



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-190

Proposal Title: Increase Native Tree Seedling Planting in Minnesota

Project Manager Information

Name: Carrie Nicklow

Organization: Let's Plant Trees

Office Telephone: (218) 663-1234

Email: carrie@letsplanttrees.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Let's Plant Trees will expand seedling distribution and planting efforts by quantity and region, expand education and collaboration activities, and facilitate volunteer tree planting projects across the state of Minnesota.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$128,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2027

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Methods to Protect or Restore Land, Water, and Habitat (F)

Project Location

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

Statewide

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

Statewide

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.

Climate change is negatively affecting forests across the state in several ways. First, climate change harms trees such as our own state tree, the red pine, which suffers due to unpredictable precipitation and the resulting drought. Secondly, climate change is exacerbating pest issues such as the spruce budworm and emerald ash borer, as our warming winters don't kill off as many pests. It also allows these pests to increase their geographical range. Lastly, all the above issues are creating additional wildfire risk across the state, due to a growing supply of dead and dying trees as fuel for wildfire.

By planting a diverse mix of native tree species that are predicted to withstand a changing climate, we can adapt to this dynamic and create more resilient forests for the future. Forest biodiversity enhances the health of the forest as the various species have different strengths and weaknesses and fill different roles in the ecosystem. A mix of species helps prevent the devastation that a monoculture can experience when a new pest emerges.

To mitigate these impacts that impair our forests, we need continuous education, collaboration, and planting activities supported by individuals, property owners, municipalities, and communities.

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.

Let's Plant Trees seeks funding to acquire additional native tree seedlings, to expand our educational efforts through the media and in schools, to upgrade our ability to store tree seedlings, and to create additional seedling distribution points across the state. Our goal is to facilitate the planting of 75,000 tree seedlings in 2029 (up from 3,500 in 2024).

By increasing quantities, we can negotiate better pricing with nurseries and buy more trees cost-effectively. A walk-in cooler would allow us to store greater quantities of seedlings for longer, thus expanding our distribution capabilities. Additional distribution points across the state will enhance our ability to quickly distribute live tree seedlings to a broader range of participants in different regions of the state.

Our educational efforts include staying current with the latest research on climate-ready tree species, collaborating with municipalities, schools, nonprofits, and other organizations, attending events such as Earth Day fairs, and supplying educational materials and sharing information on social media. We will help educate the public and property owners about the importance of biodiversity, reforestation, what types of trees to plant and where, and how to protect them after planting to ensure the best possible seedling survival rates.

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?

We will facilitate the planting of tens of thousands of tree seedlings annually, promoting and enhancing forest biodiversity, through a combination of community engagements, working with cities and counties, tree seedling giveaways, and volunteer planting projects. By planting native species that are expected to fare well in a changing climate, we are taking action to ensure healthy forests for future generations. Planting native trees directly supports the objectives of protecting, conserving, and enhancing Minnesota's natural resources. We hope that our efforts encourage individuals and communities to lead their own tree-planting initiatives as well.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Expand tree seedling acquisition and distribution to greater than 36,000 tree seedlings in spring 2027

Activity Budget: \$78,000

Activity Description:

Let's Plant Trees plans to implement a phased approach that increases tree seedlings acquired and distributed per year, aiming for 10,000+ seedlings in 2025, 24,000+ in 2026, and 36,000+ in 2027. Tree species sourced will focus on those native trees that based on current research are expected to do well in a changing climate, such as maples, oaks, and white pines, along with small quantities of trees such as red pine and jack pine, which are part of a diverse forest even if they might not fare as well in the future. We will negotiate significantly better pricing with nurseries and secure quantity discounts to maximize resources. We will enhance infrastructure, distribution capabilities and dormant seedling longevity by acquiring a used walk-in cooler by spring 2026 to ensure seedling storage capability. We will also utilize various communication channels such as local newspapers, radio, social media, and community groups to economically promote seedling giveaways and foster planting partnerships. This work will be supported by staff hired to assist with communications and coordination of seedling distribution. Of this \$78k, \$41k is for seedlings, \$22k is staffing costs, \$4k is supplies, and \$9k is for the cooler.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Approximate Completion Date |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Negotiate better pricing with nurseries to save at least 25% off current pricing | June 30, 2026 |
| Acquire a used walk-in cooler by spring 2026 to better store tree seedlings | June 30, 2026 |
| Expand tree seedling distribution to 24,000 planted statewide in spring 2026 | June 30, 2026 |
| Expand tree seedling distribution to 36,000 planted statewide in spring 2027 | June 30, 2027 |

Activity 2: Expand education and collaboration activities statewide to 40 cumulative projects by summer 2027

Activity Budget: \$24,000

Activity Description:

Let's Plant Trees will expand the volunteer network from 10 individuals to at least 50 statewide by spring 2026, and develop volunteer training materials and videos to share with volunteers before participation. Further, Let's Plant Trees will execute 15 volunteer planting projects in conjunction with cities, counties and other organizations in spring 2026, aiming for a cumulative total of 40 volunteer planting projects since inception, by summer 2027. We will also collaborate with local media, community groups, schools, local government, and other organizations to promote tree planting and reforestation through educational initiatives. Further, Let's Plant Trees will engage in community events, Earth Day fairs and the like, and facilitate tree planting workshops to disseminate information and cultivate partnerships, aiming to complete 50 separate community engagement initiatives by June 30, 2027. All of this work will be supported by staff hired to assist with engaging our communities, local governments, schools, and nonprofits to identify planting locations and recruit tree planting and tree distribution volunteers. Of this \$24k, \$22k is for staffing, and \$2k is for printed materials. (See attachment "Let's Plant Trees Community Engagement 2024" for examples of our current volunteer planting and educational community engagement activities.)

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Approximate Completion Date |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
|-------------|-----------------------------|

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Expand volunteer network to 50 individuals by spring 2026 | June 30, 2026 |
| 15 completed volunteer tree planting projects in spring 2026 | June 30, 2026 |
| 40 cumulative completed volunteer tree planting projects by summer 2027 | June 30, 2027 |
| 50 cumulative completed community engagement and collaboration events by summer 2027 | June 30, 2027 |

Activity 3: Increase tree seedling distribution points to 8 locations by 2027

Activity Budget: \$26,000

Activity Description:

Let's Plant Trees will expand its tree seedling distribution network beyond its current single location, by engaging volunteer individuals as well as cities, counties and nonprofits across the state to distribute tree seedlings from their location. This will expand both the geographic reach of our efforts, increase the biodiversity and variety of seedlings planted as these will vary regionally, and enhance our overall message of reforestation for the benefit of future Minnesotans. We will utilize our existing recruitment efforts to establish partnerships for volunteer tree seedling distribution locations.. Collaboration with like-minded property owners, businesses, and organizations will support our desire to establish additional distribution points. These efforts will be supported by part-time staff who will aid recruitment and communication with collaborators across the state. Of this \$26k, \$20k is for staffing and \$6k is for travel expenses.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Approximate Completion Date |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Increase tree seedling distribution points to a total of 5 by 2026 | June 30, 2026 |
| Increase tree seedling distribution points to a total of 8 by 2027 | June 30, 2027 |

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?

Results will be implemented directly, through the planting of the acquired tree seedlings, with engagement with people, municipalities, and organizations across the state, and expanding the ability of Let's Plant Trees to distribute seedlings and support planting projects. These activities will help increase biodiversity in forested areas across the state and restore ecosystems affected by spruce budworm, emerald ash borer, and wildfire. Let's Plant Trees will also expand its individual and corporate donors, build out its fundraising capabilities, and seek grant funding through private foundations to continue its efforts for these same activities, beyond the grant period.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Carrie Nicklow

Job Title: President

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

As President and co-founder of Let's Plant Trees, Carrie Nicklow studied environmental science and forestry at the University of Minnesota, and recently completed the Master Woodland Steward course through the U of M Extension. Carrie is also a CPA (inactive) and has 30 years of financial management and business experience. Carrie is passionate about environmental issues and has project management experience that includes running several businesses, managing educational initiatives in schools, and spearheading a \$1m ERP system implementation project. Carrie is fiscally conservative by nature, and is highly passionate about ensuring that resources appropriated to Let's Plant Trees are used judiciously and for the benefit of all Minnesotans.

Organization: Let's Plant Trees

Organization Description:

Let's Plant Trees is a nonprofit founded in 2023 with the goal of reforestation by empowering individuals, organizations, municipalities, and communities to plant native trees. We distribute tree seedlings along with essential information on where and how to plant them. This operation grew out of experience with deforestation due to the spruce budworm, wildfire threats, and the pressing matter of climate change. Many people want to combat these issues; our nonprofit makes it easy for them to act. Let's Plant Trees studies the latest climate research on tree species predicted to fare well in a changing climate and provides that information to property owners. We then distribute tree seedlings in manageable quantities that can be protected and watered. Let's Plant Trees also provides detailed planting instructions help ensure better seedling survival rates, and facilitates volunteer tree planting projects across the state. The focus of 2024 has been the North Shore area. In addition, we are also supporting volunteer tree planting projects in the Twin Cities, such as our project with the City of Eden Prairie. Future steps include expanding our operation into north central Minnesota, to aid in reforestation needs due to the emerald ash borer.

Budget Summary

| Category / Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Purpose | Gen. Ineligible | % Benefits | # FTE | Classified Staff? | \$ Amount |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|-----------------|------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Personnel | | | | | | | | |
| 2-3 Part Time Seasonal Support Staff | | Tree seedling management and distribution, communication and coordination of volunteer planting projects and community engagement events, and supporting partnerships to increase distribution points. | | | 10% | 1.3 | | \$64,000 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$64,000 |
| Contracts and Services | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Equipment, Tools, and Supplies | | | | | | | | |
| | Tools and Supplies | Native tree seedling purchases | This cost is for ~60,000 native, climate-ready tree seedlings that we will purchase and distribute for planting during the 2 year funding period | | | | | \$41,000 |
| | Tools and Supplies | Work gloves, planting bars, soil, buckets and water containers, and other tree planting supplies | These items are needed for the volunteer tree planting projects and to support tree seedlings in the timeframe between receipt and planting | | | | | \$6,000 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$47,000 |
| Capital Expenditures | | | | | | | | |
| | | Large refrigerator or walk in cooler | A cooler is needed to extend the duration that we can store tree seedlings between receipt and planting | X | | | | \$9,000 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$9,000 |
| Acquisitions and Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--------------------|------------------|
| Travel In Minnesota | | | | | | | | |
| | Miles/ Meals/ Lodging | Travel by car to other areas of the state, 5-7 trips per year by car for 2 people | Participate in community events, recruit volunteers, engage with municipalities and educate community members, set up new distribution points for tree seedlings, and plant trees with volunteers. | | | | | \$6,000 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$6,000 |
| Travel Outside Minnesota | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Printing and Publication | | | | | | | | |
| | Printing | Planting instructions and training materials | Handouts for recipients and volunteers to ensure that seedlings are handled and planted correctly, and protected from deer and other predators. | | | | | \$2,000 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$2,000 |
| Other Expenses | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| | | | | | | | Grand Total | \$128,000 |

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

| Category/Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Capital Expenditures | | Large refrigerator or walk in cooler | <p>If for some reason the use changes or needs of the organization changes, Let's Plant Trees will reimburse LCCMR for any funds received in connection with this purchase.</p> <p>Additional Explanation : This type of cooler is only intended to be used for storage of tree seedlings. By keeping the seedlings in a dormant state, the cooler will allow us to expand the time frame and geographical area where we can plant seedlings, thus allowing us to considerably scale up operations. Once acquired the expected life is 5-7 years depending on whether we can purchase new or used equipment.</p> |

Non ENRTF Funds

| Category | Specific Source | Use | Status | Amount |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| State | | | | |
| | | | State Sub Total | - |
| Non-State | | | | |
| Cash | Individual Donations | Funds from donors are used to acquire tree seedlings, promote Lets Plant Trees in the media, and cover operational costs that help expand our reach, and engage community members in our goals | Potential | \$10,000 |
| Cash | Corporate Donations | Funds from donors are used to acquire tree seedlings, promote Lets Plant Trees in the media, and cover operational costs that help expand our reach, and engage community members in our goals | Potential | \$18,000 |
| Cash | Sales of merchandise, net of costs (this is expected gross profit) | Funds from merchandise sales are used to acquire tree seedlings, promote Lets Plant Trees in the media, and cover operational costs that help expand our reach, and engage community members in our goals | Potential | \$7,500 |
| Cash | Private Foundation Grants | Funds from private grants are used to acquire tree seedlings, promote Lets Plant Trees in the media, and cover operational costs that help expand our reach, and engage community members in our goals | Potential | \$15,000 |
| | | | Non State Sub Total | \$50,500 |
| | | | Funds Total | \$50,500 |

Total Project Cost: \$178,500

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [b1c0dab3-dbe.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

White Pine Tree Seedling Photo...

Financial Capacity

| Title | File |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Lets Plant Trees 990-N 2023 | 3f584817-5c0.pdf |
| Lets Plant Trees Board Reviewed Profit Loss 2023 | 2316756e-74a.pdf |
| Lets Plant Trees Board Reviewed Balance Sheet 2023 | 8db9475a-bee.pdf |
| Lets Plant Trees Certificate of Good Standing - MN Secretary of State | 36027a98-e98.pdf |

Board Resolution or Letter

| Title | File |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Board Resolution Letter | 6245104c-7fd.pdf |

Supplemental Attachments

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

| Title | File |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Lets Plant Trees Letter of Support-Arboretum Village HOA | aecebd7b-be2.pdf |
| Lets Plant Trees Community Engagement and Volunteer Activities 2024 | 5b72257d-d15.pdf |

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:

Mike Nicklow, Let's Plant Trees

