

# Cooperative Weed Management Area Program

## Request for Proposals

November 2021

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## 1. General Information

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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 FY2022 and FY2023 (combined) for newly developing and existing CWMAs/CISMA partnerships in Minnesota through this Request for Proposal.

This cost-share grant program funding is made possible through an appropriation (Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 4d(1)) and is focused on establishing strong and sustainable Cooperative Weed Management Areas and Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas across Minnesota for the collaborative and efficient control of invasive species and protection of conservation lands and natural areas.

This program follows the state [Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy](#).

## 2. Who May Apply?

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As the CWMA Program is a State Cost-share Program, 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.

## 3. Eligibility Criteria

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Newly developing and existing CWMAs and CISMAs (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas) are eligible for this RFP.

- Newly developing CWMAs/CISMAs or groups where more than one county are combined as part of existing CWMAs/CISMAs may request up to \$20,000
- Grants for existing groups will be \$15,000

SWCDs 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.

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

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](#).

Proposals must 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.

## 4. Evaluation and Selection

- Proposals should demonstrate significant, measurable project outputs and outcomes<sup>1</sup>. 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 a sufficient partnership exists to implement the project.

### Application Questions:

- Describe if 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) or if the funding will be used for an existing group
- Describe the anticipated outcomes of the project including how they related to goals and how they will be attained.
- Describe how the proposal and target 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 and the [MN Tactical Invasive Species Management Plan](#).
- List target species of focus and why they have been identified as priorities
- Describe partners involved in the project and how the partnership will lead to effective management and operation.
- Describe plans to plan and manage invasive species through partnership coordination and using integrated pest management, and a focus on restoring native vegetation and/or native plant communities where practicable.
- Describe plans for the management of information about weed locations (using [EDDMapS](#)), as well as other management approaches used.

Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points
<u>Newly Establishing Organizations</u> : 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
<u>Anticipated Outcomes</u> : 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.	25

<u>Relationship to CWMA and Conservation Plans:</u> 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
<u>Weed Prioritization:</u> Weed threats are prioritized and are consistent with Minnesota’s Noxious Weed Law, as well as local needs.	15
<u>Strength of Partnerships:</u> Partnerships are clearly defined and will lead to effective management and operation.	15
<u>Management Approach:</u> An approach is defined to plan and manage invasive species through partnership coordination and using integrated pest management, and a focus on restoring native vegetation and/or native plant communities where practicable.	15
<u>Information Management:</u> An approach is defined for the management of information about weed locations (using <a href="#">EDDMapS</a> ), as well as other management approaches used.	10
<b>Total Points Available</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## 5. Eligible & Key Activities

Grant funding can be used for a wide variety of activities related to setting up and sustaining existing CWMAs, including:

- Technical Assistance
- Conducting outreach and education
- Weed mapping
- Managing invasive species and monitoring
- Reporting project areas in EDDMapS
- Equipment purchases (spray equipment, weed wrenches, tablet etc.) must not exceed \$1,000. All equipment purchased shall be used as a shared landowner resource and remain with grantee.

The following are a list of key activities of CWMAs/CISMAs can include:

<p><u>Building Strong Partnerships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Public landowners, and agencies</li> <li>-Private landowners</li> <li>-Local units of government</li> <li>-Tribal nations</li> <li>-Non-governmental organizations</li> <li>-Universities</li> <li>-For-profit partners</li> </ul>	<p><u>Sharing Resources between Partners</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Staff/labor</li> <li>-Equipment</li> <li>-Leveraged funds</li> <li>-Access to lands, roads, gravel pits and/or key decision makers</li> </ul>	<p><u>Effective Outreach/Communication</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communication back and forth between agencies, landowners, local units of government, and private organizations</li> <li>-Educate – ID, prevention, management – also grant writing and plan writing</li> <li>-Technical transfer – news, tips</li> </ul>
<p><u>Identifying and prioritizing emerging weed threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-New and/or recently introduced species</li> <li>-Those changing status</li> <li>-High priority landscapes</li> </ul>	<p><u>Facilitating management/control of priority species</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Promote sound weed management that promotes multiple landscape benefits (pollinators, re-establishing native vegetation) etc.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Effective data management/sharing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Weed Mapping</li> <li>-Project Mapping</li> <li>-Project Outcomes</li> </ul>

## 6. Other Information

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### Native Vegetation

The planting of native vegetation following removal efforts is required 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 at:

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-07/Updated%20guidelines%20Final%2007-01-19.pdf>

### Match Requirements

A non-state local share equal to at least 25% of the amount of CWMA funds received is required. Local share can be provided by a landowner, land occupier, local 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.”

### Eligible Expenses

See the unallowable costs as defined in the Grant Administration Manual – [Allowable and Unallowable Cost](#) section.

Equipment purchases (spray equipment, weed wrenches, tablet etc. ) must not exceed \$1,000. All equipment purchased shall be used as a shared landowner resource and remain with grantee.

## Timeline

January 3, 2022	Application period begins
February 23, 2022	Application deadline at 4:30 PM
April 27, 2022	BWSR Board authorizes grant awards
May 9, 2022	BWSR grant agreements sent to recipients (proposed)
June 6th	Work plan submittal deadline
June 15, 2022	Grant Execution deadline

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## 7. Payment Schedule

Applications Grant payments will be made as one advance 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.

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## 8. 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.

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## 9. 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.

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## 10. Grant Execution

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

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## 11. Incomplete Proposals

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

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## 12. Project Period

The project period starts when the grant agreement is executed, meaning all required signatures (from BWSR and Grantee) have been obtained. Work that occurs before this date is not eligible for reimbursement with grant funds. All grants must be completed by the expiration date of December 31, 2025 as referenced in the grant agreement.

## 13. Project Reporting Requirements

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- All grantees are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of Cooperative Weed Management Area 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 Cooperative Weed Management Area 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.

## 14. Grants and Public Information

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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.

## 15. Conflict of Interest

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State Grant Policy 08-01 (see [http://www.admin.state.mn.us/ogm\\_policies\\_and\\_statute.html](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.

## 16. Questions

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For more information concerning the request for proposal, contact BWSR's Cooperative Weed Management Area Program Coordinators: Tara Perriello, [tara.perriello@state.mn.us](mailto:tara.perriello@state.mn.us) or Dan Shaw, [dan.shaw@state.mn.us](mailto:dan.shaw@state.mn.us).