

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2018 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 107-C

Blue Thumb Pollinator Plantings Connecting Regional Population Centers

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 321,034

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2018 to June 2021

Summary:

Deploying Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water® resources to regional population centers to connect pollinator corridors, improve water quality, and to inventory and map matrix of privately managed native plantings.

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Location

Region: Central, Southeast

County Name: Blue Earth, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Olmsted, Stearns, Wabasha

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Initial inventory of installed Blue Thumb native plantings totaling 2,000 plantings, 345 pledges to plant, and areas for proposed project impact.

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL	_____ %



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2017 Main Proposal

Project Title: Blue Thumb Pollinator Plantings Connecting Regional Population Centers

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project will deploy Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water® resources and technical expertise to Minnesota’s regional population centers to connect pollinator corridors improve water quality; and to inventory and map matrix of existing and new privately managed native plants to evaluate impact. Minnesota has made great strides in improving the ecological integrity of our landscapes but knowledge and resources have not been shared equally across the state. The collective knowledge of Blue Thumb’s 40+ public and private partners, strengthened through collaboration with state interagency governmental teams will increase adoption of native plantings; and connect urban and rural habitat to benefit a wide range of pollinator species, including the endangered Rusty Patch Bumblebee and Monarch.

Pollinators are struggling due to loss of habitat and overuse of pesticides. Preserved prairie and grassland remnants are losing plant diversity due to invasive species, and lack of funding for long-term management. Managed landscapes on private properties provide the opportunity for increasing diversity through raingardens, shoreline plantings, native turf alternatives that connect pollinator habitat corridors while helping to keep water clean by capturing and filtering runoff and recharging groundwater.

Blue Thumb’s approach and the “Pledge to Plant for Pollinators and Clean Water” challenge aims to inspire and support individual action by shifting social norms about traditional turf lawns and encourage property owners to commit to planting at least 5% of their yard with native plants. Initial inventory indicates more than 5,000 stormwater BMPs with native plants are a direct result of this approach. Identified barriers to action will be addressed through regional workshops, online training, social marketing (e.g., bee lawn signs), and contractor trainings to expand local regional resources for the installation of native plantings targeting urban areas of Rochester, St. Cloud and Mankato.

Project funding also supports collaboration with interagency governmental teams to inventory existing and pledged native pollinator plantings. This project will evaluate and demonstrate impact of the approach, track utilization, and share information with partners, the public, and policymakers about existing plantings, opportunities for new corridor connections, and economic benefits of clean water/pollinator plantings.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Deploy Blue Thumb resources and technical expertise, continuing expansion in

Rochester/Faribault area and with the addition of Mankato and St. Cloud.

Budget: \$295,796

Outcome	Completion Date
Develop Blue Thumb partnerships in regional population centers of Rochester, Mankato and St. Cloud (40+ new local public and private native nursery and landscape contractor partners).	Jan 2020
Build local capacity leading 27 contractor, train-the-trainer, and landowner workshops in collaboration with local partners, share education and outreach tools, interactive exhibits, and connections to local resources to get projects installed.	June 2021
Implement Pledge to Plant Challenge, track utilization and offer timed follow-up and links to local resources (10,000 plantings by 2020).	December 2020

Activity 2: Inventory and map existing and new pollinator and clean water plantings, evaluate program



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impact, and plan statewide expansion to fill in gaps in pollinator/clean water matrix. **Budget:** \$25,238

Outcome	Completion Date
Collaboration with State of MN Inter-Agency Pollinator Team and Blue Thumb partners for inventory and mapping evaluation and reporting strategies.	June 2021
Inventory and mapping of existing plantings, new pledges and installed plantings (10,000+) demonstrates impact and provides information for landowners and policy makers statewide to encourage and plan for new plantings.	June 2021

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Project Partners not receiving funds:

- Dan Shaw, Plant Ecologist, BWSR; liaison to interagency pollinator team
- Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water® award-winning partnership (45+) government, private contractors, and native nurseries created by the Rice Creek Watershed District (2007). In 2015 Metro Blooms, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, became licensed operator to support expansion statewide. *Public:* Carver Co SWCD, Elm Creek WMC, Minnehaha Creek WD, Rice Creek WD, Ramsey Washington Metro WD, Sherburne SWCD, Shingle Creek and West Mississippi WMC, Washington CD, Mid America Regional Council (KS and MO); and cities of Elk River, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Shoreview, Rochester, and Faribault. *Private:* Blazing Star Gardens, Earth Wizards, Ecoscapes, Field Outdoor Spaces, Giving Tree Gardens, JL Theis, Living Sculpture Tree Care, MN Nice Organics, Morning Sky Greenery, My Garden Goddess, Jubert Tree, Nelco Landscaping, Organic Bob, Patio Town, Plaisted, Sogn Family Farm, Studio Gro, Trio Landscaping, Twin Lake Design, MN Native Landscapes, NEON, Glacial Ridge Growers, Mother Earth Gardens. *Nonprofit:* Wild Ones-Twin Cities, Monarch Joint Venture.

Partners Receiving Funds:

- MP&G Marketing: ecological messaging, campaign graphics, education tools. (\$25,000)
- Website/IT consultant, TBD: online utilization tracking and follow-up (\$20,000).

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

This project addresses the lack of technical expertise and resources targeted to urban areas in Greater Minnesota by building capacity of Blue Thumb to share resources regionally using approach that has led to an estimated 10,000 pollinator and clean water plantings on private land in the Twin Cities area

C. Timeline Requirements

This project is based on a pilot expansion of Blue Thumb in SE Minnesota. Expansion of this pilot and the addition of St. Cloud and Mankato will begin July 1, 2018. Implementation through evaluation and plans for next steps in statewide expansion will be completed by June 30, 2021.

2018 Detailed Project Budget

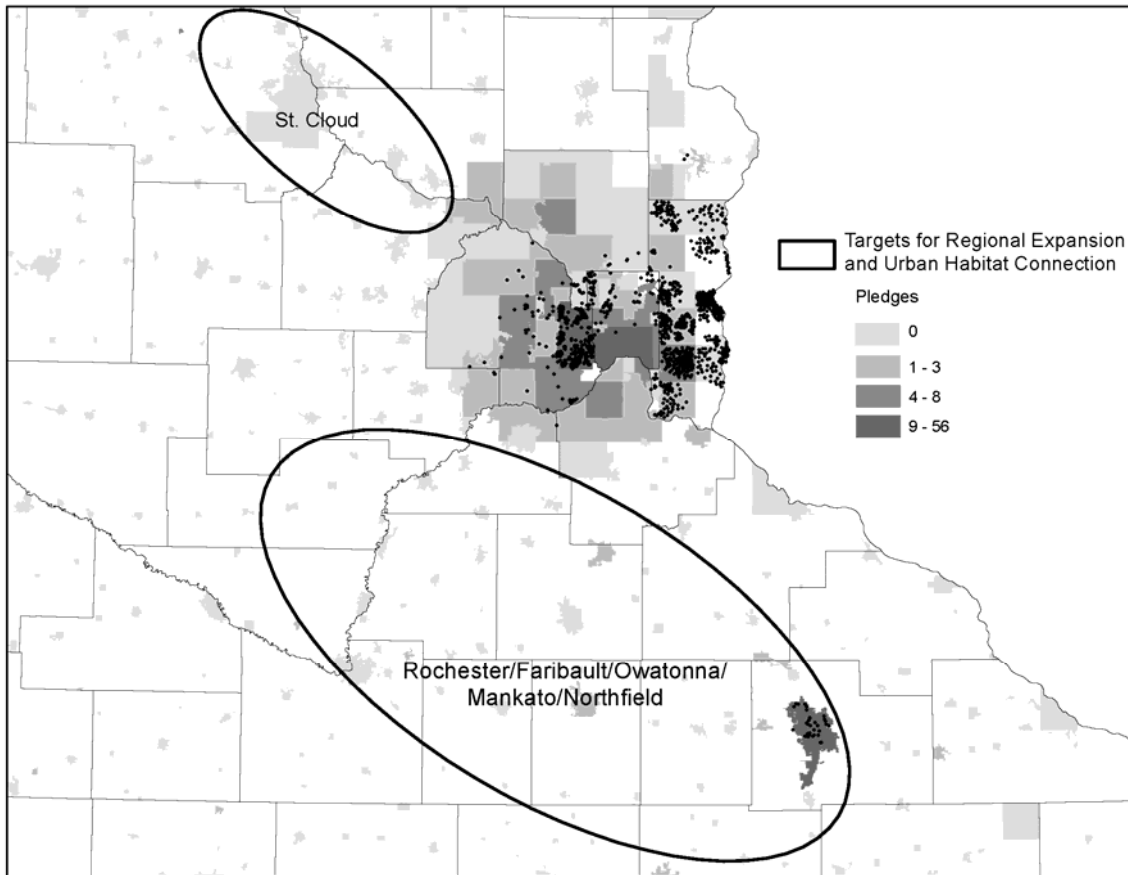
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET: 3 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel:	\$ -
Laura Scholl, Project Manager: (66% salary, 34% benefits); .30 FTE year 1, year 2, and year 3	\$ 75,000
John Bly, Blue Thumb Education & Communication Coordinator: (63% salary, 37% benefits); .5 FTE year 1, year 2 and year 3.	\$ 102,380
Anna Bierbrauer, Landscape Designer+ Manager of New Education Initiatives (63% salary, 37% benefits); .10 FTE year 1, and year 2).	\$ 17,460
Rich Harrison, Landscape Architect/Workshop Trainer: (63% salary, 37% benefits); .1 FTE year 1, year 2, and year 3.	\$ 28,571
Administrative Assistant/Office Manager (75% salary, 24% benefits); .05 FTE year 1, year 2, and year 3.	\$ 10,800
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$ -
MP&G Marketing Consultants: ecological messaging, campaign graphics, education tools	\$ 25,000
Website/IT/ Data Services Consultant: TBD, RFP to be issued to develop and support online training tools, data collection, track utilization and provide timed follow-up on pledges to plant. RFP to be issued.	\$ 30,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Portable Blue Thumb engagement/educational exhibits - 2 sets for checkout by partners in each regional population center.	
<i>Magic in the Roots</i> , a very popular, interactive exhibit with pull-out roots to demonstrate long roots of MN Natives compared to Kentucky Blue Grass (\$1,100 ea.)	\$ 6,600
Native Flower Faces, another very engaging exhibit with cut out faces depicting 6 different native flowers and describing their unique personalities (6 cutouts \$300 set)	\$ 900
Pledge to Plant Razor Banners, Highly visible banners to capture attention and draw visitors to exhibit (\$280 ea.)	\$ 1,680
<i>New Blue Thumb Plantings and Pledges Large Outdoor Map</i> , Visitors can pledge to plant by making a Blue Thumb print to mark the location of their planting and to connect pollinator corridors (\$320 ea.)	\$ 1,920
Related exhibit and educational materials (\$400 ea. partner)	\$ 1,200
Workshop educational materials: workbooks, field training guides and supplies - 27 workshops and trainings (\$400/workshop, \$10 per attendee).	\$ 10,800
Local Travel: Staff travel to regional Blue Thumb partner sites for partner meetings, workshops and contractor training (total 64 trips @ \$.535/mi. and \$40/diem/day.	\$ 8,723
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 321,034

V. OTHER FUNDS *(This entire section must be filled out. Do not delete rows. Indicate "N/A" if row is not applicable.)*

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$: <i>Blue Thumb Partner Fees</i>	\$ 35,000	<i>Pending</i>
<i>McKnight Foundation grant for Blue Thumb Expansion in Greater MN</i>	\$ 45,000	<i>Pending</i>
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: Blue Thumb Partner in-kind services to project.	\$ 19,500	<i>Pending</i>
Other Funding History: McKnight Foundation 2016-2017 (\$30,000), Blue Thumb Partner Dues 2016-2017 (\$40,000), West Metro Water Alliance 2016 (\$12,000) Initial concept and development of Pledge to Plant Campaign.	\$ 82,000	<i>Secured</i>

Together, Let's Pledge to Plant 10,000 plantings by 2020



Native Plantings Installed

- Each dot represents one Blue Thumb planting.
- Initial inventory of installed Blue Thumb raingardens, native plantings and shoreline stabilizations totaling 2,000 plantings.

Pledges to Plant

- At the MN State Fair and local community events visitors will be asked to fill in the gaps by pledging to plant and adding their Blue Thumb planting to the map.
- To date 345 pledges have been gathered.

Photos show Blue Thumb media campaign and residents interacting with Blue Thumb partners and educational tools at workshops and MN State Fair



Metro Blooms/Blue Thumb Organizational Capacity

Blue Thumb-Planting for Clean Water® is an award winning public private partnership of 40+ local water governing bodies, private landscape contractors and native plant nurseries. It was created by the Rice Creek Watershed District to support the pooling and sharing of partner expertise and resources to maximize impact of partner efforts to promote planting for clean water. The Blue Thumb website at BlueThumb.org is a one-stop-shop with downloadable information and resources to help bridge information and action. The websites most popular features include a plant selector tool and partner resource finder tool, and more recently, the Pledge to Plant for Pollinators and Clean Water landing page. Blue Thumb's high quality and engaging educational resources and exhibit materials are shared widely at fairs, expos and festivals throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

In 2015 Metro Blooms, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, became licensed operator of Blue Thumb under a two year license agreement to support its expansion statewide, with plans for permanent transfer of the program effective November 2017.

Metro Blooms has a history of implementing successful citizen-based education and engagement projects to encourage property owners to take action on their own property to improve water quality. Our past projects of this scale include the MN Environmental Trust Fund-supported Powderhorn Lake Neighborhood of Raingardens (2009-2012) where 130 raingardens were installed on mostly residential properties in the Central and Powderhorn neighborhoods of Minneapolis. An ongoing project of similar scale includes the Clean Water Fund-supported project Lake Nokomis Neighbors for Clean Water. This project targets alleyway runoff through source control by working with blocks of residents to implement stormwater BMPs adjacent to alleys. The project is focused on community engagement to change social norms and strengthen social fabric. MB provides hands on training in the planning and installation of raingardens, engaging neighborhoods in community efforts to educate citizens and install raingardens to improve water quality in local lakes and streams.

Since the Powderhorn Neighborhood of Raingardens project, Metro Blooms has worked with project partners and led 25 neighborhood-scale projects to engage residents to install over 500 stormwater BMPs, including raingardens, permeable pavement, trench drains, and native plantings. These community-based projects have been successful due to their focus on citizen education and engagement through community leadership.

Project Manager Qualifications

Laura Scholl, Director of Environmental Programs (Aug 2013- present), Bachelor of Science, Fisheries and Wildlife, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. Graduated with Distinction.

- Project Manager for Clean Water Trust Fund Project: Blooming Alleys for Clean Water, Neighborhood of Raingardens, and business district improvement projects. Manages outreach, engagement, project coordination, and communications for Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water and for Pollinators program.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Saint Paul, Minnesota, Minnesota GreenCorps Member, Metro Blooms September 2012 – August 2013

Hennepin County Environmental Services, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Wetland Health Evaluation Program Team Leader – Bloomington Team, April 2013 – December 2016