

## **M.L. 2014 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2017

**PROJECT TITLE:** Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship Academy

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Jenny Gieseke

**AFFILIATION:** BWSR

**MAILING ADDRESS:** 520 Lafayette Road North

**CITY/STATE/ZIP:** St. Paul, MN 55155

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**FUNDING SOURCE:** Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$392,000**

**AMOUNT SPENT: \$ 392,000**

**AMOUNT REMAINING: \$0.00**

### **Overall Project Outcomes and Results**

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. The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy transfers knowledge from experienced Soil and Water Conservation District professionals to the next generation of conservation managers. Real-world experience gained with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) during their busy season is experience that textbooks cannot convey.

This project funded the placement of 30 apprentices in 2015, 31 apprentices in 2016, and 32 apprentices for the first part of 2017. During this time the apprentices stabilized erosion on 916,318 square feet of slopes, planted 61,201 plants, trees, shrubs and seedlings, maintained 22.6 million square feet of restored areas, collected 3,505 water samples and impacted 2,451 people through environmental education and outreach.

In addition to these environmental benefits, the program also has a positive impact on students and conservation districts. 100% of apprentices indicated they felt more prepared to work in the conservation industry as a result of the program, and would recommend it to others. 95% of the Districts were satisfied with the work their apprentices completed, and 99% said they would participate in the program again. Managers also indicated that the work conducted by the apprentices increased the amount of conservation practices delivered by their districts during the program period.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

Information from the project has been disseminated through reports to LCCMR, newsletters by BWSR and through the Conservation Corps newsletter, website and annual report. Information was also used to recruit apprentices.

Communication and outreach activities include the aforementioned reports, press releases, and electronic newsletters. Additionally, BWSR and Conservation Corps staff conducted outreach to SWCDs to find optimal matches between districts and apprentices. Through the course of their work,

the apprentices conducted significant outreach to land owners and residents in topics ranging from easement protection to water quality education.



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

## M.L. 2014 Work Plan

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**Date of Report:** June 30, 2017

**Date of Next Status Update Report:**

**Date of Work Plan Approval:** 1/20/17

**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

**Organization:** Board of Water and Soil Resources

**Mailing Address:** 520 Lafayette Road North

**City/State/Zip Code:** St. Paul, MN 55155

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**Web Address:** [www.bwsr.state.mn.us](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us)

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**Location:** Statewide

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**Total ENRTF Project Budget:**

**ENRTF Appropriation:** \$392,000

**Amount Spent:** \$392,000

**Balance:** \$0

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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):** No work has been completed on the project at this time

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

The Conservation Apprentice Academy started-up in May of 2015 with 30 apprentices ready to work in 30 counties. BWSR and Conservation Corps staff worked together throughout the winter and spring to recruit SWCDs and apprentices, develop individualized work and training plans for apprentices, and organize and orientation for the new apprentices.

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

The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy matched 30 apprentices with 30 SWCDs. All 30 Apprentices completed the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy. Apprentices contributed thousands of hours of conservation service to SWCDs during the peak season for conservation practice implementation. Conservation Corps staff attended site visits at all 30 SWCDs. The site visits provided the member, supervisor, and Corps staff an opportunity to reflect on the term and address any pressing issues. The Conservation Corps staff focused both on the individual development of the apprentice and on the service provided to the site. In addition, all 30

apprentices participated in 3 meetings with each other to share what they have learned and share information on projects they completed.

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

The Conservation Apprentice Academy started-up in May of 2016 with 31 apprentices ready to work in 31 counties. BWSR and Conservation Corps staff worked together throughout the winter and spring to recruit SWCDs and apprentices, develop individualized work and training plans for apprentices, and organize and orientation for the new apprentices.

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

The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy matched 31 apprentices with 31 SWCDs. 30 Apprentices completed the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy and 1 Apprentice did not complete their service term, due to accepting a full time employment position. Apprentices contributed thousands of hours of conservation service to SWCDs during the peak season for conservation practice implementation. Conservation Corps staff completed site visits at all 31 SWCDs. The site visits provided the members, supervisors and Corps staff an opportunity to reflect on the term and address any pressing issues. Conservation Corps staff focused on the individual development of the apprentice as well as the service provided to the site. In addition, all 31 apprentices participated in 2 meetings with each other to share what they learned and present information on projects they completed.

**Amendment Request**

As of December 30, 2016, 30 apprentices were employed in both the 2015 and the 2016 field seasons as described in the ML 2014 Work Plan. However, there is a balance of \$19,608 that could be used to support programming next year. CCMI would be able to utilize these funds before June 30, 2017 when both the BWSR-CCMI contract and the LCCMR work plan expire. CCMI has received requests from SWCDs for the 2017 program year and there are more than 30. If we can use the remaining \$19,608 into next year, we would be able to support 32-33 apprentices in 2017, instead of 30 as described in the 2016 work plan.

**Amendment Approved: [01/20/2017]**

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

The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy matched 61 apprentices with SWCDs between 2015 and 2016. 2016 Apprentice Mark H, placed with Becker SWCD, said, "Participation in the Conservation Academy allowed me to practice what I'd learned in school and gave me a better feel for which skills are valued in this field of work." That year alone he and his fellow Apprentices tackled over 6800 acres of invasive plant species, planted over 35,000 trees, shrubs and/or grasses, and seeded over 514 acres. They installed erosion control measures on 16 acres and spent 200 hours providing important information to the community. One SWCD host noted, "The apprentice provided much needed capacity... He was able to get trained in and complete the work at a high level. This allowed our staff to extend into other obligations and meet deadlines for work completed. This would have been very difficult to achieve without the apprentice position."

At the same time, Apprentices received valuable insight into conservation and management practices, demonstrating increased understanding of the relationship between management agencies and landowners, and particularly the role of a SWCD. Through networking at SWCDs, receiving guidance from their site supervisors and interacting with the community, Apprentices gained greater insight into their own career paths. Haley B, with the Winona SWCD in 2016, commented, "I joined this program to help me figure out what I want to do with my career and I truly believe this summer helped me get pointed in the right direction."

**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: \$6,000**  
**Balance: \$ 0**

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

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>1.</b> execute contract between BWSR and Conservation Corps	August 30, 2014	\$0
<b>2.</b> create employment agreement format and program documentation describing schedule and duties; employment agreements and management	October 15, 2014	\$1,000
<b>3.</b> 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
<b>4.</b> 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):** No work has been completed at this time.

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

A contract was executed between BWSR and the Conservation Corps outlining the agreement for services pertaining to duties, schedule, considerations and conditions of payment for the program.

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

The program has delivered strong outcomes. This is represented through, 1) surveys that identify skills gained by apprentices and 2) surveys by SWCD staff and apprentices. All 30 SWCDs that participated in 2015 would like to partner again with this program. All 30 apprentices that served in the program indicated an increased understanding of the conservation delivery system in Minnesota. One outcome identified by SWCD staff identifies the benefit to SWCDs by bringing new knowledge and technology skills to SWCDs.

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

The contract put in place prior to June 30, 2015 is still in effect. Data is being collected during the summer season that will be used to evaluate the program.

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

The program has delivered strong outcomes. This is represented through, 1) surveys that identify skills gained by apprentices and 2) surveys by SWCD staff and apprentices. All 31 SWCDs that participated in 2016 would like to partner again with this program. All 30 apprentices that completed the program indicated an increased understanding of the conservation delivery system in Minnesota. One outcome identified by SWCD staff identifies the benefit to SWCDs by bringing new knowledge and technology skills to SWCDs.

**Final Report Summary:**

The program has consistently delivered strong outcomes over the course of two years, with benefits to BWSR and to young adults pursuing a career in conservation in Minnesota. Building on the existing foundation of the program, Conservation Corps and BWSR staff worked to improve the program over the last two years, incorporating input from apprentices as well as host districts. SWCDs reported high satisfaction and maintained interest in the program. Applications from interested Apprentices outnumbered available positions each year. All 60 apprentices demonstrated an increased understanding of conservation practices in Minnesota and each participating SWCD expressed interest in renewed partnership.

**Activity 2:** Recruit participating SWCDs; Develop 30 employment agreements; Recruit, select, and train 30 academy participants; Repeat with 30 participants for year two; partially fund 32 academy participants in year 3.

**Budget:** \$386,000

**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: \$ 386,000**  
**Balance: \$ 0**

<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
3. match candidates with interested SWCDs	April 31, 2015	\$3,000
4. employ 30 apprentices	October 15, 2015	\$172,392
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	\$176,000
9. match candidates with interested swcds; year 3	April 31, 2017	\$3000
10. employ 32 apprentices for the first portion of year 3:	June 30, 2017	\$16,608

**Activity Status as of (December 30, 2014):** No work has been completed at this time.

**Activity Status as of (June 15, 2015):**

<b>Deliverable/Outcome (Activity 2)</b>
<p><b>1. design recruitment materials and conduct recruitment at educational institutions, online, and through other media</b></p> <p>Completed for the 2015 program year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment information was designed by program staff for 2015.</li> <li>• Natural resources and environmental programs were contacted for 2015.</li> <li>• Recruitment was conducted at educational institutions in classrooms and at job fairs. Attended career fairs to promote the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy: University of Minnesota’s Job &amp; Internship Fair (attendance of over 3,000 students from the Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris and Duluth branches), the University of Minnesota’s Environmental Resource Fair, Minnesota’s Private Colleges Job Fair, North Hennepin Technical College Job Fair, North Hennepin Community College Job Fair, Gustavus Adolphus Job Fair, Concordia University Job Fair, and University of Minnesota Duluth Environmental Job Fair.</li> <li>• Recruitment was conducted online through online job boards, email blasts, e-newsletters, and social media channels. Position posted to college online job boards that serve 80 state and private colleges and universities in Minnesota. Position posted to Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, The Corps Network and the AmeriCorps web-site.</li> <li>• Placed newspaper ads in strategic areas in Minnesota where Soil and Water Conservation District placement sites are located. Also provided recruitment materials to many SWCDs so that they could recruit from the local community.</li> <li>• Recruitment was conducted by local partners, including alumni, SWCDs, and other supporters. Sent announcement to Corps alumni and partners.</li> <li>• Application was available online for applicants for 2015. Available for apprentice applicants on February 6<sup>th</sup> via Conservation Corps website. Preferred application deadline was March 22<sup>nd</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. generate list of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor)</b></p> <p>Completed for the 2015 program year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Corps sent information about the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy to every SWCD, attended the MASWCD conference, and posted information on the Corps’ website.</li> <li>• Conservation Corps sent out a request for proposals on 10/23/2014. It was distributed to all Minnesota SWCD’s and TSA’s. RFP applications were due 11/30/2014.</li> <li>• Information sent with the RFP included a general overview of the opportunity, instructions on how to apply, and a list of frequently asked questions.</li> <li>• SWCDs submitted applications to the Conservation Corps. The applications were reviewed, scored using a standard rubric, and selected with the approval of BWSR. Placements distributed throughout MN (map attached) based on quality of experience, skill-training potential and equitable geographic distribution.</li> <li>• SWCDs were selected for the 2015 season. In total, 35 different SWCDs applied for 37 apprentices, with 30 able to be awarded.</li> <li>• 30 placements were selected in the following counties: Becker, Big Stone, Brown, Carver, Cottonwood/Jackson, Crow Wing, Dodge, East Otter Tail, Fillmore, Freeborn, Lac Qui Parle, Lake of the Woods, Lyon, Marshall, Martin, Mille Lacs, Pennington, Pope, Ramsey, Renville, Rice, Root River, Scott, Sherburne, South St. Louis, Stevens, Wadena, Washington, Wright, Yellow Medicine.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. match candidates with interested SWCDs</b></p> <p>Completed for the 2015 program year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Corps received 123 apprentice applications for 30 positions by 04/30/2015.</li> <li>• Conservation Corps screened and interviewed applicants and selected apprentices based on region preference, area of interest, skills and qualifications with feedback on final candidates from the SWCD.</li> <li>• SWCD staff were provided with information on the top candidates for their apprenticeship and allowed to select the one they felt provided the best match.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Corps staff provided training conference calls for SWCD mentors in late April and early May and provided an overview of supervisor responsibilities, expectations, Conservation Corps policies and procedures. Conservation Corps site supervisor handbook was sent to each mentor prior to the calls and referenced by Corps staff.</li> <li>• Candidates were notified and provided contact information of the mentor at the SWCD so that introductions and general information could be relayed prior to the start date.</li> </ul>
<b>4. employ 30 apprentices</b>
<p>Started; Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 apprentices were hired by 05/18/2015.</li> <li>• 28 apprentices received general orientation on 5/18 - 5/22. The orientation schedule is included with this progress summary.</li> <li>• Orientation was held for the 28 apprentices for the remainder of the week at the Cloquet Forestry Center, Cloquet, MN. The orientation introduced the apprentices to the program, their role, various partners involved, and provided a networking opportunity.</li> <li>• Apprentices began with a half day at the SWCD office to meet their mentor, familiarize themselves with the SWCD, and review their specific work/training plan.</li> <li>• Using the projects and responsibilities outlined in the SWCD's original proposal, Conservation Corps and SWCD staff developed a schedule of project and training activities for the apprentice to complete throughout the term. Apprentices reviewed their specific work/training plan with their mentor during their first day. Conservation Corps staff facilitated discussion with the apprentices in regards to the work/training plan to increase knowledge of SWCD functions, share best practices, and learn how the various activities are connected as part of a larger effort. The work/training plan will be used as a resource by the apprentice and supervisor to track progress. Conservation Corps staff will review progress at a site visit during the mid-point of the apprentice's term. The work/training plan will also serve as a reflection tool for the apprentice to recognize accomplishments and enable them to translate those achievements to their resumes.</li> <li>• On-site training was provided by the SWCD. This training was outlined in the approved work/training plan specific to the unique position description of each placement. On-site orientation occurred the first full week at the SWCD, and ongoing on-the-job training occurred throughout the apprentices' terms.</li> <li>• 2 apprentices received a condensed, late-hire orientation on 05/26/2015 at the Conservation Corps headquarters in St. Paul. These apprentices, in coordination with their placement sites, will continue their service term beyond the scheduled, primary end-date, in order to complete the term requirements.</li> <li>• Apprentices will continue their service terms into August, 2015.</li> </ul>
<b>5. design recruitment materials and conduct recruitment at educational institutions, online, and through other media</b>
Not completed yet. Planned for Fall of 2015.
<b>6. generate list of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor); year 2</b>
Not completed yet. Planned for Fall of 2015.
<b>7. match candidates with interested SWCDs; year 2</b>
Not completed yet. Planned for Spring of 2016.
<b>8. employ 30 apprentices</b>
Not completed yet. Planned for Summer of 2016.

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

**Deliverable/Outcome (Activity 2)**

#### 4. employ 30 apprentices

Completed for 2015 program year.

- 30 apprentices were hired by 05/18/2015.
- 28 apprentices received general orientation on 5/18 - 5/22. Orientation was held for the 28 apprentices for the remainder of the week at the Cloquet Forestry Center, Cloquet, MN. The orientation introduced the apprentices to the program, their role, various partners involved, and provided a networking opportunity.
- Apprentices began with a half day at the SWCD office to meet their mentor, familiarize themselves with the SWCD, and review their specific work/training plan.
- Using the projects and responsibilities outlined in the SWCD's original proposal, Conservation Corps and SWCD staff developed a schedule of project and training activities for the apprentice to complete throughout the term. Apprentices reviewed their specific work/training plan with their mentor during their first day. Conservation Corps staff facilitated discussion with the apprentices in regards to the work/training plan to increase knowledge of SWCD functions, share best practices, and learn how the various activities are connected as part of a larger effort. The work/training plan was used as a resource by the apprentice and supervisor to track progress. Conservation Corps staff reviewed progress at a site visit during the mid-point of the apprentice's term. The work/training plan also served as a reflection tool for the apprentice to recognize accomplishments and enabled them to translate those achievements to their resumes.
- On-site training was provided by the SWCD. This training was outlined in the approved work/training plan specific to the unique position description of each placement. On-site orientation occurred the first full week at the SWCD, and ongoing on-the-job training occurred throughout the apprentices' terms.
- 2 apprentices received a condensed, late-hire orientation on 05/26/2015 at the Conservation Corps headquarters in St. Paul. These apprentices, in coordination with their placement sites, continued their service term beyond the scheduled, primary end-date, in order to complete the term requirements.
- The Corps managed apprentices, provided ongoing training and development opportunities, and conducted visits to each SWCD throughout the summer.
- Apprentices completed their service terms in August, 2015.

#### 5. design recruitment materials and conduct recruitment at educational institutions, online, and through other media

Started; Ongoing.

- Recruitment information was designed by program staff for 2016.
- Natural resources and environmental programs have been identified and will be contacted in 2016.
- Recruitment will be conducted at educational institutions in classrooms and at job fairs. Corps staff will attend career fairs to promote the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy: University of Minnesota's Job & Internship Fair (attendance estimated for over 3,000 students from the Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris and Duluth branches), the University of Minnesota's Environmental Resource Fair, Minnesota's Private Colleges Job Fair, North Hennepin Technical College Job Fair, North Hennepin Community College Job Fair, Gustavus Adolphus Job Fair, Concordia University Job Fair, and University of Minnesota Duluth Environmental Job Fair.
- Recruitment will be conducted online through online job boards, email blasts, e-newsletters, and social media channels. Position will be posted to college online job boards that serve 80 state and private colleges and universities in Minnesota. Position will be posted to Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, The Corps Network and the AmeriCorps web-site.
- Newspaper ads will be placed in strategic areas in Minnesota where Soil and Water Conservation District placement sites are located. Corps will also provide recruitment materials to many SWCDs so that they can recruit from the local community.
- Application will be available online for applicants in 2016. Available for apprentice applicants on January 8, 2016 via Conservation Corps website. Preferred application deadline is February 28, 2016.

<b>6. generate list of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor); year 2</b>
<p>Started; Ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Corps sent information about the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy to every SWCD, attended the MASWCD conference, and posted information on the Corps' website.</li> <li>• Conservation Corps sent out a request for proposals on 10/15/2015. It was distributed to all Minnesota SWCD's and TSA's. RFP applications were due 12/15/2015.</li> <li>• Information sent with the RFP included a general overview of the opportunity, instructions on how to apply, and a list of frequently asked questions.</li> <li>• SWCDs submitted applications to the Conservation Corps. The applications are currently being reviewed, scored using a standard rubric, and selected with the approval of BWSR. Placements will be distributed throughout MN based on quality of experience, skill-training potential and equitable geographic distribution.</li> <li>• In total, 30 different SWCDs will be selected by January 30, 2015.</li> </ul>
<b>7. match candidates with interested SWCDs; year 2</b>
Not started. Will be completed by April 30, 2016.
<b>8. employ 30 apprentices</b>
Not started. Will be completed by October 15, 2016.

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

<b>Deliverable/Outcome (Activity 2)</b>		
<b>5. design recruitment materials and conduct recruitment at educational institutions, online, and through other media</b>	November 30, 2015	\$6,000
<p>Completed for the 2016 program year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment information was designed by program staff for 2016.</li> <li>• Natural resources and environmental programs were contacted for 6</li> <li>• Recruitment was conducted at educational institutions in classrooms and at job fairs. Attended career fairs to promote the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy: University of Minnesota's Job &amp; Internship Fair (attendance of over 3,000 students from the Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris and Duluth branches), the University of Minnesota's Environmental Resource Fair, Minnesota's Private Colleges Job Fair, North Hennepin Technical College Job Fair, North Hennepin Community College Job Fair, Gustavus Adolphus Job Fair, Concordia University Job Fair, and University of Minnesota Duluth Environmental Job Fair.</li> <li>• Recruitment was conducted online through online job boards, email blasts, e-newsletters, and social media channels. Position posted to college online job boards that serve 80 state and private colleges and universities in Minnesota. Position posted to Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, The Corps Network and the AmeriCorps web-site.</li> <li>• Placed newspaper ads in strategic areas in Minnesota where Soil and Water Conservation District placement sites are located. Also provided recruitment materials to many SWCDs so that they could recruit from the local community.</li> <li>• Recruitment was conducted by local partners, including alumni, SWCDs, and other supporters. Sent announcement to Corps alumni and partners.</li> <li>• Application was available online for applicants for 2016. Available for apprentice applicants on January 8th via Conservation Corps website. Preferred application deadline was February 28<sup>th</sup>.</li> </ul>		
<b>6. generate list of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor); year 2</b>	December 30, 2015	\$0

<p>Completed for the 2016 program year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Corps sent information about the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy to every SWCD, attended the MASWCD conference, and posted information on the Corps' website.</li> <li>• Conservation Corps sent out a request for proposals on 10/15/2015. It was distributed to all Minnesota SWCD's and TSA's. RFP applications were due 12/15/2015.</li> <li>• Information sent with the RFP included a general overview of the opportunity, instructions on how to apply, and a list of frequently asked questions.</li> <li>• SWCDs submitted applications to the Conservation Corps. The applications were reviewed, scored using a standard rubric, and selected with the approval of BWSR. Placements distributed throughout MN (map attached) based on quality of experience, skill-training potential and equitable geographic distribution.</li> <li>• SWCDs were selected for the 2016 season. In total, 38 different SWCDs applied for 31 apprentices, with 31 able to be awarded.</li> <li>• 31 placements were selected in the following counties: Aitkin, Becker, Big Stone, Brown, Carlton, Carver, Cottonwood/Jackson, Crow Wing, Dakota, East Otter Tail, East Polk, Fillmore, Itasca, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Lyon, Marshall, Martin, Mower, Pennington, Renville, Ramsey, Rice, Root River, Stevens, Traverse, Washington, West Otter Tail, Winona, Wright, Yellow Medicine.</li> </ul>		
<b>7. match candidates with interested SWCDs; year 2</b>	April 31, 2016	\$3,000
<p>Completed for the 2016 program year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Corps received 148 apprentice applications for 31 positions by 02/28/2016.</li> <li>• Conservation Corps screened and interviewed applicants and selected apprentices based on region preference, area of interest, skills and qualifications with feedback on final candidates from the SWCD.</li> <li>• SWCD staff were provided with information on the top candidates for their apprenticeship and allowed to select the one they felt provided the best match.</li> <li>• Conservation Corps staff provided training conference calls for SWCD mentors in late April and early May and provided an overview of supervisor responsibilities, expectations, Conservation Corps policies and procedures. Conservation Corps site supervisor handbook was sent to each mentor prior to the calls and referenced by Corps staff.</li> </ul>		
<b>8. employ 30 apprentices; year 2</b>	October 15, 2016	\$184,000
<p>Started; Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 apprentices were hired by 05/16/2016.</li> <li>• 29 apprentices received general orientation on 5/16 - 5/18. The orientation schedule is included with this progress summary.</li> <li>• Orientation was held for the 29 apprentices for the remainder of the week at the Cloquet Forestry Center, Cloquet, MN. The orientation introduced the apprentices to the program, their role, various partners involved, and provided a networking opportunity.</li> <li>• Apprentices began with a half day at the SWCD office to meet their mentor, familiarize themselves with the SWCD, and review their specific work/training plan.</li> <li>• Using the projects and responsibilities outlined in the SWCD's original proposal, Conservation Corps and SWCD staff developed a schedule of project and training activities for the apprentice to complete throughout the term. Apprentices reviewed their specific work/training plan with their mentor during their first day. Conservation Corps staff facilitated discussion with the apprentices in regards to the work/training plan to increase knowledge of SWCD functions, share best practices, and learn how the various activities are connected as part of a larger effort. The work/training plan will be used as a resource by the apprentice and supervisor to track progress. Conservation Corps staff will review progress at a site visit during the mid-point of the apprentice's term. The work/training plan will also serve as a reflection tool for the apprentice to recognize accomplishments and enable them to translate those achievements to their resumes.</li> </ul>		

- On-site training was provided by the SWCD. This training was outlined in the approved work/training plan specific to the unique position description of each placement. On-site orientation occurred the first full week at the SWCD, and ongoing on-the-job training occurred throughout the apprentices' terms.
- 2 apprentices received a condensed, late-hire orientation on 05/23/2016 at the Conservation Corps headquarters in St. Paul. These apprentices, in coordination with their placement sites, will continue their service term beyond the scheduled, primary end-date, in order to complete the term requirements.
- Apprentices will continue their service terms into August, 2016.

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

<b>8. employ 30 apprentices; year 2</b>	October 15, 2016	\$184,000
<p>Completed for the 2016 program year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 apprentices were hired by 05/16/2016.</li> <li>• 29 apprentices received general orientation on 5/16 - 5/18. The orientation schedule is included with this progress summary.</li> <li>• Orientation was held for the 29 apprentices for the remainder of the week at the Cloquet Forestry Center, Cloquet, MN. The orientation introduced the apprentices to the program, their role, various partners involved, and provided a networking opportunity.</li> <li>• 2 apprentices received a condensed, late-hire orientation on 05/23/2016 at the Conservation Corps headquarters in St. Paul. These apprentices, in coordination with their placement sites, continued their service terms beyond the scheduled, primary end-date, in order to complete the term requirements.</li> <li>• Apprentices began with a half day at the SWCD office to meet their mentor, familiarize themselves with the SWCD, and review their specific work/training plan.</li> <li>• Using the projects and responsibilities outlined in the SWCD's original proposal, Conservation Corps and SWCD staff developed a schedule of project and training activities for the apprentice to complete throughout the term. Apprentices reviewed their specific work/training plan with their mentor during their first day. Conservation Corps staff facilitated discussion with the apprentices in regards to the work/training plan to increase knowledge of SWCD functions, share best practices, and learn how the various activities are connected as part of a larger effort. The work/training plan will be used as a resource by the apprentice and supervisor to track progress. Conservation Corps staff will review progress at a site visit during the mid-point of the apprentice's term. The work/training plan will also serve as a reflection tool for the apprentice to recognize accomplishments and enable them to translate those achievements to their resumes.</li> <li>• On-site training was provided by the SWCD. This training was outlined in the approved work/training plan specific to the unique position description of each placement. On-site orientation occurred the first full week at the SWCD, and ongoing on-the-job training occurred throughout the apprentices' terms.</li> <li>• Apprentices completed their service terms by the end of August 2016.</li> </ul>		

**Final Report Summary:**

LCCMR approved an amendment on 1/20/2017, allowing remaining funds to be spent in 2017 to support additional Apprentices in the first part of June.

<b>9. match candidates with interested swcds; year 3</b>	April 31, 2017	\$3000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed for 2017 program year.</li> </ul>		

- Conservation Corps received 130 apprentice applications for 33 positions by 04/30/2017.
- Conservation Corps screened and interviewed applicants and selected apprentices based on region preference, area of interest, skills and qualifications with feedback on final candidates from the SWCD.
- SWCD staff were provided with information on the top candidates for their apprenticeship and allowed to select the one they felt provided the best match.
- Conservation Corps staff provided training conference calls for SWCD mentors in late April and early May and provided an overview of supervisor responsibilities, expectations, Conservation Corps policies and procedures. Conservation Corps site supervisor handbook was sent to each mentor prior to the calls and referenced by Corps staff.
- Candidates were notified and provided contact information of the mentor at the SWCD so that introductions and general information could be relayed prior to the start date.

10. employ 32 apprentices for the first portion of year 3:	June 30, 2017	\$16,608
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Completed (for the first portion of year 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 33 apprentices were hired by 05/16/2017.</li> <li>○ 28 apprentices received orientation from 5/16 - 5/19. Orientation was held at the Cloquet Forestry Center, Cloquet, MN. The orientation introduced the apprentices to the program, their role, various partners involved, and provided a networking opportunity.</li> <li>○ 5 apprentices with schedule conflicts at the start of the summer completed a separate orientation in the Saint Paul Conservation Corps office on May 22, 2017 before meeting their host sites.</li> <li>○ Apprentices began with a half day at the SWCD office to meet their mentor, familiarize themselves with the SWCD, and review their specific work/training plan.</li> <li>○ Using the projects and responsibilities outlined in the SWCD's original proposal, Conservation Corps and SWCD staff developed a schedule of project and training activities for the apprentice to complete throughout the term. Apprentices reviewed their specific work/training plan with their mentor during their first day. Conservation Corps staff facilitated discussion with the apprentices in regards to the work/training plan to increase knowledge of SWCD functions, share best practices, and learn how the various activities are connected as part of a larger effort. The work/training plan will be used as a resource by the apprentice and supervisor to track progress. Conservation Corps staff will review progress at a site visit during the mid-point of the apprentice's term. The work/training plan will also serve as a reflection tool for the apprentice to recognize accomplishments and enable them to translate those achievements to their resumes.</li> <li>○ On-site training was provided by the SWCD. This training was outlined in the approved work/training plan specific to the unique position description of each placement. On-site orientation occurred the first full week at the SWCD, and ongoing on-the-job training occurred throughout the apprentices' terms.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

As this program has continued, CCM and BWSR have been increasingly effective at promoting and recruiting for it, evidenced by the numerous applications the Corps receives for a limited number of positions. Between 2015 and 2016, 61 Apprentices served as SWCDs throughout Minnesota. 33 more started in 2017. The Corps continued to provide strong support to SWCDs and apprentices, offering specialized orientation and training. These past two years have provided an opportunity for the Corps and BWSR to continually improve orientation and training. One host said, "The Conservation Corps is very supportive and informative on the entire process of hosting an apprentice. Any questions or concerns regarding the program were handled with flexibility by the Corps coordinator."

**V. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** The CCMI will be the primary disseminator and provide a link on their website describing the program ([www.conservationcorps.org](http://www.conservationcorps.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):** No work has been completed at this time.

**Status as of (June 1, 2015):**

Conservation Corps has updated their website description of the program - <http://www.conservationcorps.org/apprentice-academy>.

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

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District seeks summer apprentice - [http://fillmorecountyjournal.com/single.php?article\\_id=35126](http://fillmorecountyjournal.com/single.php?article_id=35126)

Summer intern needed at Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District -

<http://www.pineandlakes.com/news/3698503-summer-intern-needed-crow-wing-soil-and-water-conservation-district>

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

Applicants sought for summer work in Mower County

<http://www.bloomingprairieonline.com/county-news/applicants-sought-summer-work-mower-county>

Root River seeks summer apprentice

[http://lacrossetribune.com/root-river-swcd-seeks-summer-apprentice/article\\_db477880-1010-5299-bc74-296a55fff94c.html](http://lacrossetribune.com/root-river-swcd-seeks-summer-apprentice/article_db477880-1010-5299-bc74-296a55fff94c.html)

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

Conservation Corps updated the SWCD outreach page

<http://www.conservationcorps.org/host-apprentice/>

#### **Final Report Summary:**

Conservation Corps has maintained regularly updated information regarding this program on its website at [www.conservationcorps.org](http://www.conservationcorps.org). BWSR and the MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts have also maintained updated online information regarding the and link to the CCMI site. Awareness of and interest in the program has grown as information spreads. In addition, individual SWCDs have featured Apprentice projects and the Corps has found additional ways to share information about the program on its website, including its blog.

Winona Co SWCD Welcomes New Conservation Corps MN Apprentice

<http://www.winonaswcd.org/ccmapprentice.html>

2017 Apprentice featured on Conservation Corps blog:

<http://www.conservationcorps.org/crewblog/2017/6/28/making-conservation-an-adventure>

## **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>	\$ 392,000

**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. Remaining funds will be used to partially fund 32 positions in 2017.

**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>
LCCMR			368,000		
LCCMR				200,000	



LCCMR					186,000

*(add or remove rows and columns as needed)*

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

**IX. VISUAL ELEMENT or MAP(S):** A map showing of the 2016 Apprentice Locations is attached.

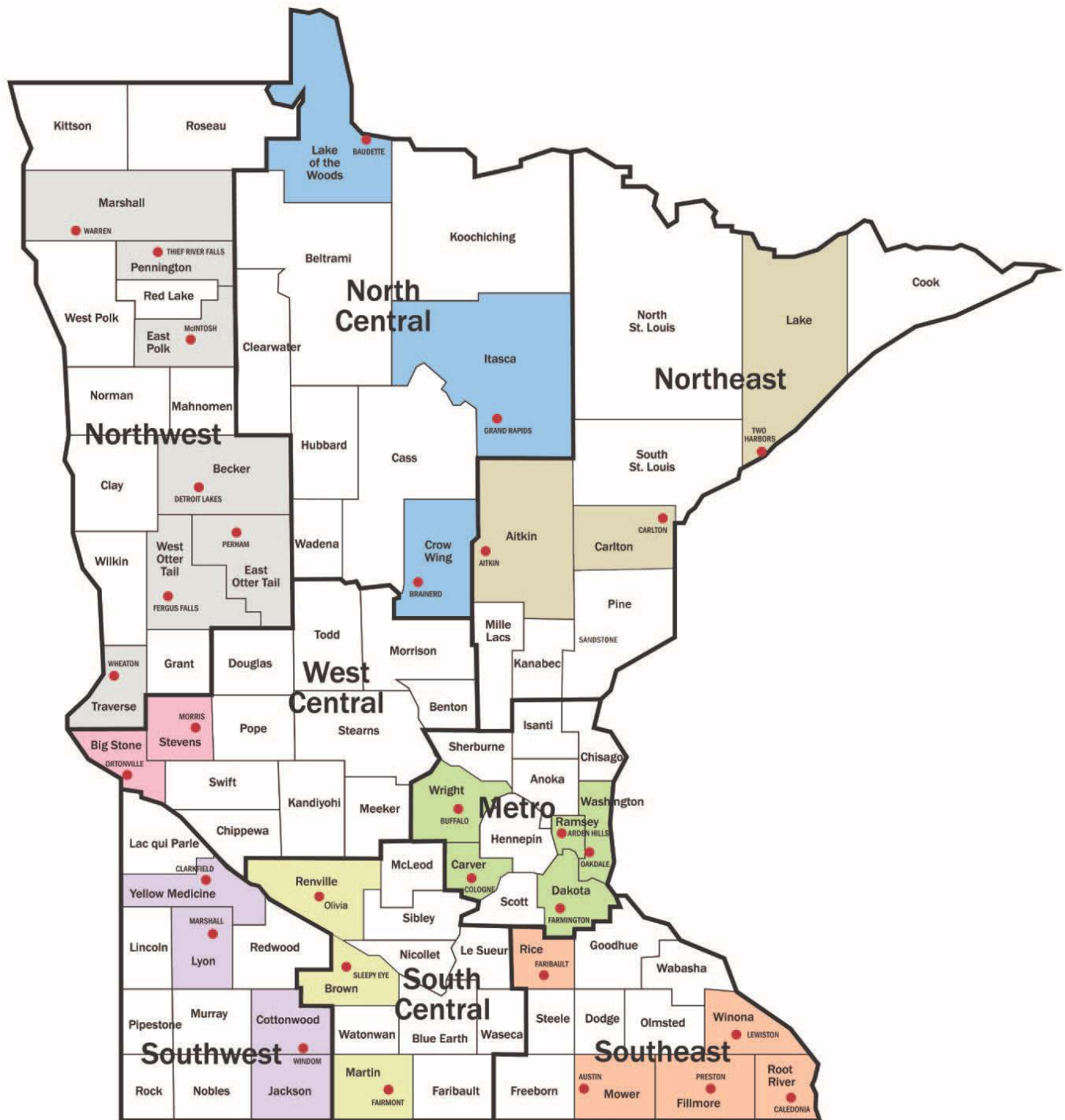
**X. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS WORKSHEET: NA**

**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.

# 2016 Conservation Apprentice Academy Map





<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; June 2017								
<b>Date of Report:</b> June 30, 2017								

<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 with 30 participants for year two. Partially fund the recruitment, selection and training of 32 participants in year three.</i>				
<b>Personnel:</b> BWSR Training Coordinator @0.04 FTE (non-general fund employee).	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$0			\$0	\$6,000	\$0
<b>Contracts:</b> Two years of 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	\$0	\$386,000	\$0
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$386,000</b>	<b>\$386,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$392,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>