



FY 2012 Cooperative Weed Management Area Program Request for Proposal (RFP)

The Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Program was developed in 2008 to promote the cooperative control of invasive species across geographic boundaries to manage and protect natural areas and conservation lands. \$300,000 is available for FY2012 for existing Minnesota CWMA's through this request for proposal.

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RFP General Information

CWMA Program Goals

1. Develop and sustain strong partnerships between landowners, government units and other interested partners to manage invasive species across geographic boundaries
2. Control emerging weed threats and manage invasive species that threaten natural areas and conservation lands
3. Facilitate the removal of invasive plant species through an integrated pest management approach, and the restoration/reconstruction of native plant communities through an ecosystem approach.

What's New for 2012 BWSR Grants

1. Applicants, who have previously received a grant from BWSR, must be in compliance with BWSR requirements for grantee website and eLINK reporting before grant execution and payment.
2. The payment schedule has changed. Funds will be paid in three installments, with 50% of the funds paid upon execution of the grant agreement.
3. Match may be provided from any non-state source.
4. The grant period has been extended until December 31, 2014.
5. Minimum software requirements are established.
6. Documentation of Conflict of Interest procedures is required for awardees.

BWSR Assistance

BWSR Board Conservationists are available to help applicants with grant application development and questions. A map showing the Board Conservationist work areas is available at: http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/contact/BC_areas.pdf. Questions can also be directed to the Dan Shaw, the Program Manager at dan.shaw@state.mn.us, 651-296-0644.

Applicant Eligibility

- CWMAs that were previously established in whole or partially with BWSR funding are eligible applicants for this RFP.
- As the CWMA program is a State Cost-share program SWCDs are the only eligible applicants. Other organizations may consider applying in partnership with SWCDs to help develop and run the Cooperative Weed Management Area project.

Project Period

The project period starts when the grant agreement is "executed," meaning all required signatures have been obtained. Work that occurs before this date is not eligible for reimbursement with grant funds, and cannot be used as match. All grants must be completed by December 31, 2014.

Payment Schedule

Grant payments will be distributed in three installments to the grantee. The first payment of 50% of the grant amount will be paid after execution of the grant agreement. However, initial grant payments will be retained until applicants are in compliance with all BWSR website and eLINK reporting requirements for previously awarded BWSR grants. The grantee will provide notification to BWSR when a minimum of 50% of the awarded grant funds have been expended. The second payment of 40% of the grant amount will be paid once the grantee has expended the first 50% of the grant and has provided BWSR with reconciliation of these expenditures. The last 10% will be paid after all final reporting requirements are met by the established reporting timelines and grantee has provided BWSR with reconciliation of these expenditures.

Native Vegetation

To the extent possible, applicable projects must have vegetation planted or seed sown only of ecotypes native to Minnesota, and preferably of the local ecotype, using a high diversity of species originating from as close to the project site as possible, and protect existing native prairies from genetic contamination. See guidance at:

http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/seeding_guidelines.pdf .

Application Deadline and Timeline for FY2012 CWMA Funding

No late submissions or incomplete applications will be considered for funding.

- September 22, 2011 Application period begins
- **October 14, 2011** **Application deadline at 11:59 PM***
- December 14, 2011 BWSR Board authorizes grant awards (proposed)
- December 15, 2011 Award notices sent out to applicants (proposed)
- January-February 2012 BWSR grant agreements sent out to recipients
- March 30, 2012 Work plan approval deadline
- April 30, 2012 Grant execution deadline

Incomplete Applications:

Applications that do not comply with all application requirements will not be considered for funding, as provided below.

- Components of the application are incomplete, missing, or exceeds narrative page length requirements;
- Any required documentation is missing; and
- The match amount does not meet grant requirements.

CWMA Program Reporting Requirements

- All grant recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of CWMA grants. The grant funds may be used for local grant management and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing the activity.
- BWSR CWMA Funds will be administered via a standard grant agreement. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.
- All BWSR funded projects will be required to develop a work plan including detail relating to the outcome(s) of the proposed project. All activities will be reported via the eLINK reporting system. For more information on eLINK go to: <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/outreach/eLINK/index.html>.
- Grant recipients must display on their website the previous calendar year's detailed information on the expenditure of grant funds and measurable outcomes as a result of the expenditure of funds according to the format specified by the BWSR, by March 15th of each year.

Grants and Public Information

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to an RFP are nonpublic until the application deadline is reached. At that time, the name and address of the grantee, and the amount requested becomes public. All other data is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee is completed. After the application evaluation process is completed, all data (except trade secret data) becomes public. Data created during the evaluation process is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee(s) is completed.

Prevailing Wage

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient or contractor to pay prevailing wages on construction projects to which state prevailing wage laws apply (Minn. Stat. 177.42 – 177.44). All laborers and mechanics employed by grant recipients and subcontractors funded in whole or in part with state funds included in this RFP shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality. Additional information on prevailing wage requirements is available on the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) website: <http://www.dli.mn.gov/LS/PrevWage.asp>. Questions about the application of prevailing wage rates should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091. The Grant recipient is solely responsible for payment of all required prevailing wage rates.

Conflict of Interest

State Grant Policy 08-01, (see http://www.admin.state.mn.us/ogm_policies_and_statute.html) Conflict of Interest for State Grant-Making, also applies to BWSR grantees. Grantees' conflicts

of interest are generally considered organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- 1) A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties,
- 2) A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties, or
- 3) A grantee or potential grantee has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.

Minimum Software Requirements

The applicant must use Microsoft (MS) Office 2007 or newer software in order to utilize the applications MS Excel and MS Word documents.

Questions

This RFP and the 2012 Grant Policy adopted by the BWSR

(<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/index.html>) provide the framework for funding and administration of the 2012 CWMA Program. Questions regarding grant applications should be directed to your area Board Conservationist or Clean Water Specialist

(<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/contact/index.html>) or the Program Manager, Dan Shaw.

Application Guidelines

- Proposals should demonstrate significant, measureable project outputs and outcomes¹. As appropriate, outputs should include scientifically credible estimates of both short-term and long term benefits as well as other measures such as: acres of invasive species treated, increases in diversity levels, etc.
- Proposals must have plans for long-term maintenance and inspection monitoring for the duration of the project's effective life.
- Proposals should demonstrate that, when appropriate, a sufficient partnership exists to implement the project.
- \$300,000 is available for the program for FY2012. Up to \$15,000 can be requested by CWMA's that have previously received BWSR CWMA funding. Up to \$20,000 can be requested by CWMA's that currently involve two or more counties, or CWMA's that plan to expand by adding one or more additional counties (not currently involved in a

¹ The term "outcome" means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out the environmental program or activity associated with the application. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health related or programmatic in nature but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within the grant agreement timeline.

The term "output" or "intermediate outcome" means an environmental activity, effort and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during the grant agreement timeline.

CWMA). Up to \$30,000 can be requested by two existing CWMA's that plan to merge (or merge and add one or more additional counties). Applicants may receive partial funding.

- The CWMA program requires a minimum match of 25% (non-state) or in-kind cash value that can be directly attributed to project accomplishments. As this is a State Cost-share program a maximum of 20% T/A can be used for the program.
- The program application (to be posted on the BWSR website on 9-22-11) consisting of a narrative and budget form must be electronically submitted to BWSR at the following address: BWSR.grants@state.mn.us by 11:59 PM on October 14, 2011.

Table 1: Cooperative Weed Management Area Program Ranking Criteria	
Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
<u>Project Description:</u> The proposed project demonstrates a high potential of long-term success based on project organization and management structure, partner support and community involvement within the project area. Projects that include merging with another CWMA and/or expand the geographic area managed by the CWMA will receive priority consideration.	30
<u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u> The outcomes expected upon completion of the project initiatives are identified, including a description of the resulting primary and secondary public benefits such as managed future costs, human health, pollution reduction, ecosystem health etc.	30
<u>Relationship to CWMA and Conservation Plans:</u> The proposal and species of focus are based on priority actions listed in or derived from CWMA plans, and other local, state and federal conservation and invasive species plans.	20
<u>Species Focus and Management Approach:</u> An approach is defined to manage invasive species using integrated pest management and ecosystem restoration.	20
Total Points Available	100