



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-296

Proposal Title: Moving Minnesota towards a Lead-Free Sporting Future

Project Manager Information

Name: Brian Hiller

Organization: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities - Bemidji State University

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We will use educational outreach to increase awareness of lead-free options for big game hunting, small game hunting, and fishing as a means of reducing wildlife exposure to lead.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$250,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Environmental Education (C)

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.

Lead has no biological benefits and has been removed from nearly all traditional human uses yet is still a primary component in ammunition and fishing tackle around the world. The widespread use of lead in hunting and fishing activities continues to be a problem in Minnesota as it routinely results in the unintentional poisoning of wildlife. These illnesses and deaths are preventable through a simple change in materials used in hunting ammunition and fishing tackle. Encouraging voluntary switch in hunting ammunition and fishing tackle choices through education can reduce the amount of new lead deposited in the environment and the unintended illnesses and wildlife death that results.

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 seeks to use an educational outreach approach to encourage hunters and anglers to voluntarily switch their hunting ammunition and fishing tackle to lead-free alternatives. Switching hunting ammunition and fishing tackle to lead-free versions to reduce wildlife illnesses and/or deaths due to unintentional exposure to lead.

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 outcomes of this project include increased awareness of the lead-free alternatives available for use in big game, small game, and fishing tackle. This increased awareness of the alternatives to lead will, through voluntary means, decrease the use of lead for hunting and fishing throughout Minnesota thereby reducing lead in the environment and reduce lead exposure in a variety of wildlife.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Grassroots outreach and education on lead-free alternatives via direct contact with big game, upland game hunters, and anglers.

Activity Budget: \$170,000

Activity Description:

We propose to work with large-scale expos around the state such as Game Fair, the Governor’s Deer and Fishing Opener celebrations, and various outdoor sports shows held around the state. We propose having an increased presence during hunter sight-in season and utilize our growing network of professional partners to share volunteering workload help across all educational programming workshops, demonstrations, and other events. We propose to increase advocacy to non-convention/expo/gun-range-attending demographics. We will also develop and further connections with tribal communities and identify gaps or challenges regarding ammunition sourcing around reservations and rural areas less likely to locally stock odd calibers in non-lead. We could reach ~10-25% local-only hunters via brick-and-mortar store marketing campaigns, collaborating with hunting access groups, and landowners directly. We will also help hunters establish group-buy practices or increase local ammo distribution via petitioning their local sellers.

We will purchase ballistic performance learning tools, provide ammo testing opportunities, word-of-mouth, and media kits to help better inform people in their decision making. We will also conduct train-the-trainer workshops offer participants to sample various projectile offerings to inform their own purchasing decisions and better inform their cohort on what to expect when first making the adjustment to non-lead

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Make 2000 contacts via outreach efforts in the first year of work.	June 30, 2026
Make an additional 3000 outreach contacts via demonstrations and education booths at range days/shows.	June 30, 2027
Make a further 4000 contacts via sight in days and governor's sporting opener events.	June 30, 2028

Activity 2: Using digital media to inform those considering switching to lead-free alternatives and provide users with updated retailer locations.

Activity Budget: \$80,000

Activity Description:

We propose to use a variety of digital media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and a dedicated Website) to exemplify lead-free ammo and fishing tackle performance, value, and conservation mindset behind their use. These will likely be presented in that order based on common hunter responses to this advocacy effort in the past. We will not be proselytizing trophy animal carcasses, but rather highlighting noteworthy insights, helpful tools, product tests, in-stock notifications, shareable clips, and further public engagement via the various platforms.

We propose a dedicated website that will be used to inform yet will also provide robust search tools for products and ballistic charts. The website will also contain buying strategies for hunters, shooters, and anglers so they may get the best choice for their hunting or angling situation. The website will have mobile and desktop usability for “on-the-go” price and availability checks. These features will increase return visit metrics compared to similar organizations.

Real-time examination of print and digital product catalogs from major manufacturers (Federal Premium, CCI, Remington, Barnes, Norma, Nosler, etc.) to simplify hunters’ search for lead-free ammo and (Northland, Clam, Rapala, Berkeley, etc.) to simplify anglers’ search for lead-free fishing tackle.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Contract for development of a website and mobile app for lead-free information.	January 31, 2026
Development of digital content and engagement via social media platforms to inform users.	June 30, 2026
Continued content creation and engagement via social media; additional recording engagement metrics.	June 30, 2027
Continued content creation and engagement via social media; additional recording engagement metrics.	June 30, 2028

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Lead-Free Wildlife Minnesota	Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society (MNTWS)	MMNTWS/Lead-Free Wildlife Minnesota has been a pioneer in lead-free outreach in Minnesota since 2014 and they will collaborate on events and demonstrations.	No

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?

Following the successful implementation of our outreach project we will continue this work by merging with a Montana-based, nationally recognized grassroots organization advocating the voluntary switch to lead-free sporting alternatives (Sporting Lead Free). Merging with Sporting Lead Free will allow the work to continue in Minnesota while defraying the cost to the parent organization.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Brian Hiller

Job Title: Professor of Biology, Wildlife Specialist

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

I hold two graduate degrees (MS & PhD) with a focus in wildlife toxicology, another graduate degree (MS) in environmental education, and have been working on non-lead outreach for more than 20 years. I have also been working on a similar project in Minnesota for nearly 10 years. In my role as a graduate student advisor I have been involved in budget management, project design, project execution, and completion of more than 10 successful theses. I feel that my experience in these areas qualifies me to manage the proposed project effectively and efficiently over the course of the proposed timeline.

Organization: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities - Bemidji State University

Organization Description:

Bemidji State University (BSU), located amid the lakes and forests of northern Minnesota, occupies a wooded campus along the shores of Lake Bemidji. Enrolling around 5,000 students, Bemidji State offers more than 70 undergraduate majors and eight graduate degrees encompassing arts, sciences and select professional programs. BSU is a member of the Minnesota State system of colleges and universities and has a faculty and staff of more than 550. The university's Shared Fundamental Values include environmental stewardship, civic engagement, and international and multicultural understanding. These values, and the Wildlife Biology major, align well with this proposal as it aims to use educational outreach and demonstrations to encourage hunters and anglers to voluntarily switch to nonlead ammunition for hunting and tackle for fishing to reduce unintended wildlife exposure to lead.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	We propose building a dedicated website that will be used to inform yet will also provide robust search tools for products and ballistic charts. The website will also contain buying strategies for hunters, shooters, and anglers so they may get the best choice for their hunting or angling situation.				0.75		\$80,000
Associate Coordinator- Lead Free Wildlife Minnesota	Professional or Technical Service Contract	This position will assist with the implementation of an initiative to encourage the manufacture, sale and use of environmentally preferred lead-free ammunition and fishing tackle. The position will be responsible for staffing a large number of public education and outreach activities targeting hunter and angler groups, ammunition and tackle manufacturers.				2.25		\$120,000
							Sub Total	\$200,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Trade show supplies (backdrop, table cloth, etc), ballistic gel blocks for demonstrations, ear and eye protection, targets, target stands	Run shooting demonstrations and host events.					\$15,000
							Sub Total	\$15,000
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								

							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Other	30 trips, 2 people, \$500/trip avg	Travel to events					\$30,000
							Sub Total	\$30,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
		Booth fees	Fees set up an educational booth at trade shows.					\$5,000
							Sub Total	\$5,000
							Grand Total	\$250,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

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

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$250,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [4fc649be-f25.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The graphic highlights grassroots outreach events such as tabling at trade shows, live raptor shows, and hosting shooting demonstrations. Other aspects of the graphic include possible lead exposure to scavenging animals, lead deposition via ingestion for birds, and our proposed social media creation and engagement goals....

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:

Lead-Free Minnesota Wildlife under the Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society