

2026 Annual Application Questions and Answers

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program
2026 Annual Notice of Grant Opportunity
Version 2; Date: 12/05/2025

Introduction

On November 11, 2025, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) published the Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program "[2026 Annual Notice of Grant Opportunity](#)". Program staff have received several questions from potential applicants. We are sharing the answers, so all have the same information.

Please contact us if you have additional questions.

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Questions and Answers

What information do you want to see for the budget in the two page-proposal?

In the project section, you should provide an estimated cost of the project (if known). You should include brief description of expenses so we can determine if the costs are eligible. For example: "We expect this project will cost \$150,000 total. We need funds for salary/fringe, travel to collect data at five sites within the coastal area, supplies, and indirect (15% de Minimis). [My organization] will provide 50% of project costs from [non-federal source]."

We are a small local government. Can we contract for a (e.g., comprehensive plan)?

Yes. You must follow municipal contracting law ([Minnesota Statute 471.345](#)) when subcontracting any part of the project. Non-profits and/or the University must follow appropriate state and federal subcontracting laws.

What issues are relevant for the reduced match option?

This year, we are offering less than 1:1 match to assist small organizations that don't have the capital/funds to provide a 1:1 match. However, we will consider reduced match from any organization that requests it.

Do we need to apply and get approved for a < 1:1 match prior to December 11?

No. It is not necessary to provide advanced notice or receive approval prior to submitting your project summary.

Can I plant trees outside the coastal boundary?

No. Planting trees is a coastal resource improvement project (306A). The entire 306A project must be within the coastal boundary.

The project must be complete by December 31, 2027. What if I apply for a construction project, and we run into delays. Is an extension possible?

The federal award that would fund the project expires December 31, 2027. However, a no-cost extension is possible from NOAA (up to 18 months). We would ask that you communicate with us early regarding possible delays so the DNR can apply for an extension on the federal award.

What about letters of support? I don't see a space/time for them?

You may submit letters of support with your task description to the Coastal Council, however they are not required and may not be reviewed.

There may be rare instances where a letter of support may be requested by the DNR or NOAA. This includes any partnerships or work on behalf of one of the Tribal Nations.

We're a non-profit, can we complete a construction project? We don't own the land, the [local municipality] does.

The [NOAA Section 306A Guidance](#) says: "Non-profit organizations can facilitate the implementation of Section 306A projects; however, Section 306A funds must not be allocated to a non-profit organization as a sub-awardee, and non-profit organizations cannot acquire interests in land." You must coordinate with the landowner (municipality) to manage the grant.

Why are you requesting a two-page proposal rather than a full application?

We anticipate submitting a draft cooperative agreement to NOAA early March 2026. In our 'regular' cycle (6 to 7-month process), applicants submit a 20+ page application for review. Then, if selected, re-write their project in a task description that fits NOAA's format.

Having applicants develop the task up front will allow us to negotiate terms and project specifics, as well as ensure all activities and expenses are eligible before they go to the Coastal Council for review. This will allow us to complete every required step of the process in the four months between publishing the notice and submitting a draft to NOAA.

When will I know if my project has been selected for funding?

Officially, your project is not funded until you have entered into a grant contract agreement with the State of Minnesota (expected September 1, 2026). However, there are several touch points before then and we will keep you updated.

- Project Summary – Due 12/11/2025. Reviewed and invited by Coastal Program staff to proceed.
- Task Description – Due (estimated) 01/30/2026. The task will first be reviewed and recommended by the Coastal Council. We will notify applicants of the results after the DNR commissioner selects projects (estimated 03/02/2026).
- NOAA review – Pending appropriations and selection by the commissioner, we will send your task to NOAA in early March. If NOAA has questions about your project, we will work with you to respond. After the DNR submits the final Cooperative Agreement to NOAA (estimated 04/01/2026), applications are public data. At this point, the tasks are considered 'final' and fundable.
- Cooperative Award – NOAA should award funds to the DNR starting July 1. At that point the DNR will encumber the funds and set up grant contract agreements with grantees.

Things that may influence funding:

- changes to NOAA’s funding cycle
- consultations with Fish and Wildlife, the State Historic Preservation Office and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Office(s)
- problems with pre-award review/monitoring
- (NOAA or DNR) grant or legal teams find any errors or issues with the cooperative agreement/projects.

Added to Version 2: December 5, 2025

If funded, can I use [activities] as match?

If the activities help achieve the objectives of the grant funded project, they are eligible as match. You must report match expenses the same as you would grant expenses, with detail and supporting documentation (e.g., invoices, receipts).

Can I conduct research outside the Minnesota coastal boundary with grant funds?

If your research compliments or supplements activities that occur within the coastal area, they may be allowed. You should vet any activities outside the boundary with Coastal Program staff.

Did you record the information sessions?

We did not record the sessions. Please review the Notice of Grant Opportunity and these Questions/Answers. If you still have questions, reach out to Coastal Program staff. We are here to help.

I applied for [other] grant funding but will not know if I receive it until spring 2026. Can I still apply for Coastal Program funding, if I want to use this unsecured funding as match? If so, how should I document that?

You can apply. You should include the match source(s) and note if they are in hand or not. If selected for Coastal Program funding, you will be responsible for the agreed upon match amount or the State will withdraw funding or terminate the grant contract agreement.

Can I use grant funds to purchase trail cameras to document habitat presence and numbers?

Yes, you can. You must plan to mount them on existing infrastructure. You could install them on existing trees, buildings, posts etc. For the second review (Task Description), you will need to include a map with the location and a picture of the infrastructure (by the end of January).

If that’s not possible, and you must install new posts or poles, this will be a 306A (low-cost construction) project and you will need to submit a 306A questionnaire and supporting documentation (including proof of land ownership for each location).