



FRIENDS GROUP PARTNER *GRANTS*

PARKS & TRAILS COUNCIL OF MN VOLUNTEER HABITAT RESTORATION GRANTS 2025 OVERVIEW

GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota proudly offers a grant program for our Friends Group partners. We will award several small grants (\$500-\$2,500 each) to support habitat restoration projects carried out with hands-on volunteer labor. A primary goal of this program is to boost Friends Group efforts to engage volunteers on these types of projects, contributing to a collective land ethic.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be a Friends Group partner of Parks & Trails Council. See the P&TC definition of Friends Groups and program details at parksandtrails.org/friends-groups/.

TIMELINE

January 5, 2025	Grant announcement
January – February 2025	Engage in conversations with land management agency staff to determine possible projects (<i>required</i>).
February 17, 2025	Submit draft application to P&TC for feedback. (<i>Recommended</i>)
February 24, 2025	Submit final application, agency letter, and budget to P&TC by 5pm.
March 5, 2025	P&TC issues award decisions and awardee agreements.
March 14, 2025	Submit signed awardee agreement to P&TC to release funds for the project.
March 15, 2025– November 29, 2025	Project implementation period
July 26, 2025	Interim report due
December 20, 2025	Final report and volunteer hours log due

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

This grant program will fund habitat restoration projects. See the chart below for activity types and eligible expenses. Awarded funds must be used for project activities explicitly stated in the application.

Activity	Eligible expenses
Tree protection (bud-capping, cages, tubes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tools/equipment• Materials/supplies• Publications to get the word out• Event related food/beverages
Exclosures (fencing to prevent deer browse)	
Planting (restoration at scale; usually seedlings or shrubs)	
Planting (enhance use areas, replace ash trees; larger trees)	
Seed collection	
Invasive species management	
Other restoration activity (subject to approval by P&TC)	

PARTNERS

Land Management Agency: The Friends Group should work closely with their land management agency representative throughout the process to identify and develop a project. The application requires a letter of support from the land management agency.

Community Groups: Friends Groups are encouraged to cultivate relationships with community groups, businesses, or schools to aid in the project.

P&TC: P&TC will remain available and engaged as needed through the grant planning, implementation, and reporting process.

FUNDING DISTRIBUTION METHOD

Friends Groups can apply for \$500-\$2,500 to complete their project and must supply a budget with a line-item breakdown for the project. Note: If more than 10% of the grant funds remain unspent at the end of the project with an insufficient explanation, this may negatively impact the group's standing in future grants.

The distribution method varies by the type of organization:

- **Fiscal clients of P&TC:** Use the same method as all fiscal client expenses—reimbursed based on invoices/receipts.
- **501c3 Nonprofits:** Check issued upon winning grant.
- **Unincorporated associations:** i.e., groups that are neither fiscal clients nor registered 501c3 nonprofits: please contact us to discuss options.

REPORTING

Grant recipients must submit an interim and final report. A template will be issued to the selected grant recipients. Report content will include:

- *Measurable data*: number and types of trees planted, volunteer hours, etc.
- *Narrative*: descriptions of the activities, quotes, lessons learned, etc.
- *Photo/video documentation*: volunteers at work, restoration accomplished, etc.
- *Financial information*: a financial comparison of the budget vs. actual expenses.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Projects will be evaluated on several criteria, including but not limited to how well the application documents the following:

- Project contributes to the habitat restoration goals of the park or trail.
- Project engages volunteers in hands-on restoration work.
- Project plan is thorough, clearly indicating scope, location, and materials needed.
- Budget includes items and costs that directly support the project.
- Project timeline lays out clear and reasonable steps to complete the project.

Careful consideration will be given to projects that:

- Demonstrate a high level of volunteer engagement.
- Engage with volunteers or youth from underrepresented backgrounds in regard to race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, immigration status, or other areas of diversity.

P&TC aims to partner with Friends Groups across Minnesota and will consider the geographic distribution of projects in its evaluation.

SUBMISSION

Friends Groups are strongly encouraged to connect with the External Relations Director to discuss their project idea, financial plan, and other questions.

Lisa Filter, External Relations Director
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Please submit the Application, Budget, and Agency Letter to Parks & Trails Council by 5pm on **February 28, 2024**. These documents can be submitted via email to friends@parksandtrails.org.