BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

FY 2018 and 2019 Cooperative Weed Management Area Program

Request for Proposal
7/26/2017

Table of Contents

Cooperative Weed Management Area Program

Cooperative Weed Management Areas are partnerships of federal, state and local government agencies along with tribes, individual landowners and various other interested groups that manage noxious weeds or invasive plants in a defined area. The BWSR Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Program was developed in 2008 to promote the collaborative and efficient control of invasive species and protection of conservation lands and natural areas across geographic boundaries. $200,000 is available for FY2018 and FY2019 (combined) for newly developing and existing CWMAs/terrestrial weed management partnerships in Minnesota through this Request for Proposal.

CWMA Program Purpose

To establish strong and sustainable CWMAs across Minnesota for the collaborative and efficient control of invasive species and protection of conservation lands and natural areas.

Key activities of CWMAs include:

#1 Building Strong Partnerships
- Public landowners, and agencies
- Private landowners
- Local units of government
- Private organizations

#2 Sharing Resources between Partners
- Staff/labor
- Equipment
- Leveraged funds
- Access to lands, roads, gravel pits and/or key decision makers

#3 Effective Outreach/Communication
- Communication back and forth between agencies, landowners, local units of government, and private organizations.
- Educate - ID, prevention, management - also grant writing and plan writing
- Technical transfer - news, tips

#4 Identifying and prioritizing emerging weed threats
- New and/or recently introduced species
- Those changing status
- Possible prioritization methods
- Species based
- Site based
- Based on planned actions

#5 Facilitating management/control of priority species
- Promote sound weed management that promotes multiple landscape benefits (pollinators, re-establishing native vegetation) etc.

#6 Effective data management/sharing
- Occurrence
- Projects
- Structures/memberships
- Deliverables
- Funding

Applicant Eligibility

- As the CWMA Program is a State Cost-share Program, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are the only eligible applicants. Other organizations may consider applying in partnership with SWCDs to help develop and run the Cooperative Weed Management Area project.
- Newly developing and existing CWMAs and CISMAs (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas) are eligible for this RFP.
- Applicants are eligible to receive grant funds if they are working under a current water management plan that has been state approved and locally adopted when the BWSR Board authorizes the grant awards
- Proposals from applicants that were previously awarded CWMA Funds will be considered during the review process for applications submitted in response to this RFP. However, applicants that have expended less than 50% of previous award(s) at the time of this application will need to demonstrate organizational capacity to finalize current projects and complete new projects concurrently.

Application Guidelines

- 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.
- Proposals should demonstrate significant, measureable project outputs and outcomes[1]. As appropriate, outputs should include scientifically credible estimates of both short-term and long term benefits as well as other measures such as: acres of invasive species treated, increases in diversity levels, etc.
- Proposals must have plans for long-term maintenance and inspection monitoring for the duration of the project's effective life.
- Proposals should demonstrate that, when appropriate, a sufficient partnership exists to implement the project.
- **$200,000 is available for the program for FY 2018 and FY 2019 combined. Up to $20,000 can be requested by newly establishing CWMAs/CISMA's or groups where more than one county are combined as part of existing CWMAs/CISMA's; and $15,000 can be requested by other existing groups.**
- Grant funding can be used for a wide variety of activities related to setting up and sustaining existing CWMAs, conducting outreach and education, weed mapping, managing invasive species and monitoring.
- A minimum non-state match equal to at least 25% of the amount requested and/or received is required. The match must be cash or in-kind cash value of goods, materials, and services directly attributed to project accomplishments.
- Applicants are required to fill out a project budget summarizing proposed activities and expenditures including proposed actual technical and administrative costs. Applicants may propose using more than

---

[1] The term "outcome" means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out the environmental program or activity associated with the application. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health related or programmatic in nature but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within the grant agreement timeline.

The term "output" or "intermediate outcome" means an environmental activity, effort and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during the grant agreement timeline.

20% of the grant funds for technical and administrative costs as provided in Section 2.2 of the Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy, July 2017.

- Proposals may include one image file (.jpg, .tiff, .png) as an Application Image in eLINK. General attachments will not show up as a part of the application report in eLINK.
- Applications may receive partial funding if there are insufficient funds remaining to fully fund a project. Prior to final selection, the Board may engage applicants to discuss modifications to the project or funding request.
- The grant application must be in "Submitted" status in eLINK by 4:30 PM on October 2nd 2017.

Table 1: Cooperative Weed Management Area Program Ranking Criteria

Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
Newly Establishing Organizations: The funding will be used to assist the development of a newly establishing Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) or Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA).	10
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.	30
Relationship to CWMA and Conservation Plans: The proposal and species of focus are based on priority actions listed in or derived from CWMA/CISMA plans, and other local, state and federal conservation and invasive species plans.	10
Weed Prioritization: Weed threats are prioritized and are consistent with Minnesota's Noxious Weed Law, as well as local needs.	15
Strength of Partnerships: Partnerships are clearly defined.	15
Management Approach: An approach is defined to plan and manage invasive species through partnership coordination and using integrated pest management, and an ecosystem restoration approach.	10
Information Management: An approach is defined for the management of information about weed locations (using tools such as EDDMapS), as well as management approaches used.	10
Total Points Available	**100**

BWSR Assistance

BWSR Board Conservationists are available to help applicants with grant application development and questions. A map showing the Board Conservationist work areas is available at: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/maps/Website/Administrative%20Boundaries/BWSR%20Administrative/BC_areas.pdf. Questions can also be directed to Dan Shaw, the Program Manager at dan.shaw@state.mn.us, 651-296-0644.

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, and cannot be used as match. All grants must be completed by December 31, 2021.

Payment Schedule

Grant payments will be made as one payment after the work plan approval and execution of the grant agreement provided the grant applicant is in compliance with all BWSR website and eLINK reporting requirements for previously awarded BWSR grants.

Native Vegetation

The planting of native vegetation following removal efforts is recommended whenever feasible for a project to provide competition for invasive species and provide other landscape benefits. Vegetative practices must follow the Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines found at: http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/seeding_guidelines.pdf

Minnesota Session Law 114, Article 4, Section 12 (b) requires that any prairie planting conducted with state funding include pollinator habitat through the growing season. For information regarding pollinators, see information at:

http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/Pollinator_Fact_Sheet.pdf
http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/Incorporating_Pollinator_Habitat.pdf

Application Deadline and Timeline for CWMA Funding

No late submissions or incomplete applications will be considered for funding.

August 28, 2017	Application period begins
October 2, 2017	Application deadline at 4:30 PM*
December 20, 2017	BWSR Board authorizes grant awards (proposed)
January 2018	BWSR grant agreements sent to recipients (proposed)
March 12, 2018	Work plan submittal deadline
April 9, 2018	Grant execution deadline

*The application must be submitted by 4:30 PM. Late responses will not be considered. The burden of proving timely receipt is upon the grant applicant.

Incomplete Applications:

Applications that do not comply with all application requirements will not be considered for funding, as provided below.

- Components of the application are incomplete or missing;
- Any required documentation is missing; and
- The match amount does not meet grant requirements.

Project Reporting Requirements

All grant recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of CWMA grants.

- All BWSR funded projects will be required to develop a work plan and budget, including detail relating to the outcome(s) of the proposed project. All activities will be reported via the eLINK reporting system. Grant funds may be used for local grant management and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing this activity. For more information go to http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/outreach/eLINK/index.html.

- BWSR CWMA 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.

- All grantees receiving funds from BWSR programs must follow the BWSR Grants Administration Manual and FY18 Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy.

- **Grant recipients must display their program goals and major program activities on a fact sheet (or separate webpage) that is linked to their website.**

Grants and Public Information

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 applicant, and the amount requested becomes public. All other data is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected applicant are completed. After the application evaluation process is completed, all data (except trade secret data) becomes public. Data created during the evaluation process are nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected applicant(s) is completed.

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: http://www.dli.mn.gov/LS/PrevWage.asp . Questions about the application of prevailing wage rates should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091.

Conflict of Interest

State Grant Policy 08-01 (see http://mn.gov/admin/images/grants_policy_08-01.pdf), 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.

Minimum Software Requirements

Internet Explorer 9 or above or the Firefox web browser is required to complete the application in eLINK.

Questions

This RFP and the Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy, July 2017 adopted by the BWSR (http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/index.html) provide the framework for funding and administration of the CWMA Program. Questions regarding grant applications should be directed to your area Board Conservationist (http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/contact/index.html), or the Program Manager, Dan Shaw.