

## **2019 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2024

**PROJECT TITLE:** Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers

**PROJECT MANAGER:** May Yang-Lee

**AFFILIATION:** The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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**FUNDING SOURCE:** Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 5d

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT:** \$250,000

**AMOUNT SPENT:** \$249,912

**AMOUNT REMAINING:** \$87

### **Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results**

The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) program fosters the next generation of environmental and natural resources professionals and enthusiasts. The appropriation was used to support the existing project for an additional 17 students to experience a unique internship/fellowship experience in an environmental career path from 2019 to 2024.

### **Overall Project Outcome and Results**

Minnesota's population continues to diversify, and STEM-based jobs continue to increase, there has been no increase in the diversity of the nation's STEM workforce for more than a decade (as of 2016). Likewise, the State has been unable to attract representative numbers of ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, or women into the professional and technical STEM positions that make up nearly half of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) jobs. A significant percentage of positions with the State's environmental agencies will be at risk of retirement-related turnover (2016-2026).

Through a strategic partnership between the DNR, Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, this collaborative program aims to reduce and eliminate barriers that inhibit under-represented students from completing STEM degrees and obtaining environmental careers after graduation.

- In 2020, a second cohort of 16 students enrolled in the IDEC program; 13 graduated and obtained their STEM degrees and 3 withdrew from the program. Of the 13 students who graduated, 9 work in environmental careers, 3 do not work in environmental careers, and 1 is in graduate school.
- In 2021, a third cohort of 13 students enrolled in the IDEC program; 7 graduated and obtained their STEM degrees, 3 withdrew, and 3 are still enrolled in the program. Of the 7 students who graduated, 2 work in an environmental career, 4 do not work in environmental careers, and 1 is currently completing summer internships with the state agencies involved in the IDEC program.
- In 2022, a fourth cohort of 12 students enrolled in the IDEC program; 5 graduated and obtained their STEM degrees, 2 withdrew, and 5 are still enrolled in the program. The 5 students who graduated are completing summer internships with the state agencies involved in the IDEC program.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

DNR, MPCA, and CCMI have completed short videos of the program and each video highlights either the experience of an IDEC participant, rotational internship, and agency internship. The state agencies and CCMI continue to disseminate information about the IDEC program throughout the period.

- MN DNR: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1N1zayF550>
- MPCA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iP8tSfC9m3A>
- CCMI: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MU2KnMtEKE>



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

## M.L. 2019 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

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**Date of Status Update Report:** February 18, 2025

### FINAL REPORT

**Date of Work Plan Approval:** 06/05/2018

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2024

**Does this submission include an amendment request?** No

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**PROJECT TITLE:** Increase Diversity in Environmental Careers to Serve Minnesota's Changing Demographics

**Project Manager:** May Yang-Lee

**Organization:** Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

**College/Department/Division:** Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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**Location:** Statewide

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**Total Project Budget:** \$1,287,000 (\$487,000 ML 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 5b; \$550,000 ML 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd 5l; \$250,000 M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 5d)

**Amount Spent:** \$899,464

**Balance:** \$387,536

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 5b; M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 5l

**Appropriation Language:** \$487,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources in cooperation with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa to encourage a diversity of students to pursue careers in environment and natural resources through internships and mentorships with the Department of Natural Resources, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Pollution Control Agency. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2022, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 02, Subd. 05l

**Appropriation Language:** \$550,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources in cooperation with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa to provide a college-to-work pathway for

students of diversity to pursue natural resources careers through internships and mentorships with state agencies. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2023, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 5d

**Appropriation Language:** \$250,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources in cooperation with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa to encourage a diversity of students to pursue careers in environment and natural resources through internships and mentorships with the Department of Natural Resources, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Pollution Control Agency. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2024, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

## **I. PROJECT STATEMENT:**

The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC): Fellowships, Internships, Mentorships project provides a college to workforce pathway for under-represented students (women, ethnic and racial minorities, and individuals with disabilities) who are enrolled in and are pursuing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) degree programs at state and tribal colleges and technical schools. Through a strategic partnership between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), this collaborative program intends to reduce and eliminate barriers that inhibit under-represented students from completing STEM degrees and obtaining environmental employment post-graduation.

The project initially received two appropriations (\$487,000-M.L.2017 and \$550,000-M.L.2018) totaling \$1,037,000 to serve 26 students. The M.L.2019 appropriation of \$250,000 (recommended) will be used to build upon the existing project and provide opportunities for an additional 17 students to experience a unique internship/fellowship experience in an environmental career path.

The MNDNR is the project lead; in consultation with the partners, MNDNR will design, administer and evaluate the overall project. MNDNR will contract with CCMI to recruit student applicants; administer fellowship/stipends; deliver contracted internships, and provide outreach and training to participants and their support networks. The state agencies will provide in-kind funding for mentors and the state-sponsored internships. In total, this \$1.287 million project will serve 43 students over the duration of the project and provide up to 129 paid internships, 43 of which will be funded through ENRTF dollars to CCMI, and 86 funded by the partner agencies.

Students selected for this program will participate in learning opportunities, paid internships, and experiential on-site learning opportunities and mentoring throughout their post-secondary STEM educations. They will gain invaluable skills and direct work experience in areas such as water resources and wildlife management, recreation, conservation practices, surveying, engineering, habitat restoration and management. As a result of this work effort, student interns will be prepared for natural resources careers within the public sector upon graduation. The long-term goal of this project is that the experiences of these 43 students are shared within their communities in ways that further awareness of and interest in environmental careers. As students embark on career planning, they will seek experiential opportunities within state agencies, ultimately resulting in broader diversity among Minnesota citizens engaged in natural resources and environmental careers.

## II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

**First Update January 31, 2019** – A project manager was hired for the project- Mimi Daniel. She started with the MN Department of Natural Resources on February 6 and quickly dug into the work, reviewing the work plan, budget, and other background information. While Mimi will be responsible for providing day-to-day leadership and ensuring the day-to-day success of this project, Denise Legato will provide oversight of this project and be available to address any issues or concerns that may arise.

In addition, a meeting was held with our CCMI partner to discuss kicking off the project and beginning to map out the process. CCMI is yet to hire its program manager officially; however, an offer has been made. CCMI anticipates having a program manager on board within the next two weeks.

**Second Update June 30, 2019** – Mimi Daniel continues to coordinate and oversee the project. CCMI's program manager, May Yang, started in her position at the end of March and immediately began to work with Mimi to develop and implement the project. Partner meetings with MPCA and BWSR took place to discuss the project, the timeline and map out plans. Currently applications are open and CCMI is recruiting students for the first cohort. It is anticipated that students will be recruited and selected by August 2, 2019.

**NOTE:** Following conversation and agreement with Becca Nash on **December 23, 2019**, the work plan and budget were revised to combine all three appropriations into one work plan and budget to more succinctly document and report on the project work and accomplishments. Specific changes included:

1. Track each appropriation in a separate column in the budget spreadsheet.
2. Combine all CCMI budget items into one CCMI contract line that includes a list of the related outcomes
3. Simplify the workplan activities and outcomes descriptions so that these sections more closely conform to the level of detail we typically see in work plans. This would be 1-3 activities, 3-5 outcomes under each activity.

As a result, each activity's first two status updates may not perfectly align with the new description of those activities.

**Third Update January 31, 2020** – Overall, the project is off the ground and moving along smoothly. All three agencies have been involved in providing input on the project. Both Mimi (DNR Project Manager) and May (CCMI Program Manager) worked together to finalize and implement the IDEC program's three components- Fellowship, Internship, and Mentorship. During the open application period, 82 students applied to participate in the program. 16 students were selected to be part of the first cohort of IDEC fellows, and the program officially launched in September. May met with fellows one-on-one to learn more about them and their goals while in the program. All fellows have been actively engaged and have provided positive feedback about the experience to date. Mimi rolled out the mentorship program's recruitment phase, and 28 state agency employees submitted applications to become mentors. Mimi created an IDEC Internship committee to begin to work on the design and implementation of the IDEC internship component.

**Fourth Update June 30, 2020** – The project is still moving along well. Progress was made in furthering the development of the fellowship, mentorship, and internship components.

CCMI and DNR worked collaboratively to recruit students for cohort 2. Mimi and May met with the IDEC selection committee to discuss application questions and finalize the IDEC application for cohort 2. The application for cohort 2 was rolled out in March, and 146 applicants applied for 17 spots in the program. Mimi and May narrowed down the applicant pool by comparing applications with program requirements. Phase two

questions were sent to 70 applicants, 46 applicants responded, and applications were evaluated based on submitted responses to the questions. 30 applicants were selected to participate in virtual interviews.

The mentorship program kicked off, and all fellows were paired and interacted with their mentors.

On a biweekly basis, Mimi and May met with the IDEC internship committee to continue to plan and map out the first summer rotational internship. The rotational internship was successfully developed and implemented in June.

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021-** Despite the impacts of COVID-19, the project has continued to progress and operate virtually. Interviews were conducted, and 19 students were selected for the second cohort. 16 of the 19 students started the IDEC program in September 2020. Of the 3 students who didn't start with the second cohort, 2 students opted out, and 1 student decided to take a gap year. Cohort 1, with 15 fellows, completed their first year of the program and continued their second year.

Recruitment planning for cohort 3 started in December of 2020, and recruitment started in January 2021. It was decided to focus more on recruiting high school seniors and first-year college students for the program. The application opened in February 2021 and will close May 28, 2021, to recruit 12 students for cohort 3.

Mimi and May evaluated the first summer rotational and shared the results with the internship committee and leadership at each partner agency. The results were used to make improvements and plan for the following summer rotational for cohort 2. Overall the summer rotational went well, but there were a few areas to improve for next summer. The entire rotational was held virtually through the use of Skypes and Microsoft Teams. The fellows would have preferred an in-person experience with more hands-on activities, but they clearly understood the pandemic limitations.

During the fall, Mimi and May met with the IDEC internship committee to begin planning for the second-year summer agency internships and cohort 2 first-year rotational internship. It was still unclear if the second-year agency internship experience for cohort 1 would be virtual or in-person. Still, the team continued to plan while listening to the Governor's updates and each agency's commissioners. The first-year rotational internship for cohort 2 will be a virtual experience.

**Sixth Update June 30, 2021** The project continued to move along without any major issues. CCMI worked with the three state agencies to plan for cohort 1 fellows agency internship for summer 2021. The IDEC Internship Committee met with Mimi and May to plan for the first summer rotational for cohort 2. Lessons learned from last year's rotational was incorporated to improve the experience for cohort 2.

Recruitment for cohort 3 continued while the application period remained open through June 11. Conservation Corps staff conducted widespread outreach, focusing on reaching even more high school seniors to increase the number of first-year students in the applicant pool. Conservation Corps's IDEC Program Manager, May, Recruitment Manager and Marketing and Recruiting Associate worked together to reach high school staff and student groups. Continuing COVID restrictions presented some challenges to recruitment for staff. Conservation Corps staff hosted two online information sessions, on February 27 and March 11.

**Seventh Update January 31, 2022** The project is going well, and we have not had any delays with the pandemic still existing. Some students have been affected by the pandemic, but May continues to work with them to navigate the situation. We have entirely shifted the program to a virtual model, with a few in-person activities during the summer. All three cohorts are running, and no more cohorts will be starting in the future (the project planned for three cohorts). Cohort 1 is in its third year, cohort 2 is in its second year, and cohort 3 is in its first year of the program.

**Eight Update June 30, 2022** – The project is going well overall. All three cohorts are running smoothly and cohort 1 is close to wrapping up. Cohort 2 is in its second summer, and cohort 3 has started their first summer in the program. Plans have been made to do more in-person activities during the summer internships. In May, we had a virtual IDEC recognition event. The purpose of the event was to recognize fellows who graduated with their STEM degrees and completed the IDEC program as well as give recognition to their mentors.

**Ninth Update January 31, 2023** – Since the last update, there have been a few staffing changes. During the summer of 2022, May and Hollis resigned from CCMI and Mimi went on parental leave. CCMI has all new IDEC program staff. Over the last few months, staff have been getting trained in and oriented to the program. Currently, we have an interim program manager from CCMI, but we hope to have a permanent program manager by May 1, 2023. Mimi has been working with the new CCMI staff to keep the program running.

Throughout the summer and early fall, Conservation Corps and DNR staff worked with staff from the Wilder Foundation to develop a comprehensive evaluation plan for IDEC. As a result of this process, we have a finalized logic model for the program and two key evaluation tools: an exit survey and an alumni survey. Staff will report on results next quarter.

#### **Tenth Update June 30, 2023**

Project Manager Mimi Daniel was promoted, so a new project coordinator, May Yang-Lee, was brought on staff to serve as project manager. The project coordinator's FTE will change from .70FTE to .80FTE. There will be no impact on the salary line. CCMI had staffing changes that impacted the IDEC program. An assistant program manager, Monica Martinez, was hired to serve full-time on the project. In addition, her supervisor, Brian Hubbard, will dedicate 25% of his time to the project. In total, the FTE will change from 1.0 to 1.25. There will be no impact on the salary line.

#### **Eleventh Update January 31, 2024**

The Career Pathways Program Coordinator is working with a consultant to improve the mentorship component and detail information is provided below under Activity 3. Additionally, the IDEC Team (Career Pathways Program Coordinator and Assistant Program Manager) is actively communicating with the Internship Committee to improve opportunities based on their requirements and interests from the IDEC participants. 2 IDEC fellows from Cohort 2 graduated from the program in December 2023.

#### **Final Update June 30, 2024 (submit by August 15, 2024)**

2 out of the 5 IDEC fellows from Cohort 3 graduated in college this past spring; one of them interned at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency during the agency internship and the other accepted a full-time job prior to the agency internship. The New Initiatives Program Director started their role to support the Career Pathways Program Manager at Conservation Corps MN & IA in July.

Amendment Request February 18, 2025

Requesting to reconcile final budget with actual costs. Shifting funds from personnel to service contracts.

Amendment Approved February 28, 2025

### **III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

#### **ACTIVITY 1: Fellowship Program Development and Administration**

##### **Description:**

43 underrepresented students enrolled in STEM programs at two and four-year public and private colleges and universities will participate in a high-quality fellowship program. The fellowship will assist them with overcoming barriers to academic success and equip them with professional skills that contribute to career

success. Each spring, students will be recruited to become a cohort of fellows with a fall start date. The program will run a total of three cohorts, with one cohort starting each fall. Cohort 1 will have up to 16 fellows, cohort 2 will have up to 17 fellows, and cohort 3 will have up to 10 fellows for a total of 43 fellows. Fellows in the program will receive a financial award- \$2,000 in their first year of the program, and \$1,000 in their second, third, and fourth year of the program. During the school year, fellows will connect with their peers at least quarterly, have access to professional development opportunities, and receive STEM career guidance and other wrap-around support services from CCMI's program manager. Fellows remain in the program until they graduate and obtain their STEM degrees. Fellows consist of freshman, sophomore, and junior students.

CCMI will enter a contract with MDNR and contribute to the design and development of the fellowship program. DNR's project manager and CCMI's program manager will collaborate to design and develop the fellowship application process, application materials, a recruitment and outreach plan, student support plan and resources, and program evaluation tools to support three cohorts over the project duration. MDNR will coordinate the application and selection process for each cohort, and CCMI will coordinate and manage the recruitment, outreach, cohort orientation, fellowship payments, support services, cohort meetings, and professional development opportunities.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$472,219**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 16 fellows in cohort 1 will develop various professional skills that they can utilize in their future environmental/natural resources careers.	May 31, 2021
2. 17 fellows in cohort 2 will develop various professional skills that they can utilize in their future environmental/natural resources careers.	May 31, 2022
3. 10 fellows in cohort 3 will develop various professional skills that they can utilize in their future environmental/natural resources careers.	May 31, 2023
4. 9 fellows in cohort 1 will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees as a result of participating in the program.	June 30, 2021
5. 6 fellows in cohort 1 and 5 fellows in cohort 2 (11 total) will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees as a result of participating in the program.	June 30, 2022
6. 1 fellow in cohort 1, 5 fellows in cohort 2, and 3 fellows in cohort 3 will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees as a result of participating in the program.	June 30, 2023
7. 7 fellows in cohort 2 and 3 fellows in cohort 3 will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees as a result of participating in the program.	June 30, 2024

**\*Note- fellows in the same cohort may not have the same graduation date, due to the ability to enter the IDEC program as a freshman, sophomore, or junior.**

**First Update January 31, 2019** - DNR has an executed contract in place with CCMI and has hired a project manager, Mimi Daniel, to deliver the program. Mimi is in the beginning stages of designing the program. Most of her time has been focused on getting to know the DNR as well as the partner agencies, doing a thorough review of the work plan, the budget, and working to develop a project plan.

**Second Update June 30, 2019** – In consultation with the partners, Mimi continued working on designing the program and building key elements. Both Mimi and May scheduled and attended meetings with other organizations to discuss the program and gather resources. Organizations included the University of Minnesota, TCI Solutions, Wallin Scholars Education Partners, MN Dep. Of Transportation (SEEDS program), MN Science Museum, and 3M. Mimi and May worked together and developed the program overview, cohort structure, student application, and scoring criteria. MPCA and BWSR also provided feedback on the program structure and application.



The mentorship program is still under development, but Mimi has been working on finishing putting the program together. Mimi attended a mentor workshop and received resources for building a mentor program. Also, she has explored various training options for the mentees. A few MCPA employees have expressed interest in mentoring; however, formal recruitment will begin before the end of July.

**Third Update January 31, 2020-** Mimi and May successfully implemented the fellowship component, and the first cohort started in September 2019. Cohort 1 fellows completed initial orientation before beginning the program. The orientation was held on Saturday, September 28, 2019, with 16 students in attendance. After the orientation, the fellows set goals and completed an intake with May. May continued periodic check-ins throughout the semester. All fellows received their first financial award of \$2,000 (\$1,000 in October for the fall semester and \$1,000 in January for the spring semester). In November, fellows completed their first professional development in communications offered by Saint Paul Community College. In January, the fellows attended an in-person meet-and-greet session with the commissioner from MPCA, BWSR, and PCA. This event allowed agency leaders to meet the fellows and gave fellows the ability to network with the leaders.

**Fourth Update June 30, 2020-** All 16 fellows continued to participate in the program during the spring academic school year. Another in-person session was to take place in March; however, that session was used for the mentor-kick-off (to be discussed in activity 3 updates). By April 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created a shift in the program. In-person cohort meetings had to stop due to the Governor's stay-at-home order and ensure fellow safety. May and Mimi spent time researching alternative methods for keeping the students connected. May, continued to have periodic virtual check-ins with the fellows to assist with overcoming challenges with their education.

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021-** Cohort 1 fellows (16 students) continued to participate in the program for the fall school year. The fellows received their stipend, and May held one-on-one check-ins with each of the fellows to see how things were going, especially with the pandemic. All the fellows took their classes entirely online or did a hybrid for the fall semester. A number of them discussed the challenges with distance learning but still pushed through. The cohort met twice during the fall semester. The first meeting was to recap the summer rotational experience and begin to think about which agency they would like to intern at the following summer. The second meeting was to discuss methods to improve their virtual academic experiences and connections with professors.

Cohort 2 fellows (16 students) started the IDEC program in the fall and completed a virtual IDEC orientation and met twice virtually during the fall semester. All fellows received their first stipend for the fall semester and completed their bios to share with their future mentors. On Friday, December 11, 16 fellows, 16 state agency leaders, and 2 members of the IDEC program staff team attended a virtual leadership meet-and-greet. The meet-and-greet provided agency leaders with a chance to officially welcome fellows to the program, provide some background about their respective agencies, and start to get to know the fellows. In addition, IDEC program staff set up virtual break-out sessions to facilitate small group conversations.

In November, several IDEC fellows raised questions about MPCA's decision to issue permits to Enbridge Energy's Line 3 pipeline project. Program staff shared these questions with state agency staff and together, they arranged a special virtual cohort meeting in December, open to all current IDEC participants. As a result, Deputy Commissioner Peter Tester agreed to meet with fellows, shared some information about MPCA's decision-making process, and answered several questions. This is an example of how this program provides students and agency leaders unique opportunities to interact and engage on important issues.

**Sixth Update June 30, 2021 -** CCMI Program Manager met with 14 Cohort 1 fellows throughout February 2021 to check-in about progress in school and any of their general needs and/or stressors in life. Students were still grappling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their schoolwork and school experience. Conservation Corps disbursed \$23,000 in stipend payments to Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 fellows.

Cohort Meetings in Spring 2021 were designed to prepare fellows for their internships, focusing on the common, or core, skills that are desirable for and transferable between multiple professions and specific positions. Specifically, staff selected workshop topics intended to bolster communication and listening skills, self-motivation, leadership, and teamwork.

- January 2021: The January meeting included an interview preparation session facilitated by Conservation Corps's Recruitment Manager and a CliftonStrengths Workshop facilitated by Twin Cities Gallup-Certified Strengths Coach Clifton Strength Coach Latisha Gray. The 2.5-hour virtual workshop included a student workbook and individual participant packets, including reports on the fellows' top 5 strengths as identified by the assessment. Conservation Corps staff selected this activity for Cohort 1 in advance of their first agency internships as a way for fellows to assess their strengths and reflect on how they might leverage and develop them during their summers with state agencies.
- In March, fellows participated in an Intercultural Conflict (ICC) Style Inventory workshop, facilitated by Nou Yang, Co-Founder of Courageous Change Collective.

As of May 2021, five fellows have graduated and obtained their STEM degrees. Four fellows anticipate graduating in December 2021.

**Seventh Update January 31, 2022-** An additional 5 fellows from cohort 1 graduated this past fall 2021. This brings the cohort 1 total graduations to 10 fellows. There are 4 fellows from cohort 1 who are still in the program. 2 of the 16 fellows from cohort 1 have dropped due to personal reasons. 16 fellows started in cohort 2 and are still actively participating. During the summer and early fall, interviews were conducted and 13 fellow were selected to participate in cohort 3. Across the three cohorts, 33 students are currently active in the program.

May continued to have regular check-ins with the fellows through the summer and fall. Conversations primarily focused on available scholarships and post-graduation resources. CCMI staff created individual resource documents for fellows approaching graduation with ideas for pursuing graduate school, searching for jobs and securing future housing.

### **Cohort 1**

In October, the fellows reflected on their summer internship and discussed the graduate school application process. In the reflection activity, fellows shared positive experiences and challenges of their first agency internship.

Cohort 1 met again in December 2021. With five fellows graduating at the end of the fall semester, program staff focused this cohort meeting on preparing to enter the workforce. Topics included expectations of the workplace, a general overview of terminology associated with typical employment benefits, and an overview of how to start saving for the future. May and Mimi were joined by three panelists local to the Twin Cities metro area who shared their experiences and offered advice about entering the workforce. The panelists, all currently working in fields related to natural resources, identified with one or more of the following identities: woman, LGBTQIA+, person of color and/or individual with a disability.

### **Cohort 2**

In October, the fellows reflected on their first summer internship and graduate school application process. In the reflection activity, fellows highlighted the successes and areas for improvement.

### **Cohort 3**

Program staff held an initial orientation for 7 fellows on August 21. Because we elected to extend the Cohort 3 application timeframe to allow more time for freshmen applicants, we held a second Orientation on October 2.

In addition to participating in the program orientation, fellows convened in December for a virtual meet-and-greet with agency leadership. State leaders from MN DNR, MPCA, & BSWR attended to introduce themselves and welcome fellows to the program

**Eighth Update June 30, 2022** – May continued to have regular check-ins with the fellows. 2 fellows from cohort 1 obtained their STEM degree this past spring. This brings the total graduates to 12 out of the 16 that originally started the program. There is one fellow left in cohort 3 that will obtain his STEM degree this fall, 2022. 1 fellow dropped from the program and indicated she wanted to change her focus to real estate. 5 fellows from cohort 2 and 1 fellow from cohort 3 received their STEM degrees as well.

During the spring semester, fellows received academic stipends, a total of \$20,000 was disbursed across all three cohorts. Cohort 2 convened in January for a Gallup CliftonStrengths workshop, facilitated by a certified Strengths coach (who also led this activity for Cohort 1). Fellows first completed the CliftonStrengths assessment, designed to measure talents and then explored their personal reports in more depth with Latisha Gray, the CliftonStrengths coach. The intention behind scheduling this activity for early 2022 was to encourage fellows to think critically about their strengths, their natural patterns of thinking and acting and areas for growth as they prepared for their summer agency internship. CCMI staff convened Cohort 3 in February for a closer look at justice, equity, diversity and inclusion at Conservation Corps and the three state agency partners. As a group cohort 3 discussed what similarities and differences exist between present-day CCMI and the CCC in Minnesota and what federal and State agencies can do to increase the presence of people of color visiting and working on public lands.

**Ninth Update January 31, 2023** – One member of Cohort 1, and two members of Cohort 2 graduated in the fall of 2022. Conservation Corps staff have been checking in with them about their plans post-graduation. They have yet to finalize their plans; we will provide an update when we have one. During the fall semester, we disbursed \$11,000 in scholarship payments; 1 student in Cohort 1, 9 students in Cohort 2, and 12 students in Cohort 3 received \$500 each.

### **Support Services**

- October - November 2022: CCMI staff held 30-minute online meetings with 14 current participants. Topics included post-graduation employment options for those close to graduating and internship placement interests for those completing agency internships next summer.

### **Cohort Meetings**

- Staff met with Cohort 3 regularly throughout the summer as they completed their rotational internship.
- End-of-Summer: Members of all three cohorts were invited to gather for service-learning and reflection at the end of the summer. IDEC fellows joined AmeriCorps members from Conservation Corps's Field Crew program at Hočokata Ti, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community's cultural center. Following a few presentations and a guided tour of the center's exhibit, the Conservation Corps crew members and IDEC fellows cleared buckthorn from burial mounds.
- Conservation Corps welcomed a new IDEC Program Coordinator in September, but unfortunately, she had to take personal leave shortly after accepting the role. The Corps has since shifted staffing assignments to provide full-time employee coverage during this leave, but because of the slight disruption in staffing, additional cohort meetings were not held in fall 2022. Staff focused on checking in with fellows individually and are planning now for cohort meetings in spring of 2023.

**Tenth Update June 30, 2023** - Project Manager Mimi Daniel was promoted, so a new project coordinator, May Yang-Lee, was brought on staff to serve as project manager. The project coordinator's FTE will change from .70FTE to .80FTE. There will be no impact on the salary line. CCMI had staffing changes that impacted the IDEC program. An assistant program manager, Monica Martinez, was hired to serve full-time on the project. In addition, her supervisor, Brian Hubbard, will dedicate 25% of his time to the project. In total, the FTE will change from 1.0 to 1.25. There will be no impact on the salary line.

### **Eleventh Update January 31, 2024**

Scholarship Payments:

- During the fall semester, we disbursed scholarship payments to 9 fellows; 2 students in Cohort 2 and 7 students in Cohort 3.
- During the spring semester of 2024, we disbursed scholarship payments to 5 fellows in Cohort 3.

Cohort Meetings:

- In the fall of 2023, cohort 2 and 3 fellows attended a cohort meeting to strengthen their relationship through hands-on activities and received a 2-hour presentation from St. Paul College on *Communication and Listening Skills*.

Cohort 2:

- The remaining 2 Fellows in Cohort 2 graduated at the of December 2023. They are currently looking for full-time work at state agencies and non-profits. All Fellows from Cohort #2 have officially exited the program. Alumni surveys will be sent out in December to all IDEC Fellows that exited the program in 2023

Cohort 3:

- 1 Fellow in cohort 3 withdrew from the IDEC program and wanted to explore other internship options in summer 2024.
- There are 5 active fellows in cohort 3.

### **Final Update June 30, 2024 (submit by August 15, 2024)**

Cohort 3 interacted with Cohorts 4 & 5A during the summer internship to increase their professional development:

- June 26: Interact with Mississippi Park Connection staff to explore about their career in the federal and non-profit sectors.
- July 19: Interact with Mississippi Park Connection staff on hands-on activity and site visit.
- August 9: Cohort 3 presented their agency internship experience and interacted with their peers, mentors, supervisor, IDEC internship committee members, and leadership staff at the mixer activity in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Central Office.

**ACTIVITY 2:** CCMI Contracted Rotational Internship and Agency Sponsored Internship Program Development and Administration

#### **Description:**

Each cohort of fellows (3 cohorts to total 43) will complete a first-year summer rotational and a second and third-year summer agency internship. The internships are full-time paid opportunities that run from June

through August. During the first-year summer rotational internship, fellows in the cohort rotate between MDNR, MPCA, and BWSR. The rotation allows fellows to learn about each agency and explore different career paths in environmental and natural resources fields. Upon completion of the first-year summer rotational internship, fellows will choose one MNDNR, MPCA, or BWSR to intern at for their second and third summer as a fellow in the program. The second and third-year summer agency internships provide fellows with an opportunity to gain more direct work experience in their desired career fields before graduating from college.

Under contract with DNR, and in consultation with its partners, CCMI will coordinate and implement and will manage the rotational internships for fellows who complete the first year of the fellowship program with CCMI. This funding will pay for up to 43 first-year summer rotational internships with CCMI (1 rotational internship per fellow @ 43 fellows). In consultation with its partners, MNDNR will coordinate the development and implementation of the second and third-year agency internships. MNDNR, MPCA, and BWSR will provide in-kind funding for these internships. In total, MNDNR and its partners will provide up to 86 total agency-sponsored internships (2 summer internships per fellow @ 43 students) to fellows participating in the program.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 619,575**

<b>Outcome (3 outcomes per cohort)</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Through the first-year summer rotational internship, 16 fellows in <b>cohort 1</b> will increase their knowledge of working for MNDNR, MPCA, and BWSR and be able to describe various environmental/natural resources careers within these agencies.	August 31, 2020
2. Through the second-year agency internship, 16 fellows in <b>cohort 1</b> will gain work skills and accumulate up to 450 hours of hands-on work experience that directly relates to their desired career field.	August 31, 2021
3. Through the third-year agency internship, 16 fellows in <b>cohort 1</b> will gain work skills and accumulate up to 450 hours for a combined total of up to 900 hours of hands-on work experience that directly relates to their desired career field.	August 31, 2022
4. Through the first-year summer rotational internship, 17 fellows in <b>cohort 2</b> will increase their knowledge of working for MNDNR, MPCA, and BWSR and be able to describe various environmental/natural resources careers within these agencies.	August 31, 2021
5. Through the second-year agency internship, 17 fellows in <b>cohort 2</b> will gain work skills and accumulate up to 450 hours of hands-on work experience that directly relates to their desired career field.	August 31, 2022
6. Through the third-year agency internship, 16 fellows in <b>cohort 2</b> will gain work skills and accumulate up to 450 hours for a combined total of up to 900 hours of hands-on work experience that directly relates to their desired career field.	August 31, 2023
7. Through the first-year summer rotational internship, 10 fellows in <b>cohort 3</b> will increase their knowledge of working for MNDNR, MPCA, and BWSR and be able to describe various environmental/natural resources careers within these agencies.	August 31, 2022
8. Through the second-year agency internship, 10 fellows in <b>cohort 3</b> will gain work skills and accumulate up to 450 hours of hands-on work experience that directly relates to their desired career field.	August 31, 2023
9. Through the third-year agency internship, 10 fellows in <b>cohort 3</b> will gain work skills and accumulate up to 450 hours for a combined total of up to 900 hours of hands-on work experience that directly relates to their desired career field.	August 31, 2024

**First Update January 31, 2019** – CCMI is still in the process of hiring a program manager for this project. The program manager should be fully on board before the next status update.

**Second Update June 30, 2019**- As mentioned previously, CCMI's program manager, May Yang, is fully on board and has been working to help implement components of the program. May developed a recruitment plan by identifying current Conservation Corps connections with schools and other youth-serving programs. She also researched new connections to compile a comprehensive list of public high schools in Minneapolis (six), Saint Paul (nine), and other high schools throughout the State, focusing on schools with existing college access programs (for example, TRIO Upward Bound programs) for potential applications from high school seniors. In addition to recruiting through direct connections at educational institutions, CCMI developed a program-specific page on its website, created paper and electronic recruiting material, and promoted the program through electronic communication channels such as e-newsletters and social media. On June 28, the application went live on CCMI's website, and students can apply until July 26 or until the cohort is full.

**Third Update January 31, 2020** - An IDEC Internship Committee was created to assist May and Mimi with developing and implementing high-quality first-year rotational and second and third-year agency internships. The committee members (14 total) represent staff from DNR, MPCA, and BWSR who work in various divisions. The role of the members is to provide guidance, input on priorities, policies, and resources related to internship program development and implementation. In addition, they will serve as liaisons during the internship implementation phases and connect May and Mimi to appropriate staff. An initial committee meeting was held in December, and two meetings were held in January. The committee has begun to map out the first year rotational for each of the agencies. Cohort 1 is expected to start its rotational on June 1, 2020.

**Fourth Update June 30, 2020** – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to shift the program from an in-person rotational internship to a virtual rotational internship. Having a virtual internship ensured that fellows still had an opportunity to learn about the three state-agencies and get a better understanding of the various careers available at each agency. The fellows were pleased to know that the paid internship would continue despite the pandemic. Many fellows indicated how this internship would help them with gaining valuable knowledge in the field but also help them financially while navigating resources during the pandemic. Some of the fellows had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic during the months of April and May and began to rely on the paid internship as another source of financial support. Being that the program is designed to help eliminate barriers that inhibit underrepresented students from successfully completing their education, it was important for the agencies to find a way to continue the program and support the fellows during this unprecedented time.

The IDEC internship committee continued to map out what the virtual rotational internship would entail. We had to change a few components, moving it from full-time (40 hours) paid to a part-time (30-hours) paid internship. Before starting the internship, all 16 fellows completed orientation on June 16. The orientation was to go over logistics and plans for the rotational internship. After orientation, the 16 fellows started their first rotation with MPCA on June 17. Fellows are still with MPCA and will spend a total of 4 weeks before moving to DNR.

Virtual Rotational Internship Structure:

- Students will rotate through the agencies as one group. 4 weeks with MPCA, 4 weeks with DNR, 2 weeks with BWSR.
- Activities will be a combination of asynchronous learning (engaging with materials or doing at-home activities independently) and interacting in a live setting with agency staff
- The internship will be between five to six hours per day (inclusive of asynchronous learning and live interaction).

- To keep consistency throughout the summer, each agency will schedule as many of the interactive “live” or “face-to-face” (but virtual) activities between 9 am – 2 pm from Monday – Friday.

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021** – Cohort 1 fellows continued and completed their rotational internship in this reporting period. For the week of July 6 and the first half of the week of July 13, fellows were scheduled with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. For seven days, MCPA staff covered a range of topics, including environmental rulemaking, the legislative process, the electric vehicle program, the diesel remissions reduction act, chloride, toxic reduction, solid waste and land permitting, and the municipal stormwater program. Additionally, staff led fellows through environmental justice and construction-stormwater management case studies, including a virtual inspection.

Fellows rotated to the DNR mid-week the week of July 13. Following orientation to the DNR, facilitated by HR staff, students spent time learning more about operations services at the Department, including budgeting and policymaking. The cohort participated in discussions with the DNR Tribal Liaison and learned about mining from the Lands and Minerals division. The Forestry Division focused on cultural and archeological resources and DNR interpretive programs. The Fish and Wildlife and Ecological and Water Resources divisions presented on monitoring and surveying, public water and permitting, climate change, floodplain management.

In mid-August, Fellows proceeded to their final rotation with the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Staff introduced fellows to how BWSR works with various local conservation partners and discussed the various sources and mechanisms for funding conservation projects. They also walked students through the BWSR grant application process. The students’ time with BWSR continued with a presentation and exercise on remote sensing. They had the opportunity to (virtually) observe a Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation Board Meeting. The BWSR rotation concluded with sessions on communicating conservation outcomes and multiple discussions on wetlands (design, identification, and regulation).

Overall, fellows said that the internship provided them with an understanding on MN state job application and process, increased their awareness in professional careers and current issues in the field, enabled them to develop new skills, and offered opportunities to network with other professions. Students identified that the internship helped them recognize that transitions within the program are about the opportunity to rethink who they are, their goals, strengths and assets, aspects of their life they want to change, and how they will deal with challenges and thinking about their identity.

Students also completed a self-assessment at the end of the internship. The tool was designed so that students could assess their knowledge of topics and issues before and after the internship.

- 92% reported an increase in awareness of different career paths in the environmental and natural resources field
- 92% reported an increase in their network of professionals and peers in the environmental and natural resources field
- 85% reported an increased understanding in the various roles and functions of state agencies involved in conservation

**Sixth Update June 30, 2021-** Program partners matched 13 Cohort 1 fellows to agency internships for their second summer with the IDEC program. Fellows matched as follows:

- MN Department of Natural Resources: 7
  - Three with Ecological and Water Resources
  - Two with Fisheries and Wildlife
  - One with Parks and Trails
  - One with Lands and Minerals (with some support from the Office of School Trust Lands)

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: 5
  - Two with Environmental Analysis and Outcomes
  - One with Remediation
  - One with Industrial, Compliance and Enforcement
  - One with Resource Management and Assistance Division
- Board of Water and Soil Resources: 1

One fellow from Cohort 1 opted to leave the IDEC program this summer before being placed at and completing an agency internship. This fellow will graduate in Fall/Winter of 2021, but felt that stepping back was the best for him at this time as he sought to balance his family obligations.

Sixteen fellows in Cohort 2, started their rotational internship on June 1, 2021. The IDEC Internship Committee decided to provide another primarily virtual rotational internship experience for Cohort 2. However, some in-person activities were implemented. For the rotational, MPCA was assigned 15 days, DNR 21 and BWSR 9 days. Several days throughout the summer were set aside for Conservation Corps staff to connect with fellows for administrative tasks and offer additional professional development.

To offer rotational internship presenters additional support in facilitating virtual sessions, Conservation Corps staff provided presenters an optional two-hour training on techniques for increasing engagement in virtual workshops. Staff at the Corps who have considerable experience providing young adults education on virtual platforms provided general tips for creating engaging lesson plans and showed presenters how to use features such as break-out rooms, interactive polls, and online collaborative “whiteboards.”

**Seventh Update January 31, 2022-** 13 fellows from cohort 1 completed their first agency internship. 16 fellows from cohort 2 completed the first-year summer rotational experience from June 1 – Aug 13. The majority of the rotational internship was virtual, and state agencies hosted a total of six in-person opportunities. CCMI hosted one in-person event for Cohort 1 & 2.

### **Cohort 1 & 2**

#### Agency Internship

Planning in progress for Summer 2022. 15 fellows will participate in the agency internship. IDEC staff met with the internship committee in November to ask for estimated agency capacity in regards to agency placements (funding levels available, which departments or divisions had staff supervisors available, etc). In December, IDEC staff connected individually with each agency (or Division, in the case of the Department of Natural Resources) to discuss student interests, agency needs and agency capacity in more detail.

### **Cohort 3**

#### Rotational Internship

The priority for Quarter 4 was to start assessing agency placement options for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 fellows. IDEC program staff will reconnect with the Internship Committee in early February to resume planning for the rotational internship component for Cohort 3.

**Eight Update June 30, 2022** Cohort 3 started their first summer learning rotational. A total of 12 out of 13 fellows are participating in the rotational this summer. 14 fellows started their agency internships between May and June (one from Cohort 1 and 13 from Cohort 2). Fellows were placed with the following agencies/divisions:

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
  - Commissioner’s Office (1)
  - Water (1)
  - RMAD (1)
  - Municipal (1)



- Industrial (1)
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
  - Ecological and Water Resources (4)
  - Fisheries and Wildlife (3)
  - Operations Services (1)
  - Parks and Trails (1)

### **Ninth Update January 31, 2023 – Rotational Internship**

12 members of Cohort 3 completed their rotational internship, gaining experience with all three partner agencies. Fellows completed over 3,500 internship hours: 1,398.5 with MPCA, 1,547.8 with DNR and 591 with BWSR. Feedback from the students will be incorporated with feedback from fellows on the agency internships in a future report.

#### **Agency Internships**

14 fellows completed agency internships during the summer of 2022 (one from Cohort 1 and 13 from Cohort 2). Fellows were placed with the following agencies/divisions:

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
  - Commissioner’s Office (1)
  - Water (1)
  - RMAD (1)
  - Municipal (1)
  - Industrial (1)
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
  - Ecological and Water Resources (4)
  - Fisheries and Wildlife (3)
  - Operations Services (1)
  - Parks and Trails (1)

Conservation Corps and DNR are actively seeking feedback from students and supervisors about their experience with the agency internship. A future report will include this information.

### **Tenth Update June 30, 2023**

#### **Agency Internships**

14 fellows started their agency internships between May and June (two from Cohort 2 and 12 from Cohort 3). Fellows were placed with the following agencies/divisions:

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
  - Water (1)
  - RMAD (1)
  - Municipal (1)
  - Industrial (2)
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
  - Ecological and Water Resources (3)
  - Fisheries and Wildlife (2)
  - Forestry (2)
- Board of Water and Soil Resources
  - Wetland (1)
  - Resource Conservation (1)

### **Eleventh Update January 31, 2024**

#### 2023 Agency Internship (Cohorts 2 & 3)

- 7 IDEC Fellows from Cohort 3 completed their first Agency Internship and 2 Fellows from Cohort 2 completed their second Agency Internship in summer 2023. Due to scheduling, some students finished in August, but others finished in September.
- 7 Fellows from Cohort 3 and 2 Fellows from Cohort 2 returned to school for the Fall 2023 semester, and they are all continuing the program.

#### 2023 Internship Evaluations

The IDEC Assistant Program Manager has reviewed and summarized the Agency Internship and Agency supervisor data/feedback collected in August 2023. This data and feedback collected from the surveys was presented at the IDEC Committee Meeting (10/23/2023).

### **Final Update June 30, 2024 (submit by August 15, 2024)**

4 IDEC fellows in Cohort 3 started their their second summer agency internship between May and June. Fellows were placed at the following agencies/divisions:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
  - Ecological and Water Resources, Aquatic Invasive Species Intern (Brainerd)
  - Ecological and Water Resources, Nongame Wildlife Program Intern (Saint Paul)
  - Forestry Division, Forestry Intern (Brainerd)
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
  - Environmental Analysis & Outcomes Division, Air Policy and Air Regulatory Intern (Saint Paul)

### **ACTIVITY 3: Mentorship Program Development and Administration**

#### **Description:**

All students in the fellowship program will be paired with DNR, PCA, or BWSR employees who will serve as their mentors. The mentorship program will enhance college success, encourage personal and professional development, and promote the career advancement of under-represented STEM students participating in the program. The program will offer a structured framework to help ensure productive conversations between mentors and fellows. The program will use a one-on-one mentoring approach that might include the use of in-person meetings, video conferencing, email, and phone communication. All mentors will complete initial training before being paired with their mentees. After the initial mentor training, mentors will meet their mentees at a mentorship kick-off day. All mentors receive ongoing training and regular support. Mentors will engage with their mentees on a regular basis throughout the duration of the program.

MNDNR, MNPCA and BWSR will use in-kind funding and work collaboratively to recruit, select, train, and match up to 43 agency mentors to fellows in the program. MNDNR will administer the overall program to include the development of the mentor recruitment plan and materials, training plan, program evaluation, mentorship agreements, site visits, and mentor/fellow matching with assistance from CCMI. The three agencies will provide leadership and support services to the mentors for the duration of the program.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 195,206**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Up to 16 state agency employees increase their mentoring and cultural competency skills through training and support.	August 31, 2021
2. 16 fellows in cohort 1 and 16 mentors will develop personal and mutually beneficial relationships.	April 30, 2022
3. Up to 17 additional state agency employees increase their mentoring and cultural competency skills through training and support.	August 31, 2022
4. 17 fellows in cohort 2 and 17 mentors will develop personal and mutually beneficial relationships.	April 30, 2023
5. Up to 10 additional state agency employees increase their mentoring and cultural competency skills through training and support.	August 31, 2023
6. 10 fellows in cohort 3 and 10 mentors will develop personal and mutually beneficial relationships.	April 30, 2023
7. 43 fellows (cohort 1, 2, & 3 combined) will develop personally and increase their ability to navigate education and career spaces through regular interactions with their mentors.	June 30, 2024

**First Update January 31, 2019** – There are no updates for this activity and outcome.

**Second Update June 30, 2019** – Mimi has been working on the mentoring program. Many staff within the state agencies have expressed initial interest in serving as a mentee. Mentor recruitment and applications are scheduled to roll out by the end of July 2019. There are no updates regarding the first the CCMI contracted internships. Planning for this component will start this fall (2019) with the first internship starting in the summer of 2020.

**Third Update January 31, 2020**- Mimi worked with agency leadership to create the mentorship program and criteria to become a mentor. The mentor application rolled out in the late fall, and 28 staff between the three agencies applied to become mentors. Applications were reviewed by leaders from the three agencies as well as Mimi. All 28 applicants were placed in the mentor pool. In January, IDEC info sessions were held for potential mentors. The info session provided mentors will and in-depth overview of the IDEC program as well as the mentorship component for IDEC. Mentors had the opportunity to ask questions and decide if they wanted to move forward with being an IDEC mentor. Before being paired with IDEC fellows, mentors were informed they would need to attend a 4- hour mentor training that would take place in February.

**Fourth Update June 30, 2020** – During this period, the selected IDEC mentors completed 4 hours of training, facilitated by Deon Clark from TCI solutions. 28 mentors participated in the training and were provided an evaluation upon completion of the training. Based on the evaluations, the training was very beneficial, and mentors felt more prepared to work with their mentees. After training, Mimi and May conducted a matching process to get 16 mentors matched with the IDEC fellows. Mentors who were not matched, remain in the mentor pool to be considered for cohort2. On March 13, a Mentor Kick-off was held. The kick-off purpose was for mentors and mentees to meet and build a good mentor-mentee relationship. All fellows and mentors were present for the kick-off.

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021**- Cohort 1 mentors began to meet virtually with their mentees. A few of the mentors met in person while practicing social distancing guidelines. Most mentors were able to connect and build rapport with their mentees. Mimi held a mentor check-in to discuss how the mentorship was going and discuss more ways to build rapport. A couple of mentors reported that their mentee was nonresponsive or had very little to say during their check-ins.

Mimi rolled out the mentor application to recruit mentors for cohort 2 fellows. Mimi held mentor info sessions to go over the program and the mentorship component. Mentors had the opportunity to ask questions and decide if they wanted to move forward with being an IDEC mentor. Before being paired with IDEC fellows, mentors were informed to attend a 2-hour virtual mentor training. 16 staff expressed interest in mentoring and added to the mentor pool. In February 2021, 2-hour virtual mentor training was facilitated by Deon Clark from TCI Solutions. 16 mentors participated in the training and were provided an evaluation upon completion of the training. Based on the evaluations, the training was very beneficial, but many felt that 2 hours was not enough time. Training will be increased to 3 hours for the next round if held virtually.

**Sixth Update June 30, 2021** - Programming for Cohort 2 in spring 2021 focused on matching fellows with their program mentors. MN DNR staff facilitated the mentor application and selection process as well as training for mentors. In April 2021, MN DNR and Conservation Corps staff hosted a mentor-mentee kick-off meeting, outlining basic expectations for mentor-mentee relationships and providing structured introductions and ice-breakers.

**Seventh Update January 31, 2022** – The mentorship program continued for cohorts 1 and 2. With many of the fellows in cohort 1 graduating, many of their mentors signed up for cohort 3. Overall the mentorship program is going well, we saw some challenges with fellows responding to their mentors. Some of the mentors expressed feeling like they weren't adding value and were unsure if their mentee needed a mentor. Based on feedback, we decided to change the mentorship program model for cohort 3. For cohort 3, fellows are given the option to either be paired with a mentor or have access to a pool of mentors who serve as resources. 10 of the 13 fellows opted for having access to a pool of mentors when needed. 3 fellows opted for being paired one-on-one with a mentor.

**Eight Update June 30, 2022** – The mentorship program is still running for all cohorts. A mentor-mentee kickoff for cohort 3 was held in March. Due to some of the mentorship challenges from cohorts 1 and 2, cohort 3 students were not paired with mentors unless they indicated they wanted to be paired with one. All fellows have access to the pool of mentor and can reach out to any of the mentors at any time.

**Ninth Update January 31, 2023** – During the 2022 summer, a panel of mentors virtually met with the fellows to discuss challenges and success in their roles and with working for the State. Mentors continued to be available to fellows as needed.

**Tenth Update June 30, 2023** In April, a virtual meeting was held where mentors and IDEC fellows had sessions to discuss their upcoming summer internships. Another mentor info session was held in June to gather more interest in the mentor program. The mentorship program is on hold until the new IDEC Program Coordinator is onboarded.

**Eleventh Update January 31, 2024** –

#### Cohort 2 Mentor Meetings

- The IDEC Assistant Program Manager is encouraging all Cohort 2 Fellows to meet with their mentor at least once per semester until graduation.

Cohort 3 Mentor Update:

- The DNR Career Pathways Program Coordinator and IDEC Assistant Program Manager reviewed the IDEC mentor applications for Cohort #3 on 12/8 and 12/26. All 5 Fellows were matched with mentor and were introduced to each other via email during the first week of January 2024.

Consultant:

- Mentor Minnesota provide consultation for the following two services:

- Mentor Training (\$2,000):  
Offer their Connect, Focus, Grow (CFG): A three-pronged approach to equip mentors with skills to support the personal and professional growth of young people, coach supervisors on how to manage with a mentoring mindset, and how to guide young people towards engaging and leveraging mentoring opportunities while, at the same time, meeting their goals.
- Mentor Curriculum (\$5,000):  
Design a mentor curriculum that is aligned with the goals and objectives of the IDEC program. The curriculum will serve as a framework for mentors and mentees to connect with and learn from one another throughout the program. The DNR Career Pathways Program Coordinator is meeting with a Mentor Minnesota on a weekly to biweekly basis from February 2024 – May 2024 to develop this request.

**Final Update June 30, 2024 (submit by August 15, 2024) -**

Work with Mentor Minnesota to complete the following documents by the end of August 2024:

- Mentorship Component Recommendations: Define the needs to improve the operations and mentor elements.
- Logic Model: updated version that defines the role of the IDEC mentorship program.
- Agreement Form: Mentor and mentee agreement form so they can discuss how often they want to meet and if an issue arises, then the IDEC Team will need to relook at the agreement form.
- Activity Guide: The activity guide is created by Mentor MN so mentors and mentees can build a rapport.
- Mentor Handbook: Guide for mentors to refer if they have questions about their role.

**IV. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** The MNDNR, MPCA, BWSR, and CCMI will disseminate program information and will provide links on their websites. The partners have experience recruiting STEM students through existing relationships with environmental and engineering departments at several universities. CCMI has been successful at attracting student interest in similar programs, such as the Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy. MNDNR, MPCA and BWSR’s websites will offer descriptions of the program and links to CCMI’s website for more information. This project will also build on the foundation, work, and achievements of the ENRTF-funded project, *Bridges to Diversifying Involvement in the Natural Resources Community*. At project end, a report will be provided that summarizes the project, including its successes and challenges, so that others may benefit from any lessons learned.

**First Update January 31, 2019** - There are no updates on dissemination.

**Second Update June 30, 2019** – Program information has been disseminated. CCMI has posted the program information on its website and a link for students to apply to the program. MN DNR has highlighted the program in their spotlight series, which is a biweekly newsletter that goes out to all DNR staff. In addition, a DNR press release has been drafted and approved to go out on July 8, 2019. MPCA and BSWR are currently working on getting program information posted on their sites as well as share the information with their broader networks.

**Third Update January 31, 2020**- All three agencies continue to disseminate information about the IDEC program. Mimi participated in a wire-side chat with the commissioner of DNR. The wire-side chat is aired lived for all DNR

staff to view. In the chat, Mimi discussed with the commissioner about the IDEC program, the three program components, and how DNR staff can get involved. Spotlight articles continue to go out periodically. Each agency created a page on their intranet for the IDEC program. The page was used to recruit mentors to the program and provide a link to apply. In January, DNR started working on getting the IDEC program information on its external careers page and is still underway. CCMI began networking and recruitment for cohort 2.

**Fourth Update June 30, 2020** – All three agencies continue to disseminate information about the IDEC program. DNR finished creating the IDEC page on its external careers page. MPCA posted information about the IDEC program in the LORAX, a communication channel for staff to receive diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and resources. CCMI continued recruitment for cohort 2 and revamped the IDEC page on their website. With the planning and start of the first virtual rotational internship, staff among the agencies became more informed about the program.

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021** – All three agencies continue to disseminate information about the IDEC program. For cohort 3 recruitment, DNR did a press release that reached the Governor’s office and news outlets. Mimi interviewed with Sahan Journal and another news outlet.

**Sixth Update June 30, 2021** – All three agencies continue to disseminate information about the IDEC program.

**Seventh Update January 31, 2022** – All three agencies continued to disseminate information during the summer to recruit IDEC fellows for cohort 3. Since cohort 3 is the last cohort for the project, no more recruitment is taking place. However, the state agencies continue to discuss and share the work and goals of the IDEC program with various stakeholders.

**Eight Update June 30, 2022** – All three agencies continue to disseminate information about the IDEC program.

**Ninth Update January 31, 2023** - All three agencies continue disseminating IDEC program information. When the evaluation results roll out, a new IDEC communication plan will be developed.

**Tenth Update June 30, 2023** - The DNR is working on a short video about the IDEC program to be used as promotional material and for outreach.

**Eleventh Update January 31, 2024** – The DNR, MPCA, and CCMI have completed short videos of the program and each video highlights either the experience of an IDEC participant, rotational internship, and agency internship. All three agencies continue to disseminate information about the IDEC program.

- MN DNR: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1N1zayF550>
- MPCA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iP8tSfC9m3A>
- CCMI: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MU2KnMtEKE>

**Final Update June 30, 2024 (submit by August 15, 2024)** -

All three agencies continue to disseminate information about the IDEC program to complete ML19.

## V. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

**A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:** See spreadsheet

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:** N/A

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** Any classified staff position paid for by ENRTF will either:

1) Be backfilled with a new position OR 2) The work done by this position will be delayed, eliminated, or completed by the start of the project. The internship, CCMI and MNDNR Program Coordinator positions will not be created until the commissioner of natural resources is appropriated funding and the LCCMR has approved this work plan.

**Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours: 7,280	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE: 3.5
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*This appropriation would fund 0.7 FTE for five years. One MNDNR position will provide program coordination for the 43 mentors and 86 internship placements. This position will be 0.7 FTE each year for five years or the equivalent of 3.5 FTEs.*

**Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours: 22,880	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE: 11.0
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*This proposal would fund 1.0 FTE for five years. This is a five year program to fund 14.2 FTEs through the CCMI contract. CCMI will hire one (1) FTE to manage and administer the program through CCMI and select 43 students to participate in the program who will be offered contracted internships over the duration of the program. Each internship is estimated to last 480 hours; with up to 43 interns, ENRTF funded intern positions (contracted internship program with DNR, PCA and BWSR) is to be 6.0 FTE over the duration of the project. Fellowships are excluded from this calculation.*

**B. Other Funds:**

SOURCE OF AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS	Amount Proposed	Amount Spent	Status and Timeframe
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>			
Federal education awards leveraged by Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa for Year 1 Interns	\$ 90,000	\$ 0	Pending
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>			
DNR, PCA and BWSR operating budgets. Includes intern salaries (40 hours for 13 weeks at \$15/hr); intern supplies (est. \$1,000/intern) and salaries for state employee mentors and supervisors	\$ 709,909	\$0	Secured
<b>Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b>			
ML 2017, Chp 96, Sec. 2, Subd 5b	\$ 487,000	\$ 0	Will expend the ML 2017 appropriation for this project before expending ML 2018 appropriation and will expend ML 2018 before expending 2019 appropriation.

<b>Other Funding History:</b>			
	\$	\$	

**VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

**A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding**

- Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa will receive ENRTF funding for this project via contract for program administration to include the fellowship/stipend awards, contracted internships (ENRTF funded), on-going student support.
- MNDNR will receive funding through the appropriation to coordinate the inter-agency mentorships and internships and program administration.

**B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

- MPCA and BWSR – provide intern supervisors and mentors, fund second and third year internships.

**VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

This project provides fellowships, multiple internship opportunities for 43 under-represented students (women, ethnic and racial minorities, and individuals with disabilities) over the course of a five-year program and will break down barriers that inhibit those students from pursuing post-secondary science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) educations and careers.

Despite Minnesota’s change demographics and more than a decade of both national and State focus on directing more students – particularly women and minorities – toward STEM careers, research shows that the STEM workforce is no different today than in 2001. Through this program, under-represented students will receive financial support, learning and experiential opportunities that will encourage graduation rates and post-graduation placements into career fields that will benefit Minnesota’s environment and natural resources for generations to come.

**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- **The project is for 6 years, will begin on July 1, 2018 and end on June 30, 2024.**
- **Periodic project status update reports will be submitted January 31 and June 30 of each year.**
- **A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2024.**

**IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:**

- A. Budget Spreadsheet**
- B. Visual Component or Map**
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet (N/A)**
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements (N/A)**
- E. Research Addendum (N/A)**



Attachment A:  
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
 M.L. 2018 Budget Spreadsheet



FINAL BUDGET

Project Title: Increase Diversity in Environmental Careers to Serve Minnesota's Changing Demographics

Legal Citation: M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 5d

Project Manager: May Yang-Lee

Organization: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

College/Department/Division: Operations Services Division - HR

M.L. 2019 ENRTF Appropriation: \$250,000; M.L. 2018 ENRTF Appropriation: \$550,000; M.L. 2017 ENRTF Appropriation: 487,000

Project Length and Completion Date: (2019) 5 years, June 2024; (2018) 5 years, June 30, 2023; (2017) 5 years, June 30, 2022

Date of Report: February 28, 2025

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	M.L. 2017 Appropriation	M.L. 2017 Revised Budget	Spent	Balance	M.L. 2018 Appropriation	M.L. 2018 Revised Budget	Spent	Balance	M.L.2019 Revised Budget approved 2/28/25	Spent	Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL SPENT	TOTAL BALANCE
	<i>Expires June 30, 2022</i>				<i>Expires June 30, 2023</i>									
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>														
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b>														
<i>Project Manager, \$358,626 ( 80% FTE , salary plus 30% fringe)</i>	\$145,800	\$145,309	\$145,309	\$0	\$152,000	\$163,606	\$163,606	\$0	\$60,162	\$60,162	\$0	\$0	\$369,077	\$0
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b>				\$0				\$0				\$0		
<i>Travel related expenses in years 1-5 of the program to visit potential and existing program sites statewide.</i>	\$1,500	\$36	\$36	\$0	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0			\$0	\$36	\$0
<b>Other</b>				\$0				\$0				\$0		
<i>Direct and Necessary for MNDNR's costs to design and oversee the program: HR support; Safety Support; Financial Support; Communications Support; IT Support; Planning Support</i>	\$11,061	\$4,242	\$4,242	\$0	\$12,475	\$19,294	\$19,294	\$0				\$0	\$23,536	\$0
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</b>				\$0				\$0				\$0		
<i>Contracts with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI) to manage project with the following components: 1FTE Assistant Program Manager and .25FTE Program Manager, Yearly fellowship payments; Paid first-year full-time summer rotational internship for 43 fellows; Recruitment, Training &amp; Professional development, Equipment &amp; tools for first-year rotational internship; Outreach; Wrap-around services and support; Travel</i>	\$328,639	\$337,413	\$337,413	\$0	\$382,525	\$367,100	\$367,100	\$0	\$189,838	\$189,751	\$87	\$87	\$894,264	\$87
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$487,000</b>	<b>\$487,000</b>	<b>\$487,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$249,913</b>	<b>\$87</b>	<b>\$87</b>	<b>\$1,286,913</b>	<b>\$87</b>

OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
<b>Non-State:</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>State:</b> MNDNR, MPCA and BWSR-awarded Sophomore and Junior Internships: awarded during summer following students' sophomore and junior years; total of 34 sophomore and junior internships awarded over duration of project.	Secured	\$ 418,543	\$ 370,617	\$ 47,926
<b>In kind:</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Mentor for each Student: 21 @ 40 hours/year @ \$30.01/hour for 4 years	Secured	\$ 168,056	\$ 80,000	\$ 88,056
Intern Supervisor for fellows for 12 weeks each summer @ 30% of time dedicated to supervisory duties	Secured	\$ 87,310	\$ 41,000	\$ 46,310
Supplies and equipment for Interns (including laptops and field equipment such as GPS units, maps, data, first-aid and safety equipment); 36 interns@ \$1,000 each	Secured	\$ 36,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 11,000

			\$ 709,909	\$ 516,617	\$ 193,292
<b>PAST AND CURRENT ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS</b>	<b>Amount legally obligated but not yet spent</b>		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Balance</b>
NA					