



Protect Community Forests by Managing Ash for EAB Grants

2021 Request for Applications

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Grant Overview

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources welcomes applications from local units of government within Minnesota that assist communities in managing ash for emerald ash borer (EAB) on public land, and improve community forests by involving community members and planting a diversity of trees.

Eligible Activities

- Public tree inventories
- Developing a management plan that includes an EAB component (*grantees must adopt an EAB management plan through this program if they do not already have one in place*)
- Ash tree and stump removal and tree replanting on public land
- Chemical treatment of ash trees on public land with an injectable non-neonicotinoid insecticide (i.e. emamectin benzoate) in communities up to 10 miles outside of generally infested areas across Minnesota (please see [online](#) guidance for more information)
- Tree planting for diversity
- Resident education and engagement – *you will not have to budget (pay) for technical assistance through either of the following programs; if applying for assistance with tree plantings, you will need to purchase the trees for planting. Note that snacks for volunteers are an ineligible expense, and must be budgeted through matching funds.*
 - Operational Assistance through Tree Trust, working in conjunction with Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (CCMN&IA): Tree Trust is uniquely suited to assist communities with the design, planning and management of community volunteer tree plantings. Tree Trust, with additional support from CCMN&IA, is able to supply the tools, technical assistance and volunteer support necessary to engage and empower your community's volunteers in creating a greener future.
 - Educational Assistance through the University of Minnesota's Tree Steward volunteer program: The Tree Steward Program is a community-based program where city/county staff or representatives will request Tree Steward training for community members to turn them into knowledgeable volunteers. This education allows the local residents to get involved with caring for their community's urban and community forests as advanced volunteer stewards. Tree Steward volunteers can be trained in a wide array of topics related to trees based on the needs within your community. This education can include, but is not limited to, the following topics:
 - Properly planting trees and leading others at planting events
 - Properly pruning young trees to improve the overall health and structure
 - Pruning suckers and sprouts from young and mature trees to ensure safety and proper sightlines for the public
 - Watering devices available for use and the benefits of utilizing watering devices for young and newly planted trees
 - Installation of watering devices on public trees
 - Identification of common tree diseases and pests
 - How to identify trees of concern
 - How to report trees of concern to your community so action can be taken

Eligible Applicants

All local units of government within Minnesota are eligible. This includes cities, counties, regional authorities, joint powers boards, towns, Tribal nations, and parks and recreation boards in cities of the first class.

Priority will be given to:

- Communities who have staff, who plan to certify their staff during the grant period, or who will contract with companies with staff with professional tree care credentials (such as Minnesota Tree Inspector, International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist, etc.). Any such credentials must be listed on the application to be considered.
- Projects removing and replacing ash trees that pose significant public safety concerns.
- Projects that benefit underserved populations and areas of concern for environmental justice (communities with higher populations of low-income residents, or people of color, including tribal communities, or both). Please reference the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's interactive environmental justice [map](#) for more information. Applicants should describe how the proposed project activities benefit these communities.

Funding

The DNR has \$2.4 million available to fund projects managing EAB through community forestry activities on public lands. Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). There is no minimum to the dollar amount applicants can request. The maximum reimbursement amount that will be funded is \$150,000.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive grant process with review by a committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge. DNR expects to announce selected grantees by Monday, February 14, 2022. If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures after the grant contract is fully executed and the grant has reached its effective date.

Match Requirements and Explanation

No matching funds are required. If applicants choose to provide a matching contribution, it may be in-kind, cash match, or both. A cash match is a direct project expense provided by a grantee as a contribution to the project; i.e., cash expenditures for costs related to the specific project. This can include project-related staff salaries only if they are dedicated to the project, consultant's fees or contractor expenses, equipment rentals and travel costs. In-kind match funds are materials and services, salaries and wages (including fringe benefits) being used that are not project-dedicated, space or utilities, equipment and/or technical assistance provided by the grantee or donated by a third party specifically for the project. All contributions, whether cash or in-kind, will be accepted as a grantee's matching funds when those contributions meet the following criteria:

1. Are verifiable from the grantee's records;
2. Are not included as matching contributions for any other project, contract or program;
3. Are not services or other grant funds from the State of Minnesota;
4. Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishing grant objectives; and
5. Are incurred and contributed within the grant period (not before the contract is fully executed, or after the grant timeline ends).

Minimum Requirements

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity. Minimum requirements are:

- **Adopting an EAB management plan through this grant process if the community does not yet have one in place.**
- Showing the ability to implement the project and submit final report by June 30, 2025.
- Replanting a minimum of one tree for each tree removed through grant, match funds, or both.
- Providing photo documentation of the project's progress at appropriate phases, and illustrations,

diagrams, charts, graphs, and maps to show results. All trees removed, planted, or treated must be mapped and submitted. Public tree inventories completed through this project must be made accessible to DNR.

- Publicly posting and promoting grant project information and purpose.
- Complying with all Federal and State laws and regulations related to the completion of projects as stated in the grant agreement.

Additional Criteria

- Tree planting projects must follow standards set in [A Pocket Guide to Planting Trees](#)
- Tree inventory projects must submit obtained data to the DNR in a shapefile format
- Tree planting projects must identify tree species; site location; and number, size, and type of planting stock
 - Species list must increase the diversity of the community's tree canopy to work toward the 20-10-5 guidelines, meaning a community has no more than 20% of their trees within a single family, no more than 10% of their trees within a single genus, and no more than 5% of their trees within a single species. If your community does not have a completed tree survey, contact the DNR at ucf.dnr@state.mn.us to receive your community's 2010 tree survey.
 - Species list for trees to be planted needs to be submitted and approved by DNR prior to planting.
 - Species list and numbers can be amended following the submission of tree inventory/survey data.
 - Tree stock can be ¾-2 inch caliper bareroot or a container class size #20 or smaller. DNR recommends trees be purchased with a one-year warranty.
 - Balled and burlapped trees are **not** eligible through this grant program.
- Tree planting projects must include a 3-year maintenance plan

Priority Projects

Ensuring fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards is a policy of the State of Minnesota. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant making. [The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities, disparities, or both.

Projects that clearly benefit underserved populations and areas of concern for environmental justice (communities with higher populations of low-income residents, or people of color, including Tribal nations, or both) will be rated higher. Please reference the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's interactive environmental justice [map](#) for more information. Applicants should describe how the proposed project activities benefit and serve these communities.

Eligible Project Expenses

Eligible project expenses are those incurred through project activities that are directly related and necessary to produce the outcomes described in the project application. Grant funds can be used for, but will not be limited to:

- Professional contracts for technical assistance, resident education and engagement, or project implementation by individuals or organizations not a part of the local government unit (including public tree inventories, EAB management plans, tree removal and replanting, chemical treatment with injectable non-neonicotinoid insecticide, and tree planting)
- Site preparation and planting, including mulch, watering bags, staking materials, and tree wrap or guards

- Purchase of chemicals for injectable non-neonicotinoid insecticide treatment (such as emamectin benzoate)
- Equipment purchases less than \$5,000 that are used to complete the project
- Equipment rental
- Gravel bed construction
- Purchase of trees for diversity

Ineligible Project Expenses

Ineligible project expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Costs incurred prior to the start date on the fully executed grant agreement
- Staff time for local government unit employees
- Purchase of trees listed on the [Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants](#) list, including Amur cork tree, Amur maple, autumn olive, black locust, buckthorn, Norway maple, Russian olive, Siberian elm, and tree of heaven
- Purchase of balled and burlapped trees, containerized trees larger than #20, and bareroot trees greater than 2" caliper diameter
- Purchase of tree species that already make up 10% or more of the community's public trees, or whose family makes up 20% or more of the public trees
- Purchase of plants such as shrubs, living ground covers, sod, grass seed, and flowers
- Purchase of land or easements
- Major soil and grade changes or construction
- Equipment purchases equal to or exceeding \$5,000
- Purchase of meals or snacks for volunteers
- Experimental practices not approved by DNR

Questions about additional eligible or ineligible expenses can be direct to ucf.dnr@state.mn.us.

Application Instructions

When filling out the application, ensure all sections are completed and the application is submitted by the deadline. Pay close attention to requested information and respond to all questions. If funded, answers will be incorporated into the grant work plan; therefore, make sure enough information is provided, especially in the timeline and budget sections, to serve as a complete work plan. Clearly demonstrate how the application connects to eligible activities.

A complete application will consist of the following documents:

1. Application form (PDF, format unchanged)
2. Budget (Excel, format unchanged, additional lines added as needed)
3. 3-Year Tree Maintenance Plan for newly-planted trees, *if planting trees* (PDF, format unchanged)
4. Species and Stock List from which trees will be planted, *if planting trees* (any format acceptable; contact ucf.dnr@state.mn.us with questions about species eligibility)
5. EAB Management Plan, if already completed (communities **must** have adopted or will adopt an EAB Management Plan through this grant process)
6. Letter of Support, *if collaborating with an outside organization* (any format acceptable)

Application Submission Instructions

After reading through the Request for Applications, complete all parts of the application found [online](#). Grant applicants are required to submit applications by email to ucf.dnr@state.mn.us. Applications must be received electronically by **January 24, 2022**, to be considered eligible for funding. DNR is not responsible for

any technical or logistical problems causing an application to be received late. The applicant is responsible for ensuring their submission is received by DNR by the deadline; applications received after the deadline will not be eligible for consideration. All applicants will be notified by February 14, 2022, whether or not project is to be funded.

Review Process and Timeline

A UCF Grants Steering Committee, made up of Department of Natural Resources Forestry staff, Department of Agriculture staff, and select stakeholders, will recommend projects and award amounts. The steering committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. DNR will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for final award decisions. *The award decisions of DNR are final and not subject to appeal.*

RFA posted on the DNR website	November 29, 2021
Application Questions due	January 12, 2022
Applications due.....	January 24, 2022
Application Grant Review Process.....	three weeks
Project Selection; Grant Agreement Negotiations Begin	February 14, 2022
Work Plans Approved, Contracts Executed, Grant Work Begins.....	May 31, 2022

Questions:

Submit questions to ucf.dnr@state.mn.us. Questions must be submitted no later than January 12, 2022. Answers will be posted weekly [online](#).

Data Privacy and Trade Secret Notice

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant’s eligibility to receive a Protect Community Forests grant. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. Applicants may decline to complete this application without any legal consequence. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant; incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applications are private or nonpublic until opened. Once the applications are opened, the name and address of the applicant and the amount requested is public. All other data in an application is private or nonpublic data until all agreements are fully executed. After DNR has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data in the applications is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. § 13.37. A statement by a grantee that the application is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the application (Minn. Stat. § 13.599, subd. 3).

Liability and Project Implementation

DNR will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation and production of a proposal, nor for any work performed prior to the execution of the contract. Project work and expenses that are eligible for reimbursement with grant funds CANNOT be started or incurred until the grant contract is fully executed. Grant agreements are expected to be finalized by May 31, 2022. Related grant project work can begin after all signatures are obtained. Interim reports and final reports will be required for all grant-funded projects.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture considers **May 1 – September 30** to be the flight season for EAB. This means that EAB adult beetles are emerging from infested wood or trees and flying in search of new hosts during this time. The best management practice is to not remove ash trees when EAB are actively flying (May-September), to avoid the risk of EAB emerging from this material in transit or at a processing location.

Reimbursement

All funds will be awarded on a reimbursement basis. Following reimbursement request submissions (provided that work has been completed without issue), grants funds will be reimbursed up to 90%, with the final 10% retained until the project is completed. The Reimbursement Request Form and required reports must be received by:

1. December 15, 2022
2. June 15, 2023
3. December 15, 2023
4. June 15, 2024
5. December 15, 2024
6. June 30, 2025

Project Completion

All project work must be completed, and the final request for reimbursement (along with final reports) must be submitted by June 30, 2025.

Other Considerations

All proposals submitted in response to this RFA become the property of the DNR. DNR reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, otherwise use, and to authorize others to use materials produced under this grant agreement.

DNR also reserves the right to:

- Post funded proposals and reports, including images and maps, to the DNR website
- Reject any or all proposals received
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant
- Use any or all ideas submitted unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFA requirements and with appropriate notice to potential applicants, to best serve the interests of the state of Minnesota
- Amend program specifications after their release, with appropriate notice to potential applicants
- Require a good faith effort on the part of the grantee to work with DNR subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results
- Withhold any payments when contract conditions are not met

Exhibit A: Application evaluation score sheet

Selection Criteria and Weight

The steering committee will be reviewing each eligible application on a 100-point scale. Scores will be used to develop final recommendations. Applicants are encouraged to score their own applications using the evaluation score sheet before submitting the application. While not required, this step may help applicants meet the criteria that grant reviewers will be scoring.

Applications to the Protect Community Forests by Managing Ash for EAB Grants will be evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria and points:	
1. Project Overview and Need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application is clear and complete Community has a readiness to take on a project of the proposed scope and size Project focuses on significant public safety concerns 	25
2. Project Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline provides specific dates for all activities Timeline is easy to read and comprehend Timeline follows best management practice of not removing ash trees when EAB are actively flying (no ash removals May-September) 	20
3. Project Budget and Budget Explanation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget explanation provides specific dollar amounts for anticipated use Budget totals equal amount requested Financially realistic and cost effective Project seeks to replant more trees than removed 	15
4. Project Impacts on Priority Populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and collaboration clearly serves and includes areas of concern for environmental justice (communities with higher populations of low-income residents, people of color, including tribal communities, or both) Applicant demonstrates actionable items for these communities (examples include program focal areas, outreach offered in multiple languages, added inclusion); impacts on diverse populations are clear and tangible 	20
5. Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication strategies directly related to project accomplishments, activities, or both, and multiple forms of communication are listed with potential to reach the public EAB-related messaging included 	10
6. Key Personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All certifications and education degrees are listed for staff or contractors A high scoring community will have staff or contractors with a degree in a related field, or a combination/multiple staff with ISA Certified Arborist, TCIA accreditation, or both 	10
Total	100