



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2014 Work Plan

**Date of Report:** January 30, 2014  
**Date of Next Status Update Report:** December 30, 2014  
**Date of Work Plan Approval:**  
**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2017  
**Does this submission include an amendment request?** No

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**PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship Academy**

**Project Manager:** Jenny Gieseke  
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**Location:** Statewide

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<b>Total ENRTF Project Budget:</b>	<b>ENRTF Appropriation:</b>	<b>\$392,000</b>
	<b>Amount Spent:</b>	<b>\$0</b>
	<b>Balance:</b>	<b>\$392,000</b>

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a

**Appropriation Language:**

\$392,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources in cooperation with Conservation Corps Minnesota to continue a program to train and mentor future conservation professionals by providing apprenticeship service opportunities with soil and water conservation districts. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2017, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

**I. PROJECT TITLE: MINNESOTA CONSERVATION APPRENTICESHIP ACADEMY**

**II. PROJECT STATEMENT:** The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy transfers knowledge from experienced professionals to the next generation of conservation managers. Future conservation leaders need to be familiar with Minnesota’s widely varying land-use practices, water and soil resources, plant and animal habitats, and landowner concerns if we hope to maintain the capacity of local organizations to deliver conservation on the ground. While college graduates with conservation-related degrees are knowledgeable in technology, theory, and research methods, they still need to develop their on-the-ground skills. Communicating with landowners and implementing quality projects are vital to the success of conservation efforts and best learned from seasoned professionals. Real-world experience gained with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) during their busy season is experience that textbooks cannot convey.

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) works under a contract from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to recruit interested SWCDs and university students, and then matches them by geography and interest. Apprentices gain skills and experience in areas such as water resource management, conservation inspections, surveying, and habitat restoration. In turn, apprentices will bring knowledge of emerging technologies and other innovations to improve the quality and productivity of current conservation efforts. During the first two seasons of the academy, apprentices showed significant knowledge gains in project planning and implementation. This was summarized by apprentice Mathias V. at the end of his term, “I was able to learn first-hand from a wide variety of natural resource professionals including engineers, technicians, specialists from the NRCS, DNR, MPCA, and more: A million times better than a textbook or a lecture hall. And, I got to tangibly help them all too! I learned more in my summer there than in a year or two of environmental engineering class.”

The ENRTF funded a cohort of 30 apprentices during the summer of 2011 and cohorts of 35 in 2012 and 2013. In total, 100 students have participated in this program to date. Of the 65 participants from 2011 and 2012, 34 are currently employed or completing a degree in natural resource management or a related field. Additionally, 38 students will participate in the 2014 program. This work plan would provide an opportunity for 60 new apprentices during the summers of 2015 and 2016. When initially proposed to LCCMR, the opportunity for this project was viewed as a 4 to 8 year project to ensure seamless transition for SWCDs around Minnesota. This work plan represents years 5 and 6.

**III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**Project Status as of (December 30, 2014):**

**Project Status as of (June 30, 2015):**

**Project Status as of (December 30, 2015)**

**Project Status as of (June 30, 2016):**

**Project Status as of (December 30, 2016)**

**Final Report Summary (June 30, 2017)**

**Overall Project Outcomes and Results:**

**IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

**ACTIVITY 1:** Contract, oversight, and technical assistance for Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa

**Description:** The intent is to build on the solid foundation of the apprentice program and further enhance program quality. This result is administratively focused, as the contract and employment arrangements details are critical for all parties. BWSR will provide guidance in interpreting evaluation data from previous years and implementing improvements based on the data. Similarly, BWSR will assist with final program evaluation by comparing the experience and knowledge of the apprentices prior to the field season to their knowledge after the field season. The benefits of the apprentice program to the districts will also be evaluated.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:**

**ENRTF Budget:** \$ 6,000  
**Amount Spent:** \$ 0  
**Balance:** \$6,000

**Activity Completion Date:** November 30, 2016

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>
1. execute contract between BWSR and Conservation Corps	August 30, 2014	0
2. create employment agreement format and program documentation describing schedule and duties; employment agreements and management	October 15, 2014	\$1000
3. close out year one and evaluate the program based on input from apprentices and host districts. Skills gained, knowledge of the conservation delivery system in MN and program satisfaction are among the topics that will be evaluated.	December 31, 2015	\$2,500
4. close out year two and evaluate the program based on input from apprentices and host districts. Skills gained, knowledge of the conservation delivery system in MN and program satisfaction are among the topics that will be evaluated.	November 30, 2016	\$2,500

**Activity Status as of (December 30, 2014):**

**Activity Status as of (June 30, 2015):**

**Activity Status as of (December 30, 2015)**

**Activity Status as of (June 30, 2016):**

**Activity Status as of (December 30, 2016)**

**Final Report Summary:**

**Activity 2:** Recruit participating SWCDs; Develop 30 employment agreements; Recruit, select, and train 30 academy participants; Repeat with 30 participants for year two.

**Description:** BWSR and the CCMI will approach University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and University environmental programs for assistance in recruiting candidates. The CCMI will match students and recent graduates with SWCDs and Technical Service Areas (TSA – a joint powers entity of SWCDs). Both the SWCD and the apprentices will receive training to clarify expectations and requirements for successful participation in the program. The CCMI will serve as the employer of record and handle all payroll and personnel issues (e.g. AmeriCorps credits) until conclusion of summer employment.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:**

**ENRTF Budget:** \$ 386,000  
**Amount Spent:** \$ 0  
**Balance:** \$386,000

**Activity Completion Date:** October 15, 2016

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>
1. design recruitment materials and conduct recruitment at educational institutions, online, and through other media	November 30, 2014	\$6,000
2. generate list of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor)	December 30, 2014	\$0.00
3. match candidates with interested SWCDs	April 31, 2015	\$3,000
4. employ 30 apprentices	October 15, 2015	\$184,000
5. design recruitment materials and conduct recruitment at educational institutions, online, and through other media	November 30, 2015	\$6,000
6. generate list of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor); year 2	December 30, 2015	0
7. match candidates with interested SWCDs; year 2	April 31, 2016	\$3,000
8. employ 30 apprentices; year 2	October 15, 2016	\$184,000

**Activity Status as of** *(December 30, 2014):*

**Activity Status as of** *(June 30, 2015):*

**Activity Status as of** *(December 30, 2015)*

**Activity Status as of** *(June 30, 2016):*

**Activity Status as of** *(December 30, 2016)*

**Final Report Summary:**

#### **V. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** The CCMI will be the primary disseminator and provide a link on their website describing the program ([www.conservation corps.org](http://www.conservation corps.org)). The program recruiting through environmental and engineering departments at several universities has been successful in garnering significant student interest from around the state. BWSR and the MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts will also offer descriptions of the program and link to the CCMI site. MASWCD has been spreading this idea nationally through the National Association of Conservation Districts. BWSR has done likewise through the National Association of State Conservation Agencies.

**Activity Status as of** *(December 30, 2014):*

**Activity Status as of** *(June 30, 2015):*

**Activity Status as of** *(December 30, 2015)*

**Activity Status as of** *(June 30, 2016):*

**Activity Status as of** *(December 30, 2016)*

**Final Report Summary:**

**VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. ENRTF Budget Overview:**

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Personnel:</b> BWSR Training Coordinator @0.04 FTE (non-general fund employee).	\$ 6,000
<b>Contracts:</b> Conservation Corps Minnesota for manager time (\$80,000), apprentice stipends and benefits (\$262,000), training (\$20,000), and site visits (\$12,000). Included in contract are funds for recruitment, background checks, recruiting ads, and materials (\$12,000).	\$ 386,000
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 392,000</b>

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** Project management and field visit time - none seeking reimbursement

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:** NA

**Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:** One non-general funded BWSR employee will be used to provide consultation and analysis of annual and longitudinal measures being collected. Her time will be approximately 0.04 FTE.

**Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:** This is a two-year program to fund 60 apprentice positions for approximately 520 hours per position. This equates to approximately 15 FTEs.

**B. Other Funds:**

NA

**VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:**

**A. Project Partners:**

Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa will receive ENRTF funding for this project via contract.

BWSR will receive funding through the appropriation.

Additional partners not receiving funding through ENRTF:

MN Association of SWCDs, individual SWCDs, University and State College systems, field staff of NRCS and other agencies

**B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:**

This project proposal seeks to utilize the capacity that has been built and the momentum gained during the first years of the Apprenticeship Academy. The project will meet the needs of SWCDs with 30 apprentices in each of the 2015 and 2016 field seasons. In addition to the immediate impact at the local level, this project will prepare conservation leaders that will shape environmental strategy and implementation for the next 40 years.

BWSR and CCMI are developing long-term funding strategies for the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy that involves a mixture of federal, state, local, foundation, and private support.

**C. Spending History:**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>M.L. 2008 or FY09</b>	<b>M.L. 2009 or FY10</b>	<b>M.L. 2010 or FY11</b>	<b>M.L. 2011 or FY12-13</b>	<b>M.L. 2013 or FY14</b>
ENRTF			368,000		
ENRTF				200,000	
ENRTF					186,000

**VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: NA**

**IX. VISUAL ELEMENT or MAP(S):** Exact locations will not be known until April 2015 and April 2016. Maps of Apprentice locations will be provided as attachments to status update reports as the information becomes available.

**X. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS WORKSHEET: NA**

**XI. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: NA**

**XII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than December 30, 2014, June 30, 2015, December 30, 2015, June 30, 2016, and December 30, 2016. A final report and associated products will be submitted after completion of the summer work season and analysis of exit interviews and before June 30, 2017.



<b>Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund</b>								
<b>M.L. 2014 Project Budget</b>								
<b>Project Title:</b> <i>Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship Academy</i>								
<b>Legal Citation:</b> <i>M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a</i>								
<b>Project Manager:</b> <i>Jenny Gieseke</i>								
<b>Organization:</b> <i>BWSR</i>								
<b>M.L. 2014 ENRTF Appropriation:</b> \$ 392,000								
<b>Project Length and Completion Date:</b> 2 years; December 2016								
<b>Date of Report:</b> <i>January 4, 2016</i>								

<b>ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET</b>	<b>Activity 1 Budget</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Activity 1 Balance</b>	<b>Activity 2 Budget</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Activity 2 Balance</b>	<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<i>BWSR to provide contract, oversight, and technical assistance for CCMI.</i>		<i>Recruit participating SWCDs; Develop 30 employment agreements; Recruit, select, and train 30 academy participants; Repeat</i>					
<b>Personnel:</b> BWSR Training Coordinator @0.04 FTE (non-general fund employee).	\$6,000		\$6,000			\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000
<b>Contracts:</b> <b>Two years of</b> Conservation Corps Minnesota for manager time (\$80,000), apprentice stipends and benefits (\$262,000), training (\$20,000), and site visits (\$12,000). Included in contract are funds for recruitment, background checks, recruiting ads, and materials (\$12,000).			\$0	\$386,000		\$386,000	\$386,000	\$386,000
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$386,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$386,000</b>	<b>\$392,000</b>	<b>\$392,000</b>

## Conservation Apprentice Academy Placement Sites

