

Revamped grant program aims to weed out invasive species



Non-native invasive plants commonly found in Minnesota include (clockwise from top left) black swallow-wort, poison hemlock, common tansy, purple loosestrife, narrowleaf bittercress and cutleaf teasel. **Photo Credits:** Minnesota Department of Agriculture

A revamped program administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will provide local governments with more flexible options for managing invasive species.

The Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape (MIRL) program will support restoration of native plant communities in areas of Minnesota impacted by invasive or noxious weeds. The program replaces BWSR's Cooperative Weed Management Program, which shared similar goals focused on financially supporting Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs). Present in 43 of Minnesota's 87 counties, CWMAs are local organizations established to share invasive species management resources to achieve widespread prevention and control.

The MIRL program aims to be less restrictive, expanding eligibility beyond

CWMAs and increasing funding amounts for individual grants.

"Managing invasive species helps maintain the integrity of Minnesota's natural areas and conservation lands," said BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke. "This revamped effort will help us target areas of the state where management is most needed."

A request for proposals for the MIRL program opened on April 23 and will close on June 30. Eligible applicants include soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, cities, counties, townships, joint powers organizations, nonprofit organizations, Tribal Governments and Tribal Consortia representing Tribal Governments. Eligible organizations can apply for a minimum of \$15,000 and a maximum of \$30,000 per grant.

Grants under the MIRL program can be used for a wide range of activities that help manage invasive species. Eligible expenses might include technical and engineering fees, project development, design services, site investigations and assessments, construction, forestry practices, urban stormwater practices, inspections and public engagement and outreach.

The MIRL program is funded by a \$200,000 appropriation from the state general fund. A 10% awardee match is required; activities that contribute to program goals are eligible to be counted toward an in-kind match. BWSR program managers said they anticipated awarding six to 12 grants during this round of funding.

Grants are slated to be awarded this summer. Learn more about the grant program and apply on the [Apply for BWSR Grants webpage](#).