

ML 2016 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending March 30, 2019

PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy

PROJECT MANAGER: Jenny Gieseke

AFFILIATION: Board of Water and Soil Resources

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FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 05a

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$433,000

AMOUNT SPENT: \$433,000

AMOUNT REMAINING: \$0

Overall Project Outcome and Results

The Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy was designed to provide a mechanism for maintaining an experienced conservation workforce in Minnesota despite the recent wave of retirements that have occurred as baby-boomers leave the workforce. As these experienced conservation professionals retire, they take with them their practical, on-the-ground experience and skills. While college students may have knowledge of emerging technologies and other innovations that can improve and contribute to current conservation efforts, they often lack experience with on the ground projects and relating to landowners. The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy filled this gap by providing an opportunity for the two generations to exchange knowledge during the SWCD's busiest season.

This project funded the placement of 31 apprentices in 2017 and 33 apprentices in 2018. Over the course of the grant period, these 64 young adults gained skills and experience in water resource management, conservation inspections, surveying and habitat restoration.

The program had a mutually beneficial impact on both the students and the SWCDs they were placed in. 100% of the SWCDs that participated in the project indicated they would partner with the program again. SWCD staff noted that Apprentices added value to project work through their knowledge and skills while also becoming better prepared for future careers. Apprentices who responded to a survey request all indicated they felt more prepared for a future career in conservation as a result of the program.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

Information from this project has been disseminated through reports to LCCMR, information on the Conservation Corps website, blog posts, and in a Conservation Conversation podcast.

Conservation Corps provides a description of the program on [the organization's website](#) (updated in October 2018 to indicate the completion of the program as funded by LCCMR).

Additional coverage over the course of the project includes: 2017 Apprentice featured on [Conservation Corps blog](#), 2017 Apprentice featured on [KLQP "Conservation Conversation" podcast](#), 2017 Apprentice featured on [Conservation Corps blog](#), and coverage of the project in the [Austin Daily Herald](#).



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2016 Work Plan Final Report

Date of Report: March 30, 2019
Date of Next Status Update Report: **April 9, 2019**
Date of Work Plan Approval: June 7, 2016
Project Completion Date: March 30, 2019
Does this submission include an amendment request? No

PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy

Project Manager: Jenny Gieseke
Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources
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Location: Statewide

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation:	\$433,000
	Amount Spent:	\$433,000
	Balance:	\$0

Legal Citation: M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 05a

Appropriation Language:

\$433,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources in cooperation with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa for the final phase of a program to train and mentor future conservation professionals by providing apprenticeship service opportunities with local soil and water conservation districts in Minnesota. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2019, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy

II. PROJECT STATEMENT: The Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy project provides the opportunity for college students and recent graduates to be mentored by experienced conservation professionals at Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) across Minnesota. In return, the Apprentices bring knowledge of emerging technologies and other innovations to improve the quality and productivity of current conservation efforts. This request will fund cohorts of 30 Apprentices in each of the 2017 and 2018 field seasons. To date, 139 individuals have successfully completed apprenticeships since 2011, and 60 more are anticipated during the cohort years of 2015 and 2016. A 2014 survey of past apprentices indicated that 96% of the program participants were either employed in the natural resources field, or continuing their education in Natural resources.

To deliver the Apprentice Academy Program, the Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) will work under a contract from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to recruit interested SWCDs and university students, and match them by geography and interest. Apprentices will gain skills and experience in areas such as water resource management, conservation inspections, surveying, and habitat restoration. The impact of this program is best described by the participants themselves. Mathias V, a 2012 Apprentice now employed at South Saint Louis SWCD summarized his experience by saying *"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."* Kayla H, a 2014 Apprentice now employed at Dakota SWCD said *"This opportunity is truly life changing. The hands on experience and networking opportunities are priceless. I have learned countless new things about water monitoring and soil and water conservation methods."*

The deliberate selection and pairing of SWCDs and apprentices expands this program beyond a typical internship program. It provides opportunities for true mentorship and skills training, and the benefit extends from the apprentices to the districts they serve. Special care is taken to match the needs of these SWCDs with the strengths and interests of the apprentices so that everyone's goals are met.

III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of December 30, 2016:

A contract has been executed between BWSR and CCMI. The Conservation Corps has recruited SWCDs and is in the process of selecting SWCD sites for the 2017 field season. The Conservation Corps is recruiting Apprentices for the 2017 field season.

Project Status as of June 30, 2017:

The Conservation Apprentice Academy started-up in May of 2017 with 33 apprentices ready to work in 33 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, 2017:

33 apprentices completed their terms of service in mid-August 2018. Conservation Corps has solicited applications from SWCDs for 2018 and is currently reviewing applications to select SWCD sites for the 2018 field

season. Conservation Corps is also recruiting Apprentices for the 2018 field season – applications opened on December 18, 2017 and are projected to close on March 2, 2018.

Project Status as of June 30, 2018:

Following recruitment efforts on the part of Conservation Corps and BWSR, 31 apprentices began their terms of service in May 2018. Apprentices attended orientation from May 15 – May 18. Orientation included an introduction to Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps, an overview of policies and procedures, First Aid and CPR training, an introduction to BWSR and MDA as well as time for apprentices to review and add to their work plans for the summer. Apprentices then reported to their SWCD sites on May 21 and have been actively working on a variety of projects including data collection, community outreach, raingarden maintenance, water quality sampling and invasive species management.

Project Status as of December 30, 2018:

30 apprentices completed their terms of service in mid-August 2018. Summer of 2018 is the last summer funded by this project. Conservation Corps contacted SWCDs to let them that the program will not continue in 2019. Conservation Corps has exchanged correspondence with several SWCDs to discuss site needs and possibilities for future collaboration.

Final Project Report March 30, 2019:

The project is complete. Over the course of the grant period, 64 young adults participated in the program, gaining skills and experience in water resource management, conservation inspections, surveying and habitat restoration.

Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

The Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy was designed to provide a mechanism for maintaining an experienced conservation workforce in Minnesota despite the recent wave of retirements that have occurred as baby-boomers leave the workforce. As these experienced conservation professionals retire, they take with them their practical, on-the-ground experience and skills. While college students may have knowledge of emerging technologies and other innovations that can improve and contribute to current conservation efforts, they often lack experience with on the ground projects and relating to landowners. The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy filled this gap by providing an opportunity for the two generations to exchange knowledge during the SWCD's busiest season.

This project funded the placement of 31 apprentices in 2017 and 33 apprentices in 2018. Over the course of the grant period, these 64 young adults gained skills and experience in water resource management, conservation inspections, surveying and habitat restoration.

The program had a mutually beneficial impact on both the students and the SWCDs they were placed in. 100% of the SWCDs that participated in the project indicated they would partner with the program again. SWCD staff noted that Apprentices added value to project work through their knowledge and skills while also becoming better prepared for future careers. Apprentices who responded to a survey request all indicated they felt more prepared for a future career in conservation as a result of the program.

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: BWSR to provide contract, oversight, and technical assistance for CCMI.

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.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 6,000
Amount Spent: \$ 6,000
Balance: \$ 0

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Contract executed between BWSR and Conservation Corps	August 30, 2016
2. Employment agreements and program documentation describing schedule and duties updated.	October 15, 2016
3. Year one evaluation complete	December 31, 2017
4. Year two evaluation complete	December 31, 2018

Activity Status as of December 30, 2016:

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

Activity Status as of June 30, 2017:

The contract is still in effect. Data is being collected during the 2017 summer season that will be used to evaluate the program.

Activity Status as of December 30, 2017:

The program delivered strong outcomes, as demonstrated by surveys that identify skills gained by apprentices and surveys by SWCD staff and apprentices. 32 SWCDs that participated in 2017 would like to partner with the program again (one SWCD did not answer this specific question). All 33 apprentices indicated that their experience increased their knowledge of conservation practices. SWCD staff noted that Apprentices added value to project work through their knowledge and skills while also becoming better prepared for future careers. All 33 Apprentices indicated they felt more prepared for a future career in conservation after participating in the Apprentice Academy.

Activity Status as of June 30, 2018:

The contract is still in effect. Data is being collected during the 2018 summer season that will be used to evaluate the program.

Project Status as of December 30, 2018:

The program delivered strong outcomes, as demonstrated by surveys that identify skills gained by apprentices and surveys by SWCD staff and apprentices. 23 SWCDs that participated in 2018 would like to partner with the program again (at the time of the report, Conservation Corps staff were waiting on responses from 8 sites). All 18 apprentices indicated that their experience increased their knowledge of conservation practices (at time of report, awaiting responses from 10 members). SWCD staff noted that Apprentices added value to project work through their knowledge and skills while also becoming better prepared for future careers. The 18 returned

surveys all indicated that Apprentices felt more prepared for a future career in conservation after participating in the Apprentice Academy.

Final Report Summary:

The program consistently delivered strong outcomes, as demonstrated by surveys that identify skills gained by apprentices and surveys by SWCD staff and apprentices. All 38 SWCDs that participated over the course of the project indicated they would partner with the program again. SWCD staff noted that Apprentices added value to project work through their knowledge and skills while also becoming better prepared for future careers. The 18 returned surveys all indicated that Apprentices felt more prepared for a future career in conservation after participating in the Apprentice Academy. 52 Apprentices (96% of the Apprentices who completed the post-program assessment) indicated that they felt more prepared for a career in natural resources.

Testimonials from SWCD partners

- “It’s always a great experiencing learning [Apprentices’] strengths and building projects off of their areas of expertise.”
- “It is a valuable program because of the learning opportunity for the apprentice and for building future capacity within all conservation fields to deliver services effectively and efficiently.”
- “We appreciate the opportunity to have a Conservation Corps member in our office each summer...Many great SWCD staff members have come from the Conservation Corps.”
- “We have really enjoyed the opportunity to mentor young conservationists through this program. And it helps us reflect some on our own work and makes us better employees.”
- “Once again, we have greatly enjoyed being a part of this program. The extra assistance has been appreciated by our staff, and allowed us to complete needed work that would have not been otherwise possible. We look forward to the opportunity to continue hosting an Apprentice!”

Testimonials from Apprentices

- “[The program] has give me hands on skills that will allow me to be a better citizen and worker in the natural resources field.”
- “The Conservation Academy has given me an opportunity to work closely with natural resource management professionals and learn from them. It has opening my eyes to how broad and interconnected the natural resources industry is and has given me a great deal of clarify and focus when it comes to my long-term career goals.”
- “It was a great opportunity and experience. It meant...that I could be a part of something that was having a positive impact.”
- “The Conservation Academy has allowed me to better understand the career field I would like to go into. It has given me the opportunity to have hands-on experience...This program has been a great stepping stone to my career.”
- “The Conservation Academy provided an opportunity to take my theoretical academic knowledge and practices and apply it to practical methods. The experience was a first-hand look into how natural resource agencies correspond with landowners and seeing how their practices and methods are developed and applied. The Academy is a fantastic way to glimpse how conservation works at a local level.”
- “The program was a means to gain practical skills to be applied in any natural resource management position. It made me more confident in my knowledge of natural resources and possible professional

avenues to take in the future. I was also able to meet peers interested in natural resources. There was a strong sense of community and positivity.”

- “It’s a wonderful resource. It’s one thing to study environmental issues but another thing to see it put to work and under the laws, regulations, and restrictions behind it. You learn while seeing how things are run, all while being part of a community.”
- “I gained valuable experience and exposure to the natural resources field. The skills I’ve developed and the relationships I’ve created are greatly appreciated. The Academy has given me a large step up in my professional career and I can’t thank the Corps enough for that.”
- “It has been a great opportunity to explore future career options and learn how to get involved in my local community. I’ve seen the difference community involvement makes and I’m motivated to keep learning after this experience.”

ACTIVITY 2: Recruit participating SWCDs; Develop 30 employment agreements; Recruit, select, and train 30 academy participants; Repeat with 30 participants for year two.

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). Apprentices are selected and matched with an SWCD based on skill, area of interest and regional preference. SWCD’s are selected based on quality of experience, skill-training potential and geographic distribution. Participating SWCDs provide final feedback on Apprentice selection prior to hiring. Both the SWCD and the apprentice 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: \$427,000
Amount Spent: \$427,000
Balance: \$0

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media	November 30, 2016
2. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete	December 30, 2016
3. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs	April 31, 2017
4. Up to 32 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented	October 15, 2017
5. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media; year 2	November 30, 2017
6. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete; year 2	December 30, 2017
7. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs; year 2	April 31, 2018
8. Up to 30 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented; year 2	October 15, 2018

Activity Status as of December 30, 2016:

Outcome (Activity 2)
1. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment for 2017 program year apprentice applicants is underway. • Conservation Corps has promoted the positions through various communication channels, including social media platforms. The positions are posted at educational institutions throughout the state and on numerous online job boards. • Applications are due 03/03/2017
<p>2. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Corps sent information about the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy to every SWCD, attended the MASWCD conference and posted information on the Conservation Corps website. • Conservation Corps set out the initial request for proposals on 10/18/2016 and sent reminders before the application deadline of 12/15/2016. • Program staff reviewed the applications, using a standard rubric, and will consult with BWSR on SWCDs at which to place apprentices.
<p>3. An amendment request is being submitted to the LCCMR to request authorization to utilize \$19,608 of unspent funds from the M.L. 2014 appropriation toward the 2017 Apprentices. The funds would be used before June 30, 2017 when the M.L. 2014 Appropriation expires. These additional funds would be used in combination with M.L. 2016 funding, and would allow the program to support 32 apprentices in 2017 rather than the 30 described in the 2016 work plan.</p>

Activity Status as of June 30, 2017:

<p>Outcome (Activity 2)</p>
<p>1. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed for 2017 program year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment information was designed by program staff for 2017. ○ Natural resources and environmental programs were contacted for 2017. ○ 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 & Internship Fair (attendance of over 3,000 students from the Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris and Duluth branches), University of Minnesota’s Environmental Internship and Job Fair, Minnesota State University’s Career & Internship Day, Winona State University’s Summer Opportunities Fair, Saint Olaf College’s Service Expo, Minnesota Private Colleges’ Job and Internship Fair, and North Dakota State University’s Part-time and Summer Jobs Fair. • 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. • 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. • Recruitment was conducted by local partners, including alumni, SWCDs, and other supporters. Sent announcement to Corps alumni and partners. • Application was available online for applicants for 2017. Available for apprentice applicants on December 21, 2016 via Conservation Corps website. Preferred application deadline was March 3, 2017.
<p>1. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete</p>

- Completed for 2017 program year.
 - 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.
 - SWCDs were selected for the 2017 season. In total, 37 different SWCDs applied for 37 apprentices, with 33 able to be awarded, thanks to approval of an amendment request to utilize \$19,608 of unspent funds from the M.L. 2014 appropriation toward the 2017 Apprentices.
 - 33 placements were selected in the following SWCDs: Aitkin, Anoka, Becker, Blue Earth, Carlton, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, East Otter Tail, East Polk, Fillmore, Isanti, Kanabec, Lac Qui Parle, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Lyon, Marshall, Martin, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Mower, Pennington, Pine, Ramsey, Scott, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Washington, West Otter Tail, Winona, Wright, Yellow Medicine (in some instances, Apprentices serve at two SWCDs, if the host sites work out a plan beneficial to all).

2. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs

- Completed for 2017 program year.
 - 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.

3. Up to 32 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented

- Started; Ongoing
 - 33 apprentices were hired by 05/16/2017.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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

<p>serve as a reflection tool for the apprentice to recognize accomplishments and enable them to translate those achievements to their resumes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Apprentices will continue their service terms into August, 2017
<p>4. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media; year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not started; planed for fall 2017
<p>5. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete; year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not started; planned for fall 2017
<p>6. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs; year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not started; will be completed by April 31, 2018
<p>7. Up to 30 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented; year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not started; will be completed by October 15, 2018

Activity Status as of December 30, 2017:

Outcome	Completion Date
<p>4. Up to 32 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented</p>	<p>October 15, 2017</p>
<p>Completed for the 2017 program year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 apprentices were hired by 5/16/2016 • 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. • 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. • 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. • Work and training plans were used as a resource by apprentices and supervisors to track progress. Conservation Corps staff conducted site visits (primarily in-person, some via teleconference) to review progress with the apprentices and supervisors. • 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. • Corps staff hosted an end-of-season retreat for Apprentices, designed for reflection and planning for the future • All 33 apprentices successfully completed their terms 	

5. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media; year 2	November 30, 2017
<p>Started; ongoing through March 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Corps opened the online application for potential Apprentices on December 18, 2017. • Applications are due March 3, 2018 • Conservation Corps sent out a request for proposals on November 9, 2017. Applications were due December 15, 2017. 	
6. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete; year 2	December 30, 2017
<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Corps sent information about the Apprentice Academy to all SWCDs, attended the MASWCD conference and posted information on the Corps' website. • Conservation Corps sent out a request for proposals on November 9, 2017. Applications were due December 15, 2017. • Currently reviewing proposals, which include details about proposed tasks and proposed primary mentors at each site 	
7. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs; year 2	April 31, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not started; will be completed by April 31, 2018 	
8. Up to 30 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented; year 2	October 15, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not started; will be completed by October 15, 2018 	

Activity Status as of June 30, 2018:

Outcome	Completion Date
7. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs; year 2	April 31, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed for program year 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conservation Corps received 110 apprentice applications for 33 positions by March 3, 2018. ○ 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. 	
8. Up to 30 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented; year 2	October 15, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started; Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 31 apprentices were hired by 5/15/2018. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 apprentices received orientation from 5/15 - 5/18. 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. • 6 apprentices with schedule conflicts at the start of the summer completed a separate orientation in the Saint Paul Conservation Corps office (6 on May 21 and 4 on May 29) before meeting their host sites. • 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 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. • 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. • Apprentices will continue their service terms into August, 2018 	
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Project Status as of December 30, 2018:

Outcome	Completion Date
<p>8. Up to 30 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented; year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed for program year 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 31 apprentices were hired by 5/15/2018. • Apprentices completed orientation with Conservation Corps staff (either at the Cloquet Forestry Center in Cloquet, MN or at the Conservation Corps office in Saint Paul, MN) before meeting their host site supervisors. • 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 	<p>October 15, 2018</p>

<p>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 plans were 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 plans also served as a reflection tool for the apprentice to recognize accomplishments and enable them to translate those achievements to their resumes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 30 Apprentices completed their terms in mid-August. 	
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Final Report Summary:

Outcome	Completion Date	Notes
1. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media	November 30, 2016	Conservation Corps received 130 applications for 2017 positions.
2. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete	December 30, 2016	39 SWCDs completed an application to host an apprentice.
3. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs	April 31, 2017	Applicants indicated placement preferences, Conservation Corps staff and SWCD staff selected candidates
4. Up to 32 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented	October 15, 2017	33 Apprentices placed at 33 SWCDs. Throughout the state, Apprentices served 16,283 hours completing various projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58,882 square feet of erosion control/slope stabilization • 47,870 square feet of rain garden maintenance • 339 acres of restoration area maintenance • 96 acres of vegetation removal • 170 acres of seeding • 17,970 plants/forbs/grasses installed
5. Apprentice applicants recruited through educational institutions, online, and through other media; year 2	November 30, 2017	Conservation Corps received 110 applications Apprentice Academy positions.
6. List of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor) complete; year 2	December 30, 2017	34 SWCDs completed an application to host an apprentice.
7. Candidates matched with interested SWCDs; year 2	April 31, 2018	Applicants indicated placement preferences, Conservation Corps staff and SWCD staff selected candidates

<p>8. Up to 30 Apprentices employed and managed; local projects implemented; year 2</p>	<p>October 2018</p>	<p>31 Apprentices placed at 31 SWCDs. Throughout the state, Apprentices served 14,964 hours completing various projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 274 hours of community outreach • 211,450 square feet of erosion control/slope stabilization • 355 acres of invasive management • 434 acres of seeding • 13,871 plants/forbs/grasses installed
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V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: The CCMI will be the primary disseminator and provide a link on their website describing the program (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.

Status as of December 30, 2016:

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

Status as of June 30, 2017

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

2017 Apprentice featured on Conservation Corps blog:
<http://www.conservationcorps.org/crewblog/2017/6/28/making-conservation-an-adventure>

Status as of December 30, 2017

Conservation Corps provides a description of the program on the organization’s website:
<http://www.conservationcorps.org/apprentice-academy>

2017 Apprentice featured on KLQP “Conservation Conversation” podcast:
<http://podcast.ruralsolutions.com/wordpress/?s=Rhyan&submit=>

2017 Apprentice featured on Conservation Corps blog:
<http://www.conservationcorps.org/crewblog/2017/11/20/kick-start-to-a-career>

Status as of June 30, 2017:

Conservation Corps provides a description of the program on the organization’s website:

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

Status as of December 30, 2017:

Status as of June 30, 2018:

Project Status as of December 30, 2018:

Conservation Corps provides a description of the program on the organization’s website:

<http://www.conservationcorps.org/apprentice-academy> (updated in October 2018 to indicate the completion of the program as funded by LCCMR)

<https://crowwingswcd.org/conservation-corps-of-mn-and-ia/>

Final Report Summary:

Conservation Corps provides a description of the program on the organization’s website:

<http://www.conservationcorps.org/apprentice-academy> (updated in October 2018 to indicate the completion of the program as funded by LCCMR).

Additional coverage over the course of the project:

- 2017 Apprentice featured on Conservation Corps blog:
<http://www.conservationcorps.org/crewblog/2017/6/28/making-conservation-an-adventure>
- 2017 Apprentice featured on KLQP “Conservation Conversation” podcast:
<http://podcast.ruralsolutions.com/wordpress/?s=Rhyan&submit=>
- 2017 Apprentice featured on Conservation Corps blog:
<http://www.conservationcorps.org/crewblog/2017/11/20/kick-start-to-a-career>
- <https://crowwingswcd.org/conservation-corps-of-mn-and-ia/>
- <https://www.austindailyherald.com/2018/02/applicants-sought-for-local-summer-apprentice/>

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget Overview:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Overview Explanation
Personnel:	\$ 6,000	BWSR PRAP Coordinator @0.04 FTE.
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$427,000	Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Two years of Conservation Corps Minnesota for manager time (\$85,000), salary and benefits for 60 Apprentices (\$4,850/apprentice, or \$291,000 total),

		training (\$25,000), and site visits (\$13,500). Included in contract are funds for recruitment, background checks & recruiting ads (\$12,500).
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET: \$433,000		

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 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. Conservation Corps staff will coordinate the project, manage the apprentices, and work with SWCDs. The CCMI staff time is approximately 50% time per year, equating to approximately 1.0 FTE.

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 will utilize the capacity that has been built and the momentum gained during the first years of the Apprentice Academy. The project will meet the needs of SWCDs with 30 apprentices in each of the 2017 and 2018 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 working to develop long-term funding strategies for the Conservation Apprenticeship Academy involving a mixture of federal, state, local, foundation, and private support.

C.

C. Funding History:

Funding Source and Use of Funds	Funding Timeframe	\$ Amount
ENTRF	FY 2011	\$368,000
	FY 2012-2013	\$200,000
	FY 2014	\$186,000
	FY 2015-2017	\$392,000

VIII. FEE TITLE ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION EASEMENT/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS:

A. Parcel List: NA

B. Acquisition/Restoration Information: NA

IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S): Exact locations will not be known until April 2017 and April 2018. Maps of Apprentice locations will be provided as attachments to status update reports as the information becomes available.

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: NA

XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than December 30, 2016, June 30, 2017, December 30, 2017, June 30, 2018 and December 30, 2018. A final report and associated products will be submitted between January 1, 2019 and March 30, 2019.

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2016 Project Budget**



Project Title: Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy

Legal Citation: M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 05a

Project Manager: Jenny Gieseke

Organization: BWSR

M.L. 2016 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 433,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 2.75 Years; March 30, 2019

Date of Report: March 30, 2019

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 1 Balance	Activity 2 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 2 Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	BWSR to provide contract, oversight, and technical assistance for CCMI.			Recruit participating SWCDs; Develop 30 employment agreements; Recruit, select, and train 30 academy participants; Repeat with 30 participants for year two.				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)								
Personnel: BWSR Training Coordinator @0.04 FTE (non-general fund employee).	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$0				\$6,000	\$0
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts								
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Two years of Conservation Corps Minnesota for manager time (\$85,000), salary and benefits for 60 Apprentices (\$4,850/apprentice, or \$291,000 total), training (\$25,000), and site visits (\$13,500). Included in contract are funds for recruitment, background checks & recruiting ads (\$12,500).				\$427,000	\$427,000	\$0	\$427,000	\$0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$0	\$427,000	\$427,000	\$0	\$433,000	\$0