

Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood Grants Program Request for Proposals

General Information

This new grant program is made possible through an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), aimed at increasing the populations of rusty patched bumble bees and other at-risk pollinators. This will be achieved through efforts to establish residential pollinator habitat within neighborhoods in important pollinator corridors/pathways and building overall interest in ecological landscaping. \$450,000 is available for Fiscal Year 2020. Grant awards will be for a minimum of \$20,000 and a maximum of \$40,000. Smaller grant awards may be considered if combined with other sources of verifiable funds that creates a total project size that is at least \$20,000.

Who May Apply

- Cities
- Counties
- Watershed Districts
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Nongovernmental Organizations
- Tribal Governments

Applicants must be able to comply with the Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood Program Policy.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible landscapes must be residential yards but the scale and density of “neighborhoods” can be determined by the applicant.

A minimum non-state match equal to at least 25% of the amount requested and/or received is required, except in areas identified by the United State Fish and Wildlife Service as areas where there is a high potential for rusty patched bumble bees to be present, where only a 10% match is required. The linked [map](#) provides locations for high potential for rusty patched bumble bees to be present. The match must be cash or in-kind cash value of goods, materials, and services directly attributed to project accomplishments.

To Apply

Applications need to be submitted via eLINK. . Eligible applicants without a current eLINK user account must submit a request at <https://apps.bwsr.state.mn.us/elink/Account/Register> to establish an eLINK account **no**

later than 7 days prior to the application deadline in order to ensure sufficient time to create an account. As part of the application, eLINK will require applicants to map the location of the proposed project area(s).

The following are the application questions to be filled out in eLINK:

- Describe if and how your project’s location will benefit the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.
- Discuss your projects connection to statewide and local habitat corridors/pathways or areas mapped as important for pollinator habitat.
- Describe your projects value to other at-risk pollinators beyond the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.
- How will partnerships be established or strengthened as part of the demonstration neighborhood?
- Discuss the technical expertise of applicants and partners that will be involved with assisting landowners.
- What are your plans for the long-term planning/maintenance/sustainability of projects, including protection from pesticide exposure?
- Discuss the potential to incorporate several project types into the demonstration neighborhood such as pollinator beneficial trees and shrubs, pollinator lawns, pollinator meadows and native pocket plantings that are encouraged for the program.
- Explain the anticipated outcomes upon completion of the project and how these outcomes will be obtained.

Applicants will be required to fill out a project budget summarizing proposed activities and expenditures including technical and administrative costs.

Applicants may be required to submit an internal financial statement, a certified financial audit, or an IRS Form 990, if such documentation is not already on file with the Board.

Proposals must include one image file of the project area in relation to the priority zones (.jpg, .tiff, .png) as an Application Image in eLINK. General attachments will not show up as a part of the application report in eLINK.

Evaluation and Selection

Table 1: Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood Program Ranking Criteria

Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points
<u>Located in an area with high potential for the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee</u>	20
<u>Connection to habitat corridors/pathways or areas mapped as important for pollinator plantings</u>	15
<u>Value to other at-risk pollinators</u>	10
<u>Partnerships established or strengthened as part of the demonstration neighborhoods</u>	10
<u>Sufficient technical capacity of applicant and partners</u>	10
<u>Long-term planning/maintenance/sustainability of projects, including protection from pesticide exposure</u>	10

Potential to incorporate several project types (i.e. flowering trees and shrubs, pollinator lawns, etc.) into the demonstration neighborhood	5
Anticipated Outcomes: The outcomes expected upon completion of the project initiatives are identified, consistent with project goals, and it is clear how these outcomes will be obtained.	20
Total Points Available	100

*BWSR reserves the right to make selections based on geography and equity, in consideration of the Office of Grants Management Policy 08-02 Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review.

Eligible Activities

- Project and plan development
- Site preparation, planting and management costs (tilling, burning, sod removal, weed barriers, seeds, containerized plants, seeding, inter-seeding, weed removal, etc.)
- Non-herbicide methods of site preparation and management are preferred, see the Xerces Society guide to [“Organic Site Preparation Methods.”](#)
- Flowering trees and shrubs are eligible for funding, as they often provide early season floral resources and nesting resources
- It is encouraged to use this program in combination with other non-state funding sources and practices.

Additional Information

Grantees will be required to comply with prevailing wage provisions and other assurance and administrative requirements via a grant agreement and workplan as approved by BWSR consistent with appropriations and state grants administration policies.

BWSR recognizes that not all participating landowners will be signed onto the program at the time of application, but some documented interest should be identified at the time of application.

BWSR has left the definition of “neighborhood” open-ended to allow applicants to determine how to most effectively establish demonstration projects and benefit pollinators.

Projects must be sustained for a minimum of 5 years and have a focus on long-term care of ecological functions and aesthetics.

Grantees must follow project planning and design requirements using project planning information as provided below:

- See [BWSR’s Pollinator Toolbox](#), [The Lawns to Legumes Program Guide](#), as well as [Xerces Society resources](#), and Metro Blooms turf alternative resources for additional design guidance.

Projects must include plans for long-term maintenance, inspection monitoring and site access for the duration of the life of a project as part of their project files. Work plans developed for funded applications will rely on this information for operation, maintenance and inspection requirements after the project is completed.

Project size up to three acres with no minimum size.

Pollinator signage is required for all projects funded through this program. Signage will be provided by BWSR.

Projects are strongly encouraged to be located in areas protected from pesticides (at least 200 feet away from pesticide application). See the BWSR/Xerces Society fact sheet on [Protecting Conservation Lands from Pesticides](#) for additional protection strategies.

There is also an emphasis on incorporating different types of habitat as part of the demonstrations including native pocket plantings, pollinator beneficial trees and shrubs, pollinator lawns and pollinator meadows (all discussed in the Lawns to Legumes [Habitat Guide](#)). It is also encouraged to combine the demonstration neighborhoods with public and commercial pollinator plantings to strengthen the overall demonstration value of the efforts. Plantings can be conducted in city boulevards but approval must be given by the city for the project.

When practical, projects must have at least three blooming species during, spring, summer and fall, with higher diversity strongly encouraged. Use of milkweeds is encouraged to provide monarch habitat.

- Seed and plant source requirements are summarized in BWSR’s [Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines](#). Additional details about species for pollinator plantings are included in the Lawns to Legumes Habitat Guide and BWSR’s Pollinator Toolbox. See the Lawns to Legumes Habitat Guide for information about non-native species that can be funded as part of the establishment of Pollinator Lawns. Any plants must be neonicotinoid (systemic pesticide) free. This [website](#) shows many nurseries in Minnesota that have plants that meet this criteria. The Minnesota DNR also has a [list of native plant vendors](#) (it is important to check with any vendor to ensure that their plants are neonicotinoid free).

All projects are encouraged to register with the Xerces Society Pollinator Pledge.

For additional public outreach tools see resources on BWSR’s Lawns to Legumes Page, BWSR’s brochure on “[Protecting Minnesota’s Pollinators](#),” Fact Sheet on “[How You Can Help Pollinators](#),” and [Featured Plant Articles](#) that include over seventy species for benefitting pollinators. USFWS information on [plants for Rusty Patch Bumblebee](#).

Timeline

December 3, 2019	Application period begins
January 10, 2020	Application deadline at 4:30 PM
January 22, 2020	BWSR Board authorizes grant awards
February 2020	BWSR grant agreements sent to recipients (proposed)
April 15, 2020	Work plan submittal deadline
June, 2020	Grant Execution deadline

Submittal

Applications will be submitted via eLINK. Eligible applicants without a current eLINK user account must submit a request to establish an eLINK account no later than 7 days prior to the application deadline. As part of the application, eLINK will require applicants to map the location of the proposed project(s). If registering for a new eLINK user account training will be provided for application and grant management.

Incomplete Applications

Applications that do not comply with all requirements, including incomplete or missing application components, will not be considered for funding.

BWSR Grant Administration

BWSR reserves the right to partially fund any and all proposals based on the amount of funding available. Proposals that are deemed complete may be considered for future available funds.

Grant Execution

Successful applicants will be required to develop and submit a work plan in eLINK prior to execution of the grant agreement.

Payment Schedule

Grant payments will be made on a quarterly reimbursement schedule after submission of documentation of eligible expenditures and approval by the program manager, provided the grant applicant is in compliance with all BWSR reporting requirements for previously awarded BWSR grants.

Project Period

The project period starts when the grant agreement is executed, meaning all required signatures have been obtained. Work that occurs before this date is not eligible for reimbursement with grant funds. All grants must be completed by December 31, 2022.

Project Reporting Requirements

- All grantees are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood grants. All BWSR funded projects will be required to develop a work plan, including detail of each eligible activity, a description of the anticipated activity accomplishments, and grant and match funding amounts to accomplish each of the activities. All activities will be reported via the eLINK reporting system. For more information about eLINK, go to: <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>.
- BWSR Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood Program funds will be administered via a standard grant agreement. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.
- Grant recipients must display their program goals and major program activities on a fact sheet (or a separate webpage) that is linked to their website.

Grants and Public Information

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to a Request for Proposals are nonpublic until the application deadline is reached. At that time, the name and address of the applicant, and the amount requested becomes public. All other data is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee is completed. After the application evaluation process is completed, all data (except trade secret data) becomes public. Data created during the evaluation process is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee(s) is completed.

Conflict of Interest

State Grant Policy 08-01 (see http://www.admin.state.mn.us/ogm_policies_and_statute.html) Conflict of Interest for State Grant-Making, also applies to BWSR grantees. Grantees' conflicts of interest are generally considered organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

1. A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties,
2. A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties, or
3. A grantee or potential grantee has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.

Questions

For more information concerning the request for proposal, contact BWSR's Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood Program Coordinators:

Technical program questions contact: Dan Shaw at dan.shaw@state.mn.us or at 651-296-0644