

Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)

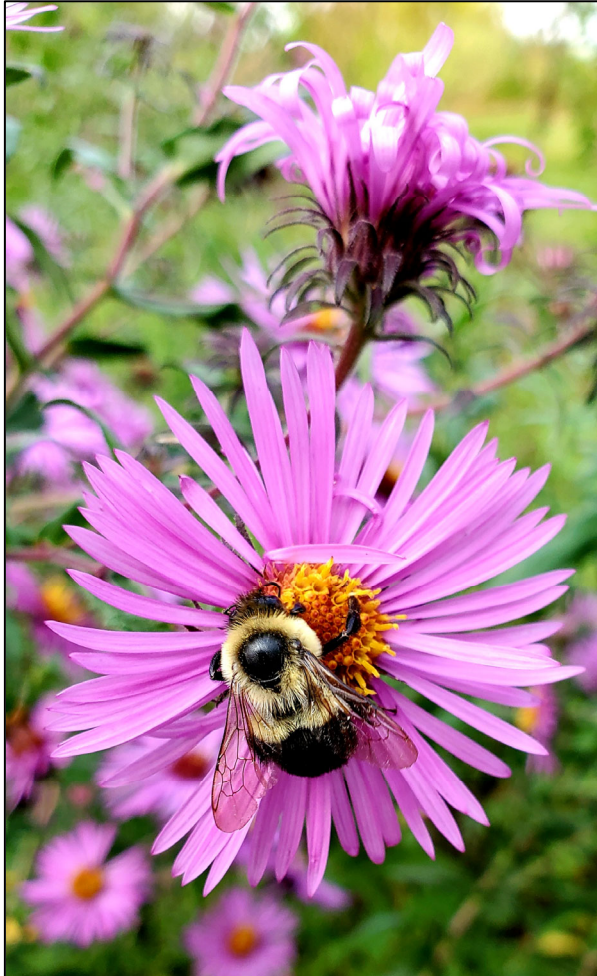
The HELP cost-share grant program is made possible through an appropriation (Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4 paragraph (J)). HELP is focused on restoring and enhancing strategically located, diverse native habitat across Minnesota on conservation lands and natural areas to benefit populations of bees, butterflies, dragonflies, birds, and other wildlife. The program also provides co-benefits of carbon sequestration, soil health, water quality improvements, and increased landscape and climate resiliency.



Program goals:

HELP prioritizes landscape/regional scale initiatives that support species with declining populations. As a result of these efforts the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) hopes to build new partnerships and increase conservation innovation by filling gaps left by other conservation programs.

- **Applicants can apply for grants of \$50,000 to \$500,000. One grant proposal can comprise multiple eligible activities on multiple parcels**
- **10% match required**
- **Eligible applicants**
 - Soil and Water Conservation Districts
 - Watershed Districts
 - Watershed Management Organizations
 - Municipalities
 - Contractors
 - Nongovernmental Organizations
 - Tribal Governments
 - Counties
 - Local Government Joint Power Boards
 - Park Districts
- **Eligible practices must be located on lands with a long-term commitment to conservation management through conservation easements, long-term conservation contracts or public ownership**
- **Practices must be sustained for a minimum of 10 years**
- **Practice types**
 - Establishing new floral-rich plots or riparian plantings, including native flowering trees and shrubs (0.50 to 20 acres in size per practice)
 - Converting existing non-native cover to native vegetation, including native flowering trees and shrubs (0.50 to 20 acres in size per practice)
 - Enhancing prairie, savanna, wetland, woodland ephemerals and shoreline habitat (no size limit)
 - Site preparation, planting and management costs
 - Non-native and invasive species management as part of efforts to enhance or re-establish native vegetation
- **Funding will be made available through a competitive Request for Proposal. Anticipated grant application start date is spring of 2024.**



“The HELP grant has provided the opportunity to support a wider range of pollinators through the enhancement of existing restored prairie, and to do so in a way that brings students and staff directly into the restoration process.”

- South Washington Watershed District Watershed Restoration Specialist Tony Randazzo, who managed the restoration of habitat areas at Lake Middle School in Woodbury.



“The HELP grant provided us with the perfect opportunity to work with partners and develop a creative way to prepare the site without chemicals and threat of erosion.”

- Sherburne County Parks Coordinator Gina Hugo, regarding a partnership with Sherburne SWCD to restore native prairie habitat at Grams Regional Park near Zimmerman.

Additional information:

bwsr.state.mn.us/HELP

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