



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-103

Proposal Title: Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew Program

Project Manager Information

Name: Brian Miller

Organization: Conservation Corps Minnesota

Office Telephone: (651) 209-9900

Email: brian.miller@conservationcorps.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew Program, developed in partnership with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, provides environmental education and workforce development opportunities for Indigenous young adults.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$712,000

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): NE

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

Region(s): NE

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.

The Fond du Lac (FDL) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI) are engaging in innovative and culturally relevant ways to prepare younger generations to take care of the Tribal communities, including tribal-owned and ceded lands. There is a great need for more opportunities geared towards indigenous young adults that are centered on environmental stewardship and education, as well as (re)connection to the land, culture, and community. This urgent push for more young adults entering the conservation and natural resources field is fueled in part by the upcoming retirement of many tribal resource management staff, who are seeking to mentor the next generation of land stewards in order to ensure the continuation of current management plans and to carry that knowledge base forward to future generations. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, 19% of FDL community members are living in poverty and 14.1% of the community is unemployed. These statistics highlight the need for creating job opportunities for young adults in the FDL community, via culturally relevant programming, that allows them to gain experience and confidence in the natural resources field while also providing employment that aids them in building economic security.

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.

With the responsibility of stewardship and the health of future generations in mind, CCMI has partnered with FDL to develop the Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin (Starting out in Earth Conservation) Conservation Crew Program. This program creates opportunities for indigenous young adults to work with current Tribal Resource Management professionals to gain valuable experience and skills, preparing them for future careers in the natural resources field and as the next generation of stewards in their community.

The program engages indigenous young adults (ages 18 - 30) through place-based experiential environmental education promoting an ethic of stewardship through culturally and community-focused programming. The crew serves on projects that aim to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance tribal air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other relatives through locally led conservation efforts that support and respect Tribal sovereignty and cultural knowledge.

The program's pilot year (2023) was incredibly successful with 3 crew members obtaining jobs with FDL Resource Management after completing the program. There is also a strong possibility of partnering with other Ojibwe Bands and Tribal Nations in Minnesota who have shown interest in bringing this program to their reservation and adapting it to fit their specific community needs.

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?

The Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew Program provides training that will increase participants' knowledge and skills to restore and maintain a healthy and biodiverse natural environment. The program is designed to cultivate an enduring action-based conservation ethic through the integration of traditional knowledge, nature immersion, and best management practices in the field. The objectives of educating the next generation about the Great Lakes ecosystem, and protecting and restoring species of interest, align with FDL's Integrated Resource Management Plan.

Project outcomes will include a focus on aquatic and terrestrial invasive plant species measured by the number of acres treated and improved.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Crew Members Implement Natural Resource Management Activities on tribal lands and Ceded Territories

Activity Budget: \$712,000

Activity Description:

The main focus of the Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew program is to provide members with the training and education they need to not only pursue a career in the natural resources field, but also to become responsible stewards of the land where they live and recreate. The crew begins their 6-month term with 3 weeks of training to prepare them for a season of varied project work. Training includes Wildland Fire training, chainsaw operation and maintenance, herbicide use, wilderness first aid, hand tool operation, leadership skill development, interpersonal conflict, mental health first aid, Invasive plant ID, Leave No Trace, etc. Once the crew begins working on projects with FDL Resource Management staff, they continue their learning via educational opportunities that are interspersed into their project work weeks. These include visiting the Great Lakes aquarium and Lake Superior Reserve, attending the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's regional conference, visiting the Fond du Lac and Mille Lacs cultural museums, learning from FDL Resource Management staff about FDL Treaty Rights, college campus tours, FDL air quality monitoring tour, site tours of FDL's energy and sustainability initiatives, and attending FDL's wild ricing camp in the fall.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Crew attends and engages with FDL Ojibwe School Youth at Taking Care of Things Gathering	September 30, 2026
Participants attend and table at the Ganawenjigewin Maawanji'idiwin (Taking Care of Things Gathering)	September 30, 2026
1200 hours of environmental education and technical conservation skills training, over two years	June 30, 2027
Monitoring and restoring 100 acres of Wild Rice in St. Louis Estuary and FDL lakes	June 30, 2027
Monitoring and removal of terrestrial invasive species in 120 acres of FDL lands	June 30, 2027
Dedicate at a minimum 300 hours to aquatic invasive species prevention and surveillance activities	June 30, 2027
Provide participants with 1200 hours of environmental education and technical conservation skill training	June 30, 2027
Participants monitor and restore 100 acres of manoomin (Wild Rice)	June 30, 2027
Participants dedicate 300+ hours to aquatic invasive species prevention and surveillance activities	June 30, 2027
Participants monitor and remove terrestrial invasive species from 120 acres of FDL lands	June 30, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jody Karr	Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa	CCMI Grants Manager & Strategic Resource Development	Yes
Kelsey Taylor	Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Invasive Species Coordinator	No
Brian Miller	Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa	AmeriCorps Field Crew Program Director	Yes
Hillary Olsen	Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa	Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Field Crew Coordinator	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?

The Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Conservation Crew Program is based on the successful model created by the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, which began in New Mexico over 15 years ago and has continued to expand in the Southwest.

Ongoing efforts will be funded by leveraging CCMI's existing AmeriCorps funding; partnering with Tribal communities to apply for new AmeriCorps Native Nations grants; Bureau of Indian Affairs funding through the Gulf Lakes Restoration Initiative program, or Indian Youth Service Corps; private funding through Northland Foundation, Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, the Ordean Foundation, and the National Park Foundation.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Conservation Corps Veterans Service Corps Program	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 08b	\$1,339,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Brian Miller

Job Title: AmeriCorps Field Crew Programs Director

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Brian has been managing programs for over 20 years and has been involved in the planning and implementation of multiple partnerships including with FDL as well as multiple LCCMR projects. He has the knowledge, relationships and skills to effectively manage this project efficiently and effectively.

Organization: Conservation Corps Minnesota

Organization Description:

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and AmeriCorps grantee, engages hundreds of youth and young adults each year in programs and initiatives that improve access to outdoor recreation, restore natural habitat, protect waterways, and respond to community needs and natural disasters. Our mission is to engage youth and young adults in meaningful service, leadership development, and environmental stewardship while also intentionally striving to incorporate the values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into our systems and approach to programming.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Program Manager		Providing operational oversight; mentoring and supervision of Field Coordinator; outreach and relationship building w/ Tribal communities in MN; identifying and applying for funding supporting the program			13%	2		\$188,698
Field Coordinator		Providing direct supervision of participants, crew project work, crew cultural activities; leading and/or facilitating crew training			13%	2		\$118,880
							Sub Total	\$307,578
Contracts and Services								
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Fond du Lac Natural Resource Management staff will be providing training to the crew members, preparing projects, supervising project work on FDL Tribal lands, and reporting on project work outputs/outcomes.				0		\$90,000
Conservation Legacy - Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps Program (ALCC)	Professional or Technical Service Contract	The ALCC Senior Program Director will travel from New Mexico to Minnesota to provide training for CCMI staff and participants. Our program design is based on this program model.				0		\$1,969
							Sub Total	\$91,969
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Fleet vehicle fuel and maintenance @ \$5K per vehicle per year * 3 vehicles * 2 years	Fuel to operate vehicles and basic vehicle maintenance					\$30,000
	Tools and Supplies	Participant work clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) @ \$2629 in year 1; \$2707 in year 2	Garments appropriate for a variety of outdoor conditions, and PPE such as eye protection, ear protection, hard hat, gloves, work boots, etc.					\$5,336

	Tools and Supplies	Food and camp supplies @ \$7416 in year 1; \$7638 in year 2.	Used by participants when they camp near project sites for extended periods due to backcountry or hard-to-access project locations					\$15,054
	Tools and Supplies	Program hand tools and power tools @ \$5338 in year 1; \$5488 in year 2.	Tool caches used by Conservation Crews to complete a variety of natural resource management projects					\$10,826
	Tools and Supplies	Program awards and recognition @ \$1386.5 in year 1; \$1386.5 in year 2.	Outdoor gear and similar items presented to participants for special achievement and graduation					\$2,773
	Tools and Supplies	Marketing material @ \$1380 in year 1; \$1421 in year 2.	Marketing material for outreach and recruiting such as flyers, program information, post cards, logoed stickers etc.					\$2,801
							Sub Total	\$66,790
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
	Other	(Roundtrip airfare for one person = \$600) + (Lodging, 1 person * \$107/night * 6 nights = \$643) + (Per diem, 1 person * \$42/day * 7 days = \$174) + (rental car, 7 days = 500)	CCMI staff member shadowing Crew Member Training for one week with the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps in New Mexico (the program model we based our program on)	X				\$1,917
	Other	(Round trip airfare for one person = \$480) + (Lodging, 1 person * \$120/night * 3 nights = \$360) + (Per diem, 1 person * 4 days = \$168) + (Rental car, 4 days = \$261)	CCMI Program Manager flying from MN to AZ to attend a training offered by the Native Wellness Institute.	X				\$1,269
							Sub Total	\$3,186

Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
		Recruitment	Costs for publicizing program opportunities, fees for tabling at recruitment events					\$2,395
		Program participant training and development	Orientation, DOT health cards, 1st Aid, CPR, fees for events, etc.					\$20,492
		Program participant personnel expenses	Weekly stipend and benefits for 1 crew leader (6.5 months/year * 2 years) and 3 crew members (6 months/year * 2 years)					\$147,590
		Lease of fleet vehicles: 3 trucks each year @ \$36K/year (1 for Program Manager; 1 for Field Coordinator; 1 for the 4-person Conservation Crew)	Vehicles for travel to and from project sites and other program activities					\$72,000
							Sub Total	\$242,477
							Grand Total	\$712,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Travel Outside Minnesota	Other	(Roundtrip airfare for one person = \$600) + (Lodging, 1 person * \$107/night * 6 nights = \$643) + (Per diem, 1 person * \$42/day * 7 days = \$174) + (rental car, 7 days = 500)	Our program is based on the successful model of Conservation Legacy's Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps Program based in New Mexico. A peer exchange with the Ancestral Lands program would greatly help us strengthen our participant training strategies and content.
Travel Outside Minnesota	Other	(Round trip airfare for one person = \$480) + (Lodging, 1 person * \$120/night * 3 nights = \$360) + (Per diem, 1 person * 4 days = \$168) + (Rental car, 4 days = \$261)	CCMI is working to build cultural competency that will help us strengthen our relationship with the Fond du Lac community, as well as other Indigenous communities in MN. Training resources are hard to identify, so out of state travel is sometimes needed.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	AmeriCorps	Conservation Corps program operational expenses @ \$50K/year * 2 years.	Secured	\$100,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$100,000
			Funds Total	\$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$812,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [93018d07-c89.docx](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Map of Fond du Lac Reservation...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
CCMI Form 990	a69c9be5-604.pdf
CCMI Audit Report 2022	e97125fc-a53.pdf
CCMI Good Standing Document	e779573f-913.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
CCMI Board Resolution Letter	48ddc0eb-015.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
CCMI Impact Report 2022	90c4aa46-415.pdf
Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Crew in 2023	f15020c1-5eb.jpe
Maajii-akii-gikenjigewin Crew at Community Event	3d3488c1-18f.jpe
Letter of Support- FDL Resource Management- Kelsey Taylor	8852135e-01f.docx

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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")?

No

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Brian Miller, Hillary Olsen and Jody karr with Conservation Corps