

Legislation Text

File #: 24-0110, **Version:** 1

Item Description:

Neg grant agmts for Good Steward natural resource projects, various periods, total combined NTE \$146,969; Amd 1 to PR00005065 with Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center, incr NTE to \$19,722

Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the County Administrator be authorized to negotiate the following grant agreements to provide funding for Good Steward natural resources projects during a two-year period beginning on the date of execution:

- PR00006028 with SN Botanical Services, LLC, with the amount not-to-exceed \$16,219
- PR00006030 with Xcel Energy, with the amount not-to-exceed \$6,200
- PR00006031 with Great River Greening, with the amount not-to-exceed \$25,000
- PR00006026 with Wado, LLC, with the amount not-to-exceed \$25,000
- PR00006029 with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, with the amount not-to-exceed \$15,000
- PR00006025 with Conservation Minnesota, with the amount not-to-exceed \$14,550
- PR00006027 with Aaron and Angelica Evens, with the amount not-to-exceed \$25,000
- PR00006032 with Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, with the amount not to exceed \$20,000; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that following review and approval by the County Attorney's Office, the County Administrator be authorized to sign the agreements on behalf of the county; that costs incurred by the grantees after the board approval date be eligible for reimbursement upon execution of the agreements; and that the Controller be authorized to disburse funds as directed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Amendment 1 to Agreement PR00005065 with the Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center, increasing the grant amount to \$19,722, be approved; that following review and approval by the County Attorney's Office, the County Administrator be authorized to sign the Amendment on behalf of the county; and that the Controller be authorized to disburse funds as directed.

Background:

Natural Resources grants support Hennepin County residents with implementing conservation practices that preserve and restore critical habitats, reduce erosion, protect groundwater, and improve water quality. Eligible applicants include landowners, businesses, government agencies, and other organizations. Since 2016, the program has invested more than \$2 million across the county, leveraging more than \$13 million in other contributions from applicants and their partners.

Two types of grants are available through the Natural Resource grant program: Good Steward and Opportunity grants. Good Steward grants are primarily focused on supporting smaller project installations that provide significant community, water, and natural resource benefit. The grant reimburses up to 75% of project design and installation costs, while the applicants (and/or partners) contribute at least 25% of project costs which can be provided through cash or in-kind labor and support.

In 2023, the County solicited for and received applications for Good Steward grants. The solicitation occurred

from September to mid-November. County staff marketed the opportunity through email lists, social media posts, and updates in Environment and Energy's e-newsletter Green Notes. Staff also hosted a workshop to discuss program and application specifics with potential applicants. The request for proposals generated 24 applications requesting \$397,304, which leverages a total of \$692,567 in projects across the county.

A review panel was convened to review each application based on the project scope and how well the project addresses several program requirements listed in the application and program guidelines. Guidelines include water quality and/or habitat improvement benefits, education and community outreach, project readiness, and community benefits to reduce racial disparities and/or address climate impacts. The panel included four staff from the county's Environment and Energy department and an external partner. The panel's recommendations for grant funding are below.

Current Request:

This request is to authorize the County Administrator to negotiate eight agreements to provide funding for natural resource Good Steward grant projects with the following organizations.

- SN Botanical Services, LLC (Minneapolis). The Corcoran Pollinator Project plans to install four boulevard/yard bioswales, grow native plants, and work with residents to establish more native plantings in the community. The projects will increase neighborhood biodiversity, improve water quality, and educate residents about the benefits of stormwater infrastructure and native plants.
- Xcel Energy (Bloomington) - In collaboration with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the city of Bloomington, Xcel Energy plans to convert 4 acres of turf grass into native prairie habitat under electric transmission lines, adding to 19 acres of restored prairie already installed in this transmission corridor since 2017.
- Great River Greening (Minneapolis) - In partnership with the Division of Indian Works, this project will improve stormwater management at the Division's building on Lake Street. The project includes installation of a rainwater and ceremonial garden, removal of invasive species, and installation of stormwater swales and a retaining wall.
- Wado, LLC (Minneapolis) - Wado LLC, owner of a commercial building in Minneapolis' Bryant neighborhood near George Floyd Square, will install a rain garden and rainwater capture cistern and work with a Dakota/Lakota artist to create a mural and select culturally relevant plants to educate community members.
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (St. Anthony) - The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board plans to create a native pollinator planting demonstration site, replacing 1.28 acres of mowed turf grass with native plantings at Francis A. Gross Golf Course.
- Conservation Minnesota (Minneapolis) - Conservation Minnesota plans to work with seven neighborhood associations around Minneapolis' Chain of Lakes to launch a multi-neighborhood Adopt-a-Drain initiative to reach 25% storm drain adoption in the Bde Maka Ska and Lake of the Isles communities.
- Aaron and Angelica Evens (Dayton) - Homeowners plan to address streambank erosion along the Crow River by restoring 78 linear feet of highly eroded streambank that has contributed approximately 150,000 cubic feet of sediment to the Crow River.
- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (Minneapolis) - The Northside Residents Redevelopment Council plans to convert existing concrete walkways to permeable pavement and work with volunteers

to establish native prairie habitat around the walkways at its Demonstration Site for Healthy Urban Living.

The request is also for the approval to reimburse costs incurred by the grantees after the board approval date and upon execution of the grant agreements.

These agreements are funded by energy sales revenues received in the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund.

Impact/Outcomes:

The Natural Resources grants will provide funds to protect water quality, enhance natural resources, and mitigate and adapt to climate change countywide. These grants will help implement stormwater best management practices, which slow the flow of water to allow it to filter through soil and filter out pollutants before it reaches the county's lakes, streams, and rivers.

Recommended projects will remove and replace impervious surfaces; increase pollinator habitat; capture stormwater on-site and infiltrate it through rain gardens, native plantings, and permeable pavement; prevent erosion through riverbank stabilization; increase storm drain adoption rates; and engage with communities through art and direct action.

Six of the eight projects are in communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change. Some of these projects include educational components that are both driven by, intended for, and accessible to the communities in which they are proposed.

Recommendation from County Administrator: Recommend Approval