



## MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

**Date:** September 7, 2023  
**To:** CLFLWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Mike Kinney, District Administrator  
**Subject:** Partnership Grant Opportunity



**District Wide**

### Background/Discussion

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the board with an update about a potential partnership grant opportunity and obtain board direction to move forward with providing a letter of support to MN Lakes and Rivers.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) administered by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) is a significant state grant program. Per the LCCMR's website, "the purpose of the ENRTF is to provide a long-term, consistent, and stable source of funding for activities that protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's 'air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources' for the benefit of current citizens and future generations." This program funds a wide array of natural resources work and is applicable to a lot of the CLFLWD's work and our partners' work. There is no minimum or maximum grant request, and no match requirement (though leveraged match funds increase a proposal's ranking).

The District applied to this grant program in 2018 for the Sunrise River/Highway 61 Wetland Enhancement project but was unsuccessful (the District was later successful in obtaining multiple other grants for this project). More recently, Great River Greening obtained a \$77,000 ENRTF grant to perform restoration work on the District's North Shore Trail Nature Area property. Partnerships are a priority for the ENRTF program.

The District has another opportunity for at least one partnership grant request through this program. Staff have been in contact with the nonprofit organization Minnesota Lakes and Rivers (MLR) to discuss opportunities for collaboration and joint grant proposals. MLR is heavily involved in shoreline landowner outreach and promotion of shoreline stewardship.

### Shoreline Restoration & Stewardship

The District could work with MLR, and potentially other nearby partners, to prepare an ENRTF grant proposal to perform shoreline outreach and restoration projects. The District would work closely with MLR and local lake associations which would help spread the message further.



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Shoreline restorations and shoreline stewardship are some of the multiple high priority goals and metrics in CLFLWD's Watershed Management Plan.

The next RFP for the ENRTF is expected to open in January 2024 and close in March 2024. If awarded, funding would be made available starting July 2025. MN Lakes and Rivers is willing to apply to the next round of funding and serve as fiscal agent on behalf of CLFLWD and potentially other Lower St. Croix River Watershed partners.

For context, the District has several other shoreline restoration and shoreline outreach grant applications recently completed and currently in progress. Most grant programs have strict requirements for match. For example, most state grant programs require that a "non-state" match be provided (i.e., one state-sourced grant can't cover the match for another state-sourced grant). However, given the wide array of grant sources (federal, state, local), it's possible that one grant may account for the match portion of another grant. The District has experience doing this with past projects such as the Moody Lake Wetland Rehabilitation, CR50 Iron Enhanced Sand Filter, and Sunrise River/Highway 61 Wetland Enhancement.

	<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1	Conservation Partners Legacy (Expedited Conservation Projects)	\$8,000	\$800 (10% non-state match)	Awarded and completed; restored shoreline and implemented educational signage in the city park on Shields Lake. This may serve as a demonstration site to aid in outreach. Project completed in June 2023.
2	Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$77,000	\$10,000 (no min match, but leveraged funds encouraged)	Awarded and in-progress; manage invasive buckthorn and restore native vegetation on a shoreland parcel on Forest Lake (North Shore Trail Nature Area). Partnership with Great River Greening (GRG is the fiscal agent).
3	MN Glacial Lakes Partnership	\$60,000	\$60,000 (1:1 non-federal match)	Applied in early 2023 for grant to implement shoreline restorations, shoreland inventories, and outreach. This program requires a 1:1 match (a 10% minimum match is common for other grant programs the District



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				applies to, but this program is different). Award decision to be announced in late 2023 or early 2024, with grant funds being available mid-late 2024.
4	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - America the Beautiful Challenge Grant	TBD	TBD (10% non-federal match)	Application amount TBD to implement shoreline restorations and outreach. The District is part of a statewide and interagency shoreline workgroup that can apply for this funding. The group was not selected for funding this year, but can try again next year. MnDNR would be fiscal agent.
5	Clean Water Fund Projects & Practices	\$100,000	\$10,000 (10% non-state match)	Applied in August 2023 for grant to restore a highly degraded residential shoreline on Comfort Lake and implement a targeted shoreline outreach campaign.
6	Conservation Partners Legacy (Expedited Conservation Projects)	\$40,000	\$4,000 (10% non-state match)	Application submitted for grant to implement a shoreline restoration project on a City of Forest Lake park off North Shore Circle, pending City approval. This project will aid in outreach by serving as a demonstration site and will be supported with public outreach. Award decision to be announced in October.
7	Conservation Partners Legacy (Expedited Conservation Projects)	TBD	TBD (10% non-state match)	The District plans to continue to work with the City of Forest Lake, pending the City's approval, to apply for additional ECP grant funds to implement shoreline restorations and native plantings on city-owned parks and dead-end streets around Forest Lake in the future.
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$285,000</b>	<b>\$84,800</b>	



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### Recommended Action

Proposed Motion: Manager \_\_\_\_\_ moves to direct the administrator to pursue shoreline grant partnership opportunities with MN Lakes and Rivers and provide a letter of support. Seconded by Manager \_\_\_\_\_.

Below is additional information in the form of a Q&A.

### Q&A

1. How much time will this require of CLFLWD staff?
  - a. Likely less time than it would take to apply for and administer this sort of grant on our own. MLR has expressed willingness to take a leadership role in the grant writing and grant administration and to serve as the fiscal agent. MLR has experience in this role, working with watershed management entities elsewhere in the state. The CLFLWD has never administered an ENRTF grant on its own, but if it is similar to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund, the grant administration requires a significant amount of time. The staff time required to seek an ENRTF grant on the District's own would likely exceed the amount of time needed to work with a partnership, especially if another organization serves as the fiscal agent. If other partners participate in the project(s), they would need to assign a staff member to lead implementation in their watershed. CLFLWD staff would not be implementing work outside CLFLWD boundaries.
  
2. How does this proposal fit within our Watershed Management Plan priorities? This proposal would directly advance the following goal and metric by implementing shoreline restorations, promoting shoreline stewardship, and potentially providing funding for more shoreland inventories.
  - a. 5200, Goal 5: Promote natural, deep rooted, native vegetation buffers to ensure at least 75% of lakeshore parcels have at least 75% natural shoreline condition.
  - b. 3005, Priority behavior change outcome related to Goal 1: Increased instances of deep-rooted native vegetation along lake shorelines and streambanks