

2026 Funding Priorities

All proposals must meet the constitutional aim to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources, especially those that may be substantially impaired or destroyed in any area of the state.

Proposals should address one or more of the priorities described in the categories below, with a priority on proposals that meet the purposes of the Reinvest in Minnesota program as provided in [M.S. 84.95, Subd 2](#). However, proposals pertaining to environmental or natural resource issues not directly addressed below may also be considered. Categories and priorities are not listed in order of importance.

Please make sure you are familiar with all requirements before you begin your proposal (see pages 6-7), particularly if your proposal will include fee title land acquisition, easement acquisition, restoration, or capital construction.

Staff Note:

No longer includes the following language:

1. Proposals that address prevention strategies for protecting natural resources, that include citizen and community involvement in scientific efforts, or that implement or identify clear strategies for implementing research results are strongly encouraged.

A. Resiliency

Proposals that help Minnesota's environment, natural resources, and communities achieve resilience in the face of climate change, land use changes, and extreme weather events. The LCCMR seeks projects proposing to do one or more of the following:

1. Research, demonstrate, and/or promote comprehensive and viable solutions for reducing the impacts of climate change, land use changes, or extreme weather events on the environment and natural resources, through both engineered and natural solutions targeted at critical areas.
2. Broaden understanding and implementation of effective climate adaptation management practices for natural resources among public and private landowners through education, outreach, technical assistance, and/or the development of collaborations and networks to share and learn about new and innovative practices.
3. Support the development of local climate resiliency and adaptation plans for natural resources.

4. Implement land and water management practices and/or protect and restore wetlands, forests, prairies, and other critical systems to enhance biodiversity and provide multiple community resilience benefits.

B. Water

Proposals that help ensure Minnesota's waters are better managed for both water quantity and quality to support aquatic life, drinking water, recreation, and other uses. The LCCMR seeks projects proposing to do one or more of the following:

1. Research impacts of runoff, stormwater, or contaminants on surface water or groundwater quality and develop practical solutions to prevent or address these impacts.
2. Research current and future water supply and use to support planning efforts and implementation of best management practices and ensure the state's water resiliency and sustainability.
3. Increase understanding and awareness of weather and climate patterns and their potential impact on water resources.
4. Demonstrate innovative practices, strategies, and/or partnerships that prevent or reduce water issues in urban, suburban, or rural regions.
5. Implement measures to improve water quality and/or restore or enhance habitats, shoreline, or natural hydrology in lakes, rivers, wetlands, and other surface waters, with an emphasis on efforts that incorporate coordination and collaboration among tribal, state, and local agencies and community partners.
6. Provide educational opportunities or technical assistance programs for teachers, students, state and local decision-makers, landowners, or the public on how to improve and protect water resources, including groundwater, surface water, and stormwater systems.
7. Monitor and assess the condition of groundwater or surface water, including lakes, rivers, and wetlands, on a regular cycle and provide a long-term data set to support decision-making and evaluate efforts.

C. Education and Outdoor Recreation

Proposals that contribute to all Minnesotans, especially young people, having access to and taking advantage of opportunities to connect to the lands and waters of Minnesota, including culturally relevant and innovative approaches. The LCCMR seeks projects proposing to do one or more of the following:

1. Address social, economic, or physical barriers to natural resources-based outdoor recreation through programs that encourage inclusivity and address inequities so that public lands and waters are accessible to all.

2. Assess programs, activities, or physical spaces for their accessibility and effectiveness and/or implement changes to adapt and retrofit them to welcome more people.
3. Provide evidence-based, hands-on, and engaging curriculum, programs, or natural-resource-based outdoor events to bring a diversity of students and/or adults to outdoor experiences.
4. Create mentorship programs, leadership opportunities, and/or learning experiences for a diversity of young people to explore and pursue careers in the environment and natural resources.
5. Enhance environmental education initiatives by integrating diverse cultural perspectives, experiences, and partnerships that foster environmental stewardship in all communities.
6. Develop local or regional plans to enhance natural resources-based outdoor recreational opportunities in communities across the state.
7. Collaborate or partner with indigenous, local, BIPOC, or underserved communities to develop culturally relevant, inclusive, and accessible environmental, natural resource, or natural resources-based outdoor recreation programs, practices, curriculum, or facilities.
8. Design and/or develop culturally relevant, accessible, and resilient outdoor recreation facilities and infrastructure – including recreation areas, parks, trails, fishing piers, or shelters – that create new natural resources-based experiences. **Baseball fields, basketball courts, splash pads, playground equipment, and other recreational facilities and infrastructure that do not improve or enhance natural resources or users' experience with natural resources are generally not eligible.**
9. Expand networks of trails, parks, or natural areas to protect and connect green spaces seamlessly, improve accessibility and safety, and/or encourage all Minnesotans to recreate and engage with nature.

Staff Note:

No longer includes the following restrictions on environmental education:

2. **Funding for capital projects (e.g., buildings or building infrastructure) will not be considered in this category.**
3. **Proposals to develop new curriculum will not be considered except to allow new modules within existing curriculum or updating curriculum to reflect current state of knowledge and art.**

D. Energy

Proposals that move Minnesota forward towards achieving reliance on renewable energy in all

sectors, including transportation, building, industry, and agriculture. The LCCMR seeks projects proposing to do one or more of the following:

1. Research and develop new and innovative renewable energy or fuel technologies with the environmental considerations, including biofuels, e-fuels, sustainable aviation fuels, and energy storage.
2. Evaluate, demonstrate, and/or assess renewable energy systems or fuels for economic viability, compatibility with other land uses, and environmental and natural resource impacts over the full lifecycle of the technology.
3. Develop and/or implement plans that identify, prioritize, and coordinate efforts to reduce energy consumption and to transition to renewable energy through land use planning, infrastructure, education and awareness, and other methods.
4. Encourage and support the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency in agriculture, mining, industry, utilities, transportation, homes, or businesses.
5. Ensure equitable access to renewable energy and/or energy efficiency programs in all communities.
6. Provide inclusive education and experiential learning programs to build a skilled and diverse workforce for the renewable energy sector.

Staff Note:

No longer includes the following restrictions:

1. Funding for capital projects (e.g., buildings or building infrastructure) will not be considered in this category.

E. Fish and Wildlife

Proposals that help ensure Minnesota has healthy and diverse aquatic and terrestrial wildlife and plants that sustain and enhance the state's environment, economy, and quality of life. The LCCMR seeks projects proposing to do one or more of the following:

1. Research species or ecosystems and develop strategies to effectively manage, maintain, protect, and restore healthy habitats and populations.
2. Monitor the health of natural systems to support and improve species management and conservation strategies.
3. Support and provide technical assistance and/or planning support to private landowners on cost-effective, proven strategies and technologies to develop and restore diverse, native habitat.

4. Promote public awareness on the importance of diverse wildlife and plant populations through comprehensive education programs.
5. Prevent the introduction, reduce the spread, or develop and demonstrate alternative control techniques for invasive species.
6. Develop plans and/or implement conservation actions to protect, conserve, or restore species, with a priority on efforts that maintain or create connected, continuous habitat or address the needs of vulnerable, declining, poorly understood, or sensitive species.
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of current management practices and past investments to sustain and enhance wildlife and native plant populations.

Staff Note:

No longer includes the following language:

1. Standard control, removal, and maintenance activities of invasive species will not be considered.
2. All research proposals related to invasive species research must consider the research priorities established by the University of Minnesota's (UMN) Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center or Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center. All UMN proposals and others should apply to the Centers when applicable. The Centers will keep the LCCMR updated on the status of proposals received.

F. Land

Proposals that help ensure Minnesota's public and private lands – including forests, grasslands, wetlands, and agricultural lands – provide long-term benefits to fish, wildlife, and people. The LCCMR seeks projects proposing to do one or more of the following:

1. Develop, demonstrate, and/or evaluate new and innovative practices and processes on public and private lands, including agricultural and forest land, that provide multiple, long-term environmental and economic considerations, including benefits related to habitat, water quality and quantity, soil health, and carbon sequestration.
2. Enhance education, technical assistance, or public outreach to promote the application of practices beneficial to the environment, natural resources, and all Minnesotans.
3. Acquire and conserve minimally disturbed lands that provide the greatest capacity for multiple conservation benefits to humans, fish, wildlife, and water resources.
4. Restore and enhance lands to provide high-quality natural resource, ecological, or recreational value.

5. Foster collaboration among diverse groups, demonstrate the support of multiple stakeholders, and/or incorporate outreach to local and tribal communities to better protect lands.

Staff Note:

No longer includes the following category:

G. Small Projects

The LCCMR encourages proposals under \$250,000, especially from political subdivisions and non-profits, to quickly and efficiently provide environment and natural resource benefits in Minnesota. Proposals should address one or more of the priorities listed in the above categories A through F.