



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2024 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2024-292

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 14, 2024

Project Title: North Minneapolis Nature Connection: Storytelling and Leadership Pathways

Project Budget: \$697,000

Project Manager Information

Name: DeAnna Smith Perkins

Organization: The Loppet Foundation

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 20, 2024

Reporting Schedule: June 1 / December 1 of each year.

Project Completion: August 31, 2026

Final Report Due Date: October 15, 2026

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2024, Chp. 83, Sec. 2, Subd. 05v

Appropriation Language: \$697,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with The Loppet Foundation to promote urban nature connections for North Minneapolis residents through storytelling, nature and environmental justice programs, and environmental leadership pathways for high schoolers and young adults.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2027

Narrative

Project Summary: Loppet and community collaborators will promote urban nature connection for North Minneapolis residents through storytelling, nature and environmental justice programming, and environmental leadership pathways for high schoolers and young adults.

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

Based on visionary and historic land preservation, Theodore Wirth Park (TWP) was set aside in the early 1900's along with corridors of urban green space connecting lakes, woodlands, and creeks with the Mississippi River. This has placed Minneapolis as a consistently top-rated urban center in terms of green space, with TWP rivaling NYC's Central Park in size. However, the vision of a city united by green space was left incomplete and checkered by a history of racism and systemic injustice. It is now widely recognized that Minneapolis parks were central to restricted covenances and red-lining practices that discouraged low-income populations and people of color access to green space.

Through scoping for this project, partners representing communities of color in North Minneapolis neighborhoods abutting TWP spoke consistently of a very real divide between white and black, and rich and poor along Plymouth Avenue which connects TWP to North Minneapolis. And yet these same partners also told stories of resilience and connection to nature and TWP centered around a network of families and community groups that have been working towards equal opportunities for nature connection among their neighborhoods and youth.

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.

Through a history of quality outdoor programming and the realization of the Trailhead outdoor center, Loppet plays a central role in connecting people with TWP. But current Loppet offerings are based around culture and activities familiar to white and more affluent residents. In this proposal, we prioritize partnerships to tell stories of what TWP means for BIPOC neighbors, we implement nature and environmental educational initiatives that bridge the Plymouth Avenue divide, and we build a pathway for future leaders in nature connectedness and environmental justice.

Objectives to achieve project solution include:

- a) Permanent indoor/outdoor signage, interpretive exhibits, and art installations throughout North Minneapolis parks tell stories of what green space and environmental stewardship means to residents.
- b) 5 exhibitions throughout North Minneapolis feature these multi-media stories for over 1200 primary and 18,000 secondary participants.
- c) Engage 48+ North Minneapolis community groups in depth 4-8 session outdoor urban educational programs featuring stories of place, mindfulness, embodied practice, and environmental justice for 720 participants.
- d) Northside Pathways program will develop a cohort of 20-30 future high school and young adult environmental leaders.
- e) 50+ contractors, artists, and student leaders from Minneapolis' Northside employed in delivering project.

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?

People protect and conserve what they identify with and care about. This project will increase park usership and stewardship – especially among currently underrepresented user groups – as more people see their own stories reflected in the identity of Theodore Wirth Park and other Minneapolis green spaces. Stories also motivate action. This project will motivate citizen action. For example, stories collected during initial (pre-LCCMR) phases of this project are already inspiring volunteer partnerships with MPRB to restore and enhance parks through restoration of native vegetation that provide habitat for wildlife, birds and pollinators and improve water quality, carbon storage and climate resilience.

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: Telling Stories of BIPOC Nature Connection to Theodore Wirth Park

Activity Budget: \$242,000

Activity Description:

Current histories of TWP and outdoor activities prioritized within Loppet Foundation focus on values of white middle to upper class residents. With partners, we are in the process of gathering stories of connection to nature and TWP from voices within communities of color and lower income residents through interviews, focus groups, and community research. In this proposed activity, we will tell these stories of challenge, opportunity, and justice through the following. An interpretive traveling exhibit that includes 25 pieces of art that models, illustrates, or augment stories produced by North Minneapolis artisans. The exhibit will also include three audio/video displays of a multi-media mini-documentary series summarizing project stories and curricular elements. The whole exhibit will cohere to illustrate overarching stories and themes. This indoor exhibit will be housed in Theodore Wirth Park at the Trailhead Adventure Center and will travel for special events and programs to other North Minneapolis community centers. This indoor exhibit will be complemented by outdoor displays in Wirth Park and other North Minneapolis green spaces, and along Plymouth Avenue in North Minneapolis. A committee of partners from the North Minneapolis community will advise Loppet on selection of artisans to produce these exhibits and displays.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Planning begins for community advisory groups, exhibits, and events	September 30, 2024
Community advisory groups commissioned to review story content and guide hiring of artisans and contractors.	December 31, 2024
Contractors and Artisans Commissioned to Produce Storytelling Products	June 30, 2025
Initial indoor exhibit unveiled at Trailhead in Theodore Wirth Park	December 31, 2025
Outdoor interpretive signs and art installed in parks and along Plymouth Ave.	May 31, 2026
Travelling indoor exhibit visits 6 community centers with events and programming	August 31, 2026

Activity 2: Connecting North Minneapolis Youth to Green Space and Theodore Wirth Park

Activity Budget: \$214,700

Activity Description:

Through listening to partners and their stories, Loppet is currently developing a 21st century environmental education curriculum based on the values of north Minneapolis residents to foster a sense of belonging, nature connectedness, and environmental stewardship. In this project activity, we will work with partners to implement this curriculum in TWP, in other North Minneapolis green spaces, and in civic hubs including schools and community centers. We will implement a combination of programs, indoor/outdoor interpretive exhibits, and community events that feature stories, storytellers, interpretive media, and art contributed by North Minneapolis residents. These programs will be delivered by Loppet staff and pathways leaders (see Activity 3) and offered on a year-round basis with additional capacity during the summer season with green spaces are most heavily utilized. Programs will be delivered in partnership with other community organizations. Each programs will be offered as both four and eight-module series to build depth of connection and commitment.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
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Planning and partnerships begin for delivery of 2025-26 four-season youth and family programs with community groups.	September 30, 2024
Summer programs delivered to 24 partner organizations	August 31, 2025
Three-season programs delivered to 24 partner organizations	May 31, 2026
Summer programs delivered to 24 new and 24 existing partner organizations	August 31, 2026

Activity 3: 3. Developing a Pathway of Future Environmental Leaders from the N. Minneapolis Community

Activity Budget: \$240,300

Activity Description:

The activities above build on 15 years of Loppet youth programs in North Minneapolis public elementary and middle schools. We will partner with neighborhood high schools, community centers, and University of Minnesota to start an outdoor adventure and environmental leadership club for high school and college students, and young adults. The goal will be to deepen nature connection and build paid opportunities for the next generation of leaders to add their stories and experience to the legacy of Minneapolis parks. We will offer 6 to 12 (depending on experience of students, hourly rate, and cost of benefits) paid semester-long positions for undergraduate and graduate students to participate as pathways leaders working with Loppet staff and partners to implement the activities outlined in this grant. We will also offer 8 positions for summer camp counsellors for high school students. All of these positions will be hired prioritizing demographic backgrounds and residence representing the North Minneapolis community. These leaders will also participate in an help lead a weekly outdoor pathways program designed to connect high school age youth and young adults from Minneapolis’ Northside with opportunities for nature connection, mindfulness, embodied practice, and environmental justice.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Weekly Northside Pathways outdoor education and leadership events begin for Northside high schoolers and young adults	December 31, 2024
First year academic year Northside Pathways interns assist with development of project activities	May 31, 2025
First year Northside Pathways summer interns and camp counsellors lead summer programs	August 31, 2025
Second year Northside Pathways academic year interns deliver winter programming and events	May 31, 2026
First year Northside Pathways summer interns and camp counsellors lead summer programs	August 31, 2026

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Ryan Atwell	NatureWerks	Consultant	Yes
Anne Olson	Loppet Foundation	Grant Administrator	No
Vusumusi Zulu	Black Storytellers Alliance	Black Storytellers Alliance has developed a local storytelling mentorship program developed. Through this program, a team of storytellers from the North Minneapolis community will mentor youth, young adults and families in telling stories of connection to Wirth Park and urban green space through programs, events, and exhibits.	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 ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

This is a community education- and outreach-based project, and as such, sharing stories with the local community is inherent in project goals and outcomes that are designed to be viewed and appreciated by as many park users and community members as possible. Loppet's development and communications teams will work to publicize all project activities and objectives through online, news, and social media avenues. Loppet currently has a network of partners throughout North Minneapolis and the Twin Cities Metro area. All project activities and objectives of this project will be shared with project partners through direct phone and email communications as well as social media tags. Initial phases of this project to collect stories and analyze common themes and illustrative details have also built a network of local community stakeholders invested in and excited about the subsequent environmental education and storytelling phases of this project that would be funded by the LCCMR. This network of stakeholders will also be notified of all project outcomes and asked to share them with their contacts, including through social media tags. The mentor-based approach of this project aims to involve youth leaders that will in turn communicate with and activate their own networks to further disseminate project products.

This project will acknowledge the ENRTF in all project communications and outreach – including press releases, media interactions, signs, installations, publications, exhibits, event advertisements & invitations, websites, newsletters, printed materials, presentations, programs, and social media. Acknowledgement will be made through use of the ENRTF logo where appropriate on physical or media products, as well as verbally as part of programs, presentations, and events, and/or by tagging the ENRTF on social media.

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?

This grant is part of an ongoing project with multiple sources of funding. North Minneapolis partners are gathering stories through interviews, focus groups, and community research. Prior to the activities outlined in this grant application, this data will be archived and analyzed, and key themes and illustrative stories will be presented to partners for feedback and incorporated into existing curricula. The activities in this grant will provide permanent interpretive resources, grow public interest, and help usher programs and leadership opportunities through development stages. We will seek funding for term personnel hired through this grant to continue over time.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Community Engagement Coordinator, \$60,000 + 25% Benefits (\$15,000) = \$75,000 / FTE x 2 years.		Lead team of community partners. Work with Loppet staff and partners to publicize project events and installations. Work with partners to manage all multimedia stories of connection to nature and North Minneapolis green spaces. Curate design and installation of exhibits. Organize community events and partnerships. Co-lead programs with education coordinator and pathways leaders. Mentor pathways leaders.			25%	2		\$150,000
Education Coordinator, \$60,000 + 25% Benefits (\$15,000) = \$75,000 / FTE x 2 years.		Work with partners to deliver curriculum and organize multi-stage outdoor-indoor educational opportunities for North Minneapolis youth and families to connect with nature in Theodore Wirth Park and North Minneapolis parks and community centers. Co-lead these programs. Oversee the future leaders pathways program including assisting in hiring and supervising paid high school, undergraduate, and graduate employees. Lead once a week programs for the larger pathways community.			25%	2		\$150,000
Northside Pathways - Undergraduate/Graduate Internships (rate determined by experience, may include some tuition or other benefits); 1-2 positions for two years.		Work with Education Coordinator and partner organizations or to deliver outdoor-indoor programming to North Minneapolis youth, families, and community groups throughout the busy summer season. Mentor high school pathways participants. Assist in leading weekly pathways events.			0%	1		\$63,100
Northside Pathways - Summer High School Camp Nature Counsellors, 10 weeks, 40 hrs/wk, \$16/hr =		Work with Education Coordinator and other Loppet Staff to deliver nature and stories curriculum to North Minneapolis youth through Loppet Adventures summer camps. Assist with other programs and events. Assist in leading weekly pathways events.			0%	1.54		\$51,200

\$6400 x 4 positions x 2 years.									
								Sub Total	\$414,300
Contracts and Services									
NatureWerks Environmental Education, Sociology, and Project Management Services	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Work with staff and partners to hold project vision. With partners, craft multimedia stories from previous stages of project that collected stories through interviews and community research. Assist in supervision and mentorship of project coordinators and pathways leaders to implement stories into existing curriculum and new exhibits, programs, events.				0			\$122,500
Black Storytellers Alliances and Other Storytellers TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	In collaboration with a local storytelling mentorship program developed by Black Storytellers Alliance, we will contract a team of storytellers to mentor pathways participants in telling stories of connection to Theodore Wirth Park and Minneapolis environments and greens spaces. Stories will be presented through programs, events, and exhibits				0			\$20,000
TBD - Multi-Media Radio and Videography	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Project stories will be told through multimedia radio and videography through a mini-documenaries series summarizing project stories and curricular elements for display online, through social media, and through podcasts, as well as on display via three video screens (see equipment budget) as part of exhibits.				0			\$35,000
TBD - Outdoor nature education stations (5 stations at \$5000 per station)	Professional or Technical Service Contract	These outdoor nature education installations will present different aspects of our curriculum in ways that inspire community connection and engagement through stories, science, and art. Each will include an outdoor sculpture component contracted through a competitive proposal from a local artist from North Minneapolis.				0			\$25,000
TBD - Interpretive Art for Exhibit (25 pieces at \$450 per piece)	Sub award	Local artisans from North Minneapolis will have the opportunity to apply to tell stories through a piece of interpretive artwork that models, illustrates, or augments a part of our stories. Successful applicants will be matched				0			\$11,200

		with a sub-story so that the whole exhibit coheres to illustrate overarchings stories and themes.						
TBD - Professional Designer	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Professional design for the following. A storyboard creating consistent design themes for all aspects of the project. Using materials provided by staff and partners, design interpretive signage for installations and exhibits. Design publications and flyers for events, exhibits, installations. Design elements of Plymouth Avenue street art project.				0		\$25,000
							Sub Total	\$238,700
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Outdoor interpretive signs	Interpretive signs for display in Theodore Wirth Park and other North Minneapolis parks that facilitate connections between users and elements of green space in keeping with project curriculum, themes, and stories.					\$12,000
	Tools and Supplies	Art supplies for youth nature & art programming	As part of events, camps, and programs, youth will contribute stories to exhibits through literary and visual art.					\$2,000
	Tools and Supplies	Plymouth Avenue nature connection street art	Production and fabrication materials for connections to nature signage and street art project along Plymouth Ave through North Minneapolis from Theodore Wirth Park to the Mississippi River.					\$20,000
	Equipment	Audio/video portable interpretive displays (2 LED digital displays at \$5000/display)	To present multimedia stories of nature connection as part of traveling exhibit.	X				\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$44,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-

Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$697,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies		Audio/video portable interpretive displays (2 LED digital displays at \$5000/display)	Interactive narratives interpretive display of nature connection via audio and video storytelling, used in a portable kiosk-type display for digital signage interpretation.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
Cash	Age-Friendly Minnesota Community Grant	To create an action plan to fully realize our mission - connecting people to the outdoors through experiences that grow community. The plan will help expand Loppet Foundation engagement with and offerings to older adults in Hennepin County, with a focus on access to green space in North Minneapolis where we reside.	Secured	\$70,000
Cash	Hennepin County Community Violence Prevention Services	To implement youth programming at Loppet Foundation focussed on outdoor adventure, nature connection, environmental justice, mindfulness and healing, embodied practice, leadership, and teamwork. This funding will be used to implement after school and summer programs for North Minneapolis youth.	Secured	\$175,000
Cash	Hennepin County Equipment Grant	Donation of youth cross-country ski equipment for use in Loppet Adventures programming.	Secured	\$5,000
			State Sub Total	\$250,000
Non-State				
Cash	Private Donor	Funding to purchase youth bicycles for a mobile bike fleet for use by Loppet Adventures after school programs, community programs, and summer camps.	Secured	\$35,000
In-Kind	Volunteers	Average 1500 volunteer hours logged for Loppet Adventures after school and community youth and family programs. (1500 hours x volunteer rate of \$29.95/hr)	Secured	\$44,925
In-Kind	Private Donors	Private donations designated for Loppet Adventures programming	Secured	\$20,000
In-Kind	Corporate sponsors and private donations	Additional staff support from Loppet Adventures Director (0.05FTE), and Accounting (0.03FTE)	Secured	\$20,000
In-Kind	Loppet Foundation	Use of great hall at Trailhead for workshops and events	Secured	\$6,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$125,925
			Funds Total	\$375,925

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [e9af4c83-7ab.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

North Minneapolis Nature Connection Project Visual...

Financial Capacity

File: [6e2afa91-45c.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Signed Letter from Board	76057516-faf.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
UMN IonE Letter of Support	296ebd5b-62f.pdf
UMN UROC Letter of Support	2828eea8-71d.pdf
Black Storytellers Alliance Letter of Support	489a89aa-db3.pdf
Minneapolis Park & Rec Board Env. Ed Letter of Support	d10b4c58-093.pdf
E. Hall STEM Academy Letter of Support	fb1c12c4-277.pdf
NatureWerks Letter of Support	f2ff05c2-00d.pdf

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

We made several small changes to the budget and outcomes in order to match the \$91K difference between the original proposal of \$788K and the awarded amount of \$697K. These include: 1) change salaries for community engagement and education coordinators; 2) combine and scale back funding available for summer and academic year graduate and undergraduate interns; 3) reduce hourly rate of summer high school camp counsellors; 4) reduce number of outdoor education stations from 7 to 5; 5) reduce commissioned pieces of art in exhibit from 30 to 25; 6) scale back budget for radio and video, graphic design, and digital displays; 7) remove line items for tablets, brochures, equipment and supplies, and printing; and 8) scale back new community groups receiving environmental education programming each year from 28 to 24.

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?

N/A

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

No

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

N/A

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

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

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

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes