

**Legal Name of Project Sponsor:** Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission  
**Designated Project Representative:** Laura Jester, Administrator  
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**Project Title:** Northside Neighborhood Engagement & Opportunities in Clean Water Initiatives

**Total Project Cost:** \$302,750  
**Grant Request Amount:** \$200,000

**Project Description**

This project addresses local water quality issues related to urban runoff pollution from private property and provides multiple community benefits by engaging communities in the Harrison Neighborhood of Minneapolis in order to create local expertise in the planning, installation and maintenance of stormwater best management practices (BMPs). The project area lies within the Bassett Creek and Mississippi River Watersheds in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The main stem of Bassett Creek is a Priority 1 stream for the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC), as listed in the 2015 BCWMC Watershed Management Plan. It is included on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Impaired Waters list for aquatic life (due to chlorides) and aquatic recreation (due to fecal coliform). Further, Bassett Creek is listed as having the highest concentration of chloride of Mississippi River Urban Streams in the Metropolitan Council's 2014 Stream Water Quality Assessment. This area is included in the 2014 MPCA Upper Mississippi River Bacteria TMDL & Protection Plan and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Chloride TMDL Study.

The Bassett Creek Watershed is highly developed with many roads, freeways, and parking lots. The use of road salt on these surfaces contributes heavily to the elevated chloride levels in the creek and other waterbodies. Strategies to reduce the use of deicers include educating community members on the responsible use of salt and installing permeable pavement to minimize ice build-up during winter months. To address the bacteria impairment, monitoring continues in the watershed to determine the source(s) of fecal coliform, although pet waste is considered one of the primary sources. Elevated levels of pollutants like chloride and fecal coliform are traced directly to human land use and patterns of behavior. BCWMC goals as outlined in the 2015 BCWMC Watershed Management Plan include increased public awareness of our impact on water quality and initiatives that motivate behavioral changes and engage the public as partners for improved water quality.

Near North Minneapolis has a history of racial, economic, and environmental disparity. The Harrison Neighborhood, which is part of the North Minneapolis HUD promise zone, is comprised primarily of people of color and people who are living in conditions of economic poverty. It is also a community with great knowledge and resilience with a strong and growing community of gardeners working to establish local food networks.

This project partners with local organizations to engage neighborhood property owners and identify opportunities for stormwater management on private property at the alleyway (backyards & driveways) and in the public right-of-way (boulevards). These under-utilized spaces offer significant opportunity for runoff filtration and/or infiltration. The proposed project includes a partnership with youth and young adult outdoor jobs programs. The project will provide on-the-job training and opportunities to receive industry recognized certification in the inspection and maintenance of raingardens as a component of a career pathways initiative. This project helps to address concerns raised by community members about a lack of local jobs and career advancement opportunities for youth and young adults of color in environmental initiatives happening in this North Minneapolis community.

This project will be implemented and managed by Metro Blooms. Their citizen based approach to stormwater management has engaged 20 communities in the installation of more than 500 stormwater BMPs since 2009. With their approach, property owners agree to install stormwater management practices on their property with assistance from youth and young adult outdoor jobs programs, and to maintain the installed practice with assistance through follow-up maintenance education and assistance during the establishment period. The Harrison Neighborhood Association (HNA) will act as the neighborhood partner for community engagement activities. HNA is dedicated to supporting and creating pathways for economic development, leadership, community building, and collective problem solving led by people of color and the people most impacted by disparities in our region. The Youth Outdoors Programs include the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Mississippi River Green Team and the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCM). Crews with these organizations will assist with engagement, and provide labor for installation and establishment-period maintenance. These programs help young people from diverse backgrounds become more connected to the environment, engaged in conservation, involved in the community, and prepared for future employment. It is anticipated that the current and growing demand for maintenance services will create an opportunity for the job training program to be a sustainable, revenue generating program for community partners into the future.

## **Goals & Objectives**

### **Goal 1: Improve water quality in Bassett Creek by engaging community members to install and maintain local BMPs**

**Objective 1:** Work with the HNA to identify 3-4 target blocks within the Harrison Neighborhood based on interest in participation, opportunity for runoff capture, and timing of ash tree removal. Boulevard projects are in conjunction with the MPRB and will follow removal of ash trees. This innovative partnership demonstrates a new model for the MPRB and the City of Minneapolis. Harrison residents will be actively engaged to plan and participate in a community clean water initiative that extends beyond the project period and leverages additional funding for clean water initiatives in North Minneapolis.

**Objective 2:** Engage a minimum of 30% of private property owners (6-10 households) along 3-4 blocks to install and agree to maintain rain gardens, permeable pavement, native plantings, and boulevard bioswales in an environmental project that has direct and immediate benefits for the neighborhood and measurable impacts on local water quality. The project will encourage practices that span multiple properties and create “treatment trains” for overflow during peak rain events. Potential projects were modeled by Metro Blooms in WinSLAMM. Estimated pollutant reductions include 2.6 lbs total phosphorus, 850 lbs sediment, and 622,285 ga runoff annually.

**Objective 3:** Establish and implement an equitable framework to evaluate change in the knowledge, attitudes and practices of project participants that provides measurable outcomes and guides the future replication of the project. Evaluation protocols are developed and implemented that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths each brings. Results will allow us to adapt and share effective project framework.

### **Goal 2: Provide opportunities for neighborhood youth to access job training and career pathways in green infrastructure**

**Objective 1:** Employ neighborhood youth and young adults in outdoor jobs programs as a component of a green career pathways framework. Connect with current underutilized business contractors and develop new local connections to perform contract work and expand career connections. Neighborhood youth outdoor crews (10-15 youth per season) will work alongside Metro Blooms and HNA staff through a place-based, experiential learning framework to plan and implement community engagement and to install and conduct maintenance of native plantings on private property and boulevards. Youth will recognize and experience the impact of their work on the

environment and their community. Local contractors will learn new skills and opportunities in green infrastructure. Staff of partner organizations will receive professional development focused on working with opportunity youth.

**Objective 2:** Develop a Stormwater Management and Sustainable Landscape Inspections and Maintenance Certification Program for youth and young adults in the Minneapolis Near North Side to be used as on-the-job training, and to support job placement in supervisory/leader roles in project Phase II and III.

**Objective 3:** Offer on-the-job training to youth and young adults participating in project implementation to increase knowledge and skills, boost confidence, and award credentials to become more marketable in the local workforce. Training is linked to potential careers in the green industry and may include certification and links to internships.

**Project Budget:**

<b>Grant Request (2016 – 2018; Project Phases I – III)</b>	<b>Estimated Expenses</b>
Project Management and Engagement	\$42,690
Job Training + Certification Program Development and Pilot Implementation	\$50,000
Landscape Contractor and Landscape Supply	\$82,560
Landscape Design Services	\$18,900
Monitoring and Evaluation	\$5,500
Local Travel	\$350
<b>TOTAL GRANT REQUEST</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>

<b>Matching Funds</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Phase I Committed Funds	
Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission	\$4,000
Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention	\$20,000
Conservation Corps MN Youth Outdoors crew	\$5,250
Logic PD (corporate sponsor, in-kind labor and cash)	\$3,700
Phase II – III Pending Funds <sup>1</sup>	
Conservation Corps of MN - Clean Water Trust Funds	\$19,800
Hennepin County Environmental Services	\$50,000
<b>TOTAL Committed and Pending Matching Funds</b>	<b>\$102,750</b>

<sup>1</sup> We anticipate that this successful demonstration project will help to leverage additional funding requests for similar clean water initiatives in the Harrison and Near North Neighborhoods of Minneapolis.

**Project Timeline**

**Phase I:** (May 2016-Oct 2016) Community Exhibit, Installation, Evaluation Development

- Funding is secured for community exhibit and demonstration boulevard installations which will launch community engagement of proposed project. Recruit youth participants and finalize partnerships with Conservation Corps & Mississippi River Green Team
- Metropolitan Council funding would support backyard, driveway, and boulevard stormwater BMP installations during Phase I, and job training program development.

**Phase II:** (Sept 2016 – Oct 2017) Targeted Community Engagement: Identify target blocks and alley captains to lead block scale engagement.

**Phase III:** (May 2017-Oct 2018) Installations and Establishment Period Maintenance. Implement job training program.

**Phase 4:** (Aug 2016-Dec 2018) Conduct before and after evaluation. Analyze results and share lessons learned and best practices.