



FY 2027

Managing Invasives for a Resilient
Landscape (MIRL) Grants
Request for Proposals (RFP)

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

www.bwsr.state.mn.us

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GRANT OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to support the restoration of native plant communities in areas impacted by terrestrial invasive or noxious weeds. Administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the program provides funding to support collaborative efforts that manage terrestrial invasive plant species and reestablish resilient native vegetation.

The appropriation language governing the use of these funds is in Laws of Minnesota 2025, Spec. Session Chapter 1, Article 1, Section 4(b)(2)

EQUITY PRIORITIES

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making.

Multiple DEI approaches will be included in this grant process including:

- Resources for applicants: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document
- Resources for applicants: One-on-one application support sessions
- Weighted scoring criteria: Economic justice, positively impacting underserved communities

FUNDING AVAILABLE AND MATCH

This BWSR grant requires a non-state match equal to at least 10% of the amount of Managing Invasives for Resilient Landscapes received and/or expended. Match can be provided by a landowner, land occupier, private organization, local or Tribal government or other non-state source and can be in the form of cash or the cash value of services or materials contributed to the accomplishment of grant objectives. Funds used for match for this program cannot be used as match for any other state grant program.

Grant Program Awards	Funding Estimates
Amount to grant	\$180,000
Estimated number of awards (if applicable)	6-12 awards
Award maximum	\$30,000
Award minimum	\$15,000

TIMELINE

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 PM CT/CST on June 30, 2026. Late submissions or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. The grant applicant is responsible for proving timely submittal.

Grant Cycle	Grant Cycle Dates
Application period open	April 23, 2026
Application period close	June 30, 2026
Anticipated awards	Sept 23, 2026
Anticipated grant agreements sent to recipients	October 2026
Work plan submittal deadline	October 30, 2026
Grant execution deadline	November 27, 2026
Grant agreement end date	December 31, 2029

GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for competitive grants include:

- Political Subdivisions/Local governments:
 - Cities, Counties, Joint power boards, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Townships, Watershed Districts, Watershed management organizations
- Tribal Governments and Commissions or Consortiums representing Tribal governments

Applicants must operate in Minnesota and conduct grant activities that benefit the resources of Minnesota. Applicants must have state or federal recognition as a formal organization or entity, such as a Minnesota Tax ID or Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. Organizations or groups that do not have state or federal recognition must apply with a fiscal agent. Applicants that are debarred or suspended by the State of Minnesota or the Federal Government are not eligible. Applicants must be in compliance with all applicable federal, State, Tribal, and local laws, policies, ordinances, rules, and regulations.

COLLABORATION

Multi-organization collaboration is strongly encouraged. Application questions for competitive grants in this RFP ask about collaboration and community engagement.

ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY

Below are the eLINK activity categories to which applicants may align their proposed practices. For definitions of these categories, visit BWSR's [eLINK Guidance Activity Categories webpage](#).

The following activities are eligible for these funds:

- Administration /Coordination
- Agricultural Practices
- Technical and Engineering Assistance
- Education/Information

- Forestry Practices
- Non-structural Management Practices
- Planning and Assessment
- Project Development
- Supplies/Equipment
- Urban Stormwater Practices
- Special Project

A list of the practices available for users to select within eLINK are available at BWSR’s [eLINK Guidance Practices webpage](#).

As the purpose of this program is to support the restoration of native plant communities, projects that focus on broadcast herbicide application in road right of ways are strongly discouraged and are unlikely to be funded.

CONDITIONS THAT APPLY TO ALL CONSERVATION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Practice Standards: The grantee must use methods and practices consistent with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Minnesota Stormwater Manual, or be a professionally accepted engineering or ecological practice that have a demonstrated effectiveness and provide the greatest long-term positive impact. Innovative approaches may be incorporated on a case-by-case basis. Design standards for all practices must include specifications for operation and maintenance for the effective life of the given practice, including an inspection schedule and procedure.

Effective Life: All structural practices must be designed and maintained for a minimum effective life of ten years for best management practices and 25 years for capital improvement practices. The beginning date for a practice’s effective life is the same date final payment is approved, and the project is considered complete. Where questions arise under this section, the effective lifespan of structural practices and projects shall be defined by current and acceptable design standards or criteria.

Project Assurances: The grantee must provide assurances that the landowner or land occupier will keep the practice in place for its intended use for the effective life of the practice. Such assurances may include easements, deed recordings, enforceable contracts, performance bonds, letters of credit, and termination or performance penalties. BWSR may allow replacement of a practice or project that does not comply with expected lifespan requirements with a practice or project that provides equivalent benefits.

Operation, Maintenance and Inspections: Identifying operation and maintenance activities specific to the installed practices is critical to ongoing performance of installed practices as well as to planning and scheduling those activities. An operation and maintenance plan must be prepared by designated technical staff for the life of the practice and be included with the design standards. An inspection schedule, procedure, and assured access to the practice site shall be included as a component of maintaining the effectiveness of the practice.

ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS

Allowable costs are those costs solely incurred through project activities that are directly related to and necessary for producing the project outcomes described in the proposal. Grant recipients are required to account for the staff time charged to BWSR grants in order to track the expenditure of grant funds and match to ensure the use of the funds is consistent with applicable State and BWSR requirements. Unallowable costs to be charged to BWSR grants include but are not limited to:

- Bad debts, monetary settlements and judgements, late payment fees, and investment management fees
- Donations, fundraising, sponsorships, and acknowledgements

- Entertainment, gifts, prizes, and decorations
- Alcohol
- Interest on loans not authorized under state statute
- Loans of BWSR grant funds
- Lobbying, lobbyists, and political contributions
- Merit awards and bonuses

GRANT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Eligible activities include local grant administration, management, and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing the project or activity associated with the grant. Grantee is required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments. Applicants who have previously received a grant from BWSR must be in compliance with BWSR requirements for grantee website and eLINK reporting before grant execution and payment.

APPLYING FOR A GRANT

PRE-AWARD REVIEW

Applicants will be required to comply with [OGM Policy 08-06](#), and may be asked to submit documents relevant to their entity type; nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, political sub-divisions.

Political sub-divisions

All political sub-divisions selected for a grant award must undergo a financial review prior to receiving a grant award. Applicants may be asked to submit additional information once the application period closes.

HOW TO SUBMIT A QUESTION

Questions may also be submitted by email to Erin.Loeffler@state.mn.us. Responses will be posted on the BWSR website as a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) document regularly throughout the RFP. The final update will be posted on May, 22nd, 2026

For questions regarding this Grant Program and RFP, contact Erin Loeffler at Erin.Loeffler@state.mn.us.

For questions regarding the eLINK grants management system, email elinksupport@state.mn.us. Please review the eLINK-related topics below and on BWSR’s eLINK webpage before contacting eLINK support.

HOW TO APPLY USING ELINK

1. Set up your eLINK user account
Proposals need to be submitted via <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>. Eligible applicants without a current eLINK user account must register for an account at <https://elink.bwsr.state.mn.us> no later than seven days prior to the proposal deadline. For eLINK related questions, first visit the eLINK section of the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) page. If your question is not addressed here, please contact elinksupport@state.mn.us.
2. Complete your funding request (proposal)
See the “[Completing a Funding Request in eLINK](#)” under the “eLINK Training Videos” tab on the eLINK webpage to view a 11-minute online module describing how to complete a Funding Request within eLINK.

- Answers to each question is limited to 2,000 characters. Due to differences in how programs are encoded, be aware that the character limit in eLINK is not the same as Microsoft Word or other text editors.
- **As part of the proposal, eLINK will require applicants to map the location of the proposed project area.**
- Proposals may include one optional image to be submitted in within their eLINK application. Only .jpg, .tiff, or .png file types are allowed.

Applicants must provide answers to the Application Questions as part of their proposal submitted in eLINK. The questions are related to the ranking criteria categories, which determine how proposals are scored by reviewers. The ranking criteria can be found in the “Application Review” section of this RFP.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- Proposals may receive partial funding based on eligibility or availability of funds. Prior to final selection, BWSR staff may engage applicants to resolve questions or to discuss modifications to the project or funding request. Actual awards may be less than this minimum if proposals receive partial funding. Applications may receive partial funding for the following reasons: 1) budgeted items that were not discussed in the application or have no connection to the central purpose of the application were included by an applicant; 3) to address budget categories out of balance with the project scope; 4) application contains ineligible components; and 5) insufficient funds remaining in a grant category to fully fund a project
- Proposals that do not comply with all proposal requirements will not be considered for funding, as provided below:
 - Components of the proposal are incomplete or missing;
 - The match amount does not meet grant requirements; or
 - The minimum grant dollar amount is not met.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

FY2026 & 2027 Managing Invasives for Resilient Landscapes Questions
<p>(Answers to each question are limited to 2,000 characters.)</p> <p>Note that the following questions need to be answered in eLINK and the character limit in eLINK is NOT the same as Microsoft Word.</p>
<p>Proposal Abstract (5 Points): Provide a concise overview of the proposal that includes activities, anticipated outcomes, and how they will be achieved.</p>
<p>Plan Alignment (15 Points): Demonstrate how the proposal aligns with the priority restoration actions of a local, state, and/or federal resource management plan (e.g. comprehensive watershed management plans, county cooperative weed management plans), or comparable/equivalent Tribal plan or strategy, that target terrestrial invasive species. Is the proposal connected with BWSR's Living Landscape Priority Map, or will it create additional habitat corridors?</p>
<p>Organizational Readiness (5 points): Describe your organization’s capacity and readiness to implement the proposal soon after grant award. Incorporate information on organizational experience in terrestrial invasive species management and native species restoration.</p>
<p>Proposed Outcomes (10 points): Detail the proposal’s intended outcomes and the quantitative or qualitative metrics (e.g. acres treated, percent increase in native vegetation, etc.) used to demonstrate success. Illustrate how the proposal’s outcomes will be sustained or built upon after completion of the grant.</p>
<p>Target Species Selection and Native Plant Community Benefits (30 points): List the non-native terrestrial invasive species of focus and explain why they are priority targets. Identify the methods and practices used and anticipated benefits to the native plant community.</p>
<p>Environmental Justice (5 points): Does the project occur in or benefit an Environmental Justice Area as defined by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (link to map)?</p>

FY2026 & 2027 Managing Invasives for Resilient Landscapes Questions

Collaboration and Partnerships (20 Points): How does the proposal collaborate with and engage communities to build and/or strengthen partnerships that address terrestrial invasive species?

Project Impact (10 Points): Summarize your organization’s existing efforts to manage terrestrial invasive plant species and restore native plant communities. Explain how grant funding would build on and accelerate these efforts, including what activities could be expanded or improved, or what new, innovative efforts, would be implemented.

APPLICATION REVIEW

BWSR staff initially review all applications for eligibility. Eligible applications are further screened and forwarded to an interagency work team (BWSR, DNR, MnDOT, Tribal and SWCD partners) that will review and rank the applications, in order, to make a funding recommendation to the BWSR Board. The BWSR Board considers the review teams’ recommendations and makes the award decision. See Selection and Ranking Criteria for each grant in the sections below.

SELECTION AND RANKING CRITERIA

Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
Project Abstract: The project abstract succinctly describes what results the applicant is trying to achieve and how they attend to achieve those results.	5
Plan Alignment: The proposed project is based on priority restoration actions identified in a local, state, and/or federal resource management plan, or comparable Tribal plan or strategy, that target terrestrial invasive species, strengthens partnership and collaborative implementation.	15
Organizational Readiness: The application demonstrates organizational readiness to begin implementation soon after award. Includes information on organizational expertise and previous restoration experience with terrestrial invasive species management.	5
Proposed Outcomes: The proposed project has articulated specific and relevant metrics tied directly to the project’s outcomes. Provides a realistic plan for sustaining proposal benefits after the grant funding period ends.	10
Target Species Selection and Native Plant Community Benefits: Proposal targets terrestrial invasive species that are high priority and locally relevant. Proposed methods and practices are appropriate, targeted, and will benefit native plant communities.	30
Environmental Justice: Explains whether the project is located in or benefits an MPCA Environmental Justice Area.	5
Collaboration and Partnerships: Existing collaboration enhances project outcomes or builds capacity.	20
Project Impact: Activities will accelerate implementation of terrestrial invasive plant management practices and restoration of native plant communities. Activities will initiate or build upon efforts that benefit local communities	10
Total	100

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

State Grant Policy 08-01, (see <https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>) 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:

- A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties,
- A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties, or
- 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.

PRIVACY NOTICE

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to an RFP are nonpublic until the application deadline is reached. At that time, the name and address of the grantee, 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.

GRANT RECIPIENT INFORMATION

GRANT AGREEMENT AND PROJECT PERIOD

Notification of grant award will be in the form of an automated notification from the BWSR eLINK system or an email from BWSR Grants staff to the grantee. Notifications are sent to the Day-to-Day Contact(s) identified by the organization within the eLINK system. This notification includes instructions for further processing of the grant agreement and may also contain grant-specific information such as requirements for completing work plans, disbursement terms, or additional required documentation for processing the grant. Read these instructions carefully as requirements can vary by grant and fiscal year.

BWSR will use grant agreements, and an associated work plan, as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules, and established policies. BWSR has the right to require a work plan revision or grant agreement amendment for changes in scope. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient. Upon receiving the notification of grant award, which indicates approval of an application, and prior to beginning work on the grant project(s) and receiving grant funds, the applicant is required to do the following:

1. Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, and submit other required documentation within 30 days of award notification.
2. Sign a grant contract agreement indicating their intention to complete the project(s) contained in the application. The agreement also authorizes BWSR to monitor progress of the grant. The grant contract agreement must be signed within 30 days of being sent to the grantee.

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 and cannot be used as match.

Grant contract agreement templates can be reviewed on the [Office of Grants Management Forms and FAQs website](#).

The grant agreement will expire on December 31, 2029.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

All grant funds will be distributed in one installment promptly after the execution of the Grant Agreement. All costs must be incurred within the grant period. All incurred costs should be calculated or determined before the final report is completed or returning funds. Unspent grant funds must be returned within 30 days of the expiration date of the Grant Agreement. Once final reporting has been completed funds may not be re-requested as funds may not be available.

REPORTING AND ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

- All grant recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of the grant
- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's Implementing Contracts with Land Occupiers chapter
 - BWSR recommends all contracts be reviewed by the grant recipient's legal counsel. All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's Grant Monitoring and Financial Reconciliation Procedure
 - All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's Grant Noncompliance Policy
 - In the event there is a violation of the terms of the grant agreement, BWSR will enforce the grant agreement and evaluate appropriate actions, up to and including repayment of grant funds at a rate up to 100% of the grant agreement
 - Grant reporting, fiscal management, and administration requirements are the responsibility of the grant recipient
- Additional information regarding BWSR grant reporting and administration can be found in the Grants Administration Manual (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/manual/>)

PREVAILING WAGE

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient or contractor to pay prevailing wages on construction projects to which state prevailing wage laws apply (Minn. Stat. 177.42 – 177.44). All laborers and mechanics employed by grant recipients and subcontractors funded in whole or in part with state funds included in this RFP shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality. Additional information on prevailing wage requirements is available on the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) website <https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/employment-practices/prevailing-wage-information>. Questions about the application of prevailing wage rates should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091.

NATIVE VEGETATION

Projects that involve vegetation restoration or establishment must use native vegetation and seed and plant sources consistent with BWSR's Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines. Use of plant species on the Minnesota Noxious Weed List is prohibited for all projects. The maximum distance for sources of herbaceous species seeds and plants is 200 miles; and for tree and shrubs seed and plants the distance is 300 miles.

Cultivars of native species may be used in urban stormwater plantings if they accomplish similar or greater ecological functions, help achieve aesthetic goals and do not pose an invasive or other environmental risk

PERMITTING

The applicant is responsible for obtaining and complying with all permits, reviews, and approvals necessary to execute the project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate regulatory agencies early in the grant application development process to ensure potential projects can meet all applicable regulatory requirements.

SUB AGREEMENTS

Funds may be distributed to partner(s) through the use of sub-agreements. Activities identified in the sub-agreement must fit within the scope of the agreement between BWSR and the recipient and include requirements for fund distribution, implementation, and reporting.

TECHNICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Practices and projects must meet the following requirements to ensure long-term public benefit:

- **Technical Assistance Provider.** The recipient must designate technical assistance provider(s) that have appropriate credentials for investigation, design, and construction.
- **Practice Standards.** Practices and projects must use appropriate standards for design, construction, effective life, operation, and maintenance.
- **Practice Certification.** Technical assistance provider(s) must certify that the practice or project was installed or constructed in accordance with the applicable plans and specifications, including approved modifications, prior to authorization for payment.
- **Operation and Maintenance.** Technical Assistance Provider(s) must prepare an operation and maintenance (O&M) plan specific to the site and practice(s) implemented.
- **Periodic Practice/Project Inspection.** Inspections shall confirm that the operation and maintenance plan is being followed, and the project has not been altered or removed.

The grantee has the responsibility to ensure that the designated technical staff have the appropriate technical expertise, skills and training for their assigned role(s). See also the Technical Quality Assurances section of the Grants Administration Manual.

Grantees must identify the technical assistance provider(s) for the practice or project and their credentials for providing this assistance. The technical assistance provider(s) must have appropriate credentials for practice investigation, design, and construction inspection. Credentials can include conservation partnership Job Approval Authority (JAA), also known as technical approval authority; applicable professional licensure; reputable vendor with applicable expertise and liability coverage; or other applicable credentials, training, and/or experience.

BWSR may review the qualifications of all persons providing technical assistance and review the technical project design if a recognized standard is not available.

PRACTICE OR PROJECT CONSTRUCTION AND SIGN-OFF

Grant recipients shall verify that the practice or project was properly installed and completed according to the plans and specifications, including technically approved modifications, prior to authorization for payment.

PROJECT AND PRACTICE ASSURANCES

A written agreement is required to ensure program requirements are met when installing projects and practices or providing financial assistance to a land occupier. Project and Practice Assurances must include technical and financial obligations and requirements for the installation, operation, and maintenance of the practice or project, including a plan for failures or noncompliance.

PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LAND OCCUPIERS

All BWSR funds used by a recipient to provide financial assistance to a landowner or land occupier requires adequate project assurances.

Project Application and Agreements

Work completed prior to the signing of the agreement is not eligible.

Conservation Practice Contract Noncompliance

Failure to complete, maintain, or repair a conservation practice or unauthorized alteration is considered non-compliance with an executed conservation practice agreement. If the organization discovers noncompliance, they must take action to resolve and notify BWSR.