# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2024-091

**Proposal Title:** Restoring Land, Reviving Heritage: Indigenous Conservation-Phase Two

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Hannah Smith

**Organization:** Belwin Conservancy

**Office Telephone:** (651) 478-9075

**Email:** hannah.smith@belwin.org

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** This project will restore healthy ecosystems and Indigenous cultural practices. Through expanded programming for preK-12th grade, urban Native students and families will reestablish enduring connections to land and culture.

**Funds Requested:** $765,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2027

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Environmental Education (C)

## Project Location

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

Region(s): Metro

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

Region(s): Metro

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Narrative

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

Belwin protects 1,500 acres of land in Afton, the ancestral home of the Wahpekute Dakota people, and reaches 200,000 people annually through programs, partnerships, and trails. Anishinabe Academy is a pre-K-5 Minneapolis Public School providing Dakota and Ojibwe culture and language enrichment for over 250 students.

Many urban Indigenous students have lost their connection to nature and traditional foodways and do not have a place outside of the city to practice and learn this aspect of their culture. Anishinabe Academy and Belwin have partnered to establish an education site to address this gap.

The site hosts four distinct habitats, creating an ideal setting for environmental education, cultural teaching, gardening, and habitat restoration that partners Belwin's experts with Indigenous knowledge. This program uses environmental education as an avenue to reconnect Anishinabe Academy students to Indigenous culture and nature, while establishing cooperative care for sensitive habitats.

After several years of this partnership, we see a growth opportunity. Additional urban Indigenous schools and programs are seeking connection to land, food, and medicine outside of the city. We can meet that need by expanding the program beyond elementary students and beyond one school, providing a place for deepened community connection to nature.

**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 will deepen both organizations' knowledge of land management while restoring an ecologically significant area, providing environmental education to pre-K-12 students, and recovering this urban Indigenous community's access to nature.

In phase one, we established a site for pre-K-5 environmental education, traditional Indigenous teaching led by Native Elders, and cultural family programming. We also brought together Belwin's restoration experts and Indigenous restoration professionals to implement initial habitat restoration informed by both.

Piloted curriculum includes studying the ecological and cultural significance of:

-Impacts of bison on the prairie ecosystem, alongside Dakota and Ojibwe teachings
-Soil health for growing plant medicines and traditional Indigenous foods
-Water systems, specifically the St. Croix river and other MN waterways

Phase two will continue the established program and expand it to include other urban Indigenous-based schools and youth programs, including 6-12th graders. Expansion will also include hiring another staff member to focus on education programming and coordinate with new partners, increasing the number of field trips and events at the site, and continuing to build summer programming. This increased use of the site will include cultivating mentorship of elementary students by older students and provide a connection to cultural tradition for a wider community.

**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, we are restoring an ecologically significant area of land, while fostering multi-generational environmental stewardship and restoration of Indigenous culture.

If funded, phase two of 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 urban Native communities and Belwin with the goal of long-term care of the land and water

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Anishinabe Academy Education Partnership

**Activity Budget:** $418,496

**Activity Description:**
Students, families and community members from Anishinabe Academy and other urban Native schools will participate in Native-led programming at Belwin. Programming will expand to include students preK-12th grade, and will focus on land management techniques, Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge, Native gardening practices, ecology, astronomy, and Indigenous traditions tied to the land. Collaborative programming will include curriculum designed by local Indigenous ecology experts, Dakota and Ojibwe language experts, elders and educators, and Anishinabe Academy teaching staff. 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 entire prairie ecosystem. Another example is the assessment of the health of the soil and water before introducing sacred plant medicines and a Three Sisters garden to the site.

Curriculum experts at Anishinabe Academy have tied these lessons to MN state science, math, and social studies standards and incorporate them into yearly curriculum in the classroom. We will continue to measure outcomes through teacher assessment 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 |
|---|---|
| Program expanded to include 6-12th graders attending other urban Native schools | June 30, 2025 |
| Students will demonstrate understanding of habitat concepts: e.g. native vs. invasive species, soil/water | June 30, 2026 |
| Students will meet MN science standards while studying Bison, natural resources and prairie ecosystem | June 30, 2026 |
| Families will participate in family events focused on Native garden installation and restoration efforts. | June 30, 2027 |
| High School-aged student mentors will lead Native ecology/gardening activities with elementary aged students | June 30, 2027 |

### Activity 2: Habitat Enhancement

**Activity Budget:** $331,504

**Activity Description:**
This parcel was severely degraded with a high density of buckthorn and other invasive species. Initial habitat restoration has already started thanks to previous funding by the ENRTF. Phase two of restoration will include enhancements to promote biodiversity and reduce erosion into Valley Creek and the downstream St. Croix River.

The floodplain forest work includes planting 1,000 shrubs and selecting specific shrubs to create eco patches. Eco patches are a 10x10 foot square with native plants and shrubs fenced to deter deer browsing. We will solarize the soil before installation to kill any invasive species in the eco patches.

We will enhance the upland prairie through interseeding and planting plugs, and conduct a prescribed burn in the final year of the grant. We will interseed grasses and forbs along the woodland edge, and plant plugs of species that are difficult to source or grow from seed. We will plant native trees and shrubs around the outer edge of the woodland to provide a wildlife buffer around the site.

Throughout the site, we will apply herbicide and mow each year to control invasive species regrowth. All plantings and seeding throughout the site will include culturally significant and desirable native species.

**Activity Milestones:**

| Description | Approximate Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Site prep for Eco patches in Forested Floodplain | October 31, 2025 |
| Eco patches and bare root shrubs installed in the forested floodplain | October 31, 2026 |
| Frost inter-seeding in woodland edge and prairie | December 31, 2026 |
| Prairie plugs installed | June 30, 2027 |
| Follow-up prairie and woodland treatments and invasive species removal | June 30, 2027 |

## Activity 3: Valley Creek Stream Restoration Assessment

**Activity Budget:** $15,000

**Activity Description:**
The exceptional habitat of Valley Creek has been identified in Minnesota's State Wildlife Action Plan as a "Key River Reach." Valley Creek is one the few trout streams within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area that has a naturally reproducing population of brook trout, one of two trout species native to Minnesota. In addition, Valley Creek sustains large populations of brown and rainbow trout. Valley Creek's trout populations maintain themselves through natural reproduction. The Valley Creek watershed is home to more than 20 endangered, threatened, and special concern species, including the American brook lamprey, the hooded warbler, Blanding's turtle, and Karner blue butterfly. The creek also appears to be home to a species of cranefly (genus Phantolabis) previously undescribed by science. Valley Creek outlets into the St. Croix River, one of the world's premier mussel habitats with 41 different species identified.

The stretch of Valley Creek that runs through the site is degraded, with consequences for downstream water quality and flowage into the St. Croix River. Before embarking on larger stream restoration efforts, we will contract with an environmental engineering firm to do a full assessment of stream stability, agency requirements, permitting needs, and environmental review needs.

**Activity Milestones:**

| Description | Approximate Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Stream restoration evaluation and assessment complete | September 30, 2025 |

## Project Partners and Collaborators

| Name | Organization | Role | Receiving Funds |
|---|---|---|---|
| Laura Sullivan, Principal | Anishinabe Academy | Anishinabe Academy is a Minneapolis Pubic 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 continue expanding it with this program. | Yes |

## 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?**
Education programs with Anishinabe Academy and other schools and programs will continue for the long-term. After programs are firmly established, they will be funded by the school and other grantors, including private foundations and state and federal funds available for Indigenous-focused public school programming.

Together with Anishinabe Academy and Indigenous partners, Belwin will continue to manage the restored land to maintain appropriate plant diversity and low occurrence of invasive species. We will seek grant funding for additional restoration enhancements. Long-term maintenance of the land will be absorbed into Belwin's annual budget.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

| Name | Appropriation | Amount Awarded |
|---|---|---|
| Restoring Land, Reviving Heritage: Conservation Through Indigenous Culture | M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 05f | $420,000 |

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Hannah Smith

**Job Title:** Program Coordinator

**Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.**
Hannah Smith joined Belwin Conservancy as Program Coordinator in January 2021. In her 7-year career in education and nonprofit program management, she has focused her work on coordinating unique partnerships and developing programming for Indigenous youth and adult immigrants and refugees. Hannah has successfully managed grant projects funded by private foundations, individuals, and State agencies in her work at an education nonprofit. Along with project partners, she has created and grown education programs that focus on incorporating state standards into specialized curriculum and environmental education programs for Indigenous communities. She will manage this project in close collaboration with Belwin's Executive Director, Belwin's Operations Director, an experienced land and restoration manager, Belwin's Program Director, and in close partnership with Anishinabe Academy and Indigenous community partners.

**Organization:** Belwin Conservancy

**Organization Description:**
Belwin Conservancy's mission is to inspire connection and engagement with the natural world. For over 50 years, we have been committed to protecting wild spaces and connecting people to nature. Together with our most long-standing partner, Saint Paul Public Schools, Belwin serves approximately 10,000 3rd and 5th grade students each year for hands-

on outdoor science studies.

Belwin owns nearly 1,500 acres of land in the Valley Creek and St. Croix River watersheds. Belwin models best practices in conservation and works to protect the watershed through restoration on our own holdings and educating private landowners about best practices in managing land.

Belwin provides 9 miles of open hiking trails and also offers community programs focused on natural history, ecology, and the integration of the arts, culture, and ecology. Belwin's organizational partners include the Minnesota Land Trust, Minnesota Astronomical Society, NorthStar Bison, Anishinabe Academy, American Indian Family Center, local youth athletic clubs, and Saint Paul Public Schools.

Belwin Conservancy is a 501(c)3 funded through a combination of grants, individual donations, earned income, and endowment. Belwin is located in Washington County in the towns of West Lakeland and Afton, MN.

## Budget Summary

| Category / Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Purpose | Gen. Ineligible | % Benefits | # FTE | Classified Staff? | $ Amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Personnel** | | | | | | | | |
| Land Assistant/Specialist | | Land restoration | | | 15% | 0.45 | | $18,420 |
| Operations Director | | Oversee and conduct habitat restoration | | | 22% | 0.3 | | $3,330 |
| Program Director | | Oversee Program Manager and Program Coordinator | | | 18% | 0.15 | | $14,913 |
| Program Manager | | Manage contracting processes, development of education program, and grant administration | | | 20% | 3 | | $209,508 |
| Program Coordinator | | Coordinate partnerships and programming with urban Native schools | | | 20% | 3 | | $158,029 |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **$404,200** |
| **Contracts and Services** | | | | | | | | |
| TBD | Professional or Technical Service Contract | Restoration Enhancement activities in the Woodland, Forested Floodplain and Prairie Sections: long-term forest heath management, buckthorn removal maintenance and indigenous method of seeding/planting upkeep with culturally specific plant materials. Ongoing prairie maintenance and introduction of culturally significant and ecologically appropriate plant material. | | | | 1.5 | | $205,000 |
| TBD | Professional or Technical Service Contract | Indigenous elders and experts from the greater Native community in the Twin Cities, with localized Traditional Ecological Knowledge, to run specialized ecology programming year-round (Dakota star storytelling, etc.) | | | | 0.3 | | $15,000 |
| TBD | Professional or Technical Service Contract | Valley Creek Restoration - Stream assessment to monitor stream health and assess restoration work needed. | | | | 0.1 | | $15,000 |
| Dream of Wild Health | Sub award | Elders and ecological specialists will share Ojibwe and Dakota cultural and language teachings accompanying environmental education curriculum during field trips year-round. This is | | | | 0.3 | | $6,500 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | single source because of the specialized Indigenous knowledge held by the staff. | | | | | | |
| NĀTIFs - Indigenous Food Lab Staff | Sub award | Staff includes Native experts on food sovereignty and preserving Indigenous foodways. They will implement Indigenous garden/ecology programming at site with Anishinabe Academy and other Indigenous MPS students year-round. This is single source because of the specialized Indigenous knowledge held by the staff. | | | | 0.6 | | $15,000 |
| Anishinabe Academy | Sub award | Anishinabe Academy and MPS teaching staff to facilitate summer learning, field trips, and community events year round. 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. | | | | 1.5 | | $20,000 |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **$276,500** |
| **Equipment, Tools, and Supplies** | | | | | | | | |
| | Tools and Supplies | Sanitation Equipment for field trip use (biffs) | Year round contract for 1 regular and 1 ADA unit, plus winterization, for a total of 3 years. | | | | | $16,100 |
| | Tools and Supplies | Materials for culturally significant food preservation and Indigenous seed keeping techniques (Collection bags, material to weave baskets for prairie seed collection, racks for drying herbs/medicines/foods, kettle for making Cedar tea, etc.) | Introduce Indigenous food ways and preservation skills, using culturally appropriate materials and techniques, alongside environmental education curriculum | | | | | $3,000 |
| | Equipment | Rental tiller for garden | Till and install garden. Would rent for one day each year for two years. | | | | | $1,200 |
| | 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 |
| | Tools and Supplies | Culturally significant ecology programming supplies | Commonly used Indigenous materials and objects to enrich ecological programming to teach about past and present cultural practices in Ojibwe and Dakota traditions (Beading for constellation projects, leather for drums, etc.) | | | | | $5,000 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Equipment | Outdoor education supplies - Sit upons / folding chairs and/or moveable benches for site | Equipment to create movable outdoor learning spaces for talking circles and ecology lessons, in absence of formal building on the program site | | | | | $1,500 |
| | Tools and Supplies | STEAM Technology Devices - Classroom sets | Telescopes to be used in lessons on Dakota star storytelling; Handheld cameras + GPS devices for site exploration, plant identification, and photo point documentation | | | | | $10,000 |
| | Equipment | Snow gear for students | Extra snow boots, hats/mittens, and coats for students without access to cold weather gear during winter programming and ecology lessons | | | | | $5,000 |
| | Equipment | Snowshoes | Traditional transportation method for foraging in winter months (Estimated $120.00 per pair; 40 pairs) | | | | | $4,800 |
| | Tools and Supplies | Solar-powered lights ($75 per light for a total of 4 lights) | Lights for increased safety and security during evening outdoor activities | | | | | $300 |
| | Tools and Supplies | Rain collection system, including barrels, and hoses to mitigate lack of water access near garden site | Rain collection system to provide water source for Native gardens and plant medicines | | | | | $2,000 |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **$53,400** |
| **Capital Expenditures** | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **-** |
| **Acquisitions and Stewardship** | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **-** |
| **Travel In Minnesota** | | | | | | | | |
| | Other | Buses for students and families ($475/bus per trip. 20 trips per year for three years.) | Field trip transportation from Anishinabe Academy to Belwin Conservancy for environmental education field trips and cultural family events. | | | | | $28,500 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Other | Travel for presentations and site visits to community partners | Program Coordinator mileage for visits to Indigenous community partners for education programming planning sessions. | | | | | $300 |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **$28,800** |
| **Travel Outside Minnesota** | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **-** |
| **Printing and Publication** | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **-** |
| **Other Expenses** | | | | | | | | |
| | | Minnesota Indian Educator's Association (MIEA) conference presenter's fee ($350 per conference attendee, two attendees per year; one conference per year) | Annual state-wide conference to present to fellow Indigenous educators about project findings and shareable learning models. | | | | | $2,100 |
| | | | | | | | **Sub Total** | **$2,100** |
| | | | | | | | **Grand Total** | **$765,000** |

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

| Category/Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request |
|---|---|---|---|

## Non ENRTF Funds

| Category | Specific Source | Use | Status | Amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **State** | | | | |
| | | | **State Sub Total** | **-** |
| **Non-State** | | | | |
| In-Kind | Belwin Conservancy | Admin costs associated with running this program. One staff at 3% FTE for 3 years. | Secured | $14,800 |
| In-Kind | Anishinabe Academy | Admin costs associated with running this program. Two staff at 2% FTE for 2 years. | Secured | $10,000 |
| In-Kind | Anishinabe Academy | Curriculum Development. One staff at 3% FTE for 2 years. | Secured | $6,300 |
| In-Kind | Anishinabe Academy | Licensed Teachers to supervise field trips and do classroom instruction. Four staff at 5% FTE for 2 years. | Secured | $42,800 |
| In-Kind | Anishinabe Academy | Food for field trips and family events. Provided out of general operating money from the school or through another grant if secured. | Secured | $5,000 |
| Cash | Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community | Curriculum development for Anishinabe Academy field trips and culturally significant materials for classroom work. | Potential | $10,000 |
| Cash | Minneapolis Educator Leadership Grant | Supplementing cost of field trips, program supplies, and instruction experts. | Potential | $10,000 |
| | | | **Non State Sub Total** | **$98,900** |
| | | | **Funds Total** | **$98,900** |

## 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 | 18 | 0.12 | $220,000 | Private | Parcel would stay under Belwin Conservancy ownership. | In Progress |
| **Totals** | | | | **18** | **0.12** | **$220,000** | | | |

## 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 four main categories: streambed, floodplain forest, prairie, and woodland edge.

The streambed 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 summary of how stream restoration could achieve our goals of improving the overall stream habitat.

The floodplain forest was heavily dominated by buckthorn up until 2023 when it was mowed with a forestry mower. We are currently in the first phase of restoration (funded by ENRTF) and will complete this initial restoration by June 30, 2024. Phase two of restoration will focus on habitat enhancement that includes promoting an understory of southern terrace forest shrubs, grasses, sedges, and forbs, and culturally significant plants that are ecologically appropriate. We plan to install eco patches, which consist of a 10x10 foot square with a native tree or shrub in the middle, surrounded by native plantings or seeding. To create an opening and control the invasive reed canary grass, we will install solar mats on top of the patch to solarize and kill the reed canary grass before planting. Planned enhancements to the understory will include planting native trees and shrubs to take the place of the buckthorn, and monitoring new plants for deer browse and invasive competition. We will continue to manage buckthorn in this area with spot herbicide treatments of any woody invasive regrowth.

Expected outcomes for restoration of the woodland area are:

- 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

Prairie restoration work will be tailored to the site's newly installed prairie that will have only two seasons to grow before this grant period begins. During each growing season, we will complete mowings and targeted herbicide sprays as needed to control invasive species that attempt to establish in the new prairie. When the prairie is more well-established near the end of the grant period, we plan to complete a prescribed burn and install prairie plugs to augment and enhance the overall restoration. For the plugs, we will choose culturally significant plants and plants that typically have a harder time growing from seed or are difficult to source or purchase as seed.

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

Woodland edge habitat surrounds the prairie in the uplands. We will remove some hazard trees and thin the canopy where needed to allow for better regeneration of desirable species. Restoration will also include planting new trees to

fill gaps and create a wildlife buffer between our program site and neighboring properties. We will apply herbicide to both woody and herbaceous invasives to control regrowth. The project work will be complete with a frost interseeding along the woodland edge to promote shade tolerant woodland understory species.

Belwin Conservancy has land management plans for all of our nearly 1,500 acres. These plans are based on the needs of each parcel and are reviewed periodically and before any major restoration project. 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 needed restoration enhancements and ongoing maintenance.

**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 52-year track record of managing our lands back to health.

After restoration enhancements on this parcel are 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 initial restoration and restoration enhancements, 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 endowment. A healthy native landscape requires less care than a non-native landscape, and that stability 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 testing water and soil quality. Students and staff at Anishinabe Academy will complete basic water and soil quality testing, and may also add other measurements 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 we do for other areas of our land. We will select 1-3 photos points within the management unit, mark them with a 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 in the area, 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.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

*Map*

File: e94c0857-b39.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 small map shows the program site....

*Financial Capacity*

File: 7b3f20cc-3fd.pdf

*Board Resolution or Letter*

| Title | File |
|---|---|
| Belwin Conservancy Board Letter & Resolution | 5b00d3f6-533.pdf |

### Optional Attachments

*Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

| Title | File |
|---|---|
| Division of Indian Work Letter of Support | cf6b29a6-56f.pdf |
| Anishinabe Academy Letter of Support | 6a79c8d9-556.pdf |
| Minneapolis Public Schools - Superintendent Letter of Support | 87df71fe-8bd.pdf |

## Administrative Use

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

Yes: Restoration,

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

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 design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing $10,000 or more?**

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?**

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