

Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on November 5, 2024

M.L. 2021 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2024

Project Title: Restoring Land and Reviving Heritage: Conservation Through Indigenous Culture

Project Manager: Hannah Brithón

Affiliation: Belwin Conservancy

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City/State/Zip: Afton, MN 55001

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Website: <http://www.belwin.org/>

Funding Source:

Fiscal Year:

Legal Citation: M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 05f

Appropriation Amount: \$420,000

Amount Spent: \$394,517

Amount Remaining: \$25,483

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

We have successfully restored over 18 acres of wetlands, prairie and woodlands in Afton, MN while reconnecting over 1000 Indigenous students and families to traditional lifeways. Collaboratively, our multi-generational restoration approach has set the foundation for the next generation of Indigenous leaders in land stewardship with specific cultural focus.

Overall Project Outcome and Results

While Belwin has an abundance of land, many urban Indigenous communities have lost access to wild spaces to conduct traditional cultural activities. This project aims to reconnect Indigenous students and families from Anishinabe Academy (Minneapolis, MN) to culture, language and the land through collaborative restoration of woodlands, wetlands and prairie.

Over the past three years, the site has hosted over 1000 visits for field trips and community events based in Dakota and Ojibwe culture. Programming blossomed to include all K-5 students, in addition to summer programming. As more families experience the site firsthand, the more inquiries we've received from other Indigenous-led organizations based

throughout the metro to participate. This has positioned us well for phase 2 of this project to begin including 6-12 grade students and to continue collaborating with organizations like Dream of Wild Health and Dakhóta iápi Okhódakičhiye (DIO) in land-based experiences.

Additionally, over 18 acres of wetlands, woodlands and prairie were restored through the removal of woody invasives and implementation of native species. Over 2200 bare root shrubs were planted in the wetlands, and over 600 plugs planted in the prairie, in addition to the planting of culturally significant species, such as sage, sweetgrass, white cedar, chokecherries, and plum trees. Students and families took part in each stage of the restoration from buckthorn removal to transplanting sweetgrass from their urban school gardens to the Afton site.

These restoration efforts ensure the vitality of the wetlands surrounding Valley Creek, a protected DNR trout stream; replenish the soil for future growth; and offer a space for Indigenous students and families to reconnect to ancestral ways of knowing rooted in the land. This project is essential to creating pathways for Indigenous students to step into future land stewardship leadership roles as we face an ever-changing climate.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

Partnership staff presented annually at education conferences, such as Minnesota Indigenous Educators Association Conference (MIEA) and the Understand Native Conferences, as well as shared findings with local environmental groups. Belwin communications staff shared program updates through blogs, newsletter articles, and social media posts (uploaded as attachments) and Anishinabe Academy school staff shared updates with families through school-wide texts, social media posts and posters. A new curriculum will be completed by Spring 2025. A sign attributing project funding to the ENRTF resides on the front gate of the site (picture uploaded).



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2021 Approved Final Report

General Information

Date: November 18, 2024

ID Number: 2021-320

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

Project Title: Restoring Land and Reviving Heritage: Conservation Through Indigenous Culture

Project Budget: \$420,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Hannah Brithón

Organization: Belwin Conservancy

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Project Reporting

Final Report Approved: November 5, 2024

Reporting Status: Project Completed

Date of Last Action: November 5, 2024

Project Completion: June 30, 2024

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 05f

Appropriation Language: \$420,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Belwin Conservancy in partnership with Anishinabe Academy to conduct environmental education programming that incorporates ecology and indigenous land traditions and to restore an ecologically significant area of land using modern scientific standards and traditional ecological knowledge.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2024

Narrative

Project Summary: By linking natural resource management, cultural heritage, and environmental education, we aim to restore an ecologically significant area of land while fostering multi-generational environmental stewardship and restoration of Indigenous culture.

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

Belwin owns and protects nearly 1,500 acres of land near the Twin Cities and reaches over 2,000 people through programs and e-newsletters. Anishinabe Academy is a K-5 Minneapolis Public School focused on Dakota and Ojibwe culture and language.

While Belwin has an abundance of land, many urban Indigenous communities have lost their connection to nature and their food heritage. The Anishinabe Academy community is seeking a place where families can gather to experience cultural events, learn about traditional ways, and grow sacred medicines and food. Currently, the school is using a small courtyard, inadequate for accomplishing their goals.

The parcel of land included in this proposal includes 600 feet of Valley Creek, a DNR trout stream formed by spring-fed ponds that empty into the National Wild and Scenic St. Croix River less than one mile away. Valley Creek is one of the best trout producing streams in the State of Minnesota and Valley Creek watershed is home to more than 20 endangered, threatened, and special concern species. The habitat currently surrounding this stretch of stream is degraded forest and grassland with many invasive species present. By restoring this land, we will increase the quality of this significant stream.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

This project aims to deepen both organizations' knowledge of land management while restoring an ecologically significant area and recovering this Indigenous community's access to nature.

To accomplish this, we will bring together land restoration experts, Belwin staff, and the school community to design and implement our restoration project. The partners will work together to restore the woodland and prairie incorporating Indigenous ways with Belwin's restoration practices. This restoration will contribute to better water quality in Valley Creek and healthier wildlife habitat. This partnership approach to restoration will instill an action-based environmental stewardship ethic in participants.

Restoration efforts will be paired with field trips led by Native elders and experts in ecology. Students and families from Anishinabe Academy will come to Belwin throughout the two-year period to study ecosystems, participate in land restoration, learn about cultural heritage, experience the bison herd and tallgrass prairie, and collect samples for lessons back at their school. The school community will also cultivate a garden with sacred foods and medicines using Native American traditions.

During and after this two-year program, Anishinabe Academy will have long-term influence over this parcel of land at Belwin with the ability to visit and conduct programming anytime.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

By linking natural resource management, cultural heritage, and environmental education, Belwin Conservancy and Anishinabe Academy aim to restore an ecologically significant area of land, while fostering multi-generational environmental stewardship and restoration of Indigenous culture.

If funded, this project will:

- Improve habitat quality in Valley Creek and the surrounding watershed
- Foster a multi-generational and action-based conservation ethic in urban Indigenous families
- Create a deeper understanding of cultural heritage through a Native garden site
- Connect the communities that Belwin and Anishinabe Academy serve so they can learn from each other with the common goal of long-term care of the land and water

Project Location

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

Region(s): Metro

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

Region(s): Metro

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Anishinabe Academy Education Partnership

Activity Budget: \$213,700

Activity Description:

Students and families from Anishinabe Academy will participate in field trips to Belwin to learn about ecology, participate in land restoration, connect to the land through a Native cultural lens, and cultivate a Native garden site. During field trips, participants will learn about Native garden principles, astronomy, ecology, scientific measurements, STEM concepts, Indigenous traditions, and land-management principles, all with the help of Ojibwe and Dakota language experts. One example of this is a lesson based on the herd of bison that grazes Belwin’s prairie each summer. Families will connect the cultural significance of the animals to the ecological benefits they give to the prairie ecosystem. Another example is the assessment of the health of the soil and water before establishing a Native garden site.

Curriculum experts and teachers at Anishinabe Academy will tie these lessons to MN state science, math, and social studies standards and incorporate them into yearly curriculum in the classroom. We will measure outcomes through teacher assessment of students, pre- and post- surveys of students, tracking participation numbers in family field trips, and through talking circles that explore Tribal history, culture, values, and practices.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Curriculum related to activities at Belwin will be incorporated into classroom lessons and standards.	June 30, 2022
Students and families will gain deeper insight of cultural heritage, measured through pre/post surveys.	June 30, 2023
Families will show a commitment to environmental stewardship through participation in garden and restoration efforts.	June 30, 2023
Students will demonstrate understanding of habitat concepts: native vs. invasive species, soil/water quality, and biodiversity.	June 30, 2023

Activity 2: Habitat Restoration

Activity Budget: \$206,300

Activity Description:

The 17-acre parcel of land we will restore is situated along 600 ft. of Valley Creek, identified in Minnesota’s State Wildlife Action Plan as a “Key River Reach.” Valley Creek is one of only a few trout streams in Minnesota that has a naturally reproducing population of Brook, Brown and Rainbow Trout. The Valley Creek watershed is home to more than 20 endangered, threatened, and special concern species.

This land around this portion of the creek is severely degraded with a high density of buckthorn and other invasive species. Restoring the land to tallgrass prairie and floodplain forest will promote species diversity and reduce erosion and runoff into Valley Creek and the downstream St. Croix River.

We will begin by removing 100% of non-desirable species. Then, we will plant and seed native species and provide management to keep invasive species from returning. We will evaluate restoration areas with photo points, plant diversity and density measurements, and soil and water sampling. We will take a partnership approach to restoration that follows modern scientific standards as well as traditional Indigenous ecological knowledge. We anticipate both Belwin and the school community will learn about and improve practices.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Prairie site prep and seeding	June 30, 2022
100% reduction in buckthorn/undesirable trees and woody shrubs	June 30, 2022
Follow-up woodland treatments and invasive regeneration removal	June 30, 2023
Follow up prairie establishment and invasive species removal	June 30, 2023
Install native plants in woodland	June 30, 2023

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Laura Sullivan, Principal	Anishinabe Academy	Anishinabe Academy is a Minneapolis Public School that serves primarily Dakota and Ojibwe students. They exist to engage urban Indigenous students by integrating and reclaiming Native American identities, cultures and languages through authentic academic experiences. Our partnership began in 2018 and we hope to expand it with this program.	Yes

Dissemination

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

Belwin plans to feature this project in our print and e-newsletters, both when funding is first secured and near the completion of the ENTRF funding to highlight progress. We will also hold a community event at the restoration and education site in spring or summer of 2023 to introduce community members to the project. Belwin will install signage at the site describing the partnership and acknowledging ENTRF funding.

Anishinabe Academy will keep and prepare a video library that students and families will be able to access any time. This will provide students with an ongoing connection to the lessons. The video library and any curriculum developed in conjunction with this project will be available to other schools and districts to use as a resource as well. We will make particular effort to share this information with Minneapolis Public Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, Stillwater Area Public Schools, and the Minnesota Department of Education.

We will acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENTRF Acknowledgment Guidelines.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

Together with Anishinabe Academy, Belwin will continue to manage the restored land to maintain appropriate plant diversity and low occurrence of invasive species. These costs will be absorbed into Belwin's annual budget and/or funded through other grants. Education programs with Anishinabe Academy will continue, funded by the school and other grantors, including state and federal funds available for Indigenous-focused public school programming.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
Personnel										
Land Assistant/Specialist		Land restoration			26%	0.3		\$18,800	-	-
Operations Director		Oversee and conduct habitat restoration			15%	0.1		\$6,500	-	-
Program Director		Oversee Partnership Coordinator and run programs associated with education partnership			25%	0.15		\$20,300	-	-
Partnership Coordinator		Coordinate and develop education program			29%	3		\$156,400	-	-
							Sub Total	\$202,000	\$192,143	\$9,857
Contracts and Services										
Stonebridge Engineering, Inc.	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Survey of land borders to be done before restoration work begins.				0.1		\$9,282	\$9,282	-
Landbridge Ecological (St. Paul, MN)	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Woodland restoration (\$128,000), woodland planting (\$10,000), prairie restoration (\$39,000). Contractor will prepare initial cutting and follow up sprays, plant bareroot shrubs, install prairie, and monitor/maintain sites for 1.5 years.				1		\$136,800	\$134,624	\$2,176
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Create, design, and print interpretive signs for restoration areas, garden area, natural history, and cultural history.				0.1		\$1,000	-	\$1,000
Contract Educators	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Educational programming by Native elders, cultural experts, and Native garden/ecology experts. Approximately 8-10 contracts per year for 3 years with individual educators at about \$600/contract = \$16,000				0.2		\$23,900	\$17,900	\$6,000

Anishinabe Academy	Sub award	Anishinabe Academy teaching staff to facilitate summer learning and field trips. This is a single source contract because these teaching staff will be tied to the project in the school year. Continuity through the summer will provide the best educational experience.				0.4		\$12,100	\$11,100	\$1,000
Washington Conservation District	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Finalizing written Restoration Plan documentation for current site restoration projects.				0.4		\$6,200	\$5,870	\$330
SavATree	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Hazard Tree Removal - Removal of hazardous trees and limbs from restoration site directly threatening programming areas after recent storms in Afton.				0.1		\$6,000	\$5,635	\$365
							Sub Total	\$195,282	\$184,411	\$10,871
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies										
	Tools and Supplies	Fencing	Marking borders of property for safety and security.					\$5,000	\$3,809	\$1,191
	Tools and Supplies	Dumster	Site cleanup, removal of debris from immediate educational areas.					\$487	\$487	-
	Equipment	Rental tiller for garden	Till and install garden. Would rent for one day each year for two years.					\$600	\$538	\$62
	Tools and Supplies	Tribal varieties of plants and seeds	Planting in the garden and surrounding areas. Must use heirloom tribal varieties for cultural education.					\$4,500	\$1,899	\$2,601
	Tools and Supplies	Garden tools (rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, etc.)	Teaching garden principles to students. Garden installation and upkeep.					\$2,000	\$2,000	-
	Tools and Supplies	Field supplies related to measuring water/soil/air quality.	Teaching ecology and STEM concepts in the field					\$700	\$700	-

	Tools and Supplies	Signage	Marking borders of property for security purposes					\$300	\$238	\$62
							Sub Total	\$13,587	\$9,671	\$3,916
Capital Expenditures										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Travel In Minnesota										
	Other	Buses	Field trip transportation from Anishinabe Academy to Belwin Conservancy. 6 trips per year for three years, \$475/bus.					\$9,131	\$8,292	\$839
							Sub Total	\$9,131	\$8,292	\$839
Travel Outside Minnesota										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Printing and Publication										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
Other Expenses										
							Sub Total	-	-	-
							Grand Total	\$420,000	\$394,517	\$25,483

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
State						
			State Sub Total	-	-	-
Non-State						
In-Kind	Belwin Conservancy	Admin costs associated with running this program. Two staff at 3% FTE for 2 years.	Secured	\$11,500	\$8,247	\$3,253
In-Kind	Anishinabe Academy	Admin costs associated with running this program. Two staff at 2% FTE for 2 years.	Secured	\$20,700	\$20,640	\$60
In-Kind	Anishinabe Academy	Curriculum Development. One staff at 3% FTE for 2 years.	Secured	\$6,400	\$6,340	\$60
In-Kind	Anishinabe Academy	Licensed Teachers to supervise field trips and do classroom instruction. Two staff at 5% FTE for 2 years.	Secured	\$21,400	\$10,644	\$10,756
In-Kind	Anishinabe Academy	Food for field trips. Provided out of general operating money from the school or through another grant if secured.	Secured	\$6,500	\$6,474	\$26
In-Kind	Mortenson Family Foundation	Funding for additional transportation costs, curriculum development, and improvements to the site infrastructure.	Secured	\$15,000	\$11,122	\$3,878
In-Kind	Individual Donor	Individual donation from private donor of Belwin to build garden shed for programming use on site.	Secured	\$11,000	\$10,929	\$71
			Non State Sub Total	\$92,500	\$74,396	\$18,104
			Funds Total	\$92,500	\$74,396	\$18,104

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Valley Creek (VC) 9 and 10	Washington	Floodplain forest, upland forest, prairie, and trout stream. Land is situated on a stretch of Valley Creek, a regionally significant trout stream with spawning brown, rainbow, and brook trout.	Restoration	17	0.12	\$263,300	Private	Parcel would stay under Belwin Conservancy ownership.	Completed
Totals				17	0.12	\$263,300			

Restoration

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

All restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement. Belwin has many permanently protected areas. The area we are proposing to restore is protected under a conservation easement with the Minnesota Land Trust.

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

This restoration parcel is divided into three main categories, the stream bed, the floodplain forest, and the upland prairie site.

The stream bed is in need of a full engineering and regulatory evaluation to determine if there is a need for restoration. The evaluation will include a review of the regulatory floodplain in the area and a field assessment of stream stability. It will take into account how the proposed upland restoration may affect overall stream stability, as well as agency requirements, permitting needs, and environmental review needs. This evaluation will give us planning level costs and a timeline and a summary of how stream restoration could achieve our goals of improving the overall stream habitat.

The woodland area has been heavily invaded by buckthorn. We will begin restoration with the removal of all unwanted and invasive species. We will follow the initial removal with planting of native and desirable species at a density of 250 plants per acre. After the initial invasive populations are under control, the long-term management of the woodland area will be accomplished primarily through spot-treating or hand-removing invasive species.

Expected outcomes for restoration of the woodland area are:

- Maintain and promote canopy trees such as tamarack, red maple, hackberry, basswood, silver maple, black ash and cottonwood
- Maintain less than 25% cover of woody invasive species and 10% herbaceous invasive species
- Promote an understory composed of appropriate southern terrace forest shrubs, grasses, sedges and forbs

The proposed prairie area currently consists of mowed turf and planted evergreen trees. To establish and maintain the upland prairie, we will first clear unwanted woody and herbaceous vegetation. We will use mechanical removal methods where possible to reduce the amount of herbicide treatment needed. After the initial site preparation in the summer/fall, we will seed and plant in the spring. For the first growing season, we will mow the vegetation to keep it at a height of three inches. During the second growing season, we will mow, hand pull, and spot treat as needed to remove invasive species. As the native plants are more established in years three, four, or five (outside of the timeline of this grant), we will also incorporate prescribed burning into our management plan.

Expected outcomes for the restoration of the prairie area are:

- Maintain cover of warm season grasses such as big bluestem, Indian grass, little bluestem, switchgrass and side oats grama
- Promote at least 10% cover of appropriate southern mesic prairie forbs to enhance species richness
- Maintain less than 10% cover of woody invasive species and less than 25% cover herbaceous invasive species

Belwin Conservancy has land management plans for all of our 1,500 acres. These plans are based on the needs of each parcel and are kept both electronically and in physical binders. Restoration projects are prioritized based on ecological significance, public use, and funding. After we complete initial restoration on an area, we update the management plan for continued maintenance and any additional needs.

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

- Belwin staff have read and follow the guidelines in all restoration projects.
- We will complete major cutting on frozen ground to limit soil disturbance.
- We will make every effort to reduce or avoid the use of chemicals in this restoration project and will only use herbicides when other methods would not be effective.
- When needed, we will time herbicide treatments to limit the non-target damage to native plants and pollinators.
- We will include the highest level of diversity in species appropriate for the site when planting and seeding.
- For all plant material used in the restoration processes, we will use yellow tag seed and plants sourced as close to the site as possible.

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

Belwin employs a staff with over 50 combined years of experience caring for natural resources. The long-term maintenance and management of our land is an established and funded part of our organization, with a 49-year track record of managing our lands back to health.

After the initial restoration on this parcel is complete, Belwin staff, the school community, and volunteers will monitor the land to evaluate the success and inform long-term management needs. We rely on a community of people to help us monitor and assess our land for restoration success. Belwin staff will monitor the area several times each year and Anishinabe Academy students and families will be visiting the land often, taking measurements, and assessing restoration objectives (see section 6 below). We also often have volunteers, other educational groups, and scientists do projects on our land, walk trails, conduct bird counts, and generally use the area. All of these parties are asked to report back to Belwin what they see or measure so we can adjust our management plan to address any continuing restoration needs.

Although we need outside funding to complete the initial restoration of this property, Belwin is able to fund the long-term maintenance with our general operating budget. Our annual budget is funded through a combination of grants, individual donations, earned income, and a draw from our endowment. A healthy native landscape requires less care than a non-native landscape, and that stability in turn helps our organizational budget and goals.

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

Upon execution of the grant contract, we will notify the Conservation Corps. We will also notify them of any RFPs we put out for restoration activities. Belwin has done this regularly in the past and will carefully consider proposals by the Conservation Corps among any other proposals we receive.

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

We will evaluate restoration success by establishing photo points and transect areas, and testing water and soil quality. Students and staff at Anishinabe Academy will complete transect surveys of plant density and diversity, basic water quality testing, and basic soil quality testing in the same locations each year as part of their science curriculum. Belwin will keep this data year after year and document how it is collected so we can assume responsibility for the data collection if needed.

The photo monitoring will be done by Belwin staff. We will develop a photo monitoring program on this parcel similar to

the monitoring that we do on many other points of our land. We will select 1-3 photo points within the management unit, mark them with a wooden post and record the GIS coordinates. We will take photos from those points in the same direction with the same camera (if possible) at the same time each year. Because spotted knapweed and European buckthorn are two of the most problematic species at the site, we plan to take the photos in June when the spotted knapweed is in flower, and again in October when the density of buckthorn in the understory is readily apparent. Belwin has an inventory of annual photo points and these points will be added to that list to complete annually into the future.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [d2b65b15-c53.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The visual shows two maps - a large view of all of Belwin's land holdings, nearly 1,500 acres of land located in Afton and West Lakeland Township, MN. The holdings are not all contiguous, but are all in the same general area. The large map also shows Valley Creek trout stream running through several of Belwin's parcels. The smaller map is a zoom-in of the area addressed in this proposal. The small map shows 17 acres of land with mixed habitat of upland prairie and floodplain forest with Valle...

Financial Capacity

File: [7b24cad6-67e.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Belwin Board Resolution	1ec00dcd-2a6.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Support Letter from Anishinabe Academy	805833c1-028.pdf
Belwin Background Check form	aecfc8f9-2d2.pdf
June 2023 - Photo Points (Restoration Work)	63385000-b65.pdf
Dec 2023 - Meadowlark Article (Dissemination Update)	9bb672e5-4a4.pdf
June 2024 - Belwin Blog Post (Dissemination Update)	fff84fe7-495.pdf
June 2024 - Press Release (Dissemination Update)	e2c0891d-11a.pdf
June 2024 - Scheduled Social Media posts (Dissemination Update)	59b44145-535.pdf
June 2024 - Final Update Restoration Photos	9a8df08e-e48.pdf
Site ENRTF Signage	f5f41116-c72.jpe
Activity 1, Milestone 1 - Family Event Feedback from Participants	8c4208d0-87b.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Changes made from proposal to the work plan are based on amount of funding recommended and new information about costs of activities in this project. Changes are:

- Increased budget for woodland restoration from \$105,000 to \$128,000. This is due to the market cost of these activities increasing.
- Decreased budget for woodland planting from \$90,000 to \$10,000. This is due to reduction in funding recommendation and knowledge that there is a seed bank that will provide native plants in the area. The plant regeneration will still occur for this restoration, but will take longer since we won't be adding as many plants.
- Removed the stream assessment, which cut \$15,000 from the budget. We will pursue this at a later time as it is not critical to our goals for this project.

- Decreased budget for field supplies for education program from \$4,000 to \$2,000. The school was able to purchase some supplies in 2020 with other funds.
- Adjusted the number of field trips each year to 6, accommodating for increased cost of busing.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?

N/A

Do you agree travel expenses must follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Work Plan Amendments

Amendment ID	Request Type	Changes made on the following pages	Explanation & justification for Amendment Request (word limit 75)	Date Submitted	Approved	Date of LCCMR Action
1	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies 	We are eliminating the Capital Expenditure line item for 'Fencing and Signage' for \$5,300 and separating each item into its own line item under 'Tools and Supplies'; Fencing for \$5,000 and Signage for \$300. This change was made at the recommendation of our Grant Specialist for reimbursement purposes. It was determined these line items should not be categorized as 'Capital expenditure' as they will be implemented by Belwin staff.	April 20, 2022	Yes	April 21, 2022
2	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Budget - Non-ENRTF Funds Contributed 	These non-ENRTF funding sources were not received for their respective grant cycles as outlined in the proposal. Funds from the Shakopee Mdewankaton Sioux Community were not received. Permission for Minneapolis Educator Leadership Grant to be extended past the 2020-21 school year was not granted.	June 23, 2022	Yes	July 1, 2022
3	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Collaborators - Project Manager Info 	The Project Collaborator Information is incorrect on page 2 of this document. Under 'Job Title' for 'Hannah Smith' it should read 'Program Coordinator' in place of 'Executive Director'. All other information is correct and does not require a change.	September 7, 2022	Yes	September 13, 2022
4	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget - Personnel 	The Operations Director personnel budget line should be reduced from \$8,500 to \$6,500 and the Program Director personnel budget line should be increased from \$9,300 to \$11,300 due to an internal organizational shift in responsibilities related to this partnership. This will keep	January 4, 2023	Yes	January 9, 2023

			the total allocated personnel budget to the original amount of \$169,000.			
5	Amendment Request	• Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts	Landbridge Ecological (St. Paul, MN) is subcontracted to complete all three restoration activities listed under 'Professional / Technical Contracts': Woodland Restoration (\$128,000), Woodland Planting (\$10,000), and Prairie Restoration (\$39,000). For reimbursement purposes, we are combining these three lines into one line under 'Professional / Technical Contracts', still totaling \$177,00.	February 13, 2023	Yes	February 17, 2023
6	Amendment Request	• Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts	We are updating two entities under 'Professional/Technical Contracts' in the Budget section from 'TBD' to specify contractors: Stonebridge Engineering, Inc. completed the survey work for the first line item in the section. The fourth line item entity should read 'Contract Educators'. We have also added this clarifying language to the description, as there are multiple contractors: 'Approximately 8-10 contracts per year for 3 years with individual educators at about \$600/contract = \$16,000'.	July 11, 2023	Yes	July 12, 2023
7	Amendment Request	• Budget - Travel and Conferences	Water and soil testing will now be done in the classroom, eliminating the need for line item 'Other - Soil and water test kits sent out for analysis'. We would like to reallocate this \$1400.00 to line item: 'Travel in Minnesota - Field trip transportation from Anishinabe Academy to Belwin Conservancy. 6 trips per year for three years (instead of two years), \$475/bus (an increase from the previously estimated \$400/bus)'.	July 19, 2023	Yes	August 2, 2023

8	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts 	<p>We are amending the Restoration Work budget line item from \$177,000 to \$164,800 to account for the addition of two supplemental Professional/Technical contracts: 1. Washington Conservation District to supplement restoration evaluation requirements in our written restoration plan documentation for a total of \$6200. 2. Contract with TBD for removal of unhealthy trees on the property to maintain and promote canopy trees in the woodland area for an estimated \$6000.</p>	September 15, 2023	Yes	September 28, 2023
9	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget - Personnel • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts • Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies • Budget - Travel and Conferences 	<p>After finalizing contracts, we are moving \$33,000 of excess funds from 'Professional/Technical Contracts' to cover a gap in personnel costs, and \$2931 of projected excess funds from Equipment/Tools/Supplies to cover a gap in projected transportation costs for the remainder of the grant period. I will send a detailed email to LCCMR staff regarding exact transfer amounts between budget line items.</p> <p>SavATree is now contracted for tree removal for habitat restoration.</p>	December 8, 2023	Yes	December 14, 2023
10	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts 	<p>We are requesting to move an excess of \$7,900 from the 'Anishinabe Academy' budget line to the 'Contract Educators' budget line, for a new total of \$23,900. Anishinabe Academy summer school teachers are compensated through MPS budgeting this year, and excess funds will be used to contract with Indigenous-led organizations to support teachings during spring field trips focused on traditional Indigenous ecology and Dakota language</p>	April 19, 2024	Yes	May 9, 2024

			related to the bison and prairie ecosystem.			
11	Project Manager	Previous Manager: Hannah Smith (hannah.smith@belwin.org) New Manager: Hannah Brithón (hannah.smith@belwin.org)	Changed last name after getting married this past fall.	April 19, 2024	Yes	April 19, 2024
12	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other • Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies • Budget - Non-ENRTF Funds Contributed • Attachments 	<p>Following updates made to non-ENRTF Funds Contributed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Added Mortenson Family Foundation for \$15,000 -Added Private Donor for \$11,000 -Increased Anishinabe Academy Admin Costs from \$10,000 to \$20,700 -Increased Anishinabe Academy Curriculum Staff from \$6300 to \$6400 -Increased Anishinabe Academy Food Costs from \$1800 to \$6500 <p>Total non-ENRTF Funds contributed increased to \$92,500.</p>	July 22, 2024	Yes	August 15, 2024

Status Update Reporting

Final Status Update August 14, 2024

Date Submitted: August 12, 2024

Date Approved: August 15, 2024

Overall Update

The final months of our project gleaned exciting progress and milestone accomplishments regarding educational programming as well as habitat restoration at the site. Anishinabe Academy staff continued lessons at the site throughout the spring, in partnership with Dream of Wild Health (DWH) and Dakhóta íápi Okhódakičhiye (DIO), two indigenous-led organizations local to the Twin Cities Metro. We hosted over 170 individual visits between field trips and family events, and involved over 30 new participants in restoration activities and outdoor education rooted in traditional ecological knowledge.

Landbridge Ecological accomplished the three remaining habitat restoration milestones, including the invasive removal in the wetlands and prairie, installation of over 600 prairie plugs, and finalizing the bare root shrub installation totalling over 2000 plugs. In addition to contracted restoration work, we have made significant improvements to the site for programming, including clearing and laying of a woodland trail system, installing a temporary deer fence for the Three Sisters garden, and shrub installations to border the 'Teaching Circle' outdoor classroom area. We are looking forward to the next phase of restoration and enhancement of the site in collaboration with our school and community partners.

Activity 1

December 2023 began our spring field trip planning with two additional partner organizations Dream of Wild Health (DWH) and Dakhóta íápi Okhódakičhiye (DIO). DWH worked with 25 third grade students to establish the Three Sisters garden. DWH led planting pre-lessons at the school to teach students about beans, squash, anise, and cedar. In person, DWH farm staff led field trips at the Afton site, including the creation of 'pumpkin houses' and the implementation of Hazelnut and Chokecherry shrubs to surround the new 'Teaching Circle' area.

DIO worked with 75 fourth and fifth graders, primarily teaching Dakota language related to the seasons, plants and bison, in addition to sharing traditional Dakota stories of creation and the White Buffalo Woman. These students also helped to establish the 'Teaching Prairie' by transplanting Sweetgrass plugs from their school gardens to the site for future activities.

Families attended the third annual Bison Festival in May 2024 to witness the release of the Northstar bison herd and learn about the American Indian Family Center tipi. Over the years, feedback was gathered verbally from participants in place of surveys, and results are included as an attachment in Tab 7.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Activity 2

The final leg of contracted restoration work with Landbridge Ecological LLC continued at the site from December 2023 to present. We have now completed all activity milestones for Activity 2 - Habitat Restoration.

The following Activity Milestones were accomplished and finished in Spring 2024:

- 1 - Follow-up woodland treatments and invasive regeneration removal
- 2 - Follow up prairie establishment and invasive species removal
- 3 - Install native plants in woodland

The following Activity Milestones were accomplished and finished in Summer and Fall 2023:

4 - Prairie site prep and seeding

5 - 100% reduction in existing buckthorn/undesirable trees and woody shrubs

Updated Photo points for all restoration work through June 2024 have been added to the Attachments page.

Third, fourth, and fifth grade students all assisted with the installation of culturally significant species including Fragrant Hyssop, Sweetgrass, Prairie Onion, and New Jersey Tea in their 'Teaching Prairie', and Chokecherry and Hazelnut in their 'Teaching Circle' outdoor classroom area. We look forward to hosting future events with families throughout the fall and early Spring 2025 focused on restoration and traditional ecological knowledge.

(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)

Dissemination

Our partnership was invited to interview by Ampers Radio in March 2024, but unfortunately we were unable to complete the interview due to a scheduling conflict. We are looking forward to future interview opportunities to share more about the work we're accomplishing.

Belwin staff tabled for outreach at the Anishinabe Academy end of school year Powwow. We talked to parents, grandparents, and family members of students about the great work students had accomplished at the Afton site, and generated a list of interested families to help care for the Three Sisters garden over Summer 2024. This outreach has consistently been one of the best formats to share partnership work with the community and families, and we look forward to expanding our outreach with the new Native American Community Engagement Specialist position this coming fall.

Additional dissemination updates have been added as PDFs on the Attachments page, including two press releases, scheduled upcoming social media posts, and a recent blog post focused on the wetlands bare root shrub and protective tree tube install. Photos of ENRTF signage have also been added to the Attachments page. No signage describing the partnership, or otherwise, was installed.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update December 1, 2023

Date Submitted: December 1, 2023

Date Approved: December 14, 2023

Overall Update

Since July 2023, we have made significant progress regarding educational programming, as well as habitat restoration at the site. Anishinabe Academy staff continued lessons at the site throughout the summer through MPS summer programming. This included the pilot of lessons with K-2 grade students, and was a huge success! Staff also identified grade level objectives for 3-5th grades during the 2023-24 school year in regards to this project. This year's lessons will focus heavily on Dakota ways of caring for Unci Maka, significant plant characteristics and traditional uses, and animal relatives related to each ecosystem of the site.

Landbridge Ecological has continued to accomplish the habitat restoration milestones, and we are now over halfway to completion of all Activity 2 milestones for this grant cycle, including the clearing of woody invasives, preparing and seeding the prairie, and installing plant plugs in the wetlands. The remainder of the work in the wetlands and prairie will take place in Spring 2024. We continue to engage the school and Native community as we implement each stage of the restoration process, especially around the subject of plant acquisition and decisions around species to be implemented at the site.

Activity 1

July 2023 saw the introduction of summer programming out at the site. Over 40 K-5 students participated in a wetland bird count, heard Lakota bird stories, participated in a plant walk and learned about the bison and the prairie ecosystem. In the fall, school staff and the Program Coordinator redefined focus areas for grades 3-5:

-3rd grade: Soil health and three sisters' garden

-4th grade: Prairie, sage and ecosystems (including Bison)

-5th grade: Wetlands, red willow (red osier dogwood), sweetgrass and water systems

Each grade participated in field trips from Sept-Nov to complement classroom work using the Indigenous Food Network Youth Curriculum. Over 120 students will continue focusing on these content areas in Spring 2024, including starting and transplanting seedlings for the garden, prairie and wetland plants, creating plans and maps for the various parts of the site, and completing soil and water tests.

Families will attend the first winter event hosted at the site in January 2024, centered around Ojibwe storytelling, as well as snowshoeing to observe the wetlands in the winter landscape. Families and the greater community will be invited to participate in late Spring/early Summer plug installs in the prairies and wetlands, as well.

Activity 2

Contracted restoration work with Landbridge Ecological LLC continued at the site from July 2023 to present. We are over halfway done with Activity 2 Milestones and remain on schedule to accomplish all work prior to the end of our grant agreement on June 30, 2024.

The following Activity Milestones were accomplished and finished in Summer and Fall 2023:

4 - Prairie site prep and seeding

5 - 100% reduction in existing buckthorn/undesirable trees and woody shrubs

The following Activity Milestones are halfway to completion:

1 - Follow-up woodland treatments and invasive regeneration removal:

First treatment finished, final treatment scheduled for Spring 2024.

3 - Install native plants in woodland:

First half of plantings (1250 total) will be completed the week of November 27th, as there were delays in sourcing some of the culturally significant plant species for the wetlands. Final planting scheduled for Spring 2024.

The following Activity Milestones are scheduled for Spring 2024:

2 - Follow up prairie establishment and invasive species removal

As mentioned above, families, students and community members will be heavily involved in the planting of plugs of culturally significant plants in both the prairie and forest floodplain sections once contracted plugs are finished.

Dissemination

On August 10, 2023, partnership staff were invited back to present at the Educator Academy at Mystic Lake Center. The conference was organized in response to the Indigenous Educator For All MN Standards updates to provide Minnesota educators with examples of real-life indigenous projects, organizations, and materials to use in their classrooms. We shared more with folks about ENRTF funding through the LCCMR, and shared information regarding our project progress as an example of innovative work happening in present-day indigenous education.

Belwin also included a partnership update in our quarterly newsletter, the Meadowlark: Attachment has been updated on Tab 7 (Article on pg.4: 'Restoring Land, Reviving Heritage: How New Funding Could Expand a Key Partnership')

We also continue to meet with Phillips Indian Educators (PIE) group biweekly to share project updates, requests for proposals for contracted field trip educators, and other ways the community can visit the site. We are planning a community event in Winter 2024 related to traditional snowshoeing and storytelling as a part of the education partnership activity to engage more folks in the programming taking place at the site prior to our next phase of expansion.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update July 1, 2023

Date Submitted: July 11, 2023

Date Approved: July 12, 2023

Overall Update

Since December 2022 we have made significant progress regarding educational programming, as well as habitat restoration at the site. Anishinabe Academy staff spent time this early winter reviewing fall trips and lessons, and planned to incorporate two more lesson plans into their STEM class. School staff continued spending time building relationships with elders and other indigenous-led organizations who would be interested in contracting for future field trips.

The formal bidding for our contracted restoration work closed in December 2022, and Landbridge Ecological LLC was selected to carry out this work for the remainder of the grant period. We continue to engage the school and Native community as we implement each stage of the restoration process, especially around the subject of plant acquisition and decisions around species to be implemented at the site. Despite delays and setbacks due to COVID from 2021-22, we are still on track to complete this phase of the restoration work by June 30, 2024.

Activity 1

Program Coordinator met with 4th, 5th, STEM and Curriculum teachers/instructors to plan for Spring 2023 activities at the site. Teachers decided upon a co-teaching model to combine STEM lessons and wrap-around to include information in classroom lessons. Teachers decided to continue to focus work with 4th and 5th graders, and to push 3rd grade incorporation to the next school year (2023-24).

May and June 2023 saw over 70 visits, during 4 field trips. May trips focused on the gathering of soil and students tested samples to help plan for sage placement within the site. Students also practiced water collection and microbe viewing with microscopes, pulled invasives and observed insect species. June trips focused on the ecological and cultural significance of the Bison as a keystone species within the prairie ecosystem. Kevin Smokyday, Ojibwe elder, shared Bison artifacts, and students explored two types of prairies while at the site.

Nearly 100 students, family and staff participated in the Bison Festival Family Event on May 20. Kevin Smokyday shared teachings about the bison, and Justin Kurta and Ozuya Crow, Takoda Prep teachers, shared a tipi teaching with the group utilizing the school tipis.

Activity 2

Despite delays due to the school's limited capacity for collaboration during peak COVID, we are still on track to complete all remaining restoration milestones (1-3) by June 30, 2024.

In December 2022, formal bidding closed and restoration work began as soon as conditions permitted. In February 2023, Landbridge Ecological LLC began buckthorn removal in the forested floodplain, despite heavy snowfall this winter. They utilized both hand crews and forest mowing to remove invasive and non-desirable trees and woody shrubs to complete Milestone 5. Tree species deemed culturally and ecologically significant (such as Burr Oak, Silver Maple, etc.) were left in the woodland edge and forested floodplain.

In March and April 2023, crews began prairie site prep and removed non-desirable coniferous species from the woodland edge and prairie section (Milestone 4). They also performed two sprays and prepared the site for a burn and

seeding in June 2023. Due to drought conditions, we have decided to push back plug installation to September 2023, to also engage the students, families and Native community in restoration work.

Photo points showing before and after shots of the Forested Floodplain and Prairie sections are attached to this report as "June 2023 - Photo Points".

Dissemination

On April 18, 2023, Makylah Woods (Anishinabe Academy) and Hannah Smith (Belwin Conservancy) presented to over 50 people at the first annual Educator Academy at Mystic Lake Center. The conference was organized in response to the IEFA (Indigenous Educator For All) MN Standards updates to provide MN educators with examples of real-life indigenous projects, organizations, and materials to use in their classrooms. We shared more with folks about ENRTF funding through the LCCMR, and shared information with other indigenous-led organizations working on ecological and cultural restoration projects, including Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi and NATIFS/Indigenous Food Lab.

We also continue to meet with Phillips Indian Educators (PIE) group biweekly to share project updates, requests for proposals for contracted field trip educators, and other ways the community can visit the site. We are planning a community event in Fall 2023 related to planting sage and sweetgrass plugs at the site, as a part of the prairie restoration project.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update December 1, 2022

Date Submitted: December 1, 2022

Date Approved: December 7, 2022

Overall Update

Since July 2022 we have made significant progress regarding educational programming, as well as the restoration work to be done on the site. Anishinabe Academy staff spent time this summer scoping out programming schedules for the 2022-23 school year and developing the framework to incorporate new teachers into the program. Plans were made to incorporate 3rd-5th grade classes in field trips and pre-lessons during Fall 2022, and school staff spent time building relationships with elders who may be interested in contracting for future field trips this coming spring.

Belwin land staff developed 2 potential site plans to show desired features and projected restoration in different sections. These plans were discussed with the Site Planning Team in October. The plans were essential to visioning out the site for programming and restoration use, and were used when crafting our Restoration RFP. The RFP was published on November 14, and bidding will close on December 12, 2022. Interested bidders attended a mandatory on-site visit, and work is projected to begin in January 2023.

Activity 1

During Summer 2022, school staff planned programming, including pre-lessons and field trip schedules, for the coming school year. Grades 3-5 were identified as the pilot group for our first full year of programming. Due to unforeseen teacher turnover at the start of the year, focus shifted to 4th and 5th grade for Fall 2022 trips to the site. The Educational Partnership team will meet again in early January 2023 to determine grade levels for Spring 2023 pre-lessons and field trips, as well as summer garden programming.

During Fall 2022, over 40 students and 5 teachers visited the site. Hope Flanagan (Dream of Wild Health) joined 5th graders on a snowy Monday to share a lesson in Ojibwe, identify trees and learn traditional plant uses, and try traditional foods, such as toasted acorns. Many students got to see deer up close for the first time, and learn about the species' significance to the Native community. Lynette Anderson (Belwin) joined 4th graders the following week for restoration activities. Students learned how to safely use loppers to cut and haul Buckthorn. They created habitat brush piles and made observations about the site prior to the start of contracted restoration work.

Activity 2

Summer and Fall 2022 showed great progress towards our Activity 2 outcomes and milestones. Belwin volunteers removed enough debris to fill a 20 yard dumpster to aid restoration and educational programming efforts on the site. June/July 2022 was spent discussing potential layouts of the site, including desired features and specific restoration zones. Belwin staff and Anishinabe Academy staff collaborated on a final vision, and discussed desired restoration methods extensively. Due to the aggressive nature of buckthorn on the property, it was decided to utilize a variety of methods such as forest mowing, cut and stump treat, as well as foliar spray. In addition, a list of culturally significant plant species was generated and incorporated into our Restoration RFP.

The RFP was posted on November 14, 2022, and all interested bidders must include a demonstrated understanding of cultural impact, in addition to ecologically sound methodology, in their proposals. Five potential bidders attended an on-site meeting and site tour on November 28, and representatives from Anishinabe Academy were also present to answer cultural questions. Restoration work will begin January 2023, with an initial focus on buckthorn removal. Prairie site prep and tree clearing will take place in Spring and Summer 2024.

Dissemination

Makylah Woods (Anishinabe Academy) and Hannah Smith (Belwin) virtually presented the partnership program to Wild Ones at Prairie's Edge on October 12, 2022. Over 25 folks attended via Google Meet, and were especially excited to learn about indigenous gardening methods, sacred medicines, and how the partnership began. Information was shared regarding ENRTF funding through LCCMR.

Upon fence installation, ENRTF signage was added to the front gate, visible upon immediate entry. Belwin is also planning to feature a deeper highlight of the partnership in our Spring 2023 newsletter.

Anishinabe staff who worked on program development in Summer 2022 have proposed the potential creation of videos for lesson libraries beginning next summer, in June/July 2023. We have also slowly started sharing more about the partnership at bi-monthly Philips Indian Educators (PIE) meetings, a cohort consisting of Native community organizations, Minneapolis Public Schools School Board members, Public Schools with Native-focused programming, and employees from departments within the Minnesota Department of Education.

Status Update Reporting

Status Update July 1, 2022

Date Submitted: June 23, 2022

Date Approved: July 1, 2022

Overall Update

Since January 2022, we have hosted two successful family events in partnership with Anishinabe Academy. These events saw participation increases of 230% when compared to similar partnership events in 2018 and 2019. Participation has secured project buy-in from families, and provided moments of multigenerational cultural learning with elders Monte Yellowbird and Kevin Smokyday. Parents who participated in family events also participated in Spring field trips and accompanied students in a restoration project at the site. The summer months will be used to prepare a pilot curriculum for the 3rd and 4th grade under the school's new STEAM program.

The site itself has undergone some initial work, including a line survey that will be used to mark property borders by the end of Summer 2022. Plans are also underway for summer volunteer groups to clean remaining debris left by the former tenant. In February 2022, Belwin and Anishinabe Academy staff met with elders and ecological experts regarding indigenous methods for buckthorn removal. Information from that meeting was drafted into a site map and plant list. The group plans to meet again on Aug 22, 2022 to continue securing details before releasing an RFP for restoration work in Fall 2022.

Activity 1

Despite significant hurdles due to COVID-school closures, the Minneapolis Public School Teacher strike, and ongoing student absences as a result of these factors, we have made great progress in regards to the Educational Partnership - Activity 1, Milestones 1, 2 and 4. This spring, grades 3-5 participated in pre-lessons and field trips focused on the prairie ecosystem and the role that bison play in its restoration. Students learned from elder and Ojibwe language teacher, Kevin Smokyday, about the cultural significance of the bison to the Ojibwe and Dakota people, the near decimation of the species, and how to embody the grandfather teaching of 'respect', as the bison continues to teach us today. Students also participated in a restoration project pulling Dame's Rocket on their school site.

Pre-test results showed that while 46% of 3rd graders could define 'decimate', only 11% could identify 2 or more examples of restoration. After the trip, students were able to verbally define 'restoration' in a talking circle, and give multiple examples they had witnessed first hand at Belwin. School staff will develop lessons this summer involving habitat concepts related to soil, ecosystems, native vs. invasive species to implement in the 2022-23 school year.

Activity 2

In February 2022, project staff met with Hope Flanagan (Dreams of Wild Health) and Ferin Davis Anderson (Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community) to discuss best practices and indigenous restoration methods. We learned that Belwin's restoration practices for buckthorn removal are closely aligned to practices used at SMSC. Experts also shared ideas to replace herbicide usage and shared culturally significant plants to benefit future student learning on the property. This information was drafted into a site map, which will be reviewed in August 2022 by the same committee. Information from the curriculum planning meeting regarding the Native garden size and scope will also help to influence decisions regarding the prairie restoration project.

We have also completed a survey of the property, which unveiled the true acreage of the site and identified exact borders. Belwin staff will complete the fencing project by the end of Summer 2022.

Due to challenges outlined above, our project end date is now extended to June 30, 2024. Timeline for Activity 2, Milestones 4 and 5 will be pushed back to next Spring 2023 and Winter 2022, respectively. Milestones 1-3 will also be pushed back, according to progress on Milestones 4-5 this winter and coming spring.

Dissemination

On July 21, 2021, Belwin put out a press release to announce the approval of this project proposal and share more about the scope of the project itself. Belwin has also included information about the project in its social media, newsletters and print media, specifically highlighting programming put on for families in February and May 2022. Each publication has included the appropriate acknowledgement language and logo usage in accordance with the ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines.

Anishinabe Academy staff and the Program Coordinator presented on this project at the 2022 Minnesota Indian Education Association (MIEA) Conference on April 14, 2022. There were over 40 conference participants in attendance, and time was given for questions and answers. Information about this project has also been shared at Phillips Indian Educators (PIE) biweekly meetings. PIE is a consortium of educators, non-profits, and artists belonging to and/or working alongside the Native community in the Twin Cities area. We have also had multiple inquiries from local conservation groups to present, and will be presenting in October 2022 for Wild Ones Prairie Edge. We also have plans to continue presenting at future conferences, sharing information through newsletters, and will include appropriate ENRTF acknowledgements in all materials shared.