural resources staff. Analyses will focus on the long term viability of the restoration and will recommend corrections if problems arise. The three-year summary report will be made public on the MPRB website.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### Map

File: [92e8fb3c-8f3.pdf](#)

#### Alternate Text for Map

Aerial photograph of Theodore Wirth Park with Tree Canopy Location identified by red dot...

#### Financial Capacity

Title	File
MPRB 2024 Audit Report	<a href="#">f229f13a-6bc.pdf</a>

#### Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
MPRB Resolution 2026-22	<a href="#">18cbc079-Ofd.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Budget Addendum	<a href="#">9eea79b4-47a.pdf</a>
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire	<a href="#">6ce02cac-814.pdf</a>
Letter of Support: Friends of the Wildflower Garden	<a href="#">ea3ab639-6aa.pdf</a>
Accessible Canopy Walk imagery	<a href="#">f1f50450-b11.pdf</a>

## Administrative Use

**Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?**

Yes: Restoration,

**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?**

N/A

**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?**

Yes

**Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?**

No

**Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:**

Mike Jones, MPRB Planning; Susan Wilkins, MPRB Environmental Management

**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