



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2025-320

Proposal Title: The Mill District Habitat Restoration Site

Project Manager Information

Name: Anna Gruber

Organization: City of Sartell

Office Telephone: (320) 258-7306

Email: anna.gruber@sartellmn.com

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Project includes restoration of a riparian area to foster habitat and improve water quality within a previously abandoned industrial property along the Mississippi River.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$400,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2027

LCCMR Funding 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?

Region(s): Central

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

Region(s): Central

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 City has an incredible opportunity to transform a former paper mill site into a vibrant riparian habitat along the Mississippi River. The former paper mill operated at the site from 1905 to 2012, when a catastrophic explosion and fire caused operations to cease. The building remnants were removed from the site, but the building slabs and evidence of the past industrial use remains. The existing site conditions include concrete and debris right up to the riverbank. The site has languished over the past decade, sitting vacant and unused. The City took the proactive step to purchase the land and create a natural area along the river, allowing the public to have access to the Mississippi River and this beautiful setting. The current issue is that the area is covered in concrete and lacks vegetation. This project would remove the existing concrete and debris and then restore the area closer to its natural state, including plants and trees, reestablishing habitat along the Mississippi River. By removing concrete remnants along the Mississippi and reintroducing vegetation, this project would revitalize a riparian area and help provide habitat for both pollinators and wildlife, enhance water quality, and promote aquatic habitat.

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.

The primary goal of the requested LCCMR funding is to remove the existing concrete and debris and restore habitat along the Mississippi River. Additionally, this area will be a regional asset, offering access to the Mississippi River and allowing for enjoyment of the public space year-round. For over 100 years, the site, including the bank of the Mississippi River, has been concrete and impermeable. The project involves removing existing concrete and restoring the riverbank with grasses, shrubs, and trees. The solution of reintroducing vegetation to the site will create habitats for pollinators, birds, rabbits, and all forms of wildlife, additionally it will improve surface drainage and stormwater infiltration creating a healthier aquatic habitat within the river. The natural habitat, beauty and access along the river will promote outdoor use and habitat education and awareness for Sartell and larger St. Cloud area.

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?

This project will protect and enhance the Mississippi River and the nearby land by reducing impervious surface at the site and restoring native vegetation. The transformation of the site from its past industrial use to green space will foster the return of wildlife, create a natural filter between the site and the Mississippi River, stabilize the Mississippi River bank, and enhance the natural beauty of the river and surrounding area. Wildlife will return and the community and region will be able to connect with the Mississippi River in a way that hasn't been possible at the site before.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Design

Activity Budget: \$30,000

Activity Description:

The design phase of the project will include a site visit and survey of the existing conditions. A removal plan will be developed to facilitate the removal of the existing concrete and remaining industrial debris up to 4-feet deep along a 1000 foot long, 50-foot wide corridor adjacent to the Mississippi River. The void left from the removals will be replaced with fill and topsoil to create an environment to sustain vegetation into the future. A vegetation and planting plan for the 50-foot wide corridor will be developed to establish vegetation including grasses, trees and shrubs, creating a natural riparian habitat along the Mississippi River. The vegetation and planting plan will also include a long term management plan identifying the long-term care and maintenance of the vegetation to ensure success of the plantings into the future. This will include strategies for long-term plan implementation. The design will include development of plans and specifications for to solicit bids for the work to be completed. This phase will also include consultation with SHPO and applying for an obtaining any necessary permits.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Consultation with SHPO	August 31, 2025
Approval of Final Plans	January 31, 2026
Advertise for Bid	February 28, 2026
Permits/Agency Review	April 30, 2026

Activity 2: Construction

Activity Budget: \$362,000

Activity Description:

A contractor will be obtained through a bid process to complete the habitat restoration phase of the project. The contractor will remove the existing concrete and industrial debris from the 50-foot wide, 1000-foot corridor. This material will be removed from the project area. The contractor will then fill the voids created by the removals with borrow material, compost and topsoil. This will create an environment filled with nutrients to support vegetation establishment and growth. The contractor will then install grasses, trees and shrubs based on the designed planting plan to restore native vegetation and create habitat along the Mississippi River. The Sartell Public Works and Parks departments will utilize the vegetation and planning management plan developed during the design phase to provide ongoing care for the habitat that is created to ensure ongoing and continued success.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Construction, Oversight, and Administration Begins	May 31, 2026
Final Grading	September 30, 2026
Substantial Completion	October 31, 2026

Activity 3: Close-Out

Activity Budget: \$8,000

Activity Description:

This activity includes items to fully wrap up restoration project and ensure grant compliance.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Punch List Items	May 31, 2027
Signage Installed with ENRTF Language or Logo	May 31, 2027
Notice of Funding Restriction Recorded	June 30, 2027
Certificate of Occupancy Equivalent Obtained	June 30, 2027
Open for Intended Use	June 30, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Mayor Ryan Fitzthum	City of Sartell	Project Implementation	No
April Ryan, PE	SEH	City Engineer	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?

The City will oversee implementation of the project and will select a contractor through a competitive bid process. The City established a special fund to help pay for this project. The City has already invested a significant amount of money, more than \$1 million to-date, for improvements related to the property, and is committed to the project, but we need grant assistance for some of the project components. Any necessary ongoing maintenance will be performed by our Public Works and Parks Department and will be part of our annual city budget.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Anna Gruber

Job Title: City Administrator

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

Anna Gruber has nearly 15 years of experience in local government and city administration, including the successful management of several large, grant-funded projects throughout her career. This includes:

- Safe Routes to Schools (Pierz & Sartell Applications)
- State Highway 25 Reconstruct Project & State Funding
- Local Road Improvement Funding & Project Scout & Dehler Drives
- MN Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Grant for Watab Park
- Small Cities Development Program (Pierz & Sartell Applications)
- CARES Act & ARPA Funding Programs
- FEMA Emergency Response Applications (COVID-19)
- MN Department of Natural Resources Regional Trail Program (Multiple Projects)
- Transportation Alternatives Sidewalk & Trail Gap Projects
- Local Surface Transportation Black Grant Program – 15th Street North
- Sauk River Regional Park & Linear Park Enhancement Projects

Organization: City of Sartell

Organization Description:

The City of Sartell is a unit of local government. Sartell, Minnesota, is a vibrant city located in the central part of the state, nestled along the picturesque banks of the Mississippi River. Known for its natural beauty and small-town charm, Sartell offers residents and visitors alike a thriving community with a rich history, diverse amenities, and ample recreational opportunities. With a population of approximately 20,000, Sartell boasts a strong sense of community spirit and a welcoming atmosphere. The City of Sartell recently acquired approximately 50 acres of property along the Mississippi River. The property was formerly occupied by a paper mill, which was destroyed by a fire in 2012. Most of the buildings were deconstructed and recycled, however the building slabs, footings and debris remain and cover the entire site, including up to the river bank.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Engineer selected through qualifications process.	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Design and construction administration work for project.				0		\$37,000
Contractor selected through bidding process.	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Construction of project.				0		\$363,000
							Sub Total	\$400,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
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	\$400,000

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				
Cash	City of Sartell	Local matching funds habitat restoration.	Secured	\$100,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$100,000
			Funds Total	\$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$500,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
The Former Papermill	Benton	The site is a riparian habitat located within the Eastern Broadleaf Forest biome. The site was developed as an industrial property for over 100 years. Restoration of the site allows native habitats along the Mississippi River for public viewing and access.	Restoration	1.72	0.28	\$400,000	Public	City of Sartell	Has Not Begun
Totals				1.72	0.28	\$400,000			

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.

The City of Sartell currently owns the property, which encompasses the proposed project area. The City will retain the property, creating a park along the Mississippi River and retaining ownership into the future.

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.

The restoration plan will provide guidance on multiple components to facilitate removing existing concrete remnants along the Mississippi River, adding topsoil, and reintroducing native vegetation. Expected outcomes include the revitalization of the riparian area through the establishment of native vegetation, helping to provide additional habitat for pollinators and wildlife. The design phase of the project will include the development of a vegetation and planting maintenance plan. The maintenance plan will educate and identify strategies for the Sartell public works and parks department. This will ensure the long-term success of the project and riparian habitat area created. The maintenance plan will be kept and filed with the Parks Department and the activities and strategies will be included within the city's annual budget.

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.

The Board of Soil and Water Resources "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" will be used to aid in the development of plans and specifications for the proposed project. The City of Sartell utilizes SEH Inc. as their city engineer. SEH has extensive experience in designing habitat restoration projects meeting the BWSR guidelines. SEH will lead and review the proposed planting plans to ensure that they meet they ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement based on the BSWR guidelines. The city will also meet with the local SWCD to help review and provide input on the vegetation and planning plans.

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.

The City of Sartell has a dedicated Park Fund to finance park maintenance and management activities. The project area will become part of the City's Park system. The long-term maintenance and management of the park and habitat area will be financed through the park Fund and the city's annual budget.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

As the project is designed and prepared for bidding, consideration will be given to project splits and possibilities for the City to contract with Conservation Corps of Minnesota to complete certain/native plantings.

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.

Following restoration activities proposed with this project, evaluations will occur to analyze improvements to the parcel, identify any potential implementation problems, and identify findings for future restoration efforts. A similar evaluation will occur three years after the project has been completed.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [07015d3b-516.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The site plan identifies the area of the habitat restoration along the Mississippi River and future trail system....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Financial Audit	e4cb64db-b9d.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Resolution	f8398adf-1f6.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire	18c3d36c-337.pdf
Capital Construction Budget Addendum	1fe985f8-ce1.pdf
Photos	aa51a628-665.pdf
Letters of Support	573d0c33-649.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Restoration,

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?

Yes

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:

Alison Creeger (SEH)